

EPISODE 195

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:10] AVH: Alright, Happy New Year everyone. I'm glad you're back with me and listening to the Paleo Magazine Radio Podcast. Maybe it's part of your New Year resolutions to listen to more awesome podcast, I don't know, if that so I fully support that plan and I feel like I have this conversation every year but how you guys feel about New Year resolutions. I feel like people are all about it, they have one every year ready to go or people think that they're kind of silly I guess and if you really feel strongly about making a change, you'll do it regardless of what time of the year it is.

And, you know, people make those jokes about the gym being packed in January and empty by March and maybe I'm secretive about that before too. But I don't think there's anything wrong with it. I think sometimes people just needed tangible fresh start in order to kick off a habit change. People find it difficult understandably to enact a serious and long term behavioral change just right out of nowhere. Sometimes you just need that kind of fresh start and nothing fresher than a New Year right, so with that said does anyone have any health and wellness related resolutions that they want to share with us? You can let us know at Paleo Magazine or my personal page @themusclemaven. Maybe you have some questions about how to get started or what kind of resolutions you'd like to move forward with.

So if you have any, let us know and maybe we can round them up and talk about them in a future podcast. I think it will be fun. Alright, so on to today's show, in my opinion if you care chocolate is one of the best things in life and there are so many amazing options that are Paleo, dairy free, vegan, raw, infused with healthy herbs.

Now, basically turning what used to be a guilty pleasure in to a health food and yet they're still delicious, so it's kind of my personal quest to try all of this healthy chocolate, for experimentation purposes and when I got my hands on Addictive Wellness chocolates last year. I was immediately hooked. They're infused with different herbs and super foods that are known to address different things. So they've got a love chocolate that has ingredients that are known

to be aphrodisiacs and they have an energy boosting one, they have a calming one and they're all delicious.

So, today I'm talking with Sage. He's the founder about how he was able to make these chocolates both healthy and delicious. Talk about some of the properties of these ingredients and he also tells us why he's branding involves a unicorn and there is a reason aside from the fact that unicorns are awesome, so that's kind of a good story. He's also going to give you guys a discount to try some of the chocolate for yourself. So, if one of your New Year resolutions is to eat more chocolate, your welcome.

Anyway, he talks a little bit about some of his own healthy practices like cold water immersion and breath work and all that stuff, so this is going to be a fun one. So without further ado, here's my interview with Sage from Addictive Wellness.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:02:51] AVH: Sage, welcome to the podcast, thanks for being here.

[00:02:54] SD: Thanks so much for having me Ashleigh, I've been looking forward to this.

[00:02:57] AVH: Awesome and thank you for being so generous with your chocolates because I've been lucky enough to try them all and I'm a big fan and we'll get in to that a little bit more in our talk and I got to meet Anna Blanca at the Bulletproof Conference last month but unfortunately I didn't get to meet you there, so I'm glad we're getting a chance to chat now.

[00:03:16] SD: Yeah, I must have been running around in the different part of the hall the time you guys met and so I missed you but I'm really glad to hear you been enjoying the chocolates.

[00:03:22] AVH: Oh, yeah big time, big time. Cool so I guess before I talk about how much I love them maybe you could give us some background on you personally and Addictive Wellness and why you decided to start making your own chocolate.

[00:03:36] SD: Yes, so I grew up during the time where my parents felt that the best thing that you could do to have healthy kids and raise healthy kids was to feed them a diet that is organic and they were spot on there and then the next piece that was essential was to feed them a vegetarian diet and they were doing the absolute best they could with the very best intentions and we always do, right? Back in the 90s soya was a health food and so we were eating like Basmati rice and tofu five nights a week and they thought, they thought they were doing their absolute best and they have the best intentions but it probably wasn't absolute healthiest diet and so coming in to my teen years I didn't have amazing energy like my health was decent.

I didn't have any serious illnesses but I wasn't experiencing the ultimate in terms of life force and energy, and vitality that I felt surely must be possible. So, I started wondering like what could be done about this and a friend in my community turned me on to these mix of super foods that he produced. It was kind of a mix of HEB protein and spirulina and chlorella and other western herbs like milk thistle and things like that for cleansing the liver and I started taking it.

At that time, I wanted to be able to surf more and surf longer and be a better athlete. I was, you know, surfing was my passion and my drive and what motivated me to take that step from a health and I started feeling really interesting things. I would notice that I didn't know much at that time, I would blend it up with some frozen berries and banana and like some conventional orange juice and even just from that I would get this incredible clarity afterwards. I was detoxing and my mind was getting clear and I just had this realization that if this was out there all this time and I haven't experienced it, I've been missing out on this, so then what else have I been missing out on my entire life?

