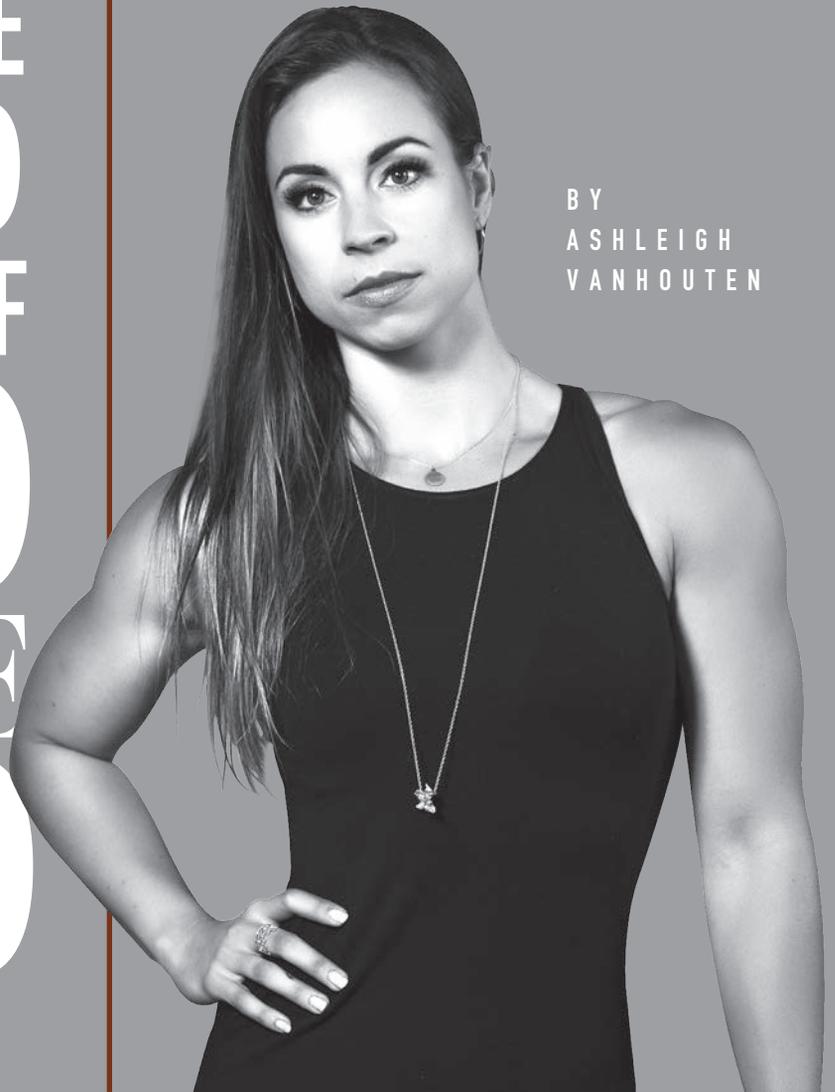




A YEAR IN REVIEW



WHAT I'VE LEARNED AS HOST OF PALEO MAGAZINE RADIO



BY
ASHLEIGH
VANHOUTEN

REFLECTING BACK ON NEARLY A YEAR AS THE HOST OF THE *PALEO MAGAZINE RADIO* PODCAST, I AM IMMENSELY GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK WITH AND LEARN FROM SOME OF THE SMARTEST AND MOST GENUINE PEOPLE IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS. MY JOB IS TO ACT AS A CONDUIT BETWEEN THESE EXPERTS AND THE PEOPLE WHO CAN MOST BENEFIT FROM THEIR KNOWLEDGE—AND OF COURSE, I BENEFIT AS WELL! IT'S BEEN A DREAM JOB AND ONE I HOPE TO CONTINUE, WITH YOUR SUPPORT AND FEEDBACK, FOR A LONG TIME.

