

EPISODE 188

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:10.6] AVH: Hey everybody, welcome back. Today I am talking with Diane Capaldi, The Paleo Boss Lady. She is a best of Paleo Magazine award winner for her blog and for her Taking It To The Streets Tour. If you haven't heard of her or if you don't know her, let me tell you that you are in for a real treat today.

This was probably one of the deepest, most intense podcasts I've ever done or even listened to for that matter. Diane has such an incredible story and I gained so much appreciation and insight just listening to her talk and I really hope that you do too.

I won't take up too much time giving the background here because she does a really great job of telling her own story but here's the cliff's notes. She built a career, started a career building tech companies and she was a millionaire by 30. However, even before that, she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, MS, and she struggled so much with her health that she became legally disabled.

Eventually unable even to use her hands. She's running through her savings and feeling hopeless and she decides to take matters into her own hands after an illuminating stint at Burning Man which don't worry, she will get into that for you.

She ended up learning about Dr. Terry Wahls, she started researching mitochondria and also how to deal with and heal a toxic environment, that includes everything from nutrition to stress, to movement, to climate and even beyond that.

This is much more than just about paleo eating or not. Now, Diane has healed herself to the point where not only is she no longer disabled, she travels the country now on her own, driving on her Taking It To The Streets Tour where she offers talks and cooking classes and community and empowerment through the telling of her story.

Through encouraging others to reach a level of consciousness where they can work on the things in their own lives that may be toxic in order to find their own best health and happiness.

Okay, like I said, that's only the cliff's notes guys, this is one of my favorite interviews ever and I really hope you enjoy it.

Without further ado, here is The Paleo Boss Lady.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:02:15.2] AVH: Diane, welcome to the podcast, thank you so much for being here.

[0:02:18.5] DC: I'm so excited to be here in joining you all.

[0:02:21.3] AVH: Awesome. First, I guess, where in the world are you and what are you up to right now?

[0:02:25.8] DC: Right now I'm in Boulder, about 8,000 feet up, living in the clouds which is quite wonderful, I know, I'm excited. I'm actually in town for the Grain Free Event that I believe Paleo Magazine is a co-sponsor of if I'm not mistaken.

[0:02:40.1] AVH: Yeah, I want to say that that's correct and I guess that you probably already know about the Paleo Magazine Expo that's going to be happening there in June, right? If we talk to you –

[0:02:49.6] DC: I literally am so excited about that and when I heard Paleo Magazine announced that, I cried tears of joy.

[0:02:56.3] AVH: Yeah, I'm so glad.

[0:02:57.0] DC: Because I know that they're going to bring something to this that the community needs so much, just like they do with the magazine, that I just couldn't think of a better group of people to be doing this. I can't wait to go to the grain free event to hug every single person that's

going to be there and thank them from the bottom of my heart that they're doing this, I really am excited.

[0:03:15.4] AVH: Awesome. I agree with you, I think these events are so awesome from an educational standpoint but also an inspirational and community standpoint. I know when I go to things like this and I get to meet and talk to people and everyone's just so happy to be there and helping each other. It just makes you feel good, right?

You just feel so kind of ready to take on the world once you've hung out with these people for a while.

[0:03:37.7] DC: Very true, I mean, the one thing I have to say is, you know, I built all these technology companies and these international companies and a lot of times, other companies, even though we were in the same space, they weren't very friendly. They really saw, no matter what you were doing, even if it wasn't a product to product comparison, as competition, you know?

Fighting for the same dollars I guess was the mentality and the thing I love the most about this conscious living space that we live in is the sense of community that is always brought to every event where it's all about creating consciousness regarding how to live your best life. I just feel like, if it wasn't for these type of events, I don't know if I would be what I consider...

I consider myself a miracle, the miracle that I am because it's hard to do this stuff alone.

[0:04:23.0] AVH: Right. Absolutely. I think people, that definitely resonates with the work that you do and I think people recognize that because you did just this year and I have to congratulate you for this in person. You've got a best of Paleo Mag award for best blog this year. That's a pretty big deal.

[0:04:39.8] DC: Yeah, I have to tell you, this year I've been blown away by the community support of my work, on not only best blog, but I also got an award for best new idea with my Taking It To The Streets Tour from Paleo Magazine.

I was blessed times two and cried for days over the joy that – the work that I do is resonating with the community. It was really inspired by my need for community and to have it grow to be a community all of its own, you know, under the brand of Paleo Boss Lady has just – it's more than I ever could have dreamed of and nothing that I planned. It just evolved.

[0:05:16.3] AVH: Right. So awesome. Before I get into sort of more detailed questions. For any listeners who maybe don't know of the whole story. Tell us a little bit about your background and the miracle that you were mentioning earlier and how you came to be The Paleo Boss Lady?

[0:05:30.2] DC: Well thank you for creating the space for me to share this because I do this to hope to inspire other people's journey every day and not because I like to talk about myself to tell you the truth.

I'm 54 years old and I'm really proud to be that old and when I was 23 years old, I got very sick, one day I was fine, the next day I wasn't. I actually got the hepatitis vaccine and it triggered the onset of MS in my body.

I didn't know it was MS and neither did the healthcare professionals that I went to. At first I was told I had an inoperable brain tumor and for about six months, truly believed that my life was coming to an end.

All of this happened six weeks after I married my high school sweetheart. I went from the joy of – a marriage and starting a life to thinking I was going to die. As luck would have it, my death sentence became a life sentence and I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

From right out of the gates, I started working with the MS Society, I eventually sat on and became a member of the board of directors of the MS Society. I ran a large fund raiser, I agreed to be part of the test group for the first ever disease modifying drugs.

I was a guest lecturer for the MS Society and talked about the drugs, take the drugs that it's going to help us, doing all that stuff, the type A over achiever, so if a doctor told me to do something, I did it. I had tons of resources because I built and sold technology companies so I was able to see the best doctors money could buy.

I was completely connected being on the board.

