Transcript of "Flow State and Being a Crossfit Champion with Amanda Allen"

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Dave: Hey, everyone. It's Dave Asprey with Bulletproof Executive Radio.

Today's cool fact of the day is about Tug-of-War. It was an official Olympic event from 1900 to 1920. It was originally used in China around the 8th century to train warriors. Each side would have their own set of drummers to inspire them. In ancient Greece they would actually hold hands to make it even more difficult. That doesn't really have a lot to do with today, except that maybe Crossfit is not that different from Tug-of-War in that you're pulling with everything you have in it? Who knows?

Anyhow, today's guest is the 2013 Crossfit Games World Champion in her age group, which is not the age group I would have expected: in the 40 to 44 group. You look much younger than that, Amanda, and by the way, this is Amanda Allen.

Amanda, welcome to the show.

Amanda: Thank you, Dave. It's an absolute pleasure to be here, thank you.

Dave: You are most welcome. In case it's not obvious from that greeting there, you are not from North America. You're down in Australia, right?

Amanda: I'm down on the bottom of the planet, yeah, South Australia. Yep, Australian.

Dave: If you are watching this on iTunes or on YouTube, you would see that I'm looking at a woman who is clearly in better shape than me. You have the most amazing arms. It's just impressive.

Amanda: There are 3 years of Crossfit in these arms.

Dave: It shows. You only started in 2010 or 2011 in Crossfit?

Amanda: It's about 3 years now. It's literally 3 years in the lead up to the coming season 2014.

Dave: You finished in the top 20 in 2011, and just went straight for it.

Amanda: Yeah, it was all an accident. I hit Crossfit Games at 40, almost 41 when I hit the Crossfit Games, having 6 months in the sport. So it was a whirlwind.

Dave: Have you always been an athlete your whole life, and then you became interested in Crossfit. Or did you have a wake-up one day and be just like "I'm going to be Superwoman."

Amanda: Oh my gosh. It's an interesting story. I've been all athlete or the polar opposite of an athlete all my life. I've really battled both ends of the spectrum. Thankfully today, 43 whatever, I'm just all athlete. I'm all health, and I'm all radiant energy. What a gift that is. No, it hasn't been all one thing for me.

Dave: That's interesting. The reason I wanted you to come on the show is that in addition doing Crossfit, you've done some other things like yoga, Reikian massage, psychology. You're pretty well rounded on the wellness front. One of the things that people talk about Crossfit is that it can be hard on your body. It's also really good for your body, as you can tell by looking at you. There's a delicate balance of really intense exercise and intense recovery. You are someone who has really mastered that balance, You're performing at this very elite level and you're doing it after age 40, which makes it tougher, and you're in really good health.

I want to know your secrets. How do you do this?

Amanda: It's gotten so interesting. Suddenly enough, Dave, I'm writing a book to answer this question. I get it every day, over and over and over. Hopefully I don't bore people with the response that it has not been a simple process. It has not been an easy journey. I had to have the absence of all of that. The absence of health, the absence of mental wellbeing. The absence of all of that to slowly over 40 years find my way to what I enjoy today, and what's given me the foundation to be able to be as successful and resilient as I am with Crossfit in my life in my 40's.

I focus on absolutely everything that I have any control over in my life. If I'm not training - which is the only place I have any right to be breaking down. If I'm not training, I'm recovering. That is everyone 1 percent of every single aspect of my life. Anything I think, anything I eat, whatever I drink, the people I surround myself with, the environment I live in. You name it. Everything I know. As rigid and disciplined as that sounds, it's not. It's an absolute joy. It's every one percent.

I don't know anybody who is as dedicated or madly obsessive as I am about recovery.

Dave: That is a twitter quote right there. "If I'm not training, I'm recovering." There you go. You've become a successful Crossfitter because you focus on recovery as much as you focus on the really good intense exercise that you're getting.

Amanda: There's only so many hours a day that you can train. Say I'm training 4 hours a day. Well, there you go, I've got another 20 hours a day to screw it up or to get it right. I spend those 20 hours being a beast at recovery.

