

**EPISODE 151**

**[0:00:00.3] AV:** Welcome Paleo Nation. I'm Ashleigh VanHouten and you're listening to Paleo Magazine Radio, the official podcast of the original Paleo Lifestyle Publication.

[INTRODUCTION]

**[0:00:19.6] AV:** Now, you may have noticed that I am not in fact Tony Federico. My name is Ashleigh VanHouten, and I'm the lucky gal who is taking over as host while Tony moves on to his next adventure. Today, for my very first show, I'm going to chat with Tony about what he's up to and what he's learned from all of his experience as Paleo Magazine Radio Podcast host and as a writer for Paleo Magazine.

First, I'll give you a quick elevator speech about myself since I know you're probably wondering who the heck I am. I have been a writer for Paleo Magazine for about five years now, mostly interviewing paleo bloggers, authors, and health professionals. I've been into paleo living, the lifestyle, for a few years longer than that. I like to think of myself as a bit of a health and fitness renaissance woman, which is a nice way of saying that I'm not really good at anything, but I'm willing to experiment. I'm willing to try anything and then tell other people about it.

You name it, I've tried it — food of fitness. I have been into swimming, CrossFit, powerlifting, Jiu-Jitsu, I've competed nationally in Figure Bodybuilding. I really like to combine my passion for learning about food and fitness with my skills as a writer and a communicator, and I think this new job as podcast host is a natural extension of that. I hope you agree and I thank you in advance for listening and hopefully going along on this journey with me.

Now, on to the good stuff. Today's podcast is with none other than Tony Federico, former Paleo Magazine writer and podcast host, cookbook author, personal trainer, paleo authority. I could go on. He is now the new VP of marketing for Natural Force, an all-natural supplement company. In our conversation, we talk about his new job, the importance of prioritizing, what he's learned during his time talking to so many of the paleo industry's best and brightest. He gives me some great advice, and why falling off your bike, both literally and figuratively, could be a good thing.

Before we get started, I just want to take a quick minute and thank our sponsor, Healthy Human.

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

**[0:02:27.2] ANNOUNCER:** Healthy Human cofounder, Natalie Schultz, created her company after battling MS and knew that her water bottle would have to be safe and nontoxic, which left her with two materials to choose from.

*“NS: Between glass and stainless steel, those are the two purist forms that you could drink from.”*

**[0:02:42.0] ANNOUNCER:** Natalie decided on shatterproof stainless steel because her MS had made it difficult to hold onto things, and she wanted her bottle to be durable enough to survive a fall. That wasn't her only goal. If you were talking to Natalie right now, this is when she would tell you about Healthy Human's double wall insulation, which keeps hot things hot and cold things cold, how the extra-large lid handle was designed for real human hands, how the stainless steel stopper means that your liquids will never touch plastic, and how the rolled edges protect your lips and mouth from sharp edges.

In other words...

*“NS: When you look at the bottle today, I can tell you specifically why I designed every aspect of it.”*

**[0:03:20.5] ANNOUNCER:** Healthy Human products are available in stores nationwide as well as on their website, [healthyhumanlife.com](http://healthyhumanlife.com). You can also check out their full-page ad in the current issue of Paleo Magazine.

[INTRO MESSAGE]

**[0:03:31.3] AV:** All right Paleo Nation, it's the end of an era. Time to celebrate with your friend and mine; Tony Federico. Paleo Magazine Radio starts now.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:04:09.2] AV:** Hey, Tony, how is it going?

**[0:04:10.9] TF:** Hey, what's up Ashleigh?

**[0:04:12.8] AV:** All right, it feels a little weird, I have to say, welcoming you to your own podcast, but here we are nonetheless. Welcome.

**[0:04:20.0] TF:** Welcome me back to my own home, or my old home, I guess.

**[0:04:23.9] AV:** Yeah. I mean I know we're just getting started, but does it feel weird already for you to kind of be on the other side answering questions instead of asking them?

**[0:04:31.4] TF:** You know, it does a little bit, but I feel proud, I feel happy. I'm excited for you to have the opportunity to be taking the reins and heading up the show. I've been in it for the past four weeks getting going with my new job. I'm feeling like the transition has already kind of happening, and this is really just sort of sealing the deal and I'm glad we're getting the chance to do it.

**[0:04:52.8] AV:** Awesome. I have lots and lots of podcast related questions for you, but we're going to start slowly here. The first question I'd like to ask, for anyone who doesn't know already, tell us why you are so kindly passing the reins on to me and what you're up to now?

**[0:05:09.0] TF:** Sure. This is one of those things where working with Paleo Magazine was always a dream. When I first went paleo in the first place, this is going back to probably 2010, 2011, somewhere around there. I'd been in the fitness industry. I had been a personal trainer for a long time, but when I got turned on to paleo, I started looking around, obviously, for some resources and there really wasn't a whole lot out there.

