

[00:00:00] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Welcome back to the Flex Diet Podcast. I'm your host Dr. Mike T. Nelson. On this podcast, we talk about all things to increase muscle performance, improve body composition, all without destroying your health in a flexible framework. Today on the program, we've got my buddy Ben Brown. He is the lead nutrition and fitness coach and owner of a body systems.

I think I originally met him, I don't know, I think it was at a seminar from Dr. Brian, I think a while ago. We've hung out quite a few times, got to see him again at Ali's Silverback Summit this past November, which was amazing. And if you are able to go to her seminar, I would highly encourage it.

So Ben actually has two master's degrees, one in clinical nutrition and one in exercise physiology. So he definitely has the. Nutrition and coaching aspect covered in addition to being a business owner, he is still coaching clients in the trenches and has been for many years. So we get into all sorts of fun stuff here.

Initially talking a little bit more about the business and how do you translate sort of the geek speak to client speak the business of actually running a business, especially if you're. doing it primarily online. How do you make time for your own training and your own priorities? Why would you even bother to go through all the hassle to work for yourself?

The real role of a coach. And then we get into talking a little bit more about client specific stuff. When should you move the goalposts? How do you know once you've achieved a goal and how do you know when to move on from that? Even with yourself and clients, what are your priorities and are you okay accepting the cost of doing those priorities?

Anytime you go to do something, there's going to be a cost associated with that. When basics are best and how to determine statistically significant by looking at research, but does that really translate into anything in the real world in terms of being significant? Shocker, we talk a little bit about context here and then if you want the three questions that I asked Ben if this is the flex four, yes, I know it's three questions instead of four.

That was my error. If you are a client who wants to get significantly leaner, what would be his top three things that you would want that client to do? You can get that by going to [www. miketeenelson. com](http://www.miketeenelson.com) forward slash flex4. [miketeenelson. com](http://miketeenelson.com) forward slash f l e x and the number 4. We'll have a link there below and you'll get that exclusive audio.

That'll also put you on the daily fitness insider newsletter. If you're already on the newsletter, then you will automatically get the Flex 4 delivered directly to your inbox. miketeenelson.com Along with a summary of the podcast and everything there. Our other sponsor is Element. So we are down as of this recording here in South Padre, Texas again, so I've noticed that whenever I come down here because it's much hotter and I'm out kite boarding, shocker, I lose a lot more fluids than I imagined.

And just by upping my fluid intake and more electrolytes via Element, my heart rate variability recovered Substantially from one day to the next so I made a huge difference Right now I'm enjoying the raspberry version so you can check that out at drinkLMNT.com forward slash Mike Nelson That's drinkLMNT.com/mikenelson And we'll have a link there below also and you can get a free sampler pack too when you check it out You And if you don't like it for some odd reason, they have a no questions guarantee policy. So just drop them a note and they will take care of you right away. So thank you so much for Ben to him and all of the great information he has here and enjoy this podcast with Ben Brown.

[00:04:21] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Hey, welcome back to the flex diet podcast. How are you doing today, Ben?

[00:04:25] **Ben Brown:** I'm doing great, man. Thank you so much for having me.

[00:04:28] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, appreciate it.

It was a great to see you at the Silverback Summit again in Austin, which was awesome. Shout out to Allie Gilbert. It's been on the podcast here before. A good friend. She did a great job and it was a super fun conference.

[00:04:42] **Ben Brown:** It was great. It's always fun to hang out at conferences. It's something that really lights me up that I've really thrived from over my career.

And always look forward to and that was certainly a special one. So again I'll reiterate, shout out to Al, Allie and man, what a good opportunity just to connect with some like minded individuals like you and all the other experts in the field. It's interesting because I feel like a lot of times as coaches as individuals who are so, so firmly rooted in this identity of health and fitness,

oftentimes we feel like we're living on a deserted island here because, frankly, the vast majority of people that surround us in our communities aren't on the same wavelength.

And so when you do get in those social environments, it's just, you automatically feel. Comfortable, you feel supported, you feel understood and heard, and man, what a great opportunity is to just connect and talk shop and know that. Guys like you are genuinely interested. They understand where you're coming from and it's just a great opportunity to learn what, what's going well for individuals in their life and their business.

So it's such a great learning opportunity above and beyond just what the speakers are presenting.

[00:06:03] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And I think we're both old enough in a good way to remember what it was like to get information in person. For quite a while, that was the only way you had some magazines, you had maybe some courses.

But I was just talking to Dan John the other day and the fact that new people could email or send a DM to an author of a book or a training program. Again, not, they may or may not reply, which is a whole different topic, but I can't imagine doing that. Like some of the mail order courses I did back in the day, like you could send a self addressed stamped envelope and pay 5 or whatever, and maybe you Get a response, but now the there's so much access that I think People miss out on what it's like to go to a live event because yes, you're going to get great info.

Yes, you get to see presentations, which are amazing. But I think like you said, is just the interactions that I had just being there with yourself and everyone else. Like you don't get those online, no matter how you try to set it up online. It just doesn't lend itself to those all way weirdo conversations about stuff.

[00:07:16] **Ben Brown:** No, a hundred percent, man. And I'll say I'm so, I feel so fortunate to have come up at the time that I did exactly because of that is because we couldn't rely on social media to glean information and instead had to be extrapolated through in person connections. And. That's been the vast majority of the connections that I have in our industry have been foraged through these conferences through certifications and in person events and mutual acquaintances that I've met through these events.

Invariably the vast majority of the people that I have on the podcast are people that I've connected with in person at, during these opportunities and. And so again, I feel, really grateful for that. It's really been the basis for how I've grown as an individual, as a professional and also given me the opportunity to realize how much BS is out there and, like what it really takes to not only effectively coach someone, also how to like effectively run a business and what is realistic and what's not.

