

EPISODE 227

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:10] AVH: Welcome everyone to Paleo Magazine Radio. Thank you for being here. I wonder if you guys ever had the same vacation conundrum that I have and I have all the time. On one hand, you want to go somewhere beautiful, maybe tropical, sit on the beach, let loose a little but on the other hand, you don't want to do when it was all inclusive where maybe you get bored after a few days, you wind up just eating and drinking yourself sick and you come home feeling worse and less rested than when you left. I mean, maybe in your early 20s but I mean, after that, come on, this is not good for you anymore.

What you really want is a beautiful, relaxing, fun vacation that feeds your soul but is also, dare I say it, healthy and good for you too? Okay, such a thing exist and it is called Prime Retreats our managing editor at Paleo Magazine, Shawn Mihalik, he went on one of these retreats for his birthday and he wrote about it for the magazine. If you're interested in reading about his experience, you can go to paleomagonline.com to find out more subscribe, great magazine, might be a little biased but it's an awesome publication. You won't be disappointed.

All right, when I read about it, I knew I wanted to talk to the founder of Prime Retreats, Ryan on the podcast to talk about how we built this company and how these retreats really work. Ryan, my guest today, has been in the health and fitness industry for more than 14 years. He specializes in athletic performance, postural health, natural movement and nutritional therapies and he started Prime Retreats with the intention of providing total immersion in a natural environment which is something that honestly, a lot of us really don't do that much.

And he wants to really focus on what the modern human body craves and is missing in their day to day life and that could be ranging from physical movement to social interaction, dietary needs, all that stuff. That's it for today, we're going to chat with a man who I think has a lot of people's dream jobs, he goes on incredible vacations for a living. Not too shabby. We're going to talk with Ryan after a quick word about our show sponsor, Chomps.

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

[00:02:13] AVH: Chomps makes healthy meat sticks that are multiple Paleo Magazine best of award winners, you don't have to take my word for it, these are very popular in the paleo community and they really do a good job of hitting those salty, meaty beef jerky cravings but they're infinitely healthier and tastier than your typical gas station variety. They are made with 100% grass fed and finished, open pasture beef which not a lot of meat sticks can say for themselves, they have nine grams of proteins, six grams of fat, zero carbs.

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[INTERVIEW]

[0:03:31.3] AVH: All right Ryan, welcome to the podcast, thank you for being here with me.

[0:03:34.9] RC: Thank you for having me.

[0:03:37.0] AVH: I'm excited to hear more about your work because I think that a lot of people, myself included, have our moments where we're kind of like interested in adventure and we want to take a vacation but we're not really sure how to combine those two and sometimes we want other people to help us with that so I'm very interested in hearing about what you do for a living and I got a lot of questions for you.

But before we kind of get in to the details of prime retreats, I love for you to kind of just give us like a little bit of a background about who you are and how you came to do what you're doing.

[0:04:13.2] RC: I've been in the industry for probably about 15 years and started off as a fitness thing, as a fitness journey for myself and you know, kind of evolved into a passion for it, usually what happens. Then I've always been kind of an outdoorsy type so apply that to my practice as well and sound that got a lot of results doing that.

Then I started going in to my travel stuff and try to apply fitness to that, when I was traveling and I felt like trash every time I traveled and got home and needed to take like a little staycation at home from my vacation to recover.

[0:04:45.5] AVH: Yup.

[0:04:45.7] RC: That's kind of how Prime Retreats developed. It was me trying to have an immersive health escape that was still a fun vacation and not just like, going to a fat camp and low fat, high carb, you know, diet French toast for breakfast and then working out for nine hours.

[0:05:03.2] AVH: Yeah, that sounds terrible.

[0:05:04.8] RC: Yeah. I've had that experience as well in my past, working in those kind of environments and so I just wanted to change it and you know, as I go, this is always evolving and I'm always bringing in different people to help me with this. That's my idea is, to bring awareness.

[0:05:20.2] AVH: I like that you are kind of highlighting that there can be another option between the two extremes of the sort of like, debaucherous, all-inclusive where you go and you start drinking as soon as you wake up and you feel like garbage which some people do and some people enjoy it and that's fine.

