



**I'M CALLING BS!**

**PART 3**

(The Joe Rogan Experience)



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## I'm Calling BS! – Part 3 (The Joe Rogan Experience) Transcript

Dr. Layne Norton:

My wife and I had this conversation the other day, because she was talking about a personality test we should do for our employees and I kind of was like, "Okay, but is that evidence-based?" She got a little offended, she's like, "Well, this has been used by everybody." I'm like, "I don't care. I don't know if that makes it evidence-based." I'm a skeptic by nature, so when anybody makes a claim, my first immediate thought is well, I wonder if that's BS.

Dr. John Berardi:

This is The Doctor John Berardi Show, a podcast that seeks important lessons in a seemingly unlikely place, amid competing points of view. In each episode, I look at fascinating, sometimes even controversial, topics through the minds of divergent thinkers, and together we tease out unifying threads from ideas that may feel irreconcilable. Today's topic, I'm calling BS, Part Three.

Dr. John Berardi:

In Part One of this series, we learned about a fringe area of science that you probably hadn't heard of before, one in which the goal is to call BS on poorly done research in the interest of having it corrected or removed. In Part Two, we moved from published science to popular science, talking about Doctor Matthew Walker's sleep book, Alexey Guzey's criticism of it, and how a leading sleep researcher, Doctor Jennifer Martin, thinks both about the book and its critics. And here in Part Three, we meet a BS detector who targets not scientific source material and not popular science books, but the dissemination of popular science in places like, for example, Joe Rogan's podcast. We'll hear about his criticism of two prominent appearances on the show and we'll even hear back from one of those guests. So, let's get started.

Dr. John Berardi:

In October of 2020, Doctor Paul Saladino, author of The Carnivore Code, appeared on the Joe Rogan show to promote his ideas around eating an animal-based diet. Now, you may recall that Doctor Saladino appeared on this show a few episodes back in a series called Diet Debates and Purple States, and here's how he described his ideas.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

There are three key insights that I really try to communicate to people. And the first is something that we've already talked about, which is that animal foods, eaten nose to tail, were the single greatest catalyst in humans becoming human and are an integral, indispensable part of the human diet, incorrectly vilified over the last 100 years due to bad science, which we can talk about, and that if we want to perform optimally as humans, there is no way to do that without including a significant amount of animal foods, eaten nose to tail, in our diet.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

The second point is equally important, and it is that it's not an argument about whether plants are toxic. Plants are toxic. Botanists accept that. Mostly, everyone accepts that plants are toxic. The only question is how toxic, and how well each of us is genetically equipped to detoxify the plants we're eating. Point number three is that the inclusion of two types of processed food are the single greatest drivers of chronic disease in our country over the last 100 years, and those two types of food are seed oils and processed sugars.

Dr. John Berardi:

Now, Joe Rogan's podcast is one of the most popular shows of any kind on the planet. Between Spotify downloads and YouTube views, it reportedly gets well over 200 million listeners a month, which means appearing on his show, much like appearing on The Oprah Winfrey Show in the 1990s and early 2000s, can catapult a guest to fame and put their books, products and services front and center for a huge portion of the English-speaking world. So for an author trying to get their book read, a podcaster trying to get their show heard, or an entrepreneur trying to get their company more

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exposure, it's a dream invite and people have gone to great lengths to try and get on Joe's radar. Yet, when you appear on such a large platform, you also get on the radar of critics.

Dr. Layne Norton:

When I look at somebody's claim, I'm like all right, first off, are they just presenting it as fact? Because sometimes, somebody will send me something and then I'll go to the page and then the person ... Yes, they made a claim, but they provided a lot of context for it and I'm like, "Listen, this isn't something that needs to be gone ..." Do I necessarily agree with it? No, but the way they framed it was fine. Somebody's allowed to have a different opinion than me.

Dr. Layne Norton:

By the same token, if somebody presents it as fact, doesn't provide context, then it kind of gets on my radar a little bit. And furthermore, if they're profiting from it, that's another thing. And then I think the thing that really gets me, really gets me, is people who make claims and also use the guise of being science-based, right? So this is definitely one of the reasons that somebody like a Gary Taubes or a Paul Saladino or those sorts of people got on my radar, because it's being presented as this is very evidence-based when it's not evidence-based.

Dr. John Berardi:

That's Doctor Layne Norton, a well-known health and fitness expert with a big platform of his own. He's got half a million Instagram followers, a quarter of a million YouTube subscribers and has appeared on The Joe Rogan Experience himself. Now, in November of 2020, less than a month after Doctor Saladino appeared on the Joe Rogan show, Doctor Norton published on his website a massive critique of the interview. If you want to look it up online, it's called Paul Saladino on The Joe Rogan Experience: Hype Versus Evidence. Anyway, the critique was epic, about 25,000 words, it contained close to 300 scientific references and was organized as sort of a timestamped, minute by minute breakdown of the three plus hour interview. And it spread fast. Over 50,000 people read it in the first week. By now, likely hundreds of thousands have read it, sparking contentious debates about ideas like the unique value of plant foods, the relationship between animal fats and human health, and more.