So this kind of sent me off down the rabbit hole researching and learning, and studying and first learning more about like raw foods at first and then into super foods and further along getting more in to traditional herbal systems from indigenous cultures and with every bit of new information I would learn I would incorporate new things in to my diet and in my life and I would feel better and that would even motivate me more to go out and learn more.

So, it was just this great cycle where I kept learning more, incorporating it, feeling better and it just got better and better and I didn't care at that time how things tasted. It didn't matter if it tastes like absolute dirt. If it made me feel good and it gave me energy and it was healthy for me

I was eating it, I didn't care. But, as soon as I started trying to turn a few of my friends on to this. They were literally throwing up trying to drink the smoothies that i would make for them.

[00:06:12] AVH: That sort of was time.

[00:06:14] SD: I think it's a combination of the taste and it was college and so I was always willing to help but my friends were a few of them were addicted to prescription medications and pain killers and so they have a lot of detoxing to do, so I think one it was gross and part two it was putting them to immediate detox that they couldn't really handle and the toxins were just taking the fastest way out which is back up through the mouth. But yes, I had this realization that if I was ever going to take this anywhere beyond myself and in any time you've experienced something so life changing, you wanted to share with other people.

So, I realized if I was going to spread this to anybody, my friends or even further than that I had to figure out a way to make it taste good. So, cacao was one of the first super foods that I was turned in to and I realized with cacao this was one thing where it was the first time I've seen a commonality between something that was supposed to be really healthy and also something people really enjoyed in the modern conventional food world. So that really turned on the lightbulb for me and I realized that this could be the ultimate gateway to getting people to eat something that is good for their health.

Cacao is an incredible source of antioxidants, really blows away anything else like acai or blueberrys it's not even in the same league as those. It's the highest natural source of magnesium, the highest natural source of chromium, the highest plant source of iron, an amazing source of zinc. It's got so much going on and then beyond just the mineral constituents and the antioxidants then you have really interesting neurotransmitters and things like anandamide, the bliss chemical or it's actually an MAO inhibitor so just got so many interesting properties and at the same time even people in a very conventional world in a conventional diet will get excited about things that are connected to chocolate.

So, I first learned to make chocolate about ten years ago in the jungles of Costa Rica and for me it was so exciting because I just saw all the potential that was there and over the years as I was learning more and experimenting more I got better in making chocolate. I got my

knowledge in the realm of nutrition and herbalism expanded and each step kind of keep going a bit further and a bit further and I was healing from Chronic Candida from having antibiotics throughout my teen years. So I really needed to have a chocolate that was sugar free and that is something that was just wasn't out there in the world. It wasn't available no matter how far I looked, there was no chocolate that was raw and sugar free.

So, I realized the only way this is going to happen is if I make it myself and so I tried a few times and I couldn't get the flavor quite right and then my girlfriend Anna Blanca who you mentioned, she really gave me the push and the support and told me "You can do it, there's got to be a way, you can figure this out" and finally got the chocolate to kind of where it is today and made it sugar free in a way that tasted really delicious. Because the sugar free sweeteners like Stevia, Xylitol they can often come off with not the best taste but if you can figure out just the right clean sources and the right proportions it comes out amazing.

[00:09:15] AVH: Tell me about, I just want to back out a little bit you said learning to make chocolate in Costa Rica, tell me about that.

[00:09:21] SD: Yes I was in my late teens and I was on a health retreat in Costa Rica and part of the whole week's experience was that they were bringing in locally harvested cacao and so at the same time I was learning to make it I was having the fresh chocolate. Most people don't even know what cacao looks like in nature and where this chocolate comes from. It's actually a pod that's about the size of a football. It grows straight out of the trunk of the tree rather than from the branches which makes it also really unique and you crack it open either with machete or you can just put a lot of pressure on the side of it and it will crack open and you have under this spiral usually 40 to 60 cacao beans that are covered in a sweet white fruit and that is fermented off but then you have this cacao bean in there and so it's an amazing thing that definitely everyone should try, cacao beans.

Just straight to get connected with the original food and then you go on to chocolate from there but yeah, it was an incredible experience that almost was a turning in my life to be able to experience cacao in nature where it comes from and then start looking how you can make it in to a food that everybody gets excited about.

[00:10:30] AVH: So, one of the cool things about your chocolate, you mentioned that you are infusing it with these super foods and different herbs and things that are good for your health but one thing that is cool is that you have different, basically, different flavors or different options that address different things. So some of them are labeled like for love, or focus, or tranquility and that informs what goes in to the chocolate, can you talk about that a little bit in how you did the sort of the experimenting or the research to figure out what kinds of super foods and herbs and things kind of go better with these different emotions or issues that people are trying to address.