[0:06:56.8] AVH: At this time, sorry, I just want to interrupt you so I can ask questions before I forget. When this was happening and you were really kind of attacking this challenge, did you – were you still able to work? Were you still in this tech world or had you kind of cut that off completely and you were moving in this new direction?

[0:07:12.5] DC: When I first got sick, I actually had three jobs, I was a respiratory therapist, that's what I went to school for. I had a part time job in the tech sector and I worked at the GAP and when I got sick, I was never able to do respiratory therapy again.

It literally took my ability to do what I went to college for. Luckily, because I was an overachiever, I had several other jobs. I went into the tech world full face but I could only work three days a week and it was in sales. I was just really good at my job so I was able to do on the type A over achievers, so in three days a week, I was still doing what I was doing working five days a week but only in three.

Then I was head hunted by a company and they knew that I had MS and that I could only work a few days a week and they were fine with that. It was not until about six years after getting diagnosed with MS that I was able to go back to work full time and that window was very short. I think I only was able to do that for another maybe seven years.

Then I was – but I was always the boss so there was no one telling me what to do because when you're in sales, as long as you're hitting the numbers, no one tells you what to do. I hit 27 quarters of goals, I actually exceeded them so I could come and go as I please which made it a lot easier for me. I never have worked really full time in the true sense of full time.

My body has demands that I have to honor so my hours are not conducive to normal working hours. I've just always been honest with people and told them my struggle and it never affected my ability to sell anything.

People were comfortable working around the adjustments that I needed but in a traditional sense, I've never really been able to work full time since being diagnosed. I ultimately became legally disabled in 2001 permanently legally disabled in 2001 which I do hope to change.

Yes, I was still making. You know, I was six figuring, I was making over \$200,000 dollars a year working three days a week. I was very good at my job. I built and sold over a dozen companies from the ground up. The largest company we sold for 36 million dollars from zero in six years.

[0:09:16.8] AVH: That's like a whole other podcast topic we could go onto now.

[0:09:20.7] DC: My life, I mean, literally, I have lived very amazing life. In spite of having MS, I was still able to do all of this and it seemed like you know, I was doing great until in typical MS fashion, I wasn't.

I literally in 1996, woke up one day and my life changed and MS just kept coming at me and how MS affected my body was it took bilateral use of both my hands. I had involuntary limb jumping meaning that my limbs would just flail, mainly my right leg and my right arm.

I had no warning or control and it would happen throughout the day. I was no longer able to drive. I also had no feeling on the left side of my body from the day I got sick with MS. I started developing trouble swallowing which is what – choking is what kills most of us from MS. Loss of bilateral use of your hands is the highest form of disability a human can have.

I mean, if you consider not being able to use your hands, like what can you do? Not really anything. 1996 I became very sick, by 2001, legally disabled and by 2003, my husband at that time, we went to my bi-yearly doctor's appointment and the doctor basically said, you know, it's secondary progressive MS, basically take for the bed.

You know, get ready for bed, there's not much we can do anymore for you and that marriage ended after that meeting. I was at this point now disabled, unable to care for myself. Very alone and very scared and living in the east coast where I was born and raised with my family and everyone is and it was at that time that I decided that I had to change everything about my life and I packed up, moved to California. Believe it or not, not knowing a single soul.

The reason why I chose California was because I can't still to this day, I can't regulate my own body temperature. You would think air conditioning and heat would help that but it doesn't. MS needs – my version of MS, it doesn't react to if I'm hot, I can't put air conditioning on and get my temperature right.

If I'm cold, I can't put heat on and get my temperature right, it just has to self-actualize the right temperature and Venice beach California, the temperature's only between 55 and 75 most of the time. I live there without air conditioning or heat and that created the space for me to start healing in a lot of ways.

[0:11:39.7] AVH: Okay.

[0:11:41.0] DC: That seemed like a really good idea too because at this time, I decided that not only was I going to move but maybe the way I was living my life was a big problem. I started – I became a certified yoga instructor and a spin instructor.

I had already been doing yoga but I took it up a notch and I'm not a pretzel so people are probably like, well what kind of yoga is that? I mean, yoga is whatever your body can do and there's modifications and I was very active with my MS when I got my certification in yoga. I had to take the same test as everyone else to pass so I am as well instructed in yoga as the next person even having MS.

Found great joy in that. I also started really studying Buddhism meditation and realized that most of my life was pretty unconscious and meaning that I was just doing what society was telling us to do every day and a lot of those things were cultural for me, meaning, being from the east coast, 100% Italian, being a woman, being a mother, being a daughter.

You know, there's a lot of cultural norms that come with that that I just assumed those roles and a lot of those things were not serving me and my move to California was really about learning how to love myself and how to wake up about my life because up until then, I was just sitting victim to MS.

It called the shots, it got to do whatever it wanted and take whatever it wanted from me and I was losing this battle. You know, truly facing homelessness, institutionalization or not to be morbid but I strongly considered taking my own life and researched assisted suicide and lots of those options because I had no quality of life. It got to the point where I had to have full time help.

I had to have people living with me and on a good day, I could use my hands to feed myself, dress myself and use the girl's room but that was not given to me every day. There are many days I couldn't wash myself, I couldn't brush my teeth, I couldn't put a zipper up, I couldn't button. I still don't wear anything with buttons.

I mean, you can't use your hands, you can't drive, you can't go to the store, you can't cook a meal. I mean, just think about what you can't do, pretty much everything.

[0:13:44.0] AVH: Where was the turning point for you, what changed?

[0:13:47.2] DC: Burning Man. I don't know what Burning Man is?

[0:13:49.6] AVH: Yeah.

[0:13:49.8] DC: Every time I say this, people are like, "What?" I had a dream for decades that I wanted to go to Burning Man and because of the body temperature issues that I have. Burning Man is in the middle of the desert for people that don't know. You're basically living in a man against nature because they have sandstorms and extreme weather, it's a zero impact event, well, it's supposed to be, I know that now it's becoming more impactful to the environment.