As of this writing I've interviewed some 50 guests, from Mark Sisson to Diana Rodgers to Chris Kresser to Laird Hamilton; from doctors to nutritionists to personal trainers, professional athletes, and beyond. One of the main themes from all these conversations is that the Paleo lifestyle should be thought of not as an endpoint, but as a means to achieving your goals in life, whatever they may be: a healthy family, an athletic personal best, better sleep, or a more peaceful life. *Paleo Magazine Radio* has delved deep, from every angle, into the Paleo lifestyle: the most nutritious foods, ways to improve sleep and manage stress, and new methods to practice effective movement and exercise. But the biggest lesson I learned from speaking to all these experts is that the Paleo lifestyle is simply a blueprint for becoming the healthiest and best version of yourself, and that "Paleo" and "healthy" can mean different things to different people. Being Paleo isn't about subscribing to one narrow list of rules for how you should eat and exercise and live; it's a framework on which you can base your own unique plan, incorporating your own individual needs, goals, and challenges. This is a liberating lesson, because it allows you to learn from others while still forging your own path—and isn't that what life's all about?

I invite you to take a look back over the past year of *Paleo Magazine Radio* and re-listen to the guests that have resonated the most with you. In the meantime, here are some of the guests, and their lessons, that have struck the deepest chord in me.

ON EXERCISE

"I love the idea of training hard and keeping myself healthy, but what I've learned is that fitness is also an essential tool that helps me actually navigate the real-life stuff."

— GABRIELLE REECE, PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE AND FOUNDER OF XPT LIFE, EPISODE 168



The interview with Gabrielle Reece and her big-wave surfer husband Laird Hamilton is a treasure trove of actionable life advice and inspiration for discovering your authentic self (these two are the epitome of #relationshipgoals, #fitnessgoals, and any other hashtag you can think of). As a high-level athlete and someone who has dedicated her life to fitness, Gabby offers a great reminder that healthy eating and training needn't be goals in themselves for many people, but rather tools for achieving your other goals: family, work, hobbies, and fun.



“Play can be taken very seriously, and you can actually achieve more from a play session than a workout. I am stronger, faster, fitter than I’ve ever been, and I haven’t done an official workout for years.”

— DARRYL EDWARDS, *THE FITNESS EXPLORER*, EPISODE 184

Darryl Edwards travels the globe teaching the art of Primal Play, helping folks get stronger, fitter, and happier through the art of “serious” play: unstructured yet often very challenging movement. Often we can get caught up in rules and quantifying our success, always concerned with lifting more than the next person, or being one second faster than we were last week, and considering anything else a failure. But to truly connect with our ancestral, animal roots and the way our body is meant to move, sometimes it’s best to get

out of the gym and into the sunshine, take off our shoes, and move our bodies in whatever way comes naturally. If you’ve ever spent an afternoon in the park playing frisbee or rolling around with your kids, you’ll know that sometimes the silliest, most playful movements are also the most rewarding.

“There is no good news or bad news, just actionable news.”

— CRAIG PICKERING, *DNA FIT*, EPISODE 170

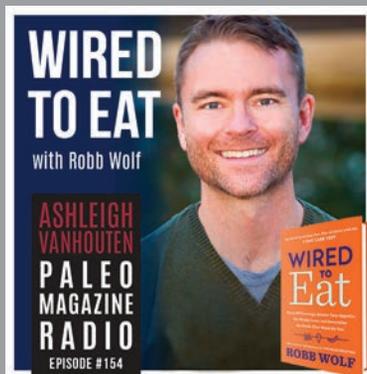
Craig is the head of sports science for DNA Fit, an online company that uses genetic information to inform what types of training, food, and supplementation will help us maximize our health and athletic performance. He taught us that your genes don’t have to determine what sports you enjoy or excel at, or even what your body composition will look like; they’re just another tool that can help you tailor your diet and training to assist you in better achieving your goals.

ON FINDING THE “PERFECT” DIET — FOR YOU

“When we make poor food decisions we aren’t technically cheating anyone; of course, there may be consequences, but it’s only if we emotionally attach the significance of our eating to cheating that we feel crushed by guilt. If you’re on a program and you have one off meal, you’re just one meal away from being back on—but you can assign this deep emotional guilt to the situation and make that one deviation off the path the reason why you give up the whole process.”

— ROBB WOLF, *WIRED TO EAT*, EPISODE 154

For many of us, our diet is inextricably linked to our relationship with food; thus, our decisions around food are often complicated mental battles. And for many of us, our relationship with food is fraught with guilt—but it doesn’t have



to be that way. Looking at the idea of “food cheating” critically, the term just doesn’t hold up; we aren’t cheating on anyone or anything when we decide to eat certain foods. When we can accept that everything we eat has consequences—good and bad but unrelated to morality or our self-worth—we can begin to make less emotionally-driven and more rational food choices, and enjoy those choices with a clear mind and clear conscience.

