

Mike Arnstein - Going the Extra Mile on Fruit!

We're over halfway through our summit now, and I hope you've been listening to all the calls because our speakers have shared some incredible insights and information, some very subtle nuances about this diet that you won't catch in anyone's YouTube videos. If you've missed a few, but you've been enjoying them, then I highly recommend investing in the recordings package. At \$27 it is seriously good value with well over 24 hours of listening time for you to use as a resource anytime, anywhere.

Today, we're going to spend some time with fruitarian ultra marathon-runner and co-creator of the Woodstock Fruit Festival, Mike Arnstein, and find out all about his fruit-filled adventures.

Mike has been following a low fat, high fruit, raw vegan diet for 7 years and has been helping others go raw and reap the incredible athletic benefits of a fruit-based diet, via his website thefruitarian.com and his Youtube channel of the same name, since 2008.

Hi Mike!

What led you to a fruit-based diet? Was it an immediate change for you, or did you have a longer transition period? Have you had any issues you had to work through, in order to make the diet work for you?

Mike:

I got into this diet because I was a runner and I was looking to get more competitive and improve my times, see what my performances could be and I was always into what I thought was healthy eating and then when I learned about the fruit based diet, it made immediate sense to me, so I went right into it overnight. I didn't have a transition period really. I had a transition period in a sense where I gradually moved into eating mostly fruit - I pretty much went into eating almost exclusively fruit overnight on January 1st - it was kind of a plan. Change as a New Year's resolution to give it a shot - but I did have transitional experiences in the first 6 months. I found myself eating an enormous amount of food to try and replicate the feeling of sedation that I had when I ate cooked food.

So the transition period for me mainly involved eating, what I would now consider, more than I wanted to because it physically took a lot of time and I had to go to the bathroom a tremendous amount and I also ate considerably more fat in that transition period. There were many evenings where I found myself having 3-6 avocados at one time just so I could get myself to go to sleep.

Those things worked themselves out in a relatively short amount of time and I think that was the extent of my transition into the diet.

Anthea:

How long would you say that transition period lasted for you? Was it the first year or 6 months?

Mike:

About the first 6 months. After 6 months, I felt I really stabilised. I wasn't eating nearly as much. I definitely wasn't eating a lot of avocados anymore. I basically wasn't eating in any type of effect to sedate or satisfy myself after that - for the most part at least.

I was more at a baseline where the transition was a little rough at times - certainly at social events, but after six months it wasn't a struggle anymore. I think that is important to note - that after about a six month period, if somebody is really giving this diet and lifestyle a chance, they should realise that they should be pretty stabilised after six months.

Anthea:

Why did you jump on board with this fruit based diet? Was it an athletic benefit that you were looking for?

Mike:

It was purely performance based - or for the most part. I consider myself somebody who is an environmentalist and I have a strong feeling of compassion for animals that can suffer as a result of trying to become food sources for humans. I don't specifically identify as a vegan - I don't want to get off the course too quickly in this discussion. Veganism is an ideal idea but in nature, veganism doesn't really exist in my opinion. Life is a cycle and everything that lives eventually dies and of course we don't want things to die in a way that includes suffering. But the idea of veganism is a good goal to think that way but for some reason, I just don't like to call myself a strict vegan in terms of how I identify my diet. I like to use the word 'fruitarian' because veganism means you don't eat any bugs or anything and I don't mean eat bugs on purpose - the pure sense of the word 'vegan' doesn't really reality for me. That being said, I don't eat animal based foods like dairy or eggs or anything.

Anthea:

What benefits have you received from a fruit-based diet? Do you ever consider going back to old lifestyle choices?

Mike:

The benefits I achieved were well beyond my dreams in the world of athletics. I was a competitive runner and I wanted to see how much I could improve and I always had these ideas of maybe I could get to a certain level and I completely blew past all of those dreams and even when I think back to the things that I've achieved, it's almost like it didn't happen. I can't believe that I was able to do some of the things I did. I definitely achieved all of the athletic benefits I wanted. What I consider ever going back on the lifestyle? I definitely have gone back to old eating habits at times for very short periods - maybe for a meal. It's always a really ugly result where I get very quickly reminded that I don't want to go back to eating cooked and processed foods. Even raw dehydrated foods or raw gourmet high fat food diet - I need to eat in a way that has a very high water content - it's the way my body has adapted. I'm very stable at this point at maintaining a fruit based diet.

