

**Getting the Skinny on Diet Soda with Zevia CEO Paddy Spence  
PMR #149**

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Tony Federico: Hey, Paleo Nation, I'm Tony Federico, and you're listening to Paleo Magazine Radio, the official podcast of the original Paleo lifestyle publication.

(Singing)

Tony Federico: According to Paddy Spence, fighting for smarter food options for consumers against large, established competitors is the riskiest career move he's ever made, but he's not one to shy away from a fight or to let fear of failure prevent him from taking a risk. Growing up with a single mom who struggled to make ends meet, but who always made a point to feed her kids the best food she could buy, Paddy knew that he wasn't going to get any handouts and any success he had would come from dedication and hard work. He studied Greek and Latin in high school and used his unique specialization to get the interest of the college administrators at Harvard, where he paid his way by delivering boxes for UPS.

After graduating from Harvard Business School with his MBA, he went on to work for companies like Kashi and Levlad, a maker of natural shampoos and soaps. He also founded SPINS, a health and wellness marketing firm. While working at Levlad, Paddy came across a stevia-sweetened soda called Zevia. He was inspired to find out more about the company. He ended up buying the small startup and has since led Zevia to over \$100 million in annual revenue, and that's with products that are artificial color-free, artificial flavor-free, corn syrup-free, GMO-free, and naturally sweetened.

On today's show, we're joined by Paddy Spence to discuss his career, his life, and how he's trying to revolutionize the diet soda industry, but before we get started, I want to take a quick moment to thank our episode sponsor, Healthy Human. Created to always be by your side and with one mission in mind, Healthy Human is here to help you drink more safely.

Healthy Human's line of drinking cups was voted 2015's best new product by Paleo Magazine readers. I'm sure being BPA-free, phthalate-free, lead-free, and certified Paleo-friendly helped, but Healthy Human co-founder Natalie Schultz's attention to detail probably didn't hurt either. When she set to work designing the Healthy Human line, she considered every detail, including one frustrating aspect of conventional water bottles.

Natalie Schultz: You would have a different size lid for every water bottle.

Tony Federico: While it would probably be a lot easier to just do things the way every other bottle manufacturer did, Natalie wasn't willing to accept that.

Natalie Schultz: Every single stein that we sell, the lid is interchangeable.

Getting-the-Skinny-on-Diet-Soda-with-Zevia-CEO-Paddy-Spence-PMR-149

Tony Federico: Certified Paleo-friendly and interchangeable lids, two of the many reasons why Healthy Human makes drinking all of your favorite beverages better. You can find Healthy Human products in stores nationwide as well as on their website, [healthyhumanlife.com](http://healthyhumanlife.com).

All right, Paleo Nation, it's time to ditch your idea of what a diet soda can be. Paleo Magazine Radio starts now.

(Singing)

Tony Federico: I'm here with Paddy Spence, CEO of Zevia. It's a zero-calorie soda made with no artificial sweeteners. Paddy, welcome to the show.

Paddy Spence: Thanks for having me, Tony.

Tony Federico: Your product, no artificial sweeteners, no artificial colors, which I think is pretty cool. That was maybe a more recent change. I don't know if the coloring previously was artificial or not, but there's no color, which is cool, and we'll talk about that, and zero calories. I've got some of these in my fridge. My wife's certainly a fan, and I'll have one from time to time. Before we get into your company and its products, let's find out a little bit about you. To start, when did you first become interested in health?

Paddy Spence: It's interesting. When you're a kid, you don't realize what your influences and environment are necessarily relative to other people, but I grew up in a health-food household. I grew up in the Boston area. My mom shopped at Bread & Circus, which was a predecessor of Whole Foods, and I thought it was normal to have steamed tofu for dinner.

Tony Federico: Nice.

Paddy Spence: What was interesting, though, is despite a pretty significantly healthy orientation in terms of the foods we consumed, tofu, my mom made her own granola, et cetera, there was always a two-liter bottle of Tab in the fridge.

Tony Federico: Interesting.

Paddy Spence: It wasn't like there was any kind of restriction on how much you could consume. It was all the Tab you wanted. I think that's one of the things that's interesting, is you look at today's health-oriented consumers, there's a lot more awareness around artificial ingredients than there was call it 40 years ago.

