



# THE FAT SUMMIT

*Separating Fat From Fiction*

**Transcript:**

**Interview with John and Ocean Robbins**  
[foodrevolution.com](http://foodrevolution.com)

**Interview by Mark Hyman, MD**  
[drhyman.com](http://drhyman.com)

**Dr. Hyman:** Hey everybody. It's Dr. Mark Hyman. Welcome to The Fat Summit where we separate fat from fiction. I'm here with two good friends and one of my profound inspirations, John Robbins and Ocean Robbins. And John, you probably heard of. He's really one of the leaders in the food movement. He's done so much to bring awareness around plant-based diets, whole foods, and the impact of how we grow, produce and consume foods on our bodies and on the planet. He's sold 3 million books, 31 languages, 9 best sellers, we're neck and neck there John.

The first book I ever read of John's was "Diet for a New America", which really opened my eyes to a lot of the myths that we have around food and healthy eating. And I want to get into some of those things in a minute.

The first time I heard you speak was at a conference in 1996 in northern California with Dean Ornish and you and Dr. Benjamin Spock and the baby doctor guy and John Lee, the progesterone dude, and Michio Kushi, Mr. Macrobiotic. It was just an incredible collection of humans talking about the power of food as medicine. From that moment on, I never thought of medicine the same and I realized that my career was going to be different. I didn't exactly know how or where or when or what. It was before I got my job at Canyon Ranch, before I really did any of this. And I knew from that moment on, I had to change the way I practiced medicine and it changed my life. It was really that moment.

I remember watching you. I don't remember if I ever told you this story, but I remember watching you before you gave your talk and it was just so inspirational. You were sitting on the side and you were actually meditating before your talk. I thought, "Man, this guy is so cool." I think that was the greatest moment. And you really shared a very different vision about food and health. You've won so many awards; the Rachel Carson Award, the Albert Schweitzer Humanitarian Award, the Peace Abbey Courage of Conscience Award, Green America's Lifetime Achievement Award and many, many other things. It's really extraordinary what you've done.

And Ocean, we've become friends over the last bunch of years, and you're the CEO and founder of The Food Revolution Network, which has 250,000 members. It's really an amazing organization that brings people together to talk about the power of food to create a revolution. You're a professor at Chapman University, adjunct professor at Chapman University's Peace Studies department, and you co-authored this amazing book called, "Voices of the Food Revolution," which I love. It's really great stories from leaders in the food movement thinking about how we change food. I can't tell you guys how excited I am to have you. You've won so many awards, both of you, and you're both inspirations for me.

I just want to share a story. I can't really tell the details because I'm under secrecy, but I met with this CEO of one of the major food companies this week, which I was dreading going into. I got called into this meeting and I had to go because of my job at Cleveland Clinic, and I thought, "Oh boy, this is not good." It was one of the big food companies and she said to me, "Mark, I've been thinking about the future of food and we need to create a different way of thinking about bringing health and food and technology together to personalize nutrition and have people eat real food that brings them health, take all the junk out of our food." I was like, "Whoa, what year is this?" This was stunning to me to hear that kind of thinking at that level. She's someone who worked for a lot of the big food companies that we are all worried about and are concerned about.

So, it's kind of amazing to see after you've been doing this for literally, I don't know, 30 years or more, and it's actually now making a difference. So, I'm so excited to have you both at the Fat Summit so we can talk a little bit about your story and the power of food as medicine and a little bit about fat. And I wanted to talk to you about dairy.

John, why don't you start and tell us a little bit about how you got into this because you're John Robbins and that's actually where I had my first job was at a Baskin-Robbins, scooping ice cream, 31 flavors, which are awesome. I guess that's why you have books in 31 languages.

**John:** That is a coincidence. It's not intentional. That's just how it is at the moment. Maybe it's divine orchestration.

**Dr. Hyman:** It's all connected, right?

**John:** When you were talking a moment ago about your meeting with the CEO, earlier this year the Gates Foundation, which is not known for having a socially responsible screen on their investments, but is by far the largest private foundation in the world, liquidated their holdings in three companies and they were Exxon-Mobile, McDonald's, and Coca-Cola. They had about a billion dollars in each of those three companies. They had 2.8 billion between the three investments and they liquidated them all. It shows me that McDonald's and Coca-Cola, which have for years been icons, worldwide icons - they're admired, they're seen as the symbol of American capitalism, and generally people hold them in a lot of recognition and esteem. Here's the Gates foundation eschewing them. And they don't have a lot of screens they impose, so it told me that junk food and highly processed food and in this one case, nutrition-less sugar water

is starting to be seen for what it is: a health damaging product with no nutritional benefits or value.

I thought that was just a sign of the times that the food revolution and that food awakening is taking place and the work that you have been doing for so long and that we have been doing for so long is, in fact, bearing fruit.

**Dr. Hyman:** It's amazing. I think you probably saw that article in the New York Times about the seismic shift in our diet. People are not shopping down the aisles of grocery stores, McDonald's are closing, soda consumption is dropping. It's all happening.

**John:** It's really happening and my personal background that you referred to a moment ago, I was born into the Baskin-Robbins family, 31 flavors. My dad and uncle founded and owned the company and for many years ran it. I was groomed to succeed my dad. It was his plan that I would follow in his footsteps and one day run the company. I liked it. I was a kid and I loved ice cream. We had an ice cream cone shaped swimming pool in our back yard and I invented flavors. I had a good time.

