

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. And now the thing our attorney advises. The content 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: Welcome back, friends, neighbors, loved ones.

nicki: Hello, everybody. It's been a while. I think it's been not quite a year, half a year at least since we've done a Salty Talk. So we're back with a Salty Talk episode for you. This is Salty Talk episode 45 and we roped our good friend John Welbourn into joining us to talk about traumatic brain injury.

Robb: Yeah. John came out to visit. He was on Andy Stumpf's podcast when he was here about a month, month and a half ago. We always chew the fat as it were on a number of topics, but talked a little bit about my essential tremor, talked a fair amount about John's two decade-long process of dealing with traumatic brain injury after 10 years in the NFL. Pretty fascinating story. John is the penultimate lifetime learner.

nicki: For sure.

Robb: What we discover in this podcast is through both accident and design, John has ended up doing a lot of the right stuff, all of the right stuff for both mitigating the effects of traumatic brain injury, I think early in his career, and then just really having the wherewithal to try to figure out how to reverse some of these effects post-career.

nicki: Mm-hmm. When we first met John, he would frequently tell us something and then 10 minutes later, tell us the same story. It was pretty evident that cognitively, there were some stuff going on and Robb actually told him like, "Dude, you just told me that 15 minutes ago," and he mentions this in the thing, in the episode that we just recorded. Clearly, that was concerning for him. Over the last 10 years, he's done a lot of different things, two key treatments or therapies that he'll talk about extensively that have significantly, well, actually, very objectively reversed the aging in his brain. He'll talk about the different scans that he had done, one in 2013 and one just earlier here in 2023, so a 10-year difference in these brain scans and this most recent one showing clear

reversal of damage to the brain. This is a guy who played 10 years in the NFL.

Robb: At the highest level.

nicki: At the highest level, offensive lineman, used his head as a weapon. He talks about that. Was a boxer previously prior to playing football in college and also in the NFL, so many, many, many concussions and incidents of head trauma.

Robb: Yeah.

nicki: Anyway, great discussion. I think you all will enjoy this. He does talk a lot about, in the beginning, he recently started playing jujitsu or learning jujitsu and he's also been training several athletes of the highest level of jujitsu, basically with their strength and conditioning. So you'll learn a lot about what he's been doing with those athletes, but the bulk of the show is on traumatic brain injury. Before we get into that, I want to share our show sponsor. As you know, this Salty Talk episode of the Healthy Rebellion Radio is sponsored by our Salty AF electrolyte company, LMNT.

The truth is, everyone needs electrolytes, but if you're an active person and/or on a low-carb diet, you really need electrolytes to feel and perform your best. Whether you're training for strength, endurance, or just trying to make it through a grueling workday, make it a point to put electrolytes in your water, your body, and your brain. Well, thank you. You'll hear John talk about LMNT, how he wishes he had it in the NFL, and even a trivia-worthy question. He played in a game that they called the Pickle Juice game because it was the hottest game on record for any NFL game. Instead of putting Gatorade in their cups on that day, they used pickle juice because they recognized the need for sodium given the heat and the levels of exertion that these guys would be going through.

Robb: Yeah.

nicki: Excuse me, I just got a little tickle on my throat.

Speaker 1: Do you need some LMNT?

nicki: Maybe. It's also grapefruit season as you know, which means you have another awesome LMNT flavor that you can add into your rotation to keep you hydrated, energized, and ready to perform at your best. You can get yours at drinklmnt.com/robb. That's drinkL-M-N-T.com/R-O-B-B. Without further ado, we'll jump into our interview with John Welbourn. Well, hey. You were recently out here in Montana and we had a nice visit.

Robb: Although you did smash me at jujitsu.

John: Well, I got smashed last night, so don't worry. Victor and Fellipe taught a special class to celebrate their... Obviously, Victor's double gold at Worlds and then Fellipe obviously took third in his first year as black belt at Worlds, which

was a huge deal in the heavyweight. So they taught a special class. After we got done, I rolled with Victor and then Felipe and then Arash and all the guys. I had never in my life felt like I was doing well and then they go, "Oh, you're doing so good," and then fucking flip me like I was nothing. So yeah, I know how it was like to get smashed.

nicki: And flipping you like it's nothing is saying something.

John: Well. Victor, who right now is considered the best in the world in the [inaudible 00:06:59], obviously, he's my athlete, so I know exactly how strong he is and what, he's 6'4", 255, 260. I know exactly how strong he is and dude, he's really strong. I was wrestling with those guys last night, I'm like, what have I done? Just created these monsters and it's fun. Then they're like, "Oh, you're doing so much better," and I'm like, "This is so emasculating. Thank you so much."

nicki: That's hilarious.

Robb: Well, it's a never-ending process. As you get better, the awesome thing is everybody else gets better too.

John: Yeah. That's unfortunate. Now that you said that, I'm like, yeah. Well, what was wild about those guys is they were so talented at jujitsu and they really just missed the classical strength conditioning portion. I was in Long Beach this last weekend at BJJ Worlds or IBJJF Worlds. I'm just coaching them. We have hundreds of hours training these guys in the gym and they told me, "I need you there." I was like, "I'm there for you, guys." We've trained as a team. We've worked and we put so much effort that after eight months, I needed to be there to help them, shepherd them across and provide them a little bit of veteran leadership. Yeah, it was great. We were in the warm-ups getting ready and back there talking them through the magnitude of the moment.

What was amazing for young guys, because I saw this all the time in the NFL where young guys would get in or get an opportunity to play and I don't think that they realize the magnitude of the moment in which it was happening. That was something, I think, very different from me is I had this rare ability to realize that this is the biggest stage in the world and if I do what I'm supposed to do at this moment, it'll alter the trajectory of my life. I'm sure you guys look back on your life and you're like, man, there was that one moment that altered the trajectory. Did I realize the importance of that moment? For those guys and for Victor and Felipe, I didn't want them to miss that moment. I was really clear on that like, this is the work we've done. Nobody's worked harder. Nobody's more prepared. This is your moment to be the best in the world and to put a stamp on it.

Both of those guys realized the magnitude of the moment. Felipe ended up losing to Erich Munis who's best in the world and Victor ended up beating him in the open in the final match. Both of those kids realized, hey, man, this is where

we ascend. It was incredible to see them realizing, go out there and absolutely decimate people. What was neat was I met a lot of the other competitors and a bunch of legends like [inaudible 00:09:58]. Obviously, [inaudible 00:10:00] was there and a lot of these BJJ legends. It was interesting, every single one of them that came over, when they introduced me and explained who I was, looked at me with wide eyes and was like, "Oh, my God, the difference in these kids in one year has been amazing, especially in Victor. He's just so much bigger and more physical and just so stacked. He looked like a dump truck up there compared to these guys and was just picking people up and slamming them." So it's pretty amazing what some good strength conditioning, consistency, and just a intelligent approach can do for jujitsu if you already have that skill set.

Robb: Absolutely. Jujitsu is one of those last bastions of athletics that really hasn't had proper S&C applied to it. MMA, I would say, has more so maybe because of the bigger payday or the greater scrutiny or something like that, but that's awesome.

John: Yeah. We really have talked about it, but I haven't super publicized it, so it was really neat to have people obviously see Victor training and then these guys that were considered the legends, the Hall of Famers coming over and Felipe talked to them or Victor introduced me and these guys were looking at these kids. The cool part is we've trained them completely natural. We didn't use any performance enhancers because I was just very clear with it where you guys don't need it and you guys are beginners and we will have super physiological gains at this point in your training that this isn't even a factor. You guys have never really ever lifted weights properly, so why would we blunt the effects by obviously taking a bunch of performance enhancers? So I made that deal and I was like, "Yo, man, we're not going to do that."

And that way when we're going into these events and you're going to win, you don't have to worry about the drug test, creatine, beta-alanine, making sure vitamin D levels were up, making sure they're eating enough protein and fixing their diet, monitoring their calories. With Victor, I used a modified anabolic diet [inaudible 00:12:12], a little bit of carb cycling. He actually worked really well off of a high-protein, moderate to high-fat diet for a week. Then I'd give him a carb [inaudible 00:12:20] on Saturdays and then give a little bit of fasting and then hit him with a big whack of protein at night on Sundays. He felt much better off of that. For some reason, the performance wise, too many carbs was just killing his performance. He just felt super lethargic and that really just leaned him out and he looked a lot better.

Felipe is 23, so for me, it was just with him, are you eating enough protein? 23 years old, just are you eating enough protein? I just made him count his protein. Whereas Victor, [inaudible 00:12:58] rush, obviously. The other training partner, he was a little too heavy. He was 292 and so we did a little bit of modified carb cycling, caloric restrictions, zone 2, and got him down to 246 in 12 weeks. So we were able to cut almost 50 pounds in 12 weeks.

Robb: Damn.

John: He did a hell of a job.

Robb: Wow.

John: Actually, it improved all of his lifts. So three really high-level dudes and each had a different approach and then figured out a really good training system for them, very grip-intensive. When Victor came in the gym the first day, his back was so bad he couldn't tie his shoes. He has an L4, L5 issue, couldn't tie his shoes. Back squatted 165 pounds per set of five. He had fought in the ADCC, and I think he was the only guy that Gordon Ryan didn't submit, but he lost on points. He couldn't stand and fight because his back is so bad. A month previous, he had an episode where he couldn't stand. So he comes to me and this has been a huge problem and preventing. So we started him with the basics.

I explained to him, I'm like, "If you have a Coke can, you can put a tractor on that Coke can, it's fine. The minute we poke a little hole in it, the integrity will blow out and the can will crumble. So we need to make sure that we teach you task-specific tension and how to brace." Started with basic isometric and stability tests that we do, our dead bugs. Started getting into a little bit of rotation and movement and all of a sudden, we started doing all the Charlie Francis GPP med ball work and all of our dynamic stuff for Power Athlete, swinging kettlebells and lifting weights. We figured out that axial loading was an issue, so we went big into the belt squats and a lot of unilateral loading like heavy kettlebell suitcase deadlifts and just single arm farmers carry so he could work on that task-specific tension for bracing.

