

The Primal Blueprint Podcast – Episode #4: The 10 Laws with Mark Sisson

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Brad Kearns: Welcome to another episode of the Primal Blueprint podcast with Mark Sisson. I'm host Brad Kearns here in the Malibu studios. And Mark, we've had a good run of podcasts in recent times and I thought that today we'd just go back to the beginning and talk about the Primal Blueprint. The basic ten laws of the Primal Blueprint that people might not be familiar with or just get a recap of how this all started.

Mark Sisson: [00:00:42] Yes, I think if you are a listener and you have been involved with Primal Blueprint for a while and you understand the basics behind it, this might be going back maybe too far but for those of you who are not familiar with the Primal Blueprint, this is a way of living that is designed to optimize how your genes express themselves, how you rebuild, renew, regenerate and recreate yourself on a daily basis based on, what I like to call, "hidden genetic switches." These are things we have discovered through a combination of paleo biology and evolution and modern genetic science. When we first decided to describe the Primal Blueprint lifestyle, we decided to come up with a blueprint, a guideline, a set of suggestions, if you will, on how to optimize health. We looked at we looked at all of the different things that every human shared throughout the course of evolution. And with that, we came up with these ten immutable Primal Blueprint laws[00:01:47] and they are:

1. Eat lots of plants and animals.
2. Avoid poisonous things.
3. Move frequently at a slow pace.
4. Lift heavy things.
5. Sprint once in a while.
6. Get adequate sleep.
7. Play.
8. Get adequate sunlight.
9. Avoid stupid mistakes.
10. Use your brain.

It's a very general list, a very generic categories, but basically every one of those activities have been embraced by every human that's ever lived and it would behoove us to pay really close attention to those if we want to manifest that strong, lean, fit, happy, healthy body.

Brad Kearns: So those are general categories but that is an exhaustive list of everything humans needed to do to survive evolution.

Mark Sisson: Correct. And it breaks down in to different areas of life. It is not just about the diet. It is not just about the exercise. Let's just roll through these one at a time and sort of talk about what they mean. [00:02:49] EAT LOTS OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS. This is how we get energy. We eat food. We convert that food into energy, or into lean body mass, or, in some cases, into body fat, and as a result of consuming those foods, we turn on different genetic switches that turn on different distributions of that energy. But the bottom line is, when we talk about eating lots of plants and animals,

as the basis of the human food pyramid has always had as its foundation, plants, vegetables, fruits, and things like that, and animal sources of protein: meat, fish, fowl, eggs, nuts to a certain extent. While it is a very simple statement to say, "Eat lots of plants and animals," it comes to a complex statement because for a millenia, we have derived most of our energy from animal sources of food and with today's sort of emphasis on eating a plant base diet, with which I totally agree, many areas of investigation into human nutrition, seem to overlook this concept that animals offer a tremendous source of protein, and very healthy fats, and that it is critical that we understand that when we are putting together a complete diet.

Brad Kearns: So when you see what a broad range that is of eating plants and animals, and we are so conditioned to subscribing to these diets that are very narrow in the regimented directives. How does the Primal Blueprint differ from that?

Mark Sisson: [00:04:29] It sort of depends on Primal Blueprint law no. 2, which is AVOID POISONOUS THINGS. What is meant by that is to stay away from those foods to which we have not adapted. Processed carbohydrates would be the best example; or sugars, for the most part, and industrial seed oils, those frankenfats. So in staying away from a lot of the processed foods that have arisen as a result of our dependence on industrial processing of foods, we are left with not just a list of foods to avoid, but there remains a pretty copious cornucopia of good foods that are delicious. Again, the meat, fish, fowl, eggs, nuts, seeds, vegetables, a little bit of fruit. These are all foods to which we have adapted, to which our taste buds are accustomed and attuned, to which if you are able to focus your diet on the intake of those, you tend to be able to mitigate hunger and to control the cravings that so many people develop as a result of their dependency on processed food.

Brad Kearns: So before heading to the next laws that have to do with exercise, let's do a recap. It seems like the Primal Blueprint stands apart from conventional wisdom on two main things. 1) it is okay to eat animal foods, including high fat animal foods, and 2) is that grains are not necessary as part of the diet, even the vaunted whole grains.