Anthea:

We need to go back a few times to remind ourselves why we made this choice. Many of us are familiar with your running achievements, but for those who aren't, can you give us a quick rundown on the amazing athletic feats you've achieved on a fruit-based diet?

Mike:

When I came into this diet, I was a marathon runner and I was able to run around 2 hours 45 minutes pretty consistently which, for people that know running, is a pretty impressive time but I was able to bring that down eventually to 2 hours and 28 minutes a number of times and I did that on courses in running that are considered quite difficult - like New York and Boston. If we talk very specifically on marathon times - those performances equated to about a 2.25 performance. Definitely a very high level in the marathon running and then of course, I went into the ultra running and I've run every distance up to 250 kilometres at a time, which is 153 miles. I've won many 100-mile races - very high profile 100 mile races in the sport in the United States.

I was averaging 25-30 major running events and marathons or ultra marathons per year for about 4-5 years so I was running mostly 150 - 180 miles per week - about 250 kilometres and I was doing that for quite a few years. For someone to even comprehend what I was doing - attempt even just half that distance in a week to see how incredible that was. It was shocking to me that I was able to hold up for so long doing that. And not just holding up but really performing incredibly well and improving - that was really important. Every year that I ran competitively, I would get better, whereas a lot of people are told that if you eat a fruit based diet, that over a long period of time, you're going to start falling apart. The opposite was happening to me, which is important.

So I culminated my career in running - I was the fifth American finisher in the New York City marathon. I finished 29th in the race out of 45,000 people and then I ran the

8th fastest 100 mile time ever in the United States which was 12 hours and 57 minutes - which equates to 7 minutes and 45 seconds per mile - so 100 miles consecutively without rest. That put me on the top ten all time list. For anybody who knows running - that's the big overview.

Anthea:

Do you attribute these feats to fruit? Give us some reasons why the average Joe should be impressed with fruit-eating for athletes. I mean, maybe you are just an amazing lifetime athlete who is merely maintaining that with a few years of fruit-eating. Or perhaps you were a better athlete before you started living on fruit. What would you say to a doubter who would question whether it was really the fruit?

Mike:

I question that myself because before I started eating this way, I wasn't training as many miles as I did when I also started eating a fruit based diet. There's no question that a lot of my performances came because of the incredible amount of training that I was doing but I'm sure that if I was eating processed foods, I would have gotten sick more often because before I started eating this way, I was getting sick at least 4-5 times per year with a virus or a cold or something like that. I wouldn't have been able to recover as quickly. When you eat heavy foods, it's unquestionable that you need more time to digest the food, it stays in your body longer - I wouldn't have been able to train as hard and recover as quickly if I was eating the way I was before eating a fruit based diet.

There are so many positive effects to eating a fruit based diet and one of them mainly is the hydration. Always being hydrated and flushing your system out constantly so the recovery on eating this way is second to none; it's absolutely phenomenal. So I'm very convinced that the diet had a major factor in allowing me to do the things that I was able to do.

Anthea:

At one time you chose to avoid all overt fats in your diet, such as avocados, nuts, and seeds. Do you still maintain this?

Mike:

I almost never eat nuts in the traditional sense of walnuts, almonds, those type of things. I do eat a considerable amount of young coconut. I live in Hawaii - I don't eat the hard coconut which is much higher in fat. I do eat avocados. I can't say that I really like the fact that I eat avocados sometimes because I do find that I get this addictive response to eating them and I often overeat too many calories on avocados. I don't think they're bad but they're quite difficult for me to put down, especially

when I have an avocado tree in my back yard and I wake up every morning and there's 5-6 avocados sitting on the floor - it's hard not to eat them.

I don't recommend eating a high fat diet - even raw. I do eat more than 10% fat. I think I probably eat closer to 15%, sometimes 20% and I think that is coming mainly from coconut meat. Although I'm not eating the hard coconut, I am eating the coconut that does have a higher fat content than traditional fruits.

Anthea:

I hear you on the avocado, I find it really hard to put them down as well and I can imagine if you have got a tree in your back yard, that would be a bit of a difficult temptation.

We heard from Dr. Robert Lockhart last week on corrective exercise. I see you have an inversion table. Can you tell us about that and how it has affected you as a runner?