But my uncle Burt Baskin dies of a heart attack in his early fifties; big guy, he ate a lot of ice cream. Dad developed very serious forms of diabetes and had other health problems at a young age. I could see the handwriting on the wall and I started to say, well ice cream isn't a health food. It's not helping anybody be healthier. I'm not saying that an ice cream cone is going to kill anybody, but the more you eat, the more likely you are to have a heart attack, like my uncle did, or get diabetes and be overweight like my dad. It was just not a product that I wanted to be involved with, so I left. To be in integrity with my choice, I told my dad I didn't want to have any access to his money. I didn't want to depend on it, I didn't want to have any trust fund, I didn't want any inheritance, and I didn't want any kind of connection to his financial achievements, which were huge. So, then I lived a very different life and eventually wrote the books I did, including the ones you've read.

**Dr. Hyman:** How did you get from, "I think ice cream is causing my dad to have diabetes and my uncle to have a heart attack," to getting to "Diet for a New America?" That's a big leap right?

**John:** It is a big leap. I wanted to...you know, when my uncle died of a heart attack at 54 years old, I asked my dad, "Do you think there could be a connection between his heart attack and the amount of ice cream he would eat?" And my father said, "No. His ticker just got tired and stopped working." And the subliminal message, the energetic message was, "Don't you ever ask that question

again." And I could see how my dad couldn't consider that possibility, that there could be a connection, because by that time, he had manufactured and sold more ice cream than any human being who had ever lived on this planet. He didn't want to think it was hurting anybody.

**Dr. Hyman:** That was before Ben and Jerry's, right?

**John:** Well, you know, Ben Cohen, founder and many years co-owner of Ben and Jerry's, had a quintuple bypass in his late forties. This is the chickens...Burt Baskin dying of a heart attack in his early fifties, of Baskin-Robbins. I'm not pointing the finger at one type of ice cream. Ben Cohen is a wonderful man and a peace activist, but the point is ice cream is harmful to people. I started to see that and I felt I had some karma. My dad had made a tremendous amount of money selling ice cream. I don't even want to think about how many heart attacks or how many cases of diabetes that might have contributed to. But I do know that I felt sort of a responsibility. He couldn't consider the possibility that there might be a connection. I was going to and I started to look into it. And the more I looked into it, the more I thought, "You know, what we eat is co-determinant with other things, our health, in a major way." In a way I hadn't realized, medical profession didn't recognize, wasn't widely understood at that time. It also was having an enormous impact, the way we grow our food and we produce our food, on the environment that we depend on for our lives and for our economy. I thought we need to own, we need to take responsibility for the impact we're having on our bodies and on the world through our food choices. We need to know what those are, so I began my journey.

**Dr. Hyman:** Amazing. I read "Diet for a New America" years ago and it really impacted me, particularly the story about dairy because dairy is an American staple. It's now even in My Plate, Michelle Obama's new plate. There's a side of dairy. There's no evidence for that.

**John:** None.

**Dr. Hyman:** And we live in a world where most people don't drink dairy. And the thing that got my attention was where do cows get their calcium? They have big strong bones. They get it from grass. I actually remember you talking about the women in Africa who had really strong bones but had very low calcium intakes because they didn't have a lot of things causing their body to leech out the calcium, like caffeine and sodas and alcohol and sugar and animal protein and all these things that cause bodies to lose calcium.

**John:** And other minerals.

**Dr. Hyman:** Tell us this story about dairy because everybody thinks dairy is it, right? I know, vegans obviously don't eat dairy, but the paleo folks don't eat dairy. So, there's this common theme.

**John:** It's one thing we have in common, these two groups, among other things.

**Dr. Hyman:** There's a lot more. I joke I say I'm a "Pegan" because you basically look at what the commonalities are; we should all eat whole food, we should all eat unprocessed food, we should all eat sustainable food, we should all eat food without hormones, antibiotics, and pesticides. We should all eat real food and it should be mostly plant-based. What should we be eating? It's real food.

**John:** It is. I remember thinking as a kid, "Well, Baskin-Robbins," I was starting to get that ice cream was mostly sugar and fat and not a healthy fat. I was beginning to think, "This is not a good thing. But at least it's providing a lot of calcium." I thought, "Well, at least there's milk in it. That's good. Isn't it? That's good." But then I started to realize actually it isn't. One of the first moments that woke me up was I went with my dad actually to a large dairy in central California where Baskin-Robbins got a lot of its milk products, and at the time in Baskin Robbins, all the stores had these photographs behind the counters on the back wall, sepia tone, beautiful pictures of Guernseys and Holstein dairy cows grazing in beautiful Wisconsin pasture lands. It was beautiful grass lands. And the image was of close to nature and connection to the natural world and I thought it was beautiful.

**Dr. Hyman:** It wasn't like that, right?

**John:** I went to the dairy where we actually got the milk products and it was a feed lot. There was no grass in sight, and the cows were crammed together and they were standing in their own excrement and it bore no resemblance to the photographs on the walls. The California Milk Producers Association recently ran an ad campaign nationwide trying to sell California cheese, and they say, "Great cheese comes from California because of our happy cows in California." And the photographs they used were taken in New Zealand. I'm sure there's a couple of happy cows in the whole state, but they took the pictures in Auckland, New Zealand for their ad campaign for California dairy.

The truth is that most of the dairy...California is the leading dairy state now, and not Wisconsin. Most of it is, almost all of it is, feed lot dairy and it's ugly. It's an environmental disaster. It's a humane disaster. These animals are really, really treated very poorly, and they're shot up with drugs. Their diets are completely unnatural. The whole game is to profit from them, not to treat them well.

So, that was one moment where I thought, "I don't want to contribute to this." I happen to be somebody that respects animals and thinks they should be treated well and don't want to contribute to cruelty to them. So, when I see something like that, I pull away from it.