Mark Sisson: [00:06:06] Well, if you were to pull one principal out of both paleo and primal ways of eating, it would be that grains are sort of antithetical to health. There is nothing really magical about grains. In fact, there are very few good things I could say about grains in general, except that they are a cheap source of calories. They convert to glucose really quickly in the blood stream. If our intention is to become good at burning fat and to minimize the amount of glucose that we depend on and have to burn over a lifetime, one of the easiest ways to achieve that is to minimize or eliminate the intake of grains.

Brad Kearns: So the main objection is that it just contributes to the excess carb intake that frames the modern diet. And then secondarily there are some anti-nutrients that particular people would be very sensitive to, or even mildly sensitive to.

Mark Sisson: Sure, beyond the carbohydrate load that grains and processed grains and sugars present to the body, there is the fact that a lot of grains sources of foods now contain lectins, and phytates and most people are familiar with gluten that are huge issues with a large part of the population. Most people would be well advised to avoid grains just about in all forms. I know that is a very harsh statement to make particularly when we have been adhering to a government recommended food pyramid that suggests 6 to 11 servings of grains a day. As more and more research comes down the road, we start to see that not only is it the celiacs who are gluten intolerant, or the people with Crohn's Disease, or the people with Irritable Bowel Syndrome or whatever have overt manifestations of pain when they eat grains. A lot of people (and I was one of them) who exhibit for prolonged periods of time some clinical effects of grain intake that would manifest themselves in decreased immune function, arthritis, for instance, GERD (gastro-esophageal reflexes disease, or heartburn brought on by grains. There are a lot of other areas that people might assume are natural or normal or caused by something other than that, and would probably be well taken care of by just eliminating grains entirely. And yet if you try eliminating grains for 30 days and it doesn't work or you feel not difference, I am not going to suggest you never eat grains for the rest of your life. What we've found is that most people who give up grains for a reasonable amount of time, start to realize

that they feel better, they have more energy, they are thinking more clearly. That's pretty profound effect for a lot of people.

Brad Kearns: [00:08:49] Well, also, a little bit of an aside, most of the people that we encounter are interested in losing excess body fat and finding that restricting calories while they are still eating a higher percent of carbohydrates, simply doesn't work. So it turns a related point as to why should we give up grains.

Mark Sisson: [00:09:07] Right. My main principles in the Primal Blueprint eating strategy is to mitigate the production of insulin. Insulin is a fat storage hormone and yes there are a lot of other hormones that are at work in the body's metabolism, lectin, graelin, glucedon, testosterone, thyroid hormone and so one. The reality is that you can do what's necessary to keep your insulin levels under control. You pretty much are able to get all of the other hormone players under control. So we look at the notion of reducing carbohydrate intake in general. This is, after all, a fairly low carb diet. When we do what is necessary to get the insulin under control, we tend to trend toward ideal body composition. That is the body tends to burn more of its stored body fat and store less of it.

Brad Kearns: [00:10:00] So before we hit the next three exercise laws, there is one thing you said at the onset about genetic switches and gene reprogramming. I think it is important to educate in a different sense of the common notion that genes as a fixed inheritable trait. You are saying these things about genetic switches turning on and off.

Mark Sisson: Yes, well all genes operate in an environment that require some signaling so that we refer to this as the epigenetics. The level of control above the genes that turns those genes on or off. Genes are just instructions for making proteins and they are making proteins that cause the body to work. That fuels the body and then causes it to have the capacity to generate energy and move about and react and respond to certain stimuli. So it all comes back to the genetic recipe that we all have and our recognition, just in the last 10 or 20 years, that much of who we are depends on which of those genes that exist in our own recipe have been turned on or off. For example, there are certain

foods that we can eat that can turn on genes that cause inflammation. And if they cause systemic inflammation throughout the body, it can predispose us to heart disease or to cancer. There are certain genes that we can turn on that will increase the amount of fat that we can burn and other genes that might increase the amount of fat that we deposit on our bodies. These all happen in the amount of inputs that we create through our behaviors. Typically food is probably the most obvious source of some of these genetic switching, so whether you store or burn fat, or whether you build or destroy muscle tissue. How much energy you have over the course of a day can be very much dependent on not what you inherited from your parents, not the familial predispositions that you might have inherited, but on the actual human gene through which all of the biochemistry the body operates whether or not they are turned on by these inputs that are derived from choices that you make in your diet, in your exercise style, sun exposure, and so on.