“Meat has been a pretty important piece of the human diet since evolution. And death has to occur for life to happen; we all have to move out of the way for new things to come. Everything eats and is eaten. Animal protein is nutritious. We are omnivores.”

— DIANA RODGERS, *SUSTAINABLE DISH*, EPISODE 152

For anyone who has struggled with the ethical dilemma of meat-eating, Diana Rodgers offers years of knowledge and experience as a licensed registered dietitian, nutritionist, and speaker on sustainable farming. She’s an expert on food policy issues and animal welfare and can help anyone navigate the best way to nourish your body while contributing to the welfare of the planet and all its inhabitants.

“I realized that Paleo was not going to make me live forever, and nothing will. The future of health is going to be 80 percent psychological.”

— STEFANI RUPER, *WELL-FED WOMEN*, EPISODE 161

Stefani has run the popular *Paleo for Women* website for years, and co-hosts the *Well-Fed Women* podcast (formerly the *Paleo Women* podcast). She dedicates much of her platform to discussing women’s health issues, including self-love and self-esteem, hormonal and sexual health, and relationships with food. Her holistic, pragmatic approach is a reminder that perfection isn’t the goal; happiness and wellness is.



“People without enough energy are wired to be mean to each other.”

— DAVE ASPREY, *BULLETPROOF*, EPISODE 175

Dave Asprey is the founder of Bulletproof, the popularizer of the ubiquitous bulletproof coffee craze, and one of the most dedicated biohackers in the world. He’s unapologetic about the lengths he’ll go to experiment and hack his health, but he also stresses that you don’t have to follow his path—and that all the extra bells and whistles and technology won’t do much if you aren’t sorting out the original life hacks first: sleep, stress, and nutrition. Our health and well-being have a massive impact on the energy we put out into the world, so for anyone who thinks it’s selfish to spend time “hacking” your own health, know that taking care of yourself first affords you the energy and enthusiasm to put your best self out there for others.



“People want the easy thing. They don’t want to have to follow a diet for years to get sorted out.”

— DR. NORM ROBILLARD, EPISODE 182

As a gut health expert who could fill many podcast episodes with his experience and knowledge, Dr. Norm’s ultimate advice is to eat whole foods, incorporate plenty of fermented foods, and chew thoroughly, taking time to enjoy and truly experience your meal. So many of us eat in a rush, affecting both our digestion and our enjoyment of our food. And yes, it will probably always be a part of human nature to seek the easy answer; but in most cases, the right answer is simple but not easy—and the sooner we accept that, the sooner we can get on to the business of being healthier.

“Habituation expresses itself when, for example, you are satisfied by your meal but when tempted with a new flavor profile, you suddenly have this second stomach. Well, I can tell you, we don’t have a second stomach, that second stomach is in your brain.”

— STEPHAN GUYENET, *THE HUNGRY BRAIN*, EPISODE 159

I highly recommend everyone read *The Hungry Brain*. It is so full of wisdom and science-backed explanations for our complicated relationship with food that we could barely scratch the surface in our podcast interview. One of the key points from our chat is that our brain is hardwired to make decisions about food that historically were helpful, but that, in today’s world of overabundant food sources, are no longer giving us what we need. Knowing this doesn’t take away responsibility for the choices we make, but does remove some of the guilt or fear that we are simply “too weak” to eat well or accomplish our health goals. Knowledge is power, and understanding the physiology behind why we make certain decisions can help us change our behavior patterns.

“I’m not a Paleo perfectionist, but it’s important to recognize what you’re feeding yourself and your family. Cooking is a basic life skill. Just like you’ve got to brush your teeth, you should learn how to cook.”

— MICHELLE TAM, *NOM NOM PALEO*, EPISODE 174

Michelle Tam’s cookbooks, podcast, and blog are wildly popular because she makes Paleo cooking accessible, fun, and of course, delicious. And she includes her family in the process, from podcasting to recipe development and creation, showing that it’s possible to make easy, healthy meals the whole family can participate in and enjoy. Cooking doesn’t have to be intimidating or time consuming, and sometimes the simplest meals are the most memorable.



