

The Primal Blueprint Podcast – Episode #33: Introducing Mike DiLandro, Our First Primal Blueprint Certified Expert!

Topic timestamps:

How Brad and Mike got together: 00:21

Mike transformed his body quickly: 01:44

Helping his family get interested: 04:29

Reducing inflammation: 07:58

How Mike lost weight and got healthier: 11:19

This is sustainable and can be easy: 12:57

Blood work: 14:42

Mike's involvement with Primal Blueprint/becoming a presenter: 19:49

Primal Blueprint Certification training: 27:14

Tips for presenting: :08

Primal Blueprint services for corporations: 32:48

Brad Kearns: Welcome to the Primal Blueprint podcast. I am your host, Brad Kearns, and today we have a very special guest by the name of Mike DiLandro. This guy is all over the Primal Blueprint scene. He is over in New Jersey. We have him on remote. Mike, thanks for coming on the show.

Mike DiLandro: Hi, Brad. How are you doing tonight?

Brad Kearns: [00:00:21] I am doing great. It has been two years since we met. Our first meeting was when you approached us asking for a guest speaker to come to your company and give a talk about the primal diet and the primal/paleo lifestyle. I had a wonderful experience heading out to Princeton, New Jersey, and talking to your folks. What I was really amazed to discover was that you, as single employee who is not even in the HR or wellness area of the company in a technical role, had an incredible impact on your employees there. You were able to transform the culture at your workplace.

Mike DiLandro: Yes. I was real fortunate how all things converged and came together. I had only been following Mark's advice in the Primal Blueprint for about a month, before I saw on Mark's Daily Apple that he was going to be coming to New York City. That is when I reached out to you guys and, thankfully, you got a hold of me and said, "Mark is probably a little expensive for you company but I will come out." We just hit it off so well. I said I will see if the HR department and the Wellness Committee will actually pay a fee to bring somebody in to talk with the employees. I was elated when they totally embraced the idea.

Brad Kearns: [00:01:44] The reason I wanted to get you on this podcast is because you have had so many interesting things going since the beginning of joining up with the Primal Blueprint. It starts with the incredible success story that you transformed your own body. That was a portal to all these other things you are involved with now. So let's kick it back to when you first became exposed to the Primal Blueprint, the state you were in at that time. I know you were doing chronic cardio and had an interest in health and fitness but you were not getting the results you wanted.

Mike DiLandro: Yeah. Chronic cardio! No kidding! I was literally in the gym 11 times a week. I would go every morning, Brad. I would take 4 or 5 spin classes a week. I was so impressed that I was burning 800 to 1000 calories a class. I worked my normal workday. I would go back to the gym at night and lift weights 6 times a week and I did this for a better part of 2+ years and didn't alter my body composition at all. I didn't lose a pound. I started having to take chondroitin and glucosamine with MSN for joint pain in my knees. I was really frustrated and I was really fortunate that one of the guys who manages the gym was talking to someone about doing a "caveman diet." I stumbled on to it and I asked him a few questions and I ended up going on the internet that night (it was back in 2012) trying to figure out what a "caveman diet" was and decided it seemed to make sense and read a few articles on the internet. So when we went back to the gym that next night, I found the same guy again and I also found the gym's director. The director said, "Look, if you guys are really serious about doing a caveman diet, you have to check out Mark Sisson's book, "The

Primal Blueprint." That night I went home and bought the book and read it on my iPad in two days. It all clicked, Brad. Everything came together. It wasn't just about changing the food. It was changing the way I exercised, the way I slept, the supplements I took, the amount of sunlight I got. It just all clicked. After that it was so easy. I lost 16 pounds in 1 month. I lost another 9-10 pounds the next month and came down from about 205 pounds to 180. I am 6 foot tall. I have been at that weight since May of 2012.

Brad Kearns: [00:04:29] That is fantastic. We can all enjoy your success story on Mark's Daily Apple where you provide the details. The wonderful next step that I noticed was how you started getting Mom and Dad interested in this transformation.