Mike:

I didn't really get the inversion table until I retired from competitive running and I definitely highly recommend it. Often when I was running for 20 hours or more per week, although I was recovering well, I did notice that I was losing range of motion in some of my major muscle groups like my hamstrings specifically, and my hips. Hanging upside down on the inversion table was a lot easier for me to do than to do static stretches - or even I tried yoga. I couldn't stay motivated to continue to do those types of stretches and when I would hang upside down on the inversion table, I did a tremendous forced stretch - there was almost like a euphoric affect afterwards from hanging upside down from all the blood going up to my brain and having an incredible stretch out of it in so many different places in my body - so I really recommend it, it makes me feel really loose and I'm really grateful to Robert Lockhart for promoting that.

I think in long terms, inversion tables have a positive affect on keeping the body loose - so I highly recommend it. I wish I was using it when I was running.

Anthea:

I love them as well. We got one recently and it's such a fantastic piece of equipment.

Tell us about your incident with hyponatremia. What is hyponatremia? Is this something fruit-eaters should be concerned about?

Mike:

As a long distance runner, the electrolytes are incredibly important and one of the things that I had a severe reaction to when I went on this diet was that I wasn't having an condiments specifically salt, in my diet and when I found myself going for very long distances in very high heat and at a high intensity, there was a real adjustment period that my body struggled to deal with in being able to hold onto enough sodium or recycle enough sodium so that I could continue to perform well. Quite often in the first 6 months to a year, I would have supplement salt during these very warm long distance running periods and when I first was encountering the effects of hyponatremia, my blood sodium levels were very low, it was very scary because I could feel that something was really wrong inside my body.

It wasn't like anything I had felt before and it didn't take very long for me to realise that I needed to have salt. When this first happened in these running events, I would take in too much salt so I would go from being below sodium levels to having too much sodium so I would get slow and it took time for me to moderate it for my body to adjust and learn how to conserve sodium so I wouldn't have this affect.

Subsequently, years later, when I would run these very long distances at high intensity and high heat, I would have almost no supplemental sodium as I did when I first started out because my body really regulated and adjusted. Now when I exercise, my sweat, I don't have any salt that comes out onto my clothes and my body has adapted to a low sodium diet. For athletes who are eating a regular processed food diet, even a clean processed food diet, they really need to be aware that there is a longer term adjustment period with your body developing a way to conserve sodium and that when you are feeling like something is wrong, you shouldn't ignore it and you should supplement with additional sodium. I think that's incredibly important.

A lot of people come into this diet and they get into the purest mode where they shouldn't have any sodium or any supplements and I think that it is important to realise that it's not always the best decision. You need to be aware of these things.

Anthea:

What were some of the symptoms that you had suffering with that?

Mike:

About 4 hours into high intensity running - I would get dizzy, disoriented, lethargic - something was really off in my body in so many ways, from my thinking to my physical abilities, it was a very strange feeling and the good news is that it was easily correctable with taking in direct sodium.

What's interesting is that I tried initially to have celery juice, which has a lot of sodium in it and I couldn't get enough of it to give me the amount of sodium that I needed. I had muscle cramps, I ran the Western States 100 early in my years of this way and I had tremendous hamstring cramps in the race because I wouldn't take

supplemental salt and I was trying to do it on celery juice. I think for someone who is listening who wants to get into ultra running or maybe just into aerobics and they can identify some of these symptoms, I would say that sodium is something that they should consider using if they feel something is off. Generally I still don't recommend supplementing with any salt - for most people, and from my experience, if I hadn't been doing these extremely long running tests, I wouldn't have any need to take supplemental salts. This is a very unique situation to what I was trying to do in the world of ultra running.

Anthea:

You've attracted quite a bit of media attention with your long-distance running as "The Fruitarian". How do you feel about this? Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years? 20 years?

Mike:

I was talking to somebody in the sport who is a lot older than me - he's in his mid 70s and he was very successful in the world of running and he mentioned to me that he thought that it's not your age that affects your running ability in the world of long distance running, marathons or ultra marathons, he believes that somebody in their 40s and 50s and 60s could be very successful in the world of long distance running but he felt what was really important was the amount of miles that was on somebody. The total mileage on their body - much like a car.

