

Cigarettes, Crossfit and Crushing It with Team Paleo Mom
COO Charissa Talbot
PMR #134

July 14, 2016

Tony: Hey, Paleo Nation. I'm [Tony Federico 00:00:02], and you're listening to Paleo Magazine Radio, the official podcast of the original Paleo lifestyle publication.

Song: Everyone ...

[inaudible 00:00:09]

We light, we light it up ...

Illuminate the world, we light it up ...

Come with ... we don't have to [blow it up 00:00:17] ...

... man, we light it up ...

Light it up ...

Tony: One of my very first assignments for Paleo Magazine was to cover the original Paleo Effects Conference, and the first person I met in Austin was a fellow Paleo fan named [Carissa Talbot 00:00:29]. At the time, [Carissa 00:00:31] had just taken a job working as a virtual assistant for [Diane Filipo 00:00:34], whose "Balanced Bites" Blog and 21-Day Sugar Detox Program had just started to become a little bit too much for one person to handle.

[Carissa 00:00:42] and I became fast friends, and spent much of the weekend ... [Carissa 00:00:44] and I became fast friends, and spent much of that weekend "fan-boying," and "fan-girling," over the talks, and presentations, workshops ... and experiences, that defined the original Paleo Effects event.

Fast forward several years, and I'm still working for Paleo Magazine. [Carissa 00:00:58], too, is still a ... heavily involved in the Paleo Community. Her current role as COO for PaleoMom.com involves overseeing an entire team of coaches, writers, editors, and social media specialists. She's Dr. Sarah [Valentine's 00:01:10] right-hand woman, working behind the scenes to ensure that all the books, blog posts, programs, and podcasts featured on PaleoMom.com arrive on time, in shape, and ready to rock.

On today's show, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to interview my friend [Carissa 00:01:23], and to share her story with all of you. In our conversation, we discuss her pre-paleo diet of bagels, cream cheese, beer, and cigarettes ... how high-intensity exercise helped her to cope with a long-distance relationship, and the death of her younger brother ... the "Balanced Bites" seminar that changed her life, and led to her first job in Paleo ... how to grow a blog into a business ... the importance of building teams, and her advice for becoming a digital nomad ... doing what you love, and getting paid for it.

... but, before we go to [Carissa's 00:01:50] interview, I want to take a moment to thank the sponsor of today's show ... Essentia, makers of the world's only certified organic natural latex memory foam mattresses.

We've all probably learned of memory foam, but I wanted to know exactly what that term meant ... so I asked the man himself, Essentia's CEO [Jack Delaccio 00:02:09], to explain to me what memory foam means.

Jack: ... is ... that slow response is not putting pressure against your body, and it's the lack of pressure, and lack of pressure points, that makes it a much more performing product ... helps you with your blood circulation ... completely fills the negative cavities, the negative space of your posture, when you're laying in bed.

Tony: One concern about memory foam, that I've heard from a lot of people, is that it sleeps hot ... but thankfully, that's not the case with an Essentia mattress.

Jack: What people love about ours, compared to regular memory foam, is ... one, it doesn't trap heat. A regular memory foam ... the chemical reaction happens with your body heat, so as your body heat sits on the bed, it contours to your body. It also traps your body's heat, so you're constantly increasing your body temperature throughout your seven hour time lapse in bed.

The Essentia mattress is the first and only one of its kind. It actually dissipates heat, so as you get on the bed, your body temperature is dissipating throughout the core. We've actually measured the comparison. We drop seven degrees in core temperature through a seven hour time lapse, which is huge.

Tony: Sleeping comfortably, and sleeping cool, are two of the many benefits of using an Essentia mattress. An experienced fitness expert, [Ben Greenfield 00:03:32], describes as "being as close as one can get to nightly nirvana." If you're interested in experiencing "nightly nirvana" yourself, you can go to myessentia.com ... that's M-Y-E-S-S-E-N-T-I-A ... to order your mattress today, and get free shipping, and a 60 day money back guarantee.

All right, nation, it's time to go behind the scenes of Paleo. Paleo Magazine radio starts now.

Song: Mind, body, soul, heart, everything ... let the music take control of you ... give you freedom to do your thing, and be a party, lighting up the world ... and play a party ... lighting up the [town 00:04:11] ...

Light the town ...

The future can be brighter ...

Light the town ...

[Higher 00:04:15], higher, higher ...

Everyone becomes ...

[inaudible 00:04:23]

We light it up ... illuminate the world, we light it up ... we know how to ...

Tony: Everybody, welcome back to Paleo Magazine Radio. I'm here with [Carissa Talbot 00:04:32]. She's the COO of The Paleo Mom. [Carissa 00:04:37], welcome to the show.

Carissa: Thanks for having me! I'm super psyched to be here.

Tony: This has been a long time coming, so probably ... what ... five years, at this point, since we first met?

Carissa: Yeah.

Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Tony: ... and it was at the first Paleo Effects, which ... we're coming up on the fifth Paleo Effects, I believe. We've both been at every Paleo Effects, since it's inception ... so, you know ... at least ... get to touch base once a year, if not more ... maybe at a ... AHS, or other related event, so ...

Carissa: Yes ...

Tony: I've been able to witness, firsthand, your development in the Paleo world. I remember those first conversations we had, just ... you know, as new entries into the scene ... and just excited to be at that first Paleo Effects, and experience everything.