Dr. John Berardi:

For me, however, in keeping with the theme of this series, I was most interested at the meta-level. After all, people argue about things on the internet all the time and no particular debate like this feels urgent to me, but I am intrigued by what motivates someone like Doctor Norton to do this in the first place, how someone like Doctor Saladino might react, and what we can learn from both.

Dr. John Berardi:

Imagine a dark background with metal weightlifting equipment out of focus. Front and center is a 220-pound man, completely ripped. His arms are crossed with veins bulging. On his face is a scowl. The whole thing's in black and white. There's harsh lighting creating lots of shadows. If you follow Doctor Norton on social media, you'll recognize this photo. It's one that he uses quite often when talking about information he doesn't like. If a picture says 1000 words, this picture says I'm a guy who doesn't mess around. I'm the Dark Knight of false information. Make a claim that's not supported by science and I'm coming for you.

Dr. Layne Norton:

There's no peer reviewers in the space of the fitness industry, right? You can make any claim you want. There's no recourse, nobody's coming after you. I mean, people can even make crazy claims. There's some isolated cases where people have got sued and whatnot, and some doctors have lost their medical licenses. It's very rare. And for the most part, you can make crazy claims about cancer and all kinds of stuff, and there really isn't much recourse. And I've seen the damage this stuff does. I mean, you can look at the statistical data. Saladino hasn't done this specifically, so I just

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want to be clear on that. But the cancer hucksters out there who promote alternative therapies ... Listen, if you want to do an alternative therapy, that's fine, but the research shows that people who choose alternative therapies choose to also do the standard of care less and they have higher rates of mortality. So this bad information literally kills people.

Dr. John Berardi:

In other words, purveyors of bad science, particularly in the public domain, beware, you're going to get called out, your BS is going to be detected.

Dr. Layne Norton:

I have a hard time with misrepresentations of the scientific literature. I think that's a very sacred thing. And there's such an uproar when somebody has to retract things, right? In the scientific space. But anybody can make a claim in fitness. Some famous person can make a claim in fitness and there's no uproar when it's shown to be completely wrong. And so, I guess, well, I would look at it as this is me peer-reviewing other people, which is a necessary part of science.

Dr. John Berardi:

Much like Doctor Heathers in the first episode and Alexey Guzey in the second, when seeing how much time Doctor Norton pours into his critiques, I wonder why.

Dr. Layne Norton:

Yeah. So the podcast itself was three hours, but it probably took me about 15 to listen to it, because originally, I was like well, I'm going to timestamp the particular claim, write the claim down, and then have a rebuttal to the claim, and there was just so many claims. I actually ended up taking quite a bit out because I just, like ... Okay, I can't ... I'm going to wind up not spending any time with my kids this week because I'm spending so much time on this. So to watch it was 15 hours, to write the whole thing up, cite it, edit the article, get it posted, all that, it probably ended up being somewhere on the metric of 40 hours.

Dr. John Berardi:

That's an entire workweek for most people. So, why do work like this, unpaid?

Dr. Layne Norton:

So I think I feel called to do that because of a few things. And the first thing is when we go to make a claim in science, like if we're writing a scientific publication, we are very cautious because we know if we make a claim, it's going to get checked, or it should get checked. And so I think over the years of me making a claim and then having somebody really question that and having to rigorously defend that.

Dr. John Berardi:

One learns to appreciate the need for rigor when making claims and realizes the problems with making claims that aren't supported by rigorous evidence.

Dr. Layne Norton:

And also, one of the things that I think even more important than knowing how to rigorously defend a claim is knowing when to say you don't know something. I think that is so powerful and so important. And I remember, when I was getting ready for my qualifying exam as a PhD student, just to be able to be allowed to progress to a PhD, we had to do a four-hour oral examination in front of four professors where they could ask us anything about nutrition. And the way it went was they would pick a subject and they would push you until you didn't know. They would take it all the way down the rabbit hole and you had to know when to say, "I don't know."

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Dr. Layne Norton:

And actually, when I finished that ... I actually can still remember, they asked me an acid balance base question in the lung and I went to the whiteboard to start and I looked back and I go, "I'm not going to BS you guys, I have no idea," and they're like, "Okay, we'll move on." At the end, they were like, "You were one of the best students we've had the last few years because you knew what you knew and you knew what you didn't know," and they appreciated that and I think that kind of set that in my mind that that was very important.

Dr. John Berardi:

So these two ideas that some people making claims in health and fitness or doing so without rigorous evidence and that they're doing so in areas they don't know enough about are irksome to Doctor Norton. But there's one thing that bothers him even more.

Dr. Layne Norton:

When people just make claims, I'll kind of go, "Okay." But when it's claims with something also being sold, that's where it really kind of crosses the line for me a little bit because it's like this is a motivation of money, right?

Dr. John Berardi:

This has led him to do similar reviews of several popular documentaries and podcast appearances in the health and fitness space, like The Game Changers documentary, an appearance by Gary Taubes also on the Joe Rogan show, and more. It's also led him to aggressively go after certain individuals in his YouTube videos and on social media. A famous meme of his is to post clown pictures with the faces of some of these individuals, like Doctor Paul Saladino or Doctor Jason Fung or Gary Taubes, superimposed on them. His beef with some of the folks he mocks is that they're making definitive, confident claims without evidence and to him, that's irresponsible.