Mike DiLandro: Yeah. That took a lot of work at the beginning. About the time I contacted you, I was only about a month in and I had already lost 16 pounds and I was pretty excited on how easy it was falling off. I had no cravings. I, like most sons, would call home once a week just to make sure they were okay. I was so excited to share how this plan was working for me but at the same time, my mom was devastated because she had she gotten some blood work done and the doctor had deemed her pre-diabetic. So I bought her Mark's book and had it mailed to her and I told her just to avoid bread and added sugars. I said I would explain it to her once she got the book. The doctor had said to her before, "If you can't get this under control in five weeks, I am going to put you on medicine." She came back in five weeks and her triglycerides went from the mid-200s, like 220-240 range to 140 in just five weeks. The doctor was shocked. I hear that all the time where doctors ask the patients what they are doing? How can this happen so rapidly? She told him basically, I just cut out grains and cut out processed foods. He said she should just keep doing what she was doing. She ended up getting my dad involved and he lost over 40 pounds. He was about 15 pounds heavier than me at the start and he has gone down less than I am now. They are both in their early 70s.

Brad Kearns: What is really interesting is that we get so many comments and questions at Mark's life events where audience questions and also the written in questions from the podcast where lot of people ask, "How can I get my family, friends, and loved ones to embrace this incredible passion that has changed my life?" A lot of people have trouble. You are reporting that you just mailed the book to your mom and she transformed her health and blew her doctor's mind. So what is your secret?

Mike DiLandro: There is no secret. She was not easy at first. You are talking about someone who was a nurse and had lots and lots of medical training. It took a while. At first, more than talk is just setting an example. It is just telling people. (I do seminars, too.) I just show them how I look. They can see how I feel. They can literally notice the lack of inflammation in my body. They can see it as my face gets skinnier, as my body drops a little inflammation and excess body fat. She took a little convincing at first to take it to the next step. All three of us, my dad, my mom, and myself, were all on statin medications for years. I threw mine out the day I read "The Primal Blueprint." They took a little bit more convincing. They needed to try the diet and a little bit of the exercise. And in about six months in, they finally were off the meds. Thankfully, all of us are off statins now.

Brad Kearns: [00:07:58] You touched on some important things I want to go back and cover. One of them was the inflammation and how you can discern a noticeable change in appearance. What we are talking about there is the water retention that occurs when your body is in a systemic inflammation state, which a lot of times, is caused by the difficulty in digesting and processing the high carbohydrate/grain-based diet.

Mike DiLandro: Exactly. In fact a lot of the things I start off with when I do the talks or informally trying to explain to somebody who is curious about primal or paleo lifestyle, I say that everything that we do is based on reducing inflammation from the food we put in our bodies. We try to eliminate foods that cause inflammation and the general topics would be your grains and your legumes and potentially dairy. For everybody, it is trying to find the foods that might cause him or her, as individuals, have inflammation. And then we take it to the exercise and the amount of chronic cardio that I was going before reading "The Primal Blueprint," was causing so much stress on my body that it was actually causing inflammation as opposed to doing exercise to benefit the body. Then there is the sleep aspect. If you are not getting enough sleep, there is inflammation. If you are not getting enough sunlight, you are not helping your body out. I generally tell people that this whole plan is based on reducing inflammation in the body.

Brad Kearns: So what we are talking about is the system-wide inflammation that is an adverse health condition that occurs in response to an excessive amount of lifestyle stress. Inflammation is a great thing to have when you go into the gym to do a high-intensity strength-training workout. If you want to lift 300 pounds, you are going to have to inflame those muscles and get the bloodstream engorged to perform great physical feats. Or, if you get whacked in the eye at a baseball game, the inflammation that occurs when you get a black eye, is a sign that it is an optimal functioning of the body's immune system that contained the damage into that area and speed the healing process by inflaming the injured area. What happens is that people get into these bad patterns of eating and over-exercising, and then inflammation is occurring all the time as the body attempts to cope with the unrelenting and inappropriate forms of stress.

Mike DiLandro: That is so right. When I am giving a seminar out there that inflammation is critical. Without it, we would all be dead. You would get a cut and your injury wouldn't heal. You would bleed out. The human body is so amazing in that it can stop a cut, stop the bleeding, and then repair itself and eventually won't even have a sign that the cut was even there. So that is the magic of acute inflammation. It is the chronic inflammation that I really should emphasize that "The Primal Blueprint" looks to eliminate.