When I went to Burning Man, you know, 50,000 people got into the desert and when we left, you could never tell anybody was there. It also is a no judgement area and there's no consumerism other than ice because it can get so hot. They need to sell ice, so that we can all be safe.

But other than that, you can't buy anything, you can't sell anything, you're free to just be. That is anything that you want. Clothing options – its' a free for all. It's a great artistic expression. One

of the things about Burning Man is they build a temple that they ultimately burn and I wanted to go to Burning Man because I wanted to go to the temple.

Dig as deep as I could possibly dig to find how I could save myself because I was losing this battle and blowing through millions of dollars, because in America, when you have a disease that's not curable and for me, quality of life meant I needed to have physical therapy three days a week, I needed two 90 minute therapeutic body massages.

I needed acupuncture to be able to feel to go to the ladies room because I was lacking the ability to even know when I had to tinkle or things like that. Medicare, which is what I have, won't pay for any of those things past a certain number of visits because their feeling is we can't cure you, like why bother.

For me, it was quality of life. If I wanted to feed myself, dress myself, use the ladies room – I had to have those things. I was paying for each physical therapy visit \$150 three times a week.

Each body work \$150 twice a week and each acupuncture is \$75. Plus, I have live in help, plus I had full time help. Someone with me 40 hours a week. No insurance paid for any of that. I used my entire life savings to try and save myself.

When I went to Burning Man, I was down to about three years left of money and getting worse and had no idea how I was going to – I'm sorry, I get a little emotional, how I was going to survive.

I went to the temple every single day like most people go to Burning Man to like sex, drugs and rock and roll. I went to pray. I went to the temple every day just asking for a sign or should I kill myself, was it time for me to end my life? Was there hope, where do I go, what do I do? And it was like the fourth day and I can remember it as clear as day because the way it was setup, it was almost like.

There was an area in the temple that was like a Zen garden and had a little rake. I just remember I would spend hours just sort of raking in the sand and just – it's like gardening. I was just thinking about raking in the sand and not really anything else.

My mind was just quiet like in meditation and it came to me that it's like, "Maybe your life is toxic. Maybe it's your life." And that's when – I had already moved to California and it was like, the third year I was there and that's when I really decided that it wasn't just the weather and it wasn't doing yoga, it was everything.

I set an alarm clock every morning and when that thing went off, it scared the Jesus out of me and I woke up like flight or fight because of that alarm clock. My god, I had to do something.

Simple things like that, I had to look at everything that I did from how I ate, who I associated with, how I lived, all my cultural and societal norms that were put on me and really ask myself.

You know, "Is this the best thing for me in my life?" Because when you're raised, when I was raised 100% Italian which I'm so proud to be Italian, especially as women, we're subservient. We take care of everyone else but ourselves.

We have a lot of cultural norms that we have to adhere to when you come from a very strong Italian family. I did all of that to my detriment.

I came back from Burning Man and I locked myself in the house for a year. Other than my daughter and the appointments that I needed to do, I stopped associating with everyone because I assumed that everything in my life was toxic.

If people would email – I have great friends thank god, you know, that the true friends have stayed with me because they would email me or text me or call me and I just wouldn't answer. Because I didn't have anything to say, I didn't know what to say. I just knew that I needed to give myself this time and as luck would have it, that was in September that I made that decision and in November, when I'm laying in bed and I'm dealing –

I'm not well and it was my third day in bed and I'm unable to do anything. Me and Dr. Dougal are hanging out and I saw a TEDX come up the day it came on, Minding Your Mitochondria from Dr. Terry Wahls and I watched that video and that was the first hope I had ever had in my journey with MS and I just started doing exactly what Dr. Wahls said.

That, coupled with all the changes that I was making, with all of the focus that I have made on honoring my body, questioning my status quo. Cutting myself off from the outside world, began to produce the miracle that is the inspiration for my brand, Paleo Boss Lady which that started because when I locked myself in the house, I got lonely.

I thought well, Facebook was kind of new-ish and someone said to me, “You should call yourself Paleo Boss Lady” because as I was doing this journey and started healing. I was telling my daughter and people that I did have contact with which were very few. Mainly just my daughter and a few relatives but not like friends and like I wasn’t going out.

I was always talking about how getting conscious about food was like the last piece of my puzzle and I started healing very quickly once I added food and please know that I tried food before.

In my journey, I did a swank diet which is specific for MS and it’s a low-fat diet. I followed the pretty diet, I was vegetarian, I was vegan, I was just strictly paleo, the only thing I really didn’t try – I did Atkins, they all helped me to lose weight and helped me to sort of open my mind about processed foods and things like that but none of them helped with MS.

The Wall’s Protocol has created the space for me to really heal and to date, I manage – I’m 100% a-symptomatic. I live independently, I drive, you wouldn’t know that I have MS to look at me. Everything that MS took away, other than body temperature regulation has been returned to my body.

I still can’t regulate my own body temperature and Dr. Wahls and my healthcare team don’t believe that that will ever come back because there’s probably some level of damage that has been done to my thalamus gland throughout these years of having MS but you know, I’m not complaining.

I went from as far as we know, because bilateral use of loss of both of your hands is the highest form of disability a human can have that I am potentially the most healed Wahls warrior that we know of because I have reversed every symptom and function to other people’s lens.

Fairly normally. Now, it does take a tremendous amount of effort to do this and I have a full time job staying healthy, that is my job. But I get to function in ways that even before MS, my body was never able to do.

[0:21:23.5] AVH: I have so many questions, this is such an incredible story. I mean, the first thing that I want to say and the part that really resonates with me and I think will resonate with a lot of people with or without MS, is you're talking a lot about changing societal or cultural norms that you have followed and have always followed perhaps. Because it was something that was just always there or was expected or you know. A lot of us, most of us probably struggle with the idea of so many of these things that we're taught to be or told to be or we put it on ourselves.

