

EPISODE 212

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:10] AVH: All right everybody, welcome to Paleo Magazine Radio. Question of the day, how do you guys feel about nootropics? Natural, cognitive, enhancers and really, natural supplements in general. I know that a lot of paleo die hards kind of feel that these stuff isn't, well, it isn't paleo and it's generally unnecessary if you're maximizing a healthy lifestyle and eating right, sleeping, getting outside, all the good stuff. But some of us fall into the paleo plus category where we like to experiment a little bit.

Do a little bio hacking here and there. Personally, I fall into that latter category, I love and live the paleo lifestyle but I also come from bodybuilding background where people are always kind of looking for the edge and while I never partook in the enhancements that a lot of bodybuilders tend to gravitate towards, I'm always looking at natural ways and natural supplements to help especially with recovery and inflammation and sleep quality.

Especially sleep quality for me, that's one of my personal issues. I'm a recovering melatonin abuser and I'm a huge fan of CBD and if you want to know about the health benefits of CBD for sleep and relaxation, actually, check out my interview with the founder of Jambo Superfoods. That's a CBD product company. That's Episode 198 of Paleo Magazine Radio and you can find out all about CBD.

I'm a big fan of trying like adaptogens, mushroom supplements, natural kind of herbal remedies because it's fun and you know, it's just kind of another way to sort of learn about your body and improve your health and I also kind of feel like, if I'm going to have a protein shake or if I'm going to drink coffee or if I'm going to do whatever, I might as well seek out the best quality options with added benefits and just kind of see how it goes. It usually doesn't hurt.

I go into these things with an open mind. Not trying to be a super hero, I'm just trying to find that little edge whenever you can. Anyway, I've always been kind of weary of the nootropic side of things because I feel like it's rare to really find someone who has found like a quantifiable tangible improvement in their cognitive ability.

By taking a pill with some natural herbs with adaptogens. How do you quantify that? Are you suddenly writing more? Can you concentrate better in meetings? Do you just feel like you're in a better mood?

These things are hard to quantify and determine what exactly is causing the improvements because maybe it's the nootropic you're taking or maybe it's a placebo effect or maybe you're just sleeping better or you cut down on caffeine or maybe it's summer so you're not feeling your winter [inaudible] anymore.

I mean, there's so many reasons that you could be improving your performance, right? Whatever that reason is, it's good. It just makes it hard for me to get back behind nootropics as like a specific sort of deciding factor in improving your cognition.

I'm absolutely still open to trying them and I do try them, that's just kind of where I'm coming from. Take that with a grain of salt, I'd love to kind of hear what you guys think about nootropics and cognitive enhancers. I mean, if you've had any major improvements or success stories, definitely let me know.

Talk to me on Instagram, @themusclemaven or @paleomagazine and let me know if you're having some success or if there's some cool companies or products that I'm missing out on. Anyway, that's what this podcast episode is all about. Talking to the cofounder of Natural Stacks, his name is Roy Krebs and Natural Stacks is a supplement company that is dedicated to helping improve your physical and mental performance using high quality, open source ingredients, they're very transparent in their products.

Including, providing ingredient traceability, full label disclosure and third party lab testing which you may know is actually extremely rare in these supplement industry. Many, we could even say most supplement companies don't provide this information, they don't have to. As a result, we're often paying for things that we're not getting and we're being deliberately misled in some cases about what's in our supplements.

But these guys at Natural Stacks go above and beyond to be transparent and open in an industry that doesn't yet demand those things and that's why I think they're special. I use a bunch of their products actually, even things like their magnesium and vitamin D supplements. They go a lot further than that and they offer stacks, hence Natural Stacks which are bundles of different products that help address specific needs, whether it's cognition or whether it's muscle growth or recovery.

We go into all of this, how they operate, what they offer, Roy talks a lot about neuro transmitter function and why that's important, the different neurotransmitters that we have in our brains and what the implications are if we are either maybe over stimulated or under stimulated in any of those areas. Also, how you can work with your body's natural inclinations rather than fight against them which we get more in to in the interview so you'll get it.

They also offer a discount so if you're convinced after my chat with Roy, and you want to try some stuff, he gives a great discount and that's at the end of the show and in the show notes, you might want to take advantage of that.

Okay, but before we get into this fun interview, I want to read an iTunes review because these things make my day and I think that the people who take the time to leave a nice helpful review deserve to be recognized because in this day and age, I feel like people are just generally more motivated to review things that they're unhappy with, rather than happy with.

People don't realize that taking the time to spread some positivity and put some positivity out into the world, that compounds and it matters to people. It's helpful for me because it helps me figure out what I'm doing right and I want to recognize that.

If you hear your review on the podcast, make sure that you reach out to me on Instagram, @themusclemaven or @paleomagazine, let me know and I will send you some paleo mag swag, you'll get a t-shirt or a water bottle, something awesome because you deserve it.

