

**EPISODE 226**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[00:00:10] AVH:** Hey everybody, welcome to the podcast, thank you for being here, once again with me. I hope you're having a great summer, I'm having a great summer, if you follow me on Instagram which if you don't, you should, because you just should. This summer, I'm calling it my summer of trying new things that might possibly kill me and I mean that only half-jokingly because I've been trying some pretty challenging things this summer, for the first time. I did rock climbing for the first time like outdoors on a real cliff, real rocks.

Also rappelling back down said cliff, I did that for the first time, I tried a sprint triathlon which was very challenging, very fun, I did some acro-yoga so like flipping up and down and people throwing me around and super fun but also mildly dangerous and I'm really enjoying it. I think that it's good to try new things no matter your age, no matter your experience level, your fitness level, whatever.

Because it makes your brain work in different ways and it exercises your brain as well as your body and it makes you feel good, it makes you maybe think a little bit better in other areas of your life. We should all just be trying to use our brain as much as possible, right? Create new pathways and create new perspectives and – I think it's good. It's been good for me anyway, I feel good about it, having a good summer and I think that that's – I'm trying to segway into today's podcast about maybe thinking about your diet nutrition and some different ways and we can do that with today's conversation with Dr. Will Cole.

He wrote a book called Ketotarian. I'm going to get to what it means but I think it only makes sense as health and nutrition continues to evolve, that we're starting to get kind of like mash ups of different methodologies because as we know, one strict set of rules doesn't work perfectly for everybody. There are some, I think some pretty universal rules that make sense but different things work for different people, we need to be able to kind of take this general framework and then tailor it for specific people and needs and challenges, right?

These mashups, you're hearing things like paleo piscatorial or paleo vegetarian or carnivore keto, the list goes on but Dr. Will Cole has a new one and one that might be a more attractive and reasonable for a lot of people out there. This is Ketotarian which according to Dr. Cole who is my guest today is a pretty much, essentially a plant based version of keto.

Now, if you're thinking, Keto seems kind of restrictive enough with the whole "no carb thing" and "if you take away my meat, I'm literally just eating an avocado with some spinach leaves on top." Well, you are not alone in thinking that because that's kind of what I was thinking when I heard about this. I read Dr. Cole's book, I learned a lot, I think there's a lot we can take away from this book, whether we want to be keto or whether we're plant based or not, any version of that. I think that this book is useful and there's a lot of good information in it.

So we're going to get into it. But a quick intro on Dr. Will Cole. He graduated from Southern California University of Health Sciences in Los Angeles. He has his post doctor education and training in functional medicine and clinical nutrition through The Institute for Functional Medicine and Functional Medicine University. He now consults locally in the Pittsburgh area and via webcam consultations for people around the world and he specializes in clinically investigating the underlying factors and customizing health programs for chronic conditions like thyroid issues, autoimmune issues, hormonal dysfunction, digestive disorder, the list goes on and on.

Yeah, you could say he's pretty smart but he's also just a very awesome, sincere dude who wants to help people and he has a great Instagram account which in today's day and age is kind of a big deal. I'm always on his Instagram account, like everything he posts, I can't help it. That's my intro, I hope you enjoy the podcast, if you do enjoy it, please leave me some kind words and a nice rating on iTunes, #shamelessplug. Because I need your validation to survive guys. Do me a favor.

All right, that's it, here is my interview with Dr. Will Cole, author of Ketotarian.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:04:19.6] AVH:** All right, Dr. Will Cole, welcome to the podcast, thanks for being here.

**[0:04:23.1] WC:** Thanks for having me.

**[0:04:25.2] AVH:** I appreciated it and so cool to be seen you sort of face to face, of course our listeners are not seeing you unfortunately, but I am, after meeting you in person at Paleo f(x) the last Paleo f(x) which was awesome. I got to chat with you because you were on a panel that I was moderating which was super cool and funny because as I was kind of doing my little preemptive research about the people that I was going to be talking to and introducing.

I got to learn a little bit about you and what you do and then I was wandering around New York as I do and going in to the various sort of like health stores and health food places as I do and I discovered a product is on that you kind of helped make I suppose which we can talk about a little bit later but it was just, it was really like weirdly serendipitous that we had never – our paths had never crossed and then about two days before we met, I like discovered this product that had your name on it.

Wait, is this the same Dr. Will Cole that's kind of interesting. Anyway, that's my sort of introductory story but thank you again for being on the podcast, I appreciate it.

**[0:05:26.1] WC:** Yes, thanks for having me and that is, I loved making that product or formulating it. It's an adaptogen with marine collagen and holi basil, I'm like an adaptogenic nerd.

**[0:05:38.0] AVH:** Me too.

**[0:05:39.6] WC:** Agent Nateur which is an awesome like none natural, none toxic skin care company, they said "hey, we want to make our first supplement and we want you to make it" and okay, what a cool opportunity. It's holi(youth) is what they call it.

**[0:05:52.7] AVH:** Yeah, I love it too because it kind of hits the sweet spot that I know I'm super into and I think you're tapping into an audience here that's into like adaptogens and things that are healthy and good for your body but also are sort of beautifying too. The product when I first saw it, the way it's packaged, I thought it was like a skin cream, I thought it was like a face but

it's actually something that you ingest, you take internally that is for you but it's also like good for your skin and makes you look good and all that kind of stuff.

**[0:06:19.4] WC:** Yeah, it's from the inside out. It's interesting that social media, people are using it as a face mask as well which I kind of love because I've always written and I said, we shouldn't put things on our skin that we can't eat and this is like the total manifestation of that, they're like sipping on it and rubbing it on their face too which is cool.

**[0:06:37.0] AVH:** I love that, okay, have you used it as a mask yet?

**[0:06:40.3] WC:** I have not, I have to be honest about it. I'm not much of a mask guy but –

**[0:06:43.9] AVH:** Okay, fair enough but maybe we'll both have to try it out and report back because –

**[0:06:48.0] WC:** I take it internally everyday so yeah.

**[0:06:51.5] AVH:** I completely agree too that it's like products that if you wouldn't feel comfortable having it in your body, you probably shouldn't be putting it on your body either because it's the same thing. Like stuff that you're putting on your skin, is going into your body, right? Literally.