Dave: Do you really train for 4 hours a day?

Amanda: Yeah, absolutely. I'm a 7-day-a-week girl. It's what works for me. I've tried having recovery days, 3 days one and 1 day off, or that sort of carry-on. I simply don't come back better from it. I'm better if I'm just running that motor constantly, with fluctuations in intensity of course. Some days a long recovery run, 90 minutes with my beautiful dog and that's pure joy to me. That's not breaking me down. But for the next person who also does not have my background as a professional triathlete for many years, it may not work for them. I wouldn't advise 7 days a week to any of my clients or most people, but I found it works for me.

Dave: The individuality of this whole path of biohacking and figuring out what works. You've got to test it. You've got to see. It's interesting, it does work. Do you think it's because you were a pro-level triathlete for so long before you switched to Crossfit? Or did you switch? Are you doing both or are you pretty much all Crossfit all the time now?

Amanda: I can't look at triathlon any more. I would do it and I have done it in Crossfit competitions. It's fantastic. No, it holds no enticement to me any more. It's never one thing, is it? It's never just one thing in isolation.

I do have that background, so it does lend itself to me being an endurance kind of beast. I'm also that mentality that I know what my personality is like and I need to chip chip chip away. I'm not the person who needs to go hard, have a big break, go hard, have a big break, or eat really really well and have a cheat day, eat really well, and cheat.

I just need to keep the engine running constantly, and that works with my personality.

Dave: Do you have a trainer who helps you with all this, or do you sort of self coach?

Amanda: I'm a strange creature. I have three coaches and I also get in the mix there as well. I guess effectively I'm coached by four people if I include myself. I have one coach who has been my coach from the very first day that I walked into Crossfit, Ben Norman at Crossfit in Adelaide. He's the poor guy who has to deal with my personality and integrating the coaches involved in making me the success that I am.

Dave: That is impressive, that you have multiple coaches and you work like that. Is that common in Crossfit?

Amanda: It's the same as anything. It's "what is common?" The uncommon is common in Crossfit. Everybody is different. I wasn't the same in my first year. My first year was one coach only. I knew very little. I totally deferred to Ben. That slowly evolved and changed. No doubt it will continue to evolve and change. That's the nature of growth. That's the nature of improvement. That's just the nature of life, isn't it?

Dave: It really is. There is I think in any sports discipline, or honestly even as an entrepreneur or any sort of CEO discipline: if you don't have your ego in enough check to allow people like coaches to come in and help you in the areas where you need improvement, or even areas where you already kick ass, you just want to kick more ass. I find it's much harder to progress. I wish that when I was a young man I had understood that. I'm like I'll do it alone. I do find some of that comes out in Crossfit. There's this community, this is my tribe. Then there's like I'm on the bars and it's almost like some people have a resistance to coaching about their form and things like.

Do you come across that in the gym? Has that been your experience?

Amanda: If I understand your question correctly, it's funny isn't it? We're all resistant to change. I would resist it also if it works for me, but I just seem to have been on one of these paths where I have no choice about the change that's happening in my life. I've just got to hold on for dear life and ride that wild wave.

Change is uncomfortable. When I want to add a new coach or two new coaches, but still keep my current coach on board, that's threatening to my current coach. That's uncomfortable for me because there's possibly conflict, but I have no choice.

I came back from the Crossfit Games in 2013 having won Masters, but in winning Masters I also missed out by a few points at our regional championships in 2014. I missed out on going back as an individual competitor, and I have missed out just over the last two years. What I took back to the drawing board, well, that's not what I wanted. In a way, there's a failure.

I don't think that's a negative thing, it's just there. A failure in one area of my training. What am I going to do about that? I need to find a new coach. I was willing to strip everything back and begin again. Let's change everything, basically. With that of course comes incredible risk and a lot of uncertainty. Who likes uncertainty? We're creatures that are constantly looking for that security and certainty, but you have to be willing to risk everything to improve, and to grow, and to take the opportunities.

