



Transcript of “Rocco Dispirito: Cook Your Butt Off - #204”

Bulletproof Radio podcast #204



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Dave: Hey everyone, it's Dave Asprey with Bulletproof Radio. Today's cool fact of the day is that the Japanese snow monkey washes it's food in sea water, actually preferentially over fresh water. They do this to clean their food the way a raccoon does, but they also like to enhance the flavor with salt. Apparently we're not the only animals who like to eat salt.

Today's guest is a really interesting guy and someone I really respect and admire. He's the author of 11 books, including the New York Times best seller called, Now Eat This and the Pound A Day Diet, which actually you don't eat a pound of butter a day, I hear, although I might try it. He entered the Culinary Institute of America at the age of 16, at 18 was working with legendary worldwide chefs. He is a James Beard Award winning chef, opened a 3-star restaurant called Union Pacific in New York City, which was a culinary landmark for years. He was named Food and Wine's Best New Chef and was the first chef to be on the cover of Gourmet as America's Most Exciting Young Chef. In other words, this guy's a kick ass chef, but that's not why I wanted to have him on the show, because I have great respect for people who are really in the good in the kitchen, both from a flavor and composition perspective, but also from an entrepreneurial and management-organizational perspective. It's that Rocco's new book is Cook Your Butt Off, Lose a Pound a Day. Here we have a chef cooking food to make you lose weight. The stereotypical guy who is running, a stereotypical chef, tends to have a few extra pounds. Rocco, by the way, welcome. Do you find among your contemporaries, there's a little bit of extra weight gain?

Rocco: I was going to say respect and admiration is not going to come cheap, is it, Dave? What am I going to owe you for that? There's a change in the trend of chefs being typically overweight or obese. Most of us were until very recently. I'd like to say I lead the charge, but there's definitely been a few chefs who've caught on, and lost some weight, and gotten healthy, did Iron Man like I did. Gordon Ramsay comes to mind. Joe Bastianich comes to mind. Now even Marco Canora has written a book called the Good Food Day. He's sort of had a "come to Jesus moment" like I did

with his doctor, where 20 years, 30 years of being a chef and a butter-holic, you hit a wall and you realize this can't continue. The late nights, the drinking, be it the over-indulging of foie gras at every chance.

Dave: There's no such thing as over-indulging foie gras.

Rocco: See, I used to think that was the case, but at my thousandth piece I think if I don't see another piece of foie gras again, it won't be too soon. We're usually not in great shape. We're not in great emotional shape, physical shape. Chefs are a mess. For me, getting out of the restaurant business in 2005 was my opportunity to clean up my act.

Dave: It was actually getting out that let you do it, because I know as a professional chef, you worked brutal hours. What's a typical work week for a professional chef look like?

Rocco: To call it a work week would be a fallacy. It's really what's a typical life week? Your entire life is 99% consumed by your restaurant. Especially if you have a restaurant like I did, Union Pacific, 3 stars, very cutting edge at the time, a total passion project, and all about the vision I had for food at the time. There's no leaving it. Even when you lock the doors at night, you're still tethered to it. All your employees have your cell phone number. Your customers are friends and everything that comes out of the kitchen, it's like part of your cellular structure, so you want it to be perfect.

Dave: It's that attachment to perfection that attracts me to the idea of being a chef. It's also that idea of perfection for, "I want it to look good and feel good, versus I just want it to taste good." One of my biggest complaints with the traditional model of cooking is that you can do, like what you'll find from Nathan Myhrvold in *Modernist Cuisine*.

Rocco: Right.

Dave: Which is this shockingly amazing stuff. I've been into sous-vide, which is that cooking technique, for people listening who don't know, where you put your meat or vegetables in a plastic bag, and you cook it at a precise

temperature in a water bath like you would in a laboratory, and you get these amazing flavors.

Rocco: Circulator.

Dave: Yes!

Rocco: Circulator.

Dave: Nathan wrote about this a long time ago, and I started doing it in an old sushi cooker with a laboratory thing, and it was super ghetto, because that was the only you could do it back in the day. What was different there is that Nathan has created the world's most perfect french fry. It has 3 different kinds of oils, 3 different cooking things and it's all based on hardcore chemistry and science and biochemistry. Cooking is moving in that direction, but his end goal was like the most orgasmic french fry experience. The end goal for my perspective and yours and Cook Your Butt Off is, okay, what's the food going to do for you? You want it to taste good, but what's in it for me? You struck me as one of the first professional chef guys to really start thinking about that, rather than bow down to the granola, sticks, and twigs and all that, but to be like, "All right, it's about the flavor, but at the end of the day, if it tastes good and I look like this, then I'm not getting it." So, hats off. You've written 11 books about this over the past 11 years?

Rocco: Thank you so much. I mean you brought up about 20 topics there that we could spend hours talking about. I would love to go through them 1 by 1. About modernist cuisine. It's interesting that you think Nathan invented it, when it's really derivative of Ferran Adria's work in the '80s and '90s, and he's almost over it himself at this point. That's how long it's been around. The idea of cooking something a certain way for the sake of it is not attractive to me, but let me tell you this about modernist cooking, or Ferran's molecular kind of cooking, it actually helps me achieve a mouth-feel luxury in food, and it helps me take away sugar, and processed ingredients and fats, and replace them with other ingredients that give the food a luxurious, delicious feeling. I am using molecular gastronomy and modern gastronomy techniques more than I ever have, even when I ran a restaurant that was a cutting edge

restaurant. There is definitely some place in our world for that. I think to make fois gras couscous, just because you can isn't necessarily a great idea. Even Ferran Adria, when I ate at his restaurant, elBulli, he said, "I do these things because I have this forum and I can." They don't all taste good, but if they don't taste good, I won't make them again, and we usually create a new menu for every season anyway." He was inventing a new way of looking at cooking, a new science protocol, a new philosophy. When you're the guy who invented it, that's cool, but when you're just doing iterative stuff and your cuisine is derivative, I think you should come up with your own point of view. I'm really happy that all that science is out there, and that I can use spherical encapsulation to make gnudi, that would normally require a lot of wheat flour and full fat ricotta, and because of that technique, you get at 2/3 less calories. There's some great stuff about that.