Tony Federico: Refresh my memory. Was Tab the artificially-sweetened soda of its day? Was it one of the first kind of diet sodas or was it a regular sugar-sweetened beverage.

Paddy Spence: Tab was really the original diet soda, and it existed ... Before Coke Zero and before Diet Coke, Coca Cola had Tab. That was the alternative to sugar, but, of course, it was artificially sweetened, and back in those days, in the '70s, it was artificially sweetened with saccharin. What we now regard as kind of the nastiest artificial sweetener was the predominant sweetening ingredient in that product.

Tony Federico: I guess as a kid eating steamed tofu and granola, it probably tasted pretty good to you.

Paddy Spence: Yeah, exactly. It was an indulgence. As I grew up, I was always involved in sports. I would qualify this by saying I'm in no way an elite athlete, but I'm an average guy who is just really persistent.

Tony Federico: Maybe an enthusiastic athlete.

Paddy Spence: Exactly, and love to participate. In young adulthood, I started getting into doing triathlons and endurance events. One of the things that in those days, in the late '80s, early '90s, it was all about carbs and it was all about carb-loading and finding the most carbs you could. The ultimate pre-race meal for a triathlete or a marathoner was a big bowl of pasta.

Tony Federico: Right.

Paddy Spence: Along the way, one of the things that I got into was this constant cycle of consuming sugary products to get an energy spike and then to fight the subsequent crash. It was all stuff that I thought was healthy, Odwalla smoothies and Clif bars and juice-based spritzers. One day in 2000, I woke up and realized I was getting 250 grams of sugar a day, so literally, 1000 calories a day just from sugar. That was really the epiphany that, "Gosh, I got to change the way that I'm living and all this stuff I thought was healthy really isn't and what's the alternative?" It's going to what at that time wasn't called a Paleo diet, but a higher-protein diet and eliminated sugar.

Tony Federico: You basically inherited some of the kind of health practices that your mom was using, kind of a lower-fat, higher-carb approach. You're getting into triathlons. Obviously, you're exercising a lot. Did you have any other symptoms outside of maybe the energy ups and downs? Were you finding any sort of health issues or weight gain, or do you think that the activity level insulated you against some of those effects, at least as a young man?

Paddy Spence: It's interesting, and you're exactly right, Tony. What I tell people is marathoners and triathletes are the least picky eaters in the world, because, frankly, they can afford to be. You finish a marathon, you'll eat a pint of Ben & Jerry's. You don't care. To your point, that activity level insulates you from things like weight gain and some of the other effects

of having a carb-rich diet. I definitely was getting to that point where there was no amount of sugar that would give me the energy I was looking for, and it was just constant peaks and valleys with energy through the day and those crashes.

Interestingly, my wife and I went off of sugar cold turkey. We went out to a cabin in the woods. Nearest grocery store was 15 miles away, and all we had was what we had. There was no cheating, and my body-

Tony Federico: Was that intentional? Were you planning on going sugar-free or did it happen kind of as a happy accident?

Paddy Spence: No, we realized this is, "We've got to change the way we're living." When I took that inventory ... That's one of the things I always suggest to people. Take an inventory of what you eat in a week, because it's going to tell you a lot. You don't realize it until you write it down and you look at it and say, "Oh, my gosh, I'm getting 250 grams of sugar a day." We planned this, and what was fascinating is my body went into shock. Literally, I broke out in hives from head to toe and was just the first couple of days exhausted. I had those intense cravings for sugar. We didn't have any sugar in the house, so it wasn't possible to cheat, but the only thing that would kill the cravings was intense amounts of protein.

I was eating ungodly amounts of meat, two, two and a half pounds of meat a day just to kill those cravings. After three or four days, I came out the other side of it, frankly, and started getting my energy back. The hives started to dissipate, and from that point on, I never looked back. Really, the biggest physical change I noticed was just that much more even energy level throughout the day, not only physically but mentally as well. I did actually lose 10 pounds, although I wasn't seeking to. I thought I was pursuing a diet that was actually going to be more caloric, but I lost weight because there was just so much sugar I was putting into my body. Once you take that away, the weight just comes right off.

Tony Federico: How did your wife fare with the detox?

