

EPISODE 241

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:10] AVH: Welcome everybody. My name is Ashleigh VanHouten and I am your host of Paleo Magazine Radio and I want to thank you for being with me today and, you know, when I say that, I mean it. I really do appreciate that you take the time to listen to this podcast and everybody who leaves me reviews and reaches out to me to give me feedback and suggestions, that stuff means a lot and it's big deal to me. I'm not just saying this to start off every podcast. I really mean it. Thank you for being here.

All right, now on to the subject at hand. Now, I think we all know that there's more to life than what you eat, right? Paleo can be a lifestyle for sure, and a healthy and enjoyable one. But it doesn't have to rule your life and I think that what you put in your body is absolutely important but there's just so much more to living a good, full, healthy life than just whether or not you prefer sweet potato over white potato or rice because man, paleo people can get into some strong arguments about that.

Anyway, those of us who are lucky enough to even have the time and the luxury and the ability to concern ourselves with optimizing our health and fitness because we are already healthy and safe and have that luxury of free time to research and read and learn from people. Let's all just take a moment to be grateful for how lucky we are that we get to do that, right? And be this life optimization nerd.

Okay. Now that that's done, #gratitude. I've had the good fortune to meet and make friends with someone who is all about life optimization and has a ton of knowledge to share with us. He is also a fellow Canadian so you already know he's smart and awesome, not that I'm bias. His name is Ben Pakulski and he is an IFBB professional bodybuilder, one of the best in the world when he was competing.

Certainly one of the best coming out of Canada and he now runs his own gym and super popular muscle and strength building program. He is also the host of an Uber popular podcast called the Muscle Expert Podcast. Now, at this point, you might be thinking, okay, he's a big

bodybuilder, he talks about muscle all the time and that's where you would be wrong because he kind of boxes the trends of a typical meathead by taking a personal interest in learning about longevity and mental health, relationships as well as mobility and meditation and a lot more on his podcast.

I'm a huge fan of his podcast because I think he does do a really good job of being so wide ranging and talking about all the things I'm interested in really. You know, this is a bodybuilder who else who does yoga which I think is not something you see very often. Anyway, we immediately got a long when we met recently because we see eye to eye in a lot of these things, we have mutual love of learning and connecting with people who want to learn and taking the holistic approach to life and health.

That is much more about simply what you do in the kitchen and what you do in the gym, it's everything. But we also love muscles and eating so we talk about that and a lot more in the podcast including things that he's learned over the years and years he's spent in the fitness industry talking to all the big names in health and wellness.

This was a really fun interview for me. I really hope you enjoy it and if you do, let us know, you can share the podcast or give us a shout out on Instagram. My handle is @themusclemaven and Ben's is @bpakfitness. You can reach out to us, let us know what you think, in the interest of sharing and learning and all of us being better humans. With that, here is my interview with Ben Pakulski after just a little bit of info about our show sponsor, Perfect Keto.

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

[00:03:41] AVH: Our show sponsor today is Perfect Keto, which is a supplement company with a focus on supporting the ketogenic lifestyle but you don't have to be keto to enjoy these products. It's founded by Dr. Anthony Guston, he has been on the podcast twice so you know he's a smart dude.

Whether you're keto or not or you're low carb or you just want to add some MCT or some low carb, high quality protein powder, exogenous ketones, if you're kind of experimenting some of these things in your nutrition planner, your lifestyle, this is a company that would do it, all these

products are peer reviewed, highly tested and I can personally attest to them being tasty and delicious because that's kind of at the end of the day what matters to me.

I get exposed to a lot of really high quality products but if they don't taste good, if they don't mix well, if they don't work, I'm not into it. Perfect Keto, one of my favorite products of theirs is the keto collagen which is a low carb protein powder made with USA grass fed cattle collagen, paired with MCT and fiber for sustained energy and no blood sugar spikes.

There's no artificial flavors or ingredients, you can choose from unflavored vanilla or my obvious favorite, chocolate which is sweetened with Stevia and yeah, if you want to try out their collagen, their exogenous ketones, any of their products, you can go to perfectketo.com/paleomag to get your products and use the code paleomag to get 20% off.

They have a special offer for the month of November because they just launched this new product, this perfect keto bars. I don't know about you, I know some people in the paleo world are kind of like, against the ready to go bars but I come from meathead background and I love protein bars, I love delicious things, I kind of taste like desert but they have better ingredients and this kind of falls into that category. These have a minimal effect in your blood glucose levels but a lot of fat, decent amount of protein and very little carbs which is the keto style.

If you want to try them out, they're giving you 30% off through November with the code PMketobars30. You've got that code, you've got paleo mag for 20% off anything else. It's a pretty sweet deal so go to perfectketo.com/paleomag and check it out.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:05:56.5] AVH: All right Ben, welcome to the podcast, thank you so much for being here.

[0:05:59.5] BP: Ashley, I'm grateful to be here, thanks for asking me to be here.

[0:06:02.9] AVH: We met in person finally at Mr. Olympia in Vegas, just last weekend and I not just fully recovered but what did you think of the show, did you enjoy your time there?

[0:06:13.6] BP: I did, you know? For the last maybe 12 years now, I've been going as an aspiring bodybuilder to begin with and then a competitive bodybuilder in the Mr. Olympia competitor and it's always a bit of a stress around that weekend and this was probably the first time I've been back where I just got to kind of chill out and spend time with my wife and have no agenda so it's nice.

I got to have a couple of athletes competing, I get to watch them compete and it was great, you know? It's very relaxing for me and people leave there like needing a vacation but for me, it was actually excellent.

[0:06:43.1] AVH: Yeah, that's awesome. Yeah, I know I've competed in a couple of competitions in Canada but I've never been to a bodybuilding show that I wasn't in and I actually didn't get to see the show because I was there in a different capacity. I was at the expo which is the crazy part.

How is it as somebody who has reached the levels you've reached in bodybuilding, how is it like watching other people compete versus when you were there kind of in the middle of it all yourself?

[0:07:08.2] BP: Well, I'll tell you what. I look at it very differently now that I did, obviously, growing up, you put people in a pedestal, right? You put people on this big mountain and they're like, "these guys are so incredible and you know," you want to aspire to be like them and you build them up to be this amazing incredible humans and they are, they really are. After you've been there, it really changes my perspective on the sport and I still have a tremendous amount of respect for these guys because I know what they go through, it's 24 hours a day, seven days a week and there's no days off, there's no minutes off.

The amount of respect they have, the condition these guys bring, it will never go away but I certainly don't look at it the same way as far as putting them on a pedestal anymore obviously because I've been there and I've been able to compete with them. It's really just looking at it from a perspective of admiration now and utter respect.

[0:07:56.2] AVH: Cool. If our listeners, for anybody who doesn't already know who you are, if you could just kind of give a little bit of a background, starting with your bodybuilding career and then kind of transitioning into the work that you're doing now and how you've moved in to more of a coaching and really an authority in the health and fitness world in general?

[0:08:12.7] BP: Sure, you know, I pursued bodybuilding because I needed it. I was a very fearful kid. I built an armor, I was a very insecure kid. I thought that external egocentric thing would validate me in some way and I ascended the ranks of first amateur bodybuilding pretty quickly and then professional bodybuilding relatively quickly.