Then, I came across Paleo Magazine and I'm like, "Oh! This is like a beacon of light out in the darkness. There is actually a magazine dedicated to this lifestyle." I think that this was probably maybe issue two or three, by this time, had come out and is one of the original Paleo Magazine

covers with Robb Wolf on the front. I got this thought, I was like, “You know what? I want to get involved with that.” So I started to do what I could to hustle Cain a little bit and pitch articles and it took me a little while, but eventually got my foot in the door and started being a part of the actual production of Paleo Magazine, and then ultimately that led to the podcast, obviously.

One of the great things about that experience and why it was such a dream come true is it got me out into the world and I got to go to events like Paleo f(x), and I got to go to events like the Ancestral Health Symposium and to speak and to moderate panels and do all this stuff that, frankly, I never would have really had the opportunity to do, because the conventional fitness world, let me say, is already pretty entrenched.

If you go to any fitness personal training conferences, it’s kind of a the same sort of folks who tend to present, and I’m not saying that they’re not qualified or have important things to say, because it’s certainly not true. But it’s just hard to break in to an established business like that and what getting involved with Paleo did, it allowed me to break in and it allowed me to get involved.

One really kind of neat side effect of that was meeting people from all over the country, meeting people from all over the world, meeting business owners, people that were starting companies in this new paleo space, and I was covering their stories for the Paleo Magazine Business Spotlights that I wrote. I had started to think, “Wow, I’m doing all these stuff part time,” this is my side gig, this is my side hustle, doing the podcast and going to events and writing for Paleo Mag, but I was still a personal trainer and a facility manager at a fitness center here in Jacksonville, Florida full-time.

I’ve always had that kind of dual professional life, where I’ve had sort of the face to face job and then I’ve had these little side gigs. After reading Tim Ferriss’ 4-Hour Workweek, those side gigs involved blogs, and podcasts, and things of that nature. There was always a little bit of a disparity though, because when you’re doing more than one thing, I think, it’s hard to keep your attention focused. It’s hard to keep your energies focused. Although I’m happy with what I accomplished, I always kind of felt there’s this little nagging piece that said, “You know what? I wonder what you could do if you just went all in on something.”

Unfortunately, that opportunity didn't really present itself for years and years, but I kept working, kept my head down and I just knew that the stuff that I was doing with Paleo Magazine was really just exposing me to people that, who knows? Maybe someone will offer me a job, or whatever, and that's exactly what happened.

A few years back, I did a business spotlight feature of Natural Force, a company started by Joe Rakowski and Justin Quinn, two guys who really just wanted something new from their sports supplements, were kind of sick of the standard stuff you find at GNC and otherwise, and they made their own. That's what started their company. I did a feature for them that was run in Paleo Magazine. That was the initial contact. A few months later I did a blog post for them, kept seeing them at Paleo f(x). Lo and behold, several years later they came out and they said, "Hey, we're ready to expand our team and we want to bring you on board."

If somebody offers you a position of VP of marketing for their all-natural paleo supplement company and you're sitting there with two to three jobs kind of wondering, "When am I going to get my big break?" Then something like that happens, you're like, "Maybe I just got what I asked for." There is that fear, I guess. First is excitement, like, "This is amazing." Then, fear of, "Oh my gosh! I actually have to stop doing the podcast for Paleo Magazine. I have to stop writing articles," obviously, because you got to have your journalistic integrity. You can't be working for a company and then presenting yourself as an un-biased source of information.

But I did it. I took the jump, made the plunge, talked to Cain. That was a tough conversation. Definitely hate coming to somebody that I've been working with for so long and say, "Hey, I got to step away." But everything is good. He was able to get you on board and everything's been super fun so far, and I'm just really doing what I've been doing, but just at a much higher level. Obviously, I don't have to go into the gym everyday anymore, although I'm still working out every day.

**[0:10:01.9] AV:** That's good. I hear when people aren't personal trainers or aren't in the gym for work all day, you actually end up in better shape, because you're just going in for yourself after that. That's an upside.

**[0:10:11.2] TF:** That's what I'm thinking, because all that time and energy I spent working on other people's fitness, I get to invest in myself now. I get to be my own best personal trainer.

**[0:10:20.2] AV:** There you go. Well, congratulations. That's an awesome job. Yeah, it seems like it worked out well for all of us. It's funny that you talk about hustling Cain at the beginning, because you were definitely an early adaptor, but I had almost the exact same trajectory with him. I was paleo for a while, really into it, doing my research, learning, and I came across this magazine, I'm like, "All right, I got to," — because my background is writing and journalism and that kind of thing. I'm like, "Okay. I got to get in this magazine," I just kind of pitched, and chatted, and talked, and e-mailed, and probably harassed him until he gave me a chance, and the rest is history.

**[0:10:50.9] TF:** Yeah.

**[0:10:52.3] AV:** Cain is great.

**[0:10:53.2] TF:** You've got to put him in the editorial triangle hold and just crank it down until he taps out.

**[0:10:58.8] AV:** Exactly. A lot of our listeners probably are already pretty well versed in how, frankly, scary a lot of supplement companies are these days and also that there are better, more natural options. Tell us a little bit more about Natural Force and why it really stands apart.