... but you've been working behind the scenes. I've been working behind the scenes. We really never had a chance to have a public discussion about all the things that have happened in your specific career, and how they reflect some broader changes within the Paleo community as a whole.

... but, before we get into that, I do want to give you an opportunity to share a little bit of your back story ... because you're not a newbie in this whole health space. You've been involved for quite a while, even prior to that first Paleo Effects back in 2012.

Carissa: Yeah, so ... actually, I'll even back up a little bit before that ...

Tony: Oh ...

Carissa: ... so you can understand, like, my journey into health, because ...

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Tony: We're going way back ...

[crosstalk 00:06:09]

Carissa: I don't think many people have heard this story, so ... take me back to ... oh gosh, I'm going to age myself!

A long time ago ...

Tony: A land far, far away ...

Carissa: Far, far away ...

I was a pack-a-day smoker. I had never set foot into a gym in my entire life. My diet consisted of bagels and cream cheese ... Top Ramen ... Domino's ... and probably too much beer.

Tony: I had no idea.

Carissa: Yeah.

Tony: This is all new to me.

Carissa: All new!

... so that was where I came from. Then, one day, I had a friend who [drugged 00:06:54] into a gym, and it was one of those ... gosh ... what, like ... it was like, the cheapest gym in town. It was like, they serve pizza on Fridays ...

Tony: Planet Fitness ...

Carissa: ... purple ...

Thank you! Planet Fitness.

Tony: Planet Fitness.

"Whole pizza in my mouth," I think. is ...

Carissa: Right.

Tony: ... the tag-line.

Carissa: Oh, okay. I didn't know that.

Tony: No, I'm just kidding.

Carissa: ... so, dragged me in there. I got on an elliptical for maybe two minutes, and I
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was like, "I'm out." I went outside, and smoked a cigarette

Tony: Nice.

Carissa: ... and I was like, "This is not for me."

Two weeks later, the person I was with at that time in my life, turned to me and said, "You know, I don't want to lose you to cancer. I know that we're both smokers. Will you quit with me?"

We quit together, and ...

Tony: What was your reaction to that because? I mean, that is a true statement, you know ...

Carissa: Right.

Tony: It's one of those things that ... you know, you could say to people. You can say, "Hey, put down that ... or, whatever ... that Krispy Kreme donut, or that pack of cigarettes."

Carissa: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Tony: ... or whatever thing that's contributing to poor health ... and potentially disease, and death, in the long run.

Oftentimes, though, people say that, and it's met with a lot of defensiveness. It's not warmly received.

Carissa: Right.

Tony: Tell me a little bit about your emotional state ...

Carissa: Well ...

Tony: ... when you receive that. Were you already thinking ... kind of thinking of maybe quitting?

Carissa: No, I had ...

Tony: ... or ... were you pissed, or ...

Carissa: I had no ...

Tony: How did that go down?

Carissa: I was one of those people that ... I don't know if you remember, back in the day ... there was this show called "Sex in the City ... "

Tony: Oh, I'm aware of this show.

Carissa: I went through a similar struggle ... with her smoking ... because, like ... she ... there was even a part in the episode ... I think she was sitting outside of her stoop, and she's like, "You know what, my Marlboros are always there for me," or something, like, totally ridiculous.

I really felt like I had a relationship with my cigarettes ... which, looking back now, I did. They controlled so many aspects of my life ...

Tony: Sure.

Carissa: ... because it was an addiction. The thing that made that different for me is, it came from ... it was out of left field, for that person to say that to me, because ...

Tony: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Carissa: They were also just as a heavy a smoker as I was. We lived a very similar lifestyle. We were both eating junk. We didn't work out.

The difference was ... is that, at that time, I was very much in love with that man. For me, it was like, almost the biggest compliment that anyone had ever ...

Tony: Right.

Carissa: ... paid me, because someone cared about me enough to want to do something with me, right ... and make a change for us, for the better, for the future.

Tony: Sure.

Carissa: ... so that was really impactful for me, back then.

Tony: ... so ... wasn't just like, some random person saying, "You know, those cigarettes are going to kill you."

Carissa: Right.

Tony: ... because it was coming from ...

Carissa: People told me that all the time, and I'd be like ...

Tony: Right.

Carissa: "Well, you know, have this bird ... "

... but, yeah ...

Then, that person who I was madly in love with, went away to boot camp. I missed him dearly. I knew that, at boot camp ... A, he wasn't smoking, and neither was I. I was really good about it, while he was gone.

I knew that ... you know, your vision that you get at boot camp ... and stuff that you've seen at the movies, like "G.I. Jane," and "Full Metal Jacket," and you're like ... everyone's going to be working out until they puke, right?

Tony: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Carissa: I went back to that stupid gym that I didn't like, and I was on the elliptical for two hours every day, because it made me feel connected to him.

Tony: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

It's like ... you're on the same kind of journey, in some ways ...

Carissa: Right.

Tony: ... separated by ...

Carissa: In some ways ...

Tony: ... however much distance, but ...

Carissa: Right

Tony: You could kind of say, "Okay, he's going through it, and I'm putting myself through it as much as I can."

Carissa: ... so romantic, I know ... it's like ...

I was young and idealistic, so ...

Tony: Hey, hey, whatever gets you there.