When I came back from the games, I was really uncomfortable about all the decisions I just felt I had to make. There was that wild wave coming through again, and it required my attention and my commitment to be willing to change. As uncomfortable as that

change makes me, I'm always progressing. There's always improvement. I'm only getting better, and even getting better at being willing to risk change.

We all just want to arrive at our destination and sit back, take it easy. Change is uncomfortable. Not everybody wants to be uncomfortable.

Dave: I was doing a podcast interview earlier with a guy, Dan Hurley, who has written a book about creating mental change, and really making yourself smarter. That was a conclusion that we both came to was that no matter what you do every day, if you do something that makes you uncomfortable, that it causes increases in brain function and increases in how you perform.

It doesn't really matter if it's the extra-hard crossword puzzle, if that's something that's difficult for you, or whether it's challenging yourself in a box until you fall over panting. It's the intensity and the fact that you're uncomfortable, that your body's uncomfortable, that drives change. It sounds like you've driven quite a lot of change in 3 years.

Amanda: The last 3 years have been easier compared to the previous 20.

Dave: As a triathlete?

Amanda: Just a lot of issues. I was not a particularly well kid. I suffered a lot of depression and a range of health issues. Just journeying through all of that, I honestly believed it's laid the foundation for what I'm able to manage and enjoy today. Every day I turn up to Crossfit, every hour at some point, I am facing my own fear. It is scary to turn up and to work as hard as I do day in and day out. It could be one lift at a time, one hour at a time.

There's not a day goes by that I don't wake up and confront fear over and over and over again in my Crossfit world. That's makes me stronger. That builds extraordinary character. I love Crossfit for that more than anything. It's easy to get into a groove in triathlon. With Crossfit you don't get to sit in any groove. You never do. You're constantly being confronted and battered and tested. I love Crossfit for that. It asks me every day "What are you made of? What have you got? Do you have the depth, the character that's required to step up?" Over and over and over again, that question is being answered for me.

Dave: It's interesting in that Crossfit is holding the intensity relatively constant as in really intense, even though the activities vary. Which is kind of a different approach than you typically find. I think it's that mix that makes it particularly addictive.

Are you familiar with the flow state, the athletic flow state that you get into when things sort of ... You lose time and you're just there.

Amanda: Yeah, yeah.

Dave: Does Crossfit do that for you?

Amanda: Absolutely.

Dave: It does.

Amanda: It's something that. There are those peak moments where you are totally in the zone, if that's what you're referring to? They are so rare, do you know? That's what every athlete chases. It doesn't matter what level you are. I've just been writing my first book, which is almost finished. I write about that only rare occasions. I can remember those workouts. It maybe at competition or just in a day-to-day workout, but I can remember them like they were a moment ago. They're pure and extraordinary, and you don't reach them very often. I haven't found that I do.

Dave: Even in the box, you're not necessarily hitting those on a regular basis. I'm forming a hypothesis here about your intensity of exercise in duration based on an earlier conversation with Steven Kotler, whose work might be interesting to you for your book. He just wrote "The Rise of Superman". It's looking at extreme athletes, including triathletes and people like that, and how do they get in that state, the one you're talking about athletes chasing. It strikes me that just the level of intensity plus the variability in Crossfit would be amazing for creating that state, just because you're so all into it. I don't know if that's a helpful date point for you.

In your experience, do you find it more in Crossfit or did you find it more as a triathlete, or is it just so rare that it's hard to say?

Amanda: It is a state, isn't it? I do a lot of time meditating. Years ago, I became vegetarian. I took a guru. I chanted the thousand names of the divine mother every night in Malayalam before I went to bed. I was totally immersed in another world, constantly searching. It's a meditative state. I think that peak or that flow as you describe it, it's a state. It is meditation. I've found for me, and I've really struggled with meditation. I explored everything I could, but Crossfit is that. Crossfit is meditation for me.

You have got times times where your meditation is more pure and the thoughts are less. Then you have those times where it's just noise in your head. I think constantly turning up to Crossfit, yes, and the intensity, and finding a rhythm. That's what I find. My breath and the next count and the next movement and my breath and the next count

and the next movement, or my breath and the step back and the next movement. That is a meditation. I don't think it's intensity-related, but intensity does help me go there because it is so all-consuming, all-demanding. I love it for that.