Got his glutes really strong. He was doing 400-pound reverse hypers for bouts of 40 to 60 seconds. All of a sudden, these kids just exploded, where all of a sudden, I'm going and rolling with them and I'm like, oh, my God. I feel like these dudes are going to hurt me and I'm strong too. So a ton of plyometrics. They had never jumped up on boxes. We used a modified path, French contrast work. We do something heavy. We do something extremely explosive, and then they got to do some plyometric jumps and we do a ton of that and a lot of max effort. So they get those days, a lot of manual resistance, which is very important, especially for the isometrics. Then I have a density day, which looks like heavy sandbags, kettlebells, fat bars, and just everything to build the grip and continue to fold the steel for them.

It was a really neat piece. We also pushed their conditioning, which is something that I guess people in jujitsu don't do. But we found that using the echo bikes with the lack of eccentric load, I could really push their conditioning to an insane point and it wasn't just the diminishing from their training, because they're getting 14 to 17 mat sessions a week.

nicki: Wow.

Robb: Wow.

John: So just trying to balance their load and their intensity and the ferocity, which they're training because these dudes are going to try to kill each other. There was a really interesting balancing act of we started doing some stuff in the pre warm-up. They'd come in and I make them jump rope for 15, 10, or maybe five, 10 minutes. We have a little progression and they got to do a little bit of single leg kicking forward and some crossovers and some stuff. Based on how the performance looked on the jump rope is how I started almost like autoregulating the training a little bit, where if they were really good and everything looked nice and crisp and they were moving well, I knew I could hammer it down. If they were looking like they couldn't tie it together and they were really struggling just neurologically jump rope, I was like, okay, today we've got to deviate a little bit. I'm probably going to go back.

I ordered some lactate testing, so we'll do that, but also the [inaudible 00:17:10] to start testing their grip because that'll be a good indicator. I got some autoregulation in there, but for the most part, man, these kids are like rubber. Every day they came in. On the days that they were feeling dead on, I would jump in and train with them, turn up the music, talk shit, push them. Then other days, they needed just a lot more coaching. So it was pretty intense eight months. To go to that event and be there to mentor them and explain it in the magnitude of it and for them to look at me and be like, "Yeah, this is what we're here to do," and then watch Victor go out and be the best in the world. In what, 27 years, he have only had four submissions. In the final event, Victor had submissions in both and he'd won Brazilian Nationals the month before, which is the first time in history somebody's doubled gold at Worlds and Brazilian Nationals.

He went and made history. Yeah, I was very honored to be there. It was extreme. I felt like it was watching my kids graduate, just the amount of work that I put in with these kids and seeing them do it. It was really nice. There was a cool capstone that they were able to come and teach. And actually, two Straight Blast members were there, both Andy and Leah.

nicki: Oh, nice.

Robb: Oh, nice. Right on.

nicki: Awesome.

John: Yes. They were in town for a podcast and so Andy hit me up to go to dinner and I was like, "I can't go to dinner, but I got to go to this jujitsu thing." So they showed up and actually put on these and actually rolled. It was good. Andy's wife got to roll with those guys.

nicki: That's something.

John: It was pretty funny. She was like, "Yeah, I had never in my life felt like that," because they were like, "Oh, you're doing so good," and this whole thing, and she's like, "Yeah, it's ridiculous." I'm like, well. So yeah, it was fun, but yeah, it was a good class and I got to roll with all those guys, which was fun. On the first call-out, they let the black belts call people out. Victor came over and he's like, "You and me." So it was neat that I got to roll with them in the first one.

nicki: That's awesome, John. Super cool. Super cool.

John: Yeah.

nicki: Well, it was awesome having you out here in Montana. The topic of this podcast is basically centered on a lot of the conversation we had when you were here. Because when you were here, you shared a ton about what you've done to de-age your brain. Clearly, being 10 years in the NFL and just all of your athletic experience, you've had a lot of concussions and TBI type events. We get a lot of questions coming into the podcast and just in general like, my daughter suffered a concussion or my son was in a major motorbike accident and severe TBI or somebody who's been struggling with a chronic TBI for years and years and has tried all the things and is wondering what else can I do. I'm so committed to fixing this, is there anything else I can do? We spoke for hours and hours over dinner and just hanging out and so I thought it would be so amazing to have you on to share your knowledge about the whole topic of traumatic brain injury because clearly, you've been around the block.

John: Yeah. Well, for those of you guys who don't know me, I did play 10 years in the NFL, five years in college before that, and then obviously, in high school, so I have about 20 years of beating my head into a wall, 10 of those being not [inaudible 00:20:46]. I think when I came to the NFL, they told me that you would know you got a concussion when you got knocked unconscious. At the, I think it was my eighth or ninth season, I had a similar conversation where they said, "Hey, you know you'll get a concussion when you hit your head and you feel any form of disorientation, any form of bells ringing, different changes in vision." I was like, wow. Then the lady goes, "How many concussions do you think you've had? I'm like, "70,000?" Every time I hit, I would hear, obviously, bells ringing. I remember at one point, I hit a guy so hard I couldn't see out of my right eye for probably about 20 minutes.

nicki: Wow.

John: If you looked at my helmet, the amount of gashes on there. I used my helmet as a weapon. If you're going to strap this hard metal plasticky thing on me and it allows my head to be harder and I got a hard head, I would go heavy and harder to the body. I grew up obviously boxing when I was younger. Started martial arts when I was six. Got into boxing when I was 10. Got in. Actually really hit it hard in high school and then worked with Cal Boxing team in the offseason. Then Raphael Ruiz, you guys know, train me. He was Antonio Tarver's fight coach.

Boxing has always been very important. I was always pretty good at taking a punch, so I used a lot of the skills in boxing to play football. Cutting a guy off in pass protection is like cutting a guy off in the ring, first meaningful touch, two-thirds inside out, picking angles. All the stuff I learned within the boxing circle allowed me to be good in the NFL as an offensive lineman.

The other one, which I took, was heavy and hard to the body. I looked at it almost like Mike Tyson, where if you beat on the body, the head will fall. If it's not happening fast enough, then fucking hit in the head. I played a very aggressive, brutal style that isn't necessarily taught anymore and shunned almost today in the NFL because of the concussions and injuries and the way that guys were having problems. When I watch NFL today, it's very neutered compared to what I played in. Tight ends couldn't come across the middle. We hit with our head on every single play. We called our head our third hand. It was like head and hands. You punch with your hands, you hit with your head, and that's how you stop everything. So just giving you guys a little background.

Then when I retired from the NFL, I was approached by the NFL to go into a concussion brain study through Dr. Amen's clinic out in California. Because I lived in Newport Beach, it was easy. So I went over to Dr. Amen's. They did all this brain mapping and the CAT scans and MRIs of the skull and the brain. My brain, this is interesting for any guys that are boxing fans, you always hear like, "Oh, that guy can take a punch. That guy can't take a punch." Well, the theory is the bigger your brain is in the skull, the less room there is to squash. So if there's no brain [inaudible 00:24:06], what happens when you get hit, the brain effectively bounces off of the inside of the skull and that's when people really get disoriented and knocked out. If your brain is tight in the skull and there's not a lot of [inaudible 00:24:17], you can take a better punch and you don't have the same effect off a acute hit.

The problem is there's less padding, so then they theorize that you take more punishment over time. For me, my brain was pretty tight in skull and when they scan me, the part of my brain that was damaged was actually on my left frontal lobe, the part that deals with emotion, sympathy and empathy, which I'd still laugh at because I actually asked-

Robb: Shocker.

John: ... for a doctor's note so I could give it to my wife. I think I've told you guys that's why you're laughing. But I asked, "Hey, can I get this in a doctor's note? Because my wife's never going to believe that I'm an insensitive asshole." Now I have a doctor's prescription for it. But I was running into some cognitive issues. I know Robb and I have laughed about it, that I would obviously tell a story and then retell the story 20 minutes later to the point where you're like, "Didn't you just tell me the story again?" So I knew I was having some cognitive issues, I just wasn't as sharp as I used to be. What was really telling for me was when I retired, I think I had pulled out an old computer and I was reading actually one of my

graduate thesis. I graduated from Berkeley with a degree in rhetoric and still had a year left of football.

So I applied to the School of Education at Berkeley and I was in their master's program. I finished just that the final master's thesis was why people leave college to go play in the NFL. So my advisor recommended, "Hey, you're going to have to write this a few years once you've played the NFL to really just give this a perspective, because until you go play the NFL, you don't really know." So I went back and I wrote it and then as I submitted it, my professor ends up passing away on an unexpected heart attack. The guy that took over for him wasn't really interested in what I had to say and didn't accept my thesis, so I did my master's work. Didn't get my thesis, which I'm still a little bitter about, but I went back and read it years later. I don't know if I could have written that same thesis, the way it was structured very well. I was an excellent writer and it made me a little nervous.

So I get out of Amen's study and obviously like I said, the part that my brain that was damaged was on the left side, but the one silver lining was of the cognitive testing and the IQ stuff that they had done, because they had a whole bunch of that, I was the smartest guy that they had tested thus far. He's like, "You basically scored off the charts in terms of intelligence and aptitude and all this other stuff." I was like-

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John: ... students and aptitude and all this other stuff. And I was like, "Well, that's great, but is that for everybody or just the pool of NFL players?" "Oh, within this pool?" And I'm like, yeah, it's being the smartest kid in the dumb class. I mean, it's not like a bunch of Rhode Scholars or Fulbright scholars are in this deal. But I felt like that was a good indicator that my cognitive ability might have been damaged, but I had to do something to fix it.