**[0:07:03.6] WC:** Exactly.

**[0:07:04.3] AVH:** We're already going off on a tangent here. Okay, before we get any further for our listeners who maybe aren't as familiar with you, can you kind of give us a little bit of background about who you are and what you do?

**[0:07:13.2] WC:** Yeah, I'm a Functional Medicine Practitioner, I'm based in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania but 90% of my patients are seen globally via webcam consultation so we're primarily a virtual functional medicine practice. My Doctorate is from Southern California, University of Health Sciences in Los Angeles and my Post Doctorate Education in Training is in Functional Medicine and Clinical Nutrition through the Institute for Functional Medicine, IFM. I

see patients primarily through the week and then I also love writhing. I write for Mindbodygreen as one of their course instructors and wellness experts and I write for Goop and Bustle and other places too.

Primarily, Mindbodygreen and Goop and yeah, I love what I do, I love speaking about functional medicine and being a part of people's wellness journey is super humbling experience and there's never a dull moment in people's journey's, it always keeps me sharp and on my toes. I also am on a podcast called Keto Talk with Jimmy Moore and I have a book coming out so I'm super excited about, called Ketotarian.

**[0:08:19.1] AVH:** Just a couple of things going on.

**[0:08:20.6] WC:** Just a couple of things.

**[0:08:21.4] AVH:** Yeah, okay, I've got a lot of questions about a lot of these things. Are you from Pittsburgh?

**[0:08:26.0] WC:** I am from Pittsburgh, yeah.

**[0:08:27.9] AVH:** All right. Was that a conscious decision that you wanted to open a center there because maybe it's like, you know, you think about places like New York or California and functional medicine, something maybe people are already more familiar with and things like that. But was that something that you really wanted to kind of like bring to your hometown?

**[0:08:45.5] WC:** I was in living in Los Angeles, my wife's from LA so we moved back to Pittsburgh primarily for my kids, it was like we wanted a slower pace of life in the country outside of Pittsburgh but still close enough to make it into the city and to work and all of that stuff.

That was the real main reason to move back was for my kids. It wasn't professionally driven but when I was here, The cool thing about the day that, the age that we live in is that, it makes this big world small is the power of the internet. It's how we're talking now, it's how I talk to most of my patients so it doesn't really matter where I'm at for most of my patients.

Yes, 10% of my patients are from Pittsburgh so that's awesome. Really, we were the 10 years ago, that's how long I've been doing this but 10 years, I was the first person talking about functional medicine in the city, at least to a certain degree and people were talking about it but at least, professionally, I think I brought that word and that term and this field of healthcare to Pittsburgh. Now it's beyond Pittsburgh at this point.

**[0:09:49.2] AVH:** Yeah, it's very cool. Talk a little bit, we've talked about functional medicine and holistic medicine and that kind of thing on the podcast a lot. But talk to me a little bit about how people find you, how they kind of get started like deciding, would maybe working with you be a good fit and then you conversely deciding, can I help these people?

How that process works because I have like a vague understanding that people who maybe suffering from sort of health issues and are seeing a traditional kind of GP or whatever and maybe having some frustrations and want to explore other things but what is like the real process for how people, like recognize, maybe there's something going on, maybe functional medicine can help, reaching out to you, like how that ball gets rolling?

**[0:10:33.6] WC:** Yeah, most of my patients are going through a lot of health problems and they've done a lot in their own life by the time they get to someone like me in functional medicine. They are very well read, one of my top patient base are people in healthcare like nurses and other doctors and health coaches or just people out of their own suffering had to educate themselves on this.

They're very bright, sharp people, they know more than their doctors, most of them do. It's really born out of, they know something's missing from their health puzzle and they want to like dig deep and find out what's going on, they're eating better than most Americans, they're kind of beyond, don't eat McDonalds, they're kind of like, "okay, I'm doing everything right but I still feel like crap. Probably feel better than I would if I worked doing this but I'm still struggling."

Then occasionally, I get the person that's like, "what the heck do I do" and they're still, they're coming, this is the first introduction into wellness but most of the time, that functional medicine isn't their introduction into wellness. Yeah, that type of person and they want answers so they want to run labs, they want to dig deep to these roots sort of facets to why they feel the way that

they do and they want someone that hears them, they want someone that listens to them, they want someone that can give them direction.

They don't want to have to micromanage their case, this is like a full time job and many people have to, you know, if they have the opportunity to take time off of their job to get their health in order, that's the kind of level that I'm seeing. Many of them don't have that opportunity and they just have to work and get through the day. It's just a matter of "okay, I just need to know what to do and I want to start feeling better" and that's where they're at headspace wise.

Yeah, we start off with an evaluation and we don't want to waste anybody's time. We just want to say, "is this even right for you?" That's kind of that for you as the patient, at the front end, and then, from there, we can see, okay, should we explore more and see what functional medicine can do for you, what does that look like, what even makes sense. So we do a comprehensive health history and all of that stuff. Because we're primarily virtual, we're not taking, replacing primary care, they're still having their primary care doctors.

We're working in conjunction with them to support their health to give them answers so they can regain their health.

**[0:12:53.0] AVH:** It's funny, you touched on something there about how a lot of your clients maybe are really well educated and often know more about – especially nutrition than maybe their doctors do and – but one of the things I'm seeing more is the idea that people who don't – who aren't super well educated in this world, who don't live in the bubble that we live in where we like read these books for fun and are interested in the stuff and listen to this podcasts for fun.

It's easy for us to think that this is the world which it isn't, you know? The greater world isn't as in to this stuff and as educated as we are. Sometimes, it's the people who don't even know what functional medicine is or the idea that nutrition can be a proactive way to approach health, all that stuff, those are the people who need your help the most sometimes, right?