[00:08:27] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And even too, I was talking to a buddy the other day to find out that he's making

[00:08:37] **Ben Brown:** me,

[00:08:38] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** A couple of million a year, pretty easily, not a big team. And he was complaining about some of the same issues that I have, and you think like even, I talked to another guy a year ago, who's multiple million dollar business per year and similar problems, which to me, you always think, Oh, once you're making a million a year or 10 million or whatever number it is, or six figures, whatever, all your problems evaporate.

And it's just the easy road. And what I've realized over time is. No, a lot of those people have very similar problems and have different problems you didn't consider either and so just talking to them and getting their ideas and realizing that oh yeah, you're a lot, everyone is more similar than they are different, but from the outside looking in you would think Oh my gosh, like they can't, struggle with the same things I do and a lot of times, yeah, it's similar.

It's a

[00:09:32] **Ben Brown:** quick ticket to imposter syndrome. Yeah. When we try and compare ourselves to other professionals and make assumptions that, Things are different or easier or better for them. And I think it's the exact same conversation when, general population is looking to social media as an example for, what they aspire to be like and saying, Oh, well, it just must be so easy for him.

He'd say. He's has a faster metabolism or he can eat whatever he wants and still lose weight or, all of these things. And it's the same conversation. Everyone has their respective struggles and. Invariably, all our struggles become so much more similar than they are different.

[00:10:18] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And I think of that, and I haven't got these comments too often. One of the comments I got for a while was, well, it must be easy for you because you run your own business. You can work whenever you want. You have a gym in your garage, like you don't have to go anywhere. And a lot of that is It's 100 percent true.

But the part that people don't see is that, yeah, I started, moved my business to my garage. God, 13 and a half years ago now, and I didn't have any money to buy fricking equipment. I took the, I had five clients at the time who stayed with after the gym closed. So I told them like, Hey, I'll give you 85 percent off.

The caveat is you have to pay cash upfront on January 1st, and I'm going to train you out of my garage. And I thought, what the hell? If they all say no, then okay, I'll figure something out. And two of them said yes. Oh,

[00:11:06] **Ben Brown:** yeah,

[00:11:07] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** that's a great deal. Here's the money. So I went and called Wendler at Elite FTS, got a rack, got a bar, got a trap bar, bought a bunch of used weights, and now I had a gym in my garage and my backup plan was well, if this fails miserably.

Hey, I got a cool gym in my garage. That's right.

[00:11:25] **Ben Brown:** I

[00:11:26] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** didn't think any further beyond that.

[00:11:28] **Ben Brown:** No, absolutely. And that is the irony of it is yeah, we work for ourselves, run our own business from home. And I'm in a similar situation. I work from home. Yeah, I got a home gym, even though I do enjoy going to a commercial gym frequently.

But at the same time, if I reflect on this week alone, I've trained once and I've been work in 12, 14 hour days. And, uh, that's the penance, I think that we pay for running our own business and wanting to be, to create our version of what success looks like and spread, and share the mission that, that we each independently have.

I don't think it's what. From the outside in, quote unquote, it must be nice from the inside out, like a, sometimes I'll be, I'd be lying if I said, I don't sometimes think what, how nice it would be to have a clock in and clock out job where I

wasn't thinking about business 24 seven, especially for my marriage, especially for my family life.

And that's where this idea of like proverbial balance is. non existent. It's just there's always seasons. And so it's yeah, again, struggles in our own right. These are, but to be fair listen, these are certainly first world problems. Oh, a hundred

[00:12:46] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** percent.

[00:12:46] **Ben Brown:** Yeah. Yeah. And I wouldn't change it for the world.

I feel very fortunate to be able to do what I do, to be able to do what we do, to be able to make the impact that we make. I can't think of a better, a better J O B.

[00:13:00] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. Yeah, it gives me flashbacks too. I, at some point in my life, even now, sometimes I wish I was just wired a little bit different.

I had one of my, I've had a bunch of horrible jobs, especially going through college for way, way too long. And one of the jobs I did was actually on an assembly line, putting heads on Pocahontas stalls. So like these little kid care shaped things of molded shampoo and bath care that have the little figurine heads.

So I worked in that place and I literally stuck heads on Pocahontas dolls as they went down the assembly line for, eight and a half hours a day. That

[00:13:33] **Ben Brown:** sounds horrible. And

[00:13:35] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** it was utterly horrible. I could not stand it. You had to be there at five in the morning. It was utterly relentless.

The one only pro was that when I left, I sure as hell didn't think about it. The job and after a while, I was there luckily just for a summer. I asked some of these people have been working at this job for 15, 20 years. And in my brain, I'm thinking, Oh my God, these poor people, they must hate it as horrible.

And ironically, a lot of them were like, no, this is great. I'm like, great. Like what, why? They're like, well, the pay is okay. And I never think about it. Once I leave work, I do my job, I'm here. And then I leave and I never think about it till I just show up the next day. And I'm like, Oh, there is something cool with that.

And my brain can't do that for whatever reason. But I am. Jealous of Oh, you do the job. You make the widgets, you're done with it. You go home, like you don't think about widget making till the next day. And you can see progress of something that you've actually done.

I

[00:14:31] **Ben Brown:** think it definitely takes a different level of programming. And like you said, wiring because I know I'm not wired like that and straight out of grad school. I had two jobs for about six months each and then and during programming. programming. programming. My, during all, during that time, I still was running a side hustle personal training.

To the point where I had built up the side hustle, just Yeah. Personal training enough and built my clientele enough to then be able to piece out on the jobs. And that was 15 16, almost 17 years ago. And

[00:15:05] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Nice.

[00:15:06] **Ben Brown:** And had never looked back. I've always said, I'm. I'm unemployable because I always thought that I could do things better than the systems and structure and operations that they had in place.

And man, it's been an interesting ride for sure.

[00:15:21] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, I'm in the same boat now. I was joking with my wife the other day because I worked for 11 years in the biomedical industry. And when I left, people were like, what are you doing? You crazy person? Like you have a master's in mechanical engineering.

