

Announcer: Bulletproof Radio, a state of high performance.

Dave: You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey.

Today's guest is Chalene Johnson. Chalene is a lifestyle and business expert, a motivational speaker, and you might have heard of her podcast. Well, her two top ranked podcasts, The Chalene Show and Build Your Tribe, which have about one and a half million monthly downloads. She's one of the Huffington Post's top 50 female entrepreneurs to watch. Million Facebook followers and 600,000 Instagram followers. That's kind of interesting, but there's all sorts of Instagram celebrities. In case you're wondering this is not the cash me outside kind of Instagram celebrity, this is the real deal because it's not Instagram at all. It comes from years and years of being one of the top names, I'm talking Guinness book of world records top names, in fitness videos and fitness training courses and things like that. And what's interesting and the reason we're doing this interview today is that after many years of this, Chalene decided you can look good and be unhealthy and this is a problem. So we're going to talk about that today. Chalene welcome to the show.

Chalene: Thank you so much. It's an honor.

Dave: Now, you just came out with a new concept, which I think maybe angered some of your followers, called the 131 Method. Why did you make the change from sort of exercise all the time to something else?

Chalene: Well, as they say, when we know better we do better. I ended up in fitness kind of quite by accident. It wasn't my intention. I've always kind of been an entrepreneur, someone who takes a problem I'm having and then challenges myself to figure it out. And for me I figured out a way to enjoy fitness. I was really successful in fitness, but I always say not because of my knowledge of health and fitness but because of my understanding of the people I'm helping. So when I ended up in fitness, quite by accident, there was a big part of me that felt like an impostor. Like I better say what everyone else is saying.

Dave: I've heard this from other fitness experts, where you sort of have to say the same thing as the other people otherwise you're disruptive, you're the bad one, you're wrong. So you were sort of going with the mainstream, but were you getting results from that?

Chalene: Sure. If you're looking at physique. I knew from being told that, that's what's marketable. Get as lean as possible, look a certain way, and in order to do that here's what kind of we're all saying. Not like we had a big meeting, but you just tend to hear well this person has more credibility, this person has been in the industry longer, this is what they're saying therefore who am I to question that? And I didn't question that. And I should have. I'm a really curious person. I'm skeptical. But when it came to health and fitness, I wasn't as curious or skeptical as I should have been. And as a result I ended up damaging my own health.

Dave: That's a pretty big thing. I mean you went so far as to remove photos of yourself from social media if they had too much skin or sculpted abs. That's kind of a big deal for someone who makes a living off of fitness. Why did you do that?

Chalene: Because most of those photos I knew my body fat was so low that it was dangerous. And how I got there had nothing to do with health. It was the least healthy I ever was in my life. And I felt, and I still to this day feel that we look at people's physiques and we say #goals, I want to look like that. But we don't know if they're healthy.

Dave: But you don't want to feel like that is the problem. So here's a little humble brag. I'm a former 300 pound computer hacker. The most unlikely thing ever to happen in my life was to be in Men's Health. And to be in Men's Health with my shirt off. And you and I both know what people do when they're going to be in a shirts off Men's Health photo. You have three days of fasting, you cut the salt, take some diuretics, and get super lean and ripped. Well I didn't get the memo that they were going to come in and do a shirts off thing, and if so I wouldn't have done all that crap anyway. So in the middle of this photo shoot around all this Upgrade Labs stuff they're like, "Okay, take your shirt off and stand in this machine." I'm like, "Are you kidding me? I didn't prep for this." Even without diuretics I could have fasted for a day or something. And like, "No, trust us. We'll just give it a shot." So I'm like, "All right. I'll just do it, whatever." But I apparently had enough abs to pull it off. But I just remember thinking, I know ... You know the Wolverine look?

Chalene: Yeah.

Dave: And it's totally the look of a starved animal. And it's like a tough lean, like wow that's impressive, but I don't think I could maintain looking that way for very long and I wouldn't want to because I'd feel like crap. Like my brain would turn off.

Chalene: That's right. And especially so for women.

Dave: Oh yeah, it's even worse.

Chalene: Certainly there are people, genetically speaking, who you're going to see their abs when they're at 18, even 19, maybe even 20% body fat. Some women. But for me personally, based on my genetics, you're not seeing my abs unless I'm below 12%. 13% really.

Dave: Wow. As a woman that's really shockingly low.

Chalene: But for most women to get to a place where you're seeing a six pack ... Because we're comparing ourselves to elite fitness competitors. And in order to get that low you're going to have amenorrhea, you're going to lose your period, you're going to mess up your hormones. That's when brain fog sets in. And that's not even taking into consideration what are you doing to get there?

Dave: There's a lot of harmful things ... And I actually did some of this when I weighed 300 pounds. I was desperate to lose the weight so I did an hour and a half of exercise six

days a week. Half weights, half cardio. Went on a low fat, low calorie diet. And decided after all that time ... I still weighed 300 pounds, but I could max out all the machines. And I thought clearly it's because I'm eating too much lettuce. You know what I mean? It's my fault. And maybe that line of thinking is more common in women than in men, but I'm like, I'm a capable guy and I don't want to have any more knee surgeries and it's my most important thing is to lose this weight. And after a while you just feel like you're a total failure.

When you were a fitness model though ... Or not necessarily a model, but you're training people to do that. And you did get your body weight that low, it actually worked. So didn't you have this sort of feeling like, yay, I triumphed over my body fat, like I won?

Chalene: I didn't because I knew what it took to get there. So for me, my body fat, you could see my abs, I was happy, and I was content. I never had anybody issues. Growing up my mom never dieted in front of us. She never put her body down. She never said, "Oh I hate this", and grabbed a ... So I had a really positive body image until I started getting into consumer videos. And even still I had a really ... I mean that was kind of who I was. Like the girl who looked more normal than what most fitness folks look like. And I was really happy with how low my body fat was and I was going to film a new project and my husband actually got the phone call from the producer who said, "You know, we'd kind of like you to have a conversation with Chalene about getting leaner. Like really getting ripped for this project. Like get her body fat low. Because it's going to help make it more marketable."

And that was embarrassing and devastating and it of course stirred up all of my impostor feelings. Like I'm not lean enough to be here in this position. And I didn't know what to do because at that point Dave, I had already messed up my metabolism. You start exercising and eating less because you want to get leaner. And then the less you eat, the more you have to exercise. And the more you're exercising, the slower your metabolism is getting. So when I got that phone call I was already working out a minimum of two hours a day. And very, very low caloric intake. Very, very little fat. Sustaining myself on crap protein bars, crap protein drinks, and anything I could find that was low cal and zero fat. Like sugar free jello, and just horrible things. Because it was like, well it would make me feel full. So when I got that phone call, I just started crying and thought how do I go lower? And the only thing I knew to do was I guess exercise more. Because it's like, what do I do?

So I really started exercising like three, sometimes four hours a day. And I got all the way down to like 11% body fat. And I remember showing up to film and a cameraman ... I haven't mentioned this before publicly, but a cameraman whispered to me, "Don't worry. We can shoot around your trouble spots." And I remember thinking-

Dave: Did you just punch him?

Chalene: He gave me this wink like, I got your back, and I wanted to just die.

Dave: Did you think you had trouble spots?

Chalene: No, I was really pissed off. I did want to get up and punch him in the throat.