[00:11:10] SD: Sure, so with chocolates there's every chocolate climates out there in the world has a line of different flavors and I wanted to do something a little more different just because people are motivated in initially by flavor but I think in a bigger picture people want to experience a greater life change and a greater experience that goes beyond just the taste and the smell and so I wanted to create a line of functional chocolates. Instead of different flavors each chocolate has a different formulation of herbs like Chinese and ayurvedic herbs that have been used for thousand of years, geared towards the different functions with energy, tranquility, focus as you mentioned, and different functions.

So, the basis of all these knowledge really stems back from my passion for the daoist herbal system and in the daoist system they have an interest in way of looking at health that's called The Three Treasures and The Three Treasures are they say what makes up your life. There are three treasures their names are Jing, Qi, and Shen. At first glance, may seem a little bit esoteric but as you dug deeper in to it, it's very natural and easy to understand and it actually makes a lot of sense. So that Jing, you look at this as the wax and the wick of a candle we're going to use the metaphor of a candle to understand this and the Jing is the wax in the wick it's the form, now your Jing in a way that you can understand it, it's like your savings account of energy.

It's what you inherited from your parents and it's your energy reserves so you probably know some people who have come in to life and they just had incredible energy and they could even do unhealthy things throughout their 20s, and 30s, and 40s and they just kind of laugh at us because we're living a healthy lifestyle and they're living unhealthy and they're just as healthy as we are because they have that core power to kind of blast through it all. They inherited a lot of Jing from their parents while on the other hand we've all known a lot of people who even though they try to do everything for their health they're still kind of weak and feeble and always dealing

with health challenges. These are people who didn't start off life with a good energetic inheritance from their parents and so they've got a lot more work to do.

Now, once you start with a certain amount you're always using out this Jing energy as you go through life, it's spelt J-I-N-G for anybody wondering, and using it up little by little but depending how you live you're using it up faster or slower and eventually your Jing runs out and you die that's the end of this life. So, what makes it go faster is any kind of excessive living or unhealthy living if you're on a conventional diet, if you're taking recreational drugs, if you are abusing yourself in anyway.

[00:13:40] AVH: Exercising too much maybe.

[00:13:42] SD: Exactly, so if people who are super exercisers, people doing ultramarathons – it's a great thing it's beautiful and courageous pursuit but it's not necessarily an interest of your longevity or overall wellbeing. You see so many people who are exercising all the time and they get a hormone test and their hormones are completely wiped out.

[00:14:01] AVH: Right.

[00:14:01] SD: We see this so commonly. So that is your core energy, you know, for guys if you're losing too much sexual fluid that's going to be a big leak on your Jing for girls it's not a problem, you guys get off easy.

[00:14:13] AVH: No pun intended no, yeah okay.

[00:14:16] SD: Right, so there's basically any kind of excess living. If you're working hard, if you're stressing too much not sleeping enough these are going to use up your Jing too fast and you're going to get depleted. This is how we see people end up with chronic fatigue an adrenal burnout. On the other hand if you're living on a well balanced life, not spending excess amounts of energy, you're using up that Jing little by little and there is also herbs that you can take to supplement this core kidney adrenal energy.

Then the second treasure is the Qi, so the Jing was the wax and the wick and then the Qi is the active part that is something that a lot of people I have heard of, it's the plain it's the moment to moment energy, vitality, cognitive function, immune system function, and this is basically your body's ability to extract energy from the food you eat and the air you breathe. So you are not going to have a big flame, a lot of moment to moment energy if you're just a little birthday candle.

See, always you want to start out looking at your Jing where you're using up your Jing too much and how you can build it. Then the third treasure, and this is called the ultimate treasure, because when we look at Qi, the purpose of a candle is not just to have a big flame but to give off a great light and that's the third treasure it's called the Shen. This is the ultimate purpose, it's your higher self, it's the lighting your eyes, it's your ability to have a positive benefit on other people. It's your ability to help the world. So imagine if you're in a poor state of health, if you're weak, if you've expended all your energy and you're in constant burnout, you will not be able to really have a great benefit on people around you and the world as a whole. So, the first place to start is building the Jing which is that core kidney adrenal reserve power.