Dave: One of the ways a chef would know that someone liked their food is they want to order more, right?

Rocco: That is a good indication, sure. Oh, and to your point about me wanting food to more than just taste good, it's really interesting that you bring that up, because I often describe where I am now as at a place where I not only can make food to cause pleasure in people, to make them happy, to make them feel good, to help them close deals, do whatever it is that the food enables them to do, but the food will also help them live longer and enjoy those periods for a much longer period of time. Before I made food that made people happy, very happy, it was like having my own one-man show on Broadway. It was incredible, but I did nothing for their health, much less mine, which was why, after 10 years of running that restaurant, my doctor half-jokingly said, "Write your will. You're in trouble, buddy." This was at 35 years old. This is the fate that most of us face if we don't have a "come to Jesus" moment with our choices and our lifestyle and make some serious changes. 67% of America is in trouble. Something's got to change.

Dave: How do you deal with food cravings? I found that I used to make foods that people loved because they couldn't stop eating it, but it's easy, I never did this, but at the end of the extreme, we'll just add cocaine. Like the original Coca-Cola, like, "I love this food, I'm so happy, I can't stop."

- Rocco: That's the one idea I never thought of. I should have. Make it addicting, just like the big food companies have, right?
- Dave: Well, they have, but some of the things you could do in a kitchen, to create that thing that's so amazing people just have to get more, it's not meant, and it doesn't come from the same spirit as, "You can't eat just one," kind of marketing and food chemistry. Sometimes if you're a chef and you're making a food that makes people crave, or makes you have over-eating, how do you know? You may now, but if you're running a restaurant, it's almost like you're getting a signal from the... "Give me more, give me more," and you're like, "Well, this is good." Are you maybe accidentally using that signal to make food that are craving-inducing?
- Rocco: I could never figure out how to intentionally create a food that people would crave. I would intentionally create foods that I thought had brilliant balance in flavor, that had a beginning, middle, and an end, there was a crescendo and resolution in every bite. That's what I try to do. In terms of physical and chemical cravings, I don't know that I was that sophisticated at the time. I know the big food companies figured that out in the '50s and that's why we're all addicted to Doritos, but that wasn't part of my deal. In terms of food critics, being a chef who was once a darling of the food critics, and then became the pariah of the food critics, I've seen both sides. They were opposite ends of the spectrum and I felt both extremes. It's really interesting to be on the one side and then all the sudden find yourself, as a complete surprise, on the other side. Food critics played an important role in the development of the American chef, the independent and courageous American chef, the American chef who could come up with his own cuisine. Before that, only European chefs were celebrated. We worked with those guys, we begged to work with those guys. We brushed their floors with toothbrushes for them for free just to work with them. I went to Paris and lived there for 2 years at 18 years old and slept on the subways so I could have a chance to work with a French chef. For free, of course. It was American food critics that finally set us free and sort of declared, in the mid-80s, let's say, with Jeremiah Tower and Wolfgang Puck, that American chefs are here. They've arrived. They have a point of view, and now they have all this great skill that they learned from the French

masters. Without the food critics, I don't think that would have happened. It's interesting because I think now Yelp is the most important food critic out there. You know what that's like, right? Anyone who has internet can write a review on Yelp.

Dave: If it's a positive review, it doesn't get displayed unless you pay the Yelp fee, right?

Rocco: I didn't know that. Is that right?

Dave: Yes. It's a known issue with a lot of small restaurants. It's really hurting them, because you end up basically paying a fee or only negative comments appear.

Rocco: That's too bad. It's really too bad. You know what's interesting, I thought Zagat would become that for restaurants online, but I guess they missed that moment, or they weren't an early adopter enough to find the moment where they should have jumped in there. I haven't answered your question in full because you asked 15 questions.

Dave: I like to do that.

Rocco: Which I love. I love that, by the way.

Dave: That way, I know you'll answer the one that was most important to you and ignore the rest, which is totally cool.

Rocco: Brilliant technique. Brilliant technique. Did you study with Howard Stern?

Dave: I did not study with Howard Stern.

Rocco: One of the greatest, one of the greatest interviewers ever. He does the same thing. He brings up a million topics, and then let them go.

Dave: He'd be an interesting guy to meet some time, but once he went over the satellite radio, I sort of lost touch with what he was working on.

Rocco: Oh, yes. Cool.

Dave: I want to ask you a question that may be more personal and you can sort of talk about it or not.

Rocco: Sure.

Dave: Going from darling to basically pariah over that time frame, what did that do to you as a writer of books, as a chef, just as a human being, like having that huge swing in perception? What was the psychological experience of it, and how did you deal with it?

Rocco: After my psyche being crushed, you mean, and recovering from that?

Dave: Yes. What happened and how did you recover?