Brad Kearns: [11:19] Good stuff. So when you mentioned that you lost 16 pounds in the first month, did you say? The first few weeks?

Mike DiLandro: Yes first month. I can't believe how easy it was. I am talking three years of hard exercise and eating six small carbohydrate-based meals a day and not losing a pound over three years. And to watch 16 pounds just fall off in a month was just amazing. I don't want to over-emphasize the weight loss. People like to focus on weight loss vs. a medical parameter. The number one reason for following primal lifestyle is to regain your health. The weight loss is just a really nice side effect.

Brad Kearns: So and also with that report of 16 pounds...that's not all excess body fat. That is impossible to achieve in one month but what it represents is a reduction in inflammation in each of the cells of the body. That is why you mentioned your face and your appearance. You dramatically transformed your appearance and your health just by eliminating those offensive foods and recalibrating your exercise to be more balanced with stress and rest. You probably lost 4 or 5 or 6 pounds of healthy body fat reduction and then the rest of it was just getting your system to work right.

Mike DiLandro: Yes. Absolutely. I wish I had done a body mass fat percentage calibration at the beginning and then at the end. I could have more accurate numbers. Really it is just a guess. You are right. I lost some water in with some fat that first month.

Brad Kearns: [00:12:57] Again, these are all by-products like you emphasize and that is really wonderful because meanwhile you are feeling better. Just to pick up a recent podcast we had with Mark doing the reasons you are not reducing body fat. We talked about The Biggest Loser. Sure, those folks can lose 40 or 50 pounds in a single month but it is not the long term sustainable approach so you probably started feeling better the day you closed your book or turned off your iPad and started ditching grains, sugars, and industrial oils, huh?

Mike DiLandro: Yes. Absolutely. And some people have a rough go at it the first 3 or 4 days. I didn't. It was just easy. I was a little hungry. But there was no crankiness, no headaches, or no withdrawal. I was pretty fortunate. I am not allergic to any foods that I know of. They don't cause me Irritable Bowel Syndrome like so many of the people who write in to Mark's Daily Apple with so many of the great success stories. It always amazes me to read them every Friday and see all the different ailments that people overcome. I didn't really have any of that to start with. Really I just started out of vanity. I just really wanted to lose a little belly fat. I didn't realize how my knees were bothering me so much. I don't know whether it was because I started exercising half as much or that I removed grains from my diet, but the knee pain that I was having was totally gone. Just to be able to feel energetic in the afternoon. Even if I skipped a meal, it was pretty amazing.

Brad Kearns: [00:14:42] Another thing you mentioned back was your mom's blood report. For those who are unfamiliar with the ranges of the readings, triglycerides is the measurement of fats circulating in the

blood stream. So it is a very prominent risk factor for heart disease. In fact, Dr. Cate Shanahan, of Primal Advantage, says that the triglycerides to HDL ratio is, perhaps, the best tracker of heart disease risk. So you want to lower your triglycerides into a healthy range and many doctors say that is 150 or below. Dr. Ron Sinha, a recent podcast guest and author of the "South Asian Health Solution" writes to keep it under 100. But another tandem goal is to get your HDL up there at the same level as your triglycerides. So a 1 to 1 would be the ultimate goal and getting your triglycerides to HDL at 3.5 to 1 or better is absolutely urgent to protect your health. So when your triglycerides are up over 200, you can bet that even a good HDL score is not going to be anywhere near there. The wonderful thing is, like your mom experienced, you can right these numbers in a very short time.

Mike DiLandro: To touch on that, especially the point you are making about the triglycerides to HDL ratio. That was ironic, but it is really sad, when I was on statin medication, the statins were doing their job. They were suppressing the enzyme that allow the liver to produce cholesterol. So my total cholesterol was in what modern medicine calls a "safe range." Let's say less than 200 milligrams per deciliter. When I go back and look at my blood work, my triglycerides were almost 200 and my HDL was only about 35 so that was a ratio there that was 5-1/2 or 6 to 1. We in the primal/paleo community know that is really bad. But my doctor did not care. All he cared about was the statin medication I was on was lowering my total cholesterol and lowering my LDL to the numbers that they have.less than 200 for the total cholesterol, about a 100 or less for LDL. When I threw the statins out and followed the Primal Blueprint diet and exercise plan, my total cholesterol crept up but my triglycerides came down to about 88 and my HDL shot up to almost 60. So totally the ratio now is just a little over 1 to 1. Exactly where we want it to be in paleo community. That is without medication. That is the amazing thing.