Dr. Layne Norton:

Yeah, I think that's a big part of it, is I ... As somebody who is trained in nutrition and has done original research, if people like me are like, "Ah, we're not really sure. Maybe," using that kind of verbiage and then there's somebody who has really no formal training in that, has done no actual research and is cherry-picking studies and making very strong claims, I just don't like that, if I'm being honest. I just don't like it because it's incredible arrogance, to be honest. It's an incredible arrogance to, one, make those sorts of claims without the actual research to back it up. And in some cases, the research is the exact opposite.

Dr. John Berardi:

And when presented with research and evidence?

Dr. Layne Norton:

When presented with a lot of evidence, how do they take that? When somebody presents me with a study that counters what I believe to be true, the first thing I say is well, let me read it. Okay? Let me read the results and see if this thing actually says what you're saying it says, because most times, I would say 95 percent of the time, when somebody says a study says something and I read it, I'm like, "It doesn't actually say that." And then let me look at the methods. And in 99 percent of the times, I would tell you, once I've read the results and the methods, I go, "Here's why they found this." Every once in a while, there's a study where I'm like, "Oh, God, I don't really know how they found that," but then I'll say, "Okay, but on balance, here's these other studies," right? So, at minimum, what we can say is we're not sure.

Dr. Layne Norton:

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A great example was on Rogan, they brought up a study on intermittent fasting. It was a study by Ethan Weiss. And basically, it got a lot of headlines because it was one of the biggest intermittent fasting studies out there, and they took a lot of measurements. And basically, what they showed was that intermittent fasting wasn't any better than continuous meal feeding for most metrics they studied. And actually, they did see a bigger decrease in ... I want to say appendicular lean body mass on the intermittent fasting group, which it wasn't a huge difference, I'm not really ready to go crazy about it. In any case, Joe kind of responds, "Who would even do that study?" and I'm thinking, "A lot of people want that study." And Paul, without even having read the study, says, "Yeah, I mean, maybe one group was eating a bunch of junk food," and I'm just like, "Do you understand how randomization works?" I'll answer that for you. No, you don't understand how randomization works.

Dr. Layne Norton:

So without even reading the study, he's making a completely erroneous criticism. Whereas, the studies that support his bias, there's no criticism whatsoever. Even going through it, I said well, this was a free-living study where they kind of wanted to see if people would spontaneously reduce their intake. I'm like well, if the intermittent fasting group was eating more junk food, doesn't that say something about intermittent fasting? But it's not even considered, it's just ... As soon as the study pops up, if it doesn't support the bias, we have to immediately dismiss it. Whereas, my last criticism of a study will be something like that or the funding source or who did the study or anything like that. I'm just looking for context, I'm looking for do you change your opinion? Are you willing to consider outside evidence, or do you just immediately dismiss it? That's another big one, right? And that's a great example. Is it just immediately dismissed without even considering it?

Dr. John Berardi:

And while a lot of Doctor Norton's motivation seems to be around idealistic notions of, quote, unquote, correct behavior around the use of science and evidence, it's clear that he's also thinking about consequences.

Dr. Layne Norton:

Just from coaching enough people, I think that I see the unintended consequences of claims. So let's take sleep, for example.

Dr. John Berardi:

We got on this subject because we were talking about the situation with Doctor Matthew Walker and Alexey Guzey from Episode Two of this series.

Dr. Layne Norton:

I don't know the literature, so I'm making up a hypothetical here. If you embellish how powerful sleep is or you point out just how horrible it is to not get enough sleep, you may have the exact opposite effect of what you think. So somebody will go, "Well, I know I can't get eight hours, so F it, why even try? I'll just do whatever. I'll just stick to getting my four." Well, maybe getting five and a half was better, better than your four, but because you couldn't do it perfect ... And I see this kind of mentality all the time. But because you couldn't get it to the level that you feel like you need, it's this unicorn fallacy of well, I just might as well not even try. And people don't think about that, they don't think that about unintended consequence. And, again, I don't know the literature that well and I'm making a hypothetical. But I promise you that if that was the case, there are people who thought like that.

Dr. Layne Norton:

I think people are so resistant to the idea of placebo or nocebo because well, that's just in your mind. Not really. Let's take an athlete, for example. Maybe they get six hours of sleep the night before a competition. In reality, they would've

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been fine, but because they've read this book that told them that they're going to perform worse, they go out and perform worse.

Dr. John Berardi:

Yet, I continued to wonder how Doctor Norton chooses which information to focus on and which information to ignore. After all, there's a lot of information out there.

Dr. Layne Norton:

Because I've kind of become known as the guy who debunks stuff, what happens is, for better or worse ... I've kind of trained my audience, right? So they send me all the stuff. People think I go looking for this stuff. I definitely do not go looking for this stuff, I get it sent to me. But that's my own doing because of what I do. I kind of know what needs to be talked about based on the sheer number of people who send it to me, right? So, for example, when *The Game Changers* came out, I'm like, "Wow, a lot of people are watching this and believing it, so I guess I should watch it and just see is it as bad as some people are saying? Does it have merit, this and that?" And, of course, it was a complete nightmare of a documentary in terms of scientific veracity.