This review that I'm going to read today is from theprimalsavage and I'm already a fan of this person and their handle because that's an awesome handle. The primal savage says, "I have a short list of podcasts that support my continued quest for optimal health and paleo magazine

radio with Ashley is one of my go to sources. I've gained lots of knowledge and added something to my daily activities. Extending your lifespan is good but extending your health span is better." I completely agree and I love that and thank you to theprimalsavage for that awesome review, you're the best and reach out to me on Instagram so I can send you a present, a token of my appreciation.

That's that, here is my podcast interview with Roy Krebs from Natural Stacks.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:06:46.3] AVH: Roy, thanks for being on the podcast, I appreciate you being here.

[0:06:49.1] RK: Yeah, thank you. Pumped to be here.

[0:06:50.9] AVH: Awesome, I'm a pretty big fan of your company, I just got to get that out right away, I've been using Natural Stacks for like probably a few years now on and off and I prepped myself for this podcast, I took some vitamin D and I took some of the micro boost before we got on here so I'm ready to go.

I'd love, before we get into kind of the nitty gritty of what we're going to talk about today, I'd love if you could kind of just tell us a little bit about your personal story and a little bit about the company.

[0:07:16.2] RK: Sure. I am cofounder, CEO of Natural Stacks, we are a supplement company whose mission it is to help people experience the highest level of performance possible by providing natural solutions that work. The kind of bigger mission here is to build a billion better brains. We want to optimize people's brains, however we can and to as many people as we can.

That's the broad mission, along with my cofounder Ben Heber. We launched the company in late 2013. So we've had a strong launch early 2013 and 14 and since then, we've been building a team, we've been growing year over year, now we're starting to poke around in some retail outlets and just, I've been building the business, it's been a hell of a challenge and a lot of fun.

[0:08:12.3] AVH: A billion better brains that's a pretty ambitious, it sounds good, it's pretty ambitious plan but I think it's one that we can all kind of appreciate because we're all kind of looking for that edge, we're all trying to like get rid of the brain fog and sort of maximize our potential, that's kind of like a big thing these days. I guess some of it is like, we're in a very fortunate position right now in life where many of us, are lucky enough to be generally healthy and have access to good food.

You know, reasonably healthy lifestyles or at least we can make that choice and so no we're kind of taking the next step to see if we can like, optimize everything and optimize our brain and like do the best we can and you're helping out with that, right?

[0:08:51.0] RK: Yeah, exactly, I think I initially threw out a billion better brains but that's just - I think we could pull that off in a couple of years, you know? We needed a much bigger goal and you're absolutely right, you know? If people have a basic housing and they're fed, and they don't have any pain, you know?

Pain's probably the first thing that people will try to solve but everyone, regardless of who they are, where they're from, age, anything, can benefit from better cognition in some way or another.

We're on a mission to build a billion better brains.

[0:09:25.4] AVH: I like it. Hopefully, I'm one of them. On your website, you talk about being the world's first open source supplement company and you guys talk a lot about the transparency of what you do and your products and your ingredients, can you talk a little bit about that because you know, our listeners are from all over the world and we've got a lot of American and Canadian listeners and I know myself, being a dual citizen and going back and forth and being a little bit of like a meathead supplement junkie like I'm into this kind of stuff, the difference in some of the transparency and the quality of supplements even between the US and Canada is very different.

Anyway, talk a little bit about what it means to be an open source supplement company and how you guys are really trying to go above and beyond maybe what you might find and like – you know, your generic sort of supplement shop.

[0:10:15.7] RK: Yeah, thanks for bringing that up. This is something that motivates us to the core and we're trying to make a wave in the supplement industry to push other brands to follow our footsteps. We've discovered early on that we weren't comfortable with the majority of dietary supplements on the market today.

The main reason was a lack of transparency. The biggest problem is proprietary formulas. On most supplements in the supplement effects panel, they will say proprietary formula and they will list the ingredients in that formula but not the amount of each ingredient and from a consumer who like myself who understands supplements and you know, I really want to know what I'm taking and what it's doing for me. The exact amount, and if that amount is not right, you know, we'll tinker with it and get a different amount.

But with proprietary formula, you really have no idea. It does allow for some potential deception where a company can put a lot of one or two ingredients that may be cheaper and some of the other ingredients which maybe are expensive, they can do the tiny amount in there and still put it in their formula. Whereas it might not be an effective dose.

That was the main problem that we saw and we coined this term open source, you know, we took it from the tech field where open source code, someone can copy that code and use it for their own software. In the supplement space, we saw open source as full traceability and transparency so for us, it's more than just proprietary labels.

That's kind of the first thing, one, we'll never use proprietary formula, we want people to know exactly what's in there. Even down to the extract percentage. We aren't concerned with people stealing our formulas, you know, I get that question asked a lot, if someone wanted to steal our formula, they can but they probably wouldn't use as high quality of ingredients as we're using.

We can see, we're the first to market with our unique formula. We figure we have enough brand recognition that we're comfortable putting our formulas out there. Two, we have full ingredient

traceability. If you go to our website, we do have a link called 'Open Source' and on that page, we disclose who our suppliers are for every single ingredient in every single formula we have.