That was just with hard work, persistence, determination and you know, effectively, what I articulate is two middle thing to the world then I'll do it myself, get to the top of this preverbal mountain or very close to the top of the preverbal mountain, very much so higher than anyone ever thought I was going to achieve.

You realize that I felt accomplished, I felt like wow, I'm actually done some cool things but it was not nearly what I thought it was going to be, you know? It didn't change who I was inside, it didn't change the insecure kid, it didn't change the fearful kid, I was still that same person, in fact, I was the most lonely insecure that I ever was in my life when I was effect on stage at the Mr. Olympic contest like leading to that contest, you'd think that what is 290 pounds at 4% body fat.

Absolutely shredded inside out, you'd be confident and on top of the world but in reality, it was the most loneliness I could ever been. You know, you reach this top of the preverbal mountain and you realize it's not what it was you built it up to be in your mind. Effectively looked at it and said "well, this isn't what I thought I was going to be, very grateful for what it's done for me but now I need to realize that the journey is not outside of myself, the journey is within" so I started just kind of pursuing my own personal development, my own personal development.

My own personal growth, looking at my beliefs, looking at my practices in my life, looking at the person I am and really trying to improve or love me for who I am and that's just a lot of layers to that, right? It's like this onion, this preverbal onion you keep peeling away layers to find the next one and that's kind of where my life has gone now and I still love muscle building and I still love

exercise but now it's about my kind of tag line is brilliant mind, resilient body. I'm trying to create this body that effectively allows me to do whatever I want, whenever I want.

I want to go to run, I want to go play with my kids, I want to be able to squat, I want to be able to do handstand, do yoga and backflips and play basketball and so my training is kind of adapted to that. Still all the while being really strong, you know, I still want to be able to do crazy things in the gym but I also want to be able to do yoga and be able to run and so it's shifted a little bit and really, with the intention of keeping this vehicle or this vesicle that we have, this vessel that we have to allow me to kind of live the adventure that I want to live for the rest of my life, being a great dad, being a great leader, doing some cool stuff and really just taking advantage of this amazing life that we have.

If I want to go run a marathon in the Sahara desert or something, I can go do that and want to go do a meditation retreat in Tibet, I can go do that. Whatever it is, just trying to create an awesome life, create an adventure for myself so I'm still leading people in the fitness space but now it's – I'm teaching people how to build muscle as the underlying premise but also, letting them realize that your body's a whole unit and if you don't take care of everything, from the health of yourselves, the health of your liver and your organs so your brain and your mind and your GI tract and you're consistent and all these things. You can be successful.

You will fail and you will be a fighting a much harder battle if you're not looking at this body like a whole rather than you know, some of its parts and so many people in muscle building are so single-mindedly focused on to build muscle, "it doesn't matter what I do to my body, it doesn't matter what I put in or it doesn't matter the environment, my stratosphere, my sleep and these things are" like – well, good luck to you, you know?

Some people develop great bodies and sweat themselves and the rest of us actually have to work and intelligently approach it. My approach now is very much a holistic approach to intelligent muscle building.

[0:11:58.8] AVH: It almost seems to me like your approach now which is as you said, more holistic and more sort of well-rounded and less narrow perhaps than when you were just trying to be the best bodybuilder in the world. This approach is almost more difficult and I'd like to get

this – I'd like to get into this a little bit more later but the idea that obviously, there's an extreme amount of discipline involved in being a bodybuilder but it's one thing to kind of just follow a very strict plan with almost no choice and no mental work on your end versus trying to be this well rounded individual that can do a number of things.

That can balance like life enjoyment with the sports that they want to do and want to have health as well as look good and all of these kind of things mixed together. It seems like that's almost a sort of more difficult journey in a lot of cases.

[0:12:47.8] BP: It's much harder mentally for sure. I mean, physically, you learn to become much more effective but mentally, there's so much more to learn like you know, one of my favorite quotes is the more you learn, the less you know and the truth and honestly, it's both a blessing and a curse, especially as a bodybuilder like it was one of the hardest things I ever did to become educated as a bodybuilder because we start to question everything that everyone else is telling you to do and you're like, well, that doesn't make sense, this guy's full of crap.

You realize everybody out there in this industry has no idea what they're talking about, they're just speculating all the things really. They're an expert because they've done one contest and they have abs and you realize everybody's full of baloney, you start to question and mentally, it's challenging because you're like, well, "is this right or is this right?" Then you start asking, "is it right now because what was right a year ago might be different now" and you have to put together the skillset that allows you to intelligently approach your life and be able to answer the questions right now.

Rather than like, a year ago, this is the truth but right now, it could be something completely different. You know, according to the type of stress I'm subjecting my body to this type of training, the type of nutrition, the time of the year, all these things you can play a massive role in what we do to influence our body and our mind.

No question, it's more challenging now but it's also more rounded from a perspective of, you have more solutions I guess, you have more actual paths to take. I call them kind of levers, you know? There's different levers that I can pull that allowed me to move the needle in different ways.

As long as we're always making constant forward progression, you're winning, right? Ultimately, whether that be mentally or physically, you're always moving the right direction. plateau no longer exist which is beautiful, we're always just learning. It should never exist for anybody. If you're hitting a plateau, you're doing everything wrong. Just learning how to manipulate the variables, whether be exercise and nutrition or environment or stress or all these things that's learning how to manipulate them and realize that it's all within your control, right?

I have this amazing blessed opportunity to train some of the best athletes in the world and you realize the only thing and this sounds so cliché but the only thing holding them back from being successful is themselves, it's their brains, their beliefs. I can't or this is hard or it's also to tell you such unbelievable irony when you see these guys, such amazing talent and they just – you know, they're destroying themselves. Man, you could be the best in the world, you could be so great and the reason you're not is because you don't believe in yourself or you think you can't.

That sounds so cliché but I see it firsthand every single day with these young athletes coming into my gym and until I can change their mind, I can't make them succeed and you have the one that comes in and you know, no specific person but it comes in this kind of clean slate, his mind yet isn't influenced in a negative way and he's the one who will be the most successful because he's the least skewed I guess or the least disrupted.

Those are the people. For all these people out there aspiring to be great at something, start paying attention to the words you use, start paying attention to your unconscious mind and how you – the beliefs that you tell yourself about the world or about yourself because that's what's stopping. Sounds so cliché and woo-woo but it's the absolute truth and if you can start tapping in to your unconscious mind and paying attention to your unconscious beliefs, you can start changing your life and it's right there.

This is going to go down the path but the gateway is meditation, right? Gateway is getting down into this alpha brain state that allows you to then tap and to fade. Getting into the conversation really quickly, you know, we have these four or five states of brain excitation which is you know, most people live in beta than you can effectively downshift into alpha and then downshift again into theta and then downshift to delta which is effectively sleep.

There's also a gamma but most people don't hear about that and know about that but we all live in beta and if you – most people can't get out of beta. They live in the state of high expectation, the stress and until you can get down into alpha which is kind of slow thinking and creative thought and problem solving, maybe not problem solving, depending on how you look at it but getting into alpha is then effectively the bridge or the gateway to getting into theta and you know, theta is kind of where all the conscious mind exist allows you to tap into your unconscious mind exist and allows you to do something and tap into your unconscious beliefs and maybe start to influence them or change them.

