

EPISODE 180

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:13.3] AVH: All right, be honest. Have you ever tried baby food? Now, I actually know some people who buy portable baby food as post workout snacks because they're easy to carry and easy to get down when you're in a rush and I mean, really, how different is it than folks who make most of their meals in shake form? Because they kind of can't be bothered to cook or chew.

Anyway, no judgments here because like I said, I know some grownups who have tried the products we are talking about today. Joe and Serenity have just launched Serenity Kids, a company that makes portable baby food that's gluten free, paleo and non-GMO in flavors like organic beef with Kale and sweet potato, chicken with peas and carrots and even uncured bacon with kale and butternut squash.

See, I told you, this sounds like stuff adults want to eat, right? These two talk about how they found paleo, why their product is unique in the baby food market and they give some tips on the ideal baby food that I certainly didn't know.

Look, I don't have kids but I got a lot out of this interview and I really enjoyed it so I'm sure all of you will too, whether you have babies to feed or not. But if you do, this will certainly be of use to you and they actually offer up a little discount for those of you who want to give their products a try so stay tuned for that.

But first, a word about this week's podcast sponsor.

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

[0:01:32.4] AVH: Today's podcast is sponsored by Clean Made Market and The Clean Made Food Fest. Taking place this October 21st and 22nd at the California Market center in downtown Los Angeles. This market plus food fest is essentially a family friendly, health and wellness

lifestyle experience for folks who want to enjoy some healthy food and learn about new brands, products and services for clean living.

The Clean Food Fest is this all-inclusive tasting event that features more than 50 of So Cal's best chefs and restaurants and whether you're Paleo, Gluten free, Vegan, all of the above, this festival has food for you and whatever your preference, the event is judgment free but it's also free of gluten, dairy, soy and refined sugar which I know us paleo folks are into.

Clean Food Fest is basically, it's a great event for people with food sensitivities but just people who love food and like to eat well and healthfully. The coinciding Clean Made Market, it's all about clean living. So attendees can learn about and shop a bunch of sustainable brands, products and services as well as checkout interactive workshops, cooking demos and talks from industry leaders and categories like beauty and wellness, energy and sustainability.

Tech, pets, fitness, I could go on. And, paleo magazine is a sponsor of the event so we will have a lounge there so you can come and hang out and say hi to us as if you didn't have enough incentive to go to this already. Yeah, it's going to be great, if you want to learn more or attend this event, check them out online at cleanfoodfest.com.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:03:28.2] AVH: All right, Joe and Serenity, welcome to the podcast. Thanks for being here.

[0:03:31.4] SERENITY: Thanks for having us Ashley.

[0:03:33.1] JOE: Yeah.

[0:03:33.6] AVH: How's it going, are you guys good? Enjoying your summer?

[0:03:37.3] SERENITY: Yeah, it's hot here in Austin, Texas. So, enjoying it in very different ways than I would when I lived back in Iowa.

[0:03:44.0] AVH: Right, okay yeah, I've been to Austin only a few times, usually to go to Paleo FX and yeah, it gets pretty warm there.

[0:03:52.8] SERENITY: I'd say so, pretty warm on summer, yoga.

[0:03:55.8] AVH: Yeah, that's good. I like the heat though, I mean, I'm from Canada so I take advantage of the warmth when I can get it because we don't always have it.

[0:04:05.2] SERENITY: There you go, yeah.

[0:04:07.0] AVH: All right, well, let's get into it. I'd like you to first kind of give us some background and intro because I think that your company isn't something maybe that we see as much of in the paleo world, I mean, certainly I think as our community grows, there are more and more companies that are kind of catering towards children and babies and kids and people, you know, with families but I know in my position, I see like a lot of paleo granolas and jerkies and bars and snacks.

But what you're doing is a little bit different. I'd love for you guys to kind of tell us the backstory, how you found paleo and how and why you decided to start your company?

[0:04:43.3] SERENITY: Yeah. I'll go ahead and start there, I'll start in the womb. My mother is an extremely loving, generous person and when she was pregnant with me, she wanted only the best for me and so in the 70's, at the time, that was to be a vegetarian. She was a vegetarian when she was pregnant with me and I was born early and small.

At two weeks old, I had my first ear infection and a round of antibiotics and that's a pattern that repeated multiple times a year throughout my childhood and you know, we all know now what that kind of does to the gut and I had a lot of – I had leaky gut, I had error bowel disease, like the mysterious, we're not really sure how to help you diagnosis.