That's the herbal ingredients for the artichoke extract and even down to the commodity grade minerals and vitamins. We share who our suppliers are. We're very proud of who our suppliers are, we're seeking out the highest quality form of every ingredient so we're very proud to throw that on our website.

I'm not aware of many other companies that do that and I'm not aware of any company that follows the third tier of our open source program which is third party lab testing, we've partnered with Iner-Tech which is the largest and most respected labs in the country and we are testing every single batch, every single production batch. Which is an identity test that test each ingredient within the formula and then before we sell a product, we do this third party lab testing to verify that our manufacturer put the exact amount as per the supplement fact panel and we pose that test on our website.

If you but a product of ours, you can go to our website. Checkout the lot number and match it to the third party lab test. For us, it's those three things, no proprietary labels, complete ingredient traceability back to the supplier or manufacturer, farmer of that ingredient and then also the third party lab testing, post production.

[0:14:07.7] AVH: Yeah, it's extra impressive that you guys are doing this because not because someone is telling you, you have to, right? It's in spite of the fact that you don't have to tell people like - we live in a world where people, you know, I read and I'd have to look this up because maybe I'm speaking out of turn here but I feel like there is a study done that tested a bunch of supplements and [inaudible] and like, most of them did not – were not accurately portraying what was in their ingredients.

Most of them were not. We're in a world now where people are like, "I want to buy these supplements to help with my health," and they have no idea what's in the products and there's no onus on the companies to do that.

I think it's - but then on the flip side,, you know, I think that we're slowly, starting to become a little bit more educated about the products that we're buying, at least demanding a little bit more so it seems like you guys are kind of getting ahead of that trend and saying, for the people who really take this seriously and really demand high quality. We're going to go out there and offer this information rather than wait until we're asked for it, right?

[0:15:14.4] RK: Exactly, complete self-imposed and very strict self-imposed regulations that we're putting on ourselves. But this is what we, as consumer would like to see from a supplant company. We're going to be the first to do it and we hope that others follow, as you mentioned, there is lots of negative studies coming out and companies like lab door which does independent lab testing and consumer lab and some other agencies have been putting out some more information that hey, you know, these –

Trying to create some accountability in the supplement world but yeah, we're right there with them, we're trying to really push forward the quality and transparency in a very open way.

[0:15:54.5] AVH: You guys are called natural stacks because you also offer up, it's kind of unique I think in the supplement world, like bundles and stacks of different supplements that will address certain issues, so, can you talk a little bit about what those major stacks are and how – also, how you combine supplements that help you -your physical performance as well as mental performance. Can you just kind of talk us through that a little bit?

[0:16:18.5] RK: Yeah, absolutely. We kind of stole the term stack. It was previously used in they bodybuilding world. Mainly describing different stacks which is different supplements that are synergistic that could be taken together to either improve testosterone or build muscle or recovery.

We found that kind of the hardcore nootropics following, adopted that term stack and stack was a term used to describe multiple different supplements or ingredients that can be synergistically combined to have a greater effect for the brain.

Stack, in our mind, is just a small collection of synergistic ingredients and then natural because all of our ingredients are natural, we don't use any synthetic ingredients. Our focus is on brain

health, we do have quite a few brain health and optimization products and each product generally has between two to five or six synergistic ingredients.

We keep the ingredients, the count low because want to make sure we're getting a fully effective dose of each ingredient. Our formulas are fairly simple in the fact that there's not many ingredients but all of them are completely unique and novel.

Usually designed to have better absorption, therefore being more effective than other products on the market.

[0:17:48.3] AVH: Okay, I'm a big fan of the Sleep Stack because that's my biggest challenge, always, is like good quality sleep, sleeping well, down regulating, relaxing and the Sleep Stack I know has like magnesium, serotonin supplement, gaba. Is there an issue with – I've heard some people argue this that if you're – I guess this will lead into the more deeper questions about neurotransmitters and what they are and how they work.

Is there an issue with taking, even natural, good quality supplements that either I guess – I don't know if they like are creating hormones or if they're encouraging things to happen, if you're taking exogenous forms of this stuff, is there ever a concern with it not, when you stopped taking them, you know, that maybe these neurotransmitters or these things aren't going to work as well internally anymore and you have to keep taking them or it's going to shut off the internal processes, can you talk a little bit about that?

[0:18:47.0] RK: Yeah, absolutely, good question. We've designed all of our brain food products is what we call them, to target specific neurotransmitters in the brain, these are precursors and co-factors, vitamins and minerals. These are the building blocks that your brain needs to produce a neurotransmitter.

We are not, so for example, serotoninTryptophan brain food. The product does not contain serotonin. The product contains L Tryptophan as the raw amino acid precursor. It's very safe. To take on a daily basis you're not going to become, you're not going to come and rely upon it and you're not going to build a tolerance and we were very conscious of this and so when we do this

is we're starting with the raw amino acid precursors, instead of using five hope which by itself is a pretty powerful supplement to increase serotonin.

