

Carlos Maldonado

Carlos: Carlos Maldonado Killeen, Texas, and I'm 39 years old.

Jonathan: Beautiful. Carlos would you mind just giving me kind of a brief overview of your wellness journey was it kind of like a pretty straight direct path was it a windy road what was it like?

Carlos: It was a direct path when I took it seriously. Before that I didn't care too much on what I was eating I took my age to be a factor like, okay this metabolism is going to last and then like things started slowing down spare tire started sticking around a little longer and it's like okay, so I got to work out even harder to get this off. So, when my girlfriend, she's been raised to eat pretty well so, you know she brought some ideas to me and I was it sure I'll try them out. I've always thought diets were bland and you know tasteless a little bit of vegetables a little bit of meat but tasteless. No, it's not that at all it's actually real good food and I feel great and I feel energized. Prior to this, about two months ago, I was drinking energy drinks flooding my body full of sugars and eating dang near everything that had bread on it, pizza, sandwiches...just like everything. So that and not knowing which quote-unquote diet to follow once I got it out of my head that it's not so much a diet but it's more so a way of changing how you feel who you are, a lifestyle if you will, changing your lifestyle. I don't know, doing that has made me feel amazing, I actually feel younger. As I stated before I served ten years in the military. You kind of age in dog years in the military so running every day, doing PT every day, it takes a toll on your body; as well as wearing all the equipment that you have to, my back was always messed up. Just a bunch of different factors period, since I've lost the weight and I've taken in nutritional things that actually help just the way I think in general. So therefore, I feel better about myself, I have more confidence. I had a lot of people come into the shop where I work and were like 'oh you have such a glow about you now' and it's like really? 'Yeah it's amazing because last time I saw you was like two months ago and look at you now' and I'm like okay, I didn't know I lost that much weight until I had customers coming in my shop consistently telling me that basically what where the hell did I go? Even last year...I'm not going to say I haven't been about fitness because the military teaches you fitness, I know the importance of fitness. I've worked out, but I've always worked out from an echelon of becoming a round ball from

becoming a round ball to becoming something a little solid right so now instead of doing that I kind of want to break it down to lose my body fat first and then work my way up. I figure you got to start from the bottom right everybody starts from the bottom so therefore you have to work your way up I have to work on my way down

Jonathan: Just so I understand you're talking about the way that other human beings perceive you and treat you sounds like it has changed radically in two months?

Carlos: Yeah it has. Like I said I was always somebody who was into fitness or into the fitness aspect of things without the proper foods so like I would still work out I would still gain muscle I would still do that but I'm still eat pizza and still eat crap and I've always liked thought to myself like why do I feel so exhausted all the time why am I burning out? So, you know it's just started catching things here and there about nutrition tips and stuff like that and then applying that actually into my daily life, it's a lot easier than I thought it would be...it's a lot easier than I thought it would be. I am Puerto Rican so therefore we eat rice with everything that was like the hardest thing to give up out of everything, and bread of course because who doesn't like bread, but just giving up little things like that the sugars the breads....just within that the first two days I felt an amazing surge of energy. I didn't need an energy drink anymore, I didn't need my regular doses of caffeine which is two energy drinks, two Monsters or whatever energy drink it was, and then a coffee or something like that. So I was kind of like on a downward spiral without even knowing because you always hear about this diet and that diet but you never know which one okay this is saying that this is wrong and this is saying that this is wrong because everything is about getting money at the end for these people versus you just listening to your own body and see what works for you. Not everything works for everybody I'm not saying that foods don't work for everybody because everybody has these foods might as well eat some good clean ones and things that taste delicious. My regimen of exercise might not be right for this person or just because and I got people to come with me to the gym or even when I was younger and I went with people to the gym it's like okay I'm going to try to lift what you lift even though my body's not there yet you know I mean and you try to push yourself without knowing what you're doing. It's kind of the same thing with the food I didn't know what the hell I was doing with when it came to food I just thought hey, food is going to give me energy I feel weak today so I'm going to eat a slice of pizza, after that slice of pizza I