I had a lot of anxiety, insomnia and like my stomach always hurt as a little kid, you know? I just remember being balled up on my bed and being like, "Mom, isn't there something I can take?"

You know, I've seen commercials, right? She's like, "I'm sorry honey" and she's just like petting my back you know?

I'm like, "Crap, I'm doomed forever to a life of misery" and this kind of went on during my teenager years, I started experimenting with drugs as many teenagers do. But sadly, mine were exciting things like Tums and Cool Aid and Pepcid you know?

[0:06:05.5] AVH: What all the teens are doing.

[0:06:06.2] SERENITY: Pepto-Bismol, just drinking it straight out of the bottle.

[0:06:09.4] AVH: Right.

[0:06:12.4] SERENITY: I was desperate. I was in a lot of pain and I didn't feel good you know? It felt wrong. Back in 2010, I had another ear infection and I took antibiotics and this time, the over the counter stuff like that with that medicine did but it destroyed my stomach and I couldn't even drink water without serious pain much less consider eating, right?

I went to the doctor and I'm like, "Hey, you know, I don't know what's up, my stomach hurts" and so she gave me a pill to take every day for two weeks and to come back. I went back to her after two weeks and my stomach had been feeling better you know?

I could eat a lot of things, not everything but I could eat some things and that was good and I said, "Thanks doc, you know, I feel good, I'll see you later" and she said, "Wait, let me write you a refill."

I said, "Well, how long do I have to take this stuff" and she said, "Every day for the rest of your life." Thank god she was so dramatic because I was like, "Oh no. I'm only 33, can I be on medicine forever?" You know, I decided to try something different, I didn't know what I was going to do but I did not ever feel that prescription, I kept it for a little while because I didn't know what else to do.

I'm really lucky, my dad had found Cross fit by this time and I called him up and I'm like, "Hey dad, I don't know what to do, do you have any tips? You know, my stomach's killing me" and he said, you know? "You should probably read that book I gave you last year for Christmas.

You know, the one about The Paleo Diet" and I'm like, "Oh my god, dumb dad book you know?" I hadn't read that book, I didn't even know I had it in my book case. My dad had been –

[0:07:49.1] AVH: Thanks dad.

[0:07:50.1] SERENITY: Right? I know, totally. He had been paleo for like I think about a year by that point and I thought it was the stupidest thing I had ever heard. Eat like a caveman, are you kidding?

[0:08:01.6] AVH: Tell us how you really feel over at Paleo Magazine Radio. I have to interject here, I think it's kind of interesting that your parents introduced it to you because so many times, the story I hear is that you know, the younger folks are picking it up and then trying to introduce it to their parents. I mean, this is definitely a case of you know, parents know best which I think is a good theme for this whole podcast. Anyway, keep going.

[0:08:23.3] SERENITY: Yeah, right? I didn't even think about that. I tried it you know? He had given me Mark Sisson's book and then he mailed me at the same time, Robb Wolf's book and I read the intro and it was all anthropological and I had been anthropology major so I was sold you know?

I drank the Cool Aid right away and I went gluten free and over the period of next period of two years, I went more and more paleo and my stomach got more and more healed. You know, it took a few years. I mean, it's still not like super robust compared to other people's digestive systems. It's freaking good and I haven't had to take that medicine and it's really awesome.

Then four years ago, I quit my corporate job to become a paleo coach, to teach other people how to heal themselves with food instead of with medicine.

[0:09:10.8] AVH: Awesome.

[0:09:12.4] JOE: My story also begins in childhood. I grew up undiagnosed with high functioning autism and they didn't have the asperger diagnosis when I was a kid and now the asperger's gone away, it's all autism but I wasn't diagnosed till college so as a kid, I was just really loud and intense and you know, really big energy, just did not know how to tone it down or to calibrate to the space I was in.

I was in trouble a lot, I was in trouble in school, other kids didn't like me, I was always breaking things, making messes and they labeled me ADHD but that didn't help at all because that wasn't the right diagnosis. I just really didn't get any support other than just getting punished all the time.

Luckily my mom found theater for me, found that the performing arts were my thing and so I got really into dance and music and theater and professional theater, became a child actor, you know, doing commercials and television, things like that.

That was where I got to shine but offstage, I was still extremely awkward, really difficult with social skills. I had a lot of stomach problems. You know, my tummy hurt all the time, it was just – I didn't even get the irritable bowel syndrome diagnosis, they just said, "We don't even know what's wrong with him."