Because we think it's what's supposed to – what's expected of us, right? Even if inside we think this doesn't really fit me, this isn't really what I want. It takes a lot of courage and a big risk sometimes to step outside of those norms.

Sometimes, it takes something as severe as a life-threatening illness or something similar to make yourself take that step but what about – maybe this is something that you cover in some of your talks and as you're traveling and you're speaking with people. There's a huge range of severity in terms of people's challenges or hopes and dreams and goals for themselves, right?

There are a lot of people who thankfully are not suffering from MS or from other kind of severe issues but our feeling like they're stuck, or they're in a place that isn't right for them and they're terrified to step outside.

What are some thoughts that you have for people like that that don't have to? You know, because there are so many people who spend their lives in these situations that aren't great but it's sort of like the devil you know, right? They don't really want to take the steps.

How do you encourage or help someone make these changes that you know would improve their life, when it's such a scary thing to do?

[0:23:13.8] DC: I'm grateful that you ask this question. One of the things I did when I was highly disabled was I decided to put myself back in college with no use of my hands. I did everything with voice activation technology and I took several buses. I am that story.

I got a master's in psychology and I specialized in building community. The reason why is because of just that. Because I was motivated to do this because my back was up against the wall, clearly. How does that translate to other people? The thing that I think we all forget is we get one round in this energy space as far as I know.

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

Open your eyes every morning with great anticipation for the day and all it holds. I think most of us wake up feeling overwhelmed. Most of us wake up with an autopilot existence where we get up at this time, we have our coffee, we leave the house at this time, we drop the kids off at this time, we get home, we have dinner on Friday nights, we have sandwiches, on Saturday, it's a free for all.

You see what I'm saying? We all live this sort of autopilot existence and I have to tell you that that's a wonderful way for a lot of us to go through life, if you just want to just be.

If you really want to truly have joy and purpose and be motivated by a life led by love and living. Your best version of you, even though it's scary, I have to tell you that the end result is better than anything.

Because I went from, I am the true American story. My mother was a junkie, my father was a world war two, is an honored medaled hero but suffered from undiagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder and I came from a horrific childhood.

I mean, the most horrific childhood you could ever imagine with, many people saying these kids are never going to amount to anything because my mother was a straight up junkie. I mean,

when Michael Jackson died and they listed all the drugs that was in his system, I knew all those drugs my whole life because my mother took all those drugs.

I injected her with a lot of those drugs because I didn't know that she was an addict, this was all I knew, was that I had a mom that took a lot of drugs and then, but yet, by the time I was 21 years old, I was already a millionaire.

You know, I was selling companies by the time I was 26 for 34 million dollars. I really went the rags to riches story. I had homes all over, I have traveled the world. I mean, I lived, I built international companies.

I lived a life that people only dream about and can I tell you, I was sick and miserable and right now, I am voluntarily homeless, everything I own fits in a Fiat, I've lived in poverty, I have no money, I have nothing in the bank. I literally, by societal standards, people probably look at me like this woman is a zero.

I have to tell you, I have the greatest life in the entire world and I have joy and happiness and I have more than enough and I think it's a lot of people, you know, again, I would recommend that we question what makes us happy and what our definition of happiness is and if you're not waking up happy and joyful every day.

Whether you have a disease or not, it's time to get the autopilot of life, stop it and get conscious about your life because we all deserve happiness and joy and health and peace and love and respect.

[0:26:41.1] AVH: Right. Continuing in this same vein, you know, the work that you are doing now with Paleo Boss Lady, you call it a conscious living lifestyle brand. Can you just talk a little bit more about what that really means, what that means to you?

[0:26:54.7] DC: Well, my name is Paleo Boss Lady, my brand but I don't really care if you're paleo, I mean, not to bash paleo. I just want people to wake up. I just want people to question what they're doing all the time.

You know, what are you eating? Have you read an ingredient? When I meet people for the first time and I'm in their homes, one of the first things I say is, "You know, let's just go to the cabinet, let's read the ingredients of what you have in your cabinet."

So that we can see what we're putting in our body. That most of the time is the first time they're ever doing that. That's a simple act of consciousness or you know, if you wake up on an alarm clock every day and it scares the be-jesus out of you, maybe it's time to question that.

You know, because we can train ourselves to sleep and wake up whenever we want believe it or not, you don't need alarm clocks, they're consumer driven ideals. Our forefathers didn't have alarm clocks, you know what I'm saying?

I just recommend that you know, in a conscious living brand, it's like just get conscious about what you're doing and I'm trying to share my conscious life to inspire your journey, not to dictate and I offer in my work to lead by example.

As I'm getting conscious, I write blogs about what I'm getting conscious about and I share the journey with people. The brand is just to help people to understand the difference between an autopilot existence versus a conscious existence.

Because if you're not conscious then there are lots of things effecting your ability to live your best life that you're not even aware of. I talk about it in my TEDx, you know, the simple thing of breakfast, lunch and dinner. Something we all adhere to unconsciously.

There is no scientific evidence to show that we all need to eat three meals a day and then to make matters worse, we have consumer driven companies that have dictated what we eat at these meals. We eat bacon and eggs for breakfast and I always find it so funny on social media and people are like, breakfast for dinner.

It's like, well who said that was a breakfast meal? You know what I mean? I didn't question any of that until my back was up against the wall. But that's what Paleo Boss Lady is, the brand is really dedicated to consciousness and building community.

[0:29:02.7] AVH: I kind of love that too, like when you think about something as simple as the three meals and the fact that it's completely arbitrary, it doesn't necessarily make sense for everybody. I mean, some people could look at that and be like, "Jeez, that's like one of a million decisions I make in the day. This is overwhelming."

If there are so many things that don't necessarily have to be the way they are. You can look at it in an overwhelming way or you can look at it in a positive kind of fun, cool way. Look at all of the opportunities I have to make changes in my life to make it work better for me, right?

Maybe I don't want to eat lunch, maybe I don't want to have – whatever. Maybe I want to eat five times a day, I don't know. It's just, yeah, it's like reframing the way you look at it, taking a conscious look at what you're doing and making the changes work for you.