My friends from my days when I was meditating would be horrified that I find meditation in Crossfit. They couldn't possibly touch it, but for me that's what works. There had to be incense and there had to an enormous picture of The Divine Mother. For me, I can take all that with me into Crossfit and that just makes me who I am. I'm just a little bit odd.

But it works and I love it.

Dave: Do you do strange breathing exercises when you're exercising. Do you only breathe through your nose, or do you time your breathing when you're doing a training workout?

Amanda: I've tried breathing through my nose, and I've tried running, when I used to run a lot, through my nose. I can't get enough air in.

Dave: It doesn't work for you?

Amanda: No. As much research as there is to support its effectiveness and value, I can't do it, so I've given that away. Every workout, it speaks to me. It determines how I find the rhythm, where I find the pattern of breathing. That gives me the momentum, and that does take me into that flow.

In every single workout, I search for it. I search for that rhythm. I search for that flow. I search for that breathing pattern. I'm constantly looking for that pure experience of that workout.

Dave: That's insightful, and it's not something you hear athletes talk about too much. I appreciate you just laying it out there and sharing it.

You have something tattooed on your bicep. What does it say there?

Amanda: I do, I do. Can you it?

Dave: That is a really ripped bicep. I think I have arm envy here. It says "Freedom", right?

Amanda: It says "Freedom", yeah.

Dave: Why did you get "Freedom" on your bicep?

Amanda: I got it just over a year ago. It really is where I'm at in my life, and I've not enjoyed freedom. Actually, Freedom Through Discipline is a tour I just did, a speaking tour, a seminar tour up the east coast of Australia. I jumped into a motor home with my dog, and went and spoke at many Crossfit boxes all up the east coast of Australia. Freedom through discipline is something. I hated discipline. I rejected discipline for most of my life. Anybody who had it I think I disliked, but probably envied.

I think it was a Nelson Mandela quote "freedom through discipline"? I read it about 10 years ago and it changed everything. It was like one of those "Aha" moments. I discovered that the only way for me to have freedom is through the disciplining of my own being, and controlling the control-ables. Freedom has come ironically through discipline, in discipline in my life and integrating that into every aspect. That is the most exquisite experience to have total freedom within your own skin. I'm not totally free, but I free in a way and experiencing freedom on a daily basis in a way I could not have even imagined maybe 20 years ago.

Dave: Freedom from what?

Amanda: For me, freedom from ... I suffered a lot of depression. Alcohol abuse. I did alcohol and depression the way I do Crossfit. I do have that personality.

Dave: Very well said.

Amanda: It needs to be driven in a very positive manner, because I have such a powerful ferocious energy inside of me that it must be channeled. So I guess I'm free from that pain. Free from being trapped, basically, in my own habits and in the very negative habits. I used to call it The Pit of Despair, that I would end up in The Pit of Despair over and over, with no tools, with no way out, and with absolutely no freedom from that cycle. It's a vicious, vicious cycle.

Freedom to explore who I truly am, and not be afraid of that. I would walk into a room of people and be terrified of who they thought I was. I don't need to worry anymore. I know who I am. I'm totally free to explore.

Dave: You know who you are and you can kick all their asses, too, right?

Amanda: Most to them.

Dave: That is awesome. You're talking about depression. Are you okay if I ask you a few questions that are women-specific?

Amanda: Yeah, go crazy.

Dave: I get a lot of questions on the Bulletproof Blog around intermittent fasting. I have written a book on fertility for women widely published last year, and around pregnancy health. I care very deeply about that. At your level of fitness, your level of competition, how do you handle the monthly cycle, hormone fluctuations and things like that. What's changed because of your level of elite fitness?

Amanda: My journey with my menstrual cycle has been hell on earth, and it very much was linked into my depression and the cycle of my depressions. It's been a journey of my entire life. Always looking for answers. How do I get out of this hell hole? So I constantly looked for patterns, consistently looked for answers.