You finished your PhD in exercise. Fizz, you've got 10 plus years experience. Like you could literally go down the street and apply to a different company and start at, a hundred, 120, 000 a year. And I'm like, I got to work like 40 to 70 hours a week. And start like two weeks vacation and I got to show up on time.

And then, oh my God, what if my boss like wants to micromanage me? Cause I was very much okay. Tell me the shit you want done and just leave me alone. If I have questions, I'll come find you. I'll get it done. You tell me the next thing, a lot of companies don't necessarily work like that.

So yeah, the longer I was there, the definitely the more unemployable I became. And I also realized that this isn't really a good fit.

[00:16:19] **Ben Brown:** Yeah. Well, you gotta know what you don't want before you can know what you do want. I think.

[00:16:25] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And it was a great experience. It was like the thing I thought I wanted to do, coming out of college and most of the time, like what we're working on was pretty cool and it was, to a benefit and 90 percent of the people I worked with were great.

And there wasn't anything that was. Bad per se about it or, employees or dynamics or anything like that. It just, the longer I was there, I realized that, well, yeah, I don't think the same way as someone else. And even when I was there, I was still, doing training on the side and doing all these other things at the, like you were at the same time.

And to me, that was much more interesting because the problems you have to I would say the fitness field are literally just never ending. That's one of the reasons I still, even though I do a lot of education stuff now, I still train clients is because the stuff they come up with is stuff that I would have never picked to try to go solve on my own.

Right? So it's just we're letting less problem solving with skin in the game at the same time. It's never

[00:17:26] **Ben Brown:** like you, you learn these fundamental principles. And you can rely on the science to a degree, but invariably it's the nuance that is becomes the biggest learning opportunity in my experience, right, to truly being able to help a client through their journey.

That's why I think it's paramount that a coach. Especially a coach, and this is, again, just my opinion, but a coach, especially a coach that's scaling their business still stays rooted enough in the business and rooted enough in coaching to continue learning and continue to be able to apply the nuance and apply the educational systems and understand the psychology of behavior change and understand the art of coaching to the degree that so much of what you end up doing with clients Isn't about the numbers and the X's and O's but so much more again about the conversations and the challenges and the psychology of things to to frankly just be able to help people get out of their own way, to be able to be proactive in a society that is becoming ever more challenging to be successful with, especially in the health and fitness realm.

[00:18:44] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, I feel like it's People, coaches, trainers, starting in health and fitness, it literally parallels the changes their clients are

going through. Right. Cause I think about on a business sense, you see all the coaches who are successful in the videos in front of their fancy cars and all this other stuff.

And then later you learn sometimes they're not even their own cars. They were rented and and some of it's true, some of it's not, but you see this Oh, here's what it looks like to be successful, which is not really how it is. You don't ever see the downsides and for people looking for to say body count changes, I see someone who is in shape, and this is their lifestyle.

They're like, Oh, it must be, so easy for them. And so I feel like there's a lot of parallels at the same thing, because you're comparing yourself to everyone's Highlight reel. Yeah. And some of their highlight reels may not even get real.

[00:19:38] **Ben Brown:** That, well, that's it. Especially so deceptive.

When we look at social media and business, but when you look at someone's real and you assume that's like the pinnacle of what you're, what you want, but not realizing, for example, how terrible the person feels, if you're doing a lot of composition, right, or physique change and we kind of work towards this given goal and we snap the pictures, but behind the scenes is you're freaking miserable.

Yeah. And you're literally like starving the body and putting yourself in this terrible metabolic situation that is, is clearly unsustainable yet you present that. And I'm guilty of this too. And I have this conversation very openly and very frequently and certainly with our clients as well of saying, well, I want to look like you.

Okay. Cool. I fully respect that. And I will 100 percent help guide you there. I just want you to understand implications of what it looks like when we go through this process. And as we walk through that and we keep the lines of communication open, I want you to know that, there's going to be a tipping point where perhaps you might feel like the juice is just not worth the squeeze.

And that's totally cool as well. There's a level of sacrifice that's involved in, and it's just like I talked about, whether we're talking about body composition, whether we're talking about building a quote unquote successful business, right? I'm willing to make this level of sacrifice where on one end I will die it down to a certain point and for long enough and consistently enough to snap the pictures, I will sit behind my desk for as long as it takes.

Focusing on the efforts to get my business in a position where I can impact more people and help create the stability and success that I'm looking for my family and future. And if at any point, and trust me, there's plenty of opportunities and times when I feel like, man, it's just not worth it.

But those are often short term emotions, right? To then be able to say, okay, well, I'll continue to keep my foot on the gas, or, maybe it's, it would be more realistic for me to pump the brakes a little bit, depending on how things are progressing.

[00:21:51] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, no, I agree with that. And it's always the same thing with coaches and clients that there's always trade offs.

Like the amount of people I've talked out of a hardcore fat loss phase when their stress is going to be through the roof is, I've lost clients because of that. They're like, well, I'll have it this next six months. I got to travel for this. And I'm on the road all the time. And I'm like, we can do things to help your general habits and you will get some body comp from that.

But if you're, let's say a male trying to get to single digits, like legit, and you're on the road 90 percent of the time living out of a suitcase in a hotel. And you have not done this before. So you don't have a skill set to fall back on to know what it is you would need to do and have experience of been close to that before you might do it.

But man, it's going to be ridiculously hard. And it's going to be adding to your stressor versus maybe we do that the second half of the year when you're only traveling 20 percent of the time. Trust me, I can guarantee you it's going to be way harder. Easier, especially the first time doing it. You don't really want to.

set them up for failure because then that starts the whole, psychosomatic thing of well, I could never do it before and I wasn't able to do it this time and I paid you all this money and yeah,

[00:23:07] **Ben Brown:** but that's the nuance right there. That's where you are experienced enough with the nuances of body composition change and the efforts involved relative to the respective client to Be able to confidently and competently say those things, whereas I know for me early in my career, I tell the client what they want to hear.