Dave: Because you're like what trouble spots?

Chalene: But then in your head you're like, I guess I must have trouble spots. And how do I get rid of them if I feel like I'm going to die based on what I had to do to get here.

Dave: Was this guy doing that to be kind or was he just some kind of misogynist?

Chalene: He's in the industry too. In fact that cameraman, I've worked with him for a million videos.

Dave: Okay. So he was really trying to be helpful. So he assumed that you just had some deep insecurities about these things-

Chalene: I guess. And I also remember hearing things like, we know you've had two kids and so we'll shoot around your skin. It's like, okay. So messed up. Like, yeah we certainly don't want the public to know that you're going to have loose skin after a baby. Like crazy. Just unrealistic.

Dave: You know I delivered both my own kids and it's amazing how stretchy the skin on a woman's stomach actually is and in other areas too, and it doesn't quite come back the same way afterwards. Well man, if you saw how stretched a pregnant belly is, all right that's fine. It's normal right?

Chalene: Yeah. So I didn't feel happy about getting there. I also knew there's no way ... I can't maintain this.

Dave: Yeah. It'll actually kill you. Even professional competitors, they dip in, they look really good, and then they go off season and eat some carbs already. Or some fat or whatever they're lacking.

So what happens when you have all these followers and all the pictures of your abs and various other curvy bits, and all of the sudden you're like, oh I'm changing things, 131 method, I'm kind of coming clean about this? What did your followers do?

Chalene: Well some of them were relieved and said thank you. In fact I got a message this week from a gal who said, "I'm not blaming you, but I watched you in those videos and I felt I had to exercise longer and you were saying that we could do this in 30 minutes a day and it wasn't working for me. So then I was doing it at night after my parents went to bed, and I was doing it after meals, and I became obsessed with it. And I still wasn't getting great results so then I stopped eating and I became anorexic and bulimic. And Chalene, I've been with you along this journey. When you came clean that was a relief for me to understand, oh, that wasn't health." And she said, "I've been following you now on this journey to teach us about nutrition and our bodies and what it truly means

to be healthy inside out, and I'm six months recovered. It's still a battle." To me, I just balled my eyes out when I heard that because to think that I had that kind of a ... You want to help people. But to think that I had that kind of a negative impact on young women was hard because I know I have ...

When you have a platform you have a responsibility. And I didn't own up to it. I didn't take it as seriously as I should have, my responsibility. I didn't look into research. I didn't ask is this safe? I didn't think about what people would be seeing and the message it would be sending. And my own health scare really rocked my world and made me realize this is just a gift and I have to take it much more seriously.

Dave: Tell me more about your health scare.

Chalene: Well as a podcaster I had Dr. Amen on my show. We were talking about attention deficit disorder. And I was laughing. I had never been diagnosed with it. So after we hung up he said, "Let me ask you a few questions." He asked me a few questions. He said, "I want you to come in and have your brain scanned."

Dave: That's such a powerful thing. He's been on this show so many times I can't remember. So what happened in your brain scan?

Chalene: Well I was excited. I'm like oh, they're going to see a brain they've never seen before. There's going to be all these beautiful colors and they're going to be like, "Everybody rush in, we've got a genius." And it didn't go like that. At all. In fact during the concentration part I just ... I mean all of the testing, you know because you've done it, was really interesting. But I knew I was in over my head. I felt like everything I was trying to cover up were being exposed. And when he looked at my scan he just said, "Listen, I know who you are and I know what you do, but you're not healthy. And you need to take action immediately." And I sat there at first thinking he's reading someone else's ... Like do you know who I am? Do you know what I do? How is this possible?

Dave: Invincible thing, right.

Chalene: Yeah, and he said, "Do you have a history of drug use?" "No." "Have you recently done chemotherapy?" "No." Because obviously I had concussions. But in addition to that there was this toxicity in my brain that was all the result of lifestyle. And to think that I have tens of millions of people who've done my workout videos who are looking at me as the person who's going to help them with their health, and I'm sitting there in his office with a failing health score. What does that mean I've done to everyone else whose trust I held in my hands? What does that mean for my kids? To think that I'm on the fast path for Alzheimer's and that I've done this to my brain. And my kids are going to have to take care of my hygiene.

I was so pissed at myself. I was so upset. And in that moment I didn't care what anyone else was going to say. And I went to the people whose trust I had and said, "I've messed up. And I'm going to figure this out. And I don't know what it is. I don't know what health is. But I will figure it out. And I'll take you along with me on this journey. I'm not

going to be the expert, but I'm going to find them all. And this won't be my plan, this'll be us figuring out what you need to do, what each of us needs to do individually to get healthy."

Dave: So you got generally good response from your followers. What about your tribe of industry experts? I mean it's a small group and I know many of probably similar people as you do. And there's like the functional medicine tribe and there's the celebrity fitness tribe. We're all out there and we overlap. Did you get people who were just like don't tell anyone? Or people were kind of pissed about it? What happened there?

Chalene: For sure. Yeah. I got a lot of people who thought that I was blaming a company or blaming a producer or blaming a cameraman. Which I wasn't. I certainly made every decision. No one told me to over exercise. No one told me to stop eating. They asked me to get lean. No one made me do these things. I did it. No one said don't do the research. I was the person who decided not to. So I got backlash from there, like executive level, and then I got a lot of backlash from people who are in the fitness industry who thought that I was being judgmental or calling what they were doing unhealthy, which a lot of it is.

Dave: I was going to say, weren't you?

Chalene: Yeah. I mean a lot of it is. But there's a lot of money to be made in fitness. There's a lot of money to be made in weight loss. A lot. And when people fear that they have that scarcity mindset, just fear sets in and it can get ugly.

Dave: Oh, it certainly can. Doing the thing with oh my god, maybe some saturated fat might help your brain, that whole discourse over the last eight years of Bulletproof, finally you have to call people out and when Steve Jobs passed away I did all this research. I know exactly whose diet he'd been on for a long time. And I wrote a blog post about it. And I called out a leader in the nonfat movement who has harmed more brains and hormones than almost anyone else I know who's in the pocket of the big food industry that's selling corn syrup and diet whatever. I called him out like, you killed Steve Jobs 10 years before he needed to die.

Chalene: I did not know that.

Dave: He didn't want to come on my show to talk about it. I don't know why. But the bottom line is there's huge money to be made in the diet lie and in the exercise lie. And it's a little bit risky to go out there. I kind of wish that I would have had the opportunity. In fact I went so far as to say, "Tell you what, I'll just moderate. I'll get someone else in to debate you." Like let's put the facts out here.

Chalene: Still nothing.

Dave: Of course not. They had corporate endorsements. You want to put those at risk?

Chalene: Yeah. And it is a risk right?

Dave: Yeah.

Chalene: I mean even for me, I have the number one fitness infomercial on TV right now.

Dave: Yeah, you're super famous.

Chalene: Well thanks. I don't know about that. But I had to make a decision. When you're on top is when you get all the offers. And it's hard. It's hard from an ego standpoint and it's hard sometimes knowing that the perception might be confusing. So are you this or are you that? And I'm all those things. But I am evolved. And I have to keep my integrity. And that's not always easy. But if you just stay focused on what you know and what you believe is right and you just keep taking the next right step, those decisions get a little easier. But not everybody understands.