And then there's the other side which like you said is like a fat camp where you're going and you know it's not going to be fun and your whole purpose is to try to like, "make yourself better" or lose weight or whatever and those are miserable and those aren't fun either.

There is sort of like a happy medium and it's funny. I actually learned about prime retreats through Paleo Magazine which I work for because I read about our managing editor, Shawn, who went on one of your retreats for his birthday and I guess, it's funny because I think it's like, maybe it's something, I guess I'll ask this question next in terms of like the demographic of the people who sign up for your stuff because I wonder if it's like an age and maturity thing where like once you get out of your early 20s and like I said, you're kind of maybe over the all-inclusive thing and you want a vacation that you don't need to take a vacation from.

You want something that's going to be fun but where you're actually kind of treating your body well at the same time.

[0:06:25.8] RC: Yup, that's it. I mean, that's kind of – you're talking, we're looking at like demographics, that's what we're trying to reach, we're trying to make this accessible to everybody from the stay at home mom to the backpacking hippie and you know, whoever wants to join, we make it accessible, it's not totally scary where I mean, we use terms like rustic which basically an American term is a nice way of saying we're in the jungle but we're not so removed that you can't make phone calls or get on WiFi if you needed to. Just a little more difficult but then we make it accessible with price, you know?

If I was 21, chance of me going on a weeklong trip for \$4,500 will be like impossible, it would be like a dream of mine. We try to keep it, we're around, anywhere from like 12 to 2,000 bucks max usually. Yeah, that's for four to six days.

[0:07:13.6] AVH: That's impressive. Okay, I have kind of like a business side question here because a lot of us, like have great ideas and have this sort of dreams like this was my dream job and it kind of sounds like what you're doing is a dream job of sorts, but it almost, it's like, it takes a lot of guts to have this idea, like these healthy ancestral based kind of retreats but doing that as a job and making money, making a living, it could be like a big leap to a lot of people.

A lot of people will be like, I can't even imagine how I'd get started. How did you go from thinking, "This would be a really cool thing to do," to, "I want to provide this for people," and actually creating a company around it.

[0:07:53.5] RC: Yeah, it was kind of scary at first, when I started it, I mean, I've been training, that's like my full time thing is I want to say – I run a group fitness program and I train a couple of clients, that's kind of the bread and butter but when I decided to take the leap in and do my first retreat, it was actually going to be a long term continuing retreat that was really hard to make work so I was like, I'm going to try it for a week and see how the response is.

As soon as I left, I said that attention, I knew that I was just going to try it., I was going to do it and it didn't matter if anybody showed up, it just naturally kind of evolved and people were into it and loved the idea and they started bringing their friends, my first retreat was, I told them maybe like four or five people and they brought like three or four people. That was my first run at it. Yeah.

[0:08:39.0] AVH: It kind of started by you sort of interacting with people that your clients and people you were training and telling them about it and then it sort of grew from there?

[0:08:47.9] RC: Yeah, exactly, yeah. The first two were word of mouth, you know, I just put it out like, told my clients, told my friends, told my family, posted it on my Facebook, my private Facebook, instead of doing this. This is what we're doing and this is the price, people jumped at it.

[0:09:01.6] AVH: Cool, where are the retreats usually? Tell me where they have been, where they are, and maybe if you can talk a little bit about some of the upcoming ones?

[0:09:10.3] RC: Okay, we'll do them anywhere, basically, that fits our principles that we follow which I can kind of get in to a minute but location wise, we like to be rustic, we're try not to be too much of a populated area or at least, you know, move back a little bit so places like Yelapa, that's one of our favorites, that's actually where we brought Shawn, that's where he came.

This place, to describe it is, if you're fly in to the port of (inaudible), just a big city, big tourist attraction in Mexico. From there, you would go to the pier and you take the boat ride down to Yelapa. Yelapa is a fishing village and it's not an island but there's no roads that reach it so

super secluded, still really natural, you know, they just got electricity a few years ago and phone service is going out there now too.