My diet consisted mostly of canned ravioli and nachos which, I was a picky eater as many autistic kids are. I wouldn't eat much else, what I would eat so my mom was like, let me eat it because that's what I would eat. You know, there's a lot of problematic foods for autistic kids in there, dairy and gluten and dyes and sugar are basically all the wrong things.

Plus, I had all these anxiety from you know, being in trouble all the time and having friends. Then in middle school, this semi popular girl decided to take me under her wing and teach me social skills. I was probably annoying her one day in English class and instead of being mean to me, she was like, "You know what? I'm going to teach you how to be cool."

Me and my friends, we're going to teach you what to do" and I was like, "I'll do whatever you say," you know? I learned that I could change myself, that I could improve myself, become a better person, that I wasn't stuck being any particular way.

That set me on a personal growth track where I was just seeking out any way that I can live better, live more fully, be more myself. Then in high school, I had a spiritual awakening where that translated to changing the world as well.

Where I was like, "Wow, not only can I change myself for the better but I can have an impact on the world and make it a better place." As I grew into adulthood, my experience as a child really informed how I wanted to change the world, that I was like, "I want to make this world a better place for children, that I want to make it more equal, more safe, more connecting, you know, teach kids how to relate to each other better.

Help educate adults on how not to shame or dehumanize children in the way that I was" and particularly for autistic kids and adults, you know, to create a more inclusive society that recognizes that not every kid or person fits into a little box and that we need to meet each person where they're at.

My health issues, I started to learn about diet, I was vegan for a while believing that was the healthiest thing which did not work at all for my system and then discovered I did like some candida cleanses and found the Gaps Diet and discovered that basically meat and vegetables were my favorite foods for my body, that everything else was sort of extra. I hadn't really fully committed to it and I was working for a personal growth company at the time.

Doing coaching and personal growth workshops and stuff. My boss decided to start bringing in speakers for us to talk from the outside, to talk about different ways of improving ourselves. She found Serenity as a paleo diet speaker and she brought her in to speak and she assigned me to be her handler and I've been handling her ever since.

I fell in love with her, with Serenity and with the paleo diet at the same time, she did –

[0:13:11.9] AVH: What a great line I got to say.

[0:13:14.5] SERENITY: he knows it that's why he says that.

[0:13:19.0] JOE: Her talk of paleo was just, it all came together you know? A perfect fit for me like, what I had found anecdotally from the way I was eating and to my relationship with my body and then to my relationship with instincts and intuition, it just all made sense that our bodies actually know best what to eat and if we cut out all the addictive unhealthy stuff that we'll know.

I became paleo after that and you know, we've been on this paleo journey together, she's a master at finding replacement so I can still eat nachos.

[0:13:50.6] AVH: Nice.

[0:13:52.1] JOE: Yup, Plantain chips and cashew queso has been my amazing nacho replacement and you know, I've always wanted children you know? I wanted to have a baby since I was five, I drew pictures of my future children when I was five, I found these pictures recently, Britney and Jason, they're very cute.

I always wanted children and so you know, Serenity and I were talking about having children when we were at Paleo FX 2016.

[0:14:20.2] SERENITY: yeah, you know, we were walking around paleo FX and I started getting all kind of fuzzy and maternal and I'm like, "Hey, let's go look for the baby stuff, you know, let's see what's out there" and we found nothing. There was nothing out there.

We did talk to Lindsey from Birth Fit and you know, "if you're a cross fitter and want to have a baby, how do you still do that in a healthy way" but as far as food or baby products or you know, there's so much baby crap out there like baby stuff everywhere. It just wasn't in the paleo sphere.

I went up to the CEO of paleo FX, Michelle Norris and I said, Hey Michelle, where is the baby stuff?" She said, "You know? I ask myself that same question every year." Joe was on like an

entrepreneurial bent at the time, he's like, "Yeah, I want to start a new business, I don't know what I want it to be," he's doing all these researches and he came up to me after a talk he went to and he said, "You know? I think we should do the paleo baby food."

I'm like, "What? Us? Baby food people?" I'm like, "Well, it's a really good idea" but I still wasn't convinced, like the market didn't contain something already. You know, I just couldn't believe that there wasn't something out there. Basically, last summer of 2016, I spent, I call it my summer of nerdism. I just buried myself in books and podcasts and blogs.

Conveniently for me, several of the paleo thought leaders had had kids in the last few years and so I read all of their post about everything and started learning that there is definitely a need out there and so the first thing we did was, well first of all, I figured out what babies need to eat. Like breastmilk is nature's perfect food.