After talking to Robb, I think I reached out to Matt Milan and I said, "Matt, hey, I got this issue with," and I explained it to him. And you can just, I'm sure you guys in your mind are picturing what Matt with his extremely dry bedside manner said, which was just like, "Well, what'd you think football would do to you?" I was like, "Wow."

I was like, well, I was, "Well, let's not talk about the past. What's the future?" And so Matt said, "Hey, let me talk to my researchers." He pulled his little nerds together in their nerdery and he pulled something like 10,000 research articles on traumatic brain injury and how to do this. And he said, "The overwhelming research comes back that ketogenic diets are positive for reversing this."

Jumped in on the ketogenic diet, and I was familiar with the carb cycling

that we deal with more data [inaudible 00:28:19], but not the traditional, more medical based ketogenic diet, which you guys probably know dramatically more than I do. And so, I didn't eat a carb for almost a year. And I think the first time I'd eaten carbs was when I went and visited you guys on New Year's for your anniversary up in Chico.

Robb: We were still in Chico. Were you in Chico or Reno then?

John: You were in Chico at the old house. And I remember you did ribs in the oven with garlic, salt and salt. And I still make those exact ribs all the time for once a week for the kids, how you made them in the oven. And you made Japanese sweet potatoes.

And I remember we were crushing these sweet potatoes, eating these ribs. And I went to bed and it was like somebody wrapped me in a warm blanket and hugged me the whole night. And I had never felt so good from eating those carbs after not really eating a carb for almost a year. I didn't drink any alcohol. It was basically meat and fat. I mean, we were pembekin and just all this weird coconut oil. It was olive oil and just meat, just chicken and oil. It was probably super... It's food I like, but it's nice to have a carb. It's nice to eat some Japanese sweet potatoes, some chips and all that.

But I felt like that that year was transformational for me at least progressing. And I think Robb, even that night, you're like, "You're seem a lot better than you were." And I was like, "I feel better." That piece was the start. And then, I think it was from Robb and I's discussion, we started really going down this idea of metabolic flexibility. Which at the time, Mark Sisson and these guys are constantly promoting all these, "Oh, take this supplement to be more metabolically flexible." And there's this idea of metabolic flexibility that you can somehow fast into it and do this.

I started pulling research on it after Robb and I first discussed it. And after years, the only common thread for metabolic flexibility was the more muscle you carry in relation to fat, the more metabolically flexible you are. And it didn't matter how you got there. You could be there on a high carb diet, low carb diet, whatever it was. If you carry a lot of muscle in relation to fat, you're metabolically flexible.

And the idea that muscle's extremely insulin sensitive, fat's oxidative. That really set me down the idea of trying to be as lean as I can and carry as much muscle and continue to train. And realize that muscles almost... I mean Gabrielle Lyon made a great point that muscles an organ for the body. And obviously, continued a high protein diet and continue to train.

The other one, which I realize now is the saving grace to say the least, is I'm probably the longest continuous creatine user on the planet. We started taking creatine, five grams in the morning, five grams at night, 10 grams a day when I was... It would've been 1992. '90, '91, '92 since I was 15, 16 years old. And

have taken that pretty consistently, I mean still to this day. Over 30 plus years of taking creatine.

And at the time, it was a performance thing. We knew we were getting bigger and stronger, but now the research has come out that ATP and a neuroprotectant and creatine's ability to starve off Alzheimer's has just been pretty well established. Continue to take a ton of creatine. I think that was a big one.

And then, it just continued down this road of continue to train metabolic flexibility, increasing the brain if I remove a lot of the... I mean obviously, to all the discussions we had on a pro or an anti-inflammatory type diet, removing all the things that affect the small intestine, really the window of the immune system. There's a bunch of diet stuff.

But then, what really hit me really wild was in 2013 there was a DOD study going on with the seals where there was a local research clinic that was doing a DOD study on different tier one, door kicker operators to try to figure out if there was an operator seal, or CEO, this certain brain scan type. These guys at the Brain Research center were doing this DOD study. They actually brought in a bunch of seals and other people and were trying to figure out, "Okay, hey, all these seals might have this common thread."

The idea was that if they could do this and they could effectively prescreen their pipeline and figure out who was going to make it and who wasn't. The guys kept coming up. I lived in Newport Beach at the time, so many of those guys would come up from Coronado or from different places. They would always like, "Hey, do you want to go out tonight?"

We'd go out and have some drinks and hang out with them. And probably about the second or third time that came up, I was like, "Dude, this is fascinating." I'm like, "I'll go with you." I went over and I met these guys or the doctors that were doing the research. And it turns out that they were doing another one on professional athletes as a way to maybe pitch it to the NFL or major league baseball. The doc was like, "Hey, you should jump in our study."

I got the scan done and my brain's signature, the thing's called an EEG, was the specific brain type that they were looking for. They called operator or CEO brain, had the right peaks. But when they did all the mapping, the part of my brain obviously that was damaged, was on the left. Was very similar to what we've seen from Dr. Amen.

At that point I realized that, hey, everything that I had done up until that point from when I retired in 2009 to this is 2013, I'm feeling better. Obviously, going on the road and teaching every weekend for CrossFit, football was extremely helpful. I was reading, I was writing and was just in this constant state of learning because you guys know, I had no background in physiology or training or any of that. I was a rhetoric major, education, planning to go to law school.

And when I got thrust into doing, obviously working with CrossFit and teaching and stuff, I had to go learn this stuff in real time. And Robb, you know this because you were there, but I had to figure this stuff out. There was a real puzzle because not only did I have to figure out a website, figure out a program, figure out a methodology, I had to effectively create this in real time to be able to go teach it to people and then fool them that I knew what the fuck I was doing. And so there was a-

Robb: You did an admirable job too.

John: Yeah. Thank you. Thank you. Yeah. I mean good enough to fool everybody. I'd be like, "Yes, we fooled them again." But it's been this constant progression and defining athleticism and figuring out the pieces. I figured this all out in real time through putting out free programming. And all the people that did the program, came to the seminars.

I put them through diagnostic, I figured out what they could and couldn't do. And really developed their power at the program because of it. This knowledge base and learning and having to pull in all these different pieces and all this stuff from my history, I think all of this helped to fix the synapses and effectively undo some of the damage that had been done.

But when I got that scan done, the damage was still there, which to me was I hoped that it had dissipated. But I knew at that point I had to be a little more aggressive on this stuff. And really start researching and figuring out, okay, how do you effectively heal your brain? And if you were to put it into Google, there's a million different things. And we started going down the piece and some of the biggest pieces came shortly, a couple years later I had shoulder surgery. And I went out to Arizona to go see Tom Niquidon. And Tom's like, "There's been this great feeling that stem cells were going to fix all of these problems. But the issue has come that the stem cells and the treatments have always been very underwhelming. Some people have had great results. Other people haven't. They go out the country and they culture them and some people feel great but it's just very inconsistent."

What they figured out was that the genetic garbage that they would wash the cells that was left over, the RNA, is with the information, how the stem cells talk to each other. They just wash the stem cells thinking, "Oh, let's get rid of this stuff." Well, those exosomes, that RNA, tended to be the missing piece. When I went to go see Tom, he's like, "Hey, we're doing this new treatment with exosomes. What we're going to do is, where your shoulder's injured, we're going to put some stem cells, but then we're going to hit it locally with some exosomes that then hit you with a big IV whack of this stuff."

And it was like, I want to say 4 trillion of these things. I was like, "All right, great. Does it heal my shoulder? 100%." He hits me with it in the morning. And then that night at about six or seven, we went to go to dinner. And as I was sitting

there, I had this incredible buzzing, warm feeling. And I looked around and I was like, "Dude, we haven't had a drink. We just got here. What's going on?" And I told Tom, I'm like, "Anybody ever told you after this, that they get kind of a warm, buzzing feeling?"

And he's like, "Yeah, a few of my patients have said that." And over the course of this dinner, whatever inflammation or whatever hell was going on in my brain cleaned up to the point where, as we were sitting there at dinner and talking, I felt like myself for the first time in a number of years. I was quick, everything was sharp, there was no filler words. And I was like, "Man, something's up."

And then came back. And that didn't really lead me for about six months. And then we had Dr. Joe Diturì, who's the Navy's expert and the top US researcher on hyperbarics, friend of Doctor Parsley on the podcast. And in preparation for the podcast, he'd sent me a ton of research out of Israel and just this historical information on hyperbarics, where they created the hyperbaric chamber in the 1800s. And basically removed all the blood out of a pig, drained all the blood, and the pig was still alive. Because in the hyperbaric in this two atmospheres, your body doesn't need hemoglobin to move oxygen. It basically the oxygen can absorb into plasma and move around the body.

He started sending me all this wild research. And on the podcast I was like, "What's the protocol?" He tells me. I called the local clinic, put him in touch with Joe, he put the protocol together. And I did these 40 sessions, which was five sessions a week for eight weeks, which is not an easy deal. I'd spoke to 7:00 AM. I'd get there at 6:30, 15 minutes down, an hour on the bottom of 2.2 atmospheres and then 15 minutes up. And I was in and out and I could get home in time.

I did that nonstop for eight weeks and I got to about 20 sessions. And that same feeling of clarity and just whatever was wrong is gone. It was very similar to the exosome. I didn't necessarily have the buzz, but just the sharpness and the colors. And when I would talk to people, the information and my ability to retain information and remember things just spiked.

And I continued to do the 40 protocol. And it was pretty interesting in that the eyeballs get saturated with oxygen. And so for me, my eyesight became 20/10 to the point where we were driving and I was reading signs and my wife's, "What are you even looking at?" Whereas Parsley, on the other hand, his eyesight got so bad that he couldn't drive because I called Doc. I'm like, "Hey, doc. Dude, my eyesight's ridiculous." He's like, "Really? Because I was practically blind." His, when it's saturated, probably changed the shape of his eye, whereas it probably made mine more advantageous.