Dr. Layne Norton:

When Saladino's episode came out, it was the same thing, there was a ton of people sending it to me. So I felt like it was important to do that. The problem is that by putting someone on, who makes these claims, where they can't be questioned because ... It's not a negative against Joe, it's just he doesn't have the scientific wherewithal to do that. A lot of people will take that as being true. I did send it to Joe himself because I was like, "I know you are interested in this stuff, and here's my perspective." And then just the sheer number of people who sent it to me, I was like, "Okay, I got to do this." But I didn't want to do it because I knew ... I'm like, "This is just going to be an enormous time-suck."

Dr. John Berardi:

Yet, there is an aspect of this kind of work that Doctor Norton enjoys.

Dr. Layne Norton:

It was one of those things where I don't want to do it because I know how much of a time-suck it's going to be, but at the end of it, actually, to be honest, I do end up enjoying it a little bit because I learn so much in that process because I end up going through the literature again. And I always find that when I write about stuff, I learn so much myself, which I enjoy that aspect of it.

Dr. John Berardi:

Plus, there's his natural skepticism and his ADHD.

Dr. Layne Norton:

My ADHD can be a blessing sometimes. If something's on my mind, I can't think of something else. I originally started co-writing this with Kevin Bass. I don't know if you're familiar with Kevin. And Kevin, three days in, messages me and he's like, "Dude, how the hell are you doing this so fast?"

Dr. John Berardi:

Doctor Norton also mentioned that there's probably no acute business benefit to doing this kind of work.

Dr. Layne Norton:

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I don't get paid for this stuff. You could argue you got some followers from it, you can monetize though. It's like yeah, but that's pretty far down the line. That's not why I did it.

Dr. John Berardi:

But I can't help but wonder if there's some sort of ego reward associated with creating a superhero persona, especially if you're seen as a protector of the people. Also, if people trust you because of this character you created, when you do have something to sell, maybe they buy more. We'll talk more about this and we'll also hear from Doctor Paul Saladino after the break.

Dr. John Berardi:

Okay, we're going to take a quick break so I can tell you about a fantastic, free science-based nutrition tool from our sponsor, Precision Nutrition. It's called the PN Nutrition Calculator, and whether you want to improve your health, change your body or just get your eating on track, it can help you get where you want to go. Within just seconds of entering some basic information, it'll give you a nutrition plan that's 100 percent personalized for your body, your eating preferences and your goals. And like I said, your customized report is completely free. You can access it right now at [www.precisionnutrition.com/calculator](http://www.precisionnutrition.com/calculator).

Dr. John Berardi:

By the way, when I say it's science-based, I'm not kidding. The PN Nutrition Calculator uses a cutting-edge, adaptive algorithm validated by Doctor Kevin Hall and his team at The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease. And full disclosure, when PN was developing this calculator, I acted as an advisor, so I know it's a tool you can trust from a company you can trust, and it's totally free. So whether it's for yourself or if you coach clients, it's for them, definitely check it out. Again, you can find it at [www.precisionnutrition.com/calculator](http://www.precisionnutrition.com/calculator). All right, back to the show.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

There are people on the internet who appear to be professional trolls and don't really have a solution, but they certainly like to criticize other people. And to me, they may masquerade as someone who is a defender of truth or a bullshit-crusher or a quack exposé, which are all good things to do if the thing or if the idea being suggested is actually hurting people or could potentially hurt people. But at the same time, I think it's important to realize that that's become a persona on the internet in some ways. And a lot of those people, I don't necessarily see them advancing any of their own original ideas.

Dr. John Berardi:

This is Doctor Paul Saladino again. I wanted to have him on the show to get his thoughts on criticism in general as well as Doctor Norton's criticism of his Joe Rogan appearance. Before getting into it all, I'd like to be clear on something, though. Doctor Saladino is an outspoken critic of lots of ideas himself.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

The unique value of plant foods in the human diet is something that I take issue with. Although, that perspective has evolved over time. Certainly, COVID and the messaging around COVID has been a lightning rod for me or something that I think needs consideration. And specifically, what I'm referring to there is the ... I think the mainstream medicine's perspective would be an accurate portrayal of that. Those are the big ones right now, I think.

Dr. John Berardi:

Doctor Saladino writes on these topics, he covers them on his podcast, he makes videos about them, and more. He feels like open dialogue is the key to evolving our knowledge.



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Dr. Paul Saladino:

Whether it's something that I've written or something someone else has written or a current paradigm within Western medicine, we should be able to talk about all of it in an open dialogue. And I think that the rules are generally that ... I mean, there's no rules, but I think that when you are making criticisms of other people's work, I think it certainly helps to do so in a respectful manner and to understand that people's views are going to evolve. And that hopefully, both the author of that work and the person making the criticism have the same intention in mind, which is to advance the collective understanding to benefit people.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

I think that, or I suspect that, sometimes, as humans, I've certainly experienced this with my own work, people will criticize your work in order to elevate themselves. It's a zero-sum game. They want to chop off your head so that they stand taller, and I don't think that that benefits anyone, right? I think that that is one of the key components of doing this type of work is just making sure that the person, both writing the work and suggesting ideas and making the criticism, has the right intention in mind, which is how do we arrive at the truth, or how do we arrive at the closest approximation of the truth, and how is this dialogue productive?