Rocco: I'll share a secret with you. I've been in therapy since second grade. That's always been what's gotten me through everything that I've experienced in life that was difficult. It was obviously a difficult time to try to be the pioneer in reality television, as it relates to chefs and restaurants. I was probably 3 years too early, and I guess someone had to pave the way, right? Soon after my show, Top Chef appeared, and now there's 40 or 50 shows that do things that are far worse than anything we did on that show. Here's a really funny, fun fact: I still don't know to this day what was real and what was not real on my own television show about my own restaurant. Things were manipulated so masterfully that I literally couldn't tell you what the truth was. People ask me all the time, "Did that happen? Did that?" And I say, "I don't know if it really happened." I know it was recorded on television, but I don't know how that moment ended up coming to being, because it was really like marionettes. It was amazing. Amazing process to watch. What happened to me then was I learned a huge life lesson, pretty young, several, and one of those is you can't focus on too many things at one time and be good at all of them, so I had to make a decision. I decided to give up restaurants, which surprised me and everyone else in the world, especially the culinary world. They didn't take well to the fact that the guy they sort of cheered on for so many years abandoned, what they thought, abandoned the culinary world. I just was following my natural interests and instincts, and just doing what makes me happy, not really

realizing that I was going to be out of the restaurant business up until 2015, which is exactly 10 years now.

Dave: I may be following the opposite track. I don't come from the restaurant business. I once did work at Baskin Robbins scooping ice cream. I could do a cocktail where you throw the scoop up on the air and catch it in a cone. That was kind of cool.

Rocco: That's a very valuable skill. Don't ever forget how to do that.

Dave: Totally, right? That's like the extent of my food prep experience, but we're opening the Bulletproof Coffee shop in Santa Monica in end of March, early April. It has food. We have a full kitchen in the back, and we're lucky to get a former Ilford eye-out small location. I don't know a lot about it, but I have a team who does. I'm really hopeful that some of the ideas that I've been working on around creating a satiety, just being full and satisfied, that they come to fruition there, but hearing someone who left the restaurant scene because it's so hectic, I'm wondering if I am just walking into a buzz saw here, but we'll find out.

Rocco: There's about a 90% chance you are, but you're one of those guys who is always in the 10%. I have a feeling that your skills, your luck, and your intelligence will get you through the experience. You said you have a small space?

Dave: Oh, yes. It's going to be set for it.

Rocco: That's smart.

Dave: It's a Bulletproof Coffee shop, and it's about the coffee. There's a full, not a full, but a menu of things you can have for lunch and dinner that are really filling. There's 4 tables in doors, maybe if we're lucky, some tables outside, because it's Santa Monica. The idea there is to showcase how food can make you feel and to just let people see, "Now go do this at home. You don't have to come here. This isn't a giant restaurant."

Rocco: Understood.

Dave: It's like in the spirit of just demonstrating things.

- Rocco: It's a way for you to prove the theories that you write about. I get it. I understand that. Starting small is great. I'm sure you'll do fantastically well. Teaching people about satiety and how to eat well is something that we need so badly. Don't worry about the critics. We'll make sure the restaurant's always full. There's a great restaurateur in New York, Keith McNally, who has never closed a restaurant. He opened Lucky Strike in 1982, and it's still open. He owns Balthazar. He's never, ever once been concerned about what critics say, and his restaurants are always full. He's always about the experience, making sure the customer experience is as great as it can be. In the restaurant business, we have a term, it's called, Teflon. It's used in a lot of fields, but some restaurants are Teflon. No matter how bad the food is or how bad the reviews are, they've just got something that brings people to it. You're not Teflon, you're even better, you're bulletproof.
- Dave: I like to think so.
- Rocco: You have everything going in your direction.
- Dave: Fingers crossed.
- Rocco: The reason I started to serve my food in a food truck was because I'd written all these books about healthy and delicious not being mutually exclusive. That was a basic concede of all my work, that healthy and delicious should not be mutually exclusive. Up until the day I discovered that healthy lobster bisque is better tasting than unhealthy bisque, because the volatile oils in lobster are hydro-philic, not lipo-philic, meaning they stick to water, not to fat, and we've been cooking lobsters in cream for about 500 years thinking that was the best way to do it, I realized I was stumbling into something incredibly exciting. You can have indulgent, delicious, satisfying foods that are a third of the calories, that aren't processed, that don't have high fructose corn syrup in them. I started a food truck just to prove to people that what I was saying in the books is actually true. "Here, you can come taste this food." I really get why you're doing it, and it obviously comes from a very important, a good place, and an important point of view. You'll do really well.
- Dave: Did you like Ratatouille, the movie?

Rocco: Of course. It was a great movie, perfect movie.

Dave: There's a speech at the end...

Rocco: I have a pretty low standard for movies, by the way.

Dave: Okay.

Rocco: Yes. As long as it doesn't, if it distracts me from life for 2 hours, I'm pretty happy, but go ahead.

Dave: You like that one. All right. Tim Ferris, I've actually not seen the movie, and Tim Ferris recommended it on Bulletproof Radio that he's like, "Dave, you need to see it. That's my recipe for critics." It was a great because there's that speech at the very end about restaurant critics, and it was kind of funny because food critics, like you said, they can bring attention, and they can make people care about the art, and I'm hoping soon the art and the science of this, so that it becomes something that's part of our natural discourse. Where does our food come from? How is grown? How is it prepared? When it was put on your plate, like the whole system of food. I hope food critics become part of that. But if they don't, like that speech at the end of Ratatouille. For me, it was inspiring anyway.

Rocco: I totally get it. I think there are important writers who are joining the conversation of lunatics like us, about food origin, provenance, sustainability, health. I think, more than just you, me and JJ Virgin realize that what's happening in this country is unsustainable and we're in serious trouble. I was watching a movie about the Iran Contra Affair. Remember in the '80s, Reagan ran Contra. Oliver North. He was quoted as saying, "Crack cocaine is the biggest threat to the American way. It's not Russia, it's not terrorists." I feel like updating that by saying, "Obesity is the biggest threat to American way. It's not ISIS, it's not what's going on in the Middle East. It's not the suicide bombers we're all obsessed with and the "Snow-mageddons" that we continue to be obsessed with." I don't know if you know about our "Snow-mageddon" near-miss here in New York. There was supposed to be a "Snow-mageddon" and of course it didn't happen. We're so concerned about

the weather, about ISIS, about what our children's video games are, yet we buy into this system of slowly poisoning each other over a lifetime and causing a myriad of diseases that are killing more Americans than everything else combined. What the fuck is going on? This is madness.