Carissa: Right. Exactly.

Here's where the spark started for me, is ... actually, I was watching ... I was in this Planet Fitness, and I was watching these two male trainers every day. They would have these clients, and I just saw that, and I was like, "I could do that better." I was like, "They're not even paying attention, those women. They're not even doing anything."

I didn't know anything about fitness at the time, but I was like, "I could do that much better." I started to get all these ideas. I don't know ... just like, something lit a fire in me. At that time, I was actually in human resources, in a very good career, and was a problem solver already ... and that's like that I

liked to do.

Tony: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Carissa: When the person that I was in love with, at that time, came back from boot camp and basically asked me to move with him, I did. When we moved, I found a school, and I went through one of those six month vocational personal trainer programs.

Tony: Right.

Carissa: That was my first entrance to the health world. That was back in 2006.

Tony: That kind of gave you the opportunity for a fresh start.

You know ... the move kind of made quitting your job ... I wouldn't say it made it easier, but it kind of ... gave you the reason, like ... hey, I'm moving, I don't have to go ...

Carissa: ... and I moved away from a lot of, like, toxic people ...

Tony: ... back into HR ...

Carissa: ... that were ...

Tony: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Carissa: I think, when we're young, we get these drinking buddies, versus friends.

Tony: Yeah.

Carissa: It kind of gave everything ... yeah, a really fresh start, for like ... a new ... a new life. That was back in 2006.

Fast forward to 2011.

I had been a trainer that whole time. I thought I knew everything. I was killing it. I was the top trainer at my gym.

Tony: Nice!

Carissa: They made me head trainer, like ... I just was ... that's what I excelled at, and I loved it.

Tony: You were doing some Cross Fit.

Carissa: I started doing a little bit, but I didn't know I was doing Cross Fit.

What happened was ... this is an interesting story ...

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Tony: Accidental Cross Fit?

Carissa: ... accidental Cross Fit.

My ... the owner of the gym took all the trainers out back one day ... like, on the pavement ... and brought some bars outside. We were like, "What is this guy doing? This is ... why are we bringing gym equipment outside?"

We were so perplexed. We'd never seen ...

Tony: Gym equipment belongs in a gym. This is madness!

Carissa: Right. This is madness.

He was like, "I'm going to start putting all of my trainers through these daily workouts."

We're like, "What is Rob doing now? All right, whatever, we'll just go with it."

... so I didn't know I was doing Cross Fit, while I was doing Cross Fit. I just had no idea.

Basically ... secretly, he had started going to a Cross Fit gym ... got so addicted ... he decided to train his trainers, but not tell us it was Cross Fit, because he still wanted us to be very invested in the gym that he owned.

Tony: Nice.

Carissa: It was very interesting.

Then, that's when tragedy happened for me. This is really where the Paleo journey started for me.

I ... you know, I think I've told a couple people this story, but not a ton. I figured ... well, might as well share it today, publicly, because ...

Tony: Let's do it.

Carissa: ... why not.

My brother passed away ... my younger brother, and I was just not okay, in any ...

Tony: What was your relationship like, with your younger brother, before that?

Carissa: My younger brother had hydrocephalus, which is water on the brain. He couldn't speak or talk. He had ... he was the size of, like, probably your average twelve or eleven year old. He only had the functions of a six

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month ... year old ... child.

Tony: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Carissa: ... but we had our own form of communication. You can tell ... like, he could tell when I came into a room. We just had our own way of communicating with each other, so it was definitely ...

Tony: Right.

Carissa: ... a different type of brother-sister relationship.

I always tell people ... I feel like I grew up in a household where I felt like I was the only child, but with none of the attention. It was very strange. It was definitely an interesting dynamic which, I ... accredit ... to why I am just inherently so independent, and I have always taken care of myself ... because, you know, my brother ... I knew that he needed more ...

Tony: Yeah.

Carissa: ... from my parents, so ... yeah.

He ... because of his hydrocephalus, his immune system was really weak all the time. One day, he caught a cold, and it led to pneumonia. Then, he passed. He just wasn't strong enough to fight it off that time.

He passed away. I came back from spending some time at home, with my folks ... and at this time, I was living in Texas. I was driving down the road, and I saw, like, the Cross Fit clown signs ... you remember the old school clown ... the throw-up clown ...

Tony: Like, Pukey ... I think ... "Pukey the Clown," or something ...

Carissa: Yeah! "Pukey the Clown!"

I saw that sign, and I had remembered someone saying something about Cross Fit ... how it was just this crazy, over the top, unhealthy ... like, you know ... super intense.

I wrote down the number. I called the guy, and basically ended up in tears, on the phone, with this poor Cross Fit coach. I said, "I just need to be in another kind of pain. I want you to put me through this pain."

Tony: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Carissa: That's how I got into Cross Fit. Then, from there, I ended up meeting a girl named Crystal, who took me to a "Balanced Bites" seminar led by [Diane Filipo 00:16:20]. That's ...

Tony: This is way back in ... probably ...

Carissa: 2011.

Tony: Got it.

Carissa: Yeah. That's where the spark started. That's why I ended up working for [Diane 00:16:33] ... is ... because I became a fan of her Facebook page, and she posted a job on her page, like ... I don't know ... six months later ...

Tony: Well, I want to backtrack, just a little bit ...