Dr. John Berardi:

The problem with the idea of assessing intentionality, of course, is that it's really difficult to know what anyone else's intentions really are. Even knowing one's own intentions is a difficult proposition as our behavior is often driven by a mix of motivators, conscious and subconscious. One's decision to do criticism, for example, may come from a messy mix of a desire to get a truth, a dislike for commercial interests, a suspicion that criticism of a popular figure will get them attention, and a distaste for the person sharing the ideas they want to criticize. With that said, the respect part is fairly easy to discern. As Doctor Heathers said in Part One of this series, when talking about pointing out errors in scientific papers-

Dr. James Heathers:

We put a lot of thought into the language that we use to talk about this, who we say what needs to be said to, how much respect is inherent in the communication. I mean, I can be face-to-face, very casual, colossally disrespectful and generally, I'm a pleasant person, but every one of these emails is written like I'm the Queen of England, because it is inherent in the process that these people should be respected. As much as that's occasionally not what I want to do, it is not about me, it's about the science.

Dr. John Berardi:

So I wanted to know if Doctor Norton's criticism, independent of intentionality, felt respectful. I asked Doctor Saladino how Doctor Norton's article landed with him.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

I think that, as humans, we don't like that sort of thing. A lot of it is things people would never say to your face, they use tonality and sentence structure and sort of intention that they would not say to you from a human to a human. People may take issue with things that I said on Rogan, but if they were actually with me in person, I think they would respond in a different way or might address me or might communicate differently. So that's the first thing, is that people can be inflammatory in their communication and maybe more disrespectful or just take a tone that causes humans on both sides to bristle a little bit when it's not actually in person because that's how we're supposed to do it as humans. If you're an actual human being that has a desire to connect with another human being, you want to share ideas.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

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When other people did things that I had issues with and I actually talked to them in person or I saw their face on a podcast, my criticisms quickly became more soft. In my preparation for a recent podcast with a friend of mine, Steven Gundry, he wrote a book recently and he sent me a copy and I was like, "Oh, this will be a good opportunity to have discussion and debate and kind of see both sides." And as I was preparing, I was kind of getting a little frustrated, thinking, "Ah, Steven, what did you do here? I don't agree with these points." And I came to the podcast, on my show, ready to kind of debate him. And he's such a nice guy that he showed up and when we were live, it was much more friendly than I anticipated and we just kind of laughed and said, "Oh, we're going to disagree here, but here's this point that I have with this," and the other person is actually there, live, and able to respond and say, "Well, did you consider this?" or, maybe, "I think you're misquoting this." And so that type of discussion, I think, is much more productive.

Dr. John Berardi:

Doctor Saladino goes on to talk about some of the problems with doing criticism on the internet, particularly on social media.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

When you remove humans from actual human interaction, we become less kind and compassionate and empathetic. Does that make sense? And that's my problem with Twitter is that I will post on Twitter in the hope that people will see my post and find value or think that it's an interesting idea or criticize it, but I don't read the comments because I don't want to see that, right? But if I'm in a room with someone, if it's Layne or Michael Gregor or whatever vegan doctor or someone I might completely disagree with, I would love to have a conversation with them, right? I would love to have dinner with Layne and say, "Okay, let's talk about it. What do you think is the issue here? Let's actually do this," right?

Dr. Paul Saladino:

There are a lot of people that I would like to have those conversations with and unfortunately, very few of them are willing to do that. And never was there discussion between Layne and I saying, "Hey, Paul, I saw you on Rogan. I hope it helps a lot of people. I had issue with some of the things that you said. Do you want to come on my podcast and discuss it?" He didn't say that. I think that I said to him, "Hey, let's do a podcast and discuss some of this stuff," and he said, "Yeah, we can do it. I'm actually writing a piece about you." I was like, "Oh, okay, you're writing a hit piece. Great."

Dr. Paul Saladino:

It's like, why would you throw stones at each other from behind walls when you could just have a conversation? I think that when you try and freeze something in time, it makes it much more attackable, right? It's different when you want to have a discussion with someone and you can share ideas in real time, because I might say, "Hey, you know what, Layne? You're right, I could've said this better on Rogan. This was my intent. I appreciate you pointing that out. But have you considered all these other studies?" And that's why it becomes a much more organic, productive dialogue.

Dr. John Berardi:

Later in the conversation, he did mention that a debate like this could be forthcoming.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

To his credit, Layne has been willing to do that and there was a podcast scheduled that we haven't been able to figure out and I've been in Costa Rica. Yeah, it may still happen. I think it hopefully will. I think that there may have been a better way to go about it rather than the way that he did.