Brad Kearns: [00:12:06] Let's take a look at law no. 3, MOVE FREQUENTLY, AT A SLOW PACE.

Mark Sisson: Every human throughout the two million years of human evolution, has moved around a lot until very recently before the advent of automobiles, and planes, and trains, and even bicycles, humans ambulated. We walked. We are bipedal. We are upright by bipedal locomotors. In fact, for the longest time, there were no chairs. There were no sofas. There were no benches to sit on. So it was either walking or squatting, or reclining. So there's a huge long human history of low level aerobic activity. In the Primal Blueprint I go in to great detail about the concept of the antithesis of that which is chronic cardio which was embraced in the 60s. This concept of the more you ran or the more aerobic activity you did at a high heart rate, the better off you were. We have discovered now that that's not necessarily an accurate statement. There is a point beyond which you can do too much aerobic activity and maybe cause negative consequences. So the ideal strategy for my estimation is to find ways to walk a lot, or bike easily or swim easily, or run occasionally, but not run at a heart rate of, say, an excess of 75 or 80 percent of your max heart rate. By moving around a lot we are able to not only....it's not only about burning calories. We don't burn that many calories through walking and I wouldn't want to depend on low aerobic activity as the main reason that I'm losing weight. Most weight

loss happens as a result of the foods you eat and very little depends on the amount of exercise you do. More importantly, it is just about moving around in different planes of action and activity so that you have this body with this amazing sets of muscles that are able to move you through space and it just becomes very important to be able to have the opportunity to do that on a regular basis. You know you and I are sitting here right now in chairs and our hip flexers are tightening up. I have a stand up desk at my office at home. I have a treadmill at my desk at work. All my employees have treadmills at their desks. We try to find ways to move around a lot at this low level of aerobic activity because as the latest mantra to come out of the investigation into human movement is sitting is death. You are going to see more and more of that as time goes by. So just find ways to move around and again don't worry about how many calories you are burning or not. It's not about the calories. It's about the movement.

Brad Kearns [00:15:01] So the emphasis is you want a comfortable or slow pace and you mentioned not exceeding 75 or 80 percent of maximum heart rate. If you are not familiar with heart rate, that is a very very easy pace. So what happens when you drift above and go from slow up to medium or even difficult many exercises?

Mark Sission: I go very intensely for a short period of time all the time. This is not a prescription or prohibition of ever going hard at a fast aerobic pace. It really sort of addresses the idea that there are a number of people who think if a little is good then more is better, and who are training hard every single day. The example, I could use is when I was a marathoner I ran hard every day. When I was a triathlete, I worked out either swim, rode my bike, or ran hard just about every day. And when I say hard, it might not be as intense as I am out of breath in five minutes. It might have been spread out over two or three hours. Still to do that every single day and not give the body time to recover was putting a set of stresses on the body that it is just not able to recover from easily. So what we are talking about here is if you want to optimize your health and probably optimize your fitness, then low level aerobic activity in concert with the next two laws coming up, would be the best approach.

Brad Kearns [00:16:28] So law no, 4 is simply: LIFT HEAVY THINGS.

Mark Sisson: When we are trying to manifest a strong, lean, fit, happy, healthy, productive body, we again want to look back at our history and kind of discern what our ancestors did for millions of years to achieve that robust physical manifestation that they had and one of the activities that they exhibited was lifting heavy things, whether it was dragging a baby around because you were migrating across the plains or whether you were lugging a carcass back to camp, or building a camp, or climbing a tree. These are all brief bursts of movement, we would call resistance training, and we could emulate that by going in to the gym now or even outside in the back yard by doing push-ups, pull-ups, dips, squats, lunges, and so forth or in the gym by doing bench presses, and leg presses, and overhead presses, and a number of other typical gym exercises that we do. But what happens as a result of these exercises is signals are sent to the genes and in this case the genes in the muscles in particular are prompted to grow stronger. The idea being that if this individual is going to want to choose to lift this sack of 50 pounds, again, in the future, I, the body, had better become stronger. I better adapt. I better get fit. And this is what the minor stress of short spurts of lifting heavy things that causes muscles to grow. Now do you need to do it every day? No. In fact the Primal Blueprint Exercise Pyramid would suggest two intense lifting sessions per week is probably adequate. Maybe you can do three, or maybe four but two is probably a good minimum number to start to manifest some of the changes in not just your muscle strength, but the in-bone density which comes as a result of lifting heavy things, energy production which happens as a result of lifting heavy things. There is a genetic adaptations within the mitochondria that will allow you to process energy more efficiently as a result of lifting heavy things. There are all manner of benefits to doing resistance exercise.