Carissa: ... crazy, but ...

Yeah.

Tony: ... and talk a little bit about your Cross Fit experience ... because you mentioned you wanted to feel a different kind of pain.

Carissa: Yes.

Tony: Did that work? I guess that's the question, because ... I think, sometimes, we do stuff like that. For example, you mention that you had smoked cigarettes before, and that's one form of addiction.

I think, sometimes ... and I'm not saying that Cross Fit was an addiction, either ... but sometimes, it's like ... hey, I'm feeling some things, and I need either a way to kind of escape those feelings ... and sometimes, people go down paths in that direction ...

Carissa: Right.

Tony: ... but then, throwing yourself into a Cross Fit workout ...

I mean, those are some of the most brutal workouts I've ever experienced in my life. I definitely ...

Carissa: Oh my god ...

Tony: ... know that, at the time when I was doing my hardest workouts, I was dealing with stuff too.

It's just ... I think there's something about that. It's just ... you're trying to prove something to yourself. You're trying to ... you're trying ... it's not just about getting ... workout, is what I'm saying.

Carissa: Right

Tony: How did that work for you, when you threw yourself into those Cross Fit

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workouts ... and you're just beating yourself up with exercise?

Carissa: Yeah. It was beneficial for me, for a couple of reasons. First and foremost, it gave me ... this was, like, one of those really small Cross Fit gyms in a storage facility unit. You remember those ...

Tony: Old school ...

Carissa: Way back in the day ...

Tony: Yeah.

Carissa: Old school, like ... super small.

[cross talk 00:18:14]

Tony: Literally a Cross Fit box.

Carissa: Right, just a box.

Everyone there ... I had never felt so taken care of ... because everyone knew why I was there. It was like ... instantly, I had this family I didn't know I had, and it was ... that level of ...

Tony: Awesome.

Carissa: ... support, and connection, was a big part in my healing.

Then, on top of that, the physical pain ... and then, just ... you know, at that time, I wasn't focused on beating anybody, or getting a better score, or doing any of that. I was ... it was like, just letting my head go somewhere else, because ...

Tony: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Carissa: You couldn't think, really. You're in so much pain, in the beginning, when you first start Cross Fit. It's like, you just you want to die, but ... and that's ... really, I just ...

... and so, for a time, that worked. I think it gave me the support, and head space, I needed to get to a place ... to then start to do some real work, to heal from ...

Tony: Sure.

Carissa: ... from that.

... so, it gave me a healthy buffer, versus ... instead of, like, maybe going back to smoking, or ...

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Tony: Right.

Carissa: Heavy drinking ... it kind of ...

Tony: Exactly.

Carissa: ... gave me the space I needed to, like, get myself in a place where I could start accepting what had happened.

Tony: It's clearing some of that emotional energy, and beginning to work through some of the grief ... and, I'm sure, other emotions that you were feeling.

Carissa: Yeah. Yeah, for sure. At the time, it was perfect for me.

This is so ironic. It's funny that we're doing this today. When I left that gym ... and I just really haven't been connected to Cross Fit since. It was, like ... it served its purpose for the eight months that I did it ... and then, I just left it.

Just this morning, I restarted Cross Fit again ...

Tony: Wow.

Carissa: ... for some reason, so ...

I'm not in any emotional pain. I just feel like it's ...

Tony: Yeah.

Carissa: ... at a point where I'm ready to do it for a different reason.

Tony: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Carissa: ... not have that connection ... because I think that's something ...

Whenever I would try to start Cross Fit again ... I think it was so connected to that period in my life ... so, I think I'm finally in a place where it's like, okay ... this feels different, this time ... I think I'm ready for this.

I'm kind of excited.

Tony: That is exciting.

Carissa: ... and also terrified. My legs are really going to hurt tomorrow.

Tony: Well, congratulations. That's pretty cool, that there is that full-circle experience.

Carissa: ... and that I'm talking to you.

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Tony: Yeah.

Carissa: It's silly.

Tony: Well, I think there is something to be said for ... whatever we're doing, it's not so much the thing itself, as what we're bringing to the table.

You can certainly say the same thing about food. Put an identical meal in front of two different people, and they're going to have a completely different experience. Then, put that same meal in front of the same two people ten years later, and they're going to have a completely different experience.

I think that that's pretty cool, how your own growth, and change, and development as a person ... now, you're back to Cross Fit, but it feels very different. I think that's just a cool thing, and a nice reminder of ... that we are, ultimately, creating our reality, and creating how we manage that reality. I think your decision to do Cross Fit, rather than to drink, or smoke, or whatever, is a courageous one. I applaud you in doing ... I applaud your six, five ... six-year-ago self for doing that.

Carissa: Thank you.

Tony: Like you said, the Cross Fit community, and the people that you met, led you to going to a "Balanced Bites" seminar.

Can you tell me a little bit about what that was like? What you were thinking?

... because, as a fitness industry veteran ... you were in the fitness world as long as I was. I started in 2006, and right up ... I mean, still ... but all the way to 2011.

That's a lot of time, getting the conventional fitness wisdom ... oatmeal is everything ...

Carissa: Oh, yeah.

Tony: I'm sure ...

Carissa: My low-fat yogurt ... come on! Don't even get me started.