Dr. John Berardi:

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Now, I'd like to jump in here and say that when I read the full article reviewing Doctor Saladino's appearance, I didn't find it particularly crass, mean-spirited or disrespectful. With that said, I suspect Doctor Saladino is more reacting to the full body of criticism that's been lobbed his way by Doctor Norton. As mentioned earlier, Doctor Norton does have a tendency, especially on social media, to veer from idea criticism into criticism of the people with the ideas, which tends to land even less well.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

If the roles were reversed and Layne had been on Rogan's podcast, sharing his unique ideas and I took issue with those, I don't think that I would act in the way that Layne has. By that, I mean I would not make derogatory memes about Layne. He's done that multiple times to me, and whatever, I'm not really butthurt about it. I suppose if I'm mentioning it, maybe I am a little more than I imagine that I am. But I've never done this about anyone whose ideas I disagreed with. With Steven Gundry, who ... Some of his ideas, I agree with and some, I disagree with. I said to him, "Hey, come on my podcast. Let's have a real conversation as humans and we'll discuss it," and it was super productive. And I've had multiple vegans on my podcast and had discussions like this that I think are really productive.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

But my personal code of ethics or my perspective, just me as a human, I would never make a meme criticizing Layne and saying, "Man, you're a clown." And Layne does use that terminology for me frequently, or carnivore zealot or whatever. It's kind of just playground, name-calling, and stone and stick throwing. It's like okay, what type of person does that? I wonder about the underlying psychology, like what type of person sees an idea they don't agree with and immediately just makes fun of the other person? It's not something I would do. If it advances his work and leads to improvement in human lives, then maybe you could make a case that it's a valuable way to do something, but I'm not sure it's doing that. I think it just kind of is an illustration of what appears to be a manner of behavior in which someone is at least equally interested in disparaging someone as personally or ad hominem attacks or making themselves look to be stronger, while the other person is less credible or whatever.

Dr. John Berardi:

Again, this behavior coupled with the write-up on Doctor Norton's website left Doctor Saladino feeling less like his ideas were being criticized and more like he was being personally attacked.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

What happened with Layne in this case, where it's a three-hour podcast on Joe Rogan, and Layne has been on Joe Rogan in the past, but not by himself. He was on with Dom D'Agostino once in the past. I don't believe that Layne has ever presented unique ideas of his own on Rogan. I think he actually went on with Dom D'Agostino to provide a little bit of a criticism about Dom's work, the benefits of ketones. And so Layne has never been in the position that I was in on Rogan, which was three hours of discussion with Joe about my ideas. What's interesting is it's a podcast, it's a recorded discussion, it's not a scientific paper that I'm writing over three hours. I was kind of taken aback and thought, "Why would you debate the podcast?"

Dr. Paul Saladino:

The other challenge with being on Joe's show is that Joe moves around a lot in terms of his topics, and though I had many references that I showed during the show, there's no bibliography for the episode, there's no way for me to go through everything and do a full thesis defense on Joe Rogan. And so it presents this incomplete product and it's a discussion that's, I think, meant to pique people's curiosity and I was sort of surprised that Layne wanted to really dissect it. It's like well, it's not really meant to be dissected, it's meant to create a jumping off point for conversation and discussion rather than being something that you dissect because it's an imperfect product and always will be because it's human. It's two humans talking, and I had no idea what he was going to ask me. And the AB set up is less than ideal, I

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have a bunch of files on my computer that I'm trying to tell Jamie to pull up on his computer and then show, and then Joe is moving around a lot based on what he's interested in and there were many times in the show that I didn't get to fully elaborate on all the points that I was trying to make.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

My feeling, which could be completely wrong, was that Layne wanted to steal my shine, that he thought, "Oh, Paul got on Rogan, I'm going to make a big show criticizing his work and I'm going to steal a little bit of that shine. Because Paul's in the spotlight and a lot of people are hearing it, now is the time to really try and promote myself." I'll be completely frank with you and honest, I think Layne is a fantastic example of someone that tries to make a name for themselves by cutting other people's heads off and making other people look bad so that he looks better. I would say that to his face. I've debated him in the past. So Layne and I had a debate on Mark Bell's podcast many years ago. So if Layne and I do have a debate, when these things are hard to schedule and hard to structure in a way that's productive for the listeners, then I would say that to him. I don't think that Layne does a great job of treating people respectfully or understanding where someone is coming from.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

And my suspicion, which could be completely wrong, is that he tends to try to make other people look bad to make himself look better rather than providing unique content that will help people. So maybe it's not fair of me to levy criticism back at Layne without him being able to defend himself, but that's my frank opinion about it. At some point, I imagine Layne and I will talk about it. But I think it's one thing to take a book that someone's written and make a criticism and it's another thing to criticize a podcast. They're not quite the same product.

Dr. John Berardi:

And this last point is important to Doctor Saladino because he believes that Doctor Norton has been doing all these critiques without ever having bothered to read his book.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

For someone to be that critical of my work, but to not have examined it, also, to me, is a little bit ... It seems inconsiderate or something. And perhaps Layne would say, "I don't need to read your poor-quality book," but at the same time, if I'm going to ... And I really appreciate Steven Gundry and the work he's done, I'm just using this example because he was on my podcast. When he came on my podcast, I read his book. I read his book and I looked at his references. And so I think that that is the proper way to do it.