[00:23:30] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Oh, I did that all the time early on. I

[00:23:33] **Ben Brown:** just think that's the rite of passage with any type of practice. You don't know what you don't know and we all have blind spots and that's where, the science can only tell us so much. We have to have the experience and frankly, even mentors can only tell us so much.

But man, I just, there's so many lessons that I've come back to, to come to the realization that saying, Oh, okay, now I understand why. Whomever I respect in the industry or have a connection with or was a mentor or coach at one point was telling me to do it this way and I didn't listen and okay, now I understand why, but me being the rebel that I am, have to figure this shit out for myself and it's just the way she goes.

[00:24:20] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. I remember when I started my PhD, I was doing that working part time, was still running my business part time and I thought, Oh, I'll just keep the same level of fitness I've always had. And it was okay for the first year and a half and then slowly started going down. And then by the last three and a half years, they got stretched out to seven years instead of five years.

It was like, okay, as long as. I'm not doing anything that is irreversible. I'm okay. Like I pulled the line all the way back to how my lipids are bad. My blood work's not good. My testosterone is like below 200, but I'm taking power naps in the back of my car and sleeping four and a half hours a night.

And so I know it's all self induced. Lifestyle, stress. I would train maybe twice a week. I had four gym memberships. I had kettlebells under my desk. It was just, and my body count was like by far the worst that ever was performance was dog shit. But I'm like, I know that this is a temporary thing that this phase will end.

Either I make it or I don't, but there is going to be a finite end to it. And at some point you have to like the old, Cortez thing of burn the ships of okay, this is the direction I'm going. And I told my doc, I'm like, I'll do whatever possible as long as there's not something that's irreversible that I can't come back from.

That's my line in the sand. My lipids are high for a while, testosterone is low, whatever, I'll figure it out. And I don't recommend that to people, but I think if I would have continued to try to keep everything even at just a maintenance level, then I would have been able to do it. So I think sometimes under the extreme circumstances, you have to pick.

Okay, what are you going to do with clients that I'm always like, okay, what is the timeline there has to be, if you're going to go that hard in that extreme and

died for a show or whatever it is, or do an advanced degree or start your business, what do you have to have a hard deadline of either I made it or I didn't, and then you have to do a reassessment and don't let that thing go on for, many years at a time, because I've seen people just get to the point where they can't come back from stuff at that point.

[00:26:33] **Ben Brown:** Yeah. And I would say that's probably one of the biggest lessons I've learned over the years, initially is early on in my career would be the objective is just get someone lean and with no sort of, Acknowledgement or care or realization around what's on the back end of that.

What is the cost of of the things that we're, the stress that we're inducing on all different levels. And And obviously we know the outcome of that, of course it's relatively easy to get someone lean, but to be able to stay lean is really where the hard part where things really get challenging, and that begs the question of how are we getting them lean in the first place.

And so this real comes back to these conversations and for the way that we view things. Is really this kind of nutrition seasons approach of right out of the gate. Like first and foremost, so we won't take clients for a short period of time. Typically it's usually a minimum of six months. Most of our clients commit to a year and most of those clients end up continuing on in some capacity for an extended period of time because of this, because we realized, well, even in the first year, if you don't have any.

Nutritional knowledge or develop those skills, right. Perhaps the whole first year is just going to be this slow and steady diet phase of yes, we're creating some degree of a caloric deficit, but what we're really doing is we're helping you educate you and help you build the skills and the tools to be successful on your own, right?

We call it becoming your own best nutrition detective. And that's where it's giving you the autonomy and the empowerment to just learn how to make better decisions and how the decisions that you make on a daily basis impact the outcomes that we're looking for, right, to the degree that Beyond that one we've really shifted their belief system around.

Oh, I just want to lose that 10, 15, 20 pounds and then I'll be good. No, like then you're going to want something else. I guarantee it. So how are your goals changing and how are you Moving the goalposts as we progress as you learn more as you become more educated about the process And then how can we really set you up for success long term right to the degree then it's okay Now we

can do a performance phase a bulking phase another dieting phase and slowly and progressively really shift body composition that's where you know, it really gets fun because the client really has this picture, this vision for what their future can look like.

And what's so amazing about that, Mike, and I know you'll agree with me is when they realize what's possible for them to accomplish in their health and fitness, and they overcome these stagnations that perhaps they've been dealing with for a long time, they realize the possibility in the rest of their life.

[00:29:22] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Oh yeah, there's

[00:29:23] **Ben Brown:** a huge amount of transfer. 100 percent and that's like what I feel like we're so called to, to help empower clients with is for them to realize Hey, you have the ability to change your situation, your career your social support system, your relationships, right?

The outcome of your life because you've mastered these skills, this level of confidence that Look, man, you're in control. Life is happening for you, not to you. And that's at the end of the day, what better, what better opportunity do people have?

[00:29:58] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And that's what with clients makes me the most excited.

It's yeah, I get excited if they have, big competition, they reach their goals, they did well, strongman competition for the competition, whatever they're doing. Cool. That's great. That's awesome. That's primarily why they're paying. But I also even get more excited when a client of mine last year started wake surfing, started doing other things she had never done before in her entire life, later in life, never had done these things, in her teens, twenties, or thirties.

And just to see the expansion of her as an individual and how, things were going better, relationships were going better, she was still getting closer to her goals. It got, pretty much every goal that she said, physical fitness physique wise she made, which was great or in the past I would have been too, and this has actually happened like years ago.

Especially clients wanting to get lean. It's okay, we'll get you lean. And we did. And I didn't take into account the costs. And in some cases, like the rest of their life was a walking shit show. Right. And it was. Kind of their own doing. And I probably facilitated that, so I'm like, Ooh, we got you to the goal.