**Dr. Hyman:** I love what the Buddhists say, "You never know who your mother was in your last life or who's going to be your mother in your next life, so you should respect everybody and everything."

**John:** And speaking of motherhood, cow's milk is their lactation. It's designed for their calves, and a baby calf is going to gain about 300 pounds in its first year. It's a ruminant animal with what we call four "stomachs." So, if you have four stomachs and you want to gain about 250 pounds in the first year of your life or in a year of your life, probably that's a great fluid to consume because it's full of very strong growth promotants, which is one of the reasons why it's implicated in a lot of types of cancers, actually.

**Dr. Hyman:** And it's not growth hormones are actually put in the milk, they're actually naturally there. There are over 6...

**John:** They're actually there because they're designed...and then you also have ones that are added - bovine growth hormone - that's another story. But just milk to begin with, be it organic even, is a fluid that is designed by nature to feed a baby calf. That's not who we are. We've been trained to think that we should consume a lot of milk, three or four glasses a day, which is great for The Dairy Council and great for the milk industry's profits, but it's not good for our health at all.

**Dr. Hyman:** Yeah, it's pretty stunning when you look at the data. It's an anabolic hormone. It's full of hormones that are meant to build and grow things like cows and even babies through breast milk. It's meant to grow a human and it's powerful. We know now it's linked to prostate cancer, other cancers. Even the myth...I once wrote a blog based on some research at Harvard called, "Got Proof," right, because of this whole "Got Milk" campaign, but I'm like where's the proof that it protects you against osteoporosis and has all these wonderful benefits. When you start to dig in the evidence, there really isn't any evidence. And it's pretty interesting. Skim milk became really popular and I remember I read a paper by David Ludwig from Harvard who talked about how all these studies on dairy actually the kids who ate the low-fat dairy did worse because maybe they were hungrier, they didn't have the fat to satisfy them or they ate more sugar? I don't know exactly the reason, but it was an interesting issue.

**John:** You take the fat out; the growth hormones are still there. And the links with prostate cancer that you mentioned are very strong, very, very strong, with dairy consumption and prostate cancer. Any man who sees the actual data, sees how linked those are, it's a wake-up call.

**Dr. Hyman:** It is. In fact at Cleveland Clinic now, we're working with urologists, some of the top urologists, and one of them is an organic farmer. He's like, "I realize I'm seeing all these patients who are dying of these lifestyle related diseases, which is prostate cancer. Let's study what happens when we put them on healthy diets and give them omega-3s and vitamin D and get them off sugar and get them off dairy." It's pretty interesting to see what's happening out there. So, we're actually going to be doing sophisticated studies looking at gene expression, looking at prostate cancer growth and be able to document some of this stuff better.

Yeah, it's pretty amazing. So, dairy is clearly an issue, but the question is what is it in dairy? Is it the fat? People are, I think, worried about fat. I don't think it's actually the fat. I think it's what you're talking about. I think it's the animal hormones and I think it's the growth factors and I think it's also the proteins in dairy, which are very allergenic. I see that a lot in my medical practice. There are just so many people who have reactions to dairy with eczema, irritable bowel, and lactose intolerance. I mean, the whole idea of lactose intolerance is kind of silly because the fact is that lactose tolerance is more of the abnormal state, right?

**John:** Yes, it is.

**Dr. Hyman:** Twenty-five percent of people can tolerate dairy, the rest of us are not so good at it. Great. So, then tell us more about Ocean, The Food Revolution. I know what you're doing with that, it's so powerful. You've amassed a whole army of powerful leaders in the food movement to come together to help really transform the way we think about food and I want to know from your perspective, what have been the most powerful results of that? And what are the most powerful inspirations you've had from leading that charge?

**Ocean:** Well, Mark, as you know, we sponsor an annual Food Revolution Summit where we interview some of the top food experts on the planet, including yourself, and share their voices. My dad conducts those interviews and I have the privilege of hosting them and helping to produce the summit. We've had over 400,000 people joining in our summit so far, and we have some pretty famous folks, Paul McCartney, Tony Robbins, and Dr. Mark Hyman. And a lot of the food leaders and leading doctors of our time. What stands out to me is really two things: one is how bad things are. We have accepted a norm in our society

today that is devastating to literally millions and millions of people. A third of our kids are expected to get diabetes in their lifetimes, two thirds of our population is overweight or obese. We spend almost 20% of our gross domestic product in the United States on disease treatment. We euphemistically call it "medical care." But as you well know, it has nothing to do with health. It has everything to do with managing the symptoms of disease. So, we've got a norm today that is devastating lives, that is bankrupting us and somehow, this has become okay.

What we know is that these realities are fueled by lifestyle and, most fundamentally, when we say "lifestyle," we mean two things: we mean diet and physical activity. Diet is absolutely critical. So, the reality is that we are eating ourselves to our graves. And we're eating ourselves to misery before we get to our graves. So, that's how bad things are. I think that's also really good news, and I'll tell you why I think it's good news. The reason I think it's great news is because we can make things so much better. It would be one thing if...there are so many problems in our world today that we can't personally feel very empowered to change: we look at war in the Middle East; we look at violence on this planet, so many issues. We feel so small in the face of them, right? But when it comes to food choices, we actually have the capacity to have a remarkably large impact on our health, our vitality, our joy, not just the length of our lives but the quality of our lives and - and this is the other exciting part - on the world we live in. Because our food is very personal, it's very intimate, it's also very political, and it's very systemic.

**Dr. Hyman:** Eating is a political act, most people don't realize that.

Ocean: Yeah, exactly. And every bite that you eat is a stand for the world you want. You are standing for food policies, for agricultural practices that are influencing our climate, that are influencing animals, that are influencing our water table and our water supply, and that are influencing farm workers and the causes of social justice on this planet. You are literally helping to impact whether or not there is enough food for other people to eat at all.