That's why you know, meditation now becomes such a big part of my life because you know, you realize, without tapping into your unconscious beliefs, you don't stand a chance at succeeding at things in your life. It's going to be where I am now is by just trying to learn myself and learn what are my beliefs and challenge my beliefs, right? Tell myself I'm full of crap as often as I can and question everything.

[0:17:17.7] AVH: Right, what you're saying about the things you tell yourself, it really resonates with me and I was just reading this article about the world's fastest marathon or I don't know if you've been following this but the guy, he's had the record for a while and you just beat it, he just beat it again by like a minute and a half which is absolutely unheard of and insane and yeah, he was part of that group, the Nike group that was trying to beat two minutes or two hours but he got like 2:01 something, whatever.

It's just absolutely incomprehensible but this guy in the interview was saying like, "the difference between all of you who are saying this is crazy and me is that I believe that this is possible. I believe that I can do it" -

[0:17:57.1] BP: 100%.

[0:17:58.8] AVH: It's just incredible, it gives me goosebumps when I read this – about this guy's journey and how he does it and how he believes that it can be done. Not only is he doing this for himself but he's paving the way for future runners and athletes where like, well, I mean,

everyone thought this was impossible and he's doing it so now I can do it and that's really what it's about.

[0:18:19.3] BP: I'll tell you, that's just a belief system. I actually was running an article about that myself yesterday, I didn't know this guy was leading that conversation but it's all about your belief in yourself. Are you the type of person who says you're going to do something and no matter what gets in your way, you get it done and that's just like self – that's just character and self-esteem, you're building self-esteem, you know, so many people are the people that like to say they're going to do something.

They just don't have integrity. They don't believe when I say something that they're actually going to do it. The idea of I believe I can do anything and truthfully, that sounds ridiculous and people think it's arrogance or cockiness or whatever but it's like no. I've seen what is possible if you just commit and you're going to accept the fact you're going to run into obstacles.

You accept the fact that it's going to be hard but you can enjoy it, you're going to smile and go, "Hell yeah, I'm becoming better." Because if you don't challenge yourself, you can't get better so you know, seek the discipline, seek the obstacle and run straight into it and that's where the growth happens and that's where you can really start to do really awesome stuff.

I believe, if you say you're going to do it, no matter what it is, you're going to do it. It's just a matter of time, you may not get it today, you may not get it tomorrow but you're going to get it as long as you stay with and you stay diligent with your habits and your practice and your discipline, everything is possible and it's such an awesome opportunity in life and that's just the brain state or belief that I've created in myself and create themselves based on the little things, right?

Set yourself up for the opportunity for discipline every day. You wake up, I wake up and before I do anything in my day, I've already exemplified four, three or four different types of discipline and it's simple, as soon as I wake up, before I do anything, I floss my teeth, then I'll sit down to meditate and I'll meditate for 30 minutes, there's two and then I'll get up and I'll drink a liter of water and there's three and sometimes I'll do my stream of consciousness journaling, there's four and you know, maybe today I won't pick up my phone until nine AM and that's discipline, there's five.

I've just proven to myself that I've gotten, maybe I'll go for an hour walk and there's six and there's six things that I've done before anyone else has started their day, I get up at 4:30 so anyone that's started their day by six AM, I'm done this six disciplines. I've just proven to myself that I'm someone who gets shit done and I've got extreme self-confidence in my ability to when I say I do.

That in itself is the most powerful lesson that any human being could have is like, set yourself up, give yourself an opportunity to demonstrate your internal discipline. Just find it, look for ways in the day to go shit, there's a cookie right there and I could either throw the cookie away and take it out of my eyes or I could put it in front of my face and hang it over my nose and go, do I have the discipline not to eat this.

When you don't, you win. You get a dopamine hit, you get a satisfaction hit in your brain that says, "Hey man, I just won." As much as that sounds ridiculous and futile and small, those little victories add up in your brain chemistry and your brain's ability to learn new things. Dopamine is kind of a neurotransmitter that influences learning.

If you're constantly getting those dopamine hits of I won. Then guess what? I hear a winner. Any little thing you can do, you're winning. If I just tell myself "hey, I'm not going to touch my phone until noon" and I don't touch my phone until noon. As much as that sounds small and insignificant, I know in my unconscious mind that I have the power or the willpower and the self-confidence and self-control to not do that.

There's so much beauty in that, right? It's an awesome opportunity to set yourself up for that stuff. Yeah, it's a beautiful – I'm not sure who this guy is but I just pulled them up and I'm definitely going to look into this guy, right?

[0:21:39.1] AVH: Yes.

[0:21:40.6] BP: You dip it or something?

[0:21:41.4] AVH: Yes, incredible, there's at least one documentary on YouTube, we'll have to put this in the show notes but definitely check it out because it's incredibly inspiring and for our listeners too, whether you're into running marathons, whether you're into bodybuilding, this is why I wanted to have you on because the lessons and the things that you're talking about are applicable across the board, no matter what you want to do.

Whether it's relationships or work or whatever athletic pursuit you're into, this stuff is relevant and I want to talk to you about this mindset stuff you're talking about as it relates to coaching because I know that you do a lot of that and you coach some really high level athletes and you have a bunch of different training programs and options and things online for people to work with you and you were saying earlier that you've encountered people who just have incredible talent and incredible potential but maybe the mental side wasn't there.

How do you combine the two? If you have a client who has this potential and has come to you and it has enough sort of motivation that they want to work with you and they want to start but maybe this self-talk or the internal belief systems and those things aren't there. That's so much harder to help support than to just give somebody like a training plan and say just go do this. How do you even start to support people that way.

[0:22:54.6] BP: Well, that's the difference between being a trainer and a coach, right? A coach is someone who can actually influence you in a way that most other people can't, a trainer can write a program, a trainer can potentially write a nutrition plan but a coach is going to coach you through those life obstacles that most other people can't and to be honest, I'm not expert, right?

I'm like Tony Robbins is an expert, I'm no expert but I've got a lot of experience and it's really a situational thing. I don't know that I have a process but usually, it's just one, you got to identify it, right? Two, you got to point it out to them and say "hey, do you realize that you do that?" Because most people unconsciously you know, it suggested that after 35 years old, 95% of our days is unconscious. It's all reactive rather than responsive.

Teaching them to first be aware of their words, first be aware of the things that come to mind. The thoughts that pass through their mind. You have to create awareness so that's step one and everybody. As a coach, you have that great opportunity where you say hey, when you sign them

up, you say, "I need the ability to have complete transparency with you. If I see something, I need to build and point it out and you can't get offended and you can't take it personally and you have to believe me but I have your best interest at heart."

Creating a trust, establishing trust and creating an expectation, letting them know, "hey, this is part of what's holding you back, let's create that so that's a huge part of it for me, right? It's create that trust and when they believe you, it's just like, then it's not fixing anybody, right? The objective is never fixed, the objective is just kind of point them in the right direction because I believe everyone can fix themselves and heal themselves if they need to be fixed.