Paddy Spence: Similarly. She didn't break out into hives, but it was like [crosstalk 00:09:52] her.

Tony Federico: [Crosstalk 00:09:52] in you a little deeper.

Paddy Spence: Exactly. That was 16 years ago this summer. We've maintained a sugar-free diet and a sugar-free household since then.

Tony Federico: Oh, wow.

Paddy Spence: Obviously, over a 16-year period, you fall off the wagon, you get back on. You go to a birthday party, you go to a wedding, you eat a bunch of

sugar and then you get back on. One of the things, though, in the same way that athletes talk about muscle memory, I really think there is such a thing as dietary memory. My body adjusts so much more quickly now if I have a sugar binge. I can get back to that sugar-free lifestyle much more easily than I could 15 years ago. We've been using stevia on a daily basis for that almost 16-year period, and that led to me discovering Zevia, which was on the shelf at Whole Foods and I thought, "You know, I'm a sample of one, but this is something that would bring me back to the soda category."

Tony Federico: Now when you say that, do you mean just you as a customer? Did you have any intentions of working for the company at that time?

Paddy Spence: I had been in the natural foods industry at that point for about a decade. Yeah, so I was highly interested in emerging natural foods that could, frankly, transform the mainstream diet. My first job in the natural foods industry was at Kashi Cereal, and it was one of those early cereals that crossed over into the mainstream consciousness. Really, the solution in that situation was a higher-fiber alternative to what regular Americans were consuming.

I was looking for something to do, to answer your question, and I found Zevia and I thought, "Wow, this is a product that resonates with me as a consumer. I'd love to own this company, and I'd love to bring this to millions more Americans who don't know about stevia and don't know how it could change their lives."

Tony Federico: Explain it to our audience and maybe people who don't go through the grocery store thinking that they might buy the brand that they grabbed off the shelf. How did that actually shake out? Did you grab the can and look up the address and give the current owners a call? What was that process like?

Paddy Spence: It was a lot of careful planning, but also a lot of luck. One thing I can tell you is that virtually every small company in the world at some point is looking for financing. Growing brands burn cash. That's a reality. This was a business that was young, having a lot of success, but needed some cash and, frankly, more importantly, needed some expertise from folks who had been there and done that. I had a couple of colleagues from the natural foods industry I had worked with before.

As I mentioned, my experience had been at Kashi and in some other businesses. My colleague who runs our sales and marketing had run sales for Silk Soymilk. We kind of understood that playbook of taking a tiny brand and bringing it to a broad audience. It's a deliberate, careful process, but through a lot of hard work, we were able to forge a partnership with the founders of the business, buy the business, and really significantly grow it to the point that it's at today.

Tony Federico: It's funny, just listening to you talk, the influence that you and your friend had on so many people, myself included. When I first started trying to get "healthy," quote unquote, and transitioning away from a college diet of god knows what, I think one of the first things I did was commit to having breakfast every day. That breakfast was Silk Soymilk, Kashi cereal, blueberries, and I think almond slices. Then a salad at dinner and I don't know what for lunch and lots of running.

It's interesting to hear you're talking about running these companies and the trickle-down effect that that has. It really is significant when it reaches the end consumer and it can play a big role in their lives. Obviously, me being Paleo now, I'm not eating Kashi and drinking soy milk, but I do have Zevias in my refrigerator. Your own evolution then kind of spreads out into untold numbers of customers. You got behind ... Go ahead.

Paddy Spence: No, I was just going to say you're exactly right. I think it's interesting because food is what we need to survive, but it also has so much emotional impact on who we are and the way we live. When you can create something that changes people's lives and they tell you that, gosh, I can't imagine anything more gratifying from a career perspective.

Tony Federico: When you first got behind the wheel of Zevia, what was the product like at that time, because I'm sure it's gone through some variations over the years? What was the original Zevia soda and what you remember of it?

Paddy Spence: What's interesting about the way that we have always approached this business is it's a process of constant iteration and constant continuous improvement. When you think about what Coca Cola always talks about, they created a product 120 years ago, they locked the formula in a vault, and no one's ever changed it since. That might have worked a century ago, but the world's changing quickly, and we think of our business more like Apple or Tesla. Apple rolls out a new operating system. It's not system 5; it's system 5.0.1. They're constantly iterating and constantly making tweaks.