Dave: Being authentic is really important and there are lots of people who make plenty of money by being inauthentic, but their customers usually know it. And when you're really authentic the kind of customers you get are the kind who send you that letter, the one that you got earlier. And the real ... The technical term is asshole customers. They tend to go to your competitors and that's okay.

Chalene: Do people really know when the person who they've placed all their faith in is being inauthentic? Because I see people selling this crap because I know they've got big social media followings and they're pretending to drink the stuff or eat the stuff or use this product, and I know they're not. And I'm like, how does anyone ... She's got veneers, she's not using that tooth whitening tray. You know like, all these things.

Dave: You know, there's always going to be endorsements that are just for money and things like that, you know, corporate celebrity sponsorships, and that's a tried and true thing since the beginning of the PR and publicity industry, which is post World War II. It started around 1950. In fact, completely side thing, that started with a guy who was related to Sigmund Freud and came over to the US and he said, "Well we can't use the word propaganda because the Nazi's ruined that word, let's use public relations." And this is the guy who got women to start smoking. He branded cigarettes as torches of freedom for women's liberation and in one year 10% of women smoked, went up to 50% of women smoked because of one PR action.

Chalene: Wow.

Dave: So that's the kind of thinking that's behind these endorsements. It's manipulation of broad groups of people. And yes, you can do that. But when you're building a personal brand like yours Chalene, like mine, I really think that there are people that are watching and they listen to every word you say, and listen to how you say it. And some people are easy to fool and they'll be talking in by anybody. And there's a great number of people who have learned to have discernment and they just figure it out, like do I believe this person or not? And are they consistent and do they know what they're talking about? And do they live their values and do I find gaps? And my experience has been that engagement with people like that is much higher and I get hundreds of messages, more

than I can respond to everyday saying, this stuff worked. And you do too, I know you do. But I just fundamentally think people are not as dumb as we've thought they are.

Chalene: Agreed.

Dave: And that means they're going to notice and it might take them a while. And when they do, the fall can be hard. And some people never fall but I also believe in business karma and regular karma. You know, if it doesn't bite you in this life it'll bite you in the next one.

Chalene: Right, yeah. That's true. It's got to be rewarding.

Dave: You seem like you're agreeing with that. I mean do you think that people can sniff it out or do just think that there's enough suckers born every minute sort of thing?

Chalene: You know, I want to believe. I feel like the people who I'm speaking to, the people who hear me really have a strong in tune bullshit meter. You know, and I love those people. And it's discouraging though when you see people like fall for stuff that just ... I'm like, you seem so much smarter than that, like pay attention. I think people do ... I love to think that we're ... I know we're smarter than that, but I do think fame warps people's perception of integrity. Because this person has a million followers, they must know what they're doing. Because all these people ... You know, numbers attract numbers. And it just provides instant credibility for so many.

Dave: There's no doubt that one of the recipes for creating influence is social credibility and lots of people are commending you on things like that. We're wired that way as humans, I don't think that's going to change.

Chalene: True.

Dave: But you can abuse that, there's no doubt. And my perspective on this, and I want to see if this checks in with you, is that if you're going to use a million hours of people's time with your content, how many human lifetimes is that? It's several, I did the math once. And based on total downloads ... This is going back when the show was much smaller than it is now. I had either done something good or I'd killed 60 people. Because I'd used 60 full lifetimes of content consumed.

Chalene: Yeah, yeah. That's one way to look at it.

Dave: And you're like wow, this is kind of ... You hit this earlier, which made me think of it. It's kind of a moral obligation. You better be right if you're reaching millions of people. And to your credit and the thing that spells authenticity more than anything else is you said "Oh, this didn't do what I thought it was going to do. I looked one way but my health was not okay." So you evolved what you were saying. And that's the highest thing you can do. And if you had said along the way, oh I know this is all bullshit and I'm just going to sell it anyway, that's a completely different thing, that's sociopathic behavior. And there's internet marketers all over the place who are sociopaths.

Chalene: There are. That's right.

Dave: I was at a conference. Every now and then I go to internet marketing conferences and I give a talk about basically you can't be a dirtbag and do this. I like to make internet marketers cry. I've done it, it makes me happy. But what I heard two guys saying when they didn't know I was kind of in the room behind them, is ... They were recording a little video on their phone. "Oh I do this because I like to make a difference." You know the standard mission driven thing. And then they stopped recording, like, "Ha ha, I can't believe they're going to believe that." Like they knew they were lying. And that stuff just pisses me off but I think people figure that out eventually.

Chalene: I do too. You know one thing that was really important for me, and I wrote it in the book, is that I will never say this is the only way or the best way. I will always preface it from this point forward with this is the best so far. This is what we believe today. Because I realize I have to be really open minded now to science and open minded to the fact that we just are learning so much more every single day and it's exciting and the worst thing that we can do is be dogmatic about these things. Just put a stake in the ground and say, this is the answer. And people want one simple answer. They want it to be simple. They want nutrition to be simple. They want health to be simple, and it's not. It's not just exercise, it's not just exercise and nutrition. It's so much more.

Dave: The idea that you can exercise off the Snickers bar or earn a potato chip on the treadmill, it's just garbage science. It doesn't work. But man I sure believed that it did when I was fat.

Chalene: Yeah, yeah. I mean I did too.

Dave: In your 131 method, this new take on everything I would say, you talk about four S's and you have more practice than most humans at taking complex things and teaching them to people and then causing them to take action. So I want you to walk the Bulletproof Radio audience through the four S's and why you chose these to help people from all walks of life understand what you're doing.

Chalene: Well I chose them, I'll start with that part of the question, because you can take the smartest individual, it can be an engineer, a doctor, lawyer, scientist, but when it comes to nutrition I kept hearing the same thing over and over and over again. Like tell me what to eat. Tell me what to exercise. What do I need to do? Crazy how much our customer service got overwhelmed with people calling and saying, can I eat fill in the blank? Can I drink water? Like just crazy ridiculous non-common sense questions. I just realized like, people want permission so if we could just give them a formula to come up with the answer themselves. And so then you know the answer because my opinion does matter, and someone else's opinion doesn't matter. So you've got to take these things into consideration and then you know the answer that's right for you. Because we're also individualistic.

Dave: Okay. And the four S's you had were science, self, success, and sanity. And it sounds like you were just talking about the self one.

Chalene: Yeah.

Dave: Like it has to work for you. What is the success part of your four S's? What does that mean?

Chalene: So that means you defining what does it mean for you to be successful with your health? Because you know what, if you're at a stage in your life where it is about being as lean as possible, then you have to look at what you're doing and will that help you reach success? But are you willing to make those sacrifices? And before you say yes, consider your sanity. Is that going to drive you crazy? Is that going to drive your spouse crazy? Because if it's going to drive your spouse crazy and it's going to drive a wedge in your relationship, is that success? Right, if your relationships are suffering and the impact that'll have on your health. So all of these things have to be factored in. So can you have a piece of chocolate cake that you buy from the grocery store that's just garbage? And look at those questions and is it appropriate for you? Is it going to impact the success that you're after? This one piece of cake. Like is it not that big of a deal? And for everybody it's different. Like it's understanding there is no yes or no. The answer is, it depends.