I mean, it's a great thing, it's not a bad thing.

[0:29:46.3] DC: You know, I was a little bit afraid in the beginning because I have a very strong connection to my culture and my culture was not pleased with some of the changes I was considering. You know, aside from knowing that part and believing that I needed to do this path, I found it to be very liberating.

Because I didn't realize how many things in my life I did that I didn't really agree with. I never thought about it, until I really looked at it, it's like, "Wow, I don't really think we need to eat three meals a day or I don't think I need an alarm clock."

I don't think that – you know, when I meditate, I have to sit with my legs crossed and my thumb and my middle finger joined together and be uncomfortable.

When I meditate, I'm lying on the floor because that's what was most comfortable to me. You don't have to be quiet meditating, you can count, you can walk out.

We all get to define these things, right? Yoga, my yoga you know, may look different than somebody else's yoga. I don't ever take pictures of myself doing yoga because my yoga is what my body needs.

It's just like dancing, we all have our own style of dance.

[0:30:49.4] AVH: Absolutely.

[0:30:51.2] DC: I just feel that you know, it's so liberating to define your life, what's your best life. I truly live my best life every day, all day, without question.

[0:31:01.4] AVH: So I have a little bit of New York Italian in me as well and I know a lot of Italian people. So I'd love to know from a personal perspective, what are some things – how do you reconcile being Italian and this diet that I mean granted again for you, it's more of a necessity but for people who are both Italian and want to work on some food health stuff, how do you reconcile that? What are some changes people can make? What are some reframing?

What are some ways you can look at it where you can still enjoy culturally and food wise something that's so crucial to who you are but also trying to improve your health?

[0:31:38.4] DC: I think for me, that was one of the hardest and biggest struggles for me. I literally had to go back to the roots of my culture and find out where all of these norms came about that I was adhering to that didn't serve me or I believe didn't serve me. And look at how we got to where we were and then I married it to where I knew I wanted to go. So the perfect example is food. You know an Italian holiday is five hours on gorging on all the things I can't eat which are gluten, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant.

Things that I could no longer have, cheese that are very culturally were a part of my life and my family and I was so afraid that by changing the narrative around food, I was going to alienate myself from my family, especially around the holiday season. So, what I did was I went back to find out what the seven fishes tradition, all these traditions that we had and none of it had to do with food although food became the focus. It all had to do with family.

So once and being together and celebrating and also had a large religious undertone. So I thought, "Well okay so it's not what it appears to be about the food," because that's what we ever talked about is who's making what. Who is making the Monacadi, who's making this, who's

doing that and then gorging ourselves on food. I had to realize that, “Okay it is about the family being together and celebrating family and whatever else we were celebrating,” but also I still do this.

Even if friends invite me over, I showed up with healthier versions that I could eat of those family meals. So, I was able to say to my family, “I respect our traditions but I need to step away a little bit and this is what I can do and I want to share it with you.” So I invited them into my space by not saying, “Oh I can’t,” because a lot of people once they become conscious they’ll call the family and be like, “Well I can’t eat anything there so I am just not going to come.”

I never did that. What I did was I just showed up with enough food for myself and to share with everybody else. So, I think it’s recognizing what brings about these cultural norms and trying to honor those while creating your changes and if there are things like cheese which I am never going to be able to have again because dairy always bothered me.

Just understanding and my family doesn’t really understand that. They’re like, “There’s that fake cheese, Pasiano. I don’t want fake cheese. I don’t need fake anything right?” So it’s like, I don’t want to substitute it with fake that we also have to be comfortable with the agreeing to disagree and they get to – I appreciate the space that they’re in and my Italian culture has learned to appreciate the space that I am in, but it takes conscious work.

[0:34:26.3] AVH: That’s just another part of it. So I have some dear friends who in the paleo community who are managing MS and I’m really, really excited already to share this podcast with them but I’d love for you to talk a little bit about the difference between what would you consider a standard paleo diet and the Wahls Protocol that you followed, that had such an impact on your health.

[0:34:50.6] DC: I would love to. In the beginning, I just did what Dr. Wahls said, she didn’t have a book or anything. So I went by exactly what she said on her TEDx which was paleo diet with nine cups of fruits and vegetables. So it’s three cups of leafy greens, three cups of sulfur rich vegetables which would be a broccoli, onions, cauliflower and things like that and then three cups of rich colors, beets, cherries, things like that. So, I just started doing that exactly as she said.

Now the Wahls Protocol has developed to be a little bit, you know there is different levels and I can't speak to any of that because I was using the Wahls Protocol 18 months before she even had a book. So I literary just did and I still to this day. People were always like, "Well did you do this? Did you do that?" I'm like, "I just did what she said on the TEDx," even though I have read her book five thousand million times and I'm on the Dr. Wahls Board.

We are close friends, I visit with her all the time. I mean she's my hero, mentor and friend. It's my version and then I have grown to marry a lot of Dave Asprey's Bulletproof ideas, fasting, intermittent fasting, starting my day with Bulletproof coffee. So my body is Biohacked to what works for me although Dr. Wahls, Bulletproof, Mark Susan, Mark Celiac, these people have influenced me greatly and I do a little bit of everything. I'm fasting now for 72 hours.

I fast every day 12 hours, these are all things that I just continue to bio-hack my body. So it's an evolution. I just gave up all things with maple syrup and honey. Next year I am giving up nuts because they have high mold. So every year I have health care goals. So it's an evolution and I am truly bio-hacked but Dr. Wahls Protocol is paleo with nine cups of fruits and vegetables in the layman's terms.

[0:36:43.1] AVH: That actually sounds pretty good because I do know people and this is a generalization but a lot of times there is still that like, "Paleo is basically like Atkins. Paleo just basically is eat a lot of meat." So it sounds like without getting too into rules it's like paleo but just eat a lot of fruits and vegetables, which is really what we should be all aiming to do anyway. So that makes a lot of sense.