And there's only so much you can do per se, but it wasn't even on my radar. It wasn't even like thinking about that, like at all.

[00:31:22] **Ben Brown:** Yeah. Those are always tough. And that's where it's listen, I think the best thing that we can do now, I think as you mature as an individual, as a coach in your own, again, confidence and competence, it becomes a lot easier to have those conversations and to not feel like you don't want to make the client mad at you or quote unquote, lose the client.

Like I would rather lose a client by telling them what they need to hear than entertain them with something that's not going to serve them longterm.

[00:31:52] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yes.

[00:31:52] **Ben Brown:** And so, example, I had a conversation, I've I've got a guy I've been working with on and off for years. He's an ex Navy SEAL. With that comes this all or nothing attitude, this sort of hard nosed, just tell me what to do.

I'll do it. And it's become a, it's become a massive matter of friction over the years too, because invariably the conversation. Has always come down to I understand that you want to get leaner, but you need to understand that the biggest limiting factor keeping you from getting lean is that you keep trying to do more and keep trying to, push further beyond what you're physically capable of.

Capable of and physiologically capable of to the degree that you're getting sick all of the time, you're constantly on antibiotics, you're not sleeping enough, you're overly stressed out with your business and your career, you've got young kids, your marriage is on the rocks. Dude, we have to acknowledge these things.

And so until we take control of those and help alleviate some of the friction that's coming there till you actually start training less and managing those stress levels, you're not going to see the results that you desire. And so slowly and surely things have come around life for him. He's in a much better spot.

And so, sure is. Sure as shit yesterday. So now we've gotten him pretty good and lean. He looks great. He's a 50 year old dude. Again, still a lot on his plate, but probably about, I don't know, 10 or 12 percent body fat looks really good. And a lot of it is from actually backing off on a lot of the things that he was doing, getting him to eat more carbs.

Periodically and not be a psychopath with this stuff. And now he's like, all right, now I want to, put on another eight to 10 pounds of lean muscle mass, but I also want to be vascular. I want to stay

[00:33:52] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** lean, bro. It's magically 10 pounds of muscle. I'm like,

[00:33:55] **Ben Brown:** Listen, dude. I'm like, matter of fact, like here's what that trajectory is going to look like.

We got a bulk and unless you want to start talking about anabolics or something which I have no experience with this is, the conversation and he appreciates that because it's, it, for him, it's he knows it's what he needs to hear, even though he doesn't like hearing it, it's the truth.

And he could say, screw you and go to another trainer, but he doesn't. He values his time and energy and, knows that he'll go find someone else that will entertain him with it, but he'll be coming right back in the same situation in another 12 to 18 months frustrated that he's not where he wants to be.

[00:34:41] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And I think that's just the advantage of just having reps and having experience too. Cause I know early on with a similar case, I would have said, all right, yeah, we can do that. And then now I'm just like, again, current client, very lean trying to add more muscle, which we've done in the past.

But the first question I had is, okay, how much fat are you willing to gain? Right. And there's no right or wrong, right? Shit, where I'm at now, like if I could gain one pound of muscle for, and one pound of fat, like a one to one ratio. Right. I'm pretty happy, like I'm on the weird, not really respond or end of it per se.

Cause I know when I decide to get leaner, I can take the fat off. Cause I know what to do if, and when I decided that's a priority, but it's harder when one, you haven't done that before and you don't know what that client's ratio is. And I tell them that up front we'll just set some benchmarks.

And when we get there, you can, at that point decide, Hey, let's go a little bit further. Let's not. Yeah. Let's add 20 pounds and see where you're at and just have it be a staged thing because in their head, they think, Oh my God, you mean I'm going to gain like, 10 pounds of fat.

That's horrible, but if you, it's not going to happen overnight, right? So it's okay, let's reassess in 10 weeks or three months and whatever they decide is fine. Then you just have the other conversation of. Okay, here's what we had. Here's about what we think, what we did. Yeah, we can maybe tweak a few things.

We can maybe, push the body comp a little bit better. This or that direction. But yeah, it's unrealistic without the aid of, even with the aid of sometimes of exogenous drugs, that especially someone who's been training for quite some time, the only way I've seen around that is if you do have some freaks who have only done like strength work, but never done like hypertrophy work, like you, if you've got like a, yeah, just a pure athlete, who's.

Never really done much, leg hypertrophy stuff, calf hypertrophy stuff, delt stuff. And they've been like a hundred percent performance. Okay. Yeah. You can maybe prioritize some of those muscle groups, maybe add a little bit more muscle there. Maybe they won't gain a lot of fat, but for vast majority of people, it's going to be what ratio is acceptable to you will do our best to skew the ratio towards more muscle and less fat.

But yeah, it just, it's just. That's how physiology works. It's certainly bittersweet sometimes. Yeah. And again, that always goes back to what we're talking about with what are your priorities and what costs are you willing to pay? And there's no right or wrong per se with that. Cause I think with, especially with clients, like with newer, let's say guys come in, typical guys like, okay, I want to gain 10 pounds of muscle and lose 10 pounds of fat.

Right. So I want to recomp 20 pounds and let's say they're already, on the thinner side, they don't have a lot of muscle to work with. And you ask him like, what have you been doing historically? Well, I've been trying to, gain some muscle and lose fat at the same time. It's okay we may spend nine months out of that whole year, just slowly trying to accumulate muscle.

And, maybe just a quarter, short of three months of trying to lose fat, so I think picking the direction you want to go. But then, like we just said, it's hard for them to realize that, yeah, this means you're probably going to lose your abs during that period of time. Are you okay with that?

If you're not, well, then we may have to change your goal. There's only so much you can magically accomplish. You can only push physiology

[00:38:15] **Ben Brown:** so hard. Well, especially for guys like us, that's predominantly who I work with. So then it just always begs the conversation of,

yeah, we, we understand what needs to happen from a calorie and a training volume standpoint and a recovery standpoint, but that's the easy part.