Dave: Right. And just being open to that is particularly important. And I deal with that with my kids. You know my son Alan was just running in here and we're doing a live interview in person which is always way more fun. And he's like, "Well daddy, can I have this?" The answer is always you can. But one of the things that made me really happy is they food shamed our housekeeper because she went to McDonald's. And they're like, "We don't eat McDonald's." And they were in the drive through. And they're like, "Oh my God, there's such a thing as a drive through. Can you believe it? You talk to a little voice." And they're like five years old or something, blown away. And so afterwards I said, "All right kids, here's the deal. People eat what they're going to eat and sometimes they do it to save money, sometimes it's convenient, and sometimes just because it tastes good and it's all okay. So I'm going to take you to McDonald's." And inside I'm going oh, this is terrible. I don't want to eat that stuff, I'm going to feel like crap for a week. But look, you guys are going to get fried pies and you're going to get ice cream and toys and you can go play.

Chalene: You did that?

Dave: I said yeah, sure.

Chalene: This is great.

Dave: I said, "Come on guys, let's go." And they're like, "No." I said, "What do you mean no? You're going to get toys. It's totally worth it." They're five and seven. And they said, "Daddy, we know how we feel when we eat food that's not good for us, we don't like it when our tummy hurts. We don't want to feel that way. You can take us there but you can't make us eat."

Chalene: Oh my gosh. This is great and every parent needs to hear this. But you know what's so important there, because my kids are older than yours. They're now 22 and 19. But we never gave them food rules. And as I started going through this when they were in high school, I didn't tell them what they could and couldn't eat. But I helped share what I was learning and let them make that decision. And I think that oftentimes parents, you know they can go one way or the other. Like they're eating healthy but they're letting their kids live off of crap and they know it's garbage. And you're buying the groceries so I don't understand that. I don't understand why you're buying poison for your kids.

Dave: This is going to sound really bad, but if I was in a situation ... And people don't know this. I put auto parts in boxes for five years to help pay for my college. I've definitely lived on ramen and microwave pizza for longer than I should have when I was younger. But if I was in a situation with kids and only one of us could eat off the adult menu, it would be my kids. I would eat the crappy chicken fingers and mac and cheese for three bucks. But I'd really rather not put that in my body either, but I wouldn't give it to my kids.

Chalene: Isn't that crazy though that parents do that? They eat separately than their children because they know, well I wouldn't eat that because it's garbage. Like I would never dream of eating it, but you're feeding it to your children. But then there's also the opposite. Like the parents who just will freak out if their kid has sugar and then they tend to binge. They go to their friends' houses and they go crazy. They're sneaking food, they're hiding food. So I think personally, and every parent is going to parent their kid their way, but I think for us anyways, it worked best to just educate them and to help them make the right decision because eventually they're going to be outside of my care and outside of my control and I need them to make good decisions and be good people.

Dave: Exactly. And if they eat some gluten ... I mean I tell my kids you don't want to do this. And around gluten, we're pretty good because they know that it's not really good for them. And my son, he has the same gene I do for nitrates and it turns out his school was putting potatoes in the soup they were giving him and he and I are both reactive to those. So he was coming home every night going, "Daddy, my neck really hurts can you rub it for me?" So every night for like three months before bed I'd rub his neck. And finally I'm like, this can't be right. He's eight years old. Like what's going on? So I did some digging and found out and so we got him to get soup with no potatoes in it and the pain went away. I know because I had that neck pain my entire life until I was like 35.

Chalene: Oh wow. Wow.

Dave: It was just a normal part of like ... Right through make shoulder blades, all up my neck. Just knotted muscles. And it's a genetic thing. So we took him off those and it doesn't hurt anymore. And so he goes to restaurants, he's like, "I'm not eating that." Because he knows. Just understanding cause and effect. But the story that I was told when I was that age and older was, look what you eat is just calories and it's how effectively you burn them. And we're just like a little steam engine or something.

Chalene: Yeah, calories in versus calories out.

Dave: If you believe that, the conversation I had with him was impossible and just you deal with the symptoms because clearly if it's not anything other than calories, then it's a moral failing. There's nothing else left. Or maybe you have an infection. It was that mindset that was most toxic for me and I didn't want to give that to my kids. Like hey you're in charge.

Chalene: When I started this journey I was realizing, the first thing I had to do was just get rid of all the processed crap and I had to start fueling my body. I had to look at fat and that's really how I discovered what it is that you do and listened to countless episodes and experts. And you oftentimes would be the person who would introduce me to people in science. So I want to say thank you for that.

Dave: Oh, you're so welcome. That's an honor. I appreciate that.

Chalene: Absolutely. Also I think that we're so placated to. We're treated like we're just too dumb to figure it out so here's a meal plan.

Dave: People are pretty smart. Yeah.

Chalene: They're really smart. And listening to your podcast and realizing like, God this guy's like really popular and he's not talking down to anyone. Like this is stuff where you've got to take copious notes when you're listening to one of your podcasts and look things up and practiced pronouncing those words.

Dave: I can't believe the number of listeners. Like we get a couple of million downloads a month now.

Chalene: That's crazy.

Dave: And more than 100 million shows. But it just shows, people are interested in going a little bit beyond the Reader's Digest version.

Chalene: That's right. I first started returning to whole foods and eating all these unprocessed natural foods and I was still having major gut problems and I'm like what is going on? And I had to keep doing testing and testing and testing before I realized that some of the really healthy foods I was eating were inflammatory for me.

Dave: Yes, exactly.

Chalene: And that to me was like, okay. And we were in the middle of kind of like, how do we get people excited about learning about their bodies? How do we get people excited to do the work and not just say here's a meal plan? How do we get people to realize that this is going to have to be customized and personalized? And it's going to change because your gut health is going to change and your different seasons of your life and stress and all these things. That affects your health. And so you've got to be nimble and you've got to change things up. How do we do that? And at the time we were creating this really exhaustive list of inflammatory foods and anti-inflammatory foods. And I just had to say,

ah, we've got to put on the brakes. Because these foods that we're calling inflammatory might not be inflammatory for people.

Dave: Yes.

Chalene: And these foods that we're saying are anti-inflammatory, that might be causing a lot of people inflammation. And that's hard for people to understand. Because they're like, well wait. They want to put you on the stand. Like wait, I thought you ... Isn't this inflammatory? So and so says this is inflammatory. It's like, again the answer is, it depends.

Dave: Yeah. And dose matters too. Like kale is one of my favorite things because roughly ... You were just with our friend Naveen from Viome. And I've been saying this for many years. It was in my very first diet book, but a lot of people cannot digest the plant defense systems in kale and they're not lectins, it's oxalic acid. And it causes vulvodynia, which is really painful crystals that form in the vulva. You really don't want that. And it can cause even autism. They're doing some research around oxalic acid as a trigger for inflammation in the brain that can cause autism like symptoms and joints and kidney stones and all this. Yet roughly 60% of people probably can digest kale if they don't eat too much or if it's cooked differently. So is kale good or bad?

Chalene: Right. Well if you ask my husband it's salad garnish. It's the stuff they put on the outside of the salad bar. But even I remember when he used to say, it's horrible, I hate it. Absolutely it's not good for you. My husband would say that because it wasn't good for him and this is at the beginning of my journey. I'm like, you can't say that. That's going to offend everybody. But now I know and you mentioned Viome. It was doing that testing that I discovered a food that it was a regular part of my diet which was quinoa.