When you look at stevia as a sweetening ingredient, it was only in 2008 that the FDA said, "Yes, you can market this as a sweetener," so we're only eight years in, in this ingredient. As you can imagine, it is improving at a pretty rapid pace. At this point, 47% of Americans have a stevia product in their pantry, although many times they're not even aware of it. It could be a Trop50 orange juice or a VitaminWater Zero or Truvia, the tabletop sweetener, or whatever.

When we bought Zevia, first of all, the stevia was a lot less pure and good-tasting than it is now. The product was using a lot of erythritol, which is a sugar alcohol. Erythritol is quite different from stevia. Stevia is 200 times as sweet as sugar with no calories. Erythritol also has no calories, but it's only about 90% as sweet as sugar. When you think

about how sweetness hits your palate, stevia is what I would call kind of a spiky sweetness. It's intense at the beginning, and then it tails off. Erythritol comes on much more subtly and has a longer finish at the end. The two of them really work well together, but originally, Zevia was using 12 grams of erythritol in a can. That's a lot.

Now erythritol is different than other sugar alcohols. It doesn't cause digestive distress in the way that a xylitol or a maltitol or some of these others would. Having said that, the less, the better. Over the years, we increased the purity and the taste profile of our stevia. We cut the erythritol in half. Then we cut it in half again, so today, we're using about three and a half grams of erythritol in a can of Zevia.

In addition, and this is what's really interesting. One of the things I think has really allowed Paleo to resonate with consumers is it's a really simple concept, right? Let's not eat a bunch of processed stuff that didn't exist 10 or 50,000 years ago. If that's your overarching focus, you're going to look at a product like soda and say, "Okay, let's find all of the processed and nasty ingredients in that and let's take them out one by one."

Early on, we said, "Well, gosh, we know this product can be gluten-free. We know it can be vegan. What about artificial colors? Well, we certainly don't want to have those. What about caramel color? It's from sugar. It could be natural, but, you know, we just don't need it. It's a processed ingredient, GMOs, et cetera." One-by-one, we kind of removed all of the nasty ingredients from soda and really were left with the basics, natural flavors, carbonated water, and sweetener.

Tony Federico: For you guys, as the people making these decisions, did you see a positive response from consumers? Did you get any negative feedback from consumers? Because I would venture to guess that changing your formula, many companies are hesitant to do that because they're afraid of losing customers.

Paddy Spence: Yeah. I think, again, in that old world, the way products were developed and managed, I think you're exactly right. New Coke in our category being the classic example. They did a lot of testing and it tested better than Classic Coke, but didn't really work out. I think, frankly, in the old days, continuity was important and people wanted to drive their grandfather's car.

I don't think the world's like that anymore, and I think there's so much more of an emphasis on innovation because we're finding from a health standpoint that there are so many ways to improve products, both in terms of taste but also purity and ingredients. We've told our consumers from the beginning, we're going to continue to evolve and we're going to make this better and better and better, and we've done that. Most recently, we became Non-GMO Project Verified. We're the first soda to

be non-GMO.

Tony Federico: Awesome.

Paddy Spence: Yeah, everything that we can do is designed to create a better, cleaner, better-tasting product, and I think consumers appreciate that.

Tony Federico: Let's go ahead and dial down or drill down into some of the specific ingredients, and stevia specifically, because I think there's people out there that are consuming stevia, people that aren't. Maybe some people have questions about it. Is it a healthy alternative to sugar? There's obviously a lot of awareness of the negative impacts of artificial sweeteners. What makes stevia different from some of the artificial sweeteners, like you said, aspartames and saccharins and things of that nature?

Paddy Spence: First of all, I think whether you're consuming artificial sweeteners or stevia, it's probably in response to what I believe is going to be the defining global health crisis of our lifetime, which is sugar and excess sugar consumption. Processed foods are full of salt and sugar, and, unfortunately, it's changing the health profile of people around the world.

All we have to do is look at countries that used to have a traditional diet that was probably a lot closer to Paleo in terms of minimally processed without a lot of artificial ingredients. When they get onto a Western diet, things change really quickly. As an example, China just became the largest country in terms of diabetic population in the world, passing the U.S. That is a result of a diet that is full of sugar and processed ingredients. Certainly, once you get into the world of zero-calorie sweeteners, that's a huge step forward.