But, it does skip a metabolic step. You can't find five 5HTP in food. L Tryptophan is the raw amino acid precursor and you can find this in Turkey, in cheese and nuts. L Tryptophan, your brain turns into 5HTP which then your brain turns into serotonin. We're always starting with the raw food based building blocks. Then, the other supporting ingredients in that formula we have, about MB3 and zinc which are all required for the metabolism of serotonin in your brain.

It's a very complete formula, supporting everything your brain needs to make serotonin, kind of gently nudging it in that direction. So if you have all the ingredients available that your brain needs to make serotonin, it's a lot easier for your brain to go into that serotonin state.

We're not forcing you into that state.

[0:20:36.0] AVH: Got it, that's really helpful, okay. All right, now, let's start talking about these neurotransmitters a little bit more in depth than what the major one are and what their functions are, how we can optimize them and also, there's a lot of talk about neuro transmitter imbalance. Like some people are naturally, have like naturally higher levels of some or lower levels of others and how that can impact performance and how that can - both positively and negatively I suppose. Yeah, talk to us a little bit about neurotransmitters?

[0:21:03.7] RK: Yeah, absolutely. Just in general, as a company, our mindset is to be a little more defined and scientific. So we don't have a mood product. A lot of supplements have a general mood product and in that mood product, we'll have ingredients that activate gaba and activates serotonin and maybe activate dopamine. You're going to feel something but it's a pretty scattered approach.

What is mood? You know, mood can be dopamine related, it can be serotonin related, it can be gaba related. Each neurotransmitter is responsible for a very different mood state so we wanted to divide them out and provide a really complete formula for each neurotransmitter. When you really get down to it, the levels of neurotransmitters in your brain define how you're feeling at the time, in terms of mood, mindset, concentration, empathy and really, your personality.

The level, the balance, if you're dominant, if you're deficient, and certain neurotransmitters. This defines really who you are, how you're feeling at that time, how you're going to react to things and so it's really pretty powerful when you start to think about it in that way. That these neurotransmitters are really defining who you are.

Everyone naturally is dominant in a specific neurotransmitter. There are – you could do a urine test to check the metabolites of neurotransmitter metabolism, to see how well you're producing specific neurotransmitters naturally. You can also take qualitative assessments, we're a big fan of the of the Braverman Assessment, you can google that, you can find a pdf, it's a questionnaire, you know, it's qualitative, it's not hard science but I found it to be very accurate in getting a basic understanding of which neurotransmitters you might be dominant and deficient in.

[0:22:58.0] AVH: Is this, just to interrupt you really quickly. The neurotransmitter dominance, is that something that's either like, genetic or is it environmental based or can it be a bunch of different –

[0:23:08.7] RK: It could be both. I see it as genetic but also, consistent environmental states can cause a deficiency or dominance.

[0:23:17.3] AVH: Right, that can be like the way you eat, it can be your stress levels, it can be how you're working out, all of these –

[0:23:22.5] RK: Right, those sort of things can define temporary states or when you might the higher low end certain neurotransmitters and if you experience that temporary state over and over again, it could become a dominant state or a more permanent situation.

[0:23:38.1] AVH: Does it make sense – for example, if someone was to take the Braverman test, which you can take online, we actually talked about this, I had a famous strength coach, his name is Charles Poliquin on the podcast. He's big on neurotransmitters and I remember taking the test and I think I was –

I don't even remember what it was now. May have been, I was dopamine dominant but is it, like you take these tests and so it helps you kind of inform maybe some of the reasons why you react to certain things the way you do or why you may want to eat or exercise a certain way or would there be like an effort to, in knowing say that you're dopamine dominant to try and bring the other ones up or to try to balance them or is it more just like, "Look, I know I'm dopamine dominant so here's how I can move forward to best take advantage of that."

[0:24:22.8] RK: Yeah, one, it's just getting good understanding of yourself. If you know that you're dopamine dominant, you can start to understand, "Okay, that's maybe how I – why I react in a certain way. That's why I am," so dopamine is related to mental drive and motivation, determination, wanting to complete a task, the ability to experience pleasure.

If you're naturally a dopamine dominant person, you know what? You have no problem getting out of bed, you want to attack the day, you want to get something done. Having that understanding of why you are that way, maybe you're genetically high in dopamine or you've set yourself up to build that neurotransmitter up in your brain. If you're naturally dominant in dopamine, you might be slightly deficient in serotonin which is on the other side of the spectrum.

It's really understanding what these four neurotransmitters do. Then, being able to introspect and realize that "Okay, in this situation, I might, I'm feeling like I'm low serotonin. How can I correct that? I can correct that through maybe meditating, taking a walk outside or taking supplements to help correct that deficiency."

Yeah, getting very basic, I feel like we need to describe what these neurotransmitters are.

[0:25:40.3] AVH: Yes, please.

[0:25:41.5] RK: Dopamine is – I'm going to use a car analogy so dopamine is like gasoline for your car, power for your brain. Dopamine's related to motivation and drive and alertness. Acetylcholine, is the accelerator of your car, this is the speed of your brain. Acetylcholine is related to short term memory, it's related to mental processing speed.