Dave: Oh yeah. That stuff wrecks a lot of people.

Chalene: Yeah. And I had no ... Literally I was having it for two meals a day. And I would have never known. Because that's not in anyone's ... At the time was not in anyone's inflammatory list. And so many other things. Cucumber for me.

Dave: Oh was that a thing that offends you?

Chalene: Yeah.

Dave: I find that most people that have a cucumber problem, they know they burp from it a lot so they tend to know. But the concept of lectins, these plant defense systems, it's one of the four categories that I put in the Bulletproof Diet. But even then, the number of people who have a problem with nightshades and grains and legumes, is higher than the people who have a problem with say cucumbers. So I'm like I'm going to stack rank these things. I'm going to put cashews in my bars even though they're a legume because they're heated and they throw away the shell.

Chalene: That's right.

Dave: So few people react to the inside on that. But to go through those and realize not everyone is going to deal with everything the same way, that's the hard part.

Chalene: Why do people get so angry about that?

Dave: You know it's because I think it's a moral judgment. So if you eat this food you're bad. And if you're bad then they just stop thinking. It's like mom's yelling at me kind of behavior.

Chalene: It's like you've attacked their character.

Dave: Yeah, their character.

Chalene: Yeah.

Dave: Right, if you're the kind of person who'd eat that. And I haven't found a parenting habit that most parents have that makes food such a thing. So when I see that I revert to mitochondrial behaviors. This is the whole headstrong thing. So if you look at where the most of our energy goes, it's into things that might kill us right now. So that gets ... I'm just making up a number. But that's going to get 70% of our attention and we're going to remember negative things 10 times more than positive things because they're things that might have killed us. So that's fear and that's the first thing is, don't die right now. The second thing that everything even a bacteria does, is don't starve to death. Because throughout all of history famines have killed every life form over and over and over. So don't get eaten and then don't forget to eat. Well okay if that's the second thing ... So in your mind, you look at the little voice in your head, the stuff that Daniel Amen called automatic negative thoughts. Okay. The first ones are, will I be kicked out of the tribe? Because by the way that's death for most of human history. And is there something threatening? Okay is that car going to hit me, etc.? And then, what's for lunch?

And when you get rid of the fear stuff and you get rid of the food stuff, man, all that's left is should I have sex with that person?

Chalene: Procreation.

Dave: Right. And then if you can kind of dim those either by actually procreating or at least getting some, what's left is that fourth F word which is friend and community and form a system and support the people. But I think it's ... This is a long answer to your question. I think it's because it's the second F word. Right after not being killed right now is eat. And if you tell someone that you're eating the wrong way, you're telling them something about their survival and that triggers all the defensiveness. It's the only thing I can think of.

Chalene: Their identity. Like you're saying something about me. I remember that. I remember anytime I put ... Even today. If I post anything about food, people come at you and they want to tell you their opinion and the food police jump down your throat and get into word wars. And there are times when whenever I say that I'm like you know, why does

that trigger me? Why does that upset me? Why do I need to prove to that person that they're wrong? I don't. Right, but it still triggers something in me and I think it's because are they saying something about me? Are they saying that I'm not intelligent? That I haven't done my research you know?

Dave: Yeah.

Chalene: And so I get it and I understand that people are fiercely protective of their identity A, and B, what you said about tribe. People love to say I am, fill in the blank diet. And I just caution people not to do that because once you have labeled yourself as having a particular diet, then it means that you've removed any ability to personalize it or to change seasons or to phase your diet which is a really important piece of the 131.

Dave: Oh yeah. Or just continue evolving. It stops your evolution.

Chalene: Yeah.

Dave: I was in the car with the kids other day and something came up in a conversation. And my son Alan goes, "Daddy, what's a flexitarian?" And I looked at him and I said, "Someone with no standards."

Chalene: Oh great, you're going to get the letters.

Dave: Okay, oh I'm vegan, I don't really know why. But when it's not convenient I just eat garbage. And I'm like good for you. But why you need an identity and a tribe around that, I don't know. Because isn't that what most people have been throughout human history? I just eat what's around. I don't know, but putting a name on it makes you feel all good. And I go into restaurants now and I go, "Excuse me, do you have a vegan free menu?"

Chalene: That's a mind F.

Dave: Nine out of 10 times immediately they go, oh we have a ... And then they look at me and start laughing because they're so tired of this.

Chalene: That's so good. Yeah. I might have to steal that.

Dave: You can steal that. I'm the guy that goes, "Look, I don't want any gluten and I don't want canola oil because that stuff is garbage and I don't want any nightshades. So cook my vegetables in butter if you're going to please. And don't put red pepper flakes on them." And I order exactly what I want. You know they used to 20 years ago if you did that, they'd get all mad or the chef would come out and how dare you.

Chalene: Yeah.

Dave: Now it's like, excuse me. I'm eating for how I'm going to feel and I'd like it to taste good-

Chalene: And I'm going to tip well.

Dave: Yeah, exactly. Like I'm going to pay this. Extra avocado, sure. Two bucks. You've got it man. But I'm just happy you can do that today because you couldn't before.

Chalene: And not in all areas. We're pretty lucky where we live. You know what, you travel a lot too. There are places where you go and you're like holy cow I've got a lot of privilege, health privilege almost. Because you go to certain areas and you're like, how are we going to find something that's not processed unless we're going to walk out into the woods?

Dave: I was in Alaska fishing with a bunch of friends last week and we went to this restaurant before we went off to the lodge. And I'm like, I don't know. Get this ... It was a smoked salmon thing. I said, "Do you have any blueberries?" I figured they might grow in Alaska or avocados or something. The guy looks at me and goes, "Look man, this is a greasy spoon." Like all right, I'll own that. But you're right. There are food deserts where there's really little you can do. And the one thing that makes me happy that I was even in most of those areas, if there's any grocery store, there's grass fed butter. The Kerrygold butter is widely distributed. And for three bucks, for like a pound of butter, it is one of the cheapest calories out there on par with rice. So people saying you can't do this. Like look, if I was in college I'd be doing white rice cooked and cooled to get resistant starch and put some butter on there and have a couple eggs. You can pull that off unless you're allergic to eggs. In which case, you're screwed.

Chalene: Right.

Dave: I just feel like there's always a way. You might be short on veggies. It might not be perfect. At least-

Chalene: Well you've got to be educated too. Because if you're listening to common pop culture and what they're telling you is healthy, it's so confusing. And I do have to say, it's hard for people because they get it from so many different angles and so much of it's conflicting because it is conflicting.

Dave: It is conflicting. And I feel like you've done a good job of telling people it's okay that it's conflicting because you have to figure out what works for you. What else in the 131 method has pissed off your fitness competitors the most?

Chalene: Probably the first thing was that I told my publisher I wanted to ... They were like, "We really want something healthy on the cover." And I said, "Well I'd like to have chocolate and wine and a salad." And they're like, "Wine on the cover of a health book?"

Dave: That's brilliant.

Chalene: And I said "Yeah." You know why? Because if you know how your body processes it and if you do your research and actually understand how wine domestically is made, then you know you probably don't want most domestic wines and you can find really high

quality spirits that are not going to mess up your sugar levels and aren't going to make you feel like you got hit by a Mack truck. A couple of things. I wanted people to know like, just about anything you want, there's probably a healthy way for you to find it, number one. Number two is, no rules. Like the only rules are your rules. And so, the other thing that really makes people mad in this book is that I don't think there's one exercise program that everybody needs to do. And frankly a lot of people would have tremendous benefits if they gave their body permission to rest.