So, in the opportunity to take a stand for a more sustainable and more healthy and more vibrant world, you actually influence the whole web of life. I say food is not just a commodity, it's also a community. We have relationships and when we take our rightful place in that community, when we make our food choices into an act of integrity with our own dreams for our lives and also with our dreams for the planet and the future of life on this earth, then there is an alignment there that I think is like a gift that keeps on giving. It gives bounce to our step, it gives us the feeling that we're on the right side of history. It gives us the feeling that when we face the immensity of the problems in the world today,

that we're part of the solution. I think that is a source of immense joy and fulfillment and meaning. It also is meaningful to know that we're helping to create personal lives, wellness, and fulfillment and that we don't have to fall prey to the status quo of feeling like crap, of misery and suffering that's so normal; that something better is possible.

**Dr. Hyman:** That so beautiful...sharing, Ocean, because I think the thing that people don't realize is that we are not powerless. Most of the big problems of the world, ISIS, the political election, a lot of us feel powerless because there are other forces at work that are driving this. But as a community we are immensely powerful because by choosing the quality and type of food we eat we're impacting everything you said: from social justice to our health, to the economy, to the healthy environment or, like you said, our water tables, our rivers, our oceans. Everything is impacted by the food you put at the end of your fork and it's not just about your own personal health, but it's about the web of connections that connects everything together that actually determines the quality of our lives here as humans. We're going to be here for a while, and then the planet will blow up some billion years into the future, but for the moment, it's really precious and we want it here for our children and our grandchildren and our great grandchildren. Right now, it looks kind of grim. But I see the moment is changing. It see things shifting and it's really from the work that you guys have done and the things that you have brought together that have inspired this.

I think you, John, were probably one of the first in the '70s and '80s to really be calling this out. There were very few at that point. Now there's a food movement. I went to the Food for Tomorrow Conference in the New York Times and there were all these great thinkers and leaders and we've got congresswomen putting bills in congress to end food waste. It's just like things are happening. From my point of view, and I think from your point of view, they're just not happening fast enough.

**John:** No. It's never going to happen fast enough for me because I'm impatient and I know how much is at stake: the quality of life on Earth.

**Dr. Hyman:** It's true. A lot of us in this society are asleep because we are numbed by the media; we are numbed by the voices that create the cultural memes that aren't about real stories that are really happening. So, the things that we talk about seem to be on the edge, but they're really at the center of everything that's going on in America today. I think I come at this from a doctor's point of view because I see the immense amount of needless suffering that people have happen to them. I know it's really just a few bites away to actually change. I would love for you to share the consequences of your work, John,

how you've seen it affect people's lives when they change their diets. What happens, and what are some of the stories that you want to share to inspire us about getting people engaged and motivated to change.

**John:** Well, I've seen some people not change until they get really sick, and then maybe they're desperate. Sometimes they get improvements at that point, but I think the people who are a little wiser change sooner and don't wait to be beaten over the head by life and have to get really ill first. I think sometimes that we can learn from other people's mistakes, or we're going to have to make all of them ourselves. I think the wisdom is to learn sooner, make the changes that are called for sooner because then, what I see is people's immune systems get stronger, their respiratory systems get stronger, their cardiovascular systems get stronger, they're more vibrant, they're more vigorous, they're more vital people, they love life more. They have more to give. Whatever they love, they can do it better because they're giving from a cup that is full now instead of from a cup that's partially empty or mostly empty. They have energy. Their energy is strong and it's clear. Their mind is clearer, their emotions are cleaner, they have more inner peace. There is a sense of groundedness that their body is functioning in an optimal way. That is so different from what they had known when they were eating the standard American diet.

**Dr. Hyman:** I want three scoops of that. What you just talked about, I want three scoops of that.

**John:** Well, you know, three scoops of it is a metaphor, we have another metaphor in our society: the pink spoon. We talk about the pink spoon, which was actually something we developed at Baskin-Robbins back then. I have some of this karma, see? But you give people something for free, you give them a taste and when you are yourself, as you are Mark, contagious with positive energy. We use the word contagious for disease, but you can also be contagious with joy. Laughter is contagious, health actually is contagious. We see this. There are studies that show if your friends are healthy, you're more likely to be healthy. If your friends are overweight, you're more likely to be overweight than if your parents were overweight. It's amazing how much we affect each other and influence each other. I think that's part of what Ocean was talking about when he said that it's a community.

**Dr. Hyman:** It's so true. Food is the nexus where everything comes together: in love, community, connections, where we celebrate together, share together, come together every day as a family. And we've lost that. The average family dinners last 20 minutes or less with everybody eating from a different box made at a different factory while they're texting or on their phone or watching TV.

That's dinner and all made in the microwave. I think we've lost the art of cooking and having family meals.

I believe that we're one meal away from fixing this problem if actually we were able to empower people to eat food by teaching them how to make it easier. Then, it changes everything. I did that with a family in the movie, "Fed Up," where we met the family. They were massively obese; one had kidney failure at 42 years old on dialysis. The other one 16, practically diabetic. They didn't know how to cook. They lived in a trailer, family of five. They were two generations of Americans who were just completely, basically had their kitchens hijacked by the food industry. I remember I always talk about Betty Crocker. She was this fictional character invented by the food industry that I thought was real because my mother had the Betty Crocker cookbook. I remember the recipes: one can of Campbell's cream of mushroom soup, and it was a way for them to insinuate their food products into the American kitchen and slowly subvert the American kitchen. And it's really that act of community, connection, meeting, it's really all centered around food. That's the real food revolution. It seems so simple, but it actually is the most powerful thing when it starts to happen.