I'm just producing my first app. Go me. It's very much based on my self-analysis chart, or how do I measure heart rate, mood, menstrual cycle. What day am I on the menstrual cycle. My hydration. My sleep. My nutrition. I used to include my biorhythms as well on that chart. Constantly looking for patterns. Once I can see the pattern, of course I can start to catch that wave and not let it go where it took me to negative places.

In saying that, it's been about managing all of those aspects. It's been about withdrawing all of those poisons, toxic poisons, from my diet. The stuff we know and love when we talk about paleo. Dairy, sugar and wheat. All of the chemicals.

Dave: Are you pro butter or anti butter when you mentioned dairy, there?

Amanda: No, I don't find butter is a problem for me, so I'm a fan of grass fed organic butter. But that's it.

Dave: You have some of the best grass fed butter on the planet in Australia. The last two times I've been there, I'm like "do you have biodynamic grass fed butter?" It's so amazing. You're giving Ireland a run for their money, here.

Amanda: We're very, very lucky here in South Australia to have a great biodynamic farm that produces that butter you're probably referring to.

In terms of managing that menstrual cycle, in terms of ... Once I've got the physical out of the way, addressed all the dietary issues, I started working with a naturopath and that really helped to bring my hormones into balance, and vitamins and minerals that I was deficient in. I brought as much as I could into balance. Then it's just knowing what happens on what days mentally, because that's the battle in the end.

Once we got all the balance in the other areas, and getting enough sleep and well-hydrated, well-nourished, it's knowing on day 22 I'm starting to feel like I'm craving

sugar or I can't do this anymore. The stuff my head will tell me is, it really goes against me in every way. It is my worst enemy at those times. I don't know where it gets the rubbish that it dishes out, and it invariably dishes it out every month. I just have to know not to believe it. That is a really tough thing.

It's like I have to have strategies in place. What do I do? I ring a friend. I literally pick up the phone and say "It's day 23 and this is what my head is telling me." It's only one friend, and she will tell me everything is all right."It's day 23. You're premenstrual. Don't believe the hype."

It doesn't stop. It never has stopped, but I do get better at putting strategies in place to manage it. And I know in my diary every day I track it. What day am I? And if I have those thoughts I look in my diary and "Oh, look, there. Day 24. No wonder I'm starting to get mad. Don't believe it."

That's all I can do is not believe, and start utilizing whatever mantras that I might like to use on a particular day. Just focusing on the positive. "How does it get better than this? What else is possible?" "How does it get better than this? What else is possible?" Over and over and over again.

It's like with meditation. Don't pay attention to those negative thoughts. Just let them pass through. So those thought are going to come, and they're going to be heavy and bleak and black. They will look like depression when you're premenstrual, but not to pay them attention and to redirect that mental focus to something positive. My mantras have changed at different stages of my life, but I quite like "What else is possible? How does it get better than this?"

Dave: I think you just dropped the jaws of tens of thousands of women who are listening to this, and probably helped a few guys to understand what you're going through for something like that. Honestly we don't have a really good analogue to understand.

There's a set of signals that come from your body that feel like their from you, and they're just the body doing what bodies do. I call The Meat Operating System. It can be really challenging to know when it's you or when it's The Meat Operating System just sort of giving you a signal like "Ah! Something is wrong!" In your case, it's day 23. For other people it can be "I'm hungry, and my blood sugar's crashing", whatever. All these weird feelings come out.

I certainly used to have tons of anger issues that were biologically mediated. So I'm like "Why am I feeling so angry? I feel guilty that I'm so mad. Why did I do that? I must be a bad person." No, it's because the operating system of my body betrayed me and made me think something that wasn't actually there.

Amanda: It's betrayal by the mind and the body. It's so true. I like that one. Betrayal, it's true. My mind betrayed me on a regular monthly basis. Years with meditation has helped to teach me not to pay it attention. And to know that I'm not alone. We are not alone. You are not a failure because your mind is betraying you. You must have strategies and tools.

Around that time of the month, I make an exceptional effort to get more sleep, to have less stress in my life. Just to recognize that the last thing I need to do if I can avoid i is to go do a presentation when I'm menstrual.