Which I don't think anybody does, you just need to get out of your own way. There's just this degree of kind of pointing them down the right path and making them aware because most people, this isn't everybody for sure because I've met people who don't want to change but most people want to change and when you point it out to them, they're quick to acknowledge, it may not be an immediate thing, some people, it may be an immediate thing, you know?

If you're really good influencer, probably you could help people change very quickly. Just kind of pulling off track a little bit. The best way to change your brain and this sounds maybe surprising to people. The best way to do it is with those little victories with a little dopamine hits or exercise or things that actually changes your brain chemistry, right?

People are trying to change this fixed brain by changing habits. You know, I'm just going to quit smoking, I'm going to eat better food and it's very hard to do that, it's very hard to have will power, right? You create willpower is you prove to yourself that you can accomplish things and you get these little dopamine hits, you get this little reinforcing spikes of dopamine which actually changes your brain's ability to learn new things.

It's called neural plasticity so you change the plasticity of the brain. Now your brain is more receptive to change and that's beautiful opportunity that most people just don't understand. The more I have these little, you know, exercise is a great way to get dopamine and BDNF. Just getting the sense of accomplishment, right? I do the thing and then I get this reward. I exercise and get a reward. I go for a walk, I get a reward, I finish my work, I get a reward. This rewards is this internal brain chemistry reward.

The more you can get that, you realize when you have that spike of dopamine is when your brain is most plastic, it's most pliable to this new information. That's the time when you want to keep reinforcing them with this new pathway of like hey, not go create this habit, now go do this thing that's going to positively reinforce the things that we're trying to learn or we're trying to reinforce. It's literally, I mean, there's a lot of levels to it and there's a lot of interaction and engagement but really trying to create the positive brain state.

Which is two aspects to it, one, you have to be an alpha state in your brain which is the meditative state and you got to have some dopamine present typically, right? You don't have to but that makes it more likely to have it happen. When I were trying to create this new state with a brand that's actually able – that's actually pliable, right? Rather than creating or trying to change a state or the brain that's fixed, right? Brain that's a little more plastic and that's kind of the beauty of the opportunity we have in front of us.

Start to understand how the brain works at a physiological level.

[0:26:40.0] AVH: I mean, that makes sense to me too because isn't that how we rewire our brains in negative ways too? When we get those hormonal hits from eating sugar or from smoking or whatever. It makes sense that we're always chasing some kind of hormonal effect right? I think you know, knowing that you can do it just as easily in a positive way and that it sounds cliché but that's only because it's true and it's been proven correct over and over again but you have to take little steps to get to those bigger goals.

Nobody just kind of is successful overnight no matter how much we think that's the case on social media or whatever. You need to be able to have a little bit of humility and a little bit of patience and recognize that the little, the real kind of magic is in those little steps and the consistency that it takes to keep going down that path, right?

[0:27:28.0] BP: One of the things that I tell myself often and I tell my clients often is, every moment of your life, every instant is an opportunity to reinforce a habit or to create a new one. Everything you do in a day, you're either reinforcing a bad habit, an old habit, not necessarily a bad habit but an old habit.

Or you're creating a new one. View every instant in your life as an opportunity to either become the person you want to become or remain the same. That's your choice, consciously, every minute, I can decide like, what am I doing? Is this making me the person I want to become or am I remaining the same. It's okay to remain the same if that's how you want to be. If you're very happy and very content then remain the same. If there's something you want to change then you need to consciously, every instant of your life is an opportunity.

It's from how you stand to how you breathe to how your facial expressions are to what you eat and how you train and every instant is an opportunity to progress toward your greatest self or every instant is an opportunity to remain the same.

That's a conscious choice that everyone needs to make. It starts obviously with becoming conscious first. Becoming mindful of who you are and what you are and where you want to go and you know, I think that greatest opportunity there is meditation. For people who may be new to this meditation thing and meditation is just like I say, bringing you down from this high excited to our beta brain state.

Into an alpha brain state. If you can imagine like the matrix thought process, right? Things slow down and you just see the world a little more clearly and suggested that kids prior the age of five are constantly in an alpha brain state so the brain is just learning like sponges because they're in this alpha state where so much things are moving slowly and I just see everything around them and time slows down, they can perceive everything around and imagine living like that all the time, right?

Your brain is just somewhere receptive to all the information around, you just take it all up and that's in fact, what you're trying to create with this meditative state. Imagine the opportunity you have of if the world is moving slowly, you're no longer reacting and because now you had times move slower, now you could respond rather than react and you know, that's ultimately I think the gateway to a successful life and every successful person I talk to has a meditation practice.

Even if it's five minutes like sit down and be by yourself with your breath and pay attention to your body, right? Pay attention to your five senses. That's what meditation is, going inside

yourself and paying attention to your skin and your breathing and your sights and your smells and your taste, you know, the feelings. All these things which pay attention to your body and become aware of it.

[0:29:47.0] AVH: Can you talk a little bit about your personal meditation practice because that's one of two. I also want you to talk a little bit about your yoga practice because I'm especially interested in that as you being a very large male bodybuilder that does yoga, I'm very interested in that but first if you could talk to me a little bit about how you meditate?

[0:30:04.3] BP: Sure, it's just five – I start with minimum five minutes every day, usually ends up being somewhere up to 45 minutes. Wake up in the morning, like I said, I typically will floss and brush my teeth first because that's just become a habit. Then I'm going to sit down and I started in 2007 under the guidance of a guy who was a huge influence in my life. Dr. Wayne Dyer who unfortunately has left us.

He basically said just said “hey, if you have a hard time meditating, here's the best way to do it.” He said, “take a deep breath and as slow as you can, let it out. While you're letting it out, you count backwards from 10 and you go 10. Inhale” and he said “nine. Now you do four, five, you know, counts down until you get to zero and by the time you get to zero, either you're going to start again at 10 because you didn't stay focused or you're going to get to zero and you're going to be in what is effectively a relatively amplified alpha state.”

It just became good at it, you know? I became good at doing that every day and by the time I get to zero, I'm aware of myself but not much else around me and I am aware of my breathing and I focus on my breathing and depending on my intention, typically I will set an intention for my morning meditation even before I go to bed meaning I am going to create the person I want to be or the state I want to create in my brain or I want to focus on one particular thing or I want to identify one thing in my life that maybe isn't going the way I want it to and why and how I can make it better.

Or where I wanted to go, how do I want this to end up and then you just create it in your mind before it happens and then once you have created the ideal outcome then you can just go out and live into it right? You're like, “Oh I want that to happen” and follow that path and you'll know.

If you know where you are going to end up it is very easy to find the path. That's really what my daily meditation is and for me it is just as often as I can remember throughout the day, I try to pull myself out of beta.

Which is where we are right now. We are both in this conscious thinking state of beta and I want to put myself down into a calm and creative and responsive alpha states and I will do that in between 15 and 30 times a day where it is just even three breathes like really deep focused inhalation-exhalation cycles, slowing down my breath and really starting to pay attention creating an awareness of your body, your internal environment and creating awareness of your external environment.