It's still pretty sparse but super safe and that will be kind of like the ideal location, we love it, we love the people out there, other location we've gone are Puerto Rico out in Utuado which is up in the mountains, it's beautiful, same kind of deal. Each place kind of has their own different excursions and different movement opportunities throughout the terrains but that was more mountainous and then we got Tulum, we went to Tulum is probably our most city like I guess.

We go kind of during offseason so it's pretty slow but still, I mean, the night time you're hearing some music playing and that kind of stuff. That was one of our busier places and then Costa Rica, we have another house out there that it's small and it's in the middle of nowhere, that's kind of what we shoot for. We've also looked at Switzerland.

[0:10:40.6] AVH: Okay, that would be an entirely different kind of experience.

[0:10:43.6] RC: Yeah, totally different, you know?

[0:10:45.0] AVH: How many people are generally on the retreats?

[0:10:48.2] RC: We shoot for 12 to 25. It depends on the accommodations. So Yelapa will max out at 26 and then we got Panama which is in December this year, that one will actually max out at, there's 14 beds on the property but we will also possibly do some camping spots for a lower cost as well. Yeah, typically.

[0:11:11.1] AVH: Okay. I'd like for you to kind of walk us through like what a typical day on one of these retreats would be and one of the reasons why I personally am interested in this much detail is as somebody who is very interested in this kind of retreat or vacation or experience but I also am somebody who is like, kind of introverted and also kind of restless and I worry about going on something like this and being like yeah, it's cool, but like after like a day, what if I don't want to do the like, social hard or like, what if I like kind of want to go do some other stuff?

Walk us through exactly what a day kind of like looks like or feels like?

[0:11:49.0] RC: Okay, a typical retreat, this would be kind of generally, well, depending on the location, we'll wake up and do like an awareness trek, basically just doing like a nice meditative silent walk either down the beach, to the mountains, wherever it's at, maybe added some sun gazing and then possibly a nice cool swim, the Pacific or lake or river, whatever.

From that, we might do some ground based movement, some flow, still maybe keeping it silent, I like to keep it pretty chill until the sun's really up and we're getting some sun and then after that we'll go have a big breakfast back at camp and then take a break, maybe like an hour, encourage people to journal or read or do something productive, you know, for their mind and then we meet back together and maybe do the next movement piece, whether it's some combatives or just – we have different focus as in each one.

When Shawn came, we were doing some physical communication. You're speaking to each other through movement and we might do something like that, we might do a higher intensity, maybe like a strength session or some kind of movement in that point. Then take the long break, that's when you get to go off on your own, you can explore, you can sit in a hammock, you can go for a swim, you probably have two to four hours, depends on what we have that day.

Come back for lunch. We always try to keep our meals as a community, you know, try to eat together, try to build some friendships and that kind of stuff, and then, we'll do another session at the end of the day, have dinner and then depending on where we're at, have a fire, do some games in the night a little bit by like eight or nine. That would be a typical day but then on the other day, we'll do probably at a five day trip, we'll do probably two to three excursions.

Excursions can take up like the whole day. Basically it will be like morning session, breakfast, head out, do some free diving and snorkeling and then the staff that runs the boat will fish while we're doing that, catch us fish and cook it up for us and then we'll head back and you know, just repeat that.

[0:13:52.7] AVH: Cool. All right, I like that there loss of stuff, lots of ways for people to come together and learn and be productive but as you said, there's lots of times for people like me to like go off and hide and read a book by myself too.

[0:14:02.8] RC: Yeah.

[0:14:03.6] AVH: I like the balance. Are you personally involved and a part of and on all of these retreats?

[0:14:11.3] RC: Currently I do every single retreats, and most of the stuff, I bring in different coaches to you know, bring some different styles and you know, my next one, I got [inaudible] who is like, he's actually from Silido which is about an hour away from Porta Viarta and you know, he does gymnastics and rings and hand balancing, all that kind of stuff that I'm not good at.