Executive function, being able to, having some verbal fluency . Having that tip of the tongue, being able to choose your words quickly, kind of the fall mental processing and then gaba is the breaks for your car, this is the rhythm of your brain, this is slowing you down, gaba is responsible for calming and relaxation, relieving tension, slowing, erasing thoughts.

Then serotonin is the alternator for your car or the recharger for your brain. Serotonin is responsible for our positive mood. Having regular rhythm and digestion and sleep but generally just being able to be in a positive mindset and feel that pleasure is serotonin.

Yeah, all responsible for very different things and very different mindsets.

[0:26:54.4] AVH: I suppose it's as equally as important in finding out like what neurotransmitter you're dominant in, to also find out which ones you are more deficient in too because knowing where you naturally sort of lie but also knowing some areas that you can bring up and work on. Because I would imagine again, going back to just myself as an example, if I am kind of dopamine dominant and then maybe a little serotonin deficient, there may be some issues with relaxation or maybe maintaining positive mood all the time or things like that.

And I could be working either through supplements or lifestyle factors to kind of bring that part up. I don't necessarily need to be maybe jacking up my caffeine or stuff to get myself going. That's not a problem but knowing the other side of it. So I guess it is figuring out what you're both dominant and deficient in right?

[0:27:45.0] RK: Right, so understanding your dominance will help you understand who you are but also, you don't want to overdo it. If you have way too much dopamine, you can get headaches, you can feel anxious and a little bit scared but yeah, understanding your deficiencies is probably more important. The goal is to be completely balanced and balanced might look a little different for each person but balanced is the state where if you can look back and imagine this is where you felt at your best.

You are in the flow state, you are not thinking about how you're feeling but just in the zone. Everything is running on all cylinders. So that is the goal and I'd say the way to figure out if you are there is to see if you are having any symptoms, negative symptoms and then those are

typically related to a neurotransmitter. So if you're low motivation or if you're low drive, if you are having trouble getting up in the morning, if you're feeling just stale that's low dopamine.

If you're feeling high stress, if you're in a negative mood, if you are constantly getting that afternoon slump where you're just over it in the afternoon, that's related the low dopamine. If you're restless, if you have some anxiety, if you try to fall asleep and you have too much stuff on your mind that potentially can be low gaba. And then low acetylcholine would be if you are feeling mental fatigue, if you are having some memory loss, if you are having trouble finding the right word.

If your brain is just feeling kind of general brain fog and it's not thinking very quickly, that could be low acetylcholine.

[0:29:24.1] AVH: And how long if folks are figuring all this stuff out for themselves and are attempting to use some natural supplementation to help, so if they are taking serotonin or gaba or whatever they are taking from Natural Stacks, how long and how consistently do you have to take these supplements before you can reasonably start to see some improvements?

And then also connected to that, is there any advantage or need for cycling in and out? So if you have a 30 day amount and you take it and you're done would you maybe take a break for a month and then start it again or are these things you can just take as long as you feel you want to?

[0:30:04.8] RK: Yeah, good question. So really, all of our supplements you feel the results. Most people feel something within 30 minutes of taking it. So in that way, I see them as very specific tools for different times of days or different situations, different jobs. That being said, if you're naturally deficient or you find yourself on one end where you're constantly low motivation or something like that, personally, I am a little bit low dopamine, I found.

So I take our dopamine brain food every morning. I find that it really helps. There's like we said earlier, our products are designed so that you can take it in every day. You are not going to become reliant upon it not forcing your brain to produce dopamine. For example like Adderall is a drug that is designed to open the flood gates and release all the dopamine in your brain and

the side effects are really bad because you get this crash when you've used up all the dopamine in your brain.

You don't have any more and then your brain is confused and then it is thinking that it is going to need this drug to produce dopamine. So a very natural - we're starting with the food base precursors vitamins and minerals to kind of nudge your brain in that direction. But to answer your question, yes you could take them every day on a daily basis but on the flip side, most people do feel it within about 20, 30 minutes. So for example, just in a very general way based on time of day, dopamine is a great tool in the morning. This is a mental pick me up, it's different than caffeine. It's more if just - it is in your head. You have this drive to get up and do something. Acetylcholine is great to activate those precursors, that neurotransmitter in your brain, usually maybe, I like it mid to late morning or early afternoon to really pick up my brain. Maybe I have a lot of things going on and I want to be thinking a little faster. I want to be on my toes.

And then for me, just in general, serotonin is nice in the afternoon to avoid an afternoon slump. I've had a long day and I need to be in a positive mind to really finish my day strong and then again in general, gaba is great in the evening to just calm down and relax, full mental-body relaxation and get ready for sleep to slow your thoughts and calm your brain. With that being said, there are these kind of general times of day that are the most conducive to these neurotransmitters.

But if I woke up and I was giving a big presentation in front of 50 people and I am feeling a little nervous about that. I am feeling a little anxious about being on stage, gaba would be great at that time in the morning to help combat that situation that you are facing. So I like to describe these supplements as tools on your tool belt. What are you facing today? What kind of work are you doing? What situation are you putting yourself in and then which neurotransmitter would be most beneficial to optimize for that specific situation?