**[0:11:16.4] TF:** Yeah. It all goes back to what I was saying before, where the company was born, and it was born out of just this interest from Joe and Justin to do something different and to really go beyond what the conventional manufacturers were putting out. You got stuff — Crazy names, crazy colors. "Explode", "Extreme", everything is just completely nuts, and it's just all these chemical garbage that makes you feel wired, it makes your skin crawl. You know what? There's a market for it, obviously, that stuff sells. That was really the only option when Joe and Justin got into this.

They figured, "Hey, let's use some whole natural herbs, super foods, things that you can actually identify and could reasonably actually make yourself if you cared to go out and buy this stuff."

That's actually how they first made their original batch. They just went out and bought a bunch of raw ingredients and mixed it up and that's how they got started.

So it was really born from this desire of doing something different, bucking the trends that are part of the conventional fitness supplement space. From that original creation, which was our raw tea product, it's a paleo certified pre-workout. In fact, it was the first paleo certified pre-workout, because it was made paleo by accident, and Joe and Justin didn't know about paleo when they first got started, but it just aligned with the principles that they already had.

**[0:12:43.9] AV:** That's funny.

**[0:12:45.1] TF:** Their side hustle of selling raw tea occurred simultaneous with running other businesses. Justin had a real estate rental company. Joe ran two gyms. They were both working other jobs. They both had other stuff going on, but this was their passion project. A couple of years went by and the passion project started to get kind of serious, and sales started rolling in and they had to start putting some systems together.

At a certain point, they were like, "Wait a minute. What if we went all in on this?" Similar to how I kind of had that question for myself, "What if I go all in? What if I put all of my energy into this thing that I'm doing that I'm passionate about and I just commit that this is going to be my thing, and this is going to be what I'm working towards, and this is what it truly believe in most energetically, and by doing so, see what happens? Explore that."

They did, and were able to kind of transition out of their other jobs. Since then, have expanded the Natural Force line, the original raw tea pre-workout mix, got another flavor. It got an organic counterpart. So Organic Certified Matcha Ignite is our organic pre-workout and intro-workout, a post-workout recovery mix, and then it just kind of exploded from there. Right now, we're really doing well with an organic grass-fed, totally natural weigh protein, a pastured collagen peptide, and we're going to be doing some pretty awesome stuff with — we've got an MCT oil out right now, but we're going to be really kind of innovating in that space.

Really, throughout all the products, because it just comes from this idea of, "Let's go beyond. Let's do something different and let's do something that hasn't been done before Let's make it

the best quality product it can possibly be. Let's not give people crap if they want to return something. Let's go beyond in terms of products, customer service, and then the mission, the vision of the company, which is to take what we're doing in the supplement space and really expand it out into content, and gear, and all sorts of other things that help support people in their fitness journey, and to be a positive voice and an empowering voice, and to market to people's aspirations and best-self rather than trying to make them feel bad and by doing so, manipulate them into buying your product."

I think we can be successful without having to stoop to body-shaming people and all of those other that you see that's just kind of sketchy in the conventional supplement world, or using a bunch of Photoshopped fake, before, and after pictures and all of that. Really, just going to do something that hasn't been done before and do something different, and that's really exciting.

**[0:15:22.2] AV:** I learned about the company for the first time last year. I was at Paleo f(x) for the first time, and I met those guys, and I tried some stuff, and I was really into it from the beginning. My favorite, personally, is — you already mentioned it — the Matcha Ignite. I love it, because I'm a huge matcha person anyway. I do not like regular pre-workout, because it makes me just crazy jittery. I'm someone who has no business even drinking coffee. Like I should not do any of that stuff, but this, I find, it has a very natural, subtle energy, and it just tastes really good. That's my favorite.

**[0:15:56.3] TF:** Yeah, I had some this morning.

**[0:15:58.3] AV:** Yeah, so did I. It was amazing, anyway.

**[0:15:59.7] TF:** Nice. Matcha twins.

**[0:16:02.4] AV:** Yeah. What are your favorite products though, and walk me through a day like when you'd use them and what you're using.

**[0:16:08.5] TF:** Well, the good thing about working for a company like Natural Force is that I have ample supplies of Natural Force products in my pantry. For example, today, I had some almond milk — I guess speaking to this audience, they know that there are extreme folks

involved. I'm doing IF, I'm doing intermittent fasting. I waited until I transitioned out of my regular job to do that, because I didn't want to overload my cortisol system. Now that I'm getting my solid eight hours of sleep every night, and my quantified self-devices are indicating that everything's good to go, I'm adding IF to the mix.

Today, my goal is to have an eating window from noon to about 8, shooting for that eight hour eating window. First thing this morning, get up, almond milk, Matcha Ignite and some collagen with just maybe a tablespoon or so of MCT oil. That had me going all day until just maybe about 30 minutes before our call, I was like, "Oh, crap! I got to hustle up and get ready to talk to Ashleigh."