The hard part is talk to me about. Your readiness for change and your commitment level and your current eating behaviors and your lifestyle and your responsibilities and your stress levels and your relationship with your wife and who cooks the food and. Sleep behaviors and your, level of skill around planning and preparation and travel schedule.

And so it's never, at least for me and in my experience, because I don't work with physique competitors. I work solely with general, well, few athletes here and there but generally solely general population, in which case those are always the limiting factors. Thank you. Oh yeah. That we have to be aware of, um, and so it never goes as well as it, it never goes as smooth as it could, should they have all of those variables.

controlled for, right? It's never a scientific, a true scientific experiment because we don't have control, right? You live in an open,

[00:39:40] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** dynamic environment that's very much so.

[00:39:43] **Ben Brown:** And that's where I think as a coach, we have to be very attuned to how the variables are changing and relying both on the data as well as subjective feedback to help us make informed decisions.

And be able to insert logic and reason into any manipulations that we make to understand, okay, well, we had set this next three months as a dieting phase, but, you've got, You had a death in the family, you've got the kid's spring break, or you just all this, shit storm at work popped up.

It wouldn't be unreasonable for us to just give you a bit of a reprieve, pop into maintenance, and extend out, this dieting window by virtue of doing more calorie cycling, or more diet breaks throughout, or, whatever that looks like, but that's, legitimately that's What real world, in my opinion, real world coaching and real world progress looks like and I think people are always Appreciative of that at the end of the day.

[00:40:52] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, I remember talking to Jordan Syed on here and asked him about do you think AI is gonna replace personal training and he's like fuck no He's because and I agree with him like You might be able to get some good information from AI. I think in the future it'll probably get better. We could debate if the information is good or not.

But even in the best case scenario, you got the, air quotes, perfect plan. We all know that you need help with the implementation of it. Because like you said, you're dealing with a dynamic person in a dynamic system. And things are going to change and you can't, even highly motivated humans, you can't expect them to white knuckle their way through six months and be a hundred percent compliant without some massive cost, even if they did that right the coaching is always going to be the art of.

Okay. Yeah. Let's push a little harder on this now, like you said, or let's back off or let's change your training this way, or let's add this, let's, tweak things as they come up so that over the long term, you can continue to make progress instead of, I think there's still a lot of. Maybe some people who think that if it was just better information that I would succeed.

And rarely is that true. Yes, there's poor information, yes, you can make bad decisions. But most people I think know what to do, but they are lacking the skill set to get it done because they haven't been able to get it done before, right? Which to me is that's the art of coaching, which I think via an actual live human being with experience isn't going to go away anytime soon.

[00:42:32] **Ben Brown:** I think what most people think they need to do is far above and beyond what there is realistic for them.

[00:42:38] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Oh, 100%.

[00:42:39] **Ben Brown:** Right, we'll always have conversations with clients and they'll say no, I know what to do, I just need some accountability. And, I would say yes I do think everyone needs some degree of accountability and we know that, That accountability is something that success is built around at the same time because of the vast amount of information and confusing and contradictory information.

I think that what most people think that they need to do far is, again, is far above and beyond what is realistic for them, right, to the degree that's where it's up to us to help refine. And educate them around, okay, let's take what it is that you're willing to do, what you think you need to do and make sure that we're framing it in a realistic way for you so that you're still motivated by it so that you can still be consistent with it or, and mostly so that you can be consistent with it and so that it's not something that you end up going hard for a few weeks or a few months only to say, I can't do it anymore.

I quit. And go back to your old behaviors.

[00:43:47] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And it's. I think you're responsible to the coach to just yell at your client, tell him to try harder. It's really, when did that ever solve anything? Like I've often joked so you come to my gym, we'll just put four Oh five on the bar to deadlift.

And my cue is, bro, if you can't make it, I'm just going to yell at you to try harder. It's at some point. Yeah. Do you need to put an effort? Yes. Do you need to put in consistent effort? 100%. But if you're already doing that, trying harder, isn't gonna, it's not going to magically solve everything for you.

100%. Yeah. There's like more information, a lot of times, more information above a certain point, oof, some of those are some of the hardest clients to deal with. Like I've told totally multiple clients in the past Stop listening to fitness podcasts. Like I love Andrew Huberman. He's great. You don't need a three hour podcast about why you need sunlight exposure.

If you're in the industry and you're interested in the research, cool. There might be a, use for it. But at some point when you've maxed out your information, that's not changing what you're doing. More information actually gives you that inverted you, like you, you start getting so confused that now you're not executing on the things that you need to I've often joked, even for, I do some grip sport competitions.

And so people are like, we never see you on any of the grip forums or you never seem to ask anyone else any questions about it. And I'm like, no cause my coach is Adam glass. And if I have a question, I just ask him. And then I go to Shocker, what he tells me to do. If it doesn't work, then I go back and say, Hey bro, I tried this.

I got this result. What should I do now? I don't have a need to go anywhere else. I'm just going to get more confused that there's no point to it. If I didn't trust him, then. I wouldn't hire him as a coach, and so I know that kind of seems sometimes obvious that you have to sit down and explain this, to clients.

But most of the time then they're like oh, right. Well, okay. Yeah.

[00:45:46] **Ben Brown:** Well, it's almost damaging. Like again, the amount of. Just this sort of binary and myopic information that we're getting these little pieces of soundbites around Biohacking and all of this stuff and for Jesus for the vast majority of people.

It's like dude that is not What is going to move the needle for you? It's man, just get some sleep, eat some protein, manage your calorie intake, move your body, lift some weights drink some water, you're good. Legitimately, if we did nothing but that I promise we could probably get to 95 percent of what you're looking to accomplish.