You know, he's going to bring that kind of flavor to it, that's kind of what we're doing, we're bringing different people with me that have different things and then they can take over a little bit while I manage and my girlfriend also helps more on the administrative management side as well. Hospitality, yeah.

[0:14:48.7] AVH: Okay, that's cool. I mean, I think a lot of people who listen to this podcast and people who like to educate themselves about sort of optimal health and ancestral based health and lifestyle nutrition, they get most of the general sort of premise behind these retreats being you know, maybe disconnecting from - getting off the grid a little bit, connecting more with nature, connecting with other people.

Eating clean food and moving your body and getting lots of rest and sunshine and all of these things. But how do you go about specifically sort of programming these things, you said maybe different events or different retreats will have different themes and you'll kind of lay out the day for different excursions but then different like movement and then you'll have some alone time.

How do you plan out these retreats? What's the kind of like background thinking behind how you set these things up?

[0:15:37.6] RC: While there are like - I'm always developing the things and learning more and getting, I delve into new things that I end up loving. Our home base and you know, there are

certain things that are great for everybody. Ground based movement or the waking of the sun and you know, getting out in the water, some chilly water in the morning. Those kind of things are kind of my set standards and I'll just kind of hot line those days with all the things that I think are the most valuable.

Then I start adding in the new things that are going to be the new focus for each retreat. You know, like I said with the last one that we did, you know, physical communication, we did some blind movement where we actually put on some blindfolds and practiced really being aware of your situation and just using feel and sound to kind of guide you through.

The other thing that we use is our terrain. If we're in a place that's – we'll practice actually like traversing through the terrain but we'll practice on site in a safe kind of way to rack up precision jumps in our landing and you know, feeling different terrain and making sure you're secure and then we'll go out and apply that in real life, say we're going up the river from rock to rock, slippery rocks and how to counter it and if you do slip and all that kind of stuff.

[0:16:50.3] AVH: All right. You also talk about food is a big part of this, right? It says on the website that your retreats follow a basic human diet. Tell us what you mean by that because it sounds simple but as we all know, as we're trying to be healthy in our lives, that can be a lot more complicated, then we want to think it is. What do you mean by basic human diet?

[0:17:10.9] RC: There's labels for everything but as soon as you label, you get restricted really hard. Paleo is an awesome way to eat but we also add in – that branches out, person to person of what paleo actually means, whether it's you know, paleo or primal or whatever. Some do dairy, some don't, some do corn, some do fatty acids, I kind of thought so. It just depends on how strict you are but we also embrace the culture and cuisine of where we're at.

Just at a more traditional sense. In Mexico, I mean, we'll eat like tortillas themselves, maybe one night or even two nights. The reason we like that is because they're using like Mexican lime corn which is basically corn that's been soaked in lime, water and actually makes it a complete amino acid profile and it's just a better way of eating it, digests better.

We kind of let that happen, you know, generally, we're not even a lot of corn, we're not cooking with any pupas, you know, no seed oils and that kind of stuff but –

[0:18:15.1] AVH: Do you work with local chefs and stuff, are you collaborating with people locally to make food that's local of the place or you're not bringing somebody along with you kind of thing?

[0:18:24.7] RC: I have brought with me but typically I've found a lot of great food where we go. I haven't needed to and it's actually a lot – it's more ideal for me, I don't have to bring a chef but being getting true cuisine from the location.

[0:18:39.0] AVH: Okay, cool. How many of these retreats are you doing a year? I know this is still growing but you said, even on the website, you offer like corporate retreats so maybe retreats that are like for one specific group. Has that been kind of a growing area too? Is that something that's popular and how many of these are you doing a year?

[0:18:54.3] RC: We're doing about, we're shooting for three to four a year. Corporate retreats are kind of our – that's what we are really getting when we are at Paleo f(x) this year that was probably the most popular. People wanted us to set up their retreats for them because they wanted to do it but they actually don't want to do all of that work and we like the planning. So it is no problem for us.

And then it just comes with what this is, with ancestral health and the community is just a part of it. So we don't have to implement or overemphasize team building. It is just part of it. It is what we do in our training and it just works a lot more naturally that way. So it's great for corporate events and then the other one was a parent-kids retreat which is another one I was seeing that people want.