[00:15:59] AVH: Okay, got it, alright well I will say as much as I love this chocolates. I love sweet stuff as much as the next person but I do really feel like the formula that you've got and the things you add to it, it really does taste like food and I struggle sometimes and feeling guilty about eating sweets or chocolate and stuff because I have a sweet tooth. I admit it that's who I am but I never feel guilty when I eat your chocolate and I really feel like, look it's not something that I'm going to eat it for lunch as my only nourishment every day for the rest of my life but I do still consider it a treat but it's not something that I think I'm giving up something for or I'm doing something bad. I'm just going to treat myself like it really does it feels like food so I think that's really cool.

But it's also delicious and it makes you feel good. One question that I have for you and I don't know if this is something that – it's just terms are sort of interchangeable but maybe you can speak to it. The idea of super foods and the idea of adaptogens like are they kind of interchangeable like what makes a super food, what makes something adaptogen. Do you have both in your chocolate, what are they? Kind of get in to that a little bit for me.

[00:17:06] SD: Yeah, I'm so glad you asked. So, there's definitely a difference, they're related but not quite interchangeable. It's really the potency I would say and the dose and the nutritional profile that makes the difference. When you're looking at super foods these are things that have incredible nutritional profiles and you would eat like you would eat a food and some examples would be chocolate for example as a super food, you have things like acai or Bpon or different chia seeds or hemp seeds that are really strong in their nutritional profiles.

When we get in to herbs now we are going to a smaller dose, greater potency but it's not something you could subsist on nutritionally. So this are things that have more narrow spectrum benefits in terms of you would have something like Lion's Mane Mushroom for example it's an incredible one for increase in cognitive function and also works in your immunity but it's not something that has a whole lot of calories to it or a macro or micro nutrients as much.

[00:18:08] AVH: Got it, okay. Which chocolate is the most popular, like which one are people buying at the most?

[00:18:14] SD: It's so interesting because for the first couple of years of our business it was always energy in the top position then came around the election time last year and about two months leading up to that tranquility –

[00:18:28] AVH: Tranquility.

[00:18:28] SD: And it's been in first place ever since, it hasn't turned back.

[00:18:32] AVH: That does not really surprise me I'm pretty sure it's funny because I always joke of how I'm not like generally very like mushy kind of like emotional person but my favorite one is totally the love one.

[00:18:45] SD: Oh nice.

[00:18:46] AVH: It just, I don't know, I mean there's mild differences right? Between all of them but –

[00:18:50] SD: Yeah, there are subtle flavor differences from the herbs but the dominant flavor you always pick up is the richness of the Arriba Nacional heirloom cacao but, yes, so interesting that you like the love one and it's so funny with the love because people perceive it differently but some people think it's like a sweet soft love heart centered chocolate. It does have some heart opening herbs like Reishi Mushrooms in there. They get you more out of your head and in your heart in the moment but predominantly it's an aphrodisiac chocolate, so we have things in there like [sistance + 00:19:20] and gelatinized maca some serious aphrodisiac herbs.

[00:19:23] AVH: Alright well that makes more sense then.

[00:19:26] SD: Yeah.

[00:19:26] AVH: And another thing that I love about your chocolate is the branding, you have a unicorn on your chocolate bars so talk to me a little bit about the branding and the creative process and what you are trying to really communicate with that.

[00:19:41] SD: Yeah, it's so funny a friend of ours actually when we are coming up and working in our logo in our product design and we didn't really have it figured out. Our friend Anna Blanca and I have this great friend his name is Trek and he was in Venice Beach, we happened to run in to him in the street and we were telling him about the challenges that we are going through with the design because he was a great artist and he said, "Well, you guys it's all about purity and clean ingredients and good intentions and honesty and integrity, you guys should be like white and gold and have a unicorn" and it just instantly clicked like "Yes, that's it, that's perfect." Leading up to starting our company, we run a contest on 99 Designs which is a really cool website where you can have a lot of people submit different ideas and compete for a price.

And so, we went through just dozens and dozens of different unicorn possibilities and one cool thing that we learned about the unicorn in the process is that its horn in myth and legend is made of a substance called alicorn and the property of alicorn is that you can take it and use it to turn poison in to healing elixir, which just was incredible. Because that's exactly what we love doing both in our products and recipes we put out and things like that is taking things that are supposed to be better for you and completely reworking them so you can still totally enjoy it and have it actually be not just health neutral and not bad for you but actually really beneficial.

[00:21:04] AVH: How perfect is that.

[00:21:04] SD: It's amazing I couldn't believe it when I read that.

[00:21:09] AVH: Right that works so well that I thought it's just because unicorns are awesome and everyone loves them but actually like a real connection there, that's pretty cool.

[00:21:15] SD: Yeah, and we only learned that after picking the unicorn but it was just like wow, what an incredible thing.