It's about half carbs, half fat with a little bit of protein thrown in there which is not what I expected you know? I expected that babies needed the same kinds of macros as adults but that's absolutely not true. They need way more fat and way less protein than we do.

I used those macros as a basis for some recipes and then I called Joe and I'm like, "What if babies won't eat this kind of food? Maybe that's why it doesn't exist on the market yet. We got to start making baby food and getting it out to babies."

We spent many days in our kitchen, whipping up different recipes and delivering it with surveys to our friends around town and we ended up going with the flavors that those babies like the best.

[0:16:54.9] AVH: Your company, Serenity Kids, this is paleo baby food, is brand new. I mean, we're talking right now, we're sort of near the end of the summer but when this podcast goes live, it will be basically right when you guys are launching, right? Can you tell us a bit more explicitly about what the actual products are that you're going to be launching?

[0:17:15.7] JOE: Yeah, totally. We knew we wanted to use pasture raised meat, we wanted grass fed beef and pastured pork and poultry because that was the healthiest foods, you know,

that we knew that the fat was superior and the fat was really what was most important for babies and there's none of this available in the industry.

We looked at what other baby foods there were and we did a survey of 250 organic pouch baby foods, we took the healthiest baby foods and looked at them, their sugar content, fat content, protein content, meat content and it was alarming. It was, 80% of commercial baby foods, organic baby foods have five grams or more of sugar in them.

That was almost all fruit sugar. Most of these companies don't add any sugar but it's all from fruit. Five grams doesn't sound like a lot but for a 15 pound baby, you know, to a 150 pound adult, that translates to 50 grams of sugar. You know, which is an 18 ounce coca cola.

You know, 80% had five grams or more, 64% had 10 grams or more of sugar which for an adult is a hundred grams of sugar, that's you know, two large coca colas. You know, some of them had as much as 15 or 20 grams of sugar, there was very clearly like a sugar problem in the baby food aisle that it's like the standard amount of sugar is rather high and the allowable amount is outrageously high.

Hardly any had meat, less than 4% had meat in them at all, none of that meat disclosed the source so they're organic, it's organic meat but we have no idea you know, what the living conditions are, most likely fed organic grain, living in pens. Then less than 1% had two grams or more of fat. There's just no fat available in commercial baby food.

We're like, "Okay, we need to make a high fat baby food that contains a good amount of meat from a very good source." We found some amazing sources so we knew we wanted that, we knew we wanted to mix it with organic vegetables to match the macros of breast milk, you know, it was about 50/50 and so we just wanted to use vegetables for that rather than fruit because we don't want to keep the sugar content down.

We made up all these recipes and the babies tested them and you know, we made about 15 different kinds of combinations and tested them on babies in four different realms and the three winners, drumroll please, were grass-fed beef with organic sweet potato and kale, we had a little bit of Himalayan sea salt for taste and mineral content.

Then the free range chicken with organic pea and carrot, we also add some Himalayan sea salt to that and some organic avocado oil to increase the fat. We use chicken thigh meat so it's fattier already but we want it even more fat in there so we added avocado oil.

Then the uncured bacon with organic butternut squash and kale. We mixed a little bit of pastured pork in there as well. We balanced port with bacon, with the butter and squash and kale and that's all pastured pigs comes from pigs raised exclusively on pasture.

[0:20:15.3] AVH: These sound like meals that are delicious for adults too and I actually want to kind of get to that a little bit later but first, I guess a bit more detail. You're saying the products that you use, you're using organic vegetables and the meat is grass fed and pastured. Is the beef grass finished as well? Can you talk a bit about the – like the relationship that you have to the farms that supply your ingredients?

[0:20:40.7] JOE: Yeah, I love talking about this. My mom grew up on a small family farm in southern Missouri. I grew up visiting that in my grandparent's farm and seeing the relationship with the animals and the land and also their economic struggles and so when we knew we wanted to buy and support, to get pastured meat, the base for the quality of it, we found that – we found a coop of small family farms in Missouri in Iowa.

That actually specialized in this kind of pasture raised meat that is actually all small family enterprises. That was real exciting to me because we could support these family farmers and also get the high quality meat that we want and just really ensure that it's as high quality as we want. The grass fed, grass finished is a great label and if you can't go to the farm and visit it, it's like, "What do you know?"

We went and visited these farms, we did little farm tour, met the cows, met the pigs, met the farmers, met their kids, you know, I got to see how they live and it was amazing, it changed my understanding of farming because it was just so – their relationship is spiritual really.