That piece was really interesting. And then, actually before I had done the hyperbarics, I called Tom Inledon. I said, "Tom, hey, I'm getting ready to do this hyperbaric thing. And it's the idea that the body doesn't need hemoglobin to

move oxygen and the oxygen absorbs into plasma so it could effectively oxygenate, get nutrients into parts of the body or the brain that had never got it. What should I take?"

He sent me a protocol that was based off of some brain testing that he's done where there's a test that these guys have to figure out your chance for Alzheimer's and your current healthier brain. And they put a supplement protocol together, which was like, I think it was creatine, ribose and one other. What was it? Some lectin kind of deal. It's super cheap.

And he's like, "They're using this protocol really well." I would hit that before I would go. And then once I was in there, obviously doing some meditation and just relaxing. And then I would get up and go train. And some days the body ached, other days it didn't. And ended up getting done and just felt really sharp.

nicki: Hey, John, real quick.

John: Yeah, sorry.

nicki: I know a lot of people have tried hyperbaric oxygen for TBI. And I've heard some people it works for and some people say they didn't see any significant effects. Do you think that the reason why you felt so much better and noticed a significant change, it has to do with the fact that you went five days a week for several months? I guess my question is, are most protocols maybe once a week or twice a week? And is that why people aren't seeing the results that you saw?

John: Well, there's two reasons that people aren't seeing the result. One, it's the chamber. The chamber has to be a hard chamber. A lot of these local places you go to have soft chambers where you get into this zippered bag. Zero research and no efficacy. It's complete charlatans.

It has to be a hard chamber. They have to pipe in pure oxygen, which means that it's a medical deal, which you can't wear any jewelry, you can't have any technology, nothing. There's a clinic that'll pipe in pure or 90% oxygen so you could sit there and do some stuff. But the original protocol was 100% pure oxygen. You're in there. And then, you have to be able to go down into a depth of around two atmospheres. I actually did 2.2.

One, it comes down to the chamber. The chambers are medical grade, they have to have pure oxygen. Yeah. It really comes down to the chamber. And then the protocol that's only ever been tested. And the one they did in Israel that the US government, it was actually the Navy did, was the 40 sessions.

There's no other protocol. And the reason I know this is because Dr. Joe's the researcher and he's the guy that's doing the research. Nobody has ever tested another protocol. They just know that this one protocol works for a

telomere length of this. Anybody that tells you, "Hey, this is our protocol that isn't the 40 sessions," it's not medically approved and it's bullshit.

nicki: And it needs to be 40 sessions with that intensity of five days per week? It can't be once a week for 40 weeks. Okay.

John: Nope, no. There's a definite saturation deal. And so, they've never tested, because I know Joe is testing protocols now, but it's expensive. The cost prohibitive issue is one. But I felt really great at 20. And I asked Joe, I called him, I'm like, "Dude, I feel like a million bucks. Is 20 good enough?" And he's like, "We don't know." He's like, the protocol's 40, just do it. I did the 40 protocols.

I think the reason that most people do not get a benefit is one, they don't go to the right chamber. They have to be hard. They look like something in a submarine. You get in and they're like, "Okay, see you." And they seal you in and... And it has to be piped with pure oxygen or damn near close. And then a lot of other people too, they don't go deep enough. It's obviously more expensive the deeper you go to 2.2 atmospheres. And they give you the option because not everybody wants to spend the money of other atmospheres because it takes longer to get under. There's more time under tension, let's say. The cost is more.

A lot of people are like, "Well, I'm only going to pay for 1.4." Or they're going to go to a place that just has a zipper bag that's cheap. It really comes down to the quality of the unit where you're going, the atmosphere and then the consistency. Once a week, they've never done any.

As people are looking at this, and if you jump on the internet, there's a million places that do hyperbarics. You can go over there and look and if it's a soft chamber, walk out. If they tell you, "Oh, they've never done any research at 1.4." None of these other atmospheres, the research was at two to 2.2. And it's consistent. It's five days a week for eight weeks, which is 40 sessions that I did. I think I missed a Wednesday and I had to go on Saturday I think was the only difference. I don't know barring two times.

That was the only protocol. And so a lot of people have... Because I've talked to people about it. "I just didn't anything." And then I talked to them about where they did it, how they did it and the frequency at which they did it. And I was like, "Yeah, you just wasted your money. You didn't do it right."

nicki: Right. It's a huge commitment. I mean eight weeks, five days a week, that's a massive time commitment. But if somebody is massive...

John: Sure.

nicki: Significantly affected with an injury to the brain and really wants to see results, I think it's a commitment worth making.

John: Yeah. And then, doing the supplement stuff in the morning, they have

some really cool research too, where they were using very low dose ketamine and even low dose psilocybin, 0.15 micro doses with the hyperbarics. They were giving a low dose ketamine or low dose psilocybin microdose. And then, effectively going in and they were fixing some pretty amazing stuff.

I know when I talked to Dr. Joe and he sent me a bunch of research, that stuff's really interesting for people that have some psychological issues and this. And really just helping people work through some of these things. But the hyperbarics is really the only thing that I've ever come across that I would legitimately label life extension.

If you put in life extension, people are going to give you hormones and this and all. But legitimately sitting down and being like, "We have the research to show that if you want to extend your life and effectively reverse the age." And I'm sure there's all these labs you can send out where it's like, "Oh, your physical age is this, but your actual chronological age is this." It's the only thing that I've seen with 100% certainty is life extension and anti-aging.

nicki: Wow.

John: The other one, and I know you guys agree on this, is muscle. If people ask me, "Hey, how do I live for as long as I can?" I'm like, "Carry as much muscle as you can in relation to body fat." And if you're going to do something, do the hyperbarics. The exosomes to me, and this is another one because I know Parsley had done some exosomes and he didn't notice the same effect. I don't think he would mind telling people that. But I also don't think he did the volume at which I did and the whack, the amount.

And then also, obviously Dr. Tom gets stuff from, or the clinic or the sorry, production that it came out of. It's the same one that my buddy, Phil Yu, who's one of the top researchers on this out in California, he uses. Obviously, getting it from a reputable lab, they actually had their bags tested for what the actual physical amount is. It's like, "Hey, they're saying it's X, but what does it really have?" They knew that way.

I'm real big on the cheapest option might not be the best because you might not notice any effect. It's people like, "Oh, the hyperbarics are expensive, I don't want to spend that money." And I'm like, "Well, yeah, there's a cheaper option, but we know it doesn't work, so why would you waste your money?" I would rather not waste my money than actually... It's kind of supplements. Like, "Oh, I can buy this supplement cheaper." I'm like, "Yeah, but if it's got a bunch of crap in it or it doesn't say what it has in it, why waste your money on it?"

The exosome thing, man, it was like, it's the closest I've ever come to saying something was life changing, where all of a sudden, I woke up, we did it. And later that day, I noticed. And I was like, everything is so much crisper. And the way my brain is working and the information's coming in and the conversation, it was as close as I've ever come to life-changing. And then that

other piece was the hyperbarics.

And then, obviously, we had done a bunch of protocols to figure out how to maximize it. I might not do the ketamine or psilocybin. Which I maybe think if I ever did the hypobaric chamber again, I might do some psilocybin microdose or do something just to see the effect. But for the most part, I really got down this rabbit hole of neuroplasticity and what I have to do to increase neuroplasticity.

And that really just led me into jujitsu. And I know it's`hilarious because we talked about it early on, but I was at an interesting point in my life where I was bored. We figured out this technology for power athlete. We had taught it, we reinforced it, we pushed it out to tens of thousands of people. The technology is sound. Our ability to train athletes in terms of fostering developing athleticism and challenging posture position, the full range of motion movements, teaching people to move in different axes of rotation, different planes of motion.

And seeing all the pieces, teaching the pieces, breaking them down, creating this all based off of this, putting it back together. I mean, the technology's sound. We can increase and foster and develop athleticism and make better athletes and more explosive people. We've done that for over 10 years. And there's a reason that we work with Naval Special Workers Development group and we do this with professional athletes.

And I was like, now what do I do? I was looking to either go back to school, go back to law school or do something. And then, my daughter decide she wants to do jiujiitsu. I take her up to Chanji's school, I meet Chanji. He mentioned my name to somebody and somebody was like, "Dude, the guy's a pretty legit power athlete."

He approaches me about working with these young fighters. Young fighters come in. And I didn't know who they were because I'm not a jiujiitsu player and I didn't know who these people were. I just knew that these kids were young and they were not healthy and broken and they needed my help. And I've always subscribed to this idea that if you have the ability to help, you have a responsibility to help. That's been universal in my life.

I think that if I have knowledge and I have the ability to help somebody and I don't, that's I'm not doing anything to add to my pool of humanity, because a lot of people have helped me along the way and when they didn't have to do. And so, I really respect that.

These kids come in, Victor's back's a mess. Felipe and them, they never really lifted weights and their conditioning was off. I was like, "Shit, these kids need me." And I had no idea who they were in the grand scheme of things, but I was like, "You know what? Everybody needs a slightly different prescription. And I can do this and let's help these kids. And here's a great project."

And something that I needed because I was feeling bored. And now all of a sudden I get thrust with these, I joke and tell them that they're like my adopted kids now. That these kids come in and they needed my help and I had the ability to help them. We started training. And it ended up culminating into Victor basically doing something nobody's ever done and becoming the world champ. And doing it in such a dominant fashion that he's standing up there next to these other guys that he'd beat. And he looked like an absolute dump truck.

His shoulders are wide, his butt's big, his legs, it's just big and strong. That his package, he looked big and athletic and strong. And just these other dudes just did not look like him. And even people said it, they were like, "Man, it's like the real... Something changed." I was like, "Yeah."

nicki: Different species.