And maybe it is a little gratitude, things like that as many times I can during the day. Obviously I wouldn't do it if I am in a meeting or something like that or maybe I will but it depends and just trying to make that your default state. Right now most people live in a default state that is reactive and fast and I am trying to be like, "No I don't want to be active. I want to be responsive and I want to calm" and listen, I am not perfect. I still mess up all the time.

And there's situations that still rub me the wrong way but those are the ones that you say thank you for it as they are helping you create awareness that you're not perfect, you need to get much better and until you can be responsive in every situation and calm, well you still have a lot of work to do.

[0:32:53.4] AVH: Yeah, I like the idea of the shorter structured times throughout the day to do it because I normally use a guided app because I have a hard time sitting down and doing that thing and not incompletely distracted but I found that since I started doing that in a regular basis and also started not feeling like I have to have rules and regulations around my meditation time and just feeling like as you said, taking a couple of deep breaths and feeling grateful for something throughout the day.

I mean that is not going to hurt anybody ever and it takes a lot of the pressure off of people who tend to be type A even about things like meditation so yeah, I really love that approach.

[0:33:34.6] BP: So there's a beautiful thing in what you just said right there and the feeling of being grateful and I say those words intentionally, the feeling of being grateful. So when you actually have a sincere internal feeling of being grateful, it actually creates an internal state right? It actually creates like if you legitimately feel grateful for something, rather than just saying like, "Hey you know I am grateful for this" or I am grateful but the feeling of being internally grateful is actually feeling that you'll get.

And if you can learn to replicate that in your body, it is this beautiful feeling of elation and contentment which is beautiful and if you can learn to consciously bring that back into your body at will you win. You win life because you can learn to control your emotional state. So say you have a feeling of anxiety, you're stressed but now, I know how to bring that feeling of gratitude back into my body. I can learn to take any situation. Those previous stressful or anxiety ridden and turn it into a feeling of gratitude.

And that should be everyone's objective every morning like before I even get out of bed, I guess I forgot to say this as far as my morning practice but before I get out of bed, I am going to be grateful for three minutes and I start with this really small circle of the people and things that are closest to me like I start with my wife who is lying beside me and then I start with my kids who are often laying beside me too and then expand that out to my parents and my siblings and whomever.

My team and then grow from there and the circle keeps growing and you've got to do it for three minutes straight without stopping. That is my practice and then you learn to be grateful. So you start with this really tight circle that is easy because the things around you are very easy. You can be thankful for the electricity and the water in your house and the car and the dog and whatever and you start growing outside of that and you go, "Well I am grateful for the neighbor and I am grateful for my..." whomever, my team, my lawn care guy, whatever.

Find these things that maybe you wouldn't be otherwise grateful for and you find reasons to be grateful for them and then you are creating this internal state and when you see that person or when you see anybody there now your brain is trained to look for the gratitude and look for the appreciation of that person and I have created that original state in me so many times that if I ever want to go back there, it is just your default.

Some people have this negative default language which is built into our biology. The negativity default is literally built in your biology. It kept you alive for hundreds of thousands of years so you have to get over that. You have to train your brain otherwise so everyone practice I really believe should be a longer extended gratitude practice first thing in the morning and learning how to reproduce that feeling of sincerely actually grateful for this thing like, "Wow" a state of wonderment, a state of gratitude is a beautiful thing that is life changing.

[0:36:04.2] AVH: What an incredible and also practical tool to have too. It's that whole stoic philosophy about how you can't control what happens in your life but you can, you really actually can control how you react to it and how you feel and anything that you are feeling internally is a result of exactly that. Your internal state and the feelings that you have about what's happening and a lot of it does sound woo-woo until you actually try and implement these things in your life and realize how much control you have over your own contentment and wellbeing and sense of peace.

It is pretty incredible, it is also very empowering so I think that is a really important thing for people to think about.

[0:36:44.0] BP: Yeah and we get a lot of people who say you know I have anxiety and like, "Oh okay well..." my first response is often tell me about your gratitude practice and your meditation practice and you know what the answer to that is, right? "I don't have one," well start there and then second, take the label off of anxiety. So what is anxiety? Anxiety is a feeling that happens inside your body that somebody has labeled as this term anxiety.

So really it is just this feeling that exists at some part of your body. Most people get it in the pit of their stomach or the base of their heart or something and okay that is a feeling. Can you change it, can you move it, can you move it around, can we take the label off? And just call it hey I have a feeling there and maybe nullify change the way my brain or the way my brain is working, the way this feeling feels maybe I could change to something else and just empowering them with the idea.

Of hey, you are not anxiety. You have a feeling of anxiety at this moment in time. You don't have anxiety right? it is not a possessive thing like I have a feeling in my body right now. Fine but it is not something that I am, it is not something that I have. It is something that is transient that can go away. It's just as easy as it came. So I know so many people who live with that and I have theories why we live with that which goes into the environmental factors but –

[0:37:54.3] AVH: That would be a whole second podcast.

[0:37:57.0] BP: Yeah I am writing a book about it now. It is getting deep into all of these BS we have to live with and the environment that is literally influencing your brain chemistry which is influencing your neurochemistry and influencing your electricity which is a massive rabbit hole.

[0:38:12.2] AVH: Yeah, there is a lot to uncover there. Related to this though I want to talk about your yoga practice because I have conflicting feelings personally about yoga. I am somebody who always found that my meditation practice was when I was lifting heavy weights in the gym and yoga is something that I force myself to go because I in quotations here felt like I should and you know we should all have mobility and a certain amount of flexibility and we should all take this –

[0:38:39.1] BP: I don't use it for mobility. I will say that, I will give you my practice and why and honestly I think the reason I enjoyed it so much is I was very blessed to find someone who is a great instructor very early and you know I go in there with my own objective. I go there with my own agenda. I am not going there to do what everybody else is doing. I am not going there to get flexible or whatever. I am going there for one specific objective, well two specific objectives.

One to make myself, my mind at peace when I am very uncomfortable. So as you can imagine when I started yoga when I retired from body building I was 310 pounds and I was doing yoga and I was like, "Okay, this is going to be interesting but I am going to be really uncomfortable and I also always chose at the beginning, I always chose how yoga is like the harder the better because if I get to the point where I am panicking and I can control my mind I win.

So yeah, first thing is I am going in there to be able to control my mind and control my breath and decrease my perceived level of exertion. So I feel as though at the beginning, the first time I

went to yoga I think their class starts at 7:30 PM it was a Wednesday I remember specifically and I thought it was a 60 minute class. We get 60 minutes in the girl goes, "Okay 30 minutes left" and then literally my brain went to panic mode. I was like, "Holy shit I might actually pass out" but I am like, "No I am going to do it".

And you do it and you're like, "Wow that was really challenging but you brought yourself back out of panic mode. You're like, "Okay I am either going to pass out or I am going to make it" right? So that is where I got hooked is because how often in life do you get into the position where you are in panic mode. You're like, "Oh my gosh I don't know if you are going to make it out of here" and you do and you feel good about yourself.

So that is a benefit that I saw is learning to control my mind and control my perceive level of exertion but I think the biggest benefit that people will see that if you think about it and you frame it this way, it is not about becoming more flexible. That maybe a side benefit but it is becoming more stable. So when I do yoga, I don't just arbitrarily rush my way through poses. I am going to put myself into really effectively uncomfortable positions and I am going to practice being stable as a rock in those positions.