They have a spiritual connection to the land and to the animals, you know, our pig farmer, I consider him an animal rights activist, you know? Basically he is teaching other farmers how to

raise pigs on pasture and treat them in a dignified way that is natural, these pigs live a spa life he says. In fact, he said, "If he's reincarnated, he hopes to be reincarnated as one of his pigs."

[0:22:14.7] AVH: That's an endorsement, yeah?

[0:22:17.9] JOE: It's totally true, these pigs are like super happy and the cows too, lots and lots of pasture space, eating you know, grass their whole lives and there's a very serene, so going along with our serenity brand name, these farmers, you know, and their animals are, they live a very serene lifestyle.

It's definitely the kind of meat that we want to support and also, it turns out to be what is healthiest for the baby.

[0:22:45.0] AVH: It's interesting that you guys mentioned the sort of macro breakdown as being much higher fat than most people would expect and mostly fat, carbs and lower protein and that may not be you know, what adults are expected to eat too but it's kind of interesting because there is this sort of new, you know, you guys know about the keto thing, that's so hot right now.

That is kind of making a similar argument that we actually do need way less protein than we think we do and that we should be eating a lot more fats. Can you talk a little bit about that breakdown, what the general calories are and the breakdown per package?

[0:23:21.9] SERENITY: Yeah, sure. The calories range from 80 to 110, 110 being our bacon flavor which is the highest fat content and the lowest net carbs. For the bacon, it is 10 grams of carbs and then two grams of fiber. That's eight in that carbs and 110 calories in there.

Then, on our beef flavor, it's 80 calories and it is 11 carbs, two grams of fiber, so that's nine carbs and then five grams of protein and in our chicken flavor, it's a hundred calories, it is nine grams of carbs and three grams of fiber so that's six net carbs. Then five grams of protein as well.

[0:24:07.9] AVH: Okay. Now, I don't have kids, okay? I know that it is a very potentially slippery slope to make any kind of guesses or comments or declarations about how people should be

feeding their kids, right? I will not even attempt that. But, I know, there's a lot of babies in my life, I know a lot of people with kids and I guess, one of the questions I have is, "Do you think that there is a disconnect between people who want to eat healthy but not realizing that babies and kids can eat the same kinds of foods?"

You see often times that when people make a decision to start making better choices with their food, you know, that kids are eating like kid versions of these things. Instead of chicken thighs or chicken breast, they're eating chicken fingers and you know, you're still feeding your kids waffles and cereal because you know, maybe they are picky. Kids go through picky phases maybe you don't want to spend two hours every night fighting to get them to eat their peas. These are common sort of stories that I hear. Do you think that there is a disconnect between realizing the kids can eat the same kind of things as us and is that something you are working to mitigate with these meals that you are putting together?

[0:25:21.6] SERENITY: Yeah, absolutely and that was actually what started my summer of Nerdism. You know I thought, "Well maybe there's only fruits out there because that's what babies are supposed to be eating" and I have been paleo for seven years, right? And I had no idea and I think the root of that is that's still like the word diet in our culture deal somehow like deeply engrained to us to mean something that we do to lose weight and the idea of putting a baby on a diet is horrific right?

Babies should be eating lots of food, as much as they need and doing any kind of restriction on a baby just seems like a terrible way to parent and I actually disagree with that. If you're restricting poison from going into your baby then I think that's actually a really good thing but just in terms of what's known about baby nutrition. We don't take baby nutrition classes in school. We don't even take adult nutrition classes in school.

And so one of I think really stressful things for new parents is trying to learn all of these stuff at the last minute. They're bringing it and they're like, "Oh we're going to have a baby, we're going to have to feed it, how do we do it?" so the moms just go nuts. I mean there's a million mommy blogger websites and they're desperate to figure out and sift the wheat from the chaff like what is the truth out there and what is not the truth and there's a lot of bad information.

You know I was really thorough in my research. I did a lot of paleo research and then I also did a lot of just conventional research Googling babies, best first foods for baby and so it doesn't always pull up obviously a paleo or whole foods or wasn't priced kind of person and there's a lot of doctors and pediatricians recommending rice cereal as the first food and it's not very nutrient dense. It doesn't have too much damage from a gut perspective.

They do need a lot of carbs but it is certainly not a nutrient dense option. We're looking for like when you feed a baby, it can tend to be a stressful time for parents meal time. You want to get as much in there as possible and so we really want every bit to count and so packing as much nutrition as possible into each of those bites has been our guiding philosophy.