Dave: Oh my goodness. It's almost like you could start a whole company on recovery. Wait, that's Upgrade Labs. But I was beating the crap out of myself when I was doing that six days a week, an hour and a half a day. And I see this a lot in CEOs. I don't know if you do stuff like whether you're working with different types of clients or do any one on one stuff lately. But I don't do a lot of that lately either, but up until about three years ago I was still doing one on one coaching with people. Usually executive types who were saying, "I want to perform better cognitively, physically." And these guys would call and like, "Look I run a hedge fund and I'm doing the Kona Ironman and I want to do it in ketosis and I'm dating six women on four continents on my airplane." And you're just like, "Holy crap dude. Let me just guess. Your hair's falling out, you can't sleep at night, you can't get it up in the morning and you're getting sick all the time." And they're like, "How did you know?" It's called over training.

Chalene: Wired and tired, yeah.

Dave: Yeah. And maybe you need to sleep more. And maybe doing a CEO job, which is an enormous amount of work as a company grows, and doing an Ironman at the same time is just a bad idea.

Chalene: Right.

Dave: Right. And like it's okay-

Chalene: But we so celebrate busyness and just that go, go, go, hustle, hustle mentality. And I was there. I felt incredibly guilty if I slept for six hours. That was me being lazy. I was sustaining myself on four and a half, five hours of sleep. We're building these companies, and in order for me to exercise and to fit in that many hours as I told you, I had to start early. So I had to wake up every day at 4:30. And I just did. My alarm went off, I got up and I never thought boy, it would be healthier for me to sleep in an hour. I always thought, I better get up. If I want to be healthy, I better get up no matter how little sleep I've had. It didn't dawn on me the damage I was doing to my brain and how that isn't health. That was abuse. And people were looking at me and I was sharing my daily routines and telling other people to do this. I was never telling people how many hours I was exercising because I was embarrassed by that. I was broken. And also the marketing behind most of my programs is, 30 minutes a day, 40 minute workouts. It wasn't that I was lying, I just believed that is true for other people, not for me, I'm broken. My metabolism's messed up.

Dave: Wow.

Chalene: So I never wanted anyone to find that out. It was like a dirty little secret. Because then they would kick me out of the club. Then I wouldn't be a fitness professional. It'd be like-

Dave: It's that impostor syndrome.

Chalene: Yes.

Dave: Like if I admit I need more exercise than the next person, knowing it's individual and you really needed more sleep, wow. It's such a trap. Tell me about women in keto in your new book.

Chalene: Well, I think that it's difficult, especially for women of my age who we've spent 12, 15 years being convinced that fat means you will get fat. I remember the first episode I listened of your podcast and hearing about this concept of adding healthy fats. And I'm like, how can fat be healthy? Won't that make you fat?

Dave: Totally doesn't make sense.

Chalene: And adding butter to your coffee. Like I literally would joke about like, are you kidding me? And oil. Now it's breakfast every day. We do our Bulletproof Coffee-

Dave: That's such an honor that you would even try it.

Chalene: Oh for sure. Yeah. We live on it and it's a part of the book. So the first step is helping people to understand what it means, how it can help you, and really for me it's not just telling people like, here's a lifestyle. It's understanding that there are ranges of keto and there's mild ketosis and there's phasing in and out of ketosis and for some people it might be staying there steady. If you've got some type of cognitive function that you're really trying to heal. It might make sense for you to be deep in ketosis and for other people you factor in those four S's and you can't stay sane perhaps staying in deep ketosis but maybe to phase in and out of mild ketosis. So there isn't a set prescription but one ... So there's three phases in the book and the first phase is I'm teaching people what that feels like. So you can figure out, do you want to be in mild, deep into ketosis, do you want to do this from time to time? I do, based on what we know today, believe it is incredibly beneficial from every aspect to at least be in a mild state most of the time. And I think a lot of people need to phase out of it. I also think it's really unhealthy for some people because they take it too far.

Dave: Yeah. I've been giving this talk lately about dirty keto. This idea of the keto bro. Dude my ketones are bigger than yours. And it's sort of like saying my blood glucose is higher than yours. That might not be a good thing. So the fact that your body can't process ketones because you're not metabolically flexible, that's why you have high ketones or because you're taking a bunch of probably not bioidentical ketones. That's pretty much like taking stinger packs but those are fat instead of sugar. Stinger packs are like the sugar packs you use on a triathlon to get more sugar in faster. And so, I'm just like the deal is the levels that matter are .3 and .5 minimal. Those are the ones that affect hunger, that affect the set point. And I get my levels there just about every day with

what I put in my coffee in the morning. And I can use it on a blood stick test and it's usually there. So given that, yeah you might want to go more but I'm much happier if I get some carbs. And sure I'll fast for two or four days, or I'll go on zero carbs for a little while, but if you want to get stuck there forever, women will break before men.

So I love it that you're telling people find the one that works for you and that you're calling it out specifically for women, because it kind of scares me when I meet women who are saying, "I've been in ketosis for eight weeks." I'm like, "How's your sleep? Are your hormone cycles the way they were before?"

Chalene: Right.

Dave: And they're like, "Actually come to think of it, I'm not dreaming anymore." I'm like, "Yeah, you're kind of not doing well. Do you have a ring to track your sleep? Because if you do, you're going to notice that it's not working for you." Because the same thing happened to me, it just takes longer for guys.

Chalene: Right. You know, one thing that's really frustrating if I can be honest is that this teaches people over the course of 12 weeks how to phase their diet. And the first phase, we do talk about what it means to be in ketosis. But it's not a keto diet. But statistically speaking, people will only spend about five weeks ... Based on our research. Five, six weeks of following a plan and then they fall off. So the second phase of the 131 method is very much plant based. And the third phase is what I call macro-phasing, where you're kind of alternating days. And I will hear people say, "Well isn't that a keto diet?" I'm like, "I know you made it to that mark, you made it to that four week mark." And it is really important for people to not fear phasing and testing to see what makes them feel their best. I do a three day business conference in southern California. It's kind of a one-woman show. I mean I have other speakers, too.

Dave: Is it your SmartLife one?

Chalene: Another one, very similar. It's called Marketing Impact Academy. And I've got to be super focused, and I've got to memorize days and day's worth of content, and it is always stressful, and I never sleep well and I never eat well, and I pack all these foods. And my feet hurt, my back hurts, and I'm an introvert. An outgoing introvert. So I just feel drained every day.

Dave: It's hard work to put on a three-day conference.

Chalene: It is.

Dave: I do one every year with Bulletproof and oh my God, you're done after that.

Chalene: Have you fasted though one?

Dave: I have not fasted through one. Did you?

Chalene: Game changer.

Dave: That's pretty ... That's nuts.

Chalene: I thought this is kind of crazy, but I'm going to do it and I'll bring food just in case. But my husband will tell you, it was insane. It was like, I had all my synapses firing and my feet didn't hurt and I could take in people and I could be present and I slept well. All of these crazy things. Now of course it's not an audience of biohackers so I couldn't really tell them what was going on. I don't think they'd necessarily understand. They'd probably think that I was doing it to look thin or something. But I was doing it for my brain and my energy. A friend of mine, another podcaster Pat Flynn, I just told him. He's got his first conference coming up. I'm like, "Dude, you got to fast through it."