That's kind of what I like to do, make sort of unique shakes. Why not add some collagen and some MCTs to something like Matcha Ignite? If I'm making a regular protein shake, obviously, I'm going to be doing the same thing with collagen, MCTs added to it.

I think that the MCT oil really can be used for cooking applications, so it doesn't have to be smooth, shakes, and coffee. You can use it as, basically an oil to toss vegetables in if you're roasting them. you can use it for salads. So it's a really a versatile ingredient, I would say, and it's probably more of just a food, than a supplement.

Then as far as like the actual supplement supplements go, I posted something on my Instagram the other day. I was getting ready to mow the yard, and because I'd already had a little bit of caffeine earlier in the day, I kind of wanted a break. I didn't want to just keep pushing the stimulant, so I took some of our Cordyceps Pro, which is Cordyceps Sinensis, and rhodiola, and ashwaganda, so adaptogenic herbs and super foods, and that gives me just like a nice stimulant-free energy boost and I was able to get out there and crush the lawn, and pushed lawn mower around for an hour and a half and still be able to go to bed that night and not have my sleep disturbed.

I like that it's clean products that really fit my type of lifestyle, where it's stuff that I can trust. There's nothing funky in the ingredients, so I don't have to worry about that. Then, just from a sort of physiological perspective, having the option of an organic kind of calm pre-workout for

that calm energy, or a caffeine-free option with the Cordyceps Pro, or something like that. I just feel like that fits my life a lot better than something that's just going to jack me up every time.

**[0:18:56.0] AV:** Yes. It seems like there are a couple of different camps. There are people who think that, ideally, you should be able to get everything you need from your food and from your lifestyle, and then there are others who think it's healthy and, in some cases, necessary to supplement. Whether we're talking about vitamin D, or fish oil, or anything. Obviously, you're working for a company that provides healthy resources to people, but what's your two-cents on that debate?

**[0:19:22.0] TF:** Yeah, and I think that's a great question, because that is sort of a common theme, like, "Well, why supplement?" I started first working out when I was 12 years old. I was going into freshmen year of high school. Back then, I bought into the hype of "you drink this animal mass gainer and you're going to get super muscular and vascular and all this stuff".

I was an early patsy, I guess, I don't know — Of the supplement industry when I was like very young and a teenager. When I was kind of getting a little bit more serious into lifting, that was back in the days of the baseball players taking androstenedione. So I was getting involved in that kind of stuff, which is probably really bad for my hormones.

Nevertheless, I've been a supplement user for a long time. I became disenfranchised with supplements in general and just kind of at a certain point was only using things like the most natural single ingredient whey protein that I could find, or trying to just whittle it down and pair it down, because I had just gotten to a point where I was like, "Okay. This stuff is generally not good for me. It's got artificial colors and flavors, artificial sweeteners. I'm not doing that, especially now that I'm paleo."

Going back to working for Paleo Magazine, I started getting a lot of different samples from people and getting to try different things. My view of supplements is I've always liked them, they weren't good at first. Now, with the growing paleo movement and the paleo business segment getting bigger, there's more products that are catered, like I said about some of the Natural Force stuff, it's more catered to my lifestyle.

Now, I just look at it as an extension of my diet and an extension of my eating. If I'm pushed for time or from doing something that I want to have something portable, why not make a shake with some good quality organic grass-fed whey, and pastured collagen, and MCTs. To me, it's kind of relevant if I'm doing it that way versus eating whole foods.

Granted, I'm still eating whole foods every day. I'm not only supplementing, but if you've got, let's say, three to five meals a day, depending on your kind of perspective on meal frequency, are you going to have a full meal every time you have one of those three to five meals? I'm not. Frankly, as far as the necessity of supplementation, I think we need to think back, would our ancient ancestors have just been like, "Nope. I'm just eating bison. I'm not going to take that medicinal herb that the wise man recommended." No. People were taking herbs, and super foods, and things like that way, way, way back when.

They had food ways and they had traditions that guided it, but we've got modern systems like traditional Chinese medicine and Ayurveda, which, frankly, that's a big inspiration for Joe and Justin at Natural Force is what were people doing for thousands of years in these holistic healthcare systems? For example, when we put something like ashwaganda into a product like Codyceps Pro, there's a long history of use there, and it kind of goes beyond supplementation for more just superficial reasons, then it goes back into, you know, "we've got this whole bounty of animals and plants in this world, and we're in this world too, we are of this world too, and why not take advantage of something if it can help improve our health, make us feel better, and give us a greater degree of wellness than we would have had before?"

I can think of plenty of whole food diets that are pretty deficient nutritionally, and plenty of supplemented diets such as my own that is very nutritionally complete and gets the added benefit of some of these things that maybe I wouldn't have had access to ashwaganda or Cordyceps, because there are specific locales where you can find them. At the same time, if I was a caveman roaming around and if I did find something that worked and I was maybe not killed in the process, I certainly would have used that.