[0:27:53.8] AVH: So when you are working on your products and getting these products out to the world, are you guys focusing on the paleo community or are you focusing on anyone who is concerned with obviously feeding their kids the healthiest food? Are you focusing on clientele who maybe are busier than, I don't even know if that's possible, busier than the average parent? I don't even know what that means but does it seem like and again this is me and my ignorance.

I am not having children right? But it does seem like potentially feeding your kids these whole food versions of what you're eating is potentially relatively simple right? If you are making steak and sweet potato, you stick some of that into a blender and you got your kid's food too but on the other hand, I suppose it's similar to adults who we use meal services because sometimes you don't have the time or the energy to do it yourself, right?

So what is the main direction? Who are you reaching out to? Who do you think is your client base that really needs this product?

[0:28:56.2] JOE: I mean I have been really impressed with the savviness and education of today's parents. Even if they have information that I don't totally agree with, they read it. They aren't just guessing or doing whatever their mother or grandmother told them to do and so really for us, any educated parent, any parent who has the thought like I want to feed my kid the healthiest food which I think is probably all parents have that thought at some point.

But any parent that takes that thought and is like, “I want to do research and learn and learn a little bit more about it and possibly spend more money or more effort in making food that is the healthiest because it’s a very short window with these purees. It’s less than a year or whatever that really you have to feed your kids special pureed food and so the paleo community meets that description most obviously.

People in the paleo community are extremely well-educated about the most modern and optimal nutrition for themselves and then also for their babies and so when we read the paleo blogs, blogs for paleo parents, that was another thing that really validated our product because they would talk about how hard it is for them to find convenient options and a lot of them would just have to compromise. If they were in the car or on the road, they would have to give them the fruity pouches.

Or they would find some lesser evil ones that were just vegetables but they would just have to sacrifice because even the most savvy educated dedicated parent is busy and on the go sometimes and needs a shelf stable option and so really, we want it to be much bigger than paleo because they’re so little high fat and meat options for babies out there, we really want this product to change the whole aisle. We’d really like to create a new movement towards feeding meat to babies.

High quality meat to babies, high fat to babies so we hope to copy it. We hope that other companies as well realize how important that is and copy us and also challenge the price point, you know? Really we’re going to be challenging how much baby food costs because it costs more. The costs of a grass fed steak to the costs of a steak to a costs of an apple is very different. So when you put our food next to fruit, basically fruit purees the costs are very different.

And so there’s been a cost culture in the baby food aisle to try to keep all the baby foods roughly the same price which is I think one of the reasons there isn’t more meat in it because they are trying to keep it all at this really low price point and these are infants and people want the best for their babies and like I said, it’s only about a year that you need to buy these food. So we believe that we can charge more for real food and charge the actual cost of the food and that people well beyond paleo I think will want this and pay for it.

[0:31:58.4] AVH: And what is the shelf life of these products and what makes them shelf stable in your particular case in terms of ingredients?

[0:32:07.1] JOE: Totally. So there's no stabilizers or anything added like that. The ingredients I named before are actually all the ingredients. So if you go to our website, you can see a picture of all of the – every single ingredient that goes in it. There's about five to six ingredients in each one. It's shelf stable for, it's got a one year shelf life and it's shelf stable because it's basically canned. It's a high heat, high pressurization process called retort.

That is the same process that a can would go through if anybody has ever home canned and jars in the pressure cooker, it's like that. We kill all the pathogens inside, it seals through the pressure and then it's basically shelf stable forever. You know they are digging up cans from the 30's that people can still open and there's no bacterial growth in the food. It doesn't taste very good being that old so the shelf life is still on there because in a year, we are not sure if it will taste the same.

We're going to do a bunch of testing and find out and we could find out that it tastes great in two years or three years or who knows and then we'll change the shelf life but pathogen wise, it's a 100% safe on the pouches are. You can stand on them like they are extremely durable. They are designed to be an alternative to cans so they try to make them as strong as possible and we definitely chose the safest pouch on the market.

We wanted to make sure that if it got rubbed up against keys and a purse, it wasn't going to get a hole in it, that kind of thing and then we are using a factory that is very experienced at putting meat in pouches and they're excellent at creating shelf stable meat pouches. There's not many companies that do that, we found one and they're excellent at it. They've never had a product fail their incubation testing so we're very confident that it is totally safe and is fully shelf stable without any added chemicals.