That's like someone who's healthy and pretty balanced, someone who may have a really strong deficiency, they are going to have to take the supplement on a regular basis to get their brain back into a normal balanced state. But someone that I would say is really healthy and on top of their mental and physical health, these supplements are more like tools.

[0:33:24.1] AVH: Got it. Okay that is actually really helpful. I think I am so used to hearing, “You know if you take these supplements, if you want to start taking fish oil but it might take three months before you maybe feel like you’re healthier or your digestion is better.” It’s interesting that with stuff that is more affecting the brain and neurotransmitters, it’s like a pretty immediate response, that’s kinda interesting.

[0:33:46.2] RK: Yeah and it’s powerful too if you can combine the dietary aspects or the supplement with an environment that is also conducive. So taking serotonin brain food and meditating or and taking a walk in the park, you’re really doing everything you can to boost serotonin at that time and it’s going to be highly effective.

[0:34:03.5] AVH: That is actually a good question and something I was going to lead into because I say this a lot in the podcast and maybe I am just speaking on my own behalf but I don’t think so, that human nature, we want to have quick fixes and we want to have ways to improve our performance and feel better right away, right?

I think that is a very natural, human way to think and so it’s very attractive if we’re experiencing some of these issues, like you are saying, the brain fog or low energy or restlessness or anxiety or all of these things to just say, let’s take a pill that will immediately make it better sometimes instead of fixing some of our lifestyle factors first.

And you’re saying and I think it’s a much more common sense approach that of course, you want to be sorting out your lifestyle as best as you can and in terms of good food and stress management and sleep and getting outside and all of these things and then the supplements are kind of the icing on the cake, the bonus that will just level you up even more, right?

[0:35:00.8] RK: Yeah, absolutely. The environmental and basic diet stuff is probably the most important and most impactful thing that you can change and then supplements are support for that I believe.

[0:35:15.4] AVH: Right, I am so curious to hear because I like to see how the rest of the world is living or the things that they’re dealing with. What are the most popular supplements? What are

people buying the most of and I guess the other side of that question is, what are people suffering from or what are people's challenges, the most? Is it trying to get to sleep? Is it trying to get energy? Is it trying to up your brain function? What are the most popular Natural Stacks products right now?

[0:35:44.2] RK: Yeah, I think in general the two biggest problems that people face are wanting more productivity, more brain power less brain fog. And then also sleep and sleep is huge one we get all the time. In terms of our specific products, the dopamine brain food and the serotonin brain food are the bestsellers out of the four brain food products and my initial thought is just that's just because people are more familiar with those neurotransmitters.

They are the famous neurotransmitters, people know that dopamine is related to reward and makes you feel good and everyone knows that serotonin is a positive mood. Acetylcholine and GABA, people I think are getting more of an understanding towards but the general public, I don't think understands those neurotransmitters as well but its happening. You know acetylcholine in general most like general brain supplements are targeting acetylcholine but we have it very broken out in its own specific stack.

In total, CILTEP is our bestseller and that is our general nootropic for focus and memory. It is by far the bestseller, it's the most exciting product we have I would say. And it's because almost everyone feels a pretty substantial benefit from the product within only 20 or 30 minutes of taking. It is just one that you definitely do not have to take on a regular basis to get results from. People feel it the first day and it's a feeling that is different than other supplements as well.

We have a patent on the formula, it's unique. There's nothing else like it, designed to induce long term potentiation which is the state in your brain in which memories are formed. It's the seat of engagement and your brain turns on the novelty aspect. So things become more interesting and that's the one that I think most people are excited about because there is really nothing else like it and its highly effective.

[0:37:42.2] AVH: Okay now I am excited because I've got some in my supplement drawer that I haven't opened up yet so now I am really pumped to try that one. Okay, cool. You guys also sponsor a lot of really impressive and interesting and a wide range of athletes like professional

athletes, Olympians, just leaders in different fields. It doesn't have to all be athletic and I actually learned about your company because I am friends with one of the people that you sponsor, Ricardo Beda.

[0:38:09.1] RK: Oh Ricardo is awesome, yeah.

[0:38:10.4] AVH: Yeah, it's probably a small world.

[0:38:11.7] RK: Are you in Austin?

[0:38:12.5] AVH: I am not, I am always in Austin for Paleo f(x). Are you going to be there by the way?

[0:38:16.6] RK: Not this year, no.

[0:38:17.6] AVH: Okay, I think it is going to be after this goes up or this is going to go up after Paleo f(x) anyway. But anyway, no we met in New York a long time ago and I do some jujitsu and stuff too and I am one of those - I straddle the line between this paleo really into the healthy kind of hippie side of things and also I have a body building background and so I love my supplements and I love playing with stuff like that and I use BioCreatine all the time and I am really big on all of those products.

So I think it's cool that you do really offer - first of all, natural high quality products for those of us who love our supplements and love that stuff but care about the quality but also that you do focus on brain performance as well as body performance because those things are very intricately connected. So I guess I just was interested from a personal perspective because I think a lot of folks do find your company through following these people, these athletes and these people that they look up to.