Dave: Wow. I always tell people that look, if you're doing something that's really physiologically demanding, that's enough stress. And that fasting is a form of stress. But see you're fat adapted.

Chalene: Yes.

Dave: Which means you can do it. So I would have no problem. For me, I would probably want to do Bulletproof Coffee just for the extra energy for the neurons to fire.

Chalene: Totally.

Dave: Which isn't ... It depends. There's this Bulletproof intermittent fasting where you have coffee with zero carbs and zero protein. Insulin will not move one notch according to some third party people that did a study on it. So I'm going to count that in the universe of fasting, autophagy still happens, et cetera.

Chalene: Absolutely.

Dave: But if you want to do it on a water fast or-

Chalene: To be clear, I wasn't doing a water fast.

Dave: Okay. Okay, that's what I thought. I was like okay. So you did tea and black coffee?

Chalene: I did Bulletproof.

Dave: Oh okay. So you had the calories to get through but you were ... So you kept your blood sugar ... Okay. I was like okay. I thought your cortisol was going to go wonky, your blood sugar was going to have to crash. I'm like-

Chalene: No. And that's something I talk about in the book is that there are different levels of fasting.

Dave: Yes there are.

Chalene: Right, like-

Dave: It's a fat fast basically with-

Chalene: Basically. In fact that's what I call it. And you look at like even the stuff that Dr. Longo's doing where his people are ... They're actually eating food and food with some carbohydrates in it too.

Dave: It was funny. I'm married to a Karolinska-trained doctor. She's wonderful. And she does a lot of the biohacking stuff but she doesn't do everything. And she's just never been that attracted to fasting. But over the last six months she's like, "You know I'm just going to do more other than just intermittent fasting," which she liked. So two weeks ago she decided when I was on a trip, she was going to do a four-day water fast. Well she would do Matcha and coffee but without oil in it other than maybe a little [inaudible 00:59:02] in the first day. So she's doing this and then I come home and she says, "I totally did four days, I feel so amazing. Like I kept the fat in the right areas and it went away from the inflammation. Like, I'm really liking this. I can't believe I haven't done this before." And then the kids look at her and say, "Mommy, you had a half a bite of ice cream on your third day, you were on an ice cream fast."

Chalene: Busted. Yeah.

Dave: The joys of kids.

Chalene: You know even with the fasting, I make a really important ... I talk about the different types of fasts, A. B, you have to prepare your body. You have to get it ready. People hear us talking about this and then be like, oh I'm going to try that, don't.

Dave: Four day fast is big. Do a couple one day fasts first right?

Chalene: Yeah. Learn to get fat adapted first and then it's a breeze and there's nothing difficult about it. No. 1 and No. 2, is not all populations are safe to fast. And especially those who are ... They have a propensity or they lean towards obsession.

Dave: Yeah. It can become super unhealthy. My point with a little scoop ... Not a scoop, a little bite of ice cream, is that it didn't affect her fast at all. It's like Walter Longo's stuff. You know where you don't have to be so perfect. But a lot of people were accusing Jack Dorsey, the CEO of Twitter. He was like, "Look I'm doing OMAD, one meal a day." And Jack and I have tweeted about Bulletproof Coffee going back for years and all. I was so amazed the first time. I'm like oh, this is amazing.

Chalene: That's amazing.

Dave: And I just got a chance to email him recently about it. But in the press they're like, the CEO is only eating one meal a day, he's starving himself. He has an eating disorder. I'm like, I'm kind of sure the guy's CEO of two companies and he's kicking your ass and he's doing what works for him and he feels good. And when some business press person

throws around eating disorder and things like that, there are the people who will fast to obsession. There are orthorexic people out there. Those are the people who found out what works for them and if they're healthy and they're doing well and they feel good.

Chalene: Yes, yes.

Dave: Okay.

Chalene: And there are people who are eating six times a day as I was and destroying my health and of those six times I was eating per day, none of it had any nutrient density. And so we just can't judge other people based on how often they're eating. You really have to look at what are you doing as a lifestyle? And all of us need to factor in far more than ... And that's my mission. My mission is to teach people that health is not something that is easily photographed on Instagram.

Dave: If you were using the 131 method line of thinking and you were to look at someone like Jack Dorsey for instance, how would you know whether that is a healthy ... Like I'm following the four S's, science, etc. Versus this is one of those people who fasting is unhealthy, they're a population that's obsessed. How would you know and how would someone listening to the show know, am I one of those obsessive people or am I a healthy person?

Chalene: I think personally when it becomes all consuming, it's all you can think about, if you're not doing it exactly ... You feel like you failed. You're obsessing about it. It's controlling your thoughts, your behaviors, your decisions, time with family. You are missing out on things. It's taking over your life. I mean we're talking about an obsession. And that can be both healthy and unhealthy. Orthorexia is a real thing and it can very easily slip into disordered eating. But what is disordered eating too?

Dave: Six meals a day and lots of carbs.

Chalene: Right. So that's a term I take issue with because it's like, who's setting the order?

Dave: Yeah, who defines the order? Oh, I know the government grain pyramid. I'm sorry food pyramid. I named it wrong. Or my favorite, the British diabetics ... I'm sorry, they call themselves dietetic society, but they cause diabetes with their recommendations.

Chalene: Perfect.

Dave: They should be called the British Diabetic Society. I don't know why they're named wrong. But these are the people out there still in the face of mountains of evidence telling you and me and everyone listening to do the crap that broke your health and made me weigh 300 pounds, and they don't even feel guilt about it. I don't understand that.

Chalene: No. And so many of our chronic diseases, if we would just realize we could fix it with food. Start with food, but it's deeper than that.

Dave: Yeah, just put down the fork for eight hours and see what happens. Oh my god.

Chalene: All these things I would go to the doctor for, I never had a doctor ask me how much sleep I was getting. I never had a doctor ask me what my stress level was or what I was eating. Never.

Dave: And that is something I feel is changing. The functional medicine doctors, they're coming out. You have to find the right one.

Chalene: Right, but it's not covered by insurance.

Dave: No. Nothing good is covered by insurance.

Chalene: Health is a white privilege.

Dave: That's a big statement. I mean I know lots of people aren't white who totally own themselves. I mean you go to Bulletproof Conference, that is not a white conference.

Chalene: Right, but what I'm saying is we have to recognize that there is a health privilege and it comes with money. It is difficult-

Dave: It's a wealth privilege.

Chalene: Wealth privilege for sure.

Dave: Yeah. I'll give you that. But I'm from Silicon Valley-

Chalene: It's so much harder is my point.

Dave: There's probably more wealthy Indian and Chinese entrepreneurs than white entrepreneurs where I'm from.

Chalene: Just left one.

Dave: Yeah, Naveen's a good example. But there's 100% certainly that the No. 1 predictor whether you'll be fat or thin is economic. If you're from an impoverished area or from a family with lower income, your odds of being obese go up dramatically and it's more predictive than anything else. More predictive than race, more predictive than trauma in your life. It's crazy.