[0:19:40.5] AVH: That's interesting.

[0:19:41.6] RC: Yeah, so it's also great, there's kids play. Kids will teach you so much about movement and so you have them moving that will be great.

[0:19:49.3] AVH: Yeah, I mean if anyone has ever seen a toddler squat down into the ground to pick something up and just been so jealous of their perfect squat, you know? Kids can teach us a lot but that is a cool aspect. I never thought about that. I guess that will be a great bonding experience for families too and a good one just like that yeah.

Okay, so as you're growing this company and doing these things and having these experiences, is there ever any feedback you're getting from attendees that is surprising? I would imagine a lot of people say they learned a lot, they were able to unplug, the place they were at was beautiful but do you ever get any interesting feedback that really surprised you or that was extra cool, I guess?

[0:20:28.7] RC: Yeah, I mean so the most common thing like the reason that I do this is when I get the feedback that this has changed my life. They've developed a lot of style because a lot of the people that we bring out are not super familiar with - I mean - if you think you are familiar with this lifestyle and then you are put into it for a week straight or five to seven days straight, you realize how it makes you feel from energy levels to if you're depressed or just feeling better, looser and freer that is my favorite things to hear.

[0:21:03.0] AVH: Okay, cool. I guess you touched on something interesting there. The idea that because one of my questions was going to be, do you feel like sometimes these events are preaching to the choir because it's people who are already predisposed to living this way or interested in this kind of lifestyle that are going to reach out for your events but you are saying that maybe some of these people are people who sort of think they know what the deal is. But when they are actually immersed in it, it's a bigger challenge and a bigger experience, right?

Do you get a full range of people who are like, "I'm hardcore paleo and I walk around bare feel all the time," and then you get people who are like, "I don't even know what this is about but I am going to try it anyway"?

[0:21:39.0] RC: Yeah, I mean I have a good mix and the bare foot thing is funny because we will be in our minimal shoes day to day. We'll be walking, you know I am walking around the gym bare foot or I will go for a walk with my dogs bare foot and then I show up to these

locations and take my shoes off and by the end of the day, I'm cold as shit, my feet are going to fall off.

So I mean Shawn, he grew out of his shoes within three days. He didn't wear his shoes anymore because his feet were so swollen and big. So you'll never know but yeah, that kind of thing is what happens. I mean my clients, they're living this lifestyle in modern society where they are not being monitored day to day. So who knows what they're really living like and then get out there and be like, "Okay, you know things have changed," and then it is a lot different.

[0:22:29.7] AVH: Yeah, I mean I suppose even like I can speak for myself that I am still a lot of times picking and choosing the primal things that I want to do like from day to day, I am going out and getting my sunshine and I am eating my healthy food or whatever but I am also sitting in the air conditioning. I am doing things that are definitely more comfort based than ancestral based. So it's cool to challenge yourself and really put yourself in there.

And I think the other cool thing about events like these which are very fun and you are learning a lot and you are being healthy but it is also about going back to these fundamentals which a lot of people, and especially type A people, who are trying to maximize their health and fitness, they just don't find it as sexy right? We all want to talk about Keto and supplements and bio hacking and all of this stuff when ultimately it's like, "Are you sleeping well? Are you managing your stress? Are you are just eating food most of the time?"

And that's the stuff that is the absolute basic most important stuff but we don't like to think about it as much because it's not as fun maybe as some of these other stuff. So it is cool that you are putting all of that together and making it fun for people.

[0:23:33.6] RC: Yeah, I mean none of us are out there wearing like blue blocker sunglasses 24 hours a day you know? Just go, so yeah that is going to be I keep doing that.

[0:23:42.1] AVH: Yeah, okay so if some of our listeners right now are like - their interest is peaked but they're maybe still on the fence, maybe they are a little intimidated, maybe they're like, "I am scared of being barefoot. I am scared trying this weird physical communication without talking. So I am into it but I am a little intimidated." What are some things that you might

tell our listeners like maybe just some information you would give them to maybe encourage them to look into it or give it a try?