feel great for about ten minutes and then I just start feeling like tired and you start getting the itis and then you're just dragging' ass pretty much the whole day versus if anytime I feel peckish or something, you know, I want to eat something I would do the apples in peanut butter you know that's like my go-to that's like my little dessert. But I do the apples and peanut butter and even with that at the end of that I still have some kind of energy you know the protein from the peanut butter you do have your natural sugars from your apple and stuff like, that but it's still not as bad as that cane and all that other crap. So that's about it, I feel amazing because I'm eating amazing stuff

Jonathan: Carlos, you said something that I think raises a question mark in some people's minds I'd like you to elaborate on it a little bit which is, you said I'm feeling tired so I'm going to eat some food to give me energy but then when I ate things like rice and bread with the intention of giving myself energy...

Carlos: Has just made me more sluggish.

Jonathan: Can you talk about this?

Carlos: I would eat big quantities you know, I'm a normal guy so I don't know the actual terms of what food does exactly what you know just like your regular other person, but I know that eating stuff like that makes my body feel sluggish and that's what I was kind of going at, is to listen to yourself, to listen your body. Your body's going to tell you that you ate something wrong because something's going to be off whether it's your energy or whether it's your mind because I firmly believe that eating correctly and gaining the confidence about yourself and doing all that psychologically makes you a better person. Because you're having confidence now instead of feeling worthless, you feel like okay I'm doing this, I look good, I feel great, so you know what, I'm somebody. With me it's you gain more respect for yourself, is what I'm looking for, you gain more respect for yourself so therefore mentally you just become a stronger person that's what I feel.

Jonathan: So, it sounds like your experience has been that when you take in high quality, it makes in some ways it helps you prove to yourself that you are high-quality?

Carlos: Very, very much you are what you eat. You eat crap you're going to feel like crap, your body's going to start looking like crap, and in essence you're going to think you're crap. It's kind of like what I thought about myself I don't think I was worth it. My

girlfriend is in great shape she looks good so therefore I didn't feel like I deserved her because my body wasn't where I wanted it to be. If I was anybody else I would be like oh try to push her away but no, she stuck with me basically and then I was like okay she loves me because I'm this way, but I want to be this way and I want to be in shape. I want to for the first time in my life actually try to chase a six-pack, right? I didn't want a six-pack before, I didn't care about a six-pack but now it's something that I want it's a goal for me. The fact that I'm able to fit into large shirts instead of double XL shirts, size 42 pants to throw it down to 36 pants, you know I mean? This literally happened within a month and a half of just eating right and just treating yourself right. So more than anything I say put yourself above all. I was saying before I've always made the excuse where oh I have to work, I have a child I have to raise, I got a girlfriend I have to keep happy, you know, I have to do...I have to do...I have to do...I have to do. The more I did for everybody else the more crappy I thought about myself because I wasn't doing nothing for myself so when I started eating better started to get a little confidence. Okay, then boom my girlfriend tells me hey baby your gut is going down, and it's literally day 2 or 3. It's just like a 180 and attitude period and I don't know, I love it. I kind of lost track there but I love it. Just the enthusiasm I have about life nowadays is a lot better. The fact that I want to be there for my son when he gets a little older when about 2 or 3 months ago we were playing in a park and I couldn't keep up to save my life you know did I play with him for like maybe 10 minutes and I sat down and was like okay I'm tired and then you could he'll he's like okay but you could kind of see in his face that it bothered him. but I can do it now, now he tells me he's tired and sits down you know, it's too easy I couldn't deal with that not now let him deal with it.

Jonathan: Carlos in my experience you're not at all alone in the feeling of I need to I need to take care of my son first, I need to take care of my partner first, I need to take care of other family members first, I need to take care of my work first and all the while the person who was trying to take care of those people is breaking down. There's a there's an interesting dynamic where when you took that time to be what some people would call selfish what was your experience in your ability to give back to all those other people?