Yeah, I was doing the traditional ... like, trainer thing ... and eating that way ... and just to wrap in, really quick, another funny, full-circle moment ... is ... I used to be ... I used to idolize Bob Harper ...

Tony: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Carissa: I used to love "The Biggest Loser." I loved him as a trainer.

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It's funny, now, because ... did you see for "Sixteen Point One," he was the guest celebrity judge? He is now eating a paleo diet, and he is now hardcore into Cross Fit.

Tony: Awesome.

Carissa: I thought that was so cool. I saw that the other day, and I was like, "Woah, that's Bob Harper! That's crazy!"

Full-circle ... anyways, so ...

Oh, back to ... I'm sorry. I totally ... I got, like, Bob Harper starstruck, in my head ...

Tony: You went way off into Bob Harper land, there.

Carissa: Yes, so ... I went to the "Balanced Bites" seminar.

I had heard about Paleo, you know, in my little box, and I had thought, "Well, that's a load. You know, there's no way that can be healthy, and you can't just cut out healthy whole grains. This is just silliness, and I'm not here for ..."

Like I said, I had this attitude that I knew it all about nutrition, because I'd been helping people lose weight. That's what I had been doing.

Tony: Right.

Carissa: I was just there to, like ... be beat up, basically ... but I went to this seminar, and there was something that Diane had said in that seminar that like really hit home for me. Then, all of a sudden, everything made sense ... within, like, a minute. It was crazy. I was like, "Oh, I get it! How come I never thought of that?"

It's this whole concept that ... everything that's going on in our bodies, whether it be a severe condition, or just something that's uncomfortable, like bloating, is what ... the only thing that's affecting that, or causing that, besides like ... environmental, or genetics ... is what we're putting into, or onto, our bodies.

When she said that ... all of a sudden, I was like, "Of course. Of course, it's the food that's causing the issues that I've been having this whole entire time. That makes complete sense."

Then, it was like, "Oh, okay." In that instant, everything just clarified for me ... just with that simple phrase. I know that there's a lot more to that, and it's not that simple, but ...

Tony: Right.

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Carissa: At the moment, that's what got me to think about food in a completely different way.

Tony: Well, if you ... and that's just a thing. It's like ... the conventional path of fitness, or health, or whatever ... it doesn't really address all of that in a cohesive way. I think that realizing that acid indigestion, or the bloating ... that's because of the food you're putting in. If it's having that effect on that body, maybe you shouldn't be putting that stuff in there, you know.

Like you said ... it seems very common sense, and it seems like a no-brainer, but sometimes, it takes hearing that from somebody else ... and maybe, put together in a holistic way, the way that Paleo does ... it can really, as you say, crystallize it, and make it come into a real sharp focus all at once.

... so you were feeling it, at that point. You were convinced, at least somewhat ... okay, there's something to this.

Carissa: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Tony: Why did you then follow up with applying for a job, working for Diane, in her very beginnings of the "Balanced Bites" team?

Carissa: Yeah ... and this is a story I have told many times, but I will tell it again, because it's always a fun one.

I had been following Diane as a fan on her Facebook page, and she had posted a job listing. I read the description. I was like, "Wow, this is going to be a great job for somebody. That's really cool."

Then, I just let it go, and later on that day, it just kept nagging me.

Tony: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Carissa: It kept nagging at me, that little inner voice.

Tony: Right.

Carissa: I remember, like, throwing up my hands ... and no one else was home but me ... and I was like, "Fine! I'll apply."

I was just like, "Okay! Whatever you are, just be quiet, and I'll go apply." Then, I sat down and applied.

I got the job. It totally took me aback, because I was completely like, "Wait a minute, I get to work for this person, who I've been following? She's changed my life with her diet recommendations. This is ... "

Back then, I had only seen a small section of what the Paleo was ... the Paleo community was, back then ...

I'd been following Bob Harper for so long, and Jillian Michaels, and now I was following Diane. I had just ... kind of gotten a little glimpse of it, and so, that's how that all happened. It was a complete fluke.

Tony: ... and that's about when I think we first ran into each other, because I had just ...

Carissa: Yes.

Tony: I don't even think it would be fair to say that I was working for Paleo Magazine, at that time.

Carissa: No, you weren't! I remember.

Tony: I was on assignment ...

Carissa: Yes.

Tony: ... but in a little bit of a sneaky way ...

Carissa: Right, right.

Tony: I think I assigned myself to Paleo Effects.

Carissa: [crosstalk 00:28:04]

... you did that ...

Tony: You know ... was wheeling and dealing, trying to work my way in to the scene.

Carissa: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Tony: ... ran into you, and you had just gotten the gig with Diane ... so we're both newbies, and sort of exploring around.

That first Paleo Effects was a pretty cool event, even though, by comparison, it was super low-key. It's amazing to think ... it went from picnic tables, and [Anthony Kesenger 00:28:31] selling a couple bottles of olive oil to this huge expo floor, and all these speakers, and all this great stuff ...

The Paleo movement as a whole has evolved tremendously in that five year time, or six year time, and you have, too. Let's take it through from your beginnings with Diane, "Balanced Bites ... "

... give us a little career trajectory ... how that all played out, and where you

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are today.

Carissa: Yeah. With Diane, it started very part-time. She was just beginning.