How do you establish those relationships? Do people come to you because they like your product? Do you reach out to people because you like what they are doing? How does that work?

[0:39:23.8] RK: They all came to us. We haven't done any sort of outreach for that and I think we probably should and I'd love to make more connections with high performers in their field, whichever field that might be in. We love having conversations with those type of people, those type of people like yourself help us create the best products they can create because these are people that really strive the most from themselves but yeah, all of the people that you see on our website have all come to us organically.

I'd say one of the more famous ones is Martin Jacobson who, it was 2015 he just sent us a cold email and said, "Hey I love your guy's products, I take them all the time. I am competing at the final table at the World Series of Poker in two weeks. Do you guys want to sponsor me or can we work together in some way?" And we said, "Yeah, of course that's awesome," and we actually scrambled and put together the pieces to - we flew out a whole video crew and did a documentary on him being at the final table at the World Series of Poker.

He had a big patch on his chest that said, "Powered by CILTEP." And we spent the whole weekend with him in Vegas and it was the craziest thing. He ended up winning the World Series of Poker, \$10 million. We got a lot of TV coverage, it's been replaying on ESPN and on YouTube.

[0:40:41.3] AVH: Talk about good promotion for you, right? I mean he won, come on that's pretty good.

[0:40:46.0] RK: Yeah it was totally unexpected. He was a big underdog and it was a very long tournament and he just didn't have any mental fatigue and just power past these guys. You know I watched the whole thing and his competitors were eating sugary snacks and really not taking care of their brain the best they could. Whereas Martin is there, he has all of the supplements in his bag at the table. I see him, he is on TV taking our supplements during the tournament.

And then he is drinking a Bulletproof Coffee and he is so much more on top of his mental and physical health that I think that really helped him out on that and because he was able to concentrate for a longer period of time. He was able to be on his toes with his brain and ended up winning. It was really amazing.

[0:41:35.2] AVH: That is so cool. So can we watch that video somewhere? Is that on your website or is that somewhere we can put in the shownotes so people could find that?

[0:41:42.6] RK: Yeah, it's on YouTube. It's called 10 for 10. It is the name of the documentary. I'm pretty proud of how it came together. It was really high quality. It is probably about 30 or 40 minute documentary. It covers the entire process, a little bit of background on him. It's not like an advertisement for Natural Stacks. We really didn't push that at all, we were just trying to provide a really high quality piece of content.

[0:42:06.0] AVH: That's really cool and related to that, one of the things I think is cool about your company in terms of educating people and highlighting the cool things that other people are doing is that you guys have a podcast too which I listen to and I enjoy. I think that is really neat because it's not like every week you are talking about Natural Stacks. You are interviewing other people who are doing cool things in their respective fields and that is interesting too. I don't see a lot of companies doing that.

[0:42:32.8] RK: Yeah, you know we are trying to provide a lot of high quality education and that's I think one of our biggest struggles in general and perhaps always will be is providing education. On our podcast we cover a bunch of different things that our customers might be interested in but in general, we have an uphill battle with educating people on one of the problems of the supplement industry and the shadiness that's out there but also explaining how our products work because the formula is a little different than what people used to be seeing.

They're a little bit more sophisticated in terms of the science behind the products. And even acetylcholine brain food, people aren't – normally people are used to seeing a product that's called 'brain optimizer' or something like that. So we're constantly trying to improve how we are educating customers and the story around how do you make a dietary supplement better and here's what we are trying to do, here's the concept of the formula and here's how it should work. Here's the science behind it so it is something that we are always working on for sure.

[0:43:39.0] AVH: Very cool so not to put you on the spot too much but are there any new products coming up or anything new and exciting that you want to tell us about?

[0:43:47.1] RK: Always new products coming up. It's something that I enjoy digging into the research, looking at PubMed and figuring out what synergies we could put together that we make something more effective than what's already out there. So I will say we just released a 'CILTEP To Go Box' which is a box of 10 different packets. So it is just our flagship product CILTEP, now it's a different delivery mechanism. It is easier to take on the go, not that exciting but I thought I'd mention it.

We are making a magnesium drink and this one I think I haven't talked about. So this maybe an exclusive to Paleo Magazine. One of our bestsellers is the Magnesium Complex featuring three different types of magnesium. We are turning it into a drink so it's going to be a stick pack, lemonade flavor, it's flavored only with some organic lemon oil, there's citric acid and monk fruit extract. Those three ingredients plus the magnesium is all that's in there. It's a great taste, some people get fatigue over taking handfuls of vitamins. So we're happy to have a drink format. It's really not much else like it on the market so I am really excited about that.

And I will say that I have been looking at probiotics recently which is a really interesting thing. We do have a prebiotic product that we have been selling for a while that does great. So prebiotics are food for probiotics in a very general way. Probiotics have always been an interesting area in the supplement world.