John: Yeah. I mean his jiu-jitsu, when... And I didn't-

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:54:04]

John: ... his jujitsu, and I didn't necessarily know who Shanji was until I went and Googled him and realized that for 15 years he was the number one ranked fighter in the world, and the all time this and Rafael Lovato, all Victor's other coach, I mean these guys are world class dudes, and so when Shanji... then also his brother Solo, another hall of famer, when those guys said, "Victor, [inaudible 00:54:27] jujitsu, it's me and it's special." He has the ability to move like a little dude, but he is 260, so when they said that, at first I was like, "Ah," and then when I went looked these guys up. I'm like, "Shit, dude, these guys are the best in the world. They know, they're just not saying this." At that point, and then since Shanji and I talked the other night, he's like, "When Victor's back was so bad after ADCCs, I'm not a religious person but I prayed."

I was like, "God, please help us. We got to find somebody to help this kid. Everybody has failed." A few days later I met you and he's like... so it was cool last night the deal, he brought that up. He's like, "John came into our life and Victor's jujitsu didn't change. The only difference was adding John to the team and what he's done with his kids, it's been amazing." It was nice to feel like I was a part of a team in that way, which has been my whole life I've been a part of the team.

nicki: That's super cool.

John: I mean they gave as much to me as I gave to them, for the fact that I just really needed a new project. They needed something else to train for, and it was disingenuous that they train with me that I didn't start training with them. So against every ounce of hate I started jujitsu, because I fucking hate it. I hate laying on my back. As an NFL offensive lineman, if I end up on my back with somebody on top of me, everything's gone wrong and I'm probably going to lose

my job. To be able to be on my back and be able to move is just very, it takes me to swallow a lot of pride. As you get into, and I know you guys have done a ton of research on all this neuroplasticity stuff, the ability to humble yourself to go out and learn a new skill and be okay with sucking and being a white belt and this and I've talked about it for years, is the greatest form of neuroplasticity, where I'm going to learn a new skill.

It's everything I don't like, but I'm going to humble myself to do it and learn from people and take this in and consistent effort and the ability to... I really think there's a really neat tie in with longevity, neuroplasticity and especially moving. I mean whether it's move net or all the stuff that you guys have done with dance and Capoeira and jujitsu, I mean you guys understand that this movement and not just standing straight up sagittal plane, bilateral hip hinging like CrossFit, but actually moving supine and prone 360 on your back in these different positions, more akin to probably babies in developmental years. There's a real aspect of this in terms of neuroplasticity and neurological health. Seeing this come up and having the project of working with these kids at the time I didn't know that they were the best in the world or would be one day, but hey, here's a situation where they're like, "These kids need me and I can help them and I can fix this shit and I can mentor."

Because that's what I did. As a tenure NFL player, I always mentored the young guys because as a NFL player, people always ask, "Oh, how are you towards the young guys?" I'm like, "Great," because there might be a situation where a guy gets hurt and a young guy needs to come in and play at a high level and if I haven't mentored and worked with them and brought him along, then he's going to effectively put us in a bad position. They were like, "Aren't you worried about losing your job?" And I'm like, "No, they can take my job. I don't deserve to be here and I need to go do something the fuck else." I was not okay, and now I think back on, it would've been nice to just stand around and steal for a year. But I started every game and I got hurt and my career was done and I was never a backup in my career.

I was always in the fight, the day that I wasn't in the fight, I went to go do something else, so being able to mentor and bring these kids along and be able to hopefully, provide them my experience so that they don't fall in any of the pitfalls, like Phillipe ended up dinging up his shoulder and he's like, "I got to go see this doctor." I was like, "Great, I'll be there. If you need me to come with you." We're talking through this stuff. "I've been down this road, I've broken a lot of things, I've been a lot of fucked up. I can help you on this." I've become a pretty good lifeline for them just because they shouldn't have to go through the same BS I did and like I said, you have the opportunity to help, you have a responsibility to it.

Robb: Well, John, this is turned into 50/50 why everybody should do jujitsu and the awesome elements of jujitsu, but with TBI, one of the big challenges is depression. Share a little bit about what you said, you had just gotten off the

plane, I picked you up here in Kalispell and you're like, "Dude, if you're lonely, do this."

nicki: Or depressed.

Robb: Yeah.

John: Oh, shit. A hundred percent. If you were depressed and you need friends, go find a jujitsu gym, you'll end up with 25 friends you didn't need. Yeah, it's the wildest thing. People are like, "Oh." I just saw statistic the other day that seven out of 10 men over the age of 40 don't have a single friend that they can call in a time of need. Women are much better in terms of making friends in this. I mean the statistic came out and I'm like, "This is crazy to me." I joined jujitsu and I got, obviously these guys and John G and I met Lovato this weekend and I got to meet Arthur Gray's team [inaudible 01:00:08], all of these dudes that are world class and I missed, because we were out there and I didn't get home until Monday and I didn't make class and he would text me, "Hey, how come you didn't show? Oh, we wanted to do this."

I'm like, "I'm traveling back." It's pretty amazing the amount of people who are now your friends. I mean if you're lonely, humble yourself to go learn jujitsu, and what's weird is that people come in and whenever I see a dude who's in his thirties or forties and comes in as a white belt, I always go talk to him and I'm like, "Dude, I'm so stoked you're here." They're like, "What do you mean?" "Because today's the hardest day. Every day after this is easy as long as you keep showing up and you've done the best thing you can. You've shown up." There's always this idea, "Oh, everybody's going to laugh at me, everybody's going to this and this," and that's bullshit. I have never seen a white belt or somebody come in, where everybody is not super stoked and if you roll with them, I've rolled with new white belts, I give them 50% power and I try to coach them like, "Dude, keep moving. Get on your side. Don't let me..."

I try to coach them up because I want them to do well and I feel like it's that jits all the time. I want people to do really well. Just for the same night deal I was rolling with, obviously with Victor and Philippe and them last night and Philippe's like, "Coach, you're moving so much better." Then just when he said that, he flipped me and he's like, "Okay, can't let me flip, let's get back." There's a teaching element, but I also think the one thing I, and I told Andy and these guys last night. At our Jujitsu place there's a lot of hugs. I think I might have told you guys this. When I see the guys, they might hug me four or five times. Every time I see him there's a hug, we get done, we hug. Just that closeness deal, I think is so important. Whereas I wonder if people lose the ability for that. But yeah, it's really nice.

nicki: I have to disagree with you.

John: It's really nice to go in-

nicki: John, I have to disagree with you. You said that people's first day in jujitsu is the hardest day and it gets easier every day after that. I take issue with that. I think every day is fucking hard. You might be five years in and it's the hardest day you've ever had.

John: Yeah. Okay. Well, just emotionally, the hardest day is showing up. That's the hardest piece.

nicki: Yes.

John: But once you... you know every day's going to be hard. But what was interesting on the culmination of this whole whirlwind deal, Nick Hardwick who played center for the Chargers, he was running into some brain issues and was noting some cognitive stuff and they were grooming him to do some high level of announcing and he just was like, "Something is off," and so he ended up reaching out to this group in San Diego and they had a machine, it's these units, it's a magnet, almost like helmet deal, it's called a Sonal system. I think it's called NeuroWave, is the company that has it. Through these magnets in these 30 minute sessions, what they'll do is they'll track your brain and do an EEG and then based upon your brain mapping, they put this deal together with the magnets and they sent it, it comes to your house. They had a big machine that you'd have to go to their place, but they also have a portable one that they sent me that they've been testing.

Nick saw some phenomenal results with it. He came to town for South by South or for South by Southwest, which is a huge tech deal, and the company that was doing it was doing a presentation and so Nick came out and sat on the panel. He reached out to me and said, "Hey, you should come?" I have a rule that if ex-NFL or current NFL players reach out to me to support them, I show up. Because NFL players tend to be very flaky and it drives me absolutely crazy. So what I do is I promised him like, "I'll be there. No questions asked, you need me there, I'd love to be there. I'd love to hear you speak and I'm fascinated." It's funny, over the course of a few weeks he kept giving these outs like, "Oh you don't have to come, you don't have to come," and I was like, "Stop. I said I'd be there, stop giving fucking people outs. It's demand the best from people."

He goes up to speak, I'm there listening and the guy's getting up and presenting the tech? I'm like, "Man, this is so familiar. Where have I heard this before?" So after I go up and I meet the doc and I was like, "This research is really fascinating, the scans." I was like, "This is really familiar. I was in a DOD study about 10 years ago," and this company that was scanning all the brains was doing this DOD research to look from this operator brain. I started explaining it and I was like, "I was in the study and a lot of the technology piece and some of the information is just very familiar." The guy goes, "Oh, where was that?" I was like, "Oh, this brain research center in Newport and there's a guy named Dr. Jen."

The guy looks at me and he goes, "We're the brain research center. That's

our research. Dr. Jen has since moved on and I came on and now we're still doing this research and we've gotten into this care piece." I was like, "Oh, this is incredible," and he's like, "We'd be down for a scan tomorrow, we'd love to get you to scan." I said, "Great." I show up the next day and I walked in and the guy's like, "I called back to the office and we pulled your original scan and the doctor was elated because he's like, we've never had 10 years between scans," because he only came into the company I think in 2017. He's like, "The fact that we have a scan from 2013 is incredible and we're super excited to scan you." I was like, "Great, it's fired up."

So he scans me, we're going through the whole deal and he gave me about a 20 minute presentation on as you age, the brain peak is going to move this way and these are the changes that we're going to see and this is just a part of aging with the brain. It's really, age is the greatest determining factor for brain health. All of a sudden he has the dude punch up the computer and overlay the brain and the guy goes, "Ah, I think he got this backwards," and the guy's like, "What do you mean?" He's like, "No, no, it should be like this and this." He's like, "No, no, that's the original scan. That's the new scan."

He looks at it and goes, "Huh." He's like, "The peak is supposed to move this way and it actually moved back this way, which lets us know that over the last 10 years you've effectively de-aged your brain. So you figured out in the last 10 years how to de-age your brain and on top of it, the peak is more sharp, which means that your brain capacity is better and it's more narrow, which means your brain is more efficient." We sit down on these like, "You have effectively figured out how to de-age your brain, make yourself smarter and have greater capacity your brain over the last 10 years, which we've never seen over the course. I mean we've only done these scans, since '17, we've done re-scans, but we've never seen anybody move back to de-age."