Dr. John Berardi:

Although Doctor Saladino does point out that some of his ideas have changed over time.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

To be fair, a lot of people have written criticisms of my book, *The Carnivore Code*, and I've evolved in my own opinion about a number of issues in the book since I wrote it. So that's the tricky thing about writing a book is you're fixing your ideas in stone at a certain time and yet, as a human, your ideas are always evolving.

Dr. John Berardi:

Yet, he even feels like he's been unfairly criticized for this.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

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I'll just mention that Layne actually criticized me for changing my opinion a little bit from the book, which I find pretty ironic. Here is my writing a book, putting my ideas out there and then being humble enough to say hey, you know what? I'm going to modify my views on carbohydrates a little bit. Let's evolve and grow. I would hope that people would generally see that as hey, this guy's open to ideas and he's trying to communicate places where his ideas, that would be my ideas, were limited or incomplete. Instead of getting a high five and being like, "Man, that's cool. Thanks for being willing to evolve your ideas," right?

Dr. Paul Saladino:

We're all trying to help people by creating an increased understanding. This same group of people often comes at you and says, "This dude doesn't even know what he's talking about. He's changing his mind." And to me, that's another litmus to say I don't think the intent is the same on both sides. It just, to me, continues to seem that some people in the internet space are actually trying to make a name for themselves by making you look bad rather than really just trying to create information and content and expression of coherent ideas that help humans.

Dr. John Berardi:

In the end, Doctor Saladino suspects that he and Doctor Norton will have a public, real time discussion about all these things. It seems like he wants to, although his enthusiasm seems tempered by how these discussions are often treated.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

As much as I look forward to doing a debate with Layne about these things and having discussion, I think a lot of people take sides and they're like, "I'm Team Layne, and I'm Team Paul." That's what happened on the first debate. People like Layne's work because he's done work in the past that people have enjoyed. Great. I think people often see these debates as entertainment, when they should be actual intellectual conversation. And I actually had someone even tell me that, like, "Hey, I want to have you on my podcast to debate this guy. It'll be good entertainment." I thought, "Man, debates as entertainment? If people just want entertainment, go watch a UFC fight. I don't want to be entertainment, I actually want to create a useful discussion that people are going to be able to get something out of."

Dr. John Berardi:

And this last point seems really important to Doctor Saladino.

Dr. Paul Saladino:

I want to have a productive conversation where people can see both sides. And maybe somebody who's a vegan and suffering can say, "Ah, you know what? I am suffering, and maybe I should include animal foods back in my diet," and maybe it'll help them break out of this confirmatory paradigm that they're in. And so I don't see it quite being that way with the things that I'm saying because I'm saying hey, you know what? I've been pretty clear about this, and I'm pretty sure I said this on Rogan. If somebody's eating a diet and thriving, who am I to tell them to change their diet?

Dr. Paul Saladino:

But what I'm offering people is hopefully something original or ... I mean, do any of us really have original ideas? Some new way of communicating an idea that might be helpful for people who are suffering. I try to create caveats, and I said things like this, to the effect of you know what? If you're eating a diet and you're thriving, don't change a thing. But I want to create a tool for people who are struggling and don't see hope and don't see a new path, because this is an idea that hasn't been talked about and it's good to share with people the idea that hey, there are other ways of living that are possible, and maybe take someone from a hopeless position to a position of hope.

Dr. John Berardi:

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Listening to these various thoughts from Doctor Norton and Doctor Saladino, it feels like we're landing in a similar place as we did in Part Two of this series. Your perspective on who's, quote, unquote, right or wrong will likely depend on what you think is more important. Again, what you think is baby and what you think is bathwater. If you're a truth crusader, then no-one gets a pass. No matter how much good anyone thinks they're doing, BS must be called on anything that isn't scientifically validated. On the other hand, if you're a utilitarian and you believe in the greatest good for the greatest number, then you're willing to let some ideas slide if they seem to be doing good, even if they're aren't validated. But even that distinction seems a little too simplistic to me because, as Doctor Jennifer Martin said in Part Two-

Dr. Jennifer Martin:

I think the debate that we were discussing earlier is not around the science itself, it's around the interpretation of the science.

Dr. John Berardi:

And I think this is a key point. Most ideas discussed in the public domain can't be strictly validated or invalidated because they're interpretations of science, applications of it in the real world. Doctor Norton talked about this in the context of books.

Dr. Layne Norton:

I tell people, I'm like, I'm not saying books don't have utility, because, obviously, I've written a couple books as well, but you got to understand that a big chunk of that is the person's opinion. You really have to understand that, going in.

Dr. John Berardi:

This makes what we talked about in Part One of this series a much easier thing to referee. Published research has a set of operating principles and the rules of math are well known. Did someone violate the principles or do the math wrong? If so, their paper should be corrected or removed. However, there's a lot less certainty when it comes to the dissemination of popular science information or even public health recommendations, whether it's best to sleep eight hours per night, whether it's best for everyone to eat five servings of vegetables per day, whether there's a certain amount of meat that's safe to eat and a certain amount that isn't. No-one on the planet knows the answers for sure. In all this uncertainty, we try to find some measure of control. We look to experts to tell us what to do, and if they disagree, our instincts tell us they should fight it out. If we can declare a winner, the world feels safe again, even if it's just momentarily.

