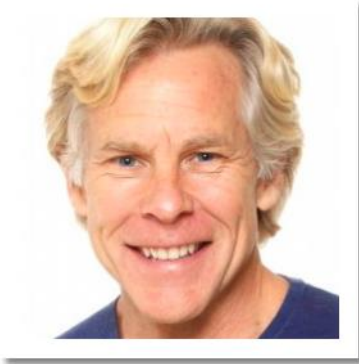


THE CALORIE MYTH

with Jonathan Bailor

FEATURING



Is There A Simple Primal Path Out of Complex Calorie Math?

with Mark Sisson

Mark Sisson is the author of a #1 bestselling health book on Amazon.com, *The Primal Blueprint*, as well as *The Primal Blueprint Cookbook* and the top-rated health and fitness blog MarksDailyApple.com. He is also the founder of Primal Nutrition, Inc., a company devoted to health education and designing state-of-the-art supplements that address the challenges of living in the modern world.

Jonathan: Hey everyone. Jonathan Bailor back and I am pumped for today's show. I overcame a personal goal or reached a personal goal I've had. For four years, there has been this guy out there which you have undoubtedly heard of. He has one of the most popular websites in the world and I am not exaggerating, who I remember four years ago shooting him an email and he responded to me.

I was like, what? Oh, my goodness. Then I knew he was busy so I didn't want to bug him too much but I dropped him a little email and he let me post on his blog, and I was like, oh my gosh, and then today the crowning achievement has happened. I have brought to you one on one the man, the founder of the Primal Movement and the best-selling author of the *Primal Blueprint*, as well as the proprietor of the amazing website MarksDailyApple.com, none other than Mark Sisson.

Mark, welcome to the show brother.

Mark: Thanks for having me, Jonathan.

Jonathan: Mark, I wanted to bring you on today because when we were talking about modern advances in medicine and not just trivializing things in terms of calories, there is this amazing irony where the modern science basically says, "Go back in time."

It is so funny that we have modern science that basically says, "Forget all the stuff we have been told and in fact do what we did before we really even had science." You have been on this path for many years, right?

Mark: Yeah. I have been into evolution since college and I have always looked at evolution as the main driving force in my life, in forming what I did in my training; how I take advantage of the genetic expression to maximize my performance, and then late on in my life when I stopped competing I wanted to look at how we could all tap into these hidden genetic switches and use evolution as the backdrop in the lens through which we view our activities and our behaviors.

Clearly, it has been working with diet and with exercise. Now, what I am really gratified to start seeing is that we are seeing it within medicine. I make a joke now that medicine has gone almost full circle back to a low tech approach where in the 1900s your surgeon was your barber and he would cut out whatever was ailing you and there was no real science behind it, but there was no magic behind it.

We would do bloodletting and we would use leeches and all sorts of hornets and things, salves and ointments and everything. Then we became this science based medicine group that looked for real novel approaches to dealing with disease and didn't really deal with what was causing the disease but how do we alleviate the symptoms.

That begot cutting and burning, and poisoning, and drugging and I think one of the most interesting applications of this, what I call the new low tech of evolutionary medicine now is this idea that for instance you take Crohn's or ulcerative colitis. I've met so many people who had issues with that and they had been on antibiotics, that didn't work. In fact, it made it worse. Prednisone, that didn't work and then finally they had surgery, that didn't work.

Ultimately, what finally worked was a fecal transplant. How low tech can you possibly get than a crap milkshake? That is the beauty of how the human organism works is really it is that low tech, in most cases with regard to medicine there is a dietary component and dietary etiology, probably the origin of the disease and certainly a way to either mitigate the symptoms, alleviate the symptoms or actually fix the condition entirely through diet and exercise.

I am very excited about the future of this.

Jonathan: It is so promising Mark because not only do we see these physiological benefits but the model you are describing is one with such important psychological benefits which is getting us away from this myth that we are somehow defective and that we need to have all of these interventions, consciously balanced calories and spend our life on the treadmill because our body doesn't actually know what it is doing and unless we intervene and buy makeup and all this artificial garbage.