Ideally, I don't go and compete when I'm premenstrual as well, because I am noticeably weaker. My nervous system doesn't fire as finely. I just can't feel things as well. If I'm going to a heavy snatch-ladder, I'm not in the prime position to hit a PB. It doesn't come easily.

I do map my menstrual cycle when I was leading into the Crossfit Games in 2013. I was leading into the worst period, like day 24, day 25, day 26. Bad, bad, bad. But I knew that a couple of months out. I don't take the pill normally, but I did go to a doctor and get a prescription for the pill and just run it through those two months. So I avoided my menstrual cycle at that time.

For me, I needed to that. I cannot afford to be flying internationally, changing time zones, just all of that stuff, and then being hit with a major competition. Having worked two years of my life, every moment of every day to perform at my very best. I wouldn't use those tools at any other time, but that was critically important and that's my solution.

Dave: It's admirable that you did that. I'm sure that that's a controversial statement. Do you own your biology or not. The bottom line is yeah, if you're a modern person, we have tools that did not exist for our parents. We can control our bodies and make them do what we want. Our bodies often times don't. Losing 100 pounds. Things like that for me were kind of important. I'll be damned if I'm going to live in a world where my hormones are going to do something I don't want them to do at a time when it's inconvenient. You stepped up. You took charge. You did that. I think that's the essence of being in control of your biology. So, congratulations for making that decision.

Amanda: It was a pretty easy decision. Certainly the right one for me. The flip side of the negative side of the monthly cycle is come day 5 through to 15, I am on fire. I love being who I am. I can lift heavy. I can take on anything. I am peaking. There are two weeks where it's extraordinary, and there are two weeks where it slowly dips. It would have been amazing to have been able to hit the Crossfit Games in that peak state of my cycle.

The other thing that I recognize is when I hit the tough patch of my menstrual cycle is all that stuff that does come up in my mind, stuff that's bothering me in my personal life is always a recurring thing. We're actually quite lucky as women, because those recurring things are a reminder that that shit needs to be paid attention to. If it's coming up again and again and again, it's because you haven't addressed it. You haven't resolved it. As soon as you have, and the menstrual cycle lets you know, because you're very hypersensitive, it lets you know what needs to be addressed. If you can take it as a positive and actually address it, it's an incredible opportunity for personal growth.

Dave: It is. There's another interesting fact that we came across in the research for "The Better Baby Book". When you're ovulating, if you're below average intelligence you get smarter. If you above average intelligence, you get dumber the day before and the day of ovulation. Which is probably in order to encourage propagation of the species. The fact that your IQ, your basic intelligence, not to mention your emotions, are changing on a basis like that. Guys have some of that, too. It's much smaller. We get an ejaculation hangover and things. Our monthly cycles, which do exist, are so small they're almost invisible.

To manage your performance as a professional athlete, in the context of that, seems like an overwhelming challenge. You have definitely stepped up and done it, which is remarkable.

What do you eat during all this time. I know you're in the paleo high-fat thing, but what's a typical day: Breakfast, lunch, dinner? Do you even eat all three meals? What do you do?

Amanda: I'm a huge fan of food. I'm also that sort of metabolism and body shape, body type, that I need to be mindful of the food that I eat. I'll put on weight easily. I start the day with funnily enough my Bulletproof Coffee. I do have coffee only up until about 11:30 in the morning. I don't do intermittent fasting. I've tried and it just breaks me down with the volume of training that I do.

Dave: Yeah, that would be a bad idea for a woman with your regimen. Don't do that, even with Bulletproof Coffee. Bad idea.

Amanda: I like to try everything. I found out the hard way that it doesn't work for me. At least I know now. I'll actually have my Bulletproof Coffee in the morning, and I'll currently have this incredible smoothie. I'm a smoothie-juice queen. I do tend to live on a lot of liquid foods throughout the day. My digestive system is so compromised with the high-intensity training that I do for hours a day.