I think the whole supplementation thing, it's easy to just kind of put them all in one box. But I think that the medicinal herbs, the holistic healthcare systems that have been in place for thousands of years and evidence that our ancient ancestors, and even animals, like dogs. I

don't know if you're a pet owner, but I've certainly seen our family dog when we had him, had a stomach ache and you could always tell, "Because he's out in the back eating grass." He was supplementing his diet.

I kind of don't see that — I see the distinction, because I can understand that perspective, but in my own personal life, I don't really feel like there's a line there. It's all part of the same thing of just trying to feel better and maximize my life.

**[0:24:07.9] AV:** That makes sense. As you said too with a lot of these products with increasing quality and ingredients, maybe they aren't exactly "whole foods", but they are real foods, and real herbs, and real mushrooms, and things that are real food. So it's really not a huge leap anyway.

Your title is VP of marketing, and I know you kind of have just sort of started recently, but what's a day in your work like look like right now?

**[0:24:34.3] TF:** It's been pretty wild. You kind of mentioned before, I was transitioning out of the personal trainer lifestyle. That was getting up super early in the morning, and training clients, and running a gym, that's a challenging work environment. There's any number of things that can go wrong in any given day, tons of customer service issues that need to be addressed, opportunities as we used to call them. Then, I would flip around and after putting in eight hours at the gym training clients and dealing with employee issues, and dealing with facility issues and all that stuff, I would come home and then I would work for another three or four hours doing my Paleo Magazine stuff.

I think I've been used to working long hours for a long time. One thing that's kind of strange is I feel like I've got so much more time in my day, because I'm just doing one thing. It's like, "Oh, wow! I can work eight hours. I'm just working on Natural Force stuff, and it's only 3 o'clock." I'm like, "Wow, that's amazing, and I can actually relax."

I was talking to my wife the other day and I'm like, "Wow! At the end of the day it's like you have a little mini weekend," because it was just such a rare thing for me to, at 5 or 6 o'clock, actually be done. Typically, I was going till 7:00, or 8:00 and sometimes later. I feel like there's a lot more

just time and space. I just got started at a co-work location down the road, so I'm riding my back to work. It's like a big just kind of shared office space, so I've got my little desk on the side and I've got my little standup setup and everything.

It's amazing. Riding my bike to work today, it felt like a dream. I'm pinching myself that I can actually ride my bike to work. It was always just such a fantasy that I never thought would really be something I could do. Granted, I did also fall off my bike today, but you know what? I rolled across the shoulder and popped right back up, and even that was kind of fun. I was like, "You know what? This is interjecting a little bit of sort of that youthful adventure into my day," where it's like, "What's —".

**[0:26:29.0] AV:** There you go. That's a good way of looking at it.

**[0:26:30.2] TF:** Yeah. It's like, "What's going to happen today?" Falling off my back and getting a little dirty, way better than get in a car accident. So if I could take my pick, I'll take that one.

Yeah, Natural Force is a distributed company. We've got people working with us on our team in other countries. We're all connected online. It's really just interesting to see how a business operates purely online where you don't really have that physical location. Joe and Justin are up in Maryland, but everyone else is spread out all over the place.

With all the tools and web apps and everything that we have available to us now, you can do business with 10 people in 10 different spots and it feels like everybody's working together. I think that that is really the cool thing about technology. It's enabling businesses to run like that. It's enabling you and I to have our conversation right now. I think that in the paleo world we are certainly aware of some of the pitfalls of maybe imprudent use of technology labor saving devices that don't necessarily save labor just add stress or EMF to our life.

When it comes to this kind of stuff too, it's really liberating and freeing knowing that I can live here in Jacksonville, Florida, work for a company based in Maryland and have coworkers in the Philippines and everybody is working together and making it happen. It's a pretty cool thing, and it's interesting to see what's possible in this kind of new business environment, this new world, and to be able to do that in a paleo-focused way is even more amazing.

**[0:28:02.4] AV:** That's awesome. Before we move on now, are there any sort of exciting new products or new projects, or anything going on?

**[0:28:09.6] TF:** Oh, yeah. This is a going to be huge here for Natural Force. We've got a completely brand new website coming out in a couple of months. It's going to blow people's socks off. Now that I'm in this side of the business, I'm like, "Responsive modern design." All these kind of keywords, but it's going to be basically a super awesome new website that's going to have excellent content focusing primarily on the areas of food, movement, and mindset. Obviously, we're going to cover other stuff as well.

We're really interested in becoming a resource for people that want to get to fit. Sharing that information online through our social media platforms, on Facebook and Instagram. You can find us on @mynaturalforce on both of those places. As far as products are concerned, I don't want to reveal a whole lot just because there's a pipeline that's involved and if something were to — If we had a snafu and let's say our labels got hung up for any reason, I wouldn't want anybody to be disappointed. I am going to say that pretty much everything that we're doing is going to fit a really key need in the paleo community. It's going to be stuff that people are going to really enjoy and appreciate having in their lives. Certainly, the emphasis, what I can say, is going to be on the vitality side of the equation. The stuff that is applicable for everyday folks, not just the uber-athletes. Definitely looking to do more of that.