We are not broken, are we?

Mark: No. We are not broken at all. In fact, as I so want to say on a regular basis, each of us contains a recipe to build a happy, healthy, strong, productive, lean human being. We have that genetic recipe, it is just the inputs that we have chosen thus far in our lives have flipped on the wrong gene switches.

It is incumbent upon us, if we want to achieve this level of health and fitness, to discover what new inputs that we can drive the future with as our genes rebuild and renew, and regenerate our bodies on a minute by minute basis, day in and day out.

We are not broken. We may be broken in the short term as a result of choices and I won't even go so far as to call them bad choices, they are just choices but there are other choices we could make that would probably improve our health, our improve our energy levels and our enjoyment of life which is ultimately what we all are after.

Jonathan: Some of those choices Mark that you found to be, we are all definitely covered in this fat, protein and carbohydrate but you have actually

taken it a step further and even some of these psychological approaches to life to help affect some of those switches.

Can you talk about some of these less well-known approaches?

Mark: Yeah. In my most recent book, *The Primal Connection*, we looked at now that you've got the diet dialed-in and you've got the exercise part of this whole thing dialed-in, and maybe you are still not feeling like you jump out of bed, ready to greet the world and discover what new opportunities lay for you today maybe it is something that is a little bit more esoteric.

Maybe it is the fact that you are not spending as much time in nature with the sounds of nature that have a frequency that resonate with the hardwiring of your brain that cause the release of endorphins or serotonin, or other neurotransmitters that would put you on a positive mood.

Maybe you are simply not getting enough sleep. Maybe you are not playing in the dirt enough. Literally, our genes expect us to be exposed to bacteria and other less than healthy organisms on a regular basis in order to train the immune system so that when the big onslaught comes we are able to handle it.

Conversely, we have somehow created this society where everything is sanitized and deodorized and every other 'ized' possible where we've gotten to a point where our immune systems have no information, no data coming in on how to build antibodies and to get ready for these onslaughts. When we do get exposed to the flu germs on a doorknob, all hell breaks loose.

There are a lot of these different aspects of life that go beyond diet and exercise that incorporate other elements of genetic expression, of epigenetics and my mission is to tap into all of these hacks and figure out how we can incorporate them into our lives.

For instance, if you are somebody who is not getting enough of nature but you live on the 42nd floor of a high-rise in New York City, how can you get enough nature? You can maybe get some potting soil and grow some plants on the window sill or something, not that there is a

window sill on the 42nd floor but maybe on your balcony or whatever, or you can go to Central Park to take a walk and try to listen to the birds and try to listen to the sounds, or you can get under a tree with a lot of leaves and hear the rustling.

Little simple hacks like that can go a long way in getting us back to this totality of well-being that doesn't just revolve around looking good naked.

Jonathan: Mark, speaking of looking good naked, you are known for not that I know how you look naked but I at least know how you look half naked and you are able to balance both these sexy aspects of this lifestyle with the much more science aspects of this lifestyle.

Speaking of the science aspects, the sexy aspects, how can we get into the medical community so that when we go into our doctor's office and we start to bring up some of these topics, are you starting to see ways we can have these conversations?

Mark: Yeah. I meet doctors all the time who have read the *Primal Blueprint* or who are going on Mark's Daily Apple and that was their first exposure to this way of thinking and who are now incorporating the Primal Blueprint Lifestyle into the recommendations that they give to their patients.

We are coming on board with a certification program in a couple of months. We are going to encourage not just physicians but physicians' assistants, RNs and LPNs and trainers to get certified in this so that they know the basic principles of the Primal Blueprint, so that when patients come into the doctor's office the doctor doesn't have to spend that much time with them as long as that physician embraces the concept. We are seeing much more of this.