Brad Kearns: The great thing that Dr. Sinha shared, too, is that the mainstream medical community is now starting to see this big picture and embrace some of these assertions as indisputable. So recognizing that triglycerides to HDL ratio for example is more relevant than just the total score is part of what is happening. There was a study at UCLA that Dr. Sinha referenced in his book that the majority of heart attack patients had LDL cholesterol levels that were in the safe zone and they still had heart attacks so it is no funny business to understand the big picture and if you are not getting cooperation with your first point of access into the medical experience, it is important to challenge these things and study up and realize what is going on out there, not only on the front lines with patients and people like your mom and your ditching the drugs, but also with the respective studies such as the Framingham Study and the other big ones.

Mike DiLandro: I read about a medianalysis, Brad, in Japan, where the Japanese have stopped using total cholesterol as a barometer for medicating people because they had been on a medianalysis, I think it was in 2007, they had a 150,000 participants in this medianalysis. They broke people into four groups. One group had total cholesterol of less than 160; another group was 160-200; and another group was 200-240; and the fourth group had total cholesterol greater than 240. The group that had the most cardio-vascular disease was the group that had total cholesterol of less than 160. The group that had the least risk of cardio-vascular disease was the group that had a total cholesterol of more than 240. Exactly the opposite of what modern American medicine has been preaching for so many years.

Brad Kearns: [00:19:49] Speaking of your referencing a study, I have to plug your email blast that you do once a month. It is an extraordinary piece of work where you aggregate all the great posts and studies and links out there, you share a little bit of personal experience, and few tips, recipes and workouts and you blast it out only to your private VIPs. I know I am not the only one bugging you for a long time that you have to publish. You have to get a blog of some type of presence so you can share this great work with everybody. You are all over the scene and your finger is on the pulse everything that is going on in the paleo/primal community.

Mike DiLandro: Thanks, Brad. A lot of the nudging has come from you and I really appreciate it. It has taken me a while to get the courage to get a blog, but it's close. Right now you can follow me on Twitter @paleomiked. My blog is also on paleomiked.com and also at paleomiked on Facebook. So hopefully I'll get that blog up soon and running. I would love to hear from you.

Brad Kearns: [00:20:54] Let's pick up the story we started with you and your success story and getting entry into the gun show and then your parents losing all that weight. And then, of course, there is your involvement in your corporate workplace. When I came in there and greeted this group. They were very open and receptive. The top-level executives and the general population were there. It was a well-attended workshop. The thing that I remember is that I was being brought in to give this talk to these corporate groups. You were going to introduce me and then I am going to step up and do my slide show. You got up to the front of the room with your fellow employees. You knocked it out. You gave such a heart-felt account of how this has changed your life. I was sitting in the front row thinking you didn't need me. You could do the presentation yourself. This is heavy stuff and it was so personal and everyone accepts you because you work with them every day.

Mike DiLandro: I do have to apologize. I probably talked way longer than a normal introduction goes. You are right. I am so passionate about it. If anybody wants to learn how to get healthy and they seek me out whether it is through email or through work, or a friend. I will spend all the time I can with that person to try to educate them and give them the choices they need. Obviously, at that time, when I first met you I had only been following the primal lifestyle for two months. So it was funny to me when you said, "You should come work for the Primal Blueprint, because you are really passionate about this." I was and I still am. I just really needed to immerse myself in some of the literature and really get a better understanding and also I wanted to see what it did to my body for a year, if I could sustain the levels. After 12 months had gone by and the weight stayed constant, the blood work was still good. I read about a dozen books on the field and felt like I really knew the stuff. I was so thankful to you and to Mark for giving me a chance to go out in the public and speak on behalf of the Primal Blueprint.