[0:33:54.0] AVH: Got it. So going back to earlier when I was talking about these ingredients with the flavors being things that are very attractive to adults too, I've talked to some adults who have eaten your products. You guys sent me some, I ate them. They're good, right? I can see

adults and I've talked to adults before who use similar products like they bring them on hikes or as snacks because they are so portable and easy to carry around. Is that something that you've heard as well?

[0:34:23.0] SERENITY: Yeah, so pre-paleo I was a total foodie, Gourmet. I'd fly to cities to eat at their nice restaurants. So I am really into flavor combinations and textures and tastes and all the different kinds of new ounces of hook cuisine and like you said, these kinds of things would be something that I would put on my own plate, you know? And eat it that way and so yeah, we've gotten a ton of feedback. We just got back from Mommy Con, yes it is actually a thing.

It's a conference for moms. We went to the Mommy Con in LA last weekend and some of my favorite comments about the moms tasting it, my favorite one of the day was, "Oh it's not gross".

[0:35:13.4] AVH: Perfect, glowing review.

[0:35:15.5] SERENITY: Right? Or are like, "Oh I'll eat that" you know? Or "Wow it tastes a lot better than I thought" or "Man it tastes just like the ingredients that are in the pouch. You know I can actually tastes the individual things, the individual foods" and so yeah, we didn't really expect it starting out but seeing that there aren't that many different choices you can get some good meat bars and there's even a couple like meat and veggie bars but yeah, we have some of our advisers and some of our investors.

They're like, "Oh need some more because I am hungry. Can you pass that over here?" I'm like, "This is a prototype. It's a sample. We don't have very many" "But I really want it, I really like it".

[0:35:56.8] AVH: So it's not a big deal if the parents are eating them too. You'll let us have a couple.

[0:36:02.1] SERENITY: Yeah, right and in reality as every parent knows, they're the leftover disposal. If they don't want to eat that thing today, the parent eats it so it doesn't go to waste and so –

[0:36:12.2] AVH: Just another reason to give your kids good food because we are going to be eating the leftovers anyway, you might as well yeah, who wants to eat more than seasoned chicken nuggets.

[0:36:19.5] SERENITY: Right.

[0:36:21.0] AVH: So like we said, your company and your products are still very new but you obviously have been doing a lot of testing and research and attending these events and I am sure you are getting lots of feedback. So what are you're – I'm sure you are already looking at future plans. Do you have ideas if all goes well to expand, have new flavors, to have new offerings, where do you guys see this going in a year or two years or five years from now?

[0:36:48.3] JOE: Yeah, so we would really love to have our products grow with our initial clients and so as the babies grow into toddlers, we'd love to create toddler food as they grow to school age, creating stuff that can be sent for school lunches on to teenager and adults. We want to nutrient dense foods containing pastured meat from small family farms, organic vegetables in a shelf stable or at least very convenient way for essentially all people and children being our first market because they are powerless.

They don't get to choose what they eat. They don't get to go to the grocery store and pick out the healthier foods and so for us it's like and we know so many parents are dying to feed their kids healthier and dying for stuff that tastes good and so much food that is marketed to kids is crap and so we really wanted to change that culture of like food that tastes good to kids, that is cool and fun, that's easy and convenient for parents and we would love to have that for all kids.

So we're starting with infants and babies because that was one of the biggest gaps we saw and we'll just get them hooked young right? On paleo fatty flavors because the flavor window is a very real thing that when babies are developing their pallets, being fed all these fruits and sweet stuff taints their pallet towards sweet and makes them only want sweet things and have more of an aversion toward savory flavors.

And so there's a lot of research coming out not about how important it is to give your babies savory flavors early so that they will be willing to eat a diversity of food as they grow up. You

know my sister has a two year old and she was very big on this because she is very well educated and so he was at nine months old eating Valentina, the hot sauce. He was licking it off his finger like he loved that stuff. Now he'll eat anything.

Anything that you put in front of him he will eat because he was fed just a huge variety of foods from very early on including lots of meat and spicy stuff and bitter stuff and flavors and so we want to get these flavors introduced early and then continue to grow with them.

[0:39:04.3] AVH: Right, you can hardly blame anybody for gravitating towards sweet stuff. When you're a kid and you are having a coke and an ice cream, I mean you're not going to want to eat broccoli after that. Nobody wants to do that so yeah, it makes a lot of sense to try to build good habits earlier rather than later whenever you can. I think that makes sense. So where can our listeners find out more about your company and the products that are going to be available very soon? Where can we find you online and on social media?