[00:21:20] AVH: It was meant to be. So you're expanding your product line too because you have these elixirs now that are drinking elixirs. Can you talk about those?

[00:21:27] SD: Yes, the idea for this really came from before we started Addictive Wellness I was sitting up elixir bars in five star hotels around the world where essentially we were introducing this concept of healthy indulgence to the world travelers. One of our favorite things we make for these people was hot elixirs where we would use like a Gynostemma tea as the base it's an upgrade to create adaptogenic herb and we would blend in different Chinese and ayurvedic herbal extracts and sweeten it with Stevia and have it come out tasting totally delicious and it would blow people away. You would get the healthy fats in there, you're getting the herbs, you're getting just no sugar coming in so it's not affecting your blood glucose and people are having amazing experiences with this and I wanted to figure out a way and I've been working on it for years to make these available to people anywhere in the world and do it in a way that is totally like as full proof as possible.

So, finally I really got it dialed to where we have this individual packets and they come in, in the flavors of cacao, chai, and caramel and all you have to do is mix it in a blender with some almond milk or coconut milk, un-sweetened and it comes out as a delicious drink. You can do a hot or cold either way and I'm still passionate about the power of this herbs and this is one of the most fun ways to be able to get in to people's bodies after chocolate of course.

[00:22:45] AVH: Right, right and these, the elixirs have similar ingredient profiles to like the energy chocolate in terms of what super foods or herbs are in them.

[00:22:54] SD: Yeah, so with these because we were going in in a flavor direction that we didn't go with the chocolates, we have these all directed towards focus and energy for the herbal formulation, so we have things in there like cordyceps which improves oxygen utilizations.

You're getting more oxygen to the blood, in the brain which is incredible for endurance and something any athlete should definitely be experimenting with and things like Lion's Mane and that is great for regeneration in the brain and regenerating the myelin sheath that is fatty coating that is on your nerves and the more myelin you have the faster signals can travel along the nerve and it's also very neuroprotective and you have things you know like a astragalus which is a great Chinese chi tonic improving moment to moment energy and that's another great one that strengthens the extremities especially the arms and the legs and it's a great immune tonic so you're protecting yourself at the same time.

[00:23:45] AVH: I see it I have the caramel one yesterday. I haven't tried the other two yet because I'm trying to like pace myself but I think it's a great hot chocolate replacement, I mean it's not even a replacement because they're very warming and sweet and tasty. But it's like a nice replacement from traditional maybe hot chocolate now that it's getting colder outside, it feels so nice it feels so cozy and it's really tasty.

[00:24:08] SD: And it's even something coffee drinkers can add as like a delicious creamer to their coffee because you're getting the herbs in there and with coffee because of the caffeine in there it actually helps to drive the herbs in deep breaths I mean coffee and chocolate actually have in common as vasodilators is that whatever herbs you take with them, they're going to get better absorbed.

[00:24:27] AVH: Alright so, that's what I'm doing tomorrow with my coffee. I'll keep you posted on how that goes. Tell me about this tonic elixir bars in hotels Anna Blanca was telling me about this and it seemed like a pretty cool job and a pretty cool concept that I have never heard of before so tell me a little bit more about what you were doing there.

[00:24:45] SD: Yeah, it first came about because I was working at the Erewhon tonic bar in Los Angeles which is a legendary health food store here in L.A. and the tonic bar there at the time was a place where you can come in off the street, talk to somebody who is a real expert with these herbs and have them craft something for whatever challenge you are dealing with have make something custom for you in the most amazingly delicious way possible that tasted basically like something that should be bad for you.

And, at the time when I was working there one day was sitting there at the bar and I was making him and his wife some drinks and they were kind of asking all these questions and I was just kind of half paying attention to them as I was working and making other drinks and cleaning the bar.

Eventually, coming towards the end of the conversation, “You know what I have the nicest hotel in Paris it’s a five star hotel. I want to bring you over and you can teach us how to make these kinds of stuff,” and I was like, “Yeah cool sounds good.” I didn’t think, you know, people say all kinds of things, I didn’t know what to believe and so I was just playing it cool and I figured I’d see if he actually emails me later and what the situation is and it turned out to be an amazing hotel called the Rama Soul if the Philippe Starck designed hotel in Paris just absolutely beautiful. I went over there and I realized first thing that these are French chefs deeply rooted in their culinary tradition and history and I’m coming over there with a mix of something that is like Chinese and Indian and American hippie.

This might be difficult for them to swallow. I have no idea how they are going to receive it. So I weigh in on the first day and kind of have had all the herbs with me and I had a meeting with the two main chefs and I realized I got to do something that will just totally capture them and blow them away.