**John:** Yes, it is. Mark, you're doing such great work and have been for so long in helping people see that food really does, it is medicine, it's healing. Or it isn't. If you just do the processed food, and you just do the junk food, and you let the cultural norm determine what you eat, what's convenient, it's going to take you down. I so appreciate when people stand up against that, take a stand for their own health, take a stand for a higher possibility for themselves, because then they start to click on all cylinders and they're creative in ways they weren't before, they have ideas and vision that they didn't have before, their relationships with other people start to get better because their energy is more positive. When your energy is more positive, you bring out the best in people instead of bringing them down and they like that.

**Dr. Hyman:** I think that's what people don't realize, that food and mood and how you feel all connect. They don't connect how they feel with what they eat. It's one of the biggest shocks for me, don't you realize if you eat that way...I saw a little boy today who is autistic and his parents are feeding him diet soda. And I'm thinking this kid yeah, loves diet soda, but don't you know that aspartame is a neurotoxin? This is not good for your kid. No wonder they're bouncing off the walls. It's a pretty exciting time that we get this whole story and we can actually change the way people think about it. The whole community about food is true...I work with Rick Warren to create the Daniel Plan that I talked to you guys about before, where we use the power of community to get people to change together and actually make health contagious. So, everybody listening

here should really think of themselves as a health warrior, as a health revolutionary, and a food revolutionary and actually start to be that person in your cohort of friends, in your community in your family, and do the things that are fun around food and teach them. It's really actually begins to change everything about the quality of your life. If you wake up every day and you feel good, you actually have more to give to yourself, to your family, to your community, and to those you love. That's really at the end of the day what matters.

**Ocean:** I would also add that one of the best ways to influence people around food is to feed them good food, healthy food.

**Dr. Hyman:** That's right.

**Ocean:** Food is so social. It's an act of connection between people to share food. That is one of their biggest challenges for healthy eaters, is that we live in a society where the norms drag us down. But by the same token, when we exhibit leadership and we stand for another way of eating, we also pull other people up. What a joy to be a positive influence on the lives of your friends and your family and everybody you care about to be spreading through your example a positive possibility that influences people in a healthy direction.

**Dr. Hyman:** What do you guys eat? What do you make for dinner at night? What do you eat all day?

**John:** Well, I'll tell you a breakfast that I have that I've been eating lately is steel cut oats and I put walnuts on it and blueberries and sometimes cinnamon on it because I like that. And that's a typical breakfast for me.

**Ocean:** I'll tell you my favorite breakfast too. I'm having a lot of fun with this. The night before I prepare this. I soak a half cup of chia seeds and two cups of nut or soy milk or you can use cow milk if that's what you want to do, but for me I use usually homemade soy milk or homemade soy yogurt, actually. And then I add a little bit of maple syrup and fresh vanilla and a cup of blueberries, usually frozen. Soak it overnight and the next morning, I eat that. I'm getting 18 grams of omega-3 fatty acids. I'm getting 30 grams of protein. It's delicious. I'm getting all the fabulous phytonutrients from the blueberries. Blueberries are found to help prevent Alzheimer's disease. It's tasty and it's ready to go on the road or right at my desk or at home if I want to have breakfast with my family. It's my favorite breakfast right now.

**Dr. Hyman:** It's really easy, you can make it the night before, and you can stick it in your fridge. It cooks in the fridge basically. And what about lunch and dinner?

**John:** Sometimes I'll have just a smoothie. I blend up a lot of vegetables and some nuts. I love nuts. It might be almonds, different nuts, and all kinds of vegetables. Lots of greens. I'm often on the go. Frankly, maybe I should eat more slowly and take more time. But lunch for me, realistically, is often something I don't want to spend a whole lot of time with. So, a smoothie is great for that and from the nuts I get a lot of nutrition that I need and it stays with me. I'm fine.

**Dr. Hyman:** It helps you stay satisfied; that's the key.

**John:** Sometimes I'll put an avocado in it.

**Ocean:** For dinner, here's a great dinner I love. We'll often have a big salad and then steamed vegetables. I love steamed kale and carrots. My kids love eating with their fingers. I have 14 year old twins, and so we'll actually have finger food, we'll literally go at a big old pot of kale and carrots or other vegetables, maybe dip them in a nice sauce. Then, I'll have some quinoa with sauce. I love a coconut milk peanut sauce over the top with some vegetables tossed in there, maybe some onions and other vegetables. I get some turmeric in there somewhere too, because I think turmeric is just an amazing life changer. Maybe get some mushrooms in the sauce that goes over the quinoa as well, and that's a great dinner for me.

**Dr. Hyman:** That's good. So, when you went through that list of what you're eating, I'm as a doctor saying, "Oh, the mushrooms have vitamin D, the quinoa has extra lysine, the coconut has acrylic acid, and lauric acid to help fight infections and help boost your immune system and are full of good, healthy MCT oils to help boost your metabolism. I actually think about all the medicine; the glucosinolates in the kale. Actually, when I go to the grocery store, I think about all the drugs that I'm buying. It's awesome. I think about it as my pharmacy. I have the luxury and the privilege, the knowledge to walk through it and go, "I know what's in you." I get to pick all the medicines that I'm having and make this amazing meal out of it. Nobody knows for the better that I'm actually giving them a bunch of drugs for dinner.