Dr. Layne Norton:

Because I think people will sit here and go, "Well, I don't know who the heck to follow. I don't know who the heck to trust," right? It's very counterintuitive, but you need to look for people who say I don't know, or people who say that's out of my scope, or people who say I'm not sure, or if they answer a question, they're asking for a lot of context. Real experts, usually, when you ask them a question, they'll probably ask you a question back. It's not just going to be, "Yeah, low carb," or "Yeah, vegan," or this kind of blanket answer to everything. I mean, if you're coming across somebody who ... They have a panacea that just fixes everything, that's a really good indication that you're dealing with somebody who's not evidence-based because physiology just doesn't really work like that.

Dr. John Berardi:

Another way I like to think of the uncertainty that comes when trying to discern what is true or false, helpful or harmful, ethical or unethical, is something that computer scientist, legal scholar and cryptographer Nick Szabo calls quantum thinking. In a recent interview, Szabo said, "Not only should you disagree with others, but you should disagree with yourself. Quantum thought demands that we simultaneously consider often mutually contradictory possibilities." He

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goes on, "In quantum reality, I can be both for and against a proposition because I am entertaining at least two significantly possible but inconsistent hypotheses, or because I favor some parts of a set of ideas and no other parts." Christian Keil, writing about this concept, tells us that, "At its core, the idea of quantum thinking implores us to keep away from answers, to live in the middle of a question, to avoid the magnetic poles of oppositional opinion, and to embrace the ambiguity of the unfinished answer."

Dr. John Berardi:

If all that feels like so much mumbo jumbo, I'll put it this way. Quantum thinking forces you to consider questions like could Doctor Layne Norton's critiques of Doctor Paul Saladino be both useful and necessary, while also unethical and in poor taste? Could Doctor Matthew Walker's book be both full of scientific errors and harmful to some, while also containing lots of accurate data and helpful to others? Could Doctor Paul Saladino's ideas on carnivore eating be both novel and clinically useful, while also scientifically unsupported and unethically defended with pseudoscientific claims? Could Doctor James Heathers and his error detection colleagues be ruiners and bullies, while also essential agents in the fight against bad science?

Dr. John Berardi:

In other words, like it or not, the world is far too complex for simple truths. So instead of looking for certainty in a person, or in a neatly constructed set of ideas, or in black versus white, or good versus bad, instead of trying to resolve life's tensions by oversimplifying and then picking sides, maybe we'd be better off developing quantum thinking skills, the ability to deconstruct things so we can isolate parts from the whole, the ability to consider what truth value oppositional arguments hold, and then the ability to better communicate our own ideas, avoiding binary, either/or thinking, even if we're just communicating them to ourselves. Because if we got better at these skills, not only would we develop a keener perception for what's worth keeping and what's worth throwing out in these winner-take-all debates, we likely find that we no longer needed to consume the debates in the first place.

Dr. John Berardi:

Before we end, I need to tell you about a little contest we're running with our two sponsors, Precision Nutrition and Change Maker Academy. There are 15,000 dollars in prizes up for grabs, and all you have to do to enter, it's really simple, is to subscribe to the show, wherever you listen to podcasts, and take a screenshot of that subscription. Next, rate and review the show, positive, negative or neutral, on either Apple Podcasts, if you use an Apple device, or on something like Castbox or Podchaser if you don't. Then, take a screenshot of that. Once you have those two screenshots, email them to us at [reviews@drjohnberardishow.com](mailto:reviews@drjohnberardishow.com). Make sure you spell it D-R-johnberardishow rather than D-O-C-T-O-R, and you're done. Like I said, really simple.

Dr. John Berardi:

From there, just before the release of our next show, we'll randomly select three winners who get to choose from among 15,000 in prizes, including a spot in the Precision Nutrition Level One Certification Program or the Precision Nutrition Level Two Certification Program or Precision Nutrition Coaching. Winners get to choose which one they want. Winners also get to choose one of the following, a copy of my book, Change Maker, or up to 75 dollars in Precision Nutrition apparel. And finally, winners also get a spot in Change Maker Academy's new course, The Career Blueprint.

Dr. John Berardi:

So, why a contest? Well, when podcasts get a lot of ratings, reviews and subscribers, they have a chance of living a long, happy, productive life. It's just the way the algorithms work. But without subscribers, ratings and reviews, a podcast toils in obscurity. So, again, for a chance to get some really great stuff from our sponsors, while doing us a solid, please get to subscribing, rating, reviewing and sending us those screenshots. Oh, and if you previously subscribed, rated and

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reviewed, you can send us your screenshots too. We'll include you in the contest as well. Can't wait to find out who wins.

Dr. John Berardi:

Before signing off, I'd like to thank our production team. Marjorie Korn, my research partner and co-writer on the show, Martin DeSouza, our producer, Dylan Groff, who edited and sound designed this episode, and thanks to you for listening.