So, these are two young guys and like in their late 20s really cool, cool guys and I made them the absolute strongest aphrodisiac elixir that I could. I said drink this, it was late in the day it was five or six p.m. Drink this go home to your girlfriends and come back tomorrow and we’ll get started and they came in the next day, with eyes like four inches wide just like “What did you put in there? This was amazing. Oh, man I can’t believe it.” And they are just blown away and they just had full trust in me from that moment on.

[00:27:02] AVH: What a cool, just how long were you doing that for?

[00:27:05] SD: So, I was there for a few weeks doing the training and then support afterwards is everything got going and then another one that we were able to do was in Australia in Sydney a place called The ADGE really neat little boutique apartment hotel where – it's a wild situation really one of those places where each room has its own butler ready to make your own custom tonic so that was another really funny one just a peak in to a world that is totally foreign to me but interesting to bring the herbs in there.

It's cool too share these kinds of ingredients in a way that people are going to enjoy, to a group of people who would normally probably never encounter it and just open their eyes up to this whole new world of possibilities.

[00:27:47] AVH: I just think it's such a cool concept too, especially in this age where juice, high end juice shops are everywhere and matcha bars are everywhere and bone broth places are popping up. It seems that it's something that could be kind of a next thing whether standalone or as part of a hotel or something else for people who are super interested in health, maybe don't always want to gather with a cocktail, right? Maybe sometimes they want to try something different and people who are in to experimenting and trying different things. Like if I was in a new city and at the school hotel I mean I have this like healthy elixir bar, I will be totally in to that and I know I'm not the only person. Anyway that's kind of, this is kind of a whole different side project but I'm just saying that's kind of a cool idea.

[00:28:32] SD: It's really exciting and there's more and more places like this coming up and to me these are the most potent ingredients in the world because not only do they have immediate benefits and make you feel really great, they clear your mind they help you focus, they give you great energy or if you take something maybe like holy basil or reishi mushroom it can help you really relax and get out of your head. But they also have this incredible long term cumulative benefits of building this deep core life force that just allows you to have such a richer life, when you don't have to worry about running out of energy or you don't have to worry that you can get sick or that you just don't have the power to achieve all your dreams. It just has so much life changing potential.

[00:29:08] AVH: Tell me some more about the formal training or research or learning that you did leading up to owning this work and starting your own company in terms of learning about herbs and adaptogens and things like that like and ayurvedic elements, what kind of training did you do?

[00:29:26] SD: So the vast majority of it was just my own self interest and passion and there's really like, there are schools that you can go to that will teach you some sort of traditional herbalism, you can learn at TCM but for me it was about getting out and experiencing it. So, for example I was traveling to Bali and studying there with mushroom experts and learning how they grew the reishi mushroom there on the coconut logs. I spent some time in China actually traveling to this some of this ancient Taoist temples where they have been practicing this kinds of herbalism for thousands and thousands of years then I also studied in neuron tea garden who is one of the original people to bring Chinese herbs as the Taoist tonic herbal system in to America back in the 70s. So it was just basically me rubbing us reaching out wherever I could pick up as much information as possible, reading books, studying online but most importantly experiencing the herbs over a period of years and years and years in my own body.

So, a lot of the herbs that we mentioned is great to mix them up in different smoothies and drinks but it's always a really good idea when you're first trying in a new herb, to have it straight and to have it on an empty stomach, so let's say you're going to try something like reishi mushroom for the first time. You want to get really high quality reishi mushroom either a tincture or powdered extract. You can just stir it up in maybe a couple of ounces of hot water and drink it like a tea and just feel how it affects your body do it on an empty stomach sure nothing else getting in the way, you're absorption will be great and just take time to sit down and the shifts in your mental state and how your body feels because you can read as much as you want in a book or you can be told things by me or by other people about how an herb works but nothing will ever compare to actually feeling it yourself.

[00:31:21] AVH: Right. So, for someone who is as in to this world as you are as knowledgeable, besides your own products what are some either practices that you do or foods that you eat or things that you do on a daily basis to help find balance and to assisting your health and just kind of overall well being. Do you have other tips or at least things that you do that work?

[00:31:46] SD: Sure absolutely. So, one of my favorite things that I've been doing this past few years is the Wim Hof, Method which is a combination of a certain breathing practice that you do for about 20 minutes combined with later doing cold water immersions and that has just been really transformational both in terms of my resilience to the cold my immunity, my mental function, my overall mental balance. Especially like this is something, basically you're maximizing the oxygen that gets in to your cells. You're maximizing your oxygen absorption and this has so many benefits in terms of how your mitochondria and how they're able to produce energy and you create what is called brown fat in your body, which is not what you would normally think of it as fat. But it's actually concentrates in like the chest area and the upper back.