Dave: It is.

Rocco: It's got to stop.

Dave: It's something we have control of, right?

Rocco: It's totally something we have control of. It's all conscious. You make a conscious choice, you're going to make a great choice. The problem is most of us are living unconsciously. We do not make choices while we're thinking. We crave, we indulge, and that's not a conscious process. That's a physical response to a physical craving. If you gave every American a good choice and a bad choice, and taught them how to be conscious about their choices, I bet you 97% of them would choose the good choice. That's what I'm trying to do with this food. I'm trying to create thousands of foods that are delicious and healthy at the same time, and make those available for just about everyone out there.

Dave: It's a giant goal and I love that you brought up JJ Virgin.

Rocco: And so are you. And so are you.

Dave: Oh, thank you. There's a bunch of us now. There's probably about 100 people that I've gotten to know, you among them, through JJ Virgin and guys like, Joe Polish and Celeste, my book agent, who are, really we're all working to help people get knowledge. We don't always even agree with each other, but to help people get knowledge about like, "There's a better way than what you're doing now, and try this, try that. See what works." It's actually a lot of work, but when you get those emails. The ones I'm sure you get from people that say, "I cooked my butt off, and literally, I cooked my butt off, and I lost 20 lbs, and I got my energy back, and I fit in my dresses," or whatever it is. It actually feels good, and you know that you've done something that's incredibly important for somebody, even if you don't know who they are.

- Rocco: I'm totally with you. The people who buy my books are usually very vocal about how they feel, good or bad, and I take the criticism and the compliments in stride. I get thousands of comments from people telling me that they've lost weight thanks to a recipe, thanks to something I said. That is a wonderful feeling, particularly being a chef who contributed to the poor health of my clients for so many years. I think I have a lot of amends to make. This is how I am doing it. Cooking you butt off is not just a title that I created in a room full of marketing experts. With my book, you actually do cook you butt off, because I designed these recipes so that they burn more calories than they contain. You are literally calorie forward at every step. You might think this is extreme, and I know what Bulletproof is all about, and how you encourage fats. It's sort of a little bit contrary to what I advise people.
- Dave: We don't have to agree.
- Rocco: It doesn't matter.
- Dave: We don't have to agree to have a good conversation or to help a lot of people, right?
- Rocco: That's right. It doesn't matter, and I do agree with you in, by the way, you and I can do it, and we'll be fine. For the average overweight or obese person, they need to take drastic measures and make giant chances. For me, the only way I know how to give them tools that they can work with, or to take all the junk out of food, take it apart, put it back together with only the good stuff, and make sure it tastes good.
- Dave: If you make that step, whether or not you go high fat or low fat, so many people are focused on...
- Rocco: They both work. We know that both work.
- Dave: They do, and so many people are focused on, "Oh, it's just about the calories. I'm going to just drink my 1200 calories of coke everyday, and magically something different happens than if you eat 1200 calories of eggs."
- Rocco: Exactly.

Dave: It's not that hard for you and I to envision that, but there are people who will swear, and I mean swear with F-words all over the place online, when you say that actually, no, those aren't the same thing, because there's this calorie-centric thing, and there's the high fat, versus low fat. Very few people are talking about the avoid toxin route. If you cut toxins, you cut inflammation, and you can eat low fat, you can eat high fat, and you still have moved so far in the right direction.

Rocco: For most people, cutting toxins out of their life is nearly impossible. Think about our food supply and how toxic it is. At the very heart of it, it's almost impossible to avoid the toxins we find in our foods. I talk about it in *Cook Your Butt Off* for about 10 pages. I serve my clients only organic foods, and let me tell you, it's very difficult to find only organic foods when you have to create a wide variety of dishes for people to eat. I send out about 6000 meals a month right now to my clients, who I'm helping to maintain their weight or send them food for convenience, or gain weight in some cases where people have Crone's disease, or put them on an anti-inflammatory diet because they have psoriatic arthritis. It's almost impossible to find foods that are local, that are from a sustainable source, that are fair trade, that are organic, that check all those boxes. I at least start with organic, because God, what's in our food system is really the enemy and what we need to avoid. Where do you get your butter?

Dave: My butter?

Rocco: What's your source for your butter? Yes.

Dave: I typically use Kerrygold butter, which is from Ireland. It's actually 10% grain-fed during the parts of the year, and 30% of that, so 3% of the total food may be from GMO grains, and I've started a petition to get them to fix it, so that's what I typically use. Any time I can get it, I will go for the most local, most grass-fed option. One of the problems that I run into, 6 million people came to the Bulletproof blog last year, like unique people, and there were 2 shortages of grass-fed butter in the US that Bulletproof Coffee was a major contributor to. How do I go to someone in Texas, I don't mean Austin, but I mean the rest of Texas, and say, "Look, you need to go to your local supermarket and you need to buy

grass-fed butter, because it's so much better than the crap-fed butter that you probably are eating, or the margarine, that's probably worse." The only thing on the shelf is Kerrygold, because they have wide distribution, and it's so far above, even though it's not as perfect as go to your farmer's market and get the little crock of precious, grass-fed, deliciousness that we all want, but probably don't have access to.

Rocco: Do you know Dan Barber?

Dave: I don't think so.

Rocco: Dan Barber's a chef who is interested in the same things you and I are interested in, and he has a farm where he raises cattle and produces grass-fed butter. We have to connect you guys. Maybe he could supply you with his butter, although he claims he can't make enough for his own use, so we'll see.

