Food, clarity, and sourcing

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It's kind of a nerdy mission, but once you're on it, you see that buying food can actually be something soulful and connecting. Like if I ate your family's pork, I'm connected to you.

Right. And I think that makes food taste better. I know these guys who raise this big and it's delicious. If it's not delicious, I won't order from you guys again, but I think that's- Right.

Yeah, you know the story behind it. You meet the people. you get a feel for the energy behind everything and who God created them to be and the pig to and everything else.

Welcome to Take Back My Brain with Lori Hammer, where real healing starts in the brain. I'm Lori, a functional nutritionist and mom who's walked the path from anxiety and burnout to clarity and calm.

Each week, we're going to dive into brain-based tools like amino acid therapy, gut health, fasting and faith to help you reclaim your energy, emotions and sense of self.

Hey everyone, welcome back to Take Back My Brain. I'm your host, Laurie Hammer, and today I have with me, Brady Lowe from Taste Network. And you're like, Lori, really?

Why are we talking about the guy that ran a restaurant? What does this have to do with Takeback MyBrain? Well, one, he's from Iowa and he grew up in Des Moines and I'm from, Iowa in case you guys don't know that.

So I am super excited to interview a fellow Iowan. He has a deep love and passion for food. Clearly he started Taste Network, so this is an obvious one.

But also for like sustainable food and how it affects our body and, how that affects really He talks a lot about the North Star. So how taking care of our bodies affects our vision for really like everything in life, whether it's starting a business, raising a family, or just interacting with people on an everyday life.

I'm really excited to have this conversation with Brady. Brady, welcome to the podcast. Thanks, Laurie. And I am really exciting to be here and to hanging out with more Iowans in my life So I want to know a little bit more about your background.

We chatted a bit before the podcast began, but how on earth did you go from Iowa? I know you're in Atlanta now. You developed Taste Network, which is totally a phenomenal business and a mission in the world.

So how did that all happen? Great question. I grew up in Des Moines and I grow up reading cookbooks and choose your own adventure books.

Podcast intro and Brady Loweu2019s background

That's literally the only thing I had an appetite for, no pun intended. I learned to cook and I loved to get around food and my brother and was a good inspiration for me for getting into cigars and into wine.

He was three years older than me. You know, you know the game of like borrowing their fake IDs so you could be in the fun zone, And the moment I left University of Iowa and I was working at some of the fine dining restaurants, that was the first place I saw source to table or farm to cable and culinary and seeing kind of people started to see the importance of not eating commodity all the time.

So when I got to Atlanta, I've got my 90 points of service and was still in cigars and wine and knew I wanted to start my own agency. And what it was, Taste Network, was a network of pairings and new experiences.

So I want to give people the first time they ever had this wine with this cheese or chocolate with wine. And it's like mental explosion, you know? And then everything after that would be like an imposter.

The first you have German chocolate cake, and you're like, oh my God, that is so good. Then once the bar is raised, it can never go backwards. You can't go back, no.

That's junk. I always kind of took that mentality to what we were looking at for food. And it was like, one day it came across, I think it's like talking to a cheese maker about animal husbandry and the word stewardship and, you know, agricultural responsibility or starting like these farm to table aren't even like words yet.

I was, what's animal husbands? They're like well, Think about it like this, you've got a kid that's sick. What do you do? Do you take the kid and you say, Hey, go upstairs to your room and just chill out and get well.

And when you feel better, we'll take you back to school. I want to go to. You can't like you're going to get other kids sick Well, really good animal husbandry in agriculture means that you take the kid out of population.

You don't stuff the kids full of drugs and then send it to school with antibiotics and steroids and say, you're going to get better faster and grow faster.

And now you are going be like, and that's where it started to click for me. I didn't want pesticides in my wine. I did not want to be ingesting things.

The body is your mind, body's your temple. You've got one, don't waste it. All of that started to come really crystal clear. So then I became really picky about what I put in body, at what rates.

And I was excessive in drinking wine and collecting wine, and that was my business, was teaching people about wine cheese and food. But it was like a chef would walk into a dinner party and be like, Oh my God, that salmon dish was so good.

Where'd the salmon come from? And they're waiting for this big romantic story of like salmon from the locks of so-and-so, like Fords and, you know, raised on impeccable feed.

And he's like Oh, it's from Publix or Hy-Vee. I was, I, At that point, every single thing that we do needs to be traced back to source and to make sure that were putting that mentality that impact.

So, you know, fast forward 20 years, not only do we have an agency, but I was just looking at my 50th birthday party, some of the messages I got, and even one from my sister-in-law was like, you taught us all how to eat better.

We didn't think that way. And you forced us through really fun, sexy culinary experiences, because we were doing 20,000 guests a year in 20 cities across North America, talking about the importance of supporting small family farmers and heritage breed pigs.

That's really what launched us into another category of people who create events and have a marketing agency and do things for the greater good. Yeah, and it's so fun having that beautiful culinary experience.

My daughter, she just turned 19 and she's always been the kid that wants the plate to look really pretty and wants to flavors to be amazing. She gives her dad such a hard time because he just shoved things in his mouth.

He's a farmer and he's just eating to fill stuff. And she'll say, I want that. You can't have this because you're not going to appreciate it. So I'm not gonna share it with you.

So I get where you're coming from and I love those experiences as well. We have this amazing farm to table restaurant just about an hour from us. And I loved to go up there because they start pairing fun stuff together.

Once you've had a steak cooked from them, you are like, my husband can't cook anything good on the grill anymore then. I'm like I don't want that. They don' want the hockey puck from the girl.

And you and I were just talking like we just, my dad and my son, I guess my daughter too, they kind of all got together and they're raising heritage breed pigs right now.

And so we had a litter of five this morning, which is really exciting. They're so cute. Oh my goodness. Yeah. Like the size of like a Twinkie and then they just get to be like the sized of a bread loaf.

I love you. But yeah, there's just so much fun. We had four born. I don't know, it's been quite a month yet, but so we have, you know eight or nine new baby pigs.

So the family is starting. You know, my dad grew up or I grew with my Dad raising Hampshire's and then they got out of the business for like 30 years and now he's back in with cooney coony pigs.

So I would love to know how do, how does that impact the world? Like people starting to go back to these heritage breeds as opposed to, I mean, we live in Iowa.

Clearly, you know that there's a ton of factory pig farms around here. Yep.

Heritage pigs and food system impact

Can you kind of talk about the impact on that? Because I, when I look at this thing that we're starting, it's just fun. It's beautiful. it just bringing a lot of cohesiveness like in the family and people in a community are interested.

And it was just like drawing a lotta people as opposed to, you know, a hog building every five miles or so. Yeah, it's a great question because, you know, I think people don't necessarily see the impact that it has when you give money to a small family farmer, right?

And where it really rang true for me was seeing the size of the operations. And I would talk to farmers when we were at one point slaughtering, a thousand pigs a year for events and talking to every single farmer about their objections in the marketplace, how people received them and everybody thought it was more expensive.

But I think. The importance is once you understand that the food that you choose to put in your body and in you're family's body is one of those medicines.

It's you are what you eat, right? And if you do it with heritage breed pigs, that means you up on the third or fourth rung of the ladder. I would say microwave bacon is ruck number one, you know?

That's like negative, it's on-the-ground. Okay, yeah, let's go there. And then, you know, let's say the first wrong is Whole Foods, right? Whole foods pork.

Like, first to the safest place that I would go. The second one is your local butcher who actually buys from small family farmers that you