Then, to your question, do I want an artificial sweetener or do I want a natural sweetener? When you look at ingredients like aspartame or sucralose, which is known as Splenda, those are ingredients that are made in the lab. I think a lot of consumers, myself included, feel like, gosh, if I have two choices, one's made in the lab, one's a plant, I'll take the plant every time, particularly if it's a plant that's been used for hundreds of years around the world with no negative side effects.

It's not that anyone's saying one Diet Coke's going to kill me, but they're saying, "Gosh, if I drink two of those a day over a multi-year period, I'm drinking literally kilos of aspartame." That's crazy and how could that possibly be good for you?

Tony Federico: Stevia is a plant. It's a plant you could potentially buy and grow in your garden, maybe have some raw stevia available if you wanted to, I don't know, crush up a leaf and add it to your tea or what have you. Where does your stevia come from and how does it make its transformation into a kind of a purified ingredient that ends up in your Zevia product?

Paddy Spence: Like you mentioned, stevia is a plant. It's in the sunflower family, originally native to Latin America, but it grows in any warm climate with a lot of sunshine. Historically, stevia production was mostly in Latin America. We actually became the first company to start to use U.S.-grown stevia, grown here in the United States in the Southeast, in Georgia and the Carolinas. Then in addition, a lot of stevia supply comes from China as well.

Now from a processing standpoint, there are a number of sweetening compounds in the stevia leaf. To your point, Tony, I would suggest that anybody grow stevia and chew that leaf. It's mind-blowing, because you're eating this thing and you're like, "This is overpoweringly sweet, and this is a leaf. Gosh, you could use it for a lot of things." There are a number of sweetening compounds which we call steviol glycosides in the stevia leaf.

We actually process to refine one of those specific compounds. It's called Reb A, and it's kind of the purest sweetness within the stevia leaf. We use a 99% extract of Reb A. We basically isolate that one sweetening compound through an alcohol-based extraction method, and then get to a 99% Reb A, and it's an amazing ingredient. As I mentioned, 200 times as sweet as sugar, no calories, no impact on blood sugar, and it's from a plant. Where do I sign up, right?

Tony Federico: I probably should have pulled the study up before we started talking, but I do recall seeing some studies that at least suggest that stevia doesn't have a detrimental impact on gut bacteria the way some other artificial sweeteners do, which is an unforeseen side effect, because I think so much of our focus on health and diet, it's around calories. For example, kind of going back to the old school, people were drinking soda and maybe 250 or so calories in a serving, maybe 50 grams of sugar.

Then they go to diet soda, and they're saying, "Well, hey, I'm saving these 250 calories," but what they might not have realized is that that artificial sweetener may be toxic to the bacteria in your gut. We're just really coming around to the importance of the microbiome and all these other organisms that basically are riding shotgun in our bodies, and having a detrimental impact on those organisms is something that we need to be cognizant of as well. I got to look it up, but I do seem to recall there being a study that showed that that wasn't the case with stevia. I would imagine that that's likely due to the fact that it is a natural product and it's something that's growing.

Paddy Spence: Exactly. You articulated it really nicely. What's fascinating when you look at a plant like this is, as you mentioned, it's got all sorts of unforeseen benefits. I can tell you tooth health is another one. Dentists love stevia because, frankly, it doesn't create the environment that allows plaque and bacteria in your mouth to grow, so it is a tooth-friendly ingredient.

Yeah, stevia, don't get me started, because I'm a 15-year daily user. It changed my life, and I do think we're in this world where people are looking for health solutions and they're looking for something that they can change in their own dietary regimen that will allow them to take control of their health and wellness. You talk to people who are struggling with diets and you ask them, "Well, what are you trying to do?" "Well, I'm trying to do low sodium and low sugar and also vegan and avoid oil." Good luck with that, right?

What's really interesting about a Paleo and a sugar-free lifestyle is that's the one thing you got to focus on. If you focus on that, everything else takes care of itself. I think where people go wrong from a dietary perspective is they try to do everything, and it's just not ... You can't maintain that. It's not sustainable. Paleo, low-carb, no-sugar lifestyle is absolutely sustainable and it's compatible with long-term health.