[0:37:03.9] DC: Well and how she came to that was really interesting. Dr. Wahls took it back to the first medical books every written, when they were still using herbs and there weren't drugs like we see now and it was all about – Hippocrates hit the nail on the head right? "Let food be thy medicine." That food can either be medicine or poison. So Dr. Wahls studied the mitochondria, which are the powerhouse of the cells, and what she did was she figured out what the mitochondria need to thrive.

And then she transferred that into what foods can deliver that. Now the reason why it is nine cups is because Dr. Wahls was reporting on what it took for her. Now she's six feet tall, so it's really somewhere between six and nine cups for everyone. You know I average probably about seven cups of complete cups a day because I am not six feet, I am five seven. I think I am five six now because you start shrinking. But anyway, this is the only protocol that is based around providing food at the cellular level.

And it is also the only protocol that has actually been tested on humans. So she has done clinical trials and now is funded by the MS Society to do clinical trials, comparing her protocol to others to see. So that's what makes the difference. It's actually eating at the cellular level.

[0:38:22.4] AVH: Okay, so you just as an aside, you aren't going to be at the Bulletproof conference next week are you in Pasadena?

[0:38:28.5] DC: I'm so sad because I am supposed to be there and I just informed them yesterday. I do a tour and the problem is that because I have to follow the weather and I drive all over the country by myself, it would have kept me back in California three weeks longer than I could be. Because the request for me to meet people on tour are getting so great now, that I only have a short window that I can travel around doing this.

So I would be unable to serve the community in the way that I choose to, by going to that conference. So I made a very difficult choice. This is the third year I've been asked to be there that I've not been able to do that, so it's gut wrenching. But Bulletproof are big – they support all the work that I do very much. I am really grateful to Dave and his team.

[0:39:20.9] AVH: Yeah that's great. I interviewed him for the podcast recently and I am actually going out to that conference for the first time this year. So I would have loved to meet you in person but I am sure we'll find another time to do that. But I guess that leads me to my next question, what is a general day/week in your life like? I mean it seems, like you said, your life fits in a car pretty awesome. You travel a lot, you are obviously very light on your feet with that.

But then you're also, as you said in the beginning, very beholden to your body's challenges and you always want to make sure that health is first and so how do you manage to have a tour

where you are driving and talking to people and out all the time and seem able to have that energy and be able to take care of yourself. How does that work?

[0:40:07.8] DC: It's amazing because I have to tell you, Dr. Will Cole who I love and Dr. Terry Wahls are both huge parts of my life, when I announced that I was going to do this tour they both pulled me aside and they're like, "We are kind of concerned how are you going to do this? What's going to happen with your health?" And I'm like, "I think I got it" but I heard what they were saying and I didn't discount it. I just in August had my yearly blood work done with natural path and my functional medicine doctor.

And I not only have MS, I have Epstein-Barr, I have adrenal fatigue and I also have Hashimoto's, which was very common for people with autoimmune because they usually have more than one. When I left on tour the Hashi was very active. My Epstein-Barr was very active, my adrenals were shot and MS was pretty silent. I just have my blood drawn and everything was silent. My numbers, everything, inflammation has gone down, everything is better.

So what everyone feared is exactly I am actually doing better living on the road. What is a typical day look like for me? Well for most people I follow my own personal circadian rhythm which means that I go to bed on average at 8:00 at night and I wake up between three and four AM. When I wake up, I make Bulletproof coffee right away or coffee with fat in it right away and about half way, if I am halfway done with my coffee, I use cannabis for the treatment of MS.

I have my cannabis and then the next thing I do is I dance. I dance like I am in the club at 5:00 in the morning and that helps me get my mentals right and it also helps me to talk to my body. Like, "Okay body what do I got to focus on?" And then from there, I jump onto a yoga mat and I do what it seems my body would like for me to do. I also use balls for self-mayo fast and release. So I roll on balls pretty much from head to toe. So that's on average about an hour and a half in the morning.

So that's my morning and then I will get onto social media and do that. Then for me, my tour is basically a free tour. My brand does not make any money, I just try and cover the cost of touring. I don't participate in affiliate relationships to make money. I basically am a missionary. The way I

run what I do, I live with strangers, anyone that invites me to come and live with them. I live with them and I share with them everything that I do.

All my tools so if I am living with someone usually between 11 and one will be the first time that I will come out of the bedroom or wherever it is I am living and offer myself to help them. I usually give them about four or five hours a day and I cook all my own food. I am a five-star rated chef so I cook all my own food. I meditate during the day, I laugh every day. I have joy every day, I have no stress in my life every day and I basically honor my body.

At night before I go to bed there is usually an hour and a half of some sort of self-care because I have used my body all day, I have to reward it for what it afforded me. Nowadays when I am driving, I have to do three hours of self-care in the morning to be able to drive that far and then I have to do another hour and a half on the other end. That is four and a half hours of yoga, stretching and self-mayo fast release to be able to get my body because even though I still have MS and I manage my symptoms.

My body doesn't like repetitive motions, so although it will let me drive for eight hours, my foot going from gas to brake, gas to brake doesn't come with me having to stop every hour and a half to roll, stretch my calves. So a drive that would take somebody five hours will take me about eight or nine hours because I can't just go and drive. I have to do and then I fast, fasting. I have to fast for 12 hours every day, 16 hours twice a week.

So these are all things that I am doing all the time. When I am with people I am very strict about what I'm willing to do and what I'm not willing to do, so that I can save my body. How many hours of time I am willing to give them when I am there. Then I do scheduling, like I just came from two days in Zion National Park and two days in Moab where I didn't speak to anyone. I didn't socialize and I just retreated using aroma therapy.

Candles, meditation, you know I just increase that and I started that after 72 hours of fasting. So these are all the things that I do because I am on tour now until February and I know that I needed to give my body three days of fasting and four days of solitude and nature to be able to do the work that I need to do from now until February. Then when I get back in February I will take that whole month off and I won't do anything.