“Sometimes the pursuit of perfection ends up doing quite a bit more harm than it does good. If you can learn to just listen to your own body, you will find your own truth.”

— DR. MICHAEL RUSCIO, EPISODE 176

ON LIVING AN AUTHENTIC LIFE

“The life that we’re living right now—we get one shot at this, and we’re not guaranteed tomorrow or the next day. And I believe that with the gift of being granted this life that we have, we should all wake up with joy every single day.”

— DIANE CAPALDI, THE PALEO BOSS LADY, EPISODE 188

Diane Capaldi is living an incredible life filled with challenges and joys, and she’s able to use her story to inspire others to live their best life. She believes that one of the biggest elements of finding peace and happiness in your life is gratitude. She certainly isn’t the first or the last person to share this message, but it’s one that can’t be repeated enough: Practicing gratitude for your life as often as you can—amidst all its pleasures and challenges and learning experiences—helps you focus on the positive in every situation, which is a much more motivating place from which to move forward.



“Technology is never going to replace your soul. I wouldn’t be where I am without social media, but it has to be used in the context of delivering information.”

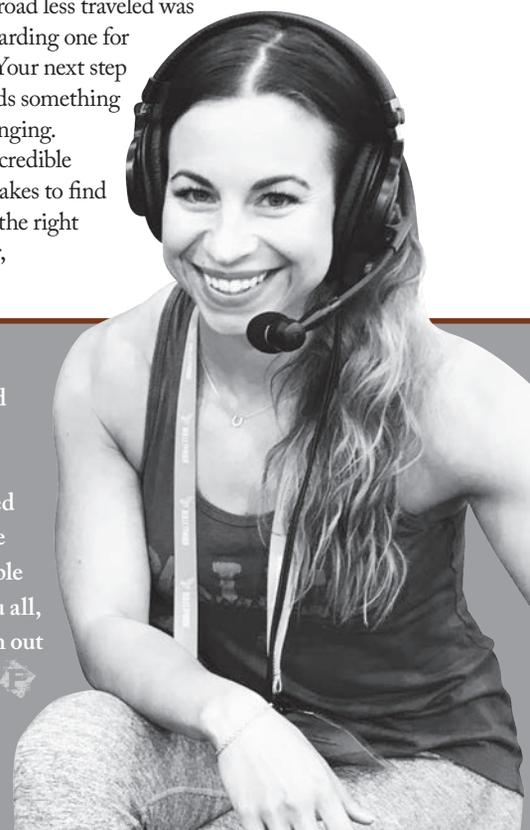
— BRIAN MACKENZIE, UNPLUGGED, EPISODE 181

Brian Mackenzie, a conditioning expert and trainer for many of the world’s highest-level athletes, recently co-authored a book about how to get the most out of sports technology without becoming too reliant and forgetting to check in with your most valuable hardware: your own body. Sometimes setting hard limits with tech and social media is necessary in order to unplug from the aspects that are wasting your time or impeding your process.

“Action is always the first step, and if you don’t try it, you’ll never really know.”

— AIMÉE ROSE, STRONGWOMAN, EPISODE 172

The owner of a holistic health facility and a competitive strongwoman, Aimée has spent a lot of time forging her own path to health and wellness. The road less traveled was the more appealing and rewarding one for her, and her biggest lesson: Your next step may be your first step towards something truly incredible and life-changing. The power of inertia is an incredible thing, and sometimes all it takes to find your joy is one small step in the right direction. And then another, and another...



So what’s next for *Paleo Magazine Radio*? The year ahead promises to be full of exciting guests as we explore our growing community and its ever-expanding body of knowledge and experiences. I’m especially excited to take my microphone to the Paleo Magazine Expo in Boulder, Colorado, in June to chat with our speakers and guests there.

The beauty of a podcast is that it exists forever, like a good book, ready for you when you need that extra push or inspiration. If you have found any encouragement or helpful lessons in these episodes, I encourage you to pass the knowledge on and share *Paleo Magazine Radio* with people in your tribe who could benefit. I look forward to continuing this learning experience with you all, and if you have any ideas or suggestions for topics or guests that you’d like to hear, please reach out to us on social media (@paleomagazine) or me personally on Instagram (@themusclemaven).