**[0:29:31.3] AV:** Awesome. All right, you're leaving us with anticipation here. That's good. All right.

Okay, so next up I have a question for you, and this is a question that I think I want to ask most of my guests. You're going to be the guinea pig.

**[0:29:42.0] TF:** All right.

**[0:29:42.6] AV:** Thank you. This goes back again to my first experience with Paleo f(x) last year. It was so awesome. I had so much fun meeting everyone there and trying all these new products, and I went to as many sessions as I could, tried to learn as much as I could. One thing

that kind of kept coming up, it seemed, was this conversation of the term “paleo” to describe the diet and the lifestyle and whether that’s a term that’s either becoming outdated, or maybe not as useful to the cause anymore?

It was a word that when it first started, it was easy to remember and easy to say and it helped bring things mainstream and people recognized it. Of course, when anything becomes mainstream, it starts to become diluted, and maybe misinterpreted. There was this conversation that maybe paleo isn’t the best way to describe it anymore? Maybe we’re looking at ancestral health. Maybe we’re looking at just something completely different.

Do you think we’ve hit peak paleo? What are your thoughts on that?

**[0:30:41.4] TF:** My perspective is a little bit different, because I remember when I first got into the whole paleo thing, my introduction was Loren Cordain’s book, *The Paleo Diet*, and it had just kind of surged in popularity in a large part due to Robb Wolf becoming more popular through his involvement with CrossFit, the CrossFit Nutrition Certification, and his podcast. A lot of people forget Robb Wolf’s podcast was blown up well before his book did. He did the CrossFit Nutrition Certifications for a long, long time, which is where he got a lot of the material for his book.

At that time, Loren Cordain had this 10, 13-year old book that all of a sudden got popular again right around that time when Robb’s book came out, *Paleo Solution*. So you had *Paleo Diet*, *Paleo Solution*, those were two books that used paleo in their title, but, really, that was it. If you look at Mark Sisson’s book, it was *Primal Blueprint*. If you look at Arthur De Vany’s book, it was *The New Evolution Diet*.

Right from the beginning, there wasn’t a whole lot of agreement as far as “what do we call this thing?” What do we call this way of living that seeks to find, maybe, a starting point in the ways of our ancestors, because, obviously, we know that the endpoint is not here yet. It’s off in the future, indefinitely. What do we call this thing? I remember early blog posts back then, people were saying, “Let’s call it Paleo 2.0, or Paleo New,” and all of these different conversations were being ahead back then. That was when paleo first started.

I guess one of the things that I kind of think about it is like, “Well, if it was going to turn into something, that was probably the time to do it.” I think as far as individual is involved in the movement, people who maybe had a blog that featured the word paleo very prominently as a way to identify themselves more clearly, moving their blog to their own name, that’s just a smart business decision. I don’t think it has a whole lot to do with the paleo movement losing any steam though.

**[0:32:42.0] AV:** Right.

**[0:32:42.4] TF:** If anything, it’s only building, because you see popular culture references now with like Bulletproof Coffee on talk shows. You can go to Costco and you can buy any number of paleo books, and I just saw coconut oil being sold in Costco as a beauty cream, and all it was just straight virgin coconut oil in a container and it’s like, “That’s stuff paleo folks have been advocating for decades at this point.”

There’s always been this conversation about “what do we call it?” but everybody still keeps coming back to paleo, because if you know what it’s about, you’re not going to be hung up on it. If you know that paleo is a template that you can apply to your own life, in your own way, then who cares what the critics say? People were like, “Well, cavemen didn’t eat this or that, because you don’t know where they lived.” It’s like, “Well, I do know that they didn’t eat McDonalds and drink Coke.” That’s the point. Let’s chill out a little bit on semantics and specifics, because we’re not talking specifics as much as we’re talking about a general lifestyle plan, general lifestyle template that you can then customize for your own individual needs. That’s really what it’s about. I’m going to be using the word paleo and I imagine a lot of people will continue to do that with me.

**[0:34:01.5] AV:** Awesome. I like that answer. I’m totally into it.

**[0:34:04.6] TF:** Cool.

**[0:34:06.6] AV:** I’d like to reflect a little bit now on your time as host of the Paleo Magazine Radio Podcast. I know that this might not be the easiest thing to answer, but over all of this time

and all of these people you've had a chance to speak with, can you talk about some of your, either, favorite or most memorable podcasts?

**[0:34:24.0] TF:** Yeah. It's funny because I got involved with the paleo movement right around when I started paleo. I was still pretty fresh to paleo when I went to the very first Paleo f(x) and met pretty much everybody that's doing anything in the paleo world was there for that event. Dave Asprey, Abel James, Mark Sisson, all of these guys.