Carlos: I think it the fact that I felt better about myself affected me positively to the point where when I started communicating with people, I started communicating in a

more open manner. I was a little more outgoing more enthused about things. I also firmly believe that in order for you to love others you have to love yourself. An hour a day to go to the gym or instead of having something that has you know something that's bad for yourself, just changing that one thing cutting off your sugars you can use things like agaves or artificial sweeteners to help offset that craving that you have. Something else I was doing was also make like if I wanted a snack I would do 70% dark chocolate with a little bit of peanuts or something like that just to kind of trick my brain into thinking I had a salty sweet snack. As well as things that I cut off a month and a half ago was, I literally slept with food in my nightstand so cutting the candy and cutting all that crap off right before bed. I look back at it and I'm like that was stupid...I'm trying to keep it PG, but it was very stupid and then I was surprised at the outcome for some reason like, oh I have a third stomach what's going on here? Basically, I looked at myself in the mirror one day and I thought to myself is this the person who you want to be, and I said no, hell no...this is not the person who you are this has never been you. You need to go back to caring about yourself, so I did, and I feel better. I feel like taking in the proper foods for myself, I feel like going into the gym, I feel like waking up early before my child wakes up....all that stuff that I'm doing for myself, I'm still not taking away from anybody has made me be able to give back because I feel better about myself so, therefore, if I feel better about myself. I kind of felt like the lady who worked at a Walmart that doesn't want to be working there and has an attitude consistently right? I felt bad about myself, I felt bad about the position I was in, so therefore I lashed out, not in a messed-up way like completely I'm not verbally abusive or nothing crazy like that it's just more like the way I interact like I don't care. now I care you know I mean like okay tell me more about this, or tell me more about that, and once you help yourself become the person who you want to become that frees up a lot of insecurities and frees up a lot of time that you spend on thinking and wasting on 'Oh am I good enough or can I do this or can I do that' just do it! I'm nobody, I'm not a special person, I'm nobody special. I'm literally a guy who knows very little about nutrition, very little bit about this and that until recently. I started educating myself and they always say knowledge is power and it's the truth, knowledge is power. You feed yourself right, you start acting right, and it's kind of instead of being in the spiral that I was going through originally with eating crap and feeling like crap it's more of a positive domino effect. so, start eating right, start taking care of myself, okay, I start getting more confidence, more enthusiastic about life. I

never thought I would be here today so therefore I also believe in karma as well where if you put out positive vibes, positive vibes come back. If you put out negative vibes then you get those negative vibes back and I firmly believe that because when I was putting out those negative vibes negative, negative vibes came back and they don't necessarily have to be in the form of anything super bad but in terms of you're putting out these negative vibes because you're not happy with yourself and therefore it kind of digs you more into a hole like okay I don't like who I am but there's nothing I can do about it. there's everything you can do about it there's everything you can do about it. Instead of eating crap eat something nice or eat something good and it doesn't have to be just bland chicken with a little bit of salt and pepper on it doesn't, you can have all sorts of spices and all sorts of things in your food. Asparagus haven't had asparagus until recently and it's great. Don't be scared to try new things. There're things I don't like and things that I will never like, but I still try them in a different light to see if I like it in that way. Even with that you can still find other ways around to get things that you do like that are nutritious for you and that can make you feel a thousand times better.

Jonathan: I love what you said about the sort of negative spiral down you feel bad about yourself you treat people poorly that makes you feel worse about yourself you treat people worse and you go down and now you feel better about yourself you treat people better they treat you better life treats you better you treat yourself better life treats you better. When you think about what your life could have been if you continue down and what your life will be now that you're spiraling up how does that make you feel?