They are very fragile so a lot of times when you get a probiotic supplement, it's not getting near the amount of CFUs or the amount of active live bacteria that was there when it was manufactured because the storage conditions, when it is being shipped from your manufacturer to the storage center then to you, if it gets over 70 degrees at any point of that time, if it gets over humidity of 50-60% of any given time, it can really degrade those probiotics faster than you would like.

And so a lot of the times, by the time you are getting it there's really not as many active cultures as you think and then also in general, the probiotics I think is like an invasive way or most probably like supplements have like 15 or 20 different probiotic strains and you are just throwing it in your gut and hoping that they do well and it is somewhat foreign and then sometimes these

probiotic strains can take over and change your whole gut biome in a way that it may be beneficial for some things.

But in the long run, it might not be the best. So I have been doing a lot of research in the probiotic space and I think you can expect Natural Stacks to come up with a probiotic supplement sometime this year.

[0:46:29.4] AVH: Very exciting. Okay, so now that you've gotten everybody excited about all of the different products that you guys have and all of the things that you can help us with, you also are going to be so kind just to give our listeners a discount code, right? You're going to do that for us?

[0:46:43.7] RK: Yes, let's do it, "paleomag" let's do that, "paleomag" lower case or upper case, doesn't matter. If you plug that in the checkout at naturalstacks.com, we'll hook you up with 15% off.

[0:46:55.0] AVH: All right great, you guys are the best and I mean I appreciate you even more after talking to you about, I always appreciated the way your company worked and the way you thought about supplements but now I know how much more thought is actually going into it than we consider how much science, how much work and like we said at the beginning, work that we appreciate and that I think it should be done across the industry.

But it isn't being asked for and you're doing it anyway and I think that's extra impressive. So I really, really appreciate you taking the time to kind of teach us a little bit and I hope all of our listeners go on and take advantage of that discount and try some stuff because I am a big fan and before I'd let you go, just maybe remind our listeners where they can go on social media to follow you guys and also how can they listen to the podcast.

[0:47:42.1] RK: Yeah of course, naturalstacks.com is our website. Our podcast is hosted on our website. If you click on 'articles' we do blog and a podcast. It's all under articles, so naturalstacks.com. I believe all of the social media domains, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, all of that is just @naturalstacks and then also, I'm always available. I like to communicate with

everyone. Please do shoot me an email directly if you have questions about the products or the brand or anything.

Try to talk about biohacking your brain or your body in anyway, I'd love to have us have a conversation, roy@naturalstacks.com. I'm available.

[0:48:21.0] AVH: Awesome, that's awesome Roy. Well I might take you up on that and be sending you a lot of emails myself and we can talk about how awesome I am after a week or two using the CILTEP. So I will keep you posted on that but yeah, thanks for your time Roy and maybe we'll have you back on again at some point and talk some more.

[0:48:35.9] RK: Thank you, anytime.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:48:41.5] AVH: All right guys, thanks everyone for listening. If you do take advantage of the discount that Roy gave you, let me know what you get and what you try and if you have some success, if you like it, hit me up on Instagram @paleomagazine or personally @themusclemaven and we can have a chat. I'm not sure if you guys are subscribers to Paleo Magazine yet but if not, we have something over at paleomagonline.com that will sweeten the pot for you.

If you sign up for a one year premium insider subscription not only do you get a year's worth of hardcopy and digital issues but we will send you this epic welcome goody box full of paleo treats and products from companies like Primal Kitchen, Four Sigmatic, Epic, Taza Chocolate and much more. I want one of these boxes myself, they're full of everything awesome. So head over to Paleomagonline.com, subscribe, choose the special insider subscription option and treat yourself.

All right so next week, I am talking to one of the most beloved figures in the paleo world, the paleo mom, Dr. Sarah Ballantyne. Her new book, *Paleo Principles* is it's got to be the most comprehensive paleo guide book ever. It is packed with scientific evidence, supporting the health benefits of a paleo template for your lifestyle. It has visual guides, tips, meal plans, more

than 200 recipes and it's just epic. It has every bit of information, every reference, every resource, you could ever hope to want. Talking about yourselves and your mitochondria and your microbiome and it approaches different chronic diseases and everything from high carb to low carb to high fat to a balance diet.

I mean any question you could ever have about health is answered in this book. It's almost 700 pages. This thing doubles as a murder weapon. But it is also written in a way that anyone can understand. So it's very science fact, it's very thorough, but it's accessible to anybody.

So it's a pretty big deal so we're going to talk about the book and we're also going to hear Sarah's take on the recent surge in the popularity for keto, for really high fat-low carb diets and I believe, I won't get into it too much now but that Sarah's take is sort of a more balanced approached and I think that that's a good conversation to have because we are hearing a lot about keto these days.

We are hearing a lot about low to no carb diets and I think that when we hear what we think of as being new protocols or methodologies, we like to run with them and we get excited based on novelty but it's good to see both sides and both approaches and educate ourselves before we move forward with whatever we're going to do.

So Dr. Ballantyne is a hugely respected member of the health and paleo community and I am really excited to hear her take on that as well as general strategies for sustainable health in general. So you don't want to miss next week's episode, I will see you then.

[OUTRO]

[0:51:39.8] 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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