Dave: I would be grateful to meet him. One of the thing I've done this year is I bought a 32-acre property on Vancouver Island, and we're turning it into an organic farm.

Rocco: Beautiful place.

Dave: Already, the front 4 acres create grass that feed grass-fed cattle, but they're not milk cattle, they're meat cattle, so the meat that I am eating ate the grass from my front yard. I am looking to make enough food on the property to feed my local community. Not all of them, but a lot of them, because there is a lot of fertility here. Also, I want to feed my family, and I want to feed myself, and become more into the soil ecology and the farming, because by understanding that, it's going to allow me to do better things in Santa Monica in my restaurant. To work with growers, I feel like I owe that to myself, and my family, and to my people, my community, to go that deep. Plus, it's kind of cool.

Rocco: It's so cool and so fun, and I applaud you for doing that. 32 acres is a big commitment. I have half an acre and I use a third of it every summer, out east, to grow vegetables. It makes me feel wonderful to walk out in the dewy mornings and see what nature has ripened for us to eat that

day. The process of sewing and harvesting a field is natural as the most important things in life. I talk about it in my book. Growing something, anything will change your life. Even the basil in the summer, everyone has tomato and basil salads. Grow the basil on your door step if you have to. If you go to Italy, France, and Spain, or hippie communes, the 4 groups of people that actually do this and sustain this kind of lifestyle. Think about the hippies in the '60s, didn't they teach us everything we need to know about a sustainable lifestyle, and culture, and community? They basically copied the Italians. It's not a secret. If you go to Italy, everyone is growing something, even people with tiny, little terraces. They've got a pot of strawberries, a pot of basil, a pot of mint. Everyone should be growing something. First of all, it's like, free. The cost of seeds is so low compared to buying a pound of basil for \$15, and it also helps debunk the myth that healthy is more expensive, which is one of the most annoying myths that I deal with on a daily basis. Everyone is constantly blaming me for spending too much money on food. I say, "What is being unhealthy going to cost you when the primary income earner in your home dies at 50 of type-2 diabetes? Think about that. What are the co-payments every month of all the medications you have to take cost you?" On the merits, I always talk about pound for pound, broccoli is cheaper than hot pockets. There's no way around it.

- Dave: That is absolutely true, although broccoli is mostly water, so when you take out the water, it's not...
- Rocco: It's most water you should consume. With all the fiber, it's good for you to consume it.
- Dave: Oh, yes. Yes, the water's good for you, but you're probably still going to be hungry if you eat a pound of broccoli versus a pound of hot pocket, although you might vomit after the hot pocket.
- Rocco: I'd rather you eat a pound of broccoli with a pound of butter, than a pound of hot pockets, that's for sure.
- Dave: Amen, brother. We're still on the same page there, because it is about quality and chemicals and all those other things. The cost thing is something that I hear a lot too. The cool this is, if you know where to

shop for vegetables, and you're buying from a farmer, just about everywhere you go, you can get at farmers markets now. What you don't know, if that farmer goes to a big grocer, even like a big, organic and hippie grocer, they're selling their stuff for like a quarter a pound, a buck a pound, and you're paying 5 or 6 dollars a pound, and the farmer didn't make the money. He didn't put it into new tractors, he didn't put it into upgrading what he's doing. It went into the distribution and selling system, but if you go to the farmer's market, and you pay 2 or 3 bucks, the farmer is just completely stoked. He was able to maintain his farm, instead of selling it to big business, and you save money, but the people who use are actually the big box stores, who want to sell you big boxes of nicely packaged crackers.

Rocco: Right, and peppers that came from Belgium that traveled 5000 miles. I'm all about the local. Whatever you can get that's local is a great thing. I remember shopping a couple years ago in a very fancy store that sells very expensive, quote, better for you foods, and asking about the provenance about some of the apples they had. I developed this conversation with one of the produce managers and they actually resourced and searched out a local grower. I was like, "We're in New York state. It's the fall. We should have some local apples." Skip ahead a few years, now all they have is local apples. They have little signs on the display that give you the farmer's name, their location, their match.com profile, I mean, it's crazy. That's an example of 1 person having a conversation making change. We all can make change or maintain the status quo with the choice we make. Going to a farmer's market and buying, by the way, at a farmer's market, at the end of the day, this is a secret and farmer's markets, go at the end of the day, they'll sell you a garbage bag full of apples for a \$1 or \$5, just so they don't have to take it back to the farm.

Dave: Yes, you can definitely get those last-minute savings. The farmers don't like it, on the one hand. On the other hand, they didn't want to have to make apple sauce. They're not going to throw away perfectly good apples, because they know how hard it was to make them. They're going to save them somehow.

- Rocco: They're another thing. You have to remember that when you're buying local, you're reducing food miles. We talk about food miles all the time, right? "The average food has 5000 food miles, blah blah blah." It's important because there's a loss of nutrition. Forget about the loss of nutrition. How about the cost of all the fuel that it takes to transport that bell pepper or piece asparagus in January from southern Mexico to your door. What does that mean for the Middle East Peace Crisis, for our dependency on foreign oil? It's crazy. It's crazy how... yes?
- Dave: Let's talk about deaths per calorie. If you're a vegan and you have a truck full of broccoli, and it's going 70 miles an hour through a bug-infested zone, how many bugs died to bring you your broccoli if it had to go 5000 miles. More than you would like, right? A lot.
- Rocco: That's an interesting perspective. I've never thought of that. We're going to need those bugs someday, because we're going to run out of food in about 50 years.
- Dave: Yes, they're kind of tasty. Have you tried the new cricket flour?
- Rocco: Of course I have, yes.
- Dave: What did you think?
- Rocco: I could make anything taste good. I'm not worried about it. It's all about balance. Everything you eat is a combination of sour, salt, sweet, bitter, you just got to know how to pull it together.
- Dave: It's got to be related to cooking crab, but I didn't find the first experience I had particularly wonderful and tasty, but I'm sure it will get better over time too.
- Rocco: What I'm worried about is that it's a really valuable source of protein, the sustainability is through the roof, the input and output is incredible, the ratio of calorie to calorie, but the first few entrepreneurs in the cricket protein business aren't chefs, so they're making bars that aren't the best tasting. I think it's going to put people off at some point, before we even learn to fall in love with it. I don't know, Dave, maybe you and I need to get into that and figure it out.