How do we reach out or how do we get in front of people like that who aren't searching for podcast about health and who aren't googling functional medicine and things like that? Those

people who really need this kind of proactive, holistic approach, how do we get in front of those people.

**[0:13:56.6] WC:** I think two fold. I think that media is part of that and I think the power of Dr. Google can connect people because they're not looking for functional medicine, they're googling their symptoms. By googling their symptoms because they like are just – “why am I doing it this way?” At that point, the more that we in the wellness world are providing good content to at least educate them and point them in the right direction of like, these are things you could do in your own life without a doctor, these are the things that you could ask your doctor to test for.

This is a functional medicine doctor that you mentioned as well. I think content is king and that's not from a marketing standpoint, that's just from a giving good quality information to educate people. That's internet and I think the other side of it is podcasts and people just – people in the wellness world on none health podcasts is helpful.

The TV, I think for a lot of people still, I think Dr. Oz, people can give him flak but I think he has a lot of people that they're just looking because they like Dr. Oz and they like this, it's on primetime television and then they're seeing this and this is like their gateway into a whole new world and I think he's done a lot to change the paradigm in the conversation that people are having.

**[0:15:11.6] AVH:** Okay, that answer makes me feel better because sometimes I do feel like we're sort of preaching to the choir a little bit, you know? We're reaching out to these audiences that already are buying into the idea of holistic approach to health and functional medicine and things like that and sometimes it's – I feel like we are just missing out on bigger group that maybe doesn't feel always as included. But I think what you're saying is a good point, that the more quality information we just put out there and make available, the more likely that people are even going to happen upon this stuff and that's how people can get started.

I like that. It's a scary situation in the United States right now where we have like the potential to – we have so much information and so much knowledge and so much resources but we're obviously still in a pretty bad way. I mean, there's some stats from your book, we're going to get into your book more here in a bit but you know, the idea that we are spending more money on

healthcare than any other nation by far, but we still have some of the like, lowest qualities of health and life and whatever in the industrialized nations.

I think he said, you know, 81% of Americans are on at least one medication, 81%. This stuff is insane and as we mentioned or you mentioned a little bit earlier, most doctors still aren't getting training on nutrition. They get like a day of training on nutrition which is insane to me. Why is it, it seems like we're almost willfully refusing to get up to speed on this stuff, it seems like the average person now knows that what you eat has a huge bearing on your health and yet it's still not a conversation at all in the doctor's office.

Why do you think that is?

**[0:16:50.4] WC:** I think that you have a massive monolithic momentum of power and money and a conflict of interest is what the World Health Organization called it between what's actually rational and what actually is effective and low cost and proving health and business goals of all of these industries, the pharmaceutical industry and its sort of incestuous relationship with the government and with the American Medical Association to certain degree so I think that there's a lot of that going on.

I'm certainly not a conspiracy theorist nor am I a politician and understand all of this stuff but I do feel like it's out of the suffering that we're seeing in the western world. People are looking for answers and that consumer, what people are looking for and the power of the internet and people becoming educated and well informed, that's forcing a lot of conversations because now I'm hearing more and more that people, their doctors are saying, "well look into this or go look into that paleo thing, look into that ketogenic thing."

Because they don't know a lot about it but they're actually throwing toward that. That's never happened before. I mean, this is huge. I think that that is really what's happening now, it's not being educated, they're not learning about it but they're just like "look into that, google that thing" and the patient's left to fend for themselves and find it out.

Now the Cleveland Clinic has a Functional Medicine Center, I think this was not here 10 years ago, this is a new age when it comes to that as well. A lot of things have to change, I don't have

the answers to that but it has to change at the educational system from the medical schools in my opinion. I think that we need to inform doctors more than just a weekend's worth of, you could learn more on YouTube on a weekend, and that's what they're getting all of their years of schooling and these are brilliant doctors, they're not being trained in this, it's like, you can't even expect them to give you opinions on food because they're not even trained in it.

It has to be an educational overhaul, I don't even know how you do that but it has to happen, I think, to really be the ripple effect of people actually being equipped with simple tools in their life and they all think that their only option is that pill because that's the only option they're typically given.

**[0:19:06.4] AVH:** Yeah. I mean, I think one of the positive things that can come out of this in the age of information is not, it's not about distrusting or mistrusting doctors and western medicine, it's about knowing that doctors are human beings too and that we are all individual and that we need to have sort of more individual approaches to our health.

It's not just taking at face value everything that a doctor says or every drug that a doctor tells you to take. It's about knowing that there's different levels to it and that a functional medicine practitioner can work with your doctor and can work with your own research and knowledge and experimentation and there's more layers to it than just going to a doctor, telling them you know, an issue and then giving you a stock answer, right?

That's kind of empowering because it means that you can take some of this sort of information to your own hands and make some decisions with it and you're not just at the mercy of whatever drugs people are giving you, right?

**[0:20:00.0] WC:** Totally. The Institute for Functional Medicine, IFM is almost all conventionally trained doctors who have had an interest in their own life for whatever reason to go and learn about functional medicine. They know they weren't tested about it, they weren't taught that at school. So they went, after they became doctors, to go learn about this stuff but what they're finding is when they graduate from IFM, they are like, "what the heck do I even do with this because I don't have the time to see – to talk to my patients about this."

Many of them are finding they had to leave the conventional system to even impart this wisdom. It's not just education, it's also the system of the timing and how we, we're stuck in this sort of sick care model where you're in there for five minutes and you only think time you have is "just take this pill and see you six months."

We need to change a lot beyond educational systems too, just to get people the time and the attention that they need.

**[0:20:55.5] AVH:** Yeah, going back to your practice and working with different clients, this is a question that I ask a lot of people because it's something that I struggle with personally. I struggle with as a health coach and someone who helps people kind of establish healthy, positive habits and routines in their own lives is the – sometimes the disconnect between when someone recognizes that there's something off and that they need some help and they need to make some changes.