[0:44:58.8] AVH: Okay, what do you listen to or do while on those long drives?

[0:45:03.9] DC: I'm like a freak. I dance and sing like a maniac and I realized that I am really stuck in the 70's. I think it's because in the 70's I was free from MS. I got diagnosed in the 80's. I was free from MS and I was raised, my parents although I'm from Philadelphia, we had always had a beach house and I have lived at the beach my entire life because when I moved to California I moved to Venice Beach and the 70's are beach music.

Every 70's song on at beach and bringing it to New Jersey, loving life so I mainly listen to the 70's and just drive around and I don't listen to any – I give my mind, sometimes I drive with nothing and I have my dog with me the whole time.

[0:45:49.6] AVH: Okay, that's good so you have some company. I don't think the 70's are a bad decade to be stuck in if you are going to be stuck somewhere. I think that's good.

[0:45:56.0] DC: I am stuck in the 70's and my daughter is a professional singer so a lot of times I listen to her because I miss her.

[0:46:01.8] AVH: Very cool. Talk to be about the Taking It To The Streets Tour. What exactly are you doing? You're meeting with folks, you're talking, what's the tour all about?

[0:46:11.7] DC: Well I mean I was on the yoga mat one day and being Paleo Boss Lady and managing that brand, I just kept getting the same questions over and over again. I just decided that the best way that I can serve the community is to just sell everything I have, throw it in my car and just go live with strangers. So basically all people have to do is email me at Paleo Boss Lady or contact me somehow and ask me to come and live with them.

And it's a no judgment free tour, we do accept donations and I am grateful for the donations I receive because I wouldn't be able to do the tour without it but you don't have to. I basically will come and live with you. I will spend three nights, two days is the maximum that I will spend with people. I get into your home and basically it's up to you.

I say to you, "What are your objectives while I'm here? I am a five star chef. I'm a miracle, I'm the most healed person I know from MS. I have a masters in community psychology, I'm an entrepreneur, what do you need? I've got a bag full of 54 years of stuff, whatever you got it's yours."

So I just help people however they want me to help them and I have been doing this tour. It was a year, April, I have travelled 33,000 miles in a year. I also do cooking classes and talks along the way. I have done a TEDx, lots of things. I just support the community in any way. So about one third of the people that reach out to me has some sort of a disease or dying of some form of illness.

One third of the people have a mental issue that they're dealing with, it's not physical at all and then one third of the people that reach out to me are literary, "I just want to get healthy. I've been sick my whole life," or "I turned 50 and my body doesn't work as well," whatever it is or I am an athlete and I want to take it up a notch. So it's really everyone and my tour is booked with, I don't even know. The last time I counted I had a 100.

I get about six new requests a week, there is over a 100 people waiting for me to come and help them and when I do come to your home, Paleo Magazine has been a huge support since day one, 12 vendors come with me. So all of my favorite vendors arrive at your doorstep. It's like Oprah's Christmas because you get 15, most bloggers, people that do what I do, I mean I do things a little bit differently. They have affiliate relationships meaning that if they say to you:

"Oh Bulletproof Coffee," and you click on the link and buy Bulletproof coffee they get paid. I don't participate in any of that. Instead I went to all the vendors and said, "Hey I'm a missionary. I'm just trying to change the world. What you have, what your products are, your magazine, this has changed my life. Would you be interested in sending product to the houses that I go to and let them have this experience and then let them decide if they want to continue buying your product and if they do, you keep all the money. I don't want any money," and that's how we do it.

I am grateful to have vendors such as some vendors that actually also provide me, the majority of them provide me with funds every month, to be able to do the work that I do. Whether they pay for my gas, some people pay for my dog, they pay for hotel rooms every month because

sometimes I was coming to Boulder for the Grain Free Event. I had to stay in places to get here because my home is in California. So when someone invites me to places, a lot of times I have to spend a night in a hotel.

Or usually I rent the cheapest thing I can find like an RV or whatever it is and businesses help me with that. So that's what my tour is and then I build communities. So I don't just come to you and then leave you and be like, "Alright see you. I just hung out and helped you. Now I am going to leave you to fend for yourself." When I leave, we set up a community for you. So not only am I available to you but I know enough people throughout the world that can help support you through this journey.

Whether they are also people that are trying to get conscious or whether they're groups of individuals. It could be someone in your neighborhood, someone virtually, or a big company that can help you. So I usually don't leave without giving you a big community that you didn't have before I got there.

[0:50:17.6] AVH: Right, so how often if you are going to someone's home, how often is it just like an individual and their family, or can they invite a bunch of people and it's like a big town hall or how does it usually manifest?

[0:50:32.5] DC: Well that's a great question. Typically what happens is I offer people to set up – if they are interested in having me talk to a group I'm willing to do that. They just have to set up everything because doing the tour and being a miracle is hard enough work for me and then they can do cooking classes. So, I provide them with a menu and a shopping list and I am willing to host three hour cooking classes. I'd say probably 75% of the homes I go in, host cooking classes.

That usually have anywhere up to 20 people so that helps people too and then I give a talk with the cooking class. You get a talk and a cooking class and again, it's all free or donation. I mean the food per head averages about \$15. So either you can invite people and they could pay the \$15 a head or hostess sometimes will say, "No we'll buy the food and we'll absorb that." So the most people would spend will be \$15 if they wanted to come to something for me.

Otherwise everything and that's a cooking class, you're going to get a full meal plus an education and then talk. So I do a lot of stuff with grocery stores, coffee shops, cross fits. Anyone that wants to invite me to give a talk, I do them all for free again and sometimes we'll have a 100 people show up and sometimes we'll have five people show up. You'll never know but change happens one person at a time. So when I come to live with you yes, some people have had me go to their employers.

To their schools like one woman who invited me not only had me come to their company and give a talk but they simulcast me all over. They are an international company, it was seen by 10,000 people, one talk.

[0:52:08.1] AVH: Yeah, that's amazing. Can you talk about how you came to do your TEDx talk? How did that come about?