Brad Kearns: Yes, and what we did.....this is the next evolution in your story. I made you sit through my presentation and then you decided that you were ready one day to step up and deliver the Primal Transformation seminar yourself. It is a pretty huge step to going from knowing this stuff to, being into it, being able to chit chat with your mom and dad, or your friends, to going into a paid audience and stepping up on a live performance. Now you have quite a few seminars under your belt. You schedule them regularly throughout the East Coast. Tell us about getting ready and preparing to deliver the Primal Transformation seminar.

Mike DiLandro: Yes, I was fortunate the very first seminar I did was outside of D.C. in Virginia. I typically arrive at my seminars about an hour in advance just to make sure I set up and the very first seminar that I did, I had two people that were going to attend the seminar show up, also an hour in advance. They were both significantly overweight and they were really eager to learn about it so we just started talking and talking and talking, to a point where it was about 15 minutes before the seminar and I hadn't done any set up at all. I think they saved me from being nervous, because I had no time to be nervous. I basically put my laptop up, put the projector up, everybody else had shown up. We had about 30 people that first time. It was just great. We schedule these seminars for 2-1/2 hours. I usually overrun it for at least a half hour. It is just so amazing to see the people that stay and all the questions they ask and wanting to know.....whether they have been doing it for a couple of months or whether they have been doing it for a couple of years or whether they are actually brand new to primal. They stay engaged and want to have discussions and they want to help people that are there with some of their ideas or some of their tips. It really is an amazing experience.

Brad Kearns: Yes. It is nice to greet a willing group who decided to come and spend the time and energy to get there. What about in your workplace where you are encountering all levels of people who are super interested all the way down to the people who are sick and tired of your proselytizing in the break room or whatever the range is? How has it gone with a broad group like that?

Mike DiLandro: It is interesting. I tell people.....you don't want to preach ever.....my place of business is loaded with bad junk food, provided free by the company for anyone who wants it. So whenever I go in to the break room to get a cup of coffee or whatever, and somebody is reaching into a drawer for a bag of chips or a bag of cookies, and they see me, they throw it back and slam the drawer closed and they say, "I will leave it alone." I don't even say anything and sometimes it is like the conscience there. It is so interesting when people now they will hit me up when they find an interesting article that they read or they

go to their doctor.....I work with a woman who went to her doctor who told her she needs to cut back on wheat and grains. When she came back from her doctor, she came immediately to my office and said, "You know, my doctor is actually telling me this now." It is refreshing to see that and I get email and notes from folks all the time to tell me they are still doing good and I am down a couple of pounds or I just had a personal best. It is really nice feeling when you are trying to motivate people to get some of that feedback.

Brad Kearns: [00:27:14] Mike, you recently completed the Primal Blueprint Expert Certification. I believe your certificate is number 1. You were the first guy to finish. You kind of went backwards on this because what we envision on this is people going through the certification training and then being equipped and perhaps interested in delivering the seminars but since you were the guinea pig here and the first guy to really jump in to this material and review it for us. Tell us how that experience was.

Mike DiLandro: That was a great experience, but it was not an easy experience and I tell that to anybody listening out there who has an interest in this Primal Blueprint Certification. I consider myself a pretty smart guy. I have two engineering degrees. I am certified in project management and that alone is a 4-hour 200-question test. I have always been a good test taker but this Primal Blueprint Certification course really does supply a lot of really good information and it is a true test of knowledge. I have probably read a dozen books in the past year or so on paleo lifestyle, exercise and nutrition and I have been speaking in the public at a rate of about one seminar a month out there in the public and I feel like I am pretty well-versed in the material but in reading it, there was tons and tons of stuff that I learned going through it and I have found the questions really challenging. Hopefully, I pointed out a few that maybe were a little too challenging and you have made the necessary changes before releasing it to the public. So I wish everybody out there who wants this certification whether it is for their business or for their general interest to go for it. It is really well worthwhile. It is well written and very informative.

Brad Kearns: [00:29:08] Thanks, Mike. So if someone aspires to perhaps one day deliver the Primal Seminar and make a go of it, what kind of tips or comments would you have as far as them going through the certification first and then what kind of skills or preparation would they need?