Then, taking those actual steps. Someone who has come to you and reached out to you and is talking to you, obviously has a level of commitment because they recognize that there's something that they need to fix and they want to work with you. But sometimes, when told, or when they start to realize what those changes are going to entail and what kind of maybe sacrifices or what kind of real lifestyle changes that takes, the initial like motivation and novelty wears off and they're not quite ready or not quite sure about how to actually enact those changes and make it sustainable.

How do you approach that after kind of establishing what the changes are that need to be made? Having somebody enact those changes and really kind of stick to it. How do you help people with that?

**[0:22:06.2] WC:** The way that we – that's another structure problem that I think that even functional medicine clinics can have is that they're going visit by visit and there's a lot of life that happens in between like doctors says it's coaching visits or anything like that.

In real life happens when you're not talking to a health coach or a doctor about your health. It's like the days, when you're having a bad day or you're feeling discouraged, you feel

disillusioned, what am I even doing and they feel overwhelmed. The way that we structure our clinic is because we saw that problem. 10 years ago, we were like, "okay, let's be there in real time with for them as much as we can be," via email, webcam and phones. They can just shoot us an email or call us up and say, "what would you do with this?" That builds good habits.

Not everybody can do that, not every health coach can do that. I just have myself and my team where while I'm consulting, they are getting feedback so we can be that structure, that support system, as they're gaining good habits and learning how to navigate this. That demystifies all of this and it defuses the feeling of anxiety and feeling overwhelmed and disillusioned. I don't know if that answered the question but it's just – having that support, a lot of people need that to varying degrees, even if they're very well read, they still want direction and they still want someone outside of their own head to say, "am I doing the right thing?"

When you're not feeling well, it's like, okay, "is this a detox symptom or am I doing too much? Am I literally, is it a good thing that looks not so good or is it a bad thing?" All of it can look the same so just sort of give confidence as to like, "this is right, it's okay, this is where you should be." I think those little things add up because then, the days turn into weeks, into months and years and then like wow, we retest in a couple of months, things are a lot better on your labs.

That starts by day to day changes.

**[0:24:01.3] AVH:** Yeah. I guess it's really about sort of structure and support. I guess also the knowledge, something you touched on there too but just knowing or just being aware of and educated about the answers doesn't mean that it's suddenly everything's fixed and you're going to be perfect, you know? Even people who are health coaches or are doctors or people who have all the answers and all the knowledge still needs support and needs structure and are not perfect every day and that's why it's a process, it's not like "okay, I have the information now. Now I'm healthy for the rest of my life."

If only it were that easy, right? It's something that's – you're constantly working on every day.

**[0:24:39.0] WC:** Yeah, exactly. Again, it's not, most of the time, with my patients, it's not a lack of knowledge, they have the knowledge. They're past that, they're into like structure and support

and community which is important to just having a team that understands them and they don't feel like they're crazy, you know?

**[0:24:57.0] AVH:** With your clients, do you – I would imagine it's obviously very individual and different depending on who you're working with and what their challenges are but is there like a certain amount of time that you want to work with anybody and is the end goal ultimately to have them go off on their own and not need you anymore or like, do you have clients that you talk to once or twice or do you have clients that you are working with for years on end? What's that relationship usually look like?

**[0:25:25.2] WC:** Most people the contact is, most people have autoimmune conditions or some chronic health problem and they're with us on average between 12 and 18 months and that's getting to the place of, I mean, they're feeling better. The goal is, all right, we're moving in the right direction, some months are better, some months are not good, some people move really fast, some people move really slow but the end of this sort of benchmarks of like six months and 12 months, we can start seeing marked improvements as far as objective data like labs improvement and just day to day feeling better.

We're tracking that over the time. With great outcomes, it takes time, these aren't quick fixes by all means. There's some people that just want to run labs. There's some people that just want to run labs, they're doing a lot in their lives, maybe they have everything in place, they just need a few tweaks here and there.

It's everything in between too but that is typically, people that are going through health problems are with us for a while.

**[0:26:21.2] AVH:** Okay.

**[0:26:22.8] WC:** To answer your question, my goal is to get them to a place of self-sufficiency. If I'm doing my job, they should be able to live their life and know what works for their body, know what doesn't, maybe come in once a year for a retesting of labs but not like, my goal is to get someone out on their own.

**[0:26:38.5] AVH:** Got it, okay. You touched on you know, the autoimmune issues and stuff like that. One of the big topics that I want to talk to you about because I think it's something that we all have to face, whether we have autoimmune issues or we're just – we're even relatively healthy people, just existing in the world is the idea of inflammation and so much dysfunction being a result of inflammation and it's sometimes I feel overwhelmed by how to address this both for myself and for people that I'm coaching because it's such a massive undertaking to say, it's one thing to say, eat less inflammatory foods, like, try to sleep a little bit more, things like that.

Pretty much anything can cause inflammation so you know, telling somebody like, "try to have a less stressful life because that's inflammatory," easier said than done, right? You know, you try to tell people, "you should probably work out a little bit more," that causes inflammation. Not working out enough can cause inflammation.

I feel like that's a really – I read about inflammation and it gets me worked up because I'm like, I'm probably full of inflammation, how do I fix this? Can you – I know that's like, it's just a very big question but can you just kind of address this idea of inflammation being, really like a major cause of a lot of poor health and how you can even start kind of dealing with it?

**[0:27:51.4] WC:** Yeah, absolutely. I find that everybody has their own level of what they can handle information wise so there comes a point where we know too much for our own good and it's kind of like, okay, we need to learn as you inform ourselves but then if it's causing a stress anxiety like even learning about inflammation or health problems.

That's causing you overly stress anxiety. I tell some people to just, you need to quit googling things, you need to quite educating yourself because you're literally –

**[0:28:20.6] AVH:** That might be my problem.

**[0:28:22.6] WC:** You're feeding into this anxiety and stress which is not good for your health, it's not good, it can be a form of inflammation but inflammation is a good thing balanced. It's a good thing when in balance because it's a part of our immune system, it fights viruses and bacteria.

This is not about inflammation is bad, hyper inflammation, chronic, insidious inflammation, acute inflammation, these responses that don't go down overtime is a problem.