It's actually how I think about food, the power to use it in that way, and then make it fun and delicious at the same time. It's so great. And the green smoothie thing, I love that. I actually have a green smoothie I make; it's in my new book, "Eat Fat, Get Thin." I put in cucumber, celery, a whole lemon, a whole avocado, spinach, I put a little olive oil in there and I put in...so I've got the avocado, the fat, and I've got the greens and the vegetables and it's got protein in the avocado. I feel so good with this green smoothie in the morning. It's so fabulous.

**John:** And you know, when you eat a green smoothie, or the kinds of foods we're talking about, you're getting a lot of different kinds of fiber also. That feeds the healthy microbiome. We're learning more and more about this. Every month now new information is coming out about how important the microbiome is to our health and how important the fiber is that we eat to the health of our microbiome. It's amazing.

**Dr. Hyman:** You've got to tend your inner garden. I've been studying the gut for decades as part of functional medicine. It's one of the central things that we do. They used to call me Dr. See Every Poop That Came My Way. I want to do all the stool tests and see what was going on in there. So, it's actually where all the money is. It's right, it's not what you eat, it's what the things in your gut are eating that determines so much of your health, and they eat plant foods.

**John:** Yes. The good ones, the ones that you want eat the plant fibers.

**Dr. Hyman:** Not the bagel plant food.

**John:** See, that's without fiber. The bagels and the flour products, now I don't eat flour actually. I eat some grains, but they're pseudo-grains actually, like buckwheat or quinoa. And they're full of fiber and other nutrients. In that way, I feel like I'm kind of "Pegan" also. It's interesting, finding the truth in the different debates that go on, the different polarizations, rather than divide us, we should put all together what's essential, which is one thing I love about the work that you're doing.

**Dr. Hyman:** It was so funny. I was sitting on the panel with a friend of mine, Joe Kahn, who's a cardiologist who's a vegan and another friend of mine, Frank Lipman, who's a paleo guy. I'm sitting in the middle and they're arguing, and I'm like, "I don't know what's going on here, I must be a "Pegan."

**John:** Exactly. Is that how you came up with the word?

**Dr. Hyman:** It was a total joke. I was like, "Look, what do we all agree on?" The concepts around what's sustainable real food for health are really similar. And I think it should be all real food, it should be sustainably raised, it should be humanely raised, it should be without pesticides, hormones, or antibiotics, it should be without ingredients that are in Latin, that you can't pronounce, that you don't recognize. It should be stuff that's really mostly plant-based, real food.

It should be...you know, if there are grains, they shouldn't be flour grains. They should be low-glycemic. You could be a vegan that eats Doritos and Coke; that's not healthy, right? Or you could be a meat eater who eats a ton of processed food and sugar. You can pick any study to prove any point you want in nutrition. It's one of the most insanely, obscene religious, polarized debates. It's worse than Democrats and Republicans, I think. It's sad because we're all basically trying to go down the same path of trying to get everybody to eat healthier real food.

I think when you start looking at some of the studies...I found one when I was reading and researching for my book that showed it was like 11,000 people who were either vegetarians or they were omnivores who actually shop at health food stores as opposed to the grocery store. And if you look at the meat eater studies, a lot of them are basically looking at populations that aren't really healthy; they eat more calories a day, they smoke more, they exercise less, they have more sugar, more processed food, less fruits and vegetables, less fiber. On every level, they're not healthy. And the ones that are actually shopping at the health food store probably eat mostly vegetables with a little grass-fed meat or sustainably raised chicken or something and a few eggs. It actually wasn't that bad.

I thought that was an interesting study because most of it is so polarized, and this was more like thinking what's balanced, the right thing.

**John:** I agree.

**Ocean:** I was just going to say that it really does matter how food is produced. It matters whether it's been drenched with pesticides, whether animals are pumped full of antibiotics and hormones. It matters to the quality of the nutrients; it matters to how it's going to impact your body. We can't assume that all food products are created equal; we have to actually look at where it came from and what its history was if we want to have accurate data. The average life-expectancy for farm workers in the United States is 49 years. In their short 49 years, many of them are dying of cancer and that has a lot to do with on the job exposure to neurotoxins that we're all consuming in our food on a daily basis. The choice to go organic is an ethical one, it affects the farm workers, it affects our eco-systems and environment but it's also a very selfish one if you don't want to be consuming poisons in your food, right? These things kill bugs, but what do they do to our microbiome, to our health and vitality, to our risk of cancer long-term?

So, not all broccoli, not all wheat, not all animal products are created equal. It is a reality, of course, that organic food costs more. A big part of the reason is the

certification that the farmers have to go through to prove that they're using organic methods. What if - I just want to put this out there - what if we made the pesticide consumptive farmers certify that they were safe and document all the pesticides they used and organic farmers didn't have to go through that regulatory burden because they're already doing a safer thing and we put the onus the other way around. It would cease to be like you're getting fined for wearing your seatbelt and the price would balance and suddenly organic food would be a lot more cost-competitive, if not cheaper.

**Dr. Hyman:** That's a great idea. I'd love to spend the last few minutes talking about - especially with you guys because you've thought so much about this - what are the policies and the ideas that if we could take 5, or 3, or 10, or whatever the number is for you, that these are the big ideas, that if we got these right in society and we all came together around this, what could we do? Because we are probably going to have 100,000 or more people listening to this. I had Tim Ryan on who wrote "The Real Food Revolution". I hope you didn't mind, he kind of stole your title.

**John:** I don't mind at all. I love Tim.

**Dr. Hyman:** Tim's a good guy, a down-home Ohio guy. I've been to his house for dinner. He's the real deal. He talked about how difficult it was to actually create change, but if you if you get people together and you actually sign a petition, or you communicate an idea at a level that matters to Congress, people will listen. So, what are those ideas? What do you want to share with us?