Tony Federico: Absolutely. For you and your wife and the rest of your family, you've been able to maintain a low-sugar or no-sugar lifestyle. Give me a little snapshot of your day today. What does your life look like running a company and trying to watch your diet and be mindful of health?

Paddy Spence: Yeah, typically, I'm on the go a lot. I have two young daughters, a four-year-old and a six-year-old, so convenience, like with a lot of families, is important to us. We'll typically start the day with something like a protein shake. I'll use a non-fat organic milk, one banana, unflavored whey protein, and maybe a little bit of stevia if I need some more sweetness. That kind of gets me going for the day.

Then I really try to stick to lean meats and vegetables. Especially during the day, minimal carbs. Instead of raw bread on a sandwich, I'll have a wrap. For an afternoon snack, I'll either eat raw cashews or turkey jerky, organic turkey or sometimes beef jerky. By the way, I talk a lot to people about hidden sources of sugar. Nuts and jerky are two that you got to be really careful about. Don't ever get coated nuts. Those are full of sugar. Don't get yogurt-covered nuts, and don't get jerky that's heavily flavored.

Some of those jerkies out there have like 11 grams of sugar per serving, which is completely unnecessary. With that as a snack, then in the evening we'll typically do some kind of lean protein, whether that's chicken or beef. My wife and I love fish. Good luck getting a four-year-old to eat fish. Then green vegetables. Sometimes the kids will have something like mac and cheese, but dessert is typically a banana or some sliced apples.

What did we not consume during that day? We didn't have any refined sugar. We, in fact, limited the amount even of natural sugars we consumed. We had some dairy, but really focused on lean protein, green vegetables, a little bit of starch, nuts and seeds, and some fruit.

Tony Federico: Sounds good, man. How you feeling?

Paddy Spence: Feeling great. Now I will tell you, I did actually have a sports injury recently. I had surgery on Friday for a torn pectoralis major [crosstalk 00:28:20].

Tony Federico: Oh, wow. How'd you get that?

Paddy Spence: I knew what I was getting into. I was in a Brazilian jiu-jitsu class sparring with someone. Yeah.

Tony Federico: You earned it. At least that's a cool ... If you're going to tear a pec, at least it was sparring in a Brazilian jiu-jitsu class.

Paddy Spence: Exactly. It's the price of being active. One of the other things, because it actually ties into the Paleo diet, I think ... One of the things that science is just really starting to understand is the role of sugar in inflammation. I'm 48 years old. When I get injured, it's not like when I was 25. It's a much slower process nowadays, and I really have to focus on diet nutrition from an inflammatory perspective. No sugar helps with inflammation. I take supplements like whether it's Arnica from a homeopathic perspective or turmeric, but those are things that really help to reduce the inflammation.

To answer your question, I should be feeling terrible having had surgery five days ago. I actually feel great, and I think the diet actually does have something to do with it.

Tony Federico: That's awesome, great to hear. Now as far as the next step for you, for Zevia, what are the things that are kind of coming down the line? What's on the horizon? Any new iterations or partnerships that you're excited about?

Paddy Spence: Absolutely. We're always working on new products and new iterations. One of the things that I think I'm seeing loud and clear is that the big companies, particularly in the soda space, whether that's Coca Cola, PepsiCo, or Dr. Pepper Snapple Group, just are not in tune with what the consumer of today and tomorrow is looking for. They're looking for low-sugar solutions. They're looking for solutions that have no artificial ingredients.

We're in a fantastic position from that perspective. When we look at the beverage category overall, yeah, we're in soda today. We make a tonic water, which is a mixer, but there's a whole bunch of incremental categories that we think need a zero-calorie solution with no artificial sweeteners, whether that's iced tea or energy drinks or sparkling water. We definitely have expansion plans in that regard.

From a partnership perspective, one of the partnerships that we're most excited about is we are a sponsor of the 2016 CrossFit Games.

Tony Federico: Very cool.