And you name any number of the positions like okay, well I need to get there and I am just going to stay there and let my body go limp like macaroni. I need to be stable like a statue and so it is not a relaxing thing. It is a contract-relax type of situation where I am trying to contract myself into it and maybe if I am sitting there for every pose I do, I am going to hold for a minimum of five extended breathes like holding my breath. It is usually ten seconds in and 10 seconds out.

So I am getting these positions. Yes I am trying to go further but as I am actually trying to go further rather than passively trying to go further and the difference is I am actively trying to use muscles to get me there rather than being a noodle and dumping myself into some position I should be in. So that transfers perfectly into weight training, right? For anyone who doesn't follow my stuff, stability is muscle building. Without stability you don't build muscle.

So if you are someone out there who stands in a bouncy ball or a Swiss ball to build muscle, you don't build muscle. Stability governs contract that ability so if you don't have tremendous amounts of stability literally concrete like stability, you can't contract muscles hard. Your nervous

system will down regulate your ability to contract muscle if it senses instability. So I am trying to create rock like stability and if you have ever seen me train or if you train with me.

Or if anyone has every trained with me they will see that one I am completely immovable. You could come and hit me with a mat truck and I am probably standing there in the same position because I practice it so diligently and two, my perceived exertion compared to other people is like zero because you are learning. You are training this and I will explain why but you are training this ability to maintain a calm focused aggression almost.

From a nervous system perspective when I always explain is you are just maintaining the lowest amount of sympathetic autonomic nervous system stimulation as possible. So I am getting the objective done, I have enough sympathetic stimulation to get this intense muscle contraction or whatever intense squat done but my perception of it is low because my parasympathetic nervous system is such a healthy stage. It is such a state of high arousal and it keeps my heart rate down.

It keeps my blood pressure down. It keeps my muscle ton relatively low or at least relatively specific. So it is just learning how to control this autonomic nervous system and yoga is that for me. If I can do yoga three times I day for the rest of my life I will be a happy man because it is just control.

[0:42:56.1] AVH: Okay. So I guess you are maybe convincing me that yoga doesn't suck because this makes sense to me but this is actually a really good segway into the next thing that I wanted to talk about which is your podcast because I am a huge fan of your podcast and it is because I feel like you are really speaking to me on a number of levels from the perspective of you, your former – well you're still a body builder but you are someone who is all about being strong and crushing it in the gym.

And building muscle but you also are so thoughtful and well balanced and research based and pragmatic about the topics that you cover and it goes back to what you were speaking about earlier how you are moving away from a more narrow focus something that is a little bit more holistic and health centered rather than sports specifics and things like that but I just think it hits

all the points of people who want to look good and they want to get stronger and they want to get fit.

And they want to do cool things in the gym but they also care about their health and they care about the other consequences of what they are doing and so I just can't speak highly enough of your podcast and I think for anybody who is listening that might immediately say like, "Oh this is a podcast for body builders" don't judge the book by its very muscular cover because there is a lot going on there but I wanted to talk to you about the podcast and when you started it what you were really hoping to achieve.

And I think I ask that as well as a podcast host myself but loves what I am doing but I sometimes wonder is it worth it in this increasingly over saturated world of people that everyone thinks that they are a fitness person and there is so much information out there. It is so hard to get through to people and obviously you have a bigger platform but what is your goal and what do you hope to achieve in the podcast?

[0:44:45.8] BP: Well I guess speaking to what you said I think the most important thing that anyone needs to learn is that muscularity and fitness doesn't need to be able to choose because they are for health. In fact, if you want to be strong and fit, health should be a factor. It should be a necessary component. The more healthy your body is, the more effectively it's going to function and that is something that people say maybe it is a little speculative.

But if you dig down in the roots of what allows muscle to be built and what allows hormones to be optimized and what allows body composition to be improved it is all health. It all comes down to here is my body functioning in an effective and healthy way and supporting those basic functions that you can look at Epigenetix. You can look at organ function, you can look at endocrine function. All of these things have to be optimized with the health of the organism.

So looking back at my career, I could have been so much better and so much less time with so much less damage to my body how to actually been aware of all this stuff. So my mission now is to spread this message. It's like these things don't have to be mutually exclusive like if you want to be muscular or if you just want to be lean or if you just want to be happy, you have to support

this vessel. You have to take care of this thing because if your brain isn't working right, it is because your vessel is not working correctly, something is off.

If your digestion isn't right well it is because of this, your hormones are whacked, if you have no sex drive, if you have poor sleep, it is not a singular event right? I am not a poor sleeper because my mom was a poor sleeper. I am a poor sleeper because something in my body is not working correctly. So I love the message the behind inspiring the next generation to realize that when I was 15 years old I started body building or maybe 17 when I actually started "body building".

I had no idea what health meant, I had no idea what needed to go in to building a great body and ultimately loving my body and loving myself. I love to be that guy and so to be honest when I was 18 years old I started looking. I was first to university and I started looking for someone even before I went to university. I started looking for that one person who could be the lighthouse in the storm and sift through the all the bullshit and say, "Hey man, you know here is what you have to eat.

Here is what you have to train, here is where you should pay attention to your supplements, here is what you should do with your hormones. All of these things, there's nobody so literally at 18 years old I was like, "well if they don't exist I am going to do my best to be that guy" and I was just blessed to surround myself with brilliant people who are way smarter than me and I just have a gift of creating a synopses of all of these amazing influencers and all of the information that has been put out there because I have a framing, right?

I have this speaking of how to create a successful podcast is you have to have a framework of what is the end of result I am trying to achieve. So for me as I just start to articulate it as well, I want to be able to hand a 15 year old boy or girl a book or a set of instruction manuals which says, "Hey, here is a blueprint for your body and here is how you're going to build an amazing body and a resilient mind or a brilliant mind and love yourself and love your body".

Don't worry about what everyone else says. This is what's going to work and here is how you make those decisions for yourself and that is how I frame it for everybody. I just want everybody

to realize that health is so vital to success in life and happiness and physique and that is just the framing for me. So thank you for all those very kind words about the podcast.

[0:48:15.9] AVH: I think that your message that you just said it comes through pretty clearly in the types of guests you have and the overarching messages and that's why it resonates with people because that is the feeling that we get when we listen to it but just to put you on the spot, can you talk about maybe one of your favorite interviews ever or maybe interview or a podcast that you had that was especially illuminating or interesting that maybe you didn't expect it to be or just something that is memorable to you.

[0:48:45.6] BP: Sure, it doesn't put me in the spot at all. I'll be honest I made a list of them so we identified 17. I was going over them right before I called you. The 17 podcasts that was amazing, I was going there like so many podcasts are amazing every guest that I have on is honestly amazing and if they're not then it is my inability as an interviewer to pull it out of them because you know all of these people have an amazing story or an amazing talent.

And if I can't pull it out of them it is not their fault, it's mine and you do an amazing job so there's a few that come to my mind. Actually the one that just released on Monday I think is probably my most I would call it surprising because I was expecting it to be amazing but it still exceeded my expectations and that was Kute Blackson. If you haven't listened to that one I couldn't recommend it more highly and as soon as the podcast was over I went and bought his book which is called "You Are The One".