Then the doctor's next question is, "What did you do?" I took him a little bit like, "Hey, this is where we started, these are the things that I've done," and the doc's like, "Man, I wish we had a scan every year so we could really figure out what made the big difference." But I think that was exciting for me is, here I am just advantageously in Newport Beach, The Seals haven't worked, come off just randomly go get the scan and then 10 years later I just say, "Yes." Show up to hear our buddy present and meet the same docs and able to get re-scanned and see unplanned serendipitously that my brain is effectively de-aged. The other cool part is on the mapping, the part of my brain that was damaged on the left side is completely healed and they have no evidence of any damage, no scarring, no calcification, nothing. He's like, "The left side of your brain looks completely fine."

nicki: Amazing.

John: All the stuff that I did from '09 to '14, I felt cognitively better, but the damage was still there from '14 to '23, or sorry, '13, I got scanned. I got scanned

in '09, scanned in '13, so it was four years and then from '13 to '23, here we are, and obviously the damage is healed. The theory is, obviously I think with the exosomes, because they're so small, they moved across the blood brain barrier, they fixed whatever inflammation or damage. Then probably the other thing was the doing 40 sessions in the hyperbarics, and obviously the protocols I think were helpful, that we used for the supplements and then being able to make it all work.

Here I sit today, but I think the reading and all the other things, and you guys know I'm good in skill acquisition. I learned to weld and fabricate and build stuff and run machinery and all the things that I did here in Texas when we moved. So acquiring new skills and this constant state of learning and being humble enough to learn new things and tackle new projects and all of these interesting things that I've done to effectively make a better version of myself, I think has contributed to this.

nicki: It's absolutely incredible, John, and I guess I just want to, as a recap here. I mean obviously for folks that, and I'm going to ask you for resources here at the end, if anybody did want to reach out to maybe Incedon or whoever you would refer for exosomes. You already laid out a really detailed list of things to look for with hyperbaric oxygen, so somebody who has more financial means to target a chronic TBI situation, clearly the exosomes and the 40 sessions of hyperbaric oxygen would be the way to go. But let's just outline-

Robb: Hey, I like where this is going, but before we go exactly there, John, is it worth mentioning, although you came out of the NFL clearly with some mileage, you came out comparatively better than a lot of people.

John: Yeah.

Robb: Now some of that may be genetic, it may be inherent, but you had been aware of an anti-inflammatory diet, you had been tinkering with carb cycling, ala Mauro Di Pasquale. I think that this is one of those points that I've thought about over time. As the diet generally has degraded for people, we've seen these TBIs worsened. Now people have gotten bigger and stronger and the move faster, impact forces are greater. Our special operators are out on more deployments, more activity than they've ever done, so it's a little bit of a chicken and egg deal. But is it worth saying that your attention to nutrition and just staying cognitively active and whatnot, how important was that at the beginning of this story, at mitigating the damage?

I guess I'm asking a super leading question when people are talking about their kids doing youth sports and riding dirt bikes and doing soccer and all this type of stuff, the anti-inflammatory diet, they don't necessarily need to be on a ketogenic diet, but I feel like is a really strong case for, "This is why you should eat well and take care of yourself because this is your frontline defense against you accruing the significant damage as a beginning."

John: Yeah, no, I mean that's kind of a second order thing almost. When I was at Berkeley, we were living pretty far well below the poverty line and we'd go to Costco and I would buy chicken breasts and eggs and white rice and black beans was like... then cereal and milk and that way I would eat all that. Then took a bunch of nutrition classes and it was very westernized, saturated fat is bad and very what you'd expect from the UC Berkeley paradigm of nutrition. That was what I was, "Fat is bad and protein's bad for your kidneys if you eat too much and carbs are great," so we were eating 600 grams of carbohydrates a day and this kind of whole deal. I showed up at the NFL and I was big. 317, 315 and I was lunchy and I was super strong, but just carried a little too much body fat like everybody. Like most of the offense alignment you see.

I ended up coming in and starting as a rookie and I got hurt, so I ended up having surgery and rehabbing. That rookie year I got set up through my agent, with this guy Mauro Di Pasquale who had a supplement company. I didn't know Mauro, so he sent his book and as I'm reading through his book, which is called the Anabolic Diet, and for those of you guys who don't know, Mauro is the father of carb cycling. Anytime you see anybody talking about pulling out carbs, it's all stealing Mauro's shit. I read this book and I ended up calling the guy and I was like, "Man, everything in here flies in the face of what I learned at Berkeley," and his idea of... and it was Stone Age, Vince GiRonda diet. High in saturated fat, high in meat and then we carb cycle in this way.

He goes, "Well, let's just give it a shot. Let me do your diet." I said, "Great, let's do it." So Mauro puts the diet together for me and I'm eating salami, I'm eating cheese, I'm eating red meat, doing shots of olive oil, and pretty much did that. Then we started training and all of a sudden we started doing these carb re-feeds, and Rob you're going to laugh at this. I have always had, obviously Rob's got a much more severe gluten allergy than I do, but mine is a ninja blow dart. If I eat a bunch of gluten or that stuff, it just hits me like somebody basically shot me with a tranquilizer.

I remember the first time we did a carb re-feed, he had me go eat a bunch of pasta and pizza, this whole deal, and I ended up having some pretty explosive number two. I remember telling him, I'm like, "I feel like great today, but I can't tolerate it." He's like, "Maybe you have some gluten allergy." I ended up getting some testing done and I did, I had a gluten allergy and at that point I went into a gluten-free diet just because I figured that if I got an allergy and these foods are red, I shouldn't eat these foods and ended up going in that direction. I kind of stumbled into it and then Mauro was like, "Well let's just do a gluten-free version of this." We started training, I started doing his diet and at the time I was maybe 310, 312 and I ended up bulking up to 326 and I was real big. I mean we were eating 6, 7000 calories a day. I'm eating 425 grams of protein. It was insane.

I benched 535 for a triple. I was huge and strong and all of a sudden I'm

coming out the other side of this deal and... Oh wait, hold on a sec. Hey, Kate, I'm on a podcast. Thanks. I come out the other side of it and I told Mauro, I was like, "Dude, I'm way too big. I don't feel very fast and I feel real strong but not very mobile." He is like, "No problem, let's change the calories up." He cut the calories in half and he's like, "I need you to go do some zone two work," and we skinned it a little different. He's like, "We're going to do it like this and this," and he dieted me down until 306, 307 in probably six, seven weeks.

I came into camp and I was 306 at 10% percent body fat, and we had followed literally the templates like, "We're going to get you as really big and strong. We're going to put on as much muscles as we can. Then what we're going to do is we're going to cut the calories, we're going to leave the protein nice and high, get you some zone two work, build some aerobic base and we're going to cut you a bodybuilder." That reshaping is pretty much shaped me into the person I am today and still walk around that. I mean I don't have to weigh 300 plus pounds anymore, but that cut from 326 down to 306, that 20 pounds that I ended up losing this fat and I was sub 10% body fat, pretty much was sub 10% body fat for the majority of my NFL career. It just reshaped me from just being big and lunchy, to pretty lean and strong and understanding the effect of carrying a lot of muscle in relation to fat.

So really just the high protein paleo, Robb Wolf, Vince GiRonda diet was pushed on me in '99, 2000 and I'd eaten that way ever since and I still eat that way. When people ask me what do I eat? I'm like, "Well, it's still pretty classical paleo. I eat sweet potatoes." I don't really eat that much corn anymore and I do eat some white rice. Really white rice is the only non paleo thing, but for the most part I eat much like the prescription that we discussed many years ago and that's something I had eaten forever. High protein diet, making sure I got a big aerobic base, increase my [inaudible 01:17:50] density, lifting heavy weights increase [inaudible 01:17:52] improvement and it ends up looking like a pretty good deal, by all of a sudden also eating enough. Then I saved myself from a lot of the inflammatory stuff, eating gluten and then also removing things like beans which have carbohydrate baseline, and so act very similar. So just increasing gut health and just tended to, I just stumbled into the right direction.

Robb: That's awesome.

nicki: That's awesome. Clearly, obviously, preaching to the choir for most of the folks listening to us, but nutrition and those general lifestyle factors serve as a prophylactic to potential TBI. So if anybody's doing or playing a sport that has a high likelihood of concussive injury, ever more important to dial in your nutrition.

John: The other one is, the NFL sponsored by Gatorade, so the worst thing that you can do after an acute or really even chronic, but just after taking a bunch of big head hits is to give somebody a bunch of sugar and glucose and the whole deal. With concussion protocols and especially people that have an acute big brain deal, one thing they don't do is give them a bunch of sugar immediately

after. What do they do in the NFL, you come off the field and they hand you a cup of Gatorade. Pretty early on, for some reason, the Gatorade when I drank it during the game, it made my legs feel real heavy. It was just a weird sensation. I drank the Gatorade and my legs just felt like they weighed 400 pounds. So I stopped drinking the Gatorade. It would come and I'd just pour it out and then I'd make them give me water and then they used to have these salt gum things.

I wish they had Element now, which, just to give you guys the high five, I'd pump my fighters full of Element. I had boxes of the stuff, I stuffed it in a fanny pack and every time they got down in their water, I poured one in and I was literally pumping those guys for an Element through the entire worlds. They took it. I didn't go to Brazil with them, but I sent them with every box I had, and I was like, "Dude." They were like, "You sure?" I'm like, "Take it. We'll get more. Just you guys, if you need more, tell me. I'll give you as many much as I have." Because I knew it was going to be hot and they needed it and I didn't want them to drink Gatorade or other crap.