I wondered about his theory that I put 10s and 10s of thousands of miles on my body in the last 8 years - am I going to run into that situation where 20 years from now - I'll be 57 - which in the world of long distance running is still an age where you can perform at an elite level so it's going to be interesting to see how my body changes with age and with all the miles that I have on my body. I think there is a correlation to how many miles you've run to your body slowing down but it will be interesting to see if I can still run very fast when I'm in my mid 40s and mid 50s which I'm sure, knowing myself well, even though I'm taking a forced break right now from sports, I'm sure that I'm going to be pushing myself hard throughout my entire life. It's just my nature. I like re-proving to myself that I can survive, that I can handle stresses and that I can attain and reach goals that are very difficult and hence very rewarding when I do reach them.

I think you'll see me continuing to run and trying new things. I'd like to get into mountain climbing - although I don't think that's a sport, it's a vacation activity for me. Although there is some athletic training involved, it's not nearly anything like running 100 miles - but you're not going to see me doing much running until I am 40 which isn't for another 2 and a half years. Right now it's family time - that's what is important,

Anthea:

That's an interesting theory that that guy has and I am wondering if that was probably based on someone on a standard Western diet. It will be interesting to see on a fruit based diet and using your inversion table and doing all those sorts of things that you do whether we get many more years out of you. I do understand the need for family time. I have a family as well and it's certainly a very time consuming but lovely thing to be doing it at this time in life.

You are the founder of this amazing event - The Woodstock Fruit Festival. Would you tell us what this festival is, and how it came about? I've even heard that without your generous personal contributions, this Festival would not have survived. Can you tell us about that? Why do you feel it is worth spending the money you could have spent on a new house, to make this festival happen?

Mike:

It's a social and educational experience. It's total immersion in this lifestyle and about two years after being into this diet, I'd been to some social/educational-based events in the movement and I wasn't satisfied with many components to them. Being a human and social interaction being something that I just innately want to be a part of, I felt that there needed to be something bigger and more inclusive and more affordable and I took some money that I had saved up from working very hard in my own business. I found Yulia who is the event director and she took my dream and worked on it with me very hard to create the first event, which we launched at a price that was exceptional value.

I knew the first year was critically important. You only have one time to make a first impression and I just knew I had to subsidise the event tremendously in order to get it off the ground. If 20-30 people showed up or even 100 people showed up, it just wouldn't create the atmosphere necessary to get it going. The first year, it was over \$70,000 USD that I personally put into the event to subsidise everything.

I think we charged \$695 per person to come to an all-inclusive, one week event and we had a tremendous amount of durian and whatever we could get our hands on that was high quality. The success speaks for itself. We had 200 people show up that year and then the next year it doubled and we had 400 and on and on.

Now the event is 2 weeks long and I firmly believe that we will have over 500 people in 2015 for the first week and somewhere close to that number for the second week. So the movement is growing. I feel very honored to have been in that position to make this event happen and I wish that I could say that I was independently wealthy and I didn't need to ask for those loans to be repaid but I still am not a home owner, I rent, I've got three kids and I'm in the thick of needing a lot of money in my life so although I make ends meet, I do need the event to be self supporting and the organisation has struggled financially over the years to meet its overheads and I've tried to make it clear that I'm doing everything that I can to support the festival.

I work hundreds if not thousands of hours per year on the event and I do it all as a donation of my own time. I don't ever take a dollar out of the organisation. I don't ever have any intentions of doing that other than to hopefully repay myself the loans I've made myself over the years. I think because people know this, it is known among the people that are passionate about the event, people have paid the increased attendance fees. They help promote it with a passion and you get what you give. I try to remember that in my life very often and I know that if I'm working with high quality people, which most people in this movement are, that they'll give me back what I give them.

I believe that the festival will continue to grow and we're having an event in Hawaii in 2015 so we're going to two events. We've priced the Hawaii event also below the lowest price possible and will continue to give the greatest value to people so they can come and experience a great social environment at a great value and most importantly to me, is to see that they can eat this diet without it being a struggle and it's interesting to note that when you are submerged in it, it's highly successful. People go home and they can make lasting changes. That was the dream and the dream is coming true. I just appreciated everybody for that - we've been doing it together. That's probably the biggest thing that I have achieved in my life apart from my running.

Anyone who is listening who comes to the fruit festival, thank you very much for donating to my dream.