For me, I guess, I didn't have that same sort of like star struck sort of experience when I would have them on my podcast, but I would geek out on like this real hardcore anthropology stuff. I read Richard Wrangham's book, *Catching Fire*, which is all about the theory that fire enabled the development of our big brains, and he's this Harvard primatologist. I was like, "Oh, I wonder if he'll come on the Paleo Magazine Radio Podcast and talk to me?" And he actually did.

That was just like such a great moment for me talking to somebody that who's got a BBC documentary and is a world renowned primatologist studying human development, our near human ancestors. I guess the typical answer would be all the big names in paleo, which I certainly was happy to talk to and enjoyed talking to. But I had my geek out moments with of the more obscure guests just because it's stuff that I was interested in a more niche way, more niche even than paleo, which is kind of funny.

**[0:35:54.1] AV:** Right. Okay. Over the course of your time as host and also writing for Paleo Magazine, I'm sure that you have maybe heard some things repeated more than others, or some things that really stuck with you. If you had to sort of write a couple of major things on a postcard and send it to me about the things that you've learned about health and wellness over the course of this time, what would those things be?

**[0:36:18.1] TF:** Oh man! Wow! That's a good one. Let's see here. Big things? I think it just comes down to kind of what I was saying before. Somebody who's been on the Paleo Magazine Radio several times and is a great thought leader in the movement, Chris Kresser. His whole thing is "make it your own". I think that that is a big takeaway is you got to make it your own. If you want this thing to be sustainable, you can't just take the template that someone else has

given you. You have to take the template and customize it, because everyone's life is a little bit different.

That would really be a big, big point to make, and maybe referencing some of the conversations I've had with Kelly Starret, or Katy Bowman, you need to move your body, and movement isn't just about cranking out reps and maxing out, and some of the, I guess, more performance aspects of it. Movement literally is medicine. It really nourishes your cells. When you go out for a walk, that's no different than taking that shot of super food juices or eating that big ass salad with grass-fed beef. All those things are nutritious, and so is walking, so is stretching, so is swimming, so is getting out and enjoying the outdoors.

I would say along with that, play. We need to play more, and I'm going to kind of keep referencing past guests, Darrell Edwards is somebody who really embodies that, and I just went to an event in Miami recently, The Physicians for Ancestral Health, and gave a presentation there about how to use social media as a healthcare practitioner, and Darrell was there doing his Primal Play Workshops and had all these doctors and physicians from all over the world crawling around and playing tag and carrying each other. It's a real joyful thing when you get outside of your kind of normal box as far as movement is concerned and you start to play again and you realize like, "Oh, okay. I can do this." It's like me falling off my bike today.

**[0:38:10.0] AV:** I was just going to say that. That's a form of play. You can make playful.

**[0:38:13.4] TF:** Yeah, it was kind of fun, and I laughed afterwards. It's important to not take yourself too seriously. Maybe that's the big takeaway point there. Make it unique, move your body, and then don't take yourself too seriously.

**[0:38:26.9] AV:** Those are great, great final thoughts. Final parting thoughts about the podcast from one outgoing host to the new one, what words of wisdom do you have for me?

**[0:38:36.8] TF:** Always follow up with guest, maybe a day or two before just to confirm the time of your call. That's always important.

**[0:38:43.7] AV:** That's good. You did tell me a lot offline before this, I will say. You gave me a few very helpful pointers that we don't have to go through now, but, yeah, very helpful.

**[0:38:51.4] TF:** Yeah, I bequeathed some knowledge to you before we talked today. I think having a calendar scheduling system, like Calendly, or — What was the other one? Meet.Me or something like that.

Systemize the things that should be systemized so that you can focus on and be present for the things that you need to be present for. If there's something that you can just automate because you don't really need to be involved in it every time, like scheduling, or whatever, automate it. Because when you're having these phone calls, when you're having these conversations, the best thing to do is just be there and be in it and enjoy it.

It's a great opportunity to talk to amazing people. Maybe I sold my favorite moment answer a little bit short. Because, really, there wasn't a single person that I talked to that I didn't feel totally blessed to have the opportunity to be talking to. How many people get into a movement like paleo, or whatever it is for you. Somebody could have the same thought about CrossFit, or whatever. If you have a question, you get to ask the expert, the person who wrote the book.

If you've got questions about autoimmunity, you're talking to Dr. Sarah Ballantyne, or if you're wanting to know about vegetable oils talking to Dr. Cate Shanahan. It's just an amazing, amazing things to be able to go right to the direct source of this information and have a normal conversation with them. My advice to you would be, make it so that you can just truly enjoy it, because it is a great opportunity and I'm really excited for you to have it.

**[0:40:22.2] AV:** Me too. I am so pumped. All right. Okay. Now that our listeners, sadly, will not be able to hear from you on the podcast every week, and I know you've mentioned, I think, and we'll put it in the show notes, where to find my Natural Force. What about you? How do we find out where you are and what you're up to?

**[0:40:38.3] TF:** Yeah. This whole process of kind of transitioning into this new position, I had to get honest and say to myself, "Okay. What can you do?" I want to do my new job very well. Okay, got that. Now, how much room do I have in my life for other stuff? The answer is, I've got

to pair things down. I had way too many irons in the fire. I think that was good for the time, but in time, it proved to be a little unwieldy.