Carlos: Grateful, it makes me feel grateful because if I continued in a downward spiral, and if I didn't feel the way I do now I think I would be in a grave a lot sooner than I would be. You know I'm trying to live longer I want I want to be around my son's life for like ever. plus, my girlfriends' young she's hot so I want to be a part of her life as long as I can. I have a great life right now and I had a great life before I was eating the stuff I'm eating now, but because all my insecurities I couldn't see it, now it's like okay cool this is awesome. I got a great girlfriend my son...I have so many positive things in my life that I'm happy, I'm just happy, I'm truly happy. I feel truly blessed and sky's the limit from here. I'm going to get that six-pack I told you I was going to get because this is what I'm aiming for, I have a goal. I want it I'm going to get it plus I got this badass Vegeta tank

top and if you don't know who Vegeta its this guy from Dragonball, (shows tattoo) so I have a badass Vegeta tank top that I couldn't wear before. Now I'm starting to be able to wear it now ss I'm feeling great. but there's another saying armored tank top that's a little tighter and I will get into that, promise

Jonathan: It's interesting because it's you say something that I think if people could really hear, it would change their life. you said something along the lines of I had a great life, but I couldn't see it like my reality was the fucking same, but I couldn't see it and by changing what you put into your body it like, sure you're going to have that six-pack whatever, but it changed what you saw in the world.

Carlos: One-hundred percent, and I feel like there is nothing easy in life first of all and this is what I repeat to my son consistently in order for you to be a success in life you have to work for everything because if you take a look around everything is money, literally. You can look around and it's money, money, money, cellphones, money, money, money, devices I'm being recorded on, money. Everything is money and you know if in order for you to achieve that if money is your success in life, then that's what you're going to see and that's what you want to achieve. Cool. My success in life would probably be the fact that I have a great family and yes it costs money and I tell him you have to work harder so you can make as much money as you can so that way when it comes time for you to have a child you don't have to do what I have to do and tell you I can't afford it. So yeah, I it's one of the worst feelings as a father to tell your son you can't afford something that he really wants and, you know he's a good kid and you can't give it to him. So, like I said if money is your key to success then have it be that way, but I think the more obstacles you have in your way and I mean, you're your own worst critic so, your own obstacles in your own way, if you can change that at the root it starts with what you put in. What you put in is what you get out right? So, if you're going to take in good food you feel good everything just literally, it doesn't spiral down like before it spirals up it just starts coming. You start seeing things totally different so therefore if you start seeing things totally different you just changed your world for the better just by a simple step. In my world, because my world is very small, everybody's world is their own little world and my world changing the way I ate is actually my key to success because I feel better, I feel important, I feel like I'm worth a fucking damn so yeah.

Jonathan: It's interesting that you brought up the term money because giving a damn about yourself does take investment. It takes probably an investment of money, it probably takes an investment of time. Can you think of anything better to invest in than yourself?

Carlos: No there's nothing if you invest in yourself then you're investing in everything around you if you invest in you if you take the time out to love you, you can love others with more love...again there goes that the yin-yang of things. So, you're feeling miserable about yourself, you reflect misery, you feel great about yourself you reflect greatness. So, I don't know, this key to success I would say, is people who love you and if you're not able to love yourself for yourself, to love yourself for them. Love yourself so you're able to stick around longer, love yourself so you're there, you're present and you're not in your head thinking about oh geez I feel like crap about myself and oh geez screw it, since I feel like crap about myself I'm going to go digging the refrigerator and get this big bowl of god-knows-what, jello or I don't know why I said jello I don't even know anybody who eats jello, but I would say something with a lot of sugar and a lot of starch and a lot of....I keep on saying pizza because that was my weakness pizza was my weakness pizza and rice. So instead of reaching in the refrigerator or you feel like you feel nothing about yourself you just self-perpetuate misery and you start feeding, literally feeding, misery into yourself by eating the type of food versus good food. I keep on repeating myself because I can't stress how important just eating changed my life and I've never felt this way before because I never took the time to give a damn about myself. I was too busy caring about everybody else, in the army it was my soldiers and my family. Now it's my job and my girlfriend and my son and my daughter. The goals are still the same it's the way I look at them.