Dave: We can talk about it. I'm friends with some of the people working on it. My friend, Megan over at Bitty, and the guys over at Exo. It's an interesting idea and I want to see the full biochemistry. I'm still worried about the fatty acid profile and the oxidation. Are we going to see allergies like we see from shellfish? Eventually, there's a certain point where you're like, "I want to eat healthy and I have x amount of dollars, and I can get this much cricket and it's healthy. I can get this much industrial beef and it's not healthy. I think I'll have the cricket steak, and maybe that's the right thing to do." I have no idea. I suspect we're getting, algae and crickets might be what our great grandkids eat for breakfast.

Rocco: Algae is a great thing to eat, sure. That might be a big part of our future, you're right.

Dave: One of the things I like about what you've done in Cook Your Butt off, and just the way you think about it is, you're one of the few, in fact probably the only chef I know of that works with the quantitative tracking stuff, like you work with FitBit, and you're actually helping people understand what they're doing to control their food, and also their movement while they're cooking using a FitBit, which is a totally unique angle. I wanted to explore that a bit more with you, because I was a CTO of one of the wristband tracking companies a few years back.

Rocco: Oh my goodness.

Dave: Yes. The Basis wristband. I was a co-founder of their American entity. I was not there for a super long time, but really got into that space. I was actually really intrigued when I read that you were working on incorporating that into a book. From the perspective of a chef, the idea of moving out of the commercial restaurant, into your kitchen, making cooking a physical activity, tracking what it does to you, tracking what you put into your body, into your food, you've kind of become a bit of a bio-hacker. Was this on purpose?

Rocco: Thank you. I've been wearing activity trackers for a long time, ever since I started doing triathlons in 2005/6. The Garmin GP, that was a critical piece of technology that you had to have if you were going to be a

serious, or triathlete that even, not a serious triathlete, but one that crossed the finish line a lot. How about that? That was my goal back then. Triathlons are so difficult that any advantage you can give yourself, you give yourself. One of the things I loved about it was the gear. I never lost my love for the gear. In the time since I started triathlons, wearables have become a gigantic industry. FitBit is one of my favorites. I'm now an ambassador for FitBit, which happened after they became my favorite, just full disclosure. I would count my active and passive calorie burn on a daily basis, just because I think that's an important thing to do to maintain isocaloric balance. It's important information. It's not all the information you need to maintain a healthy weight, but it's very valuable information. I also use it to remotely monitor my clients' active and passive calorie burn. I also use their scale to remotely monitor their weight, their BMI, their BMR, and their body fat percent. I realized, while I was cooking and counting my steps that I was accumulating more steps while I was cooking. I thought, "Holy crap, cooking is cardio." This has always been true. It's not something I invented, but no one ever talks about it. Cooking is a calorie-burning exercise. You can burn 400 calories an hour cooking. I thought, "What if you could cook dishes that had less calories than you burn cooking them, wouldn't that be cool?" Then I spent a bunch of months trying to prove that theory, and it's a theory that does work. Almost all the recipes in my book have net negative calories because of the calories that you burn cooking them. I integrated FitBit because they have this great food log. They loved the idea, and they were very happy to give me barcodes that I could put into my book, so that when you cook a dish and eat it from my book, you can also scan it on your app, and it will count in your food log, and just take one more obstacle out of your way from point A to the point B goal of achieving a health weight.

Dave: You must be a fan of Laker's A cook wear? The cook wear. Those 80 lb pots.

Rocco: How did you know that? Yes, they're great.

Dave: Because, yes, you're doing a curl every time you pick up a sauce pan.

- Rocco: You're right. I struggled a little bit in the beginning of the conception of Cook Your Butt Off. Do I have them stand on one leg while they're chopping tomato? It turns out that there's enough calorie burning in low-tech cooking. What I did here in Cook Your Butt Off was revert back to low-tech cooking. I don't use any machines. There's no food processors, blenders. Everything is done by hand. The box grater, the whip, the knife are your best friends in this book. While it may take a little bit longer and require a little more effort from you, I thought the additional benefit, the knowledge of the calorie burn would make it totally worth it.
- Dave: I find the box grater is actually more efficient than a food processor for anything than a very large meal, because you have to wash the darn food processor and the box grater just goes in the dish washer. It's so much less work.
- Rocco: Oh, you wash your box grater? I've never heard of that before.
- Dave: I rinse it a little bit, you know.
- Rocco: Most chefs are famous for never washing their equipment, right? You'll love it seasoned and old and carbonized, but yes, the box grater, one of the greatest inventions ever. You can do so many things with it. By the way, that motion, 20 minutes of the grating will burn about 230 calories.
- Dave: There's no doubt that moving the body around is good for you.
- Rocco: I was trying to think of one more way to incentivize people to cook, because when you cook, you're in control, not the big food manufacturers. When you're in control, you're going to make better decisions for yourself. You're going to advocate for yourself in a better way. If I gave you the ingredients that go into commercially made food and told you to make the same food, you would throw half of them away immediately. Getting people to cook, even one time a month, for me is a huge win.