Chalene: I recently talked about trying to heal Epstein-Barr virus. I have an outbreak of that every once in a while and talking about things I'm doing to keep it in check. And I went through all of the things that I do. Okay, I've got to get serious about my sleep again. I've got to pay attention to my stress, the way I'm scheduling my work, it's all those things. And I also said I'm doing hyperbaric oxygen chamber treatments and I'm doing glutathione, and I got a lot of angry responses from people saying, "Well that's great, but the average person can't afford to do that." And I said, "That's a problem. But it

doesn't mean that I shouldn't tell you that these things are out there because there are those individuals who are going to prioritize doing this." And I listed five things you can do that are free. But it does upset me that the insurance industry, the healthcare industry, isn't at all interested in health.

Dave: It drives me nuts. And also this idea that oh, you can't talk about it because it's expensive. Here's what happens, and this is-

Chalene: You must get that.

Dave: I get it all the time. But here's the deal, do you remember cell phones maybe 25 years ago? If you had one of those Mercedes 500D whatever, the whole trunk of it was ... This was in the mid '80s. The whole trunk of it is your cell phone. And it had this big antenna on top and you have this giant thing on your face and you're driving down and it's \$25 a minute to use this thing. And everyone sees you going, "Oh my god, what a jerk. Who does this person think they are on the phone while they're driving?" And it was \$40,000 to get it put in your car. Look at the world we live in today. Those things have changed the world in ... This is probably, what, 50% of my lifetime?

Chalene: Right. Keep pushing.

Dave: So when demand happens for stuff that works, the industry will respond. And when people stop buying crap at the grocery store, you know what'll happen? The companies will replace it with stuff that's less crappy. It won't be perfect, it'll just be better. And I've been sort of a little bit negative historically on that, you know, these big companies don't care. But I've had a chance, and you probably have too over the course of your career, I've met the CEOs of the big food companies. I sat down with the former CEO of Pepsi. And you know what is universal about these people? Most of them have kids, all of them want to make the world a better place. And they're all saying, "How can I sell healthier stuff at prices that people will pay?" And they want to do it. They desperately want to do it. Some of them have now clue what health means. Their assumptions are wrong. But there are no big bad evil-

Chalene: Like we're going to make people sick.

Dave: Like let's add some cadmium to that. There's no bad people.

Chalene: That's interesting. Yeah.

Dave: They want to do it. Some of them are just completely wrong. But if you and me don't do our job to tell people look, this stuff is \$7 right now and it should be \$3 and you shouldn't be doing the other thing, it'll be \$3 in three years. But if we don't do our job, no one will ever know. So yes, my job is to make everything I talk about almost free. It's just going to take a few years.

Chalene: That's encouraging. That's a really positive outlook on that and I'll adopt it.

Dave: I would think about that. The other thing to think about that's entirely unrelated to this except ... You talked about Epstein-Barr virus.

Chalene: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dave: You know how expensive antiviral agents are right?

Chalene: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dave: Do you know about BHT?

Chalene: No.

Dave: BHT, butylated hydroxytoluene, is a food preservative that's been soundly beat up. It's funny though, in the '80s and '90s it's one of the earlier tested and well tested antiaging substances because it's a synthetic antioxidant. It just so happens that chicken pox, herpes, and EBV are all lipid encapsulated viruses and BHT, which will cost you about one penny, maybe five cents to take, will inhibit the ability for these viruses to replicate. People who have a herpes outbreak take it, within about three days it usually goes away. Shingles, totally. Now, why is it that we have people spending \$1,000 on antiviral treatments when we haven't used the 10 cent one?

Chalene: Yeah why?

Dave: Lack of knowledge. No one told you. So there, we just showed that with however many hundreds of thousands of people are going to hear this.

Chalene: And where do they find it?

Dave: You can buy it on Amazon. It's BHT, as in berries, hydro, I don't know what the T stands for.

Chalene: Time.

Dave: Time, there you go. But I actually have used that for a long time. So you get the cold sores and all that stuff. And people say it might be dangerous. Yeah, if you take 50% of your body weight or something, but we're talking about a small dose. One of my good friends, a guy who's been on the show, wrote a book about this 30 years ago. And the knowledge has been out there, but it's not evenly distributed. So your job and what you're doing in 131 method, just get the knowledge out there and if people say it's too expensive, you know what's expensive? Not dying. Do your best. And that's okay.

Chalene: Being sick is expensive.

Dave: Yeah. So anyway I wanted to share that with you because a-

Chalene: That's amazing. Thank you. I have to update my audience.

Dave: Well you'll share it with your audience right?

Chalene: For sure.

Dave: Yeah. And do some googling. You'll find it out there.

Now, I have one more question for you at the end of our episode here. And this has to do with my next book, which is on antiaging. And it's called Super Human. It just hit the pre-sales thing.

Chalene: That's exciting.

Dave: I've been really public in that Men's Health article where I was afraid to take my shirt off, about living to at least 180 years old. How long do you want to live?

Chalene: I've heard you say that many times, and I always think 180? Do I want to be 180? And I don't know that I've given it a number. I know I'm going to be 100 at least and I think 120 sounds nice, but it's also quality of life so I don't know what condition I'll be in by then. We haven't seen people do that.

Dave: So as long as your quality is good you're up for at least 120?

Chalene: Heck yeah. If my quality of life is good, for sure. I think quality of life is really important. If at 150 Dave, you are just being wheeled around and you're blind and you're deaf and you need assistance to do a lot of just normal-

Dave: Bodily functions?

Chalene: Yes. Do you still want to live to be 180?

Dave: No. The real answer is I would like to die at a time and by a method of my choosing. And that's really anti-aging in a nutshell. I just think that 180 is pretty reasonable for someone in my condition with my history and my access to good quality food and clean air and whatever. And knowing all the science that's coming ... Not science that is mystical in the future, but stuff that's been under development for 20 and 30 years that's coming to fruition now.

Chalene: When we're looking at the genes of centenarians.

Dave: We're going to do some crazy stuff so I think that at 180 the deal is I should be driving, I should be able to walk under my own power, and I should be able to function as a contributing member of society. That's the goal.

Chalene: What is the oldest person we know right now on record?

Dave: Well there are people in their 120s who are well documented. The problem is getting above that, it's pretty rough because what kind of birth certificates were there 180 years ago?

Chalene: For sure.

Dave: I have on my nightstand a book about a guy who is allegedly 185. And it's written by the son or grandson of the guy's caretaker in India. And it's got a huge amount of detail in it. So maybe the whole thing's fiction. Maybe he just said 185, it was really 165. This guy was older than 120. So you look back through historical stuff, and you have to go back to history to find someone who's that old. So I just know we can do 120 because we have hard evidence of that. And if we can't do 50% better in the next 100 years of my life, come on. Then we've failed as scientists.

Chalene: Well it's audacious. And I think so was the four-minute mile.

Dave: It was. So I hope you'll join me in being highly functional after 100.

Chalene: We'll throw a party.

Dave: Count on it. Chalene Johnson, your website is [131method.com](http://131method.com). Same as the name of your new book. Thank you for sharing with your massive audience all the things you're doing, and for taking time to come on Bulletproof Radio.

Chalene: Thank you so much. Thanks for being a disruptor. Thanks for leading the way. Super grateful to be here.

Dave: If you liked today's episode you know what to do. Check out the 131 Method. It is really cool stuff. And the idea that you don't have to be perfect, it's actually real.