Anthea:

I just want to say thank you so much Mike personally for creating that festival, there is nothing like it. If you haven't been to this festival or if you have been thinking about going, absolutely it is totally worth the investment. I brought my whole family this year who do not eat this way and, they've come home - they're not 100% raw, but are certainly eating way more fresh produce than we ever were and it was an absolute blast. My two boys had a ball - they're 9 and 11 - they were running around. There was just so much to do for the kids - it's fabulous. An absolutely stunning environment and just so much fun. I highly recommend it.

Tell us about your move to Hawaii. What a totally different place than New York City! How does being a fruitarian in Hawaii compare with being a fruitarian in New York City?

Mike:

I moved to Hawaii about a year and a half ago and I knew I was going to be moving to a tropical environment about 2 years after eating this diet. The winters are very difficult in New York. I was also really concerned about the conventional food that I was eating. Honestly I was 90% conventional when I was living in New York. One because the organic was so expensive and also it was also hard to source all year

round. I wasn't happy with the quality of food in New York, although it is very good, it's not the best. I accepted that it was still better to eat the conventional than to go back to eating any of my old diet but I was concerned long term with the conventional food and over time, could the high levels of chemicals and pesticides that were on the food that I was eating - that compounds in my body, because I was probably eating 10 times what most healthy people were eating in terms of conventionally grown fruits. That concerned me greatly and I knew I needed to get to a tropical environment.

Hawaii was the logical choice as being an American. I wouldn't have any issues with staying here - the visa because I'm an American Citizen and also Hawaii made a lot of sense to me because it still very America culturally. I still feel comfortable here. The social opportunities in Hawaii are tremendous because it's still America for me. It's a great dream to move to Hawaii and I was only able to achieve that after getting highly organised with work remotely outside of my main business office in New York. It was a multi-year effort to get to this point so I could maintain my standard of living and my job while working 5,000 miles away.

In terms of fruit in Hawaii, a few months after I got here, it was definitely better, but I was still disappointed living on Oahu with the availability and also the price. It took me time to meet farmers, make connections with people who understood the way I ate and wanted support and encouraged what I was trying to do. Now I can't even compare how it was in New York. I've got a guy who comes to my house every Tuesday and he'll give me as much as I want - he literally comes with a truck and it's no GMO, it's organic, it's grown very close to where I'm living. The quality is incredible. It's by far the best I've ever had. It's always consistent. I get it at a price that is absolutely unbeatable and I've gotten similar hook ups with so many other people that I've met while being here.

If you're going to move to a tropical place, it's going to take time to get well connected, but once you are, I can't see myself moving back to New York full time. When I went back this year for the Woodstock Fruit Festival and I was starting to eat conventional foods again, I could tell the difference. I don't want to exaggerate and say it was like night and day but it was pretty significant. My skin here in Hawaii looks better. I feel better in a tropical environment. It's not just the food; it's the air quality. It's the feeling that I get from food that's locally grown. When I do eat avocado's, they are literally grown in the back yard. The mango season lasts for about 2 months - I can literally walk down the street and pick mangoes from trees.

The experience of living in a fruit orchard, because that's essentially what the tropics tend to provide, is a wonderland and you can't put a price on that. I feel it's a lifetime experience and the idea that I could live this experience for the rest of my life is such a release. It's not a struggle for me to know that I'm going to have really high quality fruit and it's not just about the food helping me, I also feel good about I'm also helping my environment because I'm living in a way which is harmonious and has a symbiotic relationship to it all.

There's are too many benefits to living in a tropical environment to really talk about one aspect. That's why I was so passionate about making the effort to starting another festival in Hawaii - to experience eating fruit in a tropical environment.

Question from Indira:

How to you feel about the new sports drink Numa by the Smith Brothers in Ohio? Athletes who didn't do well ingesting high acid sports drinks. Using other drinks, they say they get too much sugar and other ingredients.

Mike:

I don't drink sports drinks. The only experience I have with drinking some sports drinks is sometimes in ultra marathons I was put in a situation where I only had water or other calories that were available at a race day station like Gatorade and whatever kind of sports drink they had. I really can't comment on sports drinks. People should try things and they should give it a shot - if it seems to be working for you, then it's an option but I wouldn't drink processed sugars as an option if I had a choice. At home I would never recommend somebody have a sports drink; it just doesn't make sense.

Anthea:

What is this you are doing with fruit trees in Hawaii—planting them and giving them away? Can you tell us about that?