- Dave: I was amazed today, I came home, I'm allergic to almonds, even though they're one of the foods that I recommend, and it's an annoying allergy and I gave it to myself.
- Rocco: Like anaphylaxis?
- Dave: No, I actually get like super bright red lips, like really badly chapped for days.
- Rocco: So mildly irritating, like that girlfriend who keeps texting you months after you've broken up?
- Dave: Yes, and it looks like I'm kind of wearing lipstick. It's not a good look on me, and I get brain fog from it too, so I avoid them. 5-year-old Allan, my son walks in and goes, "Daddy, I made crust, but I used almonds because I just didn't want to crack all the hazelnuts," because we make him crack hazelnuts with a rock and he loves it. He goes banging on them and his sister, Anna. They'll do that and then they'll make a walnut-hazelnut crust from nuts they cracked, because those are the fresh, delicious.
- Rocco: That's awesome.
- Dave: He was like, "I'm really sorry, but you can't have any of my crust," but the fact that he's there covered in butter and almond whatever, I have no idea what all the stuff that was on his hands, and his face, and his shirt, but it doesn't matter, because they're learning to control their food and that kind of perspective. At a party awhile back, someone said, "Allan, do you want a piece of apple," and he goes, "Is it organic?" And they go, "Yes," and he goes...
- Rocco: Is it local?
- Dave: He didn't quite ask local, because I don't think he knows that there's a difference yet.
- Rocco: Fair trade.
- Dave: He goes, "Is it moldy?" There's a problem with apples that aren't fresh where they're bruised, and you get patulin that forms, and he's sensitive

to that. He knows it. So he's like, and the teacher's like, "Yes," then he goes, "Oh, thank you," and he eats it. That's just the way you see food.

Rocco: You said he's 6 years old?

Dave: He's 5.

Rocco: 5. That's amazing. Wow. Kids learn what not to like from you. I mean it's that simple. Kids love cooking. I'm so glad that you have your kids involved. They love it. To them it's like a magic show. It was like that to me at 11 when I started cooking, just because I didn't have enough money to buy a KISS album that I wanted. I ended up getting a job and falling in love with the business of cooking in restaurants. Kids are fascinated by the science of it, the instant reward part of it, the team work. There's the math, there's so much to captivate you. I think parents would be surprised at how willing their kids are to help them if they'd only asked and taken some time.

Dave: Yes. Even if you're a teenager, cooking is an act of self control. It's about controlling one of the fundamental parts of your environment, and what teenager doesn't want more sense of control? I did a book signing...

Rocco: That's a very good point.

Dave: At Mission Heirloom in Berkeley. It's a new restaurant with super Bulletproof principles. Amazing focus on quality and local sourcing. My kind of people. The daughter of the owners, Moya, she's 16 now. At the book signing, she came out with these trays of desserts. She cooked them for 50 people. They were all gluten free, all made with super high quality ingredients, and dramatically delicious. You couldn't even tell that they were lacking in gluten and things like that. She's 16, and she's cooking for 50 people, and just having a blast.

Rocco: That's incredible. I need that recipe by the way.

Dave: I'm sure you can call them up. I'll introduce you actually. It would be a fun intro for you. That whole idea that kids can do that, and that adults can do that too, with your perspective in Cook Your Butt Off, it's really cool too, because you're incorporating some of the stuff most people

aren't aware of, like how are they moving? What benefit do they get from not just standing in place and staring at a microwave, where they're actually interacting with the food.

Rocco: Yes, like my title, right?

Dave: Yes. "My hot pocket didn't get hot in time. It's a bad day."

Rocco: It's also a way to teach kids at an early age what it means to care for another person. When you feed someone, you're making a very, it's a huge gesture that says you love and care for this person. You think that investing in their nourishment is a good investment. You care about how they feel, their health. When a baby is born, the first thing that happens is a mother feeds it, right? That's how important the act of feeding another human being is.

Dave: Oh, good point.

Rocco: It's a great tool to give a child that I think is a little bit lost in our culture these days. The act of caring for another person as much as you care for yourself. There was a time when that was a really important principle and core value, and I don't think that is as relevant as it was. Cooking is one way to bring that back. Into the soul of a child.

Dave: Very well said. It reminds me of a Soviet-time grandmother, "Eat! Eat!" As a way of proving food.

Rocco: Exactly.

Dave: Right, I've never thought.

Rocco: Love through food.

Dave: Yes, love through food. In fact, one of the other things my kids enjoy is when they're cooking, I say, "Do you know why it tastes better when you cook it yourself?" They say, "Why?" I said, "Because you put love in it." When they cook, they put their hand over their food and go, "I'm putting love in it, Daddy."

Rocco: That's so great. That's so great.

Dave: And they are.

Rocco: You can view food with love, there's no question about it. My mother used to say it all the time about her famous meatballs, "It's the love, Rocco". It took me until she was about 87 for me to understand that you literally can imbue food with love. By the way, I love the fact that you make your children crack their own nuts, because in my last book, one of my tips was never eat nuts that are already cracked, because you will eat so many more that you would have because you had to crack them yourself. Plus, I like roasting them first in the shell, then cracking them.

Dave: That's kind of fancy.

Rocco: They taste great. Hazelnuts roasted in shell. Oh my God.

Dave: In the molecular gastronomy perspective, if you roast it in the shell, guess what, there's no oxygen in there, so you didn't oxidize the oils, like if you crack them open, then roast them. That's the way to do it.

Rocco: That's a very good point.

Dave: You toss it the way we used to as cavemen. You throw them in the coals.

Rocco: In the fire. Exactly.

Dave: They were right. They did it exactly the way they should have done it.