I would chew these salt gums when it was hot and I would drink water. I really think that one, staying away from the Gatorade was extremely helpful, and then the other one, and this is purely anecdotal, I actually, it's kind of funny. My only interaction with Peter Rattia was I actually asked him about this and he brushed it up in Peter's kind of arrogant fashion. But when I asked him, I was like... Observationally, for some reason the guys that took the most amount of painkillers seem to have the most amount of neurological problems and I really think that there's very similar to leaky gut. We talk about the small intestine being a cheese cloth and over time all this inflammation ends up eating holes and [inaudible 01:20:51] this leaky gut. I think there's a very similar effect in the brain and if you look up leaky brain, there's some things with it and I've always felt that opiates and a lot of these pain drugs end up-

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:21:04]

John: ... felt that opiates and a lot of these pain drugs end up damaging this brain barrier or causing some problems. But it also could be the fact that maybe the pills destroyed the gut. So I don't know what the effect was, but just observationally, the guys that I saw take the most amount of painkillers seemed to have the most neurological problems later on, and I just never took the painkillers.

Obviously, I can't say I never took them, but I did not take them at all with the frequency of which, I mean, I watched some guys crush eight, nine, 10 of these things and chew them up like breath mints. If I took one of those things a year, it was probably pretty rare. So just observationally, I think that the anti inflams and I stopped using a bunch of anti inflams. I started using DMSO, just because we had a old doc at the Chiefs who was an osteopath and also worked on horses. And he was like, yo man, I'll just bring DMSO and we'll just clear this

stuff up.

And so I started doing some other alternative stuff like that. And I wonder if the anti-inflammatory diet, eating a high protein paleo diet, avoiding Gatorade, taking creatine, lifting weights, a little bit of carb cycling, avoiding gluten, ended up probably safeguarding or helping me over something that I didn't necessarily know that it would do.

Robb: Sure.

nicki: That's awesome.

Robb: Yeah.

nicki: Just because I don't know what it is, and I'm sure other listeners, were you saying BMSO?

Robb: DMSO.

nicki: DMS.

Robb: Dimethylsulfoxide.

nicki: Okay.

Robb: It's a solvent, really.

John: Yeah.

Robb: But it's a form of biological sulfur. You have to be careful with the stuff because it'll dissolve anything on your hands, anything it comes in contact with. And it'll deliver it right through your skin. But it can also be really slick too, like if you get a herbal infusion, like a white willow bark infusion instead of aspirin, and say you got some bicipital tendonitis and you rub that stuff into the area, it'll deliver it.

nicki: Gotcha.

Robb: It pinpoints, so it's really got a broad application to it.

John: You just need to know how to-

Robb: And broadly anti-inflammatory. But again, you have to be careful with it. If you have your Dove laundry soap or whatever on your hands, it'll whisk that right through the skin too.

nicki: That's not so good.

John: Yeah, it's like a subdermal transporter. So if you were to mix something in,

it'll basically absorb through the skin where you go. So I had some anti-inflammatory stuff, I'd mix with DMSO and then I would coat my knee with it when my knee was swollen or whatever. I blew my ankle out and it was a baseball and they wanted to do ice and [inaudible 01:23:55] hit up guy, I was like, "Hey, you got DMSO?" Bought it in. He put it on my ankle, the swelling was gone the next day. You would've thought that he showed these young interns magic and the fact that these kids had never seen this. And yeah. I mean this is pretty well known stuff. But yeah, I don't know. I just get nervous when doctors just start handing stuff out with like, "Oh yeah, take all of this. You'll be fine."

I'm just like, "Man, I don't know." I left the NFL extremely distrusting of medicine because I was lied to so many times. And I've always joked that I'm a conscientious objector. It's not like I'm not going. I'm just don't buy everything. I'm going to go to the game and I'm going to get out there and play but I'm not necessarily sold on everything. I'm happy to go to war and shoot some people, but I'm going to be questioning why we're there. So I think the fact that the conscientious objector has been pretty good where I'm like, "Why do these guys keep pumping us for this gator? It's so sugary. It makes my legs heavy. I'm good. I'm not going to drink it." And then when we played, I played in the hottest game in NFL history. So it was Dallas, September one, noon at old Dallas Stadium and it was like 163 degrees on the field.

They told us, if you laid down on the field, you'll die. And we played in this game. And so it's the hottest game. It's called the Pickle juice game if you look it up. 'Cause they didn't get him Gatorade. They went and they bought peach jars of pickles and they were pouring pickle juice in our cups. 'Cause they were like, "It's the only way they were going to keep these guys from dying." And the Gatorade wasn't going to help us and we needed more pure salt. So that was pretty good.

nicki: That's fascinating.

John: Where I'm like, yeah. And Gatorade was best because they pay a shit ton of money to be the sponsor in the official drink at the NFL and the whole deal. And they had plastic pickle jars that they were pouring, right, dark Gatorade cups. And I remember being like, "Wait a minute. So it was real hot and you were giving us pickle juice. Why are you giving us Gatorade on the other days?" And so at that point I was like, this is bullshit to me. So like I said, it's not like I'm not going, I'm going to question everything. But I also think too that for the most part, the training that I did with Raphael was so advanced and get a chance to see it in power athletes still, there's threads of it in terms of the pap and the French contrast and the accentuated negatives and the manual resistance and all the pieces and a lot of the rotations and all, still the stuff that I did in the NFL would still be in our programs.

But I think the level of training we had so high, I think working with Marrow on the diet so early on and just the fact that I was happy to be able to do

all this and carry a bunch of muscle and be in pretty good shape ended up probably playing some dividends for me.

Whereas I think some guys, like we said, muscles, insulin sensitive, fat's oxidative, and all of a sudden you have these guys that are real fat and real obese. And I think that oxidative stress compounded with the beating on the head and then all of a sudden the painkillers and drugs and maybe some illegal stuff and alcohol, all these other key factors. I think it just becomes a perfect storm for a lot of these issues. And then guys retire, they don't continue to learn new tasks and develop neuroplasticity and flexibility. I just think, as much as we laugh about our involvement, and Andy and I were laughing a little bit about being lumped in with the margins and CrossFit. I met my best friends through it. I met you guys. I had to come to work at CrossFit. I would've never met you guys.

And then also the fact that I was forced to go out on the road and teach this methodology in real time and develop a website and business and talk and argue. I was thrust into something. I was there because I played in the NFL, but that's not what kept me there. And I had to do this stuff in real time. Whereas if I had just retired and went and sat on a lily pad and eating [inaudible 01:28:01] all day, 'cause I never had to work again. I don't know if I'd be in the same position I am today. And then obviously, I took a cue from Rob in terms of starting the podcast and we've been doing it 10 years and 700 or plus episodes. Talking to the smartest people on the planet and being intuitive and asking questions and then implementing what they said, I think has been probably one of the greatest learning experiences of my life.

nicki: Super cool John. Fun fact, John and I both competed in the 2008 CrossFit games together. I think that's when we first met you.

John: It is. Well, it's great because Rob came over, he brought me a triple X shirt 'cause they only had one at his gym and he'd been trying to give it away for years. So he brought me over this big ass shirt. And then Rob started talking to me about the paleo diet and what he did. And I was like, "Oh yeah, no, I know about this." And as I think Rob was more surprised when I started talking about Morrow and Vince Garda the stone age and this, I think Rob was like, "Holy shit, this is crazy. I can't believe you know about this stuff." I'm like, "No, that's how big strong people have been eating forever." I think that was-

nicki: The bonding.

John: ... the kindling of our friendship.

nicki: Yeah. And we've been going here for-

Robb: John, you trying to smash John Birch with-

nicki: A thruster bar.

Robb: ... a thruster bar. Well, I definitely was like, "I will take a bullet for this man now."

nicki: And John Birch was wearing his [inaudible 01:29:24] five-finger shoes.

John: Well, that I can't remember the dude's name, who was my judge. I showed him. He's like, "Show me a rep so I can see what your range of motions. 'Cause I got this doorstop in the back of my knee." So we go through and I'm like, "Hey man, this is as deep as I can get." He's like, "Great, it looks below parallel, we're fine. I do the first rep." [inaudible 01:29:47] me for the first 10 reps on my thrusters and I think his last name was Brown.

Robb: Oh, it was John Brown.

nicki: John Brown.

John: John Brown, yeah. Yeah. So he had no rep in me. And then finally, it takes me 45 reps to get 21 reps and we do chest to bar pull-ups. And I pull up, I hit my chest and he reps me on the chest because he's standing behind me and he can't see. So I do these reps and remember my hand sheared off and when I went back to the thruster and the very first one on the 15, he [inaudible 01:30:27] and I threw the bar at him and he jumped out of the way and hit John Birch and broke his arm. Which I'm not mad at that outcome. I wish the bar had hit John Brown, but hitting Birch wasn't a bad one either. [inaudible 01:30:43]. So I don't know if I can say that on this podcast. But those guys all suck.

Robb: We had other-

nicki: So funny.

Robb: ... John Birch moments too.

nicki: We don't need to go go there. We don't need to go there right now. All right.

John: Nicki's like, I don't need to be in a real bad mood for a week.

nicki: We're coming up on the two-hour mark. So I just want to tie it back around, I mean I love all this. Clearly, your story is a story of immense hope for people who have struggled with severe TBI. But clearly there's some resources needed in order to do some of these treatments that you mentioned. So I wanted to go through some... Obviously, we've talked about nutrition both as a prophylactic, but also in the wake of a brain injury, whether it's a general concussion or something more severe. What other things can you recommend that are low cost if not free? I know, I read a post of yours where you're like, "I learned to juggle and play ping pong," and other neuroprotective things that you feel are worthwhile, that are low cost or no cost that people can be doing if

they're struggling with a brain-

John: Yeah, the biggest one, the low hanging fruit's really staying hydrated. I mean the brain scans of dehydration and people that eat low salt, it's pretty amazing. So I'm going to pump your product and take element, I take three to five a day and I mean, it's a little over the top. And I'm a big dude, you train a lot. Then the other one I'll tap on parsley. And really just the sleep is by far the biggest factor. I think what happens too with a lot of the concussions and a lot of the TBIs and a lot of the stuff the NFL guys end up dealing with, they're real big. So then there's sleep apnea and guys have banged up shoulders every time they roll over, they wake up. And a lot of the guys have really shitty sleep. So they started prescribing Ambien and most of the guys I played with while I was [inaudible 01:32:50] were taking Ambien and obviously knowing parsley and knowing the effects of Ambien, that's not sleep.