I'll tell you ... for anyone looking to get into space ... if you can find someone who's just starting to gain a little bit of momentum ... if your true passion is working behind the scenes, that's a great place to go, because growing with someone, and learning through doing, is the best way. It's the best way.

Tony: Totally.

Carissa: That experience with Diane was ... it was amazing. I learned so much, and it was so valuable to what I do now for Sarah. It was a great experience ... just the opportunity to make really great connections within the community, and go through ... growing pains of, like, a blog with somebody, and then seeing them write a book.

Going through that whole experience was ... it was ... the stuff that you learn is just invaluable ... or, at least, if you want to do stuff like what I like to do ... which is, you know, be the behind the scenes.

That was a great time period. Watching that go from where it was, to where ... I mean ... even where Diane is now ... it's crazy to see how that moved. To be a part of that was pretty amazing. I was her first employee, which was very exciting. I actually had the opportunity to help her grow an amazing team of people, and that was ... I don't know ... I found out I was good at stuff that I had no idea I was good at, you know.

Tony: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Carissa: I found a new found passion for helping other people be able to do what they love, and get paid for it.

Tony: Right.

Carissa: That is where my passion point is, in what I do. I've found that I really like doing that for other people. Yeah.

Tony: Obviously, Diane and Liz had their podcast, and I know you certainly were helping with that, and the 21-Day Sugar Detox, and ...

Carissa: Yes.

Tony: ... and like you said, the book, and ...

Carissa: Yes.

Tony: ... and the community aspect of it, and growing the team ... so you really got a wide base of experience during that time. Did you start to think, "Okay,

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maybe I want to step out and do my own thing?" I want to be Diane, basically?"

Was that a thought that crossed your mind?

Carissa: Not to that extent.

I definitely had a thought of ... I've been able to learn so much knowledge ... why don't I do my own blog, and maybe possibly one day write a book?

It was very much like ... I could do that, but I've just always known I never wanted to be at that level of something, because ...

Tony: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Carissa: There's a difference. There's a difference when you have an obligation to one person, and you have an obligation to x amount ... number of fans.

Tony: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

There's pressure.

Carissa: There's pressure.

I think certain types of people find joy in certain types of things. I love interacting with the fans over on [No Cook 00:32:39]. I love it. It's fun. It's light, but there's no ...

Tony: ... and just so people are aware, [No Cook Paleo 00:32:45] ... your Instagram, and social media profiles, et cetera.

Carissa: That's fun, and light, but they're not really ... at least, not yet, but ... I think I'm probably getting myself into trouble later this year ... we can talk about that ...

... is that they're not expecting any much from me.

Tony: Right.

Carissa: Do you know what I'm saying? Where ... you know, if you start to do a podcast, you need to do a podcast every week. If you say you're going to do a blog post every week, you need to do a blog post every week. If you say you're going to create this incredible content for people, you need to do that.

It's a different. There are people that love doing that. Sarah she loves doing that. There's different types of people ... where I love taking care of all the little jobs behind the scenes, so that she can be up front with her fans ... so she can be on Facebook ... so she can be interacting ... so she can be writing ... so she can be creating, and doing what she loves ... and that gives me joy.

That's a really cool ... and I think, like ... maybe there's a lot of people that probably start a blog, and realize, "Oh, wait a minute. I would rather help someone else do this."

Tony: Sure.

Carissa: ... than actually ... because it's a different type of pressure. It's a different type of obligation. It's a different type of joy, too.

Tony: Totally.

Carissa: Yeah.

Tony: Well, and we ... you know, it's just one of those things where ... Paleo was a new industry ...

Carissa: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Tony: ... and at a certain point, when there was [Rob Wolf 00:34:12], and [Mark Sissin 00:34:13], and a handful of people doing their thing ... and even they didn't really have a team around them, until later ...

Everybody's the personality, I guess, at a certain point ... when you first get started.

Carissa: Yes.

Tony: Everybody's the personality, because they're wearing all the hats.

Carissa: Yeah.

Tony: Rob's doing his blog, his podcast, he's writing ... he's all of the things.

Carissa: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Tony: Then, as you grow and evolve ... it's just like an organism. You can't have ... an entire body isn't a cell. You've got to have a little differentiation, and some kind of roles that become defined, and you start to grow.

I think what we're seeing ... and you were one of the first people to do this ... is a manager ... somebody who was working, we can say, behind the scenes, or right alongside the front man ... or the front woman, in Diane's case.

Carissa: Yeah.

Tony: As this industry grew, I think it was inevitable that the supporting roles ... the managers, the social media people, the graphic designers ... all that had to

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grow up around it, because you can't be a one-stop shop.

Carissa: Right. It's really hard, if you want to grow.

Tony: Right.

Carissa: You can do it for a while, but then, there becomes a point where there are ...

I think that ... and I'll say this as advice for ... maybe there's a blogger out there, who's looking to bring someone on staff ... I think it's really important that the front person stays the front person.

There are a lot of little jobs behind the scenes that can go to someone like me, or to an assistant, or whatever ... but staying connected with your fans ... being the person on Facebook, you know what I mean ... those things are really important. Stay to the front, because ... and then, keep up with your creation, and all that, because that's why you started in the first place ... and that's your passion point, right?

There is a lot of ...

Tony: It's that whole 80-20 rule kind of deal, like ... where are you most effective?

Carissa: Right, right, and figuring out ... yeah.