Rocco: By the way, where did I learn that? From my Italian parents, and uncles, and aunts, who at the end of every meal, would bring a pan over to the fire and whatever nuts were in season there from southern Italy, so walnuts and hazelnuts were a big deal, and chestnuts were a big deal. They would never consider buying nuts out of the shell. That was ludicrous to them. In fact, going to a restaurant, in my upbringing, in America, not in Italy, was a punishable offence. When Mom was home cooking you all this wonderful food, how could you possibly go out?

- Dave: That's amazing. The passion you have, for not just cooking and being a chef, but for food in general and for what it does for people, it really comes through. It comes through in your book as well, which I think is really cool. Do you have a URL people can go to learn more about Cook Your Butt Off, because I just love your perspective on this.
- Rocco: Thank you very much. I appreciate that coming from you, I consider it a huge accomplishment, as a man of much accomplishment. I am talking about you, not me.
- Dave: I thought you were talking about you.
- Rocco: You're the man of much accomplishment. You can go to roccodispirito.com and on the home page, there's a big Cook Your Butt Off thing you can click and learn more about it. iBooks is doing a great job with turning it into a pretty decent digital version.
- Dave: Oh, excellent. I know it's always challenging with...
- Rocco: Very challenging. As a CTO, I'm sure you understand every pain point there is in that process.
- Dave: It's painful and I don't think we got it right. I think my audible book, "Where's the recipe?" Well, I'm not going to reach each recipe to you like, "One quarter of this." You don't read recipes.
- Rocco: I had the same debate. I wanted to read the recipes and they wouldn't let me. We negotiated and came to terms, and I was able to read the head notes and talk about my favorite part of the recipe, and that was it. The funny thing is they never include the PDF with the recipes, right?
- Dave: Yes. It drives me crazy. I want to give them away.
- Rocco: Your fans are calling you, going, "What the hell?"
- Dave: You're not allowed to give them away. So you ran into that. I'm not alone there. I was kind of feeling like, "Did I do something wrong?"

- Rocco: That happened with Pound A Day Diet. They forgot to include the PDF of recipes. The one that you refer to 600 times. "Refer to the PDF."
- Dave: Okay, so, phew. I try to take care of people on the back end when they come to me for that. All right, we've got one more question for you and then we're running up against the hour that we've got.
- Rocco: That's okay. That's okay.
- Dave: There's a question that we ask every guest on the show. The question is, "Given everything you know," not just as a chef, just as a human being, "Your top 3 recommendations for someone who wants to kick more ass. You want to perform really well in life, do these 3 things?" The most important?
- Rocco: Accept the concept of failing fast. If you fail fast, it means you're trying lots of things and you're learning who you are very quickly. Learning who you are, what you like, and what you love, what you don't like, what your core value system is, at the earliest possible age is what's going to set you free. It took me until about 38 years old to figure it out. I think it takes most men well into their 30s. Women sort it out usually in their late 20s, but if you're a teenage and you know your yourself well, you'll make better choices. You'll make informed choices. Fail fast, fail often, so that you can learn who you are and what you want to become as a result. You need 3 things you said, right?
- Dave: Yes. That was 1.
- Rocco: Okay, cool. Learn how to cook. Here's the number one reason you should learn how to cook. Have you ever cooked for someone on a date?
- Dave: Absolutely.
- Rocco: Were the results as you hoped they would be?
- Dave: I made them get some ice cream, which is kind of cheating.

- Rocco: Learn how to cook, because the best way, my favorite way to show someone that you love and care about them is to cook for them. It's a great skill to have.
- Dave: Especially if you're a guy, by the way. You can get double points for that.
- Rocco: Save more money. Spend less and save more. There's an epidemic of spending that... that's another topic, but I think people don't realize at a young age that a little bit of money saved on a monthly basis from when you're a teenager will be all the difference when it comes to retirement. Financial freedom to me is kind of like freedom in health as well. When you're financially free, I liken it to taking control of your health, and making the right choices, and losing the weight, and getting rid of the blood pressure meds. When you do all those things, you're free. You're no longer constrained by the limitations of the maladies you suffer from. The same thing this true for financial health.
- Dave: Very well said and thanks for sharing that list. Anything else you'd like to say the to 50,000 or so people who are going to hear this, this week and the other I don't know, thousands and thousands after that who are going to download this.
- Rocco: Where's my coffee, dude?
- Dave: Have I not shipped you some good beans?
- Rocco: That's a pound of coffee. No, I'm pretty sure you did. I'm kidding.
- Dave: Okay, I was like, "That's a terrible faux pas." I always send coffee out, because why not? We'll send you some more, just in case, Rocco.
- Rocco: Okay, I'm going to double check. No, I want to say thank you for listening. We've been talking for over an hour, and if you actually listened for more than 5 or 10 minutes of it, 1, you're a sadist, and 2, you might think what we're talking about is interesting. I'm very flattered by that. Thank you for being a great audience.
- Dave: Have an awesome day and thanks.



Rocco: Bye, man. Take care.

Dave: If you enjoyed today's episode of Bulletproof Radio with Rocco Dispirito, I'd appreciate it if you would go to itunes and just click, "Hey I really liked this episode," so people can find out about it. A personal request here: if someone you know needs a copy of A Bulletproof Diet, now is a really helpful time for you to go out and pick up a copy and give it to them. Send them a gift certificate. The reason for this is that I'm working on the Bulletproof Diet cookbook, the next book in the series, and when the current book hits its sales goals, then it helps new books come out on a timely manner. I would personally appreciate it, if you were thinking about buying one, if you did it now. If you do that, it really makes a difference. Even 100 extra books can be the difference between a very success next book and a less successful next book. Thank you for paying attention and going out there and checking out the Bulletproof Diet book anywhere books are sold. Thanks. Have an awesome day and that was the end of me trying to sell you something. My book is cool. Bye.

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