Mike DiLandro: That's a good question. Obviously, to speak in front of 30 people is not always easy. Some people just have a fear of it so you have to be confident that you can get up in front of 30 strangers and be able to speak. Number 1, you have to feel like you have a good command of the material. There is really no better way to prepare yourself than to take that Primal Blueprint Certification course. I recommend attending the seminar so if you are in an area of the country that we haven't gone to, you can always contact us here at the Primal Blueprint to ask us to come out to where you are and give a seminar. One of our Primal Blueprint Transformation seminar presenters, Karl Bendy, and his wife actually came from Detroit, Michigan, to Bethesda, Maryland, to attend a seminar I gave there with the interest and hoping they would be able to host and present their own seminars. Karl has done quite a few now in the Michigan area. If you are in that part of the country and you would like a seminar hit us up and we will put you in contact with Karl.

Brad Kearns: One thing I noticed when I did my 22 city tour delivering this seminar in 2011 was, of course, you have to have command of the material and the slides are wonderful with all the talking points, but the other thing I noticed is when you have this interested, enthusiastic audience they contribute so much to the presentation just from their own knowledge and experience base. So when someone shares...there is always someone who has had success and will share that aspect of it. It really becomes more of a community circle rather than some dude stepping up there giving a speech for three hours because that is way too long for someone to sit in a chair and listen to anything.

Mike DiLandro: Yes. Absolutely. The first thing I lay out as the ground rules as we get started in these seminars, please ask your question or give your point of view at any time in the presentation. Because, like you say, it stirs up tips and advice and more questions. It becomes less of a presentation and more of an interactive dialog among 30 to 50 people which is fabulous. It is a great way to learn. I give the seminars but I am always taking stuff home, whether it is a new recipe, or something like that, or tip on how to prepare food, or how to overcome a certain ailment that somebody might have. It really is a great process.

Brad Kearns: Well, Mike, you are doing a great job out there on the road and hopefully, you will have some more cities scheduled where people can come out and see you in person. The second best thing is to start following you on Twitter, I guess, right now. paleomiked and also on your upcoming blog which might even be up by the time this broadcast airs. Repeat those addresses again.

Mike DiLandro: For Twitter @paleomiked, Facebook is paleomiked, and hopefully paleomiked.com. The blog will be up shortly.

[00:32:48] Brad, before we get away I just want to put a plug out there to the decision makers and HR folks who are listening across corporate American and world-wide. If anybody out there has an interest in bringing somebody from the Primal Blueprint into your company to give a seminar, please reach out to us. We would love to come in and talk to your company, your cross-fit box, gym, your church group, your school, your university. We really think it is the best way that we can spread the word and increase the amount of people that we are reaching on the Primal Blueprint. Right now when I host the seminar it is pretty much just Mark on Mark's Daily Apple. So the people that are signing up have the knowledge of Mark. They follow him. They get his emails. They will tell somebody else and that is how we get some new people. If you an HR person and your company has got skyrocketing medical bills and you want to get your workforce healthier, there is really no better way to immerse your company in the Primal Blueprint and the Primal Blueprint 21-Day Transformation. Even if you only get 20% of the people who attend the seminar who start following it, those people will start to feel healthier, they will start to come off their medication and, in the end, the seminar will pay for itself a hundredfold.

Brad Kearns: Thanks for mentioning that because we really do want to get out and engage with groups because there is something special about the group energy in the workplace where people are part of the team. They are already accustomed to motivating and supporting each other. These kinds of things like a new lifestyle approach and implementing healthy practices into the workday, can really work well, and work some magic. People are already ready and willing to embrace things that will improve their health and their productivity. The page you can see on our website about corporate events....we are happy to customize whatever the party is looking for so if you want the straight-up 2-1/2 hour transformation seminar as it is delivered to the public, that's great. If you want to spend the whole day with someone like Mike doing all kinds of things, including guided workouts and stress reduction techniques outdoors and having a catered lunch that is specified to the primal standards, we can do whatever you need to make your corporate workplace healthy. So Mike DiLandro from New Jersey, our favorite primal guy out there on the east coast, just coming off an awesome appearance at PrimalCon New York and back out on the road doing his seminars and blogging and tweeting, thank you so much for spending time on the Primal Blueprint podcast. This is your host Brad Kearns until next time.