I've got a book coming out in a couple of months by Dr. Ronesh Sinha called *The South Asian Health Solution*. He has had tremendous success using this strategy in a particular South Asian-Indian population in the San Francisco Bay Area with a lot of people who have gravitated to that area for tech reasons and are now taking on this standard American diet and having horrendous results because of some genetic

predispositions to Type II Diabetes and other metabolic syndrome, and things like that.

We are seeing packets of physicians who are now not just embracing it in name but are doing a lot with it and doing a lot about it.

Jonathan: What can we do with our own physicians? Let's say we are not fortunate enough to have one of these physicians, because a lot of physicians Mark, and this blows my mind and I am sure it blows your mind, are still on the fence as to whether or not what you eat has any impact on your health.

I know that sounds dumb but there is a lot of physicians that are like, "Calorie is a calorie, so as long as you don't overeat you are fine." How do we start that conversation with our physicians?

Mark: You start the conversation and if your personal physician is not willing to at least investigate this avenue, then I say it is time to find a new physician. It is that simple. Doctors don't have answers, they have opinions, just like lawyers.

Lawyers have opinions. CPAs don't have answers, they have opinions. No offense to any of the professional people out there but this is not about answers. This is not about black or white, right or wrong, yes or no. These are about choices that we are making in our lives based on the best information that we can gather from professional people that we seek us to assist us with these choices.

In the case of your doctor, it is critical that if you believe that the course of evolution has manifested in humans and if you believe that the Primal Blueprint or the Paleo way of thinking or the ancestral way of thinking is an appropriate approach for your health issues and you believe that deeply and your doctor doesn't, you've got a big problem and I just think you just need to seek out a new physician.

Jonathan: Mark, what have you seen? A lot of this makes just sense. Do what we did before we had all these problems. Okay. That seems to be the most sound argument we could ever have, but it seems like some people still they want to maybe almost overcomplicate it.

What is causing us to make this more complicated than it needs to be?

Mark: That is a good question. I don't think it is complicated at all. I think that for the most part, people who are new to this they are the ones that are the most easily convinced because they don't know too much.

One of the problems with the growth in the Paleo world and the fact that when I started there were four blogs that had to do with the ancestral health and now there are probably 4,000 of which 100 are pretty good.

There is so much information out there and now it becomes difficult for people, to sort out the difference between one dogmatic approach and another. We get what we call the militant paleos who are like, "No alcohol, no grains at all. No dairy of any kind. Nuts are just little bags of linoleic acid."

That throws a lot of people off and that really creates a sort of orthorexia that we hear the outside world accusing us of and in many cases, it is probably inappropriate observation at the very least.

With the newbie, it is like, "Great. They've got the grains. I can do this 80/20 thing. I figured out, now I can try this and I know I can do this for 30 days, and if it works then I know I can do it for the rest of my life because it is pretty easy." It is the initial exposure I think that is the most clear.

Then as people get deeper into it and they start getting into science and they start questioning some of the original wisdom which I would call and they literally start to overcomplicate it.

I am an example of that because the more I get into this, the more doors open. I started my blog in 2006, it was seven years ago and I thought I would blog regularly. Every day, I would write a post for a year and after a year, I would run out of things to say.

Clearly, that hasn't happened because every time we talk about something there is a new nuance or a new opinion about that that may come down the turnpike and I don't have to address it but I choose to address it, and I like these questions but I do think that there is a strong tendency to overcomplicate this.

If it came down to it, people say, "Can you tell me what to do?" I've written seven books now and I have got a blog that has got 3,000 articles on it and six million words. I have done events, I have done seminars.

The bottom line is I can tell you everything you need to know one sheet of paper. I am just taking opportunity to give you the science and to explore some of the other outlier factors and experiments you might do but the reality is if you just get rid of the crap and just eat natural real food it is quite likely that you will be well on your way to achieving that lean, strong, fit and healthy body.