My morning smoothie. I basically go to bed each night desperately waiting to wake up so I can have my coffee and my smoothie. Over and over, it's like Groundhog Day excited. My smoothie is an enormous organic banana, a whole 2 cups of frozen blueberries. Then I put some organic peak protein powder, four scoops of that. Organic almond milk. All of the super foods that I've got on the shelf. Maqui berry powder, lucuma? Is that how you say that?

Dave: Yeah.

Amanda: Lucuma powder. Acai berry powder. I've got your collagen, Bulletproof Collagen. That goes in. What else am I forgetting? It's usually another couple of super berry powders that go in there. I whiz that up, and that gives me two enormous shakers full of smoothie for the morning.

Dave: You must put some fat in there, too, to make it creamy, or no? Raw egg yolk or something?

Amanda: I don't add any fat. I don't add any fat to that.

Dave: You've got it in your coffee already. I see.

Amanda: Yeah. I got the fat there, and I feel that that's enough. So that gets me through the morning. I'm usually training. I've got a couple of hours of training in the morning after working for a couple of hours. Then immediately post training, I have a whey protein powder with a whole bunch of glutamine and l. carnitine and taurine and all of that goodness.

Dave: Do you take vitamins and stuff with that, too? Aside from the aminos, do you take a multi or a bunch of zinc or something?

Amanda: Yes. Actually, what I do. I don't know if you can see this. This green bottle here. I have liters a day of a blend. The current product I use is a vital green, been using that for years. There are a whole lot of green powders on the market.

Dave: The guy who runs that is from down in your neck of the woods, right?

Amanda: Australian product, yeah.

Dave: I met him at a conference in Utah at the top of a ski mountain. Really cool dude.

Amanda: It's an incredible product. I've been on it for 4 or 5 years now. It's barley grass, wheat grass. Spirulina, alfalfa, kelp. The list of ingredients is so long, and all organic. That's

kind of the foundation with my (unintelligible) greens and my creatine, beta alanine, vital greens. I'll drink six liters of that day easily. I'm being drip fed the most extraordinary nutrients all day, every day. Even in just that Vital Green, I probably couldn't eat a decent diet in a year and get the nutrients that are in that scoop. Before I've even got to lunchtime, I've already got so much in the way of super foods, and the highest quality, basically. The highest quality foods is what goes into me, and what a privilege that is, and I'm not even at lunchtime yet.

At lunchtime I'll always have a couple of organic eggs, nitrate-free free-range; organic bacon, and half an avocado. Again, I look forward to that like a gleeful child.

Dave: Bacon does that.

Amanda: Bacon. One word, bacon. I'm a fan. But again, nitrate-free stuff. Free range. Not the rubbish. Again I'll have that berry smoothie that I had earlier in the morning. I'll have another one of them in the afternoon. I'll have my post training protein shake again, so the same stuff. Whey and glutamine.

Then at night I have a mustard steak and a salad with mostly lettuce and avocado. That's kind of it. I have white rice as well, steamed white rice with my dinner. The final thing, and honestly this is a fairly consistent, this is a normal day, every day over and over. I'm quite OCD on that. I'll have two or three organic green vegetable juices every day, freshly juiced. That's been doing on for since the dawn of time for me. That pretty much sums up my day. That will be day in and day out. A lot of liquid food, as you can see, throughout the day, just to get the nutrients in and absorb them.

Dave: You must be a hot date. Anytime a woman orders steak at dinner, it's a good sign, right?

Amanda: Are you going to eat that?

Dave: Yes. That's awesome. Not that I ever do any dating in my life. I'm married and have two young kids, but I was always impressed when a woman would order steak when I was dating. I'm like, "I like you."

Amanda: And "eat it all, go on."

Dave: What about blood tests? Are you looking at your hormones and your nutrient levels, and doing the vampire thing like I do where you're always walking around with a test tube of blood that someone wants?

Amanda: No too much. I work with a naturopath who does Vega testing. I have been working with her now for almost 4 years, maybe closer to 5 years.

Dave: Vega testing, just for listeners, this is an electrodermal thing where you looking at acupressure points using electrical stimulator.