I think that's a good. Then, if you find yourself ... that you are more apt to want to manage stuff, then maybe you should be working for a blogger.

Tony: Yeah. Obviously, you were able to parlay all of that knowledge, and experience, and hands-on learning that you developed, and had with Diane ... so that when an opportunity arose to work with Sarah [Valentine 00:36:36], and the Paleo Mom brand she was building, you were able to step into that role as well.

Can you tell us a little bit about what that's been like?

Carissa: It's been really cool. It's almost ... I know this is an odd analogy, but it's like I'm personally invested in these women, right?

Sarah is my second relationship, so I got a second chance to do it even better. That's kind of how I ... and it's a great opportunity. I never honestly ... I thought, when I stopped working for Diane ... I did not think ... there was no space in my head where I thought, "I'm going to work for another person."

Tony: That wasn't your game plan.

Carissa: It wasn't my game plan. It wasn't even ... I didn't even think anyone would ... I was like ... it was such a shock to me. Yeah.

I mean, what an opportunity!

I mean ... I was like, "Oh I get to do this again? This is amazing!"

... and now, especially, because I have this bag of tools with me, that I've learned ... now I feel like I can be even more high value to this person.

It's been an amazing, amazing opportunity. This time, with Sarah, it's awesome, because I'm able to really do the stuff I love, which is the logistics, and the coordinating, and the stuff behind the scenes, and the stuff that's really ... I'm much more behind the scenes with Sarah.

Diane ... I was more out front with her, because it was new, and she was growing, whereas Sarah was already established. I was able to get really into the background, and give Sarah more space to write her blog, and work on the project that she's passionate about, and stay connected with her fans.

That's been ... it's just rewarding.

Tony: This all ... it's a Paleo thing, but it's also a bigger thing than that, because your story demonstrates what's happening out in the world at large ... because, you know, Sarah [Valentine 00:38:52] ... she's out in, I think, Atlanta, and you're in Austin, so there's ...

Carissa: [inaudible 00:38:56]

Tony: ... this whole economy that's able to function ... Paleo ... and, I'm sure, Cross Fit ... and really, any niche you can think of ... I'm sure Game of Thrones podcasts have however many ... hundreds of thousands of listeners, and probably have ...

Carissa: We need to get a [inaudible 00:39:11] ...

Tony: Game of ... yeah, there we go.

Carissa: There we go. New goal! 2017.

[inaudible 00:39:19]

Okay.

Tony: I've been going in the wrong direction this whole time.

... so, you know, there's this really cool opportunity to work, like, how you're doing ... for somebody who's not in the same state. You're self-directed, and you can basically work wherever there's internet.

Can you tell us a little bit about the lifestyle that you're living? I think you're doing something that's kind of pioneering for your gender, as well,

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because ... I think we have almost this expectation that guys are going to be the ones that are going to take the more risky employment situations ... and I say "risky" in the sense of less security, and less of a clear cultural expectation ... and you can take your laptop, and be in the Caribbean working somewhere ... and that's what we would associate more with a [Tim Farris 00:40:09], or something like that.

Carissa: Right.

Tony: You're doing it too. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Carissa: I would not trade it for anything. I just wouldn't. The freedom that comes with working virtually is what really makes the quality of life that I want. It's such a ... it's such a joy to wake up in the morning, and ...

In all fairness, there are some days that I wake up, and I've got the to-do list on my head, and it takes everything in my power not to open up that computer and start work right away. That's the downside, is like ... if you go to an office, you're going into the office at 9. You're waking up at 7:30. You don't have to worry about work until you get there at 9, because you're ... there's no computer at your house, you know. You got to wait until you get there.

Tony: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

Carissa: Then, when you leave, it's 5. I'm clocking off. Work says at work. I'm going to go home and enjoy my life.

Tony: Right.

Carissa: The downside to working from home, especially when you do something that you actually are really excited to do every day, and that you love, is like ... knowing when to shut that off ...

Tony: Sure.

Carissa: ... that's the trick ... but if you can find the right work-life balance, it can be the most amazing thing to work virtually. There are some times that there ... you can make your own schedule, and there are other times where people do want you to work specific hours, even in a work-from-home situation.

... but I'm in my pajamas right now. Life is good.

Tony: Awesome.

Carissa: You know, I went to the gym early this morning ... came home ... showered, put on clean pajamas ... this is the life.

Tony: You got to have the clean PJs.

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Carissa: Right. Exactly. I don't know. I really love it.

... and then, the whole flexibility is like ... so, when I went home for Christmas to visit with my family, I didn't just go home for four days. I went home for three weeks.

Tony: That's awesome.

Carissa: I took my laptop with me. I had my work hours. I went to the little local coffee shop near my parent's house, and that way I had my designated work hours.

To be able to do stuff like that, is ... it creates this quality of life that actually leads to the lifestyle that we all talk about living. Now, granted, a lot of hours behind the computer isn't great, but that's where the stand-up desk comes into play, or that's where ... I don't have room for a treadmill desk ... when I have a place that's big enough for one, I will be getting one. I'm really excited about that.

... but, you know ... there's all these life hacks that we can do, that make it okay. I guess we can tell ourselves it's okay to be in front of a computer most of the day ... but the great thing is, you can take breaks. I have a dog ...

Tony: Pinto.