It is non visible it's not something that is going to make you fat but it's called brown because it has a higher concentration of mitochondria which are brown by nature and this is a kind of tissue that is able to produce so much more energy and you combine that with progressively building up the cold. So you would start in the first week just adding 30 seconds of cold water at the end of shower then the second week you do a minute and you build up and eventually you just totally hooked on the cold. It just, it brings you to life, it makes you feel amazing and the one thing I've observed about it is it totally forces you to be in the moment, when you put your body in to that cold so fast and instantly it is just purely focused essentially on surviving and you're not worrying about anything else when you get in to a cold shower or into an ice bath.

You are totally there and present and aware, the purest meditation that you can have and eventually you're out doing what like I do is if I'm traveling somewhere new the first thing I want to figure out is where is the coldest natural body of water I can get in to here because it's so much fun. It adds a whole new depth to the experience because for me I hated cold before. I didn't like being in cold water. I was sensitive to cold and now that cold is the most exciting thing in the world for me.

[00:33:44] AVH: That's so cool. I guess it's about reframing how you feel about a certain stimulus, like a lot of people grow up and you live, you don't like being cold because it is uncomfortable but when you can train yourself to feel differently about it, the actual physical sensation may be the same but how you reach in to it is different.

I know I have done some cold therapy and the breathing stuff as well. I did a program that incorporates some of the Wim Hof Method in it. I did some ice bath work and I agree with you in the being in the moment that kind of, it's really incredible you can force your mind to override your bodies kind of signals a little bit, right? So your sending this ice bath –

[00:34:26] SD: Right, you're taking back control of your nervous system basically like your immediate response is to start like when you are in the cold water, heavy breathing and freaking out and if you can control the breath, you can control the nervous system. The breath is basically your most direct way to control the functioning of your nervous system. So, if you can control one you got the other.

[00:34:47] AVH: So, how often like on a weekly basis are you doing this and is it just sort of the cold showers and every once in a while you'll do an ice bath or how often you are doing it?

[00:34:58] SD: Yes, I tried to do the breathing practice every day but it usually works out to about four to five times a week that I'll do that in the mornings to start off and then cold showers constantly and then fortunately because we have a commercial kitchen, part of our facility there is that we have a commercial ice machine so I'm able sometimes when I'm coming home from making a chocolate to fill up a big plastic container with ice and come home and dump that in the bath tub. It works really great, that's awesome and everybody has access to it of course but for us here in Southern California that's about the coldest water that you're going to get.

[00:35:30] AVH: Nice, right, right, that's cool. Well, I know I actually watched a couple of your videos on your website and I am from Canada originally and I spent half of my time in Ottawa which is one of the coldest places in Canada. So if you really want to get a new body of water in and go somewhere that is refreshingly icy feel free to come up to Ottawa, I will welcome you and we'll take a dip and I think you would find it to your liking for sure.

[00:35:58] SD: Oh that's great, yeah. Anna Blanca's sister lives in Calgary so the next time we are up visiting I got to plan a little visit at Ottawa.

[00:36:04] AVH: Yes, yes keep that in mind. Okay, so one of the questions I want to ask you about the company is I notice on the website that you also donate to a number of environmental organizations. Can you talk to us about why you do that, why is it important, which one you chose?

[00:36:19] SD: Absolutely, so of course I think in this community we all realize the importance of taking care of the planet and being good environmental stewards. If we just run them up with the planet and don't conserve our natural resources and take care of the direction that environments moving in. There's not going to be any more chocolate first and foremost and there's nothing about -

[00:36:36] AVH: I don't want to live in a world where there is no chocolates, so –

[00:36:38] SD: Exactly so we're looking out both for the planet and for our interest here you could say but as a surfer and somebody who loves spending time in nature, taking care of the planet is so central to what I feel is my reason for being and kind of one of my strongest driving motivations in life. So, we ever approach it for a number of different directions. One of the organizations we donate to is Oceana because obviously taking care of the ocean is such a central and vital component of the entire earth ecosystem that it's really important to put energy and money in support there.

As well as, The Ocean Clean Up, which is a project that is started by a young gentleman actually who developed a revolutionary system for cleaning plastic from the ocean and that is something that they're launching pilot programs of now and we've been really supporting that noble concept early on because the plastic situation in the ocean is of course we've all seen out of control. One of the lesser known organizations that we donate to is Bee Friendly and this is run by Paul Stennet, who is an incredible mycologist and it's something that he got going to save the bees.