Jonathan: Mark, that is so brilliant and I continue to scratch my head as to why the mainstream doesn't seem to be picking up on this. I think they are. There has obviously been a vast movement. If you look at the rise in just the whole foods movement, the ancestor movement, the Paleo movement, this is all pointing in the direction of food quality, common sense but you can't help but pick up a women's magazine and fitness magazine and just see this ridiculous dogma.

What can we do as viewers of this, as influencers to help make that mainstream difference?

Mark: It is really tough. I am a cynic at heart but I think this whole movement has flourished thus far on a grassroots one to one basis. Hey Jonathan, you look great. You lost some weight. How did you do it?

Then Jonathan says, "I stopped eating grains, I cut out the sugar. I am exercising less actually but I am smarter about it," and it is this real one on one, it is almost like multilevel marketing although that is not something I am a big fan of and to think that we can maybe get public policy to adopt this is just ridiculous. It is not ever going to happen.

The only way we are going to get real large scale buy-in as a nation or as a world is through corporate America saying, "Look, we understand that you want healthy employees, happy employees who are energetic, who don't need to take a nap at 2:30 in the afternoon, who don't lose days to sick days."

If we can get corporate America to say, "We will provide this information for the large part of our employee population," I can show any company that is willing to allocate X amount of dollars and say a couple of thousand employees, over an 18-month period they will save two, three, four times their investment in increased productivity and worker satisfaction, and that sort of thing.

There aren't that many companies particularly today that are willing to take on that sort of experiment given the financial status of the world. Now having said that, there are some that I know of that are in the process of trying this out and I am anxious to see what the results are.

That is how it is going to happen. It is an economic function. It is not going to be some socio-political function.

Jonathan: Mark, in speaking of results speaking more loudly than really anything else we could do, in terms of results, you have been doing this for really long time. You worked with a lot of people and this might not even be a fair question, what delivers more results? Is it just literally the elimination of the really bad stuff, like the stuff that everyone agrees on?

Like the elimination of sugar, I don't know too many vegans which are like "Yeah, eat sugar. It is plant based." It is just like the elimination of the stuff that everyone agrees is bad or is it the addition of stuff that some people may disagree on?

Mark: It is largely the elimination of stuff and that's why you will see an intersection of healthy populations who have gone from being unhealthy to trending for healthy and you will see them in vegans, in vegetarians, in fruitarians, in carnivorous paleo people, in quasi-vegan primal blueprint people.

I am suggesting that it is all likely to result of the elimination of these toxic foods that is driving the initial response. Now, over time it remains to be seen who is going to be the strongest or fittest or leanest but for sure, I think it is important that we recognize that at the elimination of the processed crap; the carbs, the sugars, the Omega-6 oils, that is the first level of achievement and that really does happen across all of these different diet modalities.

Jonathan: Mark, that said and let's get back into the psychology piece of this a bit because I know you've got quite a bit of passion there too. If we all agree on whatever, the 60%, the 70%, the 80%, why is 99% of the time spent talking about that which we disagree on rather than maybe uniting and trying to make Kraft to do something different or making Unilever try to do something different, or make Washington do something different?

Mark: It is interesting because you talk about these large multinational corporations who own most of the brands that consumers consume. At the Ancestral Health Symposium this summer there was a session there in which Hamilton Staple, he did a presentation on what is the size of the paleo market and how do we arrive at who we are and at what point do we hit a critical mass.

The bad news was that at the high end, there are probably only three million people in the United States that are aware of and live any kind of a paleo or primal lifestyle. That is less than 1% of the population.

When you keep in mind the fact that Krafts, Unilevers and Procters & Gambles they are all selling to the other 330 million consumers, they don't care. They don't care to sell to a tiny segment like that.

Again, it is economics and if you are a large multinational corporation that has got stockholders that are anticipating you showing a profit by creating great tasting foods, so what if they are bad for you and they don't cost much to make. Then that is your mandate and that mandate is coming from stockholders, not from consumers.