[0:39:37.5] JOE: Yeah, so our website is www.myserenitykids.com and then we're also on Facebook and Instagram, our handles are the same, My Serenity Kids, so Facebook.com/myserenitykids or Instagram.com/myserenitykids or you can look up #myserenitykids or @myserenitykids. So we're all in there and we have been getting a lot of awesome media coverage lately. So if you can just Google our name, you'll come up with a lot of cool information about us because there is actually.

Most food publications are very interested in this new development in baby food and in the growth of the paleo trend and so we expect to continue to get more attention. Paleo Magazine was one of our major goals to get in when we first started this. Serenity was like, "I want to be in Paleo Magazine".

[0:40:26.3] AVH: Guys, there's no better media coverage than Paleo Magazine coverage in my totally unbiased opinion.

[0:40:31.9] SERENITY: The pinnacle.

[0:40:33.8] AVH: There you go.

[0:40:34.8] JOE: We were trying to be either featured in Paleo Magazine and The Business Spotlight coming out in the fall and we were really excited to be on this podcast and just be bringing paleo to the baby community and bringing baby to the paleo community.

[0:40:50.1] AVH: Nice and I think you guys have mentioned offline that you were going to offer something special to our listeners right?

[0:40:55.6] JOE: That's right. We would love to offer a 10% discount for any of the listeners. If you go to our website and order online. You can put in the discount code, "paleomag" and get 10% of your entire order. It's always free two day shipping. So we fulfill through Amazon Prime. So it's the convenience of Amazon and you get the "paleomag" 10% discount.

[0:41:21.2] AVH: Awesome, thank you for that and none of us will judge you if you don't have kids and you order anyway, right? No judgments.

[0:41:28.1] JOE: Totally, there's actually a whole underground baby food eating movement amongst adults about one in five whispers to me, "You know what? I actually eat baby food" and I'm like, "Damn it".

[0:41:37.1] AVH: Well you know what? That's a topic for a whole other podcast but Joe and Serenity thank you so much for taking the time to chat today and for putting your efforts into providing healthy options for families because I think that you guys are an example that "fast" or easy food doesn't have to be bad food right? And I think that's pretty awesome especially for people with babies where time is always of the essence. So I appreciate the work that you're doing and thanks for being here.

[0:42:05.1] SERENITY: Thank you so much for having us. This has been a blast.

[0:42:07.3] JOE: Yeah, thanks so much Ashley.

[0:42:08.4] AVH: Awesome, all right enjoy your day.

[0:42:10.5] SERENITY: All right, thanks. You too.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:42:12.7] AVH: All right, thanks everyone for listening and I really hope you've been enjoying the podcast. If you are please do us a solid and leave a nice review and a rating on iTunes because it will help us get in front of more people who could benefit from the podcast. It only takes a second and you'll be entered to win some free paleo cookbooks so everyone is happy, please and thank you.

One last shout out to our sponsor, Clean Made Market and Clean Food Fest. Learn more about this two day health and wellness event that's happening in October in LA. Check it out, cleanfoodfest.com and make sure when you go to stop by at the Paleo Magazine Lounge and say hi to us cool people. So if you subscribe to the podcast, you won't miss the big interview I have next week.

I am really excited about, it's with Brian McKenzie who recently co-authored a book with Dr. Andy Galpin called Unplugged. It is all about understanding both the value and the limitations of technology in athletic performance, fitness, health and lifestyle. Brian is a world renowned strength and conditioning expert you probably have already heard of him.

He's worked with a bunch of high level cross fit games athletes and Olympians and he co-founded XPT Life, the wellness conditioning and recovery program that he has put together with Laird Hamilton and Gabby Reese that you may remember me talking about in episode 168, go check it out with Laird and Gabby. I attended one of these XPT events, it was incredible.

I met Brian there and this dude is no joke and you can take that as a very educated endorsement on my part but you don't need to take it from me. This guy knows his stuff and anyone looking to up their health and performance will not only want to get Brian's new book and follow him on social media because he's got a lot of good tidbits of advice on there too.

But definitely listen to this podcast next week, I mean not to be judgmental but you'd be crazy not to listen to this and get all these free info. So anyway that's it, see you here next week and thank you for listening.

[OUTRO]

[0:44:15.8] AV: Paleo Magazine Radio is brought to you by the Paleo Media Group and is produced by We Edit Podcasts. Our show music features the song *Light It Up*, by Morgan Heritage and Jo Mersa Marley, and on behalf of everyone at Paleo Magazine, thank you for listening.

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