**John:** Well, one idea that I think people could come together around is to get antibiotics out of the meat supply. The meat industry is fighting this and the drug companies are fighting it. The drug companies are fighting it for obvious reasons; they like selling their drugs. Eighty percent of the antibiotics that are used in the United States are not used to help heal people from bacterial infections; they're used as growth hormones on feed lots. And we're on the verge, really, of creating bacterial resistance to our antibiotics that could be decimating to the practice of medicine.

**Dr. Hyman:** But we're not on the verge, we're there John, we're there.

**John:** We're becoming more and more real that this is a terrible thing.

**Dr. Hyman:** It kills more people than ISIS, honestly.

**John:** Yes, it does, by far. It could explode in the decades to come or years to come. The irony is that they only need it because of the conditions that they're

keeping these poor animals in are so bad. If they couldn't use antibiotics, not only would we preserve our medicines, but we would also eliminate factory farms, which are environmental nightmares, which are a violation of the human animal bond, and then we'd start to have a safer meat supply. So, that's one of the core ideas that I think we should come together around very soon, is getting antibiotics...

**Dr. Hyman:** And it's happening. I don't know if you know, but there are large gatherings in Washington of policy makers who are really working on this issue.

**Ocean:** Absolutely. I'd say another one would be getting genetically modified organisms labeled. We have 9 out of 10 Americans support labeling of GMOs and we've got an agri-business industry that on the one hand is patenting these crops and making a great deal of money doing so, and on the other hand is saying they're not materially different. But I think it is materially different that we have over 500 million pounds of additional pesticides on our cropland, because these are pesticide intensive forms of agriculture. I think it is materially significant that GMOs are basically confirming one of two traits: one is that they're herbicide tolerant, which means that they're ready to be sprayed with herbicides, which the leading one being glyphosate, which has been labeled a probable carcinogen by the World Health Organization, and the other major trait is that they are living pesticide factories. They contain BT in every cell of the plant, which is a toxin. It kills bugs and we don't know entirely what it does to humans when it's consumed in this kind of quantity.

So, I think that labeling GMOs would give consumers the right to make informed choices about whether or not we want to consume these products and it would take a bite out of Monsanto's quest to control the world food supply. It would help to empower small-scale farmers, organic farmers, local, living sustainable food systems. So, this is another critical point, like with antibiotics and factory farms where we have widespread public support. You have an industry profiting from the status quo that's clearly not in the public's best interest. So, I think it's another leverage point where we could make a big difference very quickly.

**Dr. Hyman:** You're right. There are 64 countries that have labeling of GMO, including China and Russia. So, communist and quasi-fascist countries are doing it, what's going on here? I don't know if you guys know this but we are bringing one of the tests - I'm in my office in Massachusetts today - one of the tests we're bringing online in my office is a glyphosate test, so we can actually test people for glyphosate and see their exposure. I think when it becomes personal, then people start to wake up like, "Oh my God, I'm contaminated with

this glyphosate.” It's a cancer-causing agent, then we start to test people at scale and it's going to wake people up. It's very powerful.

I actually feel very honored because Monsanto has been coming after me now, which I think is great. I was in Forbes magazine a couple of weeks ago. There was this woman who worked basically for the Genetic Literacy Project, which is a Monsanto front group, who started coming after me for being a hypocrite for different discrepancies because I had a vegan form of fish oil on my website that had a product called "carrageenan" which has been lately sort of determined to be not so great for your gut, and I've been talking about how bad it is, and yet I have a product that has this. I have it there because I want vegans to be able to have DHA, which is important for their brain. I'm trying to get the companies to remove it. We worked to actually get dozens of products to get it removed by working with the companies, but it's just funny to see the level at which they're going to stoop. It's all invisible. It's all these front groups and these great names like The American Council on Science and Health. It sounds like, "Oh wow, that's great. I want to join that," but it's just this front group for big agriculture, and they're the ones that say pesticides are fine for us. It's like, "What's wrong with smoking? Smoking's fine. It doesn't kill you." It's still on that train.

John: I have one more big idea; it would be to stop the advertising of junk food to kids. Stop targeting...we allow these companies to put a target on the back of our children, and now our kids are obese and they're getting diabetes. We have a disease that used to be called adult-onset diabetes. We don't call it that anymore. We call it type 2 and the reason we changed the name is because kids are getting it more and more. That is so sad. Their health is deteriorating that early in their lives. That, to me, is a tragedy, and we still allow junk food companies to prey on our kids. To me, that's just a disgrace and I think that's something we could get a lot of agreement about and come together to change.

**Dr. Hyman:** Well, you know the FTC actually tried to stop that in the '70s and the food industry came down so hard on Congress around this that the Congress told the FTC that they were going to shut them down if they didn't allow them to continue to advertise sugar to kids. What's interesting is the worst foods get advertised the most. Things with the least nutritional value. And over 50 countries have regulation governing food marketing to kids. The only ones that don't are us and Syria. So, we're in good company.

**Ocean:** Let me add too Mark, that we also need to stop subsidizing with taxpayer dollars commodities crops, which are generally the worst things. There is a reason why high-fructose corn syrup isn't used much in the rest of the world

but it is used in the U.S., and it's because corn - most of it by the way, genetically engineered - is being subsidized with tax-payers' dollars. We're subsidizing the very things we should be eating less of. If we're going to subsidize anything, it ought to be things like vegetables and fruits, and nuts, and seeds, and the stuff that we should all be eating more of rather than subsidizing mass-scale commodities, crops, growing the food additives, and making it cheap. It's distorting the marketplace and it's making it cheaper to do the wrong thing for the food industry and that's creating a distortion in what we're paying per pound for the food calories that we consume, and it's totally going in the wrong direction. We're talking tens of billions of dollars a year. If you want to go a step further, we could be taxing - just like we did with cigarettes - we could be taxing the sugary soda industry and then using that tax money that's generated to help ameliorate the costs incurred by that industry's practices on public health, and to educate people about those practices, instead of currently allowing advertising to kids of those very products.