Jonathan: I don't know if this is accurate or not but I'm just hearing you, you talked about how much eating high-quality food has changed your life you talked about how when you were eating poor quality you saw poor quality around you. You mentioned that you also use the term, and everything is money, you also said something along the lines of like the most important thing are those who love you and the love you give off. Is part of the reason that eating higher-quality food so meaningful to you is because it is like a physical manifestation of how you show love to yourself and is it possible that

when you say that everything is money, another way to look at that is everything is love?

Carlos: Yeah that's what I was trying to work earlier I couldn't think of the precise words everything is love, that would be my key to success is to love right if your loved one, if your key was money then it would be money. But my key is love and to love yourself is one to love yourself and start loving who you are. Start loving what you like, everyone always tells you 'oh you do this and you do that' and if you start listening to that stuff just say okay cool you know yeah you're right I do this first it's bowing it off, like it's okay to sometimes pat yourself on the back, it's okay I'm doing it now and it feels great. So yeah just pat yourself on the back you deserve it once in a while because a thousand people can tell you you're doing great as long as you feel like you're doing great then that's all it really matters.

Jonathan: Do you think that one of the reasons that's so important is because that if you truly love yourself, if you truly think your high quality, why would you put shit quality into that which is high quality?

Carlos: Yeah, I agree. They always say the body is the temple you hear that everybody's heard that, it's the truth. The most important thing you have in life is life and love and in order for you to get and receive that love and giving and give that love you have to be alive right, because if not it's nothing. People miss you, you put them through more pain. Why put them through that pain if you don't have to just by changing something small in your everyday routine.

Jonathan: This is going to sound like it's a totally random question, what does your son call you?

Carlos: Dad

Jonathan: What does your girlfriend call you?

Carlos: Either babe or Carlos when she's pissed

Jonathan: Do you have a close relationship with your mother or father?

Carlos: My mother

Jonathan: What did she call you?

Carlos: Carlito

Jonathan: Do you think that your son, girlfriend, or mother ever felt like in their mind dad or babe or Carlito I miss you where did you go?

Carlos: Yeah, I'm a thousand percent sure especially like my son and my girlfriend they live with me the most they're mostly around me. I haven't been with my mom for very long time or whatever but even my relationship with her has gotten stronger. I text more, I call more you know so instead of being in my head about me I can think about 'oh I haven't called mom I wonder how she's doing'. My son and my girlfriend however live with me more.

Jonathan: I just think it's such a cool thing because you know I think it's beautiful that you know on one level it's like, when I hear you say things like...so just let me, this is going to sound weird like halfway through so let me say the whole thing in one context someone might hear like Carlos wants a six-pack, that's sort of like one motivation and then there's like I'm more present as a father, I'm more present as a son, I'm more present as a boyfriend, but those are all like you can you can want look a certain way and feel a certain way and be a certain way and that's beautiful and do you, be you, love you, however that's manifest.

Carlos: You touched on something earlier and you were talking about the way your body looks and because I want the six-pack is the way I want my body to look, so I have a goal. Even though I have a goal I keep my eye on that goal, but I still have my family, loved ones in mind, but I still can keep my eye on the goal. I want to look a certain way and so the word "dad bod" has recently risen in my life and screw that, that's not what I want. So, for the first time here like I said I want a six-pack and me obtaining a goal that I have set in mind it's a good thing it's a healthy thing. Even with having that goal in mind I'm not so obsessed with it, it will happen, but I'll happen with eating the proper foods. I'll happen, fat has literally been coming off my body within...gosh no, how many weeks...weeks! Now we're not talking about months and years and I give all the utmost respect to every last person who has been doing this for years and the people who have put the work behind this to make sure this Joe Schmo from Connecticut. Just to make sure that somebody is getting the information and it works for them so salute to those people.

Jonathan: That's beautiful