It is going to be a problem for a long time. That is why I am starting a food company now. I've got Primal Blueprint Foods coming out in 2014 because I really honestly believe that we need to address at least the three million of us, which is really not an insignificant number and I want to add a zero or two to that in the next couple of years.

That is the real issue that we are dealing with from a paleo business sort of thing and you talked about in-fighting and everything and how come we can't get around in-fighting. Those of us who are participating on the forums and the boards, and blogging, there is nothing salacious to write about if you don't write about discourse and disagreement.

If everybody agrees, then they are not going to read your blog. It is just like, we already know that or agree with that. Give me something new and salacious. That is my theory.

Jonathan: No, it makes sense and it just seems like there is so much salaciousness out there from Coca-Cola and Pepsi that maybe we can talk about that a little bit.

Mark: I love to watch some of these commercials and I saw one the other night for Pepsi One that had nothing to do with Pepsi and everything to do with some lifestyle thing that was so far removed but they are selling a lifestyle, they are not selling a product and they are selling sex.

Whatever they are selling, it is not the product but it is creating the feeling. That is the science of advertising and it is what you can get away with, I guess.

Jonathan: Digging into that science and maybe even the science of change and making this into a larger, a bigger movement adding those zeroes, let's look a case study. For example, gluten-free.

Gluten-free seems really esoteric and affects whatever percentage of the population actually need it but everyone knows about gluten now. What happened there and can we do that?

Mark: Yeah, absolutely. Gluten-free is a great example of the first step. There is awareness now and again it comes from the media, the network television glommed on the fact that there are people out there who were suffering from gluten. That was a salacious story, by the way, that was a story where the food manufacturers were putting, "We've been growing this wheat that's been specifically selected for its gluten content because that is glutinous protein and we recognize that people are severely affected by it." That is the first step.

Now, we had our little moment on TV with gluten and that was enough. Magazines pick up on it and the written press, the print press starts writing about it. Now we see more and more of it and finally now there is gluten-free products.

I don't know how well they are doing and again it is the first step and the irony is a lot of the gluten-free products are horrendous. It is like the fat-free products that addressed the fat scare from 20 years ago.

The fat-free products were worse than anything you could ever imagine because of the sugars and the crap that they added to them. The market is just adjusting to this, so gluten-free is a first step but there is a lot of things behind that that we need to, I think.

Jonathan: We've got gluten-free and I am also just thinking, I recently flew to Manhattan and when you book your flight you can make special dietary requests. There is of course like kosher, hallal, there is gluten-free which is new. There is also vegetarian options.

What do you think we would have to do and what would we call it to get that primal, that paleo or just eating things found in nature option added as a mainstream lifestyle?

Mark: It is probably not going to happen in my lifetime, I honestly believe that. Again, I love what we do and I feel a real sense of liberation and freedom because not only do I get to choose the types of food that I want to eat, and it is almost like a game. You go to a store and you go okay, I am foraging here for healthy food versus wickedly unhealthy food and I know how to do that. I've got the skills, I am a really skilled forager, and I know how to do that.

There is a sense of empowerment when I do that and when I teach people how to do that and so they can go to a restaurant and they can order anything off the menu and if it is not on the menu, they can ask the chef to prepare something with a little bit of this and a little bit of that because I know you have it in the kitchen. I know you have a stick of butter somewhere in the kitchen.

It is those sorts of skills that we are encouraging people to take on that allow us to thrive in an otherwise an environment that is full of hurdles and other impediments to this pathway but are we going to get a paleo option on United Airlines? I severely doubt it, or sincerely doubt it.

Jonathan: Mark, being in a position of so much influence and then also having an eye on the business of this and the economics of this, and how to really turn this into something that can scale, you've had a very diverse set of experiences in this arena that very few could compare to.

Given that diversity of experiences, I want three things people should think about and be concerned about, and three things which maybe they don't need to worry about as much and if you need to be controversial feel free. Three things that definitely do matter, the three that you might think do but actually don't.