That is what you can look at every health problem that we're faced with today, has inflammation as a commonality. Autoimmune disease, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, the list goes on and on. These are all inflammatory in nature so everything we do in our life is either going to feed inflammation or calm it down.

The foods we eat or don't eat, our stress levels, our lack of sleep, all the stuff you talked about. Supposed your detoxing, we need to be well informed, we need to do the best that we can but then we need to get the rest up to God, the universe and just say look, "I'm not going to show up about this and just going to be – do the best I can and then let go" because we have to resend ourselves in the wellness world and I think that's really the point that I wanted to get in my book in Ketotarian.

We need to not be so obsessed about things to the point of it causing anxiety and stress because it's with good intentions but that's actually not good for our wellness. We need to find that balance and recalibrate ourselves and not become this sort of shame, stressed out and/or thoracic sort of culture where people are overly obsessed with, and stressed and anxious about this.

So I don't know if that struck directly to link the answers to your question but I think that we do the best we can, get a baseline, ran labs like run inflammatory labs. See if it is even an issue for you. Do a checklist of some symptoms and then be logical, be rational. I am dealing with these things, it doesn't have to be this thing that is all consuming.

**[0:30:21.7] AVH:** Right, I think the idea of balance is just another reason why we need people like you and resources like you because balance, it sounds like the moderate middle of the road normal approach that we should all be aiming for but it is actually the hardest thing because personally, maybe I don't speak further when I say this but it is very easy to not give a shit and just eat like crap, treat your body like crap, live like you are going to die tomorrow.

It is also very easy to follow a very strict disciplined rule based plan that someone just gives you and says do everything exactly like this because then you don't have any choice, you don't have to make any decisions for yourself, you just do it but when someone says, "Try to find the ideal balance for you that makes you feel good, where you enjoy life, where you're healthy" all those things, that's extremely difficult because it involves a lot of self-reflection and experimentation.

And playing with things and that is a lot of work but I mean that's what we really all going for and yeah, okay so balance. All right, the last inflammatory question I guess I have before we talk about your book because this is something that I read in the book and it is something that I never really thought about before but you talk about how depression is seen as an inflammatory condition and I would imagine anxiety as well. Can you talk a little bit about how those are connected?

**[0:31:42.8] WC:** Yeah, sure. So there's whole field of research called the Cytokine Model of Cognitive Function. Basically how inflammation, cytokines are these pro-inflammatory cells impact our brain works and yes so anxiety, depression, brain fog, ADD, ADHD, autism are all linked to this sort of pro-inflammatory cytokine activity in studies and then we have to look at what's driving the inflammation I think that's the bigger thing.

I mean those research looking at the micro biome, the gut, the psychic brain impacting the brain and toxins and hormonal imbalances can – when we are talking about inflammation, it is an aspect of the immune system and it's an imbalance. So it is this imbalance that is breeding this problems and the imbalance which can cause us higher inflammation state which can impact the brain and our mood. So it is not something that people think of as directly inflammatory.

They may think of arthritis as inflammatory or think a pain is inflammatory but they don't think of the far reaching implications of inflammation beyond just pain. It's the impact that our brain health is paying a price for inflammation as well.

**[0:32:48.6] AVH:** Yeah and I mean it's funny because I am very fortunate that I am one of the I guess, what is it like 19% of Americans that is not currently, knock on wood, on a medication. I've always said like, "You know I eat paleo because I like it and because it makes me feel

better” but I can eat anything. I don’t have major issues with any type of food or whenever but when I pay attention, when I am being healthy and treating my body well, I am paying attention.

When I eat a lot of sugar I feel bad mentally and emotionally afterwards and it is not just, “Oh I feel guilty because I ate a piece of cake” if I have a really crappy day of eating the next day I’m suddenly in a terrible mood and I don’t really want to move my body and I don’t feel super productive and I am not working as hard and it took me a while to realize how silly it was that I wasn’t connecting those two things. It was like, “What did I do differently yesterday?”

Oh I ate garbage and now I feel sad and irritable and garbage, you know? So I can’t really use the excuse anymore that’s like, “Oh I can get away with this because I don’t have celiac disease or I don’t have any issues” it absolutely is causing inflammation and causing negative consequences when I eat garbage. So that is something that I am starting to grow up or crop a little bit about but the things that you eat and do and whenever, they have consequences.

And it is not always this super huge, “I have to stop or I’ll die” kind of consequences but that doesn’t mean that it is something you should be working on so yeah I am learning too. Okay so I want to talk about your book that is coming out soon, Ketotarian, and I got to read. You sent me an advance copy the other day, I appreciate it. I got to look through it and it is really a community where keto is becoming much more talked about and more widely experimented with and accepted.

This is still a very different approach to it which is kind of exciting. You are talking about lower carb, higher fat but from a mostly plant based perspective which is almost entirely opposite to what I have read about or talked about. There’s all these people who are talking about carnivore diets for example which isn’t necessarily keto but in some cases I suppose could be or just fat and then whatever else you want to eat is secondary.

So I think that what you are talking about is really, really different and I’d love for you to talk a little bit about this approach why you wanted to write this book and why you are advocating for a really very plant based approach to keto eating.

**[0:35:15.6] WC:** Yeah as I said before, most of my weeks are spent with – I mean most of my every week is spent with patients. So it is really born out of my clinical experience and seeing what works and what doesn't in each patient's lives but it's also being writing and being on a ketogenic podcast where people ask questions and it is also that too. We're seeing what a lot of people in the keto world are doing unintentionally wrong or not right for a lot of people and I am trying to get solutions to the keto world.

To be more plant-centric in their life, to get more variety of foods in their life for their micro biome which needs these plant fibers to be diverse and optimal and all the phytonutrients and the fiber that impact that house on our health and also, it was written for the vegan and the vegetarian world which I think a lot of them they're not feeling well and their digestion is wrecked, they are fatigued, they don't feel very well but they are trying to do the right thing being vegan and vegetarian.