Mike:

When I look at fruit, I try to study what my role is and why am I attracted to the fruit. It's not just to create a food source for ourselves but it's also to create a source of renewable, sustainable, healthy life and nature processes - other animals. So I make it a point to save as many of the seeds from the fruits that I eat and I replant hundreds and hundreds of fruit seeds in small pots in my back yard and then I try to graft some of the fruit trees as they get bigger so that people know, the fruit can be a little bit complicated - you've got to have certain soil conditions. Sometimes if you grow fruit from seed, you won't get the same type of fruit from the tree that the fruit came from - you need to graft. The point is that I'm trying to grow more fruit in my local community and when the trees get to a large enough size where they can take care of themselves, I put an ad on Craigslist and I give them away. I tell people that if they want free fruit trees, they can come and pick them up and every couple of months, I probably give away a couple of hundred fruit trees.

I don't think it should be some type of hero reception to this kind of thing - it's what we are supposed to do. It's the same thing if you walk down the street and you see somebody - you say hello. It's human nature to want to do these things. If everybody started planting seeds in their communities, we'd have a lot more free or low cost food available and I just think it's pretty simple. People should do it more.

Anthea:

I think what probably holds a lot of people back is that they don't know how to do it. I think it's fantastic that you're setting that example and maybe you could do a YouTube video on how you do it although John Kohler has a lot of that stuff covered and we will be listening to him coming up shortly on the summit.

So you've lived on a fruit lifestyle in New York City and now in Hawaii, both of which are quite high cost-of-living. Many of us would say you've just got money and that's not something we could ever think of doing. But you say that eating a fruit diet will make us healthy AND wealthy? Can you tell us about that?

Mike:

There's two ways to look at wealth. For me, I've lived in times where I've had quite a bit of physical numbers/zeros in my business and in my bank account and there's been times where I've had very few numbers or zeros in my bank account. I started my business myself and when I met my wife, I had a car that when you sat in the passenger seat, you could see the ground moving underneath you from rusted holes in the floor boards so when I talk about wealth, I can look at it from two perspectives.

One: on a literal sense of making more money, I saw that I was working in a way that was much more focused, when I started eating a fruit based diet. My mind became clear, eating a simpler diet literally frees up more time so you can focus on other things. I spent a lot more time working in way that was more efficient. I really believe that if people ate a fruit based diet, they actually will have more time and they will be more focused and if they are working on something that is financially based, they will probably make more money and be more successful at it.

Depending what type of business or industry you are in, it's going to dictate how much more money you make. I don't think that I'm smarter than somebody who works in an industry where they make less income - you've got to pick your industry based on how much money you want to make. If you're going to work in farming, it's going to be harder to make money than if you work in the finance industry, but you are probably going to feel a lot better about working in farming than finance.

That's one way that I felt that eating a fruit based diet has made me become wealthier.

In terms of feeling wealthy, when you're in good health and you feel very deeply satisfied with yourself on a physical level, that is a tremendous source of wealth. Benjamin Franklin said that 'health is wealth' and that was coming from a guy that was extremely wealthy in so many ways. During his time, he was one of the most popular well-known public figures in the world. He had wealth, fame, fortune and he said that health was wealth.

Whether you're homeless or living in a palace, if you feel really good about your physical health, you feel wealthy, you feel good and I think that is really important to recognise and is something that I focus on all the time. No matter how much money you have, if you don't have your health, you're not going to have anything.

Anthea:

I totally concur with that. I've been through some major health issues in my life and interestingly, when you feel like that, you worry a lot and you worry about money and when you have your health, you just don't worry about the money and that just seems to take care of itself.

Question from Aisha:

Would you ever consider putting together a book or an eBook for athletes on training for a half marathon and a true beginner to start this way of eating with so much info out there?

Mike:

I've been really busy with my personal life, my family and my job and of course the fruit festival and it's been very hard for me to make the time to keep working on a book. It's got to be 4 years now since I made the outline and started to go through the process of that. I will say that my book is not about running. There is a component of the book that is about running but it's a lot more about researching how and why I was able to achieve great health and success in my running by eating this way. It's going to be quite scientific based and a lot of research and a lot of research has been undertaken by a co-author that I'm writing the book with - Victor Van Epps and he's in a graduate program in micro-biology and he's really a scientist and he's also in the low fat fruit based lifestyle so he understands that as well.