Mark: The three things that matter are sleep, cutting out the toxic foods and what I would call appropriate movement. Getting your exercise strategy dialed-in.

The three things that don't matter...

Jonathan: At least as much as we've heard.

Mark: Yeah, as much as we've heard. I think if you've cut out the bad stuff it is really difficult to overdo some of the marginal what we would call safe starches. I don't think people ought to worry that much about certain types of sweet potatoes or fruits, or that type of carbohydrate thing.

Provided again, if you've eliminated all of the other stuff you are going to fill up pretty quickly by the time you get to 150-200 grams a day of carb.

I've had people who are not on a ketogenic program not agonize that much about their carb intake. What else wouldn't I worry about? I don't know.

Jonathan: You know all this salacious stuff that we are disagreeing on.

Mark: Yeah. Give me some examples of what I should worry about. I don't worry that much, so what should I be worrying about Jonathan?

Jonathan: I like your statement about nuts being little bags of linoleic acid. Certainly, there has been some talk about are nuts actually healthy, so it seems like you have some strong opinions on that.

Mark: That is an example, all things in moderation. I hate that term but I am going to invoke it here. I look at all foods on a spectrum and so with nuts, I say some nuts are great. Macadamias are really good, there is nothing wrong with them. It is hard to overeat them because they are so satisfying.

On the other end of the spectrum, peanuts, cashews that have been prepared in some kind of corn oil, safflower oil or high Omega-6 preparation are probably not that good. They are not a great choice. Somewhere in the spectrum, nuts are either quite good for you or not good for you at all and in the middle, you can overdo them.

A lot of people who are trying to lose weight say, "Paleo says I can eat nuts, so I am going to eat nuts every time I feel a hunger pang coming on." Next thing you know, they are eating 1,200 calories worth of nuts every day and they are wondering why they are not losing weight.

Maybe I would put that on my thing to be more concerned about is nut intake, but back to this thing about what shouldn't I be concerned with. I am still kind of stuck there.

Jonathan: No worries, Mark. One thing that I know we all don't need to be concerned with is the shortage of information coming from you and your myriad companies. What can we look forward to coming from you and the primal movement in the New Year?

Mark: Lots of stuff. Denise Minger's book is coming out in the next couple of weeks actually. I've got Ronesh Sinha's book, Dr. Ron, we call him, *The South Asian Health Solution*. We've got certification program that we'll introduce in the first quarter of 2014.

Probably one of the most exciting opportunities for people to get primal and have a lot of fun is the Tulum Vacation in March that is on our website right now. We are trying to get 300 people to show up at this great all-inclusive resort in Tulum, Mexico and hang out with me, Rob Wolfe and a number of other paleo, primal, ancestral luminaries.

What else? We've got a lot coming down for 2014, including the launch of a new food company.

Jonathan: I love it. What was the name of Denise's book?

Mark: *Death by Food Pyramid.*

Jonathan: Woo hoo!

Mark: It is a great title and it really is a very intense look at the politics and the shoddy science that went into the food pyramid and it even has a tutorial on how the average person can take a look at a scientific study and call BS on it half the time, so people are going to love this book.

Jonathan: Certainly, you are going to still be pumping out great free content on marksdailyapple.com, I would assume.

Mark: Absolutely, well into the future.

Jonathan: I love it. Mark Sisson, thank you so much for joining us today and thank you for the amazing six million words. That is an epic amount of free content so thanks for all this.

Mark: Yes, it is. Thank you very much, Jonathan.

Jonathan: Listeners, I hope you enjoyed this wonderful conversation as much as I did. Again, our guest, you've undoubtedly heard of him, Mark Sisson. Check him out at marksdailyapple.com and be sure to check out Denise's awesome upcoming book, *Death by Food Pyramid*, an awesome lady and certainly an awesome book.

Remember, this week and every week after, eat smarter, exercise smarter and live better. Chat with you soon.