So it is the best of both worlds, the plant based ketogenic approach is what I wanted to get across and to on the sort of utopian bigger level which I am reading way too into the purpose of the book but trying to bring two seemingly different worlds together which I think our world needs more of so I am just doing it on my little function on medicine level but I think we don't have to be fighting in the carnivore people and the keto people on one side don't have to be gagging on the vegans and vegetarians and vice versa.

The overly zealous vegan and vegetarian doesn't mean to be gagging on them. Let's find out how we can come together feeling great. This is food guys, we should be freaking out about this. We want to be feeling good and that is what people are looking for. So as an answer to this inflammation spectrum which I see every hour on the hour in my clinic of how to put your body into ketosis to lower inflammation, to get your brain sharp.

And it is something that people in the paleo world can do. I mean most of the recipes are paleo just by default so it is just another option for you to use sort of medicine.

**[0:37:27.6] AVH:** I like it and I am definitely seeing a reflection of this in the paleo community too in addition to this carnivore thing that's kind of pop up, there is the concept of plant based paleo which could be a vegetarian paleo approach but it also just means for the vast majority of

us I think that it is not that you do not eat animal protein ever. It's this focus on plants as being the ideally healthy and get as much variety and as much diversity as you can and then supplement with the things that work for you.

And for a lot of people that is animal protein and healthy fats and for some people it is not but one of the things that I know in the book you talk about, you do mention that for a lot of people it is beneficial and positive thing to have some animal protein for things like high quality eggs, wild caught fish, maybe every once in a while some grass fed beef things like that. For you, is the idea of limiting animal protein more of an ethical environmental thing or is it more that you think less animal protein is better health wise for individuals?

**[0:38:37.2] WC:** It's a good question. So I was a vegan for 10 years and I wrote about this in the book and my health was suffering and I wasn't doing a vegan diet a healthy way and I think that people can do a vegan diet a healthy way and that's why I wrote the book too. So there's three different tracks in Ketotarian. It's as a vegan-keto, vegetarian-keto that brings eggs and ghee in and a pescatarian-keto or what I call veggie-quarian basically wild caught fish, shell fish sort of these nutrient dense foods.

So you could do one of those ways or all three of them which is what I would like to entertain for the vegan and vegetarian like can you bring these foods back in if it is not a religious or ethical thing, is this something that you are open to in the name of your health, in the name of the viability of nutrients and experimenting and seeing how you feel on it. So for me, it was just recalibrating. It was recalibrating the vegan world, bringing it to the balance and those recalibrating the keto world.

Bringing that into balance, so I talk about the environmental components to that and I show both sides. I show that yeah, I mean there are brilliant people in the vegan world, they're into environmental research that are looking at the impact that KFO's and factory farming have on our environment and people going more plant based improves the environment long term as a society and on the flipside, there is local farmers like Joel Salatin and people that are looking at the impact.

That we could use farming to improve the environment when done properly. So it is not taking a stance and saying you have to be vegan to care about the environment. It is just, “Okay, let’s bring everybody in the center, bring some calibration to the topic between both worlds and then bring in as you want” so the track is, the plan in the book is eight weeks of being plant based keto and then from there, moderate your carbs if you want to and we talk about how to do that if you feel good on a little bit more carbs or cycle in and out of ketosis.

Whatever you want, there’s different options for people and then same with meat and I would say that as well. So a part of it’s personal preference some people just don’t like eating lots of meat and some people, it is an ethical reason but I just hopefully entertain or give people some food for thought, no pun intended, to bring some of these foods back in if they want to. So hopefully that answers your question.

**[0:41:02.0] AVH:** Yeah and I love that you mentioned that too that you don’t – it is not a hard and fast rule that you have to be vegan to care about the environment and care about the world and there are a lot of people out there like Diana Rogers with Sustainable Dish and people doing a lot of good work showing that there are ways you can ethically eat meat and that whether you mostly plants or mostly meat or whatever, it’s really ultimately more about quality of the products that you are consuming.

And you are going out there and buying that – similar to what you said earlier, everything that you put into your body is either kind of adding to your health or taking away from it and when we’re buying organic vegetables or not or when we’re buying conventionally raised meat or grass fed local meat, we’re either helping the environment or we are taking away from it right? So making those informed decisions when you can make all the difference and it is funny too.

You mentioned the idea of so often it seems like different food viewpoints we are so against one another whether carnivore versus vegan and paleo versus not or whatever but when you try to have a more balanced rational approach where almost anyone can agree that eating vegetables, more vegetables is good and eating high quality of whatever it is your purchasing is good, most of these diets are really more similar than they are different.

Like if you want to stereotype keto as being bacon covered in cheese and vegan as being awful processed like Franken-meats and stuff and all the stuff but when you look at if we all are just trying to do our best to eat whole unprocessed clean natural healthy plants and animals that we really are closer, more similar than we are different. I think it is worth kind of being a little bit less judgmental and just trying to do what works the best for us into the duly right?

**[0:42:54.5] WC:** Yeah, it is the tribalism that I am trying to stop here or at least diminish it somewhat and using sort of plant based keto approach to shift your body into ketosis to get the inflammation benefits, the calming of the inflammation levels and metabolically becoming a fat burner and then from there you're right, you can personalize it. You can be paleo, you can be vegan or vegetarian but still be in this metabolic foundation of being a fat burner.

**[0:43:21.9] AVH:** Yeah so personally for you, are you strict keto all the time? Do you do a cyclical thing? I think it's fair to say and again, I talked to a lot of keto experts on the podcast and a lot of people who have different approaches to ketogenic diets and I think it is fair to say that for most of the world relying primarily on sugar and carbs for energy isn't ideal but does that then mean that we should all be aiming for ketosis, right? So that is my question that I ask everybody is yeah, keto is great for some people and in specific situations but do they all have to be, if we relatively healthy and just trying to tune up a little bit, do we all have to be trying to do this super low carb thing. So I guess that's two questions, what are you doing and also do you think that we all need to be kind of aiming for this?