So I'm actually getting ready to put a post on my personal blog that has been quite neglected, anyway, working my full-time gym job, and working for Paleo Magazine, didn't leave a whole lot of time for my personal blogging efforts anyway. I'm going to be posting up a message and I'm leaving it up. It's going to be up and available, but I'm going to put a message up on [livecaveman.com](http://livecaveman.com) and just let people know, "Hey! Thank you for checking this thing out." But you're going to see my overall in [naturalforce.com](http://naturalforce.com) now, and on their social media pages @mynaturalforce on Instagram and Facebook, and I'm going to keep my own social media stuff going, because I kind of feel like Instagram is like the new blogger.

Instead of putting a blog post on my blog, I'm going to put it on my Instagram Page. It just feels a little bit easier to do that. It just feels like there's a little bit more flow there and a little bit more feedback from people. I don't know. I think that that's kind of where things are going to some extent anyways. I'm going to be exploring my own social media presence a little bit more fully on Instagram and Facebook, and you can find me @tonyfedfitness, and then really just digging in and working my butt off for Natural Force, website, it's [naturalforce.com](http://naturalforce.com) and you can find us on social @mynaturalforce.

**[0:42:22.0] AV:** Awesome. I really appreciate your honesty with talking about sort of pairing things down, because everyone is doing a million things at once, and we've read things before and we don't want to listen to it, that multitasking isn't even a thing and no one could really do it. We think we can, but not really. I'm in a similar boat to what you were in terms of, I've got a bunch of different things, and that's okay for me right now. But it is something that you really have to focus on pairing down and eliminating the things that just aren't helping, don't matter, and being able to focus on one thing at a time, because that's really what life is about. I really appreciate you reminding us of that.

**[0:43:02.1] TF:** What I would like to say about that is this also ties into my paleo approach and my paleo lifestyle, because if we look out at nature and if we look at the example that nature gives us, there's a time for growth, and then there's a time for death, and there's a time for

returning to the earth. We have seasons in our physical world; there's a spring time, there's a summer, there's a winter, there's a fall.

In our work, although it doesn't necessarily correspond to the calendar, there are seasons to everything that we do, and I know that, for me, it was absolutely the right thing to do to work a full-time job, write a cookbook, work with Cain on Paleo Magazine projects, write articles for Paleo Magazine, do a podcast for Paleo Magazine, have my own blog, do an eBook with Russ Crandall, start a personal training continuing education resource with Roger Dickerman. All of those things that I did, 100%, absolutely essential, and I wouldn't take back a single one. That was a time for growth and exploration and the branches to just kind of spread out and gather as much sunlight as they could.

Now, that that time is kind of naturally come to the end, it's draw that energy in, focus it in, kind of pull it together and do that pruning like you've said. I guess my hope is that I don't make you feel like you need to be changing what you're doing, because I think everything is in its own season and everyone's in their own season. It was exciting and thrilling to do all those things. Now it's exciting in thrilling to just do kind of one thing.

That's kind of the point I'd like to make, is that it's not just that doing less is better, period, or that doing more is better, period. It's that you have to honor those seasons in your life and listen to what you're being called to do at any given time.

**[0:44:57.5] AV:** I love it. Speaking of natural endings, I think we've found it. I think that's a great place to end. Tony, thank you so much for our chat today. I know I speak on behalf of all the listeners when I say, thank you for being such a great host for the podcast, for introducing us to so many new things and so many cool, smart people. Thanks for letting someone else have a go with this hosting thing, I really appreciate it.

**[0:45:18.5] TF:** Yeah, it's your season, Ashleigh.

**[0:45:21.2] AV:** Yeah, there you go, the season of Ashleigh Podcast. All right. Yeah, Tony, best of luck with your future adventures and I'm sure we're going to be following along with you.

**[0:45:29.9] TF:** Absolutely. Good luck Ashleigh, you got this.

**[0:45:32.8] AV:** Bye.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[0:45:33.8] AV:** That was Natural Force Supplement's VP of marketing and your old favorite podcast host, Tony Federico. That's it for today's episode, the first one with your new favorite podcast host, me. Please reach out to me on Instagram @themusclemaven and tell me how I'm doing, maybe offer some constructive feedback, or let me know who you'd like us to have on the show.

As for next week's show, we're talking to Diana Rodgers of the Sustainable Dish, and she's going to be discussing the sustainability of eating meat, which is am very excited about and I'm going to make everyone I know listen to it. To make sure you don't miss it, just subscribe to Paleo Magazine Radio in iTunes or favorite us on Stitcher.

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[OUTRO]

**[0:47:02.8] AV:** Paleo Magazine Radio is brought to you by the Paleo Media Group and is produced by We Edit Podcasts. Our show music features the song *Light It Up*, by Morgan

Heritage and Jo Mersa Marley, on behalf of everyone at Paleo Magazine, thank you for listening.

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