Brad Kearns: [00:19:00] So you go into the gyms and you see people mostly focused on the cardio. They go and they do the elliptical every day and they don't touch the weights because they are intimidated or for whatever reason, they are not skilled at it. But what you are saying is that it is really pretty simple and also the duration of the workout doesn't have to be that long.

Mark Sisson: Right. It doesn't take that much to prompt those genetic suggestions in the body to build a stronger muscle. One of the assumptions people have, particularly the

ones you'll see on the treadmills, for or five days a week, slogging through these painful miles that they are doing in a desperate effort to lose weight or maybe maintain their weight, but what happens as a result of that choice, is that muscle is not necessarily built in fact in many cases, there's enough muscle that is cannibalized to be able to supply those leg muscles with carbohydrate or in this case, glucose to continue that activity and then the person goes home and maybe they have burned off 600 calories in the workout but then their appetite says, "Wait a minute. I need to replenish at least the 600 calories I burned today if I am going to have to do this again." It becomes this sort of cyclical treadmill of running hard every day and then eating every night to compensate for it and never lose that 20 or 25 pounds while its jiggling off your belly or your butt while you are on the treadmill. The much easier way to do this is to get in the gym and start doing some resistance training. The appetite doesn't get as stimulated through doing that. The muscles get stronger and denser. It's much more effective.

Then this brings us up to law number 5 [00:20:44] SPRINT ONCE IN A WHILE. So as long as you are able to go all out for a brief periods of time, anywhere from 10 to 30 seconds, in bursts of speed which is another human activity. If you look back in to our ancestral patterns one of the things our ancestors had to do was to run for their lives away from something that was dangerous. Maybe once in a while, maybe once every couple of days, but that also manifested itself in a pulse of growth hormone, in a pulse testosterone, in cortisol secretion, some adrenaline and all of these different brief pulses of acute response to whatever was threatening their life, over time it would manifest itself, again, in greater speed, in greater utility of nutrients, and all of that available to us today we just don't have something chasing us and trying to kill us necessarily on any given day. So we have to create these opportunities. So one of the things I suggest people do is find one day a week where you can sprint. It doesn't have to be outside on the road or on a track. It could be in the gym on the treadmill. It could be on the bike. You could do bike sprints. You could do sprints on an elliptical trainer. You can do them on a rowing machine. The idea is to get your heart up to the max heart rate for very brief periods of time. So typically, we see people doing a warm-up of 5 or 10 minutes and then ramping up to an all out effort for 10 to 20 or maybe 30 seconds, rest a minute or two. Ramp it up

again. Do it again. Do this 6 or 8 times during that one workout one time a week and if you become good at this, maybe you can do it twice a week. Then we have this three-pronged attack to fitness. We have both moving around a lot at a low level of pace where your heart rate doesn't climb that high, lifting heavy things, which would include squats and lunges and leg presses. Your legs that would be running on a treadmill still get a workout. Your muscles are getting a more efficient effective workout and then sprinting once in a while. You put all those three together, you come up with the consummate sort of well-trained athlete who does have some endurance capacity for having done low level aerobic activity, does have some speed from having done the sprints, and does have some overall strength from having done the lifting heavy things.

Brad Kearns [00:23:16] So the first five laws to recap which pertain to diet and exercise, no. 1: Eat lots of plants and animals; no. 2: avoid poisonous things; no. 3: Move frequently at a slow pace; no. 4: Lift heavy things; and no. 5: Sprint once in a while. Then we have five more laws that deal more with lifestyle factors to support those diet and exercise.