The unique direction that he has gone with this is he's really analyzed all the different challenges that the bees are facing and created extracts of medicinal mushrooms that can be given to bees to enhance their immune system to be more resilient against things like the

horrible pesticides that are destroying them and their grow mites and all these different kind of challenges that they face he is essentially given them more tools to fight back, it is just amazing.

[00:38:11] AVH: That's awesome, yeah, that's very cool. I can tell one of the things about that I learned from this podcast and from interviewing people who own their own companies and are trying to put out products that are good for people and make people feel better is they're genuine people who are really trying to do something good and that, that shows, and that kind of dedication to, you're trying to pass a certain level on and help other people and other organizations who are doing good things and I think that customers and people out there they pay attention to that stuff too. So, I think that's really cool.

[00:38:43] SD: Absolutely and you can be in the most tremendous state of health but if people and planet around you are all suffering you're not really going to enjoy that much.

[00:38:50] AVH: Absolutely.

[00:38:52] SD: So and I think when you get in to a better state of health, you also get in to more of an abundance mindset, where you feel more comfortable giving and that's anywhere if you're struggling and just barely hanging on to life of course it's going to be more natural to be hesitant in a way that because you're just holding on to any bit of life force you can get. But I think once you reach a more incredible set of health you can feel like you can do more to support the community around you.

[00:39:18] AVH: So I know that you guys just came out with these elixirs which are awesome and have people, what's the feedback then on those by the way are people pumped about them?

[00:39:24] SD: It's been so fun. One of the first things we did when we had just come out with them is we put out an open invitation on our Facebook page to any of our Facebook fans in L.A. could come over for the day and we were doing first initial taste test results on camera and we have actually now on our YouTube if anybody wants to check them out and it's been so much fun. It's so great to see the smiles that puts on people's faces and see people posting about it on social media and just I love having products that make people happier that not only does it

make them long term happy because they're doing something healthy that is benefiting their psyche and their mind and their emotional balance but it's making them immediately say, "Wow this is amazing" and that is such a rewarding thing to have happening.

[00:40:10] AVH: Yeah, if you want to make people happy being in the chocolate business you are in the right place I think.

[00:40:16] SD: Absolutely.

[00:40:19] AVH: Aside from the elixirs is there any other kind of exciting news on the horizon you could tell us about it doesn't have to be about Addictive Wellness but any kind of cool exciting things you have coming up.

[00:40:25] SD: Yeah, so actually we have a new chocolate coming out soon and it even be out by the time this podcast gets out there. It's going to be called Recharge and it's exactly centered on what we are talking about early on the conversation about the Jing that core kidney adrenal reserve energy, your savings kind of energy and it's going to have the most powerful Daoist tonic herbs in there for essentially putting in more money in to your savings account of energy.

[00:40:50] AVH: Cool.

[00:40:51] SD: So that one is coming up and I'm really excited we will send you some of that as soon as we get it.

[00:40:54] AVH: Awesome, yeah, that's great. Cool and I remember offline you are saying that you're going to be very nice person and give our listeners a little bit of a discount if they want to try out some of your products right.

[00:41:06] SD: Yeah, I would love to absolutely so you guys can use the discount code paleomag P-A-L-E-O-M-A-G for 10% off on addictivewellness.com and really, really looking forward to you guys all trying our stuff.

[00:41:17] AVH: Yay, yummy okay, remind everybody where they can follow you guys on social media and online to go get themselves some chocolate.

[00:41:24] SD: Sure, so we're Addictive Wellness on Facebook and Instagram and then our website is addictivewellness.com and always if you guys have questions feel free to reach out and would love to connect with you.

[00:41:35] AVH: Awesome well Sage thank you so much for taking the time today. I love your company, I love what you do and it's been great to learn more about it and let's definitely stay in touch and say hi to your lovely girlfriend for me.

[00:41:46] SD: Thanks so much Ashleigh it's been a pleasure thanks for having me on.

[00:41:48] AVH: Right, take care.

[00:41:49] SD: Bye, bye.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:41:53] AVH: Alright thanks for listening everyone, next week we are talking to the founder of Chomps, it's a Paleo beef jerky stick company that you probably seen in Trader Joe's and basically everywhere else. They were also a multiple best of Paleo Magazine award winner last year so these guys know what they're doing. They know their way around some Paleo beef jerkies so I hope you join us next week and as always if you enjoy the podcast please take a hot minute to leave us a five star rating or a nice review on iTunes. Just think of it as your New Year's good deed for us. So, thanks again and I hope to see you next week and Happy New Year.

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