So really safeguarding your sleep, doing everything you can with sleep hygiene, figuring out how to increase the efficiency of your sleep is paramount. The other one is obviously eating a high protein diet, a little bit of chloric restriction, trying to keep as much muscle as you can in relation to body fat. I really think that making sure you're maximizing mitochondrial density by having a big aerobic base. There's some really fascinating research with lifting weights that actually shows, they did brain mapping under a percentage of 1RMs and found that lifting heavyweights over 90% activates that top portion of the brain for decision making. And then a medium of 75 to 85% hits the middle cortex and then the lower ones hit the bottom. So being able to work on those for registers is extremely important. So when people ask me, "Hey, why do you have your BGJ guys or your professional athletes or your military guys do heavy doubles or singles, doubles and triples?"

And it's always like, obviously we need motor units to fire, but I also need them to access that top portion of the brain, which is pretty cool because the research was never published, but I was forwarded all of the information and then actually the support was never published, but I got a chance to see some pretty amazing research about different stuff. So I think lifting heavy weights, making sure you're obviously developing that aerobic base for safeguarding your sleep, not being a fat ass. Creatine is a monohydrates, extremely inexpensive, can go to thorn and which is probably the top in terms of efficacy and just quality and it's not expensive and that's a really easy low hanging fruit. It's not expensive and you could take that. So I think between those, that's where I'd start. And if you want to get more jiggy and obviously go down the rabbit hole a little farther, I would definitely recommend getting blood work done and some gut biome testing and figuring out what you're allergic to with the foods and pulling those things out to increase gut health.

And then if you want to take it a step further, the exosomes, you can reach out to cousin Tom, Don and then also Dr. Phil Yu, who's out in California. Those guys are my go-to experts. And then obviously, if you jump online and look

at the hyperbaric chambers, probably there's one in your town, but if you do it, it's got to be medical grade, it's got to be hard shelled. And the protocol is the protocol. I mean, they haven't researched anything else, so can't research, I'm only going to go off of what they know is to work and what the research supports. So anybody that says that, "Oh, this is fine." No, I mean it's pure oxygen or damn near two atmospheres, 40 sessions, you got to be about down under an hour. And that's the one they know works in terms of lengthening telomeres and increasing health and just legitimately life extension.

nicki: Awesome. This is, I think, super helpful. Yeah, we talked about all of this stuff during your visit and I just have seen several questions come across-

Robb: We get a lot of them.

nicki: ... about this, so I'm so thankful that you made time to come on the show today and share your knowledge and share what's worked for you. I think, like you said, you're one of the only people they've scanned. They have this 10 year gap between scans and to actually see that your brain is a younger brain now at your, what are you, 45, 46 years old, than you were 35.

Robb: Yep.

nicki: Yeah, which is phenomenal. And I think-

Robb: Signed me up.

nicki: Well, and we've talked a lot with John about your essential trauma, Rob, and looking into some of these therapies to see if they might be effective for you.

Robb: So I've been chatting with Dr. Yu.

John: Yep. He called me yesterday about some of the fecal stuff and there's some fecal transplants and this in terms of fixing the gut and the blood or the gut brain deal. I know Tom forwarded me research that basically the pain neuromatrix that the same receptors in the brain are in the gut. And so I mean, there's some really fascinating connections between the two. And it's fair to say that the tremors and what you're dealing with, it stemmed from the gut. So what's great is Dr. Phil is such a sharp dude and he's so conscientious. He called me yesterday with all this information and he's like, "I think this would be great for Rob and this." So what's nice is you guys collectively, Rob, especially too, you've helped so many people without asking anything in return.

It's unbelievable to this day. If I ever a question on anything, I just Google it and Rob will podcast and he did one. The amount of information that you pushed out to tell people, you have so much good credit and good karma out there that all you have to do is reach out to help. And I know when I mentioned your name to doc, he's like, oh my God. He's like, "I've listened to Rob for years, I'm so excited to help him." And that's the response you want. If you do good

things, I think you put it out in the universe and people come help you, a post from Greg Glassman where you put bad stuff out in the universe and you say one thing and everybody pulls out their knives to drill you in the back.

Robb: So it's funny how that works.

John: Yeah, got to take a shot on Glassman when you get a chance.

Robb: I was just noodling the other day. I know in theory they're working on the history of CrossFit book. You and me, Greg Everett, maybe a couple other people, we just divide that thing up and bang it out in three months and still beat them to the publish. And it's like the unofficial history of CrossFit and see, have the two overlap would be faster.

John: I think it's a great idea. The other one is, I know that periodically they'll have those events. I keep waiting for you to sign us up. I would love-

Robb: I was going to just to give them some pucker factor and be like, "John Wellborn, Matt Leland, Rob Wolf."

John: The Avengers. Oh, God damn. I've never in my life. Just probably the name Matt Leland, just like... They're like this fucking guy. He just won't go away. Oh, goddamn hilarious.

nicki: Yep. Well, John, thank you. I think this is a hugely valuable resource that a lot of people are going to find, not only fascinating, but super helpful for navigating this type of situation.

Robb: And in our show notes, we'll have links to Dr. Yu, Dr. Tom Incedon, some of these other resources that John mentioned.

nicki: For sure.

John: So yeah. No, if you guys are fascinated on the HBO stuff, look up Dr. Joe, Dr. Deep C on Instagram. But the research, especially the stuff that just came out of Israel is pretty fascinating. They'd gone in and actually done the till of the Telomere length and seen this. I mean, it's as close as I've ever seen as life extension. And then my comment to him is like, "Okay, I did the 40 now what?" And he's like, "We don't know." I'm like, "Is there a bump up? Do I got to do it again?" He's like, "I don't know." It can't hurt, but there's just nothing [inaudible 01:40:34]. So for something that is so impactful, so life-changing, the fact that they just don't know because nobody's really done the research. It's a little upsetting when they've been doing this stuff since 1600s. So it's pretty fascinating. But yeah, Dr. Joe's a pretty sharp dude.

We got a couple podcasts on Power radio with him.

nicki: Cool.

John: Yeah, definitely. And he's a good friend of Doc Parsley. He'd be a guy to have on. He's great. He's this slightly abrasive guy from Long Island who's also has multiple PhDs, was a 29 year Navy diver, the best dude. And yeah, he's great. I call him, yeah, just to talk shit. And then obviously, like I said, the sleep thing. I think 20 years from now, not that we don't already know it, everybody's going to think, everybody's going to know that sleep is their superpower. If you can sleep, you have the ability to sleep and you spend an entire life protecting your sleep. I really think that the neurological effects and people are going to really find that as an avenue for it.

Robb: For sure.

nicki: Awesome. I'll link to some of those episodes from Power Athlete Radio with Dr. Joe also in the show notes. All right, John, thank you so much.

Robb: Tell the family we said-

nicki: Yeah, tell everybody we said hi.

Robb: I will.

nicki: Yeah, we'll catch up soon.

John: Well, thank you so much for having me, and I can't think of a better way to spend two hours than talking to you guys, so happy to help. And I look forward to seeing you guys soon. So when I came to the visit, it wasn't long enough, so we'll see you all soon.

Robb: Bye, John.

nicki: Sounds good. All right, bye.

John: Thanks guys. Bye.

nicki: Hubs, that was a solid conversation.

Robb: It was. The nice thing about talking with John, we have a lot of shared history, a lot of laughs, just a sentence or two can evoke a decade of shared experience and whatnot. But also, John's just a brilliant guy and it was nice to just sit back and let him really steer the boat where it was going to go because he's the expert on this stuff.

nicki: And not just a brilliant guy, but really one of the most loyal and just exudes integrity. And as you'll hear at various points in this show, when he is talking about these guys that he's training and his, not obligation, but it's just core to his being the need to help. If he has the ability to help somebody, he will help them. And I don't know, he just one of our most definitely loyal, upstanding human being, just solid dude and just a great person to have on your team.

Robb: I'll throw this out there. We had been booted out of CrossFit for the second go, although I guess we left of our own accord the first time. And you really saw who had some character and integrity at that time because a good number of people that were on, we thought tight relationship basis with us. They went missing immediately after that. And within about five days of us getting booted, John invited me to go speak at one of his events. And this was clearly an act of brinkmanship. He could have easily gotten booted out of the organization himself, although there was enough pushback at the Black Box Summit aftermath that I think that would've been even more catastrophic. And as Dunderhead Glassman and the rest of the crew could be in some regards, I think even they recognized the minefield that would represent. But this was a non-trivial risk to John to ask me to go speak at this event, right?

I mean, the fallout is literally still settling after the explosion of the Black Box Summit, and a few people were like that. Jeff and Melissa Hayes, a few other people went out of their way to make it clear that they had our back, that they supported us. And they took a non-trivial risk in doing that. There was no upside to them other than-

nicki: They didn't play the political game.

Robb: They didn't play that side of the political game at all. There was no upside to them other than making it clear that they cared about us and were willing to take a risk for us. And so I will remember that to the end of my days and it's why John Wellborn is one of the best friends that we have.

nicki: For sure. Hope you all enjoyed this conversation. Hopefully there is something that can help you if you are struggling with any type of brain injury. Again, all of the resources that were mentioned will be in the show notes, so you can check there to learn more. And yeah, let us know what you think. We'll see you next time.

Robb: Bye everybody.

nicki: Bye.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:45:50]