Mark Sisson: Right so law no. 6: GET ADEQUATE SLEEP. I find as I go through life and as I talk to people, this is one of the most under-appreciated and overlooked laws in human health. I cannot stress enough how important it is to get adequate sleep. We are so enticed by the entertainment that is available after 10 or 11 o'clock at night. The fact that we can keep the lights on all night long, that we can go party with friends and hang out and listen to music and do all these things. It is really quite a challenge to be able to say "no" to this and to wind down at the end of the day, to decrease your exposure to these artificial lights, the blue lights that are coming off the TV screen or the computer screen or from the overhead lights in whatever venue you are at and just kind of wind down and decrease the amount of noise that is around you and put yourself in a comfortable place and fall asleep normally without taking any sleeping drugs or aids like that. To get eight or nine, or in some cases nine and a half hours of sleep, wake up refreshed the next day and then know with complete confidence that you have repaired your body well overnight which is what sleep is necessary for, it is not just to repair the physical stresses of the body, but also to rewire neural pathways in the brain, where

learning takes place for the most part. As we sleep the experiences that we've had, the memories that we have, the visual cues, a lot of this gets wired as we sleep at night, and get reinforced so its critically important to get enough sleep.

Brad Kearns: [00:25:21] So you mentioned blue light and that's the term for the spectrum that artificial indoor light bulbs, the white light bulbs, emit the blue light spectrum, and that's the thing that interferes with the hormone function especially after dark.

Mark Sisson: One of the things that we want to achieve is we want this wonderful naturally produced hormone called melatonin. That is really the prompt that puts us in a sleeping state. Without melatonin we have a very difficult time falling asleep. We see it older people who have lost the ability to produce a significant amount of melatonin and have a tough time sleeping. They take supplemental melatonin for instance to fall asleep. I don't recommend that because once you start, particularly if you are young, you start interfering with the normal endogenous production of a hormone as critical as melatonin may foster a lifetime dependency on it. But for the most part we have delayed onset melatonin release that happens and is the result of staying up too late and we don't want to get that. We want to have melatonin released normally as a result of it being done. Melatonin does not get released in blue light or in harsh light of any kind. It needs a diminished light which starts with a sort of yellow light which, coincidentally, was available around a fire place 700,000 or 1 million years that we have had access to fire. So if you have candles or some people are using this biomax, putting on yellow sun glasses at night to read before they go to bed to kind of acclimate themselves and get away with that blue light and in to that yellow light space which allows for the release of melatonin.

Brad Kearns: [00:27:05] So it seems like the big tip or big disconnect is that we blast ourselves with artificial light after dark. How can you tell if you are making some efforts and trying to wind things down....how can you tell if you are getting adequate sleep?

Mark Sisson: You can tell if you are getting adequate sleep or not. Typically you can tell if you are not getting adequate sleep. You will notice it the next day. You will take a long time to wake up. You may have to set an alarm. If you are getting adequate sleep, you ought to be able to wake up normally and naturally as the sun is starting to rise, in whatever the part of the world you live in (provided you are not living in the extreme north or the extreme south). It's a very intuitive kind of thing in terms of am I getting enough sleep. I think when people have embraced the concepts of the Primal Blueprint and have gotten their eating strategy in order and have gotten their exercise strategies in order, the next thing to fall into place is the sleep. It is pretty intuitive when you know I am getting enough sleep because I feel good. I have energy. I wake up refreshed. I fall asleep easily at night. I don't need the assistance of any drugs or other sleeping aids. It is a fairly intuitive thing.

Brad Kearns: [00:28:19] So for those heavy hitters who are breezing right through this blog thinking they don't need much sleep, it does profoundly effect those weight loss efforts.

Mark Sisson: Yes. There are a lot of people who are stalled in their weight loss efforts, who are thinking, "I have the diet down, how come I'm not losing weight? or I am doing plenty of exercise, how come I'm not losing weight?" One potential reason might be the inability to get adequate sleep creates the production of excess cortisol. Cortisol is a stress hormone that has a whole slew of negative consequences in the body when it is produced chronically all the time. It suppresses the immune system. It prevents outtake of calcium by bones. It may be the reason that weight loss is stalling because it interferes with our ability to effectively burn off stored body fat. In fact, sort of promotes the cannibalization of muscle tissue. So there are a lot of reasons to avoid this excessive production of cortisol.

Brad Kearns: [00:29:20] Law No. 7 is PLAY.