**[0:44:09.9] WC:** Yeah, so what I do for most of my life is ketosis but I eat if I want to have extra carbs and I go out of ketosis that's fine and I can go back into it and I have that metabolic flexibility that's why I stay in ketotarian to build that because most people especially in the vegan and vegetarian world are just not there. Their blood sugar is all over the place. So recalibrate them and the standard American eater and the keto world won't really need this but it is bringing them to more of a blood sugar balance.

Lower insulin, balance inflammation levels and then from there, there are some people and I am one of them that can handle more carbs and I am fine. I feel actually really good. So I may have my sweet potato or if I want my sweet potato fries or increase fruit or have a smoothie, I am

okay. My labs look fine and then the next day I will go back to intermittent fasting and I will have my Ketotarian type meals. So I do more of a cyclical I think throughout the week.

During my work week just by default, I am going to be more ketogenic and then during the weekends, I probably moderate my carbs some from renal foods, paleo-type foods in my life. Some people don't have that wiggle room, some people if insulin resistance think with autoimmune issues, they'll pay for it if they do what I do. So we have to personalize this and some people, they just will feel better being in ketosis longer term but there are a lot of people that they will have that metabolic flexibility.

Where they can ebb and flow from that and that stiff foundation is instilled this inking inflammatory phytonutrient rich ketogenic type state and even if there aren't always in ketosis they're still relatively lower carb, some days moderate carb but they wax and wane between those states. I find that that's where most people do well other than if they have a health problem where if they go out of ketosis they feel worse. So everybody is different but that is my opinion on the matter.

**[0:46:05.3] AVH:** Yeah and that makes the most sense too just to be realistic and sustainable is if you can do the work, know yourself get to a point where you can be metabolically flexible then you can sort of enjoy the best health but also enjoying your life because to say ideally, being in ketosis all the time that is great but we are not all going to be in ketosis all the time because things happen and sometimes you eat a sweet potato or a piece of cake and you get to be able to roll with it and live with that but what about your family and your kids, are your kids doing kind of keto style eating too?

**[0:46:39.0] WC:** No, they're not. They're paleo, they're completely paleo but no I am not testing my ketones on my kids and maybe I am assuming some days they probably are producing some ketones. They don't have any health problems, there is not a reason to do that. They're not adult in that way. I don't want to – I just like to keep it simple with them. They don't need to lose weight, they don't need to increase their brain function, they don't have to decrease inflammation like the people that I think that benefit from this book or should have take their wellness game to the next level.

My kids are just kids but if they have health problems or as they get older that's definitely something that I would bring into their life and show them about.

**[0:47:19.8] AVH:** I guess that is just another advantage to being young. You don't have the issues and hang ups and messed up metabolism and things that adults do and so it is a lot simpler. You just stick with just eat real food and you should sort it out. Another concept that I wanted to touch on because it something that I think I am seeing and reading your book and also Paleo Principles, Dr. Sarah Ballantyne, Mark Sisson, Robb Wolf.

Some of these people who are really kind of trying to approach health and keto and all that stuff from a very accessible kind of standpoint. One of the misconceptions that I think some keto people have because it is all about fats. So fat first and then the rest comes after protein and carbs and so people read that as how much dietary fat can I shove in my mouth and so that's like I am eating avocado covered in NCT oil and then I am eating butter on everything and all of this stuff.

And it seems to me and you can correct me if I am wrong that for most of us especially if we are not big huge people that are working out 10 hours a day that we don't really need to be – the goal isn't to be “how much fat can we eat.” It is more supplementing with some natural good healthy fats with your vegetables so that the micronutrients of the good things of those vegetables are more readily absorbed right? So it's almost like when I was reading Paleo Principles it's like you almost don't really need to be trying that hard to add extra fat.

If you are cooking with health fats, you've got a little avocado in your salad. If you have some fatty fish or something like that, you don't really need to be keeping extra fat to be in ketosis right?

**[0:48:59.7] WC:** Absolutely. It is more that carb lowering your carbs that increases the ketosis, more of the eating fat because you want your body to actually be burning your own fat if that is the goal of the person and your own body will naturally just produce ketones just from carb restriction. You talked about moderating protein and that is definitely something to consider but I think that it has less to do with eating tons of fat and more to do with lowering your carbs.

I think more than anything but then eating until satiety and I think that is a bigger point is eating a variety of foods. You are right from a calorie standpoint, you don't need tons of fat because it is so satiating, it is so filling and cholerically, you're just going to add up pretty fast. You are not going to need a lot. What I do find and this is another common problem that I see in the keto world is that especially new to the keto, they are eating tons of fat and then their digestion is thrown off.

Their gallbladder is like, "What the heck?" and my pancreas is like, "What the heck?" they are having digestive problems from too much of this. So they need to not be over zealous and over excited. They're like, "Wow you can eat this now?" they can dis-moderate that. It doesn't mean that keto is not working for you. You may just have to tone it back and moderate it a little bit.

**[0:50:13.2] AVH:** Right okay and then another quick question before we start to wrap it up here soon but another macronutrient that's very important and near and dear to my heart as a meathead/body builder is protein. It's my favorite macronutrient I got to say and I am learning again, talking to smart people like yourself that there may be a bit of misconception with how much protein we actually need and that some of us in this health world may actually be taking in too much.

That we can probably reduce a lot of us. It's the old one gram per pound of body weight kind of thing. We can probably reduce that pretty drastically without noticing any kind of negative body composition changes without noticing any difference and how hungry we are and things like that but I am still a little bit as somebody who really likes their animal protein, I am a little bit hesitant about such a strong plant based almost supplementing with animal protein.

To me, I am worried that I am going to feel like I am missing out that I am not going to be as satiated when I am having these meals and things like that. Can you talk a little bit about how somebody who maybe like me, maybe I am trying to get into this lower carb to really up my plants and vegetables and things like that but I am a little bit nervous about reducing the animal protein a lot like how do I approach this switch?