Then we can start talking about red light therapy. And that's I think it's good. I think I love the fact that people want to know more. I love the platforms that we have to be able to learn. And I love the opportunity to get on a call with someone and help understand where they're coming from, what they're currently doing, and how some of the things that they think they can do are doing well or quote unquote right or supposed to be doing are the very things that are actually keeping them stuck and helping again reframe their mindset to say is it reasonable to assume that Because you're not seeing progress, despite the fact that you think you're doing everything right, the very things that you're doing right now are actually the things that are keeping you stuck.

And, would it be reasonable to assume that if we actually started to change some of those variables around x, y, z, meal timing, calorie intake, sleep rhythms, stress management, that We could probably start to move the needle in a different way. Yes. Okay. Here's how we do that. Right. And that makes sense for people that clicks.

It's right? Definition of insanity. It's like you do realize you keep trying to perpetuate the same cycle. So how about instead of keep doing, how about instead of you keep doing the same thing we acknowledge, right? That there might be a better way. And listen, we all have blind spots. We don't know what we don't know.

That's my job as a coach is to help shine some light on those blind spots so that next time. And we can. Take all those behaviors, we can use them as lessons, learn from them, and turn the page.

[00:48:06] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, and that's what's That's what's hard. Even like you mentioned red light therapy. I just did a presentation for Andy and Dan a biomolecular athlete.

I think it'll go out through their network at some point But I started reading that stuff six five years ago and just to do this stupid presentation I say stupid because it was me Reinventing way too much stuff to do I think I read 133 studies or something asinine about it. I use like 14 in a three and a half hour talk or whatever, but at the end of the day, like all that boils down to, yeah, there's

some pretty cool data that does support red light therapy. I think it definitely can be useful. However, if you're looking at the total effect size, it's still within the single digits, right? So to your point if you're not sleeping enough, you're not getting to the gym, you're not, you're missing all these big things that have You know, multiple factors of leverage associated with them.

Then by far and away, those are going to be the big things that are going to move it for you. But it's also hard for consumers to be like, wow, I heard this is actually efficacious. Well. It is, but then what is the big picture? Like to, maybe a high level athlete who's trying to get 2 percent more.

Yeah. For that person, that might be the difference maker for the average person who, like you said, sleeps four hours a night and eats protein of 60 grams a day. It's yeah, we got plenty of other stuff we can. We need to work on first.

[00:49:35] **Ben Brown:** Yeah, no, absolutely. And those have been a lot of the lessons that I've had to learn throughout my career.

We go back to talking about in person seminars. I, right out of grad school, I always been just voraciously hungry to learn more about, the world. Nutrition and health and fitness and nutrition specifically and I started attending seminars from Paul Cech and then was turned on to Charles Poliquin.

And when we talk about being polarizing on certain things, Charles Poliquin is proverbial, dogmatic. Right approach to so many different things, which led me down a slippery path in many different ways at the same time was invaluable education opportunity to realize a lot of the things that he discussed while they work, they weren't relevant for me.

The time, the clientele, right? The population that I was working with and so on and so forth. So again, it is just very nuanced, but by doing all of that, you learn so much around what works with whom and when, and you start to just pull out all of these little nuggets to build your own real methodology.

And I think that's the name of the game here is. I've learned so much from you and, your flex diet certification and I've learned things from Allie and I've learned things from the doctors and just sitting in the attendance and getting little nuggets of things that I've learned from, hormone doctors and from having conversations with other trainers in the room about both working with clients and building a successful business.

I don't see any other way that it can happen. And everyone's timeline is very different and it goes the same for someone's timeline around their physique changes. You're going to get some genetic freaks that are going to, in six months, they're going to completely change their lifestyle and they're going to be good to go.

And I've had clients like that and dude I can't believe, you dropped 40 to 50 pounds in six months and you got, shredded and you're good to go. And I've heard from them two years later and they're like, I'm still doing it and still learning and just so grateful. And then we've got clients for two to three years and things haven't really changed that much, even though, physically, even though physiologically they've changed psychologically, they've changed a lot.

And so, uh, that's just the way she goes.

[00:52:11] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And it's always hard. On tech. So the thing that. Isn't talked about much at all, but is the thing that allows you to try and sift through items to determine if they're useful in particular cases or not. Right. So take, Poliquin in my opinion had some amazing stuff.

Like I remember getting his Poliquin principles and realized, Oh my God, there's, this is back in the nineties, I think, or. early 2000s. I'm like, there's something beyond the Delorme 3x10 method that was invented in 1951. Holy shit, 5x5 from Bill Starr. Oh, my mind is, exploding. But then, by a signature, some other stuff is did you just completely pull this out of your ass?

Like, but it was so hard with, A lot of those figures that it wasn't that everything they did was bad. It wasn't that everything they did was amazing. It was, some stuff was really good. Like you said, some stuff was amazing for this particular athlete or this particular person, but was horrible for a different athlete.

But it is hard to get that context filter to try to figure out. Okay. When do I apply this? When do I not? And I think that's a more advanced question than does this work, quote unquote, or not work?

[00:53:24] **Ben Brown:** Well, you have to be analytical. And I would say that, one of the attributes that I adopted from my parents.

So, so my dad was a practicing lawyer, but he got a, he got an undergrad at Stanford. Then he went to, and got a PhD and. Biomolecular science. You guys would probably hit it off. You're both big nerds, but PhD from Caltech. And

then he went to university of Iowa law school and practiced in patent and trade infringement.

So he had a complex understanding of not only law, but also biotechnology and. Which made it very hard being a son, but also forced me to, infuse this line of questioning right around and being overly analytical about the things that. People are telling me about the things that we're hearing and trying to understand the context to which, with which they're being delivered, which, in Paulikin's case, it gave me a great opportunity to infuse that level of analytics and say, okay, specifically with respect to biosignatures okay, here's what I'm hearing.