Amanda: Yeah. Honestly, it's like voodoo to me. I'm not scientific. I don't understand how it works. You obviously do. But it's extraordinary the way it has worked for me. I believe in it 100 percent.

Dave: It sounds like witch-doctory, but I'll tell you I've seen some unreal results from it where that little machine knows things about your biology by looking at flow of electrons through the skin. There is real science behind it. It's just mostly from the Eastern Bloc, not from the western scientific discipline. I believe there's a genuine science to it.

Amanda: I'm a huge fan. It's brought extraordinary health to me.

I see my naturopathy every 4 to 6 weeks. In fact, I see her on Monday morning. I actually started with her ... I got very sick, being on an all organic vegetarian doing a lot of meditation and not much exercise about 5 years ago. Stressed out of my brain. I ended up with a massive fibroid tumor on my uterus. I'd never been in a worse state of health in my life, and that's when I was referred to her among other things. I tried everything. That began the process for me of getting extremely well. She's the one who balances my hormones, my minerals, whatever vitamins, and also helping to manage my adrenal fatigue. That's constantly flushed away, the sort of life that I lead in training.

Dave: Training and travel together would stress anyone's adrenals.

Amanda: Travel is the worst. It's not natural. I rely on her for managing that aspect.

Dave: You're under a professional's care on that side of things. It sounds like you're doing really, really well. You certainly look like you're doing well, which is awesome.

We're coming up towards the end of our show. There's a question that I've asked every guest, except that one time I forgot. That is: Given everything you've been through in life, not just as a Crossfit athlete or a triathlete or any other things, what three pieces of advice would you offer to people who want to kick more ass?

Amanda: Ass kicking is a good thing. There's one to me. I always looked for The Answer. I looked in every book. What's The Answer? Every therapist that I went to. They're going to have The Answer. This next food will be The Answer. Here's the thing. The number one thing is there's no one thing. Every one percent of every single thing that you have

involvement or control over in your life: what you think, what you eat, what you drink, where you live, the environment you surround yourself with, the people. Every one percent of every single thing, that's what's important. That is it.

Probably the second thing for me is, not that I haven't covered everything already in number one, the second thing is never give up hope. It is never over. If there is even the tiniest glimmer of hope, then there is a possibility of whatever it is you're looking for.

For me, especially in those times of depression, something would keep me coming back. Just hope. I just kept trying even when I thought it was all over, that I failed. It was never going to get better, it never is. Even when you think you're not doing your best, you're doing your best. And that gave me permission to or I see how that has helped me finally arrive in a place that I could never have imagined arriving. All one percenters. Every single one percent counts. Never, never give up hope.

You don't need number three, do you?

Dave: That's only two. I'm feeling short-changed here. Come on, kick some ass. Give us number three. You know it's in you.

Amanda: You know what? I'm about to get a new tattoo. I think it sums it up. That is "Dream Fiercely".

Dave: That's a great one. See, if you hadn't of pushed yourself you wouldn't have come up with it. How cool is that? Where is this one going?

Amanda: On my ribs. Just on the side on my ribs, in the line of my ribs.

Dave: That's so cool. Amanda, you mentioned you have a new book coming out. Can you give us your URL or Twitter, or however you like people who hear this who want to talk with you. How should they get a hold of you?

Amanda: Basically the best way for me is on my athlete Facebook page. That's Amanda Allen Crossfit Athlete (https://www.facebook.com/AmandaCrossfitAllen), and everything is sort of being channeled through there for the time being. It's not far off. I've got about three chapters to finish. It's my Crossfit journey, which is the journey of my life, really.

Dave: That sounds like an amazing, fascinating read. We'll put links to your Facebook page on the show notes for this on BulletproofExec.com, When your book comes out, let me know. I'll make sure that our listeners and readers know about it. I'll be sure to mention it on the podcast. It sounds like you really plumbed the depths not just

physically of what you can do, but also psychologically. I look forward to reading your book when it comes out.

Amanda: Thanks, Dave. I did plumb the depths.

Dave: Have an awesome rest of the day in sunny Australia.

Amanda: Thank you so much, Dave. Fantastic to talk to you today.

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