[0:24:07.3] RC: Yes, with us there is never pressure. The only thing we ever say is show up to every scheduled event and watch the start. If you feel a little weird about it just hang out and watch and let other people bring you in because what it is, we're introducing, we try to at least introduce everyone as far as learning goes, new movement and that's awkward and I mean when you start that's like learning a new dance but instead of me teaching you step by step they will show you.

And they go, "All right now dance," and you're like, "Okay this is weird," but it's natural. So it is a matter of letting go and moving and that is what we teach but with all those people, you know that are together I mean everything is safe and you know will keep you connected still.

There is a little tether so you feel everybody feels safe we are never not near hospitals and electricity or even WiFi. It is always pretty close and the cellphone service is decent. So you always have some little piece that will keep you safe, keep that little piece safe. We haven't gone to the survivalist mode yet, I guess we are still trying to figure that out, yeah.

[0:25:16.3] AVH: Maybe that will happen in the next year or two, you'll do a really good one.

[0:25:19.7] RC: Yeah, we'll see. Yeah just go overboard.

[0:25:21.5] AVH: Yeah, so people are they on their cellphones at all during these trips or are you kind of like, "You know put the phones away while we're here. We don't really have WiFi, let's focus on something else" or can people still play with that if they want to?

[0:25:34.8] RC: Yeah, there is never cellphone use. The unfortunate part is cameras but I'll bring camera guys out and then I try not to have any cellphones on like just leave them in your room and most of our locations, if you need WiFi it's in a center location and by the time you get to your room which is off base a little bit, you're not going to get WiFi anymore.

So you are pretty much disconnected when you get to wherever we're at. Cellphone services is never that great, if we are hiking or that kind of thing so yeah. I mean we try to disconnect as much as possible.

[0:26:06.9] AVH: Got it, so you told me that you have an interesting one coming up I guess in the winter. It's an obstacle course race retreat?

[0:26:15.8] RC: Yeah.

[0:26:16.2] AVH: What's that about?

[0:26:17.3] RC: Well, back to Yelapa again because I love the place. It is just made of cool movements and natural obstacles. So we have done a couple of different hikes out there but we wanted to bring this to another level and do a three – well it is actually a four day trip but it is a three day race where there's less instruction and more just getting after it. There will be a cash prize because it is like doing a savage Spartan, tough mother for three days straight in the jungle.

So we'll have that's pretty much what it is so yeah, it's tough. It's awesome, anybody can do it. If you are looking to win it might be a tough one but we do with little instruction in the morning to go over the course, what you will expect to see and answer any questions, give any tips on movement through that course and then we'll send you off and then there will be coaches lined up through the course giving details and queues and stuff to you without giving too much away.

[0:27:12.9] AVH: Okay, this is crazy. So this is for people who want to take their vacation a little bit more competitive but you are saying that it's a four day thing but the event itself is going to take place over three full days of this trip?

[0:27:25.3] RC: It will be three full races. Races can be anywhere, it will be from two to four hours that depends on how long it takes.

[0:27:30.8] AVH: Okay so one race per day then.

[0:27:32.0] RC: One race per day, yeah not like we are going like 20 miles or anything. It's just going to be three different courses and then a final course which will be probably a half day. It depends on we'll be going through town and up the waterfalls and all that kind of stuff and you know, so that will be the final.

[0:27:50.3] AVH: And are these in teams or individual? How does that work?

[0:27:53.7] RC: The race itself will be individual. You can come out there with as many people as you want but then –

[0:27:58.8] AVH: But then it is every man for themselves.

[0:28:00.6] RC: Yes and then you're on your own.

[0:28:02.9] AVH: That's really cool. So you've been developing - after going there and seeing how cool and interesting a place this is, you've been developing obstacle courses or race courses around the natural terrain in Yelapa.

[0:28:16.0] RC: Exactly, yep that's it.

[0:28:17.0] AVH: All right, very interesting. That's cool I mean you're definitely tapping into something that is very popular. People are obsessed with anything from American Ninja Warrior or I don't know if you've ever heard of the Barkley Marathons, have you heard of this?