Carissa: Whatever time of day ... Pinto, yes ... if I've been working really hard for three hours and focused, it's a good opportunity to get up, walk around the block a couple times.

It's the freedom of choice, and the freedom of ... if I want to put in a 12-hour day, because I'm excited about a project, I can, and that's okay. Then, there are some days where it's just like a regular seven-and-a-half, eight-hour day, and that's fine too.

I don't know. I just ... I wouldn't trade it for anything. It's definitely the lifestyle I want, and especially when you live in a fun city, like Austin ...

Tony: Mm-hmm (affirmative) ...

I know.

Carissa: ... where there's always something going on, and the weather's really nice, and ... I don't know.

Tony: ... and you don't have to drive in the traffic, so that's like, a whole ...

Carissa: Oh ...

Tony: One of the biggest things that people say is, "Austin's great, but the traffic's

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terrible. You don't even have to deal with it."

Carissa: No. Any time I have to run an errand, I make sure I run the errand around this time, that we're actually talking right now, because ... it's fine.

... but any later in the day, no. If it's after 4:30, I'm not leaving my house for anything, unless I have plans to go do something later ... but like, until 7:30 ... like, 4:30 to 7:30, don't leave the house.

Tony: It's awful. It's Thunderdome ... Mad Max, basically.

Carissa: Right, right. Exactly.

Tony: Well hey, [Carissa 00:44:35], thank you so much for coming on the show today. It's been a real blast, being able to talk to you, and look back on the past. Is it five years? Six years? I don't even know at this point.

Carissa: I don't even know.

Tony: About that years.

Carissa: We're getting old ...

Tony: You know, to see how far you've come, and to see all the things that you've done, and ... just kind of going back, and remembering those very first conversations that we had.

It's really great to see how hard work, and passion, and discipline, and diligence really does pay off sometimes. There's no guarantees in life, but I think you can certainly increase the chances of success. Obviously, you've experienced success, and are able to live the kind of life that you want, and have the freedom that you want. It's not all butterflies and cupcakes, but it's certainly a satisfying ...

Carissa: It's pretty darn close.

Tony: It is pretty darn close.

Carissa: Pretty darn close!

Butterflies and cupcakes.

Tony: Well hey, thank you so much again, and if people want to check you out, what would you recommend?

Carissa: Well, check out my awesome boss Sarah. She's the Paleo Mom, Sarah [Valentine 00:45:39]. Then, you can hop over to Instagram, if that's your thing, and you can find me. I'm No Cook Paleo.

Tony: Awesome. Well, thank you so much again, [Carissa 00:45:49]. It's been a real pleasure to have you on Paleo Magazine Radio.

That was [Carissa Talbot 00:45:54], COO of PaleoMom.Com. You can find [Carissa 00:45:58] on social media at NoCookPaleo, and you can follow her adventures around Austin with her dog Pinto by checking out the hashtag, [PintoDiOzzy 00:46:06].

On next week's show, we're talking cardio, Cross Fit, and much more with [Brad Kearns 00:46:11], co-author of [Mark Sissin's 00:46:13] latest book, "Primal Endurance."

Here's a preview.

Brad : ... so, when you exceed that maximum aerobic heart rate ... not maximum heart rate, that's your maximum heart rate. This is the maximum aerobic heart rate.

When you exceed that number ... and it's a very low, relatively low number, it's a very comfortable pace ... so when you drift above that, even though it's not super difficult ...

It's not like you're doing intervals, or anaerobic threshold ... hard, hard ... it's just a little bit too hard, and it changes the metabolic effect of the workout ... so that instead of burning primarily fat, when you exceed maximum aerobic heart rate ...

We talk about the "black hole" as the heart rate zone where you're not getting the ideal benefits, and you're trending toward chronic. When you get into that black hole, what you're doing is, you're stimulating a bit of stress hormone production. You're stimulating a bit of lactic acid production in the muscles. You're teaching your body to become good at burning glucose, instead of fat.

Tony: To find out more about becoming a fat-burning beast, you'll have to tune into next week's show.

... but, until then, you can check out our full archive of Paleo Magazine Radio episodes on PaleoMagOnline.com.

Once again, I'd like to thank the sponsor of today's show, Essentia Mattresses. Although I am upset that I learned about them just a few weeks after I spent a ton of money on a conventional mattress ...

... but, at least I know what kind of bed I'll be buying the next time around.

I'd also like to thank everyone who's taking the time to leave a rating and review for this show on iTunes. It's a small thing that makes a difference.

... so if you've heard me say this before, and thought to yourself, "Yeah, I should give Paleo Magazine Radio a review," but you got distracted by Pokemon Go, or some other thing trending online ... pump the brakes, put Facebook on hold, and head over to iTunes.

Please let us know what you think about this show. It's an important part of the Paleo Conversation.

Paleo Magazine Radio is brought to you by the Paleo Media Group. Our show music features the song "Light It Up," by [Morgan Heritage 00:48:04] and [Joe Mersamarli 00:48:04]. Paleo Magazine Radio is produced by me, and on behalf of everyone at Paleo Magazine, thank you for listening.

Song:

We light, we light it up ...

Illuminate the world, we light it up ...

Come with ... we don't have to [blow it up 00:48:16] ...

... man, we light it up ...

Light it up ...

[Young simmer 00:48:19], give me some [inaudible 00:48:21] ...