I'm not going to put a date on when we are going to be done with this project because it's not a book that's just based on hearsay or war stories on me running all night or something, it's something that's going to have a tremendous citation, database and something that we want to create that has some real lasting influence not just in the community of runners, but in the science world. I'm excited about it and I go to Seattle a couple of times per year to help the process along and I'm writing a lot but it's still going to take probably another year or two until we really finish it.

If somebody wants me to write a book specifically on running and eating a fruit based diet, it's something that is going to come afterwards.

Anthea:

What about your family? What do they eat? How did your diet changes affect them? How did their eating choices or response to your choices affect your ability to sustain this diet?

Mike:

When I first came to this diet, I was quite militant about it. I was very particular about what my kids ate and I was really pushing them hard. I've moderated a lot and know I just tell them that they can only bring certain healthy foods home. They definitely can't bring animal based foods into the house but I don't know what my kids are eating outside the house. I don't think they're eating any animal based foods but I let them know that when they get sick, which happens a couple of times per year, I ask them what they have been eating and invariably it's not fruits and vegetables and I try to make it very clear that if they don't take care of their health, this is what happens. They see that their father never catches a cold or gets sick and that he performs at a super human level and they see what I eat so they get it. They know what's going on. They're old enough to know what they've got to do to be healthy like their father.

I think when they are older and are not in a peer pressure situation, or not in a school where they don't have anything else to eat except pretty unhealthy things, I'm sure they are going to be eating a mostly fruit based diet when they get older. The same thing goes for my wife, Victoria. She eats very similar to me but she tends to fall off the wagon more often and I try not to judge her but she knows what she's got to do. I don't want to be stressed about wondering or monitoring what other people are eating - I can't let that create stress in my life so I let it go.

Question from Roberto:

What do you eat during training when you're training a lot of miles and how do you carry your food?

Mike:

When I'm training, I just eat a tremendous amount of food. The only thing I would eat while I was on a really long training run, I would stop at small supermarkets often and I would buy lots of bananas and during races, I would have these processed energy gels. It's maltodextrin and its basically a complex sugar carbohydrate that's sourced from a type of potato and that was something that I would eat during races - it's mainly about convenience when you're running very fast for long distances. Often in a remote environment, like in a trail race, you just can't carry 15 bananas on your back but you could carry 10 gels in your pocket. That's what I would eat during most of my races.

I have run many races eating dates but if you eat 6-7 pounds of medjool dates, with lots of water, you're going to be stopping to go to the bathroom very often and that

doesn't win races because that takes a lot of time. I've talked a lot about this on videos on YouTube people can hear those if they want more information on that.

Anthea:

We've had quite a few questions about teeth health on the summit, and whether or not eating a whole lot of fruit contributes to teeth issues. I know you've had some personal experiences in this area. Would you like to share about it and what you've learnt in the process?

Mike:

When I first got into this diet, I would go to the dentist probably once per year and every time I went to the dentist, I would have 2 cavities on average and I had that since I was a kid. There weren't any places on my teeth that hadn't had a filling and I wondered how I could have more cavities but I would get the x-rays and I would have more cavities. I was eating almost exclusively high water content fruits, no nuts, I wasn't eating dried fruit for the first 2 years and I had absolutely flawless teeth.

I'm sure most people notice when they first start eating this way, they don't have a lot of plaque or any at all on their teeth like they would have when they ate processed cooked foods. I experienced the same thing - my mouth got very clean. I had no cavities at all for the first time in my life.

Then what happened, my wife got into ultra running and she didn't want to eat gels as a calorie source when she would go on her runs so she started buying lots and lots of dried fruit - specifically medjool dates and like avocados, these things are so addictive, at least for me once I started eating 1 or 2 or 3, I just kept going and going and when I was running 180 miles per week, often late at night, I would just start eating these dates and I just couldn't stop eating them and too often I would go to sleep without brushing or flossing enough and about a year and a half later, I went to the dentist and I had about 22 cavities. I was absolutely speechless.

I can't deny that I have to be very forceful and explain to people who are listening - if you eat a lot of dried fruit, I'm absolutely convinced that you are going to rot your teeth away. Most people will say that people will have a lot of teeth problems no matter what diet they eat. But I think you are going to have a lot more problems eating dried fruit. I don't recommend it. If you are going to eat dates or dried fruit, you've got to put them in a blender with lots of water, it's got to be liquefied so it doesn't sit on your teeth.