[0:52:15.5] DC: Five years on working on literary. TEDx has changed my life obviously, Dr. Wahls, Brene Brown, so many TEDx's overtime has inspired my journey and I always wanted a TEDx. So I started applying in California, the state that I was living in and then I applied, I forget, Portland. I applied to a couple of different states and it just – the food as medicine part no longer was appropriate for TEDx. They even have a black thing over Dr. Terry Wahls TEDx saying that this is not sanctioned by TED.

I guess there is a fine line between their concerns about legal liability I would assume. So I knew that food as a medicine talk probably wasn't going to fly. Then Wilmington, Delaware is where I left sick and afraid and became disabled. I had an award-winning company there. It was very well known in the state and was one of the biggest employers at one time there and so I thought, "Oh Wilmington," when they got their TEDx.

I'm like, "You know what? It would be really great if I could do it there" and someone of the board of directors that TEDx happened to be also the chair of the MS society that I was on, knew my journey. There were two other people that I know that were very connected in Delaware that also were involved in this TEDx. I applied and they went to the man that runs that franchise who is an exceptional human being and talked to him and he granted me the TEDx,

which was a life changing experience for me and I am very grateful for that experience. It was a dream come true.

[0:53:57.5] AVH: Right. So we're almost coming to the end here unfortunately. I'd love to have you talk for the rest of the day but we'll end it here soon. I just love as we wrap up for you to talk about and I think you've articulated it quite well during the course of our talk, but what is the most rewarding part of this for you?

What are you hoping to achieve both for yourself and for the people that you connect with? And it seems to me that you live very much in the present. And you are grateful for the day that you have but would you ever think about where you see this going or evolving in the coming years and where you see it going?

[0:54:35.1] DC: I'm working really hard to get an actual recreational vehicle to be able to continue touring until I am 60. So that would help my body quite a bit because moving in and out of people's homes every couple of days is physically taxing on me. Just think about packing, unpacking, packing, unpacking. So I don't see my tours ending. My personal goal in this tour is to change the way Americans think about health care and I was just voted one of the top 50 people in America changing the way Americans think about health care, by the Organic Authority.

So I believe that it is working and getting awards from Paleo Magazine for my tour, all of these help. What motivates me to do this is that I was very unfortunate like I mentioned, I blew through \$2.5 million in liquid assets. I almost lost everything only because I have MS and I look at my brothers and sisters – I'm sorry, I do get emotional and what about people that don't have these chances? What about people that don't know what TEDx's are and things like that?

I just can't look at myself in the mirror knowing what I know about health care and not be of service and that's what motivates me, is my love of mankind and the final thing is, everything I do is to make my daughter proud of her mom.

So I am motivated because when I'm gone, I just want my daughter when she sees some of the things that I am able to do to be able to be like, "You know what? My mom did that" like, "My

mom helped with that.” Because MS took a lot of things away from me. And I wasn’t able to be there for her the way I always wanted to be. I’m just trying to make up for that by making her really proud.

[0:56:12.5] AVH: That’s so amazing. Diane thank you so much for giving us your time today. Your story and your mission is incredible. I mean that’s all I can say. It is truly unique and I really do think that this podcast is going to help people. I mean you said if you can only help one person, you’ve already helped and inspired me, really. So thank you so much for being so open and sharing. It really, really means a lot.

[0:56:35.5] DC: Well thank you so much for asking me. I mean Paleo Magazine has just been so nice to me and I am just so grateful and I’m really honored that you guys even consider me. Thank you so much.

[0:56:46.3] AVH: You deserve it. Okay before we go, where can our listeners and folks who want you to come and chat with them or they just want to learn more, where can they go online to find out more about you?

[0:56:57.2] DC: You can go to paleobosslady.com. You can find me at Paleo Boss Lady on everything. I’m most active on Facebook and Instagram. I have a newsletter, I have a blog that comes out and you can reach out to me. I answer everyone that reaches out to me. You will hear from me within 24 hours and you can email me at v@paleobosslady.com. I am of service to all of the community and I have dedicated myself to all of our brothers and sisters everywhere. So please don’t ever hesitate to reach out at any time.

[0:57:24.9] AVH: Awesome, okay we’ll make sure that’s all up in the show notes too that people can find you easily. So again, thank you so, so much. Enjoy your weekend and hopefully we’ll be in touch and we’ll get to meet in person soon. I would love that.

[0:57:36.5] DC: I hope so. Namaste Ashleigh. I really appreciate our time together.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:57:44.0] AVH: Alright, thank you for listening and if Diane touched you with her words like she did me, feel free to reach out to her really on social media and give her a follow. I know that she would love to hear from you and connect with you because that's just the kind of person she is. So that's that. Other news, I don't know if you have been following our social media, which you should be, but we just announced our 2017 Holiday Cookbook.

It's available on stores and it's on our website and it has more than 70 paleo friendly holiday dishes that all look amazing, like baked pork chops with sautéed pears, slow cooker cranberry chicken, pumpkin apple pudding parfait, say that five times fast, cinnamon spice cookies, sausage stuffed squash, paleo eggnog of course and that's just the tip of the iceberg. So definitely go check that out, go get your copy and if you make any of these amazing dishes, tag us on social media with the #paleomagrecipe.

And we might repost you, which should be cool but also I just want to see all the delicious food you are making because I'm into it. That's it, so make sure you're subscribed to the podcast, Paleo Magazine Radio on iTunes so you can check out next week's episode which is with Devyn Sisson, the Daughter of Mark Sisson but also a cookbook author and Primal Kitchen Restaurant owner. So she's going to talk to us about her own health and fitness journey.

What it's like growing up when Mark Sisson is your dad, also her growing business and about her struggles with orthorexia which I think is a topic that could be with a lot of interest to some of the type A health and fitness obsessed out there and you know who you are. So yeah, I think it will be helpful and I hope that you join me next week and until then, take care.

[OUTRO]

[0:59:24.8] 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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