Paddy Spence: Yeah. We have so much respect for CrossFit as an organization, particularly because of their activism, their authenticity, and their focus on diet in addition to exercise. A lot of trainers will tell you, "Aw, just run it off." The CrossFit guys don't see it that way. They say, "You know what, you got to eat right in addition to doing these routines." We think CrossFit is just changing people's lives for the better. As you said, there's nothing more gratifying than when you can change someone's life with a product or a workout or whatever. That's something we're really excited about.

Tony Federico: You mentioned before we started recording you made a trip down to CrossFit headquarters and got a chance to meet the godfather of the CrossFit movement, Greg Glassman. What was your impression spending some time with those guys, just in terms of just their overall vibe and energy?

Paddy Spence: What an amazing organization. Greg is a genius. He's an exercise savant. The guy off the top of his head can rattle off stuff that's basically aggregating eight different scientific papers. It was a real pleasure and education spending time with him. I think as an organization in general, it's very rare in the corporate world that you come across people who are hyper successful in business and yet maintain their value structure day in and day out.

I think that's one of the things I just love about CrossFit. They don't sell out. They're un-buyable, and they're absolutely true to their values. Their values are about trying to fight against chronic disease through this combination of diet and exercise and calling out people who are doing underhanded or nasty things to undermine the health of Americans. I just have tremendous respect for Greg and for their whole team. We're really proud to be a sponsor of CrossFit and the CrossFit Games. It's a community that I think is very receptive to a Paleo no-sugar type product like Zevia.

Tony Federico: All right. Final question, what's your favorite flavor of Zevia?

Paddy Spence: That's like saying who's your favorite kid.

Tony Federico: I know. That's the next question. [Inaudible 00:32:30].

Paddy Spence: We've got 14 flavors plus tonic water. My preferences kind of change depending on time of day. I'll preface this by saying I'm a 10-can-a-day guy. Yet, in five and a half years of that type of consumption, I've never had any kind of ill effects from Zevia. During the morning and kind of up

till noon or so, I'll have caffeinated Zevia, our cola being my favorite flavor. In the afternoon, I'll switch to non-caffeinated, and I really love our strawberry and our grape soda. It's interesting, the kids, they don't get the caffeinated ones, but they love the fruit flavors. They love ginger ale as well. Ginger ale is a huge one in our household.

Tony Federico: Nice. I have to second you on the grape soda. That one's pretty awesome. As a child of the '90s, I definitely had plenty of those ... I think it was like a Welch's brand or I'm not exactly sure what it was, but I was a grape soda fan back in the day, and it's nice to be able to revisit some of those memories without revisiting the insulin spike and sugar crash.

Paddy Spence: Exactly.

Tony Federico: I appreciate the stuff that you guys are doing and the products you're putting out. Paddy, it was a good time talking to you and look forward to seeing some new stuff from Zevia in the future.

Paddy Spence: Thanks so much, Tony. I really appreciate it. For folks who want to learn more, you can go to our website at [zevia.com](http://zevia.com). That's Z-E-V-I-A.com. Thanks so much.

Tony Federico: That was Paddy Spence, CEO of Zevia Natural Soda. To find out more about Zevia and their products, just go to [zevia.com](http://zevia.com). Next week's show will be a Paleo radio bite featuring [inaudible 00:34:02] expert and author of The Potato Hack, Tim Steele. Here's a preview.

Tim Steele: You know, potatoes are just good food no matter how you eat them. They have a lot of resistant starch and a lot of fiber that with a little bit of effort you can bring some more of that out of them. We'll talk about that in a minute, but just potatoes as part of your normal rotation of foods is never going to be a bad idea.

Tony Federico: To learn more about the power of plain old potatoes, you'll have to tune into next week's show. To make sure you don't miss it, just subscribe to Paleo Magazine Radio on iTunes or favorite us on Stitcher. Before we go, I'd like to thank the sponsor of today's show, Healthy Human. They're the first certified Paleo-friendly product outside of the food and beauty category and were also voted 2015's best new product by Paleo Magazine readers. Speaking of Paleo Magazine, our February/March 2017 issue is headed to newsstands and your mailbox as we speak. In it you'll find my Business Spotlight feature of Pure Indian Foods. We go deep into the ghee with Pure Indian founder Sandeep Argarwal, and it's a story that any health-seeker, foodie, or entrepreneur is going to want to check out.

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(Singing)