I went through absolute hell and a huge amount of expense to correct those problems and I immediately stopped eating dates and the only time I eat dates is probably at the Woodstock Fruit Festival and since I corrected all these issues and I don't eat dried fruit anymore, I don't have any more cavities - what a surprise. I do know that there are other people that run into issues with teeth sensitivities when they eat a lot

of citrus-based foods - I don't know if it's genetic, but I did not have those issues. I could eat oranges - went on a 10 day orange diet where I just ate nothing but oranges just to see what it was like to be on one of these mono diets and even then, I still had no teeth sensitivity so I never ran into those problems.

But I'm positive if you eat a lot of dried fruit, you're going to rot your teeth away. A lot of people when they come to this diet, they go to things like dates because it's such a high concentration of calories and they taste so strong that people get addicted to them and then they get lots and lots of teeth problems and they think it's the diet - it's the dried fruit and there's a huge argument that I would have with Harley and Freelee about this, because they were promoting eating dates all the time and I was telling people that that was the dumbest thing ever - that they shouldn't eat dried fruit unless they do blend it. That's another story. I don't recommend dried fruit.

Question from Raini

Where did you find your fruit in New York City? How did you eat and stay warm in New York City winters? What did you eat?

Mike:

I went shopping at a wholesaler once every 10 days to 2 weeks and buy a tremendous amount of food at one time and I had four refrigerators in my house. I would buy in wholesale like I was running a small fruit store and it worked out well for me because it didn't take a long time to go shopping if I just went once every two weeks and it wasn't as nearly expensive and I think if you are in a situation where your family eats a lot of fruit, because I wasn't just buying for me, I was buying for my wife and my kids ate a lot a fruit, you really need to get set up with going to a wholesaler. I highly recommend New Generation Produce in Brooklyn, they are very supportive of people who eat in this way and have great prices and great options.

Anthea:

Do you supplement with anything? B12, D, multi-vitamin and if so, do you take them every day?

Mike:

The only supplement I've ever taken on what I would consider a very quasi-regular basis is B12. When I was running a tremendous amount about 3 years into my ultra running, I went and got blood tested as a precautionary baseline and my B12 reading was very, very low and the doctor was really insistent that I start taking B12 supplementation. I was having some symptoms of low B12 issues at that time. My eyelids were fluttering and when my hands would get cold, my fingertips would get very sensitive - almost a numbing sensation.

I was still running extremely well at the time but I was still showing some nerve issues from having very low B12, I think a lot of that had to do with the fact that I wasn't eating any organic produce and I think I was stressing my body so much with so much running. I did take B12 pretty intensely at that time and now living in Hawaii, my wife takes supplements for whatever reason she thinks that she needs to, but I really don't supplement anything. If I have a B12 supplement once in a while, it's just superstition almost and maybe once every other month or something. I don't take D or multi-vitamins. If I did get a blood test and it showed that I was really deficient in one area and I should be watching out for that, I would take it. It's not that I'm against them - I just don't feel like I need them.

Anthea:

I know you have a website. How can people find you if they are looking for inspiration or running tips?

Mike:

I would say that YouTube is the best place to go. Look for my channel, it's under The Fruitarian and I've got over 100 videos that I've created over the last 7 years from a wide range of topics for people that are just getting into this diet. A lot of my running adventures are on there. Hopefully they will be able to get their hands on a really good book which covers things in detail with a lot of backing/citations from highly reputable sources of information in the near future.

Anthea:

It's been so great talking with you today, Mike. Thank you from all of us.

What you've achieve over the years is just incredible and your contribution with the Woodstock Fruit Festival, I have to say a personal massive thank you for that, it's just completely changed my life. Something I wanted to do for the last 3 years since I've been on this path. It certainly didn't disappoint me. Thank you so much.

Mike:

Thanks for your compliments and I appreciated what you are trying to do with the summit and I think we are going to see the movement grow a lot and the reason why that is, is because it really does work and it brings a lot more than health the in physical sense - there's emotional health and health to the planet, to your relationships with food and other people. I feel very fortunate that we are on the right path together. I hope more people come to the Woodstock Fruit Festival to experience what it is in a big community. It's really something special.

Anthea:

Thanks for being on the call everyone. Goodbye.