[0:28:30.7] RC: I have not.

[0:28:31.3] AVH: Okay, you need to check this out. There's a documentary, I believe it is on Netflix, I think it's just called The Barkley Marathons but it's the super – I am going off track here but it is the super underground endurance race that takes place somewhere in the New England area maybe or something. Anyway, it is a three day – I think it's three days. It is a 24 kilometer maybe, course that's like uncharted through the wilderness and you have 12 hours to get through each 24 hour loop.

And they change it every time and they hide things in the woods. You have to go find them and bring it back so they know that you went through it but it is one of the most difficult endurance races that maybe 12 people have ever finished it. You have to be invited to go. It's super crazy. Anyway, I am going way off track but bottom line stuff like this, anything from bad to the Iron Man to Spartan races, people love that kind of challenge.

People like trying things that are different and interesting that they can't get in their normal lives so I think that this is a really cool interesting take on that.

[0:29:36.6] RC: Yeah, for sure. The worst part about this is it's just big - we develop these things because it's what we need to do and then they like –

[0:29:46.7] AVH: Well maybe you have to test it first, right?

[0:29:49.4] RC: Sure, I guess I should bring a crew out there and test it and that's what I'll do first.

[0:29:53.0] AVH: Yeah you absolutely should. Okay, so going off track again because I just have to ask you this when I was doing my research on your website and talking about you and your background, it says that on your spare time you like to do free diving and I need to know about this because it sounds like a very crazy intense hobby. What is free diving?

[0:30:12.7] RC: Well, free diving is like scuba diving without the –

[0:30:17.7] AVH: Without the equipment, yeah.

[0:30:19.0] RC: Yes, so it is a physical mental challenge to calm yourself. The first time I did this when I was just getting my certification they're like, "I want to see how long you hold your breath on your own," I'm like, "All right," it all checks out. So I went out to the ocean and I got in the water and I just went underwater. I started to hold my breath and I was like, "Oh my god" that had been six minutes. So I got out and it was 35 seconds.

And so I was like, “All right so this is going to be probably the worst week of my life.” And then we go to the class and we start going over these different techniques but Pranayama would be good, probably what they use the most in the technique and the breathing techniques and you are underwater while you’re floating. So the meditation that you get into is just so calming. Once you get passed, face down in the water holding your breath, you get into a really deep state of meditation and calmness.

Once you get that down in the shallow, you apply that to movement and active apnea and seeing how far you can go. It is super dangerous. You can blackout easily that’s why you always have a partner there that spots you and a lot of people die doing it.

Now, we will introduce this too in our retreats in a very low level but more so on the meditation end. You know certain areas like Tulum has beautiful days that you could free dive in but not too deep and your lungs also get spotted by multiple people so that’s going to work with free diving with the assess.

[0:31:48.7] AVH: So if you are not into the crazy super dangerous side of it, you can instead maybe channel some of this into the breathe work, the calming down, you’re like autonomic nervous system because that I would imagine these skills that you are learning doing this free diving are very applicable in the rest of your life and even in other physical endeavors, right?

[0:32:08.9] RC: Exactly. So I’ll say right off the bat is I’m not a super free diver. I am more into –

[0:32:14.8] AVH: Recreational.

[0:32:16.1] RC: Yeah, just like the calming effect of swimming underwater and not having all the gear on and just being silent and still is awesome. But I also live in Florida, in the Gulf where the water is swimming in mud. So you can’t really see, training yourself is not so great.

[0:32:33.2] AVH: Interesting, okay that is pretty cool. That is not a super common hobby for a lot of people so I had to ask you about that because that’s pretty cool and I will say that I have done some of this like the Pranayama breathing and the Wim Hof style breathing and all of that stuff. I did an XPT seminar. I don’t know if you know about this but it was all that kind of

breathing and it was really life changing. Learning how to breathe that way and properly oxygenating yourself.