Here's this broad array of supplementation that we're, You know trying to apply And then me doing my diligence to go behind the scenes and look up. Okay, where are these supplements coming from? What are therapeutic doses? What does it say in the literature around? How they're utilized in these respective ways and that Because it was because of that, that helped me continue to want to learn more about clinical nutrition and apply that to not only myself, because I had a myriad of kind of health issues and stomach issues growing up and early on in my career.

But also apply those principles to clientele and truly understand the science. So because of that, then I went and got another master's degree in clinical nutrition. And so I think that it's paramount that we always take this information that we're gleaning with a grain of salt with context and try and infuse a deeper understanding of how and where and when it's relevant, especially with this sort of soundbite.

experience that we're gleaning things from.

[00:55:49] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, definitely. And as we start wrapping up here what do you think is the best way to take, we've touched on it, information, and then also make it practical at the same time, because for example, If you look at just protein, right? Yeah.

There's a lot of good data to show you need two to three grams of leucine. You need probably six grams of branched chain amino acids for the whole process of muscle protein synthesis to continue. You need some form of energy, blah, blah, blah. That just sounds alien speak to a client and is not necessarily useful for them to get to their goals.

So how do you translate that into. Hey, at your first meal let's try to have 40 or 50 grams of protein. That's a doable thing, but yet it has all the other information baked into it that you needed to still know to get to that. Because it seems like in the industry, there's very much appealing to your colleagues when you're trying to work with general population about studies and everything else.

But then I also hear from other trainers who are like, I don't know. Like I told the client to have, two and a half grams of leucine and they didn't do it. It's what are you, of course they didn't do it. What are you doing? You schmuck. Your client doesn't

[00:57:02] **Ben Brown:** give a shit about leucine.

They probably don't give a shit about protein. They just want to know how to get results. When I was first starting and first started studying with Charles so that must have been like 2006 he he, he talked a lot about protein intake. And I think at one point he was recommending like two grams per pound of ideal body weight.

Yeah. So, me, being, Relatively new and, just easily influenced, especially from the caliber of person that Charles was took that information and tried to apply it directly to my very general population clientele. So having Betty Sue, 55 year old. Golf club member just wanting to lose a little bit of body fat and telling her, to eat 225 grams of protein a day because that's what Charles said and very quickly realizing one She doesn't even know what protein sources are.

She only eats twice a day. She barely moves her body. There is no chance in hell that she's going to, eat that amount of protein relative to, for example, a baseball player that I'm working with now who's trying to pack on About 10 pounds before next season. Who's like a robot. It was like, I'll do, just tell me what to do and I'll do it.

And I say, okay, we need to be shooting for, around 250 grams of protein right now, relative to your total calorie intake, And boom, I look at chronometer every single day. He's hitting those. We had a brief conversation around what those could look like, how to build out our meals. So we've got these very different ends of the spectrum.

And that's where it all comes down to who is the type of clientele that we're working with at the end of the day, the principles are the same. Yes. Like we want to be getting a certain amount of protein. But of course, contextually, it's very different where we meet them on that level of spectrum to help them infuse

those guidelines, right, to the degree that for Betty Sue, saying, it probably would be reasonable based on your existing intake for us simply to just start with 75 to 100 grams a day based on what you're currently consuming.

I'm seeing you're consuming around 60 grams. Great start. Here's how we can understand. Add to that. Here's why that's beneficial. Do you think that's something that you can do? Okay, great. Let's go ahead and do that. And as her competence and confidence builds, then we can start to add more to those, to her prescription, so to speak.

I think that's the name of the game in all elements of coaching, is first and foremost determining where the client is starting from, what they're willing and capable and able to do, and then helping them progress in a realistic way.

[00:59:58] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, that's awesome. And where can people find more about you?

Give out your website and you've got a great newsletter. You've got programs. You've got all sorts of wonderful stuff.

[01:00:06] **Ben Brown:** Yeah, totally. So we're at body systems. com. We are at body systems coaching. I'm sure you'll have all the links at body systems coaching on Instagram. We've got a podcast that you've been on a couple of times called the smart nutrition made simple show.

We do. One on one coaching. And we also just launching a men's hybrid coaching program. That's a group and individual coaching program called our prime fit operating system. And it's really teaching men, husbands, and fathers to become the owners in their own body, ultimately becoming the CEO of their life through everything that we're talking about here, nutrition, strength, lifestyle.

And there's more information about that. In all of the links that I already shared.

[01:00:56] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** And if they want to get on to the newsletter, what's the best place for them to go?

[01:00:59] **Ben Brown:** I'll send you the link. They can just Perfect. We'll put it down below. They to the newsletter through the link that you'll have right here in the show notes.

So, we send a few emails per week, all about nutrition, health, fitness the science, the psychology, personal anecdotes, and experiences, client results. And what have you.

[01:01:20] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Awesome. Yeah. I would highly encourage people to check all that out. We'll make sure to have all the links and everything below.

And yeah, thank you so much for all your time and sharing all your knowledge here today. I really appreciate it. That was a fun discussion.

[01:01:31] **Ben Brown:** Dude. It was great. Thank you so much for having me. I really appreciate it, Mike, and look forward to catching up with you again soon.

[01:01:37] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yes. Thank you so much.

[01:01:40] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Thank you so much for listening to the podcast. Really appreciate it. A huge thanks to Ben for coming on the podcast again. We'll link to a note that I was a chat I had with him on his podcast. Make sure to check out all of his information there. We'll put links to everything there below.

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We really appreciate it. Thank you so much. And if you have time to hit the and subscribe button there, download the podcast that really helps us out with the old algorithms, better distribution. And if you even have just 30 seconds to leave us a written review, that is also a massive help. So thank you so much for listening.

Really appreciate it. Talk to all of you next week.

Well, that was different. Yep, lousy, but different.

[01:03:27] **Nancy:** This podcast is for informational purposes only. The podcast is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. You should not use the information on the podcast for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease or prescribing any medication or other treatment.

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