**[0:51:28.6] WC:** Yeah and maybe for that person, specifically to Ketotarian, they will just do the pescatarian approach and then that really wouldn't change much for them and especially

coming out of the paleo context and then the eight weeks, it's just an experiment I guess for that person of being more plant centric just trying something new. I think variability is a good thing for our wellness journey as well. It keeps our body in a slight state of formesis I guess in the body.

It's a good thing to explore this plant based keto approach and then from there, if you feel good eating grass fed beef in your life then do it. I think that that is completely fine. There are some people that just – they don't feel like that. They feel like, "Oh I don't feel good when I have tons of meat" so at that point, I am giving them options to know. You don't have to be the conventional vegan and vegetarian. You can be low carb high healthy fat keto plant based.

You don't have just go and do what everybody else is doing which is having that basically just vegan junk food throughout the day or depending on carbs for energy and then they are hangry and irritable and their digestions are acting because they are living in grains and legumes all day long. So you don't have to be one or the other but for eight weeks is what I say in the book to be more plant based keto and then from there, you can personalize it.

**[0:52:50.3] AVH:** Okay and I know you do mention in the book too about whether you are supplementing with protein supplements or protein powders and there is a whole host of vegan vegetarian options for that. There is hemp and pea and all of these proteins but is this a misconception too or is it not true though that a lot of these plant proteins they aren't complete proteins like an animal protein and this maybe aren't as ideal.

I mean I suppose if you are somebody who really is against for whatever reason, animal proteins this is another option but are they not usually as good an option on some of these supplements?

**[0:53:23.9] WC:** Yeah there are essential amino acids meaning our body does not produce them and we have to get them through foods. There is about nine of them and animal proteins are complete proteins. So if someone is a vegetarian, keto they'll be completely fine because they are going to get it through eggs, a variety of nuts and seeds and the vegetables and the spirulina and all of that other stuff but the vegan is the only group of people that they're going to have to really look at where they're getting their protein and be intentional.

They can do it but they're going to be intentional with this. So they can supplement with branch chain amino acids. They can supplement with different protein powders to get all the essential amino acids within the day. They don't have to have it at every meal because if you are chewing food and you are digesting it in your stomach, your body is not separating it to breakfast, lunch and dinner and you need all nine at every meal.

But just to get adequate amounts of protein and we talk about then in the book but just throughout the day, that is possible sort of being keto and a lot of people are doing it really, really well. The vegetarian and the pescatarian really is going to be fine because they are eating complete proteins throughout the day.

**[0:54:28.8] AVH:** Okay, cool. All right well I won't keep you too much longer. I think I really appreciate you taking the time and we've got a lot of great information here and a lot of ways that people can reach out and learn some more and I think, if we can take anything, one main thing for this talk, it is good to distill stuff down and make – just have a couple of points you can walk away with, right? I think probably the biggest one maybe from this one is just eat more vegetables.

Whatever you're doing whether you like your steak or you're vegan or you're paleo or you're keto or whatever, I think pretty much all of us are eating some more vegetables. I know I can so this is inspired me and that is the fun thing. Variety is the spice of life, right? Try some new things, try some new vegetables, give it a shot. What can you lose from it? I don't think there is too many people out there who are like, "I really regret eating more vegetables" you know?

**[0:55:22.7] WC:** No, other than I am thinking of people's digestive problems I am over analyzing it but they would just have to cook them down but you are right. So many people, they need to get more vegetables in their life and hopefully they can do it in a way that they feel good from doing it.

**[0:55:38.8] AVH:** Right, okay so as I let you go here can you remind our listeners where they can go online to connect with you, to learn more about what you're doing, to order the book when it comes out?

**[0:55:49.0] WC:** Yeah, everything is at drwillcole.com. So we have a page for Ketotarian that we give free swag out for the pre-orders. You get some downloads that aren't in the book and some things that are in the book and yeah everything is at drwillcole.com. There's tons of video classes if people want to learn more about functional medicine too.

**[0:56:08.2] AVH:** Okay and what about your Instagram account because it is one of my favorite Instagram accounts to follow. I love your Instagram, it's the perfect combo of like it is real, it's you, it's all funny and hilarious but it is also really positive. Every time you post something on Instagram like, "Yes I love this!" so tell people where they can follow you?

**[0:56:25.9] WC:** Thank you, yes Dr. Will Cole, it's just @drwillcole, all one word on Instagram, on Twitter, on Facebook but thank you so much. Yeah social media can be a vortex of negativity but thanks for appreciating my efforts. My insta efforts.

**[0:56:41.8] AVH:** Yeah, I mean technology literally can be the cause of and end of the solution to all of our problems. So it is nice when you can find genuine positivity especially on social media because sometimes it can be kind of hard to find but I appreciate everything you do and thank you for taking the time and everybody should definitely check you out on line and check out the book when it comes out and we'll have to do this again sometime.

**[0:57:03.8] WC:** I would love to, thanks so much.

**[0:57:05.2] AVH:** All right, thanks Will.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[0:57:09.6] AVH:** All right everybody, thanks for listening. I hope you enjoyed it and of course if you did, please let us know on social media what you thought. Share the love @paleomagazine and on my own Instagram account @themusclemaven. Even better, leave us a nice rating and review on iTunes so that Paleo Magazine Radio is not a hidden gem of knowledge but a big fat obnoxious diamond full of knowledge that everyone can see from a mile away.

I hope that metaphor makes sense. Anyway, if you are listening to this podcast maybe while commuting to work or perhaps dreaming of your next adventure, next week's podcast is going to be appealing to you because I am talking to the founder of Prime Retreats which is essentially a health, wellness and fitness retreat or vacation company that works with an ancestral framework. So they go to places like Mexico and Panama and they disconnect from technology.

They connect with nature, work on functional movement and fitness, healthy eating, social connection, all the things that make us feel more human and less like a rat in a cage which I am pretty sure I am plagiarizing from a Smashing Pumpkin song but you get the point. So I hope you join us next week and as always thank you for giving me your time and have a great day everybody.

[OUTRO]

**[0:58:19.8] 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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