And the euphoria you get when you do it properly, it's incredible and for somebody who isn't – I am not a major yoga-meditation-calm yourself kind of person generally and so it was really eye opening how effective, how much control you have over your own nervous system and over your own emotions and a lot of people think that they don't, right?

A lot of people think that when you experience anxiety or other kind of negative feelings that it is something that is happening to you. When you just need to bear with it when you really have a lot more control over on how your body reacts to these things than you think.

[0:33:35.7] RC: Yeah, 100%.

[0:33:36.5] AVH: Yeah that's super cool. All right, so I am going to wind it up here but I mentioned this at the beginning that it sounds like you have a lot of people's dream jobs.

You get to take people to these amazing vacations and teach them and be out in nature and enjoy it and let people have this incredible experiences. Do you feel like you have a dream job or is it one of those things where once you do non-glamorous stuff behind the scenes and now that it's your job it has taken some of the sparkle off or do you feel like you are doing a dream job every day?

[0:34:05.3] RC: This is a dream job that is still coming true. So it is something that I am working on constantly. So I am just working at home full time while I am doing this whole time so you know it is my dream second job right now.

I am pushing it and we are making it happen and it's getting better and it is getting busier and it is still surreal, I would say. So yes, it is my dream job.

[0:34:28.7] AVH: That's awesome. Well thanks for doing it and thanks for like I said, having the guts to turn something that most people think of as a dream and a one off thing into a job that you can help other people have those experiences too because that is a big deal.

[0:34:41.7] RC: Yeah, so when are you coming out?

[0:34:43.4] AVH: Hello, we're going to talk about this offline because I have a couple of ideas but remind us just before we say goodbye, remind our listeners about the next couple of retreats that people can maybe still sign up for and also where they can go online to learn more about it.

[0:34:56.6] RC: Okay, so coming up on October on the 17th we have a four day back in Yelapa and then again in December, we have dates to be announced which would be Coco Vivo in Panama and then the obstacle course race will be in January. That's what we had planned currently. We also have two other really big retreats to look out for but our website would be primeretreats.com and Instagram, @thegravitycollective is my personal/retreat page so you guys look for that.

[0:35:31.5] AVH: All right Ryan, well thank you for your time. Thanks for explaining everything to us and I need to learn more about this obstacle retreat thing because I am into it so we'll talk about that later but best of luck with everything and we'll be following along on all the fun you're having.

[0:35:44.1] RC: Thank you so much.

[0:35:45.3] AVH: All right, thanks Ryan.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:35:50.6] AVH: All right, thanks everybody for listening. Raise your hand if you want to go on a Prime Retreat, my hand is literally up right now. I can't see yours so maybe you'll just have to get on social media and tell us what you think. Maybe you've been on one and you have some stories for us. Hit us up on social media @paleomagazine and as always, if you have any suggestions or topic ideas for the show, let me know.

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all-natural delicious yummy definitely not plant-based meat sticks. They are giving you 15% off your entire order and free shipping if you use the code “paleomag” at checkout. So do it, they’re tasty, you can bring them on vacation with you. Actually, I think I am going to be doing that. Anyway, Chomps thank you, you guys are the best.

All right, next week on the podcast I am talking to Joy Stephenson-Laws. She wrote a book called *Minerals: The Forgotten Nutrient* and I am really excited about this because I feel like we spent so much time obsessing over macro nutrients, right? Like fat, protein, carbs, how much, cut them, don’t cut them. We spend so much time obsessing over some specific diets that tend to be sometimes extreme in one way or another, right?

Like “no animal protein” or “all fat” or whatever that we miss the point of eating which is to nourish our bodies and give it what it needs and a large part of that is minerals and micro nutrients. So sure, high fat might be great but if you never eat a vegetable ever again, maybe you are missing out on some things that are kind of important that help your body work. I don’t know, that’s why I’m talking to professionals about it.

Anyway, the way minerals work in our body I learned after reading this book is so interconnected and complex. You know I love me a complicated topic so we are really going to dive deep into it next week. I am very excited about it. I hope you join me and thanks always for your support and I hope you have a great day. Thanks guys.

[OUTRO]

[0:37:51.8] 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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