When we stopped finally advertising to kids of cigarettes many decades ago, I think we could learn a lot from what's been done around tobacco. We halved cigarette consumption in the United States in the last generation; I'd like to see us do the same thing with sugary sodas.

**John:** Maybe we should have warning labels on Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola drinks.

**Dr. Hyman:** This could kill you, you know. Absolutely. Some places in Europe you go and the entire front of the cigarette pack is like, "This will kill you if you smoke it," in big letters. I agree.

**John:** I'm serious about it. How about if every soda pop can or bottle had a picture of a diabetic's foot that...the condition. You've seen it in medicine. It's really sad. People don't see that this is what they're going to look like and this is what is going to happen to their bodies if they consume this stuff. I think we should have warning labels on foods that we know are damaging people's health and leading to obesity, and leading to diabetes and leading to cardiovascular disease. We know that. And so instead of subsidizing these foods, we should tax them and we should stop subsidizing them and we should warn people about them.

**Dr. Hyman:** The food policy, the problem with food policy is that we don't really have one. We have a lot of things that have been put together through different agencies to support industry interest without actually solving the problem. I was laughing when you were talking Ocean, because I had dinner with

the Vice Chairman of Pepsi, which you can imagine was a very heated conversation. The guys sitting in the middle of us, I felt bad for them because we were going like this to each other. He said, "Mark, the reason we use high-fructose corn syrup is because the government makes it so cheap for us and we can't not use it." We're a businesses; that's what we do. And I'm like, "You know, that's right." But what's the real cost of food. All the things that you mentioned, almost all of the things that you mentioned are actually happening in Mexico because they are now far exceeding us, 1 in 10 adults in America has type 2 diabetes; 1 in 10 children in Mexico has adult-onset diabetes, or type 2 diabetes. So, they are...

**John:** This happened when they elected Vicente Fox as president. This is when their obesity rates went up, this is when their diabetes rates skyrocketed. Vicente Fox formerly had been the president of Coca-Cola Mexico. Now they've got a different administration in now, but his administration was disaster for the health of the Mexican people.

**Dr. Hyman:** Bloomberg, because he couldn't get everything he wanted in New York, he went down and helping them. They're taxing junk food and soda; they're ending food marketing to kids. They're having clear food labels. The food labels we have are so confusing, unless you have a PhD in nutrition, you don't even know what it means. I look at it, I'm like that's what I do for a living and I'm like, how do you tell, really? We're measuring and talking about all the wrong things and then...it should be like green is good for you, yellow eat with caution, red, this is going to kill you. And then you make a choice. It's like idiot-proof. Then they're eliminating anything that's not health-promoting from schools and public facilities.

We spend...one of the biggest spenders in the food service business in this country is the government through prisons, through schools, through all kinds of government institutions and programs. It's billions and billions of dollars, and yet we don't leverage that kind of strength to change and shape the market, which we very well could. So, I think that's another policy change that could be made. With WIC you can't buy soda, but you can by a two liter bottle of soda on food stamps, you can't buy rotisserie chicken. It doesn't make any sense. So, it's very exciting. I love having you guys on with, The Food Revolution. We are, I think, actually making a dent. I'm very hopeful. I think things are shifting, maybe not as fast as we'd all want, but any last words of wisdom, things you want to share, tell us about, the food revolution, how people get involved?

**Ocean:** I want to say that you are involved. You're part of it by listening right now, by learning, by growing, by engaging, you can become an everyday food revolutionary. With every time you go shopping, every time you choose what to

order at a restaurant, every time you talk about food, think about food, learn about food, you are taking a stand through your own consciousness. You have the opportunity to do so through your actions for a sane, just, healthy, vibrant food system and food life.

And so, I want to thank you. That's really what I want to do, you Mark, of course, and also all the people listening right now. I want to thank you for your interest, for your engagement, for your curiosity, and for your action, because step by step, one bite at a time, one choice at a time, we're changing the world together. We're changing the culture together and the whole future of life on this planet is going to be brighter because of it.

**Dr. Hyman:** That's great. That's a great voice of the food revolution, Ocean. Great. Any last words, John?

**John:** Well, I would just echo what Ocean was saying, I think it's true that every one of us who plans to eat for the rest of our lives is part of the food movement. We get to decide an awful lot about how our health is going to be and how the health of our world is going to go and what kind of community movement we want to create. Whether you're Republican or Democrat...the various partisan divides that separate us, we can get disconnected from each other so easily, but food can bring us together, and healthy food in particular, because who is not in favor of a healthy body and a healthy world? I don't know anybody who isn't. I know people, who are profiting from creating products that take us away from that goal, but even they want very much to be healthy themselves and they want their children to be healthy.

So, I think we can come together around this and I'm always looking for ways we can come together and work together and unite. We're so much stronger then.

**Dr. Hyman:** Thank you John, thank you Ocean. It's been a fabulous conversation. I would check out their website [foodrevolution.com](http://foodrevolution.com). When the Food Revolution Summit happens, you've got to sign up for it. It's unbelievable, an incredible array of humans talking about important topics that are all material to our lives, which is the food we eat and how it affects us and the world we live in.

So, thank you so much you guys, for joining us today at The Fat Summit.

**John:** Thank you, Mark.

**Ocean:** Thank you, Mark.