Mark Sisson: Yes. You know this is one I'd like to have more of in my own life because I recognize how important play is. The human brain requires play as part of the

learning process over time. For some reason it appears that many of us relegated play to end at maybe 5 or 6 years old, or maybe 10 or 11 years old but certainly not in to adulthood. In fact, play is a critical component of anti-stress strategy. It is probably how I get most of my activity. When I talk about moving frequently at a slow pace, much of what I do is to accomplish Rule No. 3, in the form of play. So it may be that I am out on a two-hour paddle session with the dolphins. I am playing with the dolphins. I'm moving. I'm exercising. It may be taking my dog for a hike or I am throwing the ball with my dog. I am playing with my dog. I am sort of multi-tasking in that I am moving around a lot. I am getting that physical movement. But I am also engaging in a form of activity with which I have no attachment to the outcome. That really is the true definition of play. It is something that you are willing to do that is enjoyable and fun and to which you have no particular attachment to a positive or negative outcome. It's just there to be done.

Brad Kearns: In the Primal Connection you referenced that research that showed that play was so important for our ancestors because it allowed them to act out "what if" scenarios that prepared them to real challenges without that attachment to the outcome. In their cases without life or death consequences.

Mark Sisson: That's a very important point and it is kind of interesting to kind of noodle that around and figure out what that means. Basically in game play or just in horsing around young adolescents can figure out how to interact in a social group without getting the crap beat out of them or without being a bully; how to get along in a group given particular scenarios that play themselves out. That's really one of the more elaborate situations or manifestations of what happens when you engage in play. Again, it is just one example of how that may have impacted our evolution was this ability to use play as a practice session for real life later on.

Brad Kearns: I think the memorable quote that I took away from that passage about play is how humans develop a cognitively fluid mind which was huge for evolution and presiding over all the other competitors and as well as succeeding today.

[00:31:59] So No. 8: GET ADEQUATE SUNLIGHT.

Mark Sisson: You know it is interesting how we have been told by so much of the medical community to avoid sun. That sunlight and sun exposure is bad for us. That it causes cancer. And I made a statement years ago that I will stand by now that I think that more people get cancer as a result of avoiding sun than ever got cancer from getting too much sun. The human body was designed to be exposed to sun for a number of reasons, not the least among which was to take that UVB rays that come from the sun and convert cholesterol underneath the skin into vitamin D. Vitamin D is one of the most important vitamins, (it really ought to be called a hormone.) One of the most important vitamins in the body particularly with regard to the immune system. One of the reasons that we don't get cancer as a result is the vitamin D's interaction with the p53 gene and the propensity that we have to scrutinize all of the changes that are happening in the DNA and to identify bad links or bad situations and to use the immune system to kick out those. That's the reason why we don't get cancer every one of us all the time. We have the immune system that's always looking for damaged proteins, and damaged scans of DNA. Yet without sunlight, we really have a tough time making this all important vitamin D. So what I recommend is people spend anywhere from 10 to 20 minutes a day as unprotected as possible, with as much of the body in the sunlight as possible where feasible. Again if you are in the middle of New England, it might not be feasible, in which case it is probably prudent to take a vitamin D supplement. But for the most part, the best source of vitamin D is getting adequate sunlight. One other aspect of that is that it affects our mood. It has a huge effect. It has a significant impact depending on the amount of sunlight that we get. You see in the northern countries of Europe you see an increase in the incidence of mood disorders in the winter time as a result of the lack of sunlight. So I think all of these factors bring me back to this law. For the last 2 million years humans have gotten daily amounts of sunlight and to the extent you find ways that we can do that today, we will benefit.

Brad Kearns So the fair-skinned people that fear the sun and don't want to go out. You can cover up your face, but you want to expose the large skin surface area of your body to make vitamin D.

Mark Sisson: Sure. The back, the torso, the legs, and to the extent that you can do that. And, yes, if you want to avoid the wrinkles that you see in National Geographic magazine of the centenarians that are spread around the world. Certainly cover your face up but large areas of the body are designed to capture the UVB rays and help you convert into vitamin D.

Brad Kearns [00:34:57] I know you have to get back to your paddling session so we'll get into these last two laws: No. 9: AVOID STUPID MISTAKES.