We are reading it now. Let's get that thing in your brain. He is a brilliant speaker. So when you listen to podcast I was very lucky to identify his objective. He didn't have to articulate it, identified his objective. So I feel as though human beings and you get this learn in stories. So the podcast, he is literary taking down this journey where he has to set the stage before he can give you the information. So during the podcast I had some people going man, the first 50 minutes I wasn't sure where he was going.

But at the end I was just blown away. I was like, yes that's exactly how I felt because when he was doing it I was stepping outside of myself and going, "Is he going there? Is that what he's doing?" I'm like, "Yeah that is exactly what he is doing". So I just literally wind him up let him go

and he is an amazing speaker which told an amazing story and delivered amazing results and that was a huge one for me. What is funny the ones I like the best are not necessarily the training ones is the ones that are about this life enhancement become the best version of yourself and finding your truth.

And another one that comes to mind is Dr. John Di Martini. That was potentially one of the greatest conversations of my life and I had an opportunity to talk to him for quite a while after that, talk to Joe Dispenza, he was incredible and again all of these are very much living their greatest life, finding your true essence, finding your true value that those conversations, those were sentimental or that left a great impact on me that have actually listened to multiple times.

So when I started the podcast I never listened to one. I didn't want to listen to myself talk. I was like yeah and I got obviously the gist of what the guest had said and then I guess when I became a little more confident in myself, I started listening back to some of them because ultimately the reason I have these guests on is because I am interested in them and I think they fit the conversation of what I am trying to teach. So to not listen to them back if people ask me for podcast I listen to.

This sounds ridiculous and arrogant but I listen to mine not because of me but because of the guest. The reason I chose to have them on is because I am legitimately interested in what they have to say so why wouldn't I listen to my podcast back? And so those three come to mind. There are so many great ones that I had.

[0:51:37.8] AVH: It's so funny that you mentioned not wanting to listen back to yours and hear your voice because that was my ultimate nightmare. The first six months that I did this but I think one of the ways that I can tell I am getting better at this and I am evolving as a host is that I feel like my favorite podcast interview is usually the last one I did because every time I do an interview I feel like I am increasingly more present and as you say pull stuff out better or let them do what they want to do in a better way than I used to.

So it is getting easier to listen like I still don't want to hear myself but I can get through that to listen to what they have to say because yeah I feel like every single time I do a podcast I'm like that was the best one because I truly enjoyed kind of being in that moment and learning when I

was there. It's funny because I was going to ask you what other podcast you listen to but besides your own. You mentioned a book that you are reading right now from your latest guest, are there any other good books that you have been super excited about?

[0:52:37.5] BP: Book theme I think I might have a problem like women have problem with shoes, I have that with books.

[0:52:42.6] AVH: Well there are worsts problems to have, worse vices to have I guess.

[0:52:45.2] BP: Yeah so things that I recently have is obviously Jordan Peterson. I just went to his speech in Miami.

[0:52:51.1] AVH: Another influential Canadian.

[0:52:53.4] BP: Awesome "12 Rules for Life" is a great book. It goes on some of the people who have been most instrumental to me, Dr. David Hawkins is amazing. He's got a book called "Power versus Force and Letting Go" he got a number of books. He is brilliant and amazing. It depends on what genre people want to hear but another book that was really influential to me was Dr. Rick Hanson who is another guest at my podcast. His book, Buddhist Brain, was amazing.

[0:53:17.3] AVH: Do you very read fiction?

[0:53:19.4] BP: You know what's funny? I don't. Never in my life have I've read fiction. People ask me, I think the last fiction book that I read was Curious George but one of my fans recently send me through his books that are fiction and he seems like a really brilliant guy. I shouldn't say fan, one of the guys who listen to my podcast and he sent me three books and I may delve into that but I don't read fiction. Do you read fiction?

[0:53:36.3] AVH: I read a lot of fiction. I am the same as you, I am a really voracious reader. I probably read a book at least a book a week and I used to be almost exclusively fiction and now I am about half and half and of course I am reading a ton of books for my job and stuff now too

but I feel like you get to use your imagination. It is this escape in a way that TV does not do for you and I just feel like one of the most comforting things about reading is I always loved it.

I was such a nerd when I was a kid. I was reading Stephen King novels when I was seven years old. I always like the weird stuff but I never ever felt like I was wasting time when I am reading a book. If you can sit and watch Netflix sometimes you feel a little guilty about it or whatever, I could be reading the trashiest novel whatever and I never felt that it was wasted time when I was reading. So yeah I can get into both but as long as it is interesting to me it is time well spent.

[0:54:28.6] BP: So as someone who is shifting my life and I have this first time maybe I metrically must allow but I have this unconscious desire to become an influential author. The guy I mentioned earlier in the podcast, Dr. Wayne Dyer has been one of the greatest influencers in my life and the first time I ever saw him speak in person was one of the most transformative moments in my life and it was this very synchronous moment where I won't give the details but I was like, "That is what I want to do".

So now I realized that if someone who wants to become a better writer I need to read fiction because typically nonfiction is not going to be – it is well written but it is not like fiction. It is not telling a story and if you want to be a good writer it is all about leading with a story telling a story. So realizing I have to dive into some good fiction stuff.

[0:55:15.1] AVH: Well one recommendation I have for you if you haven't read it already and we're going right down the rabbit hole here but it is Stephen King's On Writing. So it is his book about writing and it is very famous and well-read even in literary circles. So if you have never read a Stephen King book and have no interest, I would still highly recommend it because he is one of the biggest modern examples of someone who can tell a story like whether you are into sci-fi or scary stuff or whatever, he tells a story.

In this book which is 250 pages. So it is very easy to digest, he tells a story about writing stories. It's incredible. It is so entertaining and you get sucked in and you're like, "Holy shit I just learned something while I was reading this" it is fantastic and it is an easy read. So I definitely would recommend that for you.

[0:56:04.6] BP: Yeah, I signed up for Malcom Gladwell's master class because he is a brilliant writer so I am excited to get into that but gosh good luck at making time right? So I also signed up for Steve Martin's master class which is on writing comedy and I have no intention of writing comedy but I think if someone can keep you engaged in writing a comedy whether it would be sketch or whether it would be pilot or something like that's brilliance.

Learning how to compel somebody's mind and pull them along and keep them engaged that is brilliance. You can't refute that anybody who keeps you engage for any amount of time especially with the ridiculously short attention spans we have just massive levels of brilliance and lots to be learned there. So I'd set it for that one but who knows how soon I will get into it.

[0:56:47.1] AVH: Right, well I think ultimately what you're talking about with the podcast and the work you do and writing, I share in a lot of these ambitions as well is about connecting with people and communicating with people because we love to learn and we love to hopefully pass along the things that we learn to other people and I think that it is really important not to just try to take in as much information but to figure out and really be thoughtful about how we can get that information to other people in a way that it is accessible and relevant to them.

I think that is a really important piece of the puzzle. So I think that is something you're already doing a fantastic job of.

[0:57:24.9] BP: Thank you. It is a challenging thing that I battle with every day is, "Is writing going to be obsolete in five years?" right because you know –

[0:57:34.3] AVH: No.

[0:57:35.3] BP: Well listen but you talk to these people who talk about just downloading programs into your brain and I believe that is going to be possible in 10 years and why would anyone ever read again? Is it engaging past time? Absolutely I think books are still one of the most valuable commodities like when I move I throw everything away but I keep my books but you wonder if the next generation may never need to read.

Maybe it is writing a script like nobody even writes handwriting anymore, they don't even teach that in school anymore because it is one of these interesting thoughts that maybe humanity may just leave behind if we just download a skillset into our brain, who knows.

[0:58:13.6] AVH: Not to sound too older person convergent about it because I am a millennial for the record but I hate the entire idea of that. I listen to Joe Rogan and Elon Musk talk and all of this stuff but maybe we are all part of the Matrix and we are a computer simulation and all of that stuff but the idea that would not want to read anymore similar veins like maybe in the future we don't have to eat food anymore. Maybe we don't have to have sex anymore.

Maybe we don't have to leave our house and interact with other humans anymore and everything that we'd ever needed is implanted directly into our brain and wouldn't that be easy to get rid of everything bad in life and the whole idea of it is just abhorrent to me because that is what being human is. It is going through all of that dirty scary messy fun stuff. So the idea that –

[0:58:59.8] BP: Well to us. To us it is but the next generation could be completely different you know?

[0:59:04.4] AVH: I just hope that if there comes a time when we don't need to or we can't read or eat or be in love or any of those things, I just hope I am not around for it. I know this is a very depressing way to end off this conversation but I hope I am not there when it happens. I hope that we –

[0:59:19.4] BP: I get it but when you have kids it changes perspective too like for me I don't care if I have to tap out tomorrow but when you have kids, oh man I actually have to care about what happens in this world now and it is a blessing and a curse of life. They're the greatest joy in the world but they are also the greatest stress because I have to look out for this little amazing humans and you want to make sure you leave this world a better place.

And I think everyone should have the opportunity to have a child for that exact reason because your level of commitment to making a world a better place goes through the roof I mean for me anyways. I shouldn't speak for everybody but who would want to leave this place to their kin,

their generation that follows them in a worst way than they found it. How can I make a bigger impact on the world so that one, my son and daughter will be inspired to do the same.

But two, I don't want to leave them with a plastic patch in the Pacific Ocean the size of Russia. Ridiculous, how can I clean that up? What can I do to contribute right now to clean that up? Can I take a boat and go, what do it got to do? So that is part of my mission now with all of my companies going forward. How do we create a movement to get rid of single use plastic and get rid of specific garbage patch? Unless listeners haven't heard of it, go look it up completely on Google.

It is a garbage patch in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. It is this big floating island that they suggest is anywhere between the size of Texas and the size of Russia and it is hard to determine because it's changing. It is always moving with the currents but it is there. It is massive, it's absurd and ridiculous and how do you get something the size of Russia in the Pacific Ocean that nobody talks about it, nobody cares about it.

It is absolutely absurd and we need to stop using plastic so I have removed all plastics. I should say I try to remove all plastics from my house because you realize in our culture it is actually impossible to remove all plastic but you remove single use plastic and use multi-use plastics as possible. If something is plastic and glass I will always pay more for glass but now I find out that glass isn't always recycled in a lot of cities which makes me nauseas.

So that is part of our mission with all the companies going forward. It is anything that is single use plastic we are getting rid of. So hopefully we can help change at least the next generation and help the future of the world.

[1:01:24.0] AVH: Well I think that is a great place to wrap it up and to keep it on a high note I think that regardless of whatever scary dystopian future awaits us that the answer is what you've said which is just feeling empowered and open minded and ready to make the changes that you want to see in your own life and people will follow your example. People will be inspired by what you are doing and it is not trying to change the world.

But trying to change yourself first and seeing where that goes and if more people have that attitude where it is making the world a better place then the world will be a better place, right? So I think that that's the way to go.

[1:02:02.2] BP: Yeah, absolutely. Ashleigh, thank you so much. You are great at this and I am very grateful to have connected with you.

[1:02:06.6] AVH: Ben, I really appreciate it and just before I let you go can you remind our listeners where they can go and it's funny, we didn't talk – I didn't say the word paleo once. I love it. We didn't talk about food at all. I have a ton of nutrition and training questions, but that might just have to wait for another podcast. But I kind of love that we didn't get into that at all. But for people who are interested in the programs that you have and interested in following you and learning more about your work, where should they go online?

[1:02:31.2] BP: Well, as you mentioned, the podcast is often a good place to start, which is called The Muscle Expert Podcast and transparently will soon be rebranded. But for now, it's The Muscle Expert Podcast. We've got Mi40Nation.com. So my brand is Mi40, which is Muscle Intelligence and 40 represents typically when we started the business was a 40-day programs, 40 minute workouts, 40 second sets. We really simplified things for people. We even frame it around only using 40 exercises, which is something we didn't get into, but I think is important and so Mi40Nation.com is a good place to go. Or just my name, BenPakulski.com, and obviously everybody knows Instagram, everyone has Instagram it seems. So it's @ifbbbenpak. IFBB being International Federation of Body Builders, Ben Pak.

[1:03:13.6] AVH: Awesome. Alright Ben, thank you again so much for taking the time and this is my new favorite podcast so I appreciate it and we'll have to do it again some time.

[1:03:022.2] BP: Oh, thank you so much. Awesome Ashleigh. Great chatting.

[END]

[1:03:28.6] AVH: Alright, that's it for today. Thanks as always for listening. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. I swear some of these interviews I just kind of pinch myself. Like, "How did I

get so lucky to be able to learn from and talk to and ask questions of such awesome people?” So just know, if you’re listening to this podcast and you’re like, “Man, this girl’s lucky. She gets to talk to all these awesome people.” I know. I know how lucky I am. I love my job. That’s all I can say!

Alright, thank you again to Ben. Thank you again to Perfect Keto, our show sponsor. They are the company that I recommend, personally for what that’s worth, for people who want ketogenic lifestyle-supporting products but also just tasty supplements because tastiness is always my number one priority and these guys, in addition to having exogenous ketone products and powdered MCT and keto collagen and delicious nut butters, they have a new keto-friendly bar that is kind of taking the Instagram world, at least from what I can see, by storm. It tastes like a fudge brownie apparently, but won’t mess with your blood sugar.

So if you want to try that, you can use the code “PMketobars30” for 30% off the ketobars all through November, and if you want to check out their website, go to perfectketo.com/paleomag and you can go and buy whatever else you want and you can use another code “paleomag” for 20% off. So they’re doing 30% off the bars, 20% off anything else, just because you’re smart enough to listen to this podcast. So, get on that, let me know what you think, and that’s it for this week.

Next week I am chatting with the founder of Bonafide Provisions, who created a company making really, really high-end, good quality bone broth and you know how I feel about bone broth. So we get into it, we talk a lot about, you know, we nerd out on bone broth. I mean, what more is there to say? So join me next week and thanks as always for listening.

[OUTRO]

[1:05:13.8] AV: The intro music for Paleo Magazine Radio is a song called Stronger performed by Alter Ego and I hope you love it.

[END]