Mark Sission: You know this almost goes without saying but one of the reasons we tend to live longer is we avoid making stupid mistakes. There is a whole internet and book series called "Darwin Awards" which about people who have been removed from the gene pool because of the choices they have made that had to do with maybe trying to get sun tans on the top of a microwave dish on the office building or pouring gasoline on a fire to get it going. Some of those are obvious. We have a book coming out actually next year (2014) called the Primal Prescription in Doug McGuff, an emergency room physician details some of the stupid mistakes that he has seen over his career. He actually sets off these laws. Using seat belts would be an obvious one. Wearing a helmet when you ride a bike or playing football would be a obvious one. Actually not playing football would be an obvious one. He would go on to say, "Don't buy an ATV or a three wheel vehicle because a quad will turn in to a quad." A lot of these things we look at go, "What's the harm?" No diving into a shallow swimming pool. Some of these things seem obvious to you and me but for a lot of people it does take stepping back and asking, "What are the consequences if I try this?" I am not a big fan of BASE jumping. but I have friends who chose to do BASE jumping. And when the do, they pack their own chutes. It is really about minimizes risks and as such, living a long happy healthy life.

Brad Kearns [00:36:46] Well, it's a little bit of a disturbing juxtaposition when you think about the Primal Law of Avoiding Stupid Mistakes, and not slipping off the rock and falling and even today with all the modern comforts, we still find ways to texting and driving, and so forth.

Mark Sisson: Great example. Texting and driving didn't exist fifteen years ago and now it is a cause of a lot of bike accidents because the drivers swerve over a little bit to the side of the road. I would not ride my bike on the roads today because of when texting and cell phones came on the scene fifteen years ago. And when you look at evolution over time, if any of these traumatic experiences happen to our ancestors, that was it. The ball game was over. Today we at least have the luxury of if you get whacked pretty bad in an accident, maybe there is someone in the emergency room that can help you get through this particular episode. But it is far better to just avoid that trauma in the first place.

Brad Kearns [00:37:35] So Law No.10 is USE YOUR BRAIN.

Mark Sisson: Yeah, you know we are humans are on top of the food chain because of our brain. We are the smartest animal that ever lived, according to some accounts. I am not sure that is always the case. One of the things that is important to our maintaining our health is to maintain our cognition, our ability to reason, our ability to communicate. One of the assumptions we make over time is that we don't have to train the brain. We don't have to work it out. The brain is what it is and it's there. In fact, we do have train the brain and so I recommend that a lot of times people need to engage in hobbies, learn to play an instrument. I happened to do crossword puzzles and Sudukos and Jumbles on a daily basis just as sort of a form of working out but it is for my brain. My intention is to stay as cognitively adept as I can for as long as I can. Alzheimer's runs in my family. I happen to think a lot of it is the result of bad food choices and dietary choices and I think I've got that one pretty much licked. But by the same token I want to be as sharp for as long as I can be and that requires using my brain.

Brad Kearns: So the distinction from going to work and getting slammed for eight hours in your core dealings of responsibilities and using the heck out of your brain and going home at 5:00 but, we're talking about creative pursuits you can enjoy and grow from.

Mark Sisson: Absolutely. No matter what environment you are in it is typically a rote situation. You do what you do. It's like going to the gym and lifting the same weights

every day. At some point your body gets used to it and doesn't have to adapt. What I am suggesting is that by doing puzzles, by learning a language, working with young people, there are manner of ways to used your brain and put yourself in to challenging situations where you are forcing your brain to come up with new solutions and new situations. It is fun. I have to say. I don't like being in a work situations where it is the same old thing all day long. I look forward to doing my puzzles in the morning more than any other part of my day. Don't tell my wife that. But I look for it to be fun. I don't want it to be anything other than fun.

Brad Kearns: All right. That's the Ten Laws of Primal Blueprint. Thank you so much for providing that great overview of the movement. Another way you can use your brain is to go check out flights to Cancun because on March 1 through 6th we are going to have this wonderful Primalcon vacation at Dreams Tulim, a 5-star resort coming out of Cancun airport. This is at Primalblueprint.com, you can see the link to Primalcon. We've also got another Primalcon, the Fifth annual Oxnard event in September. And thank you so much for listening to another Primal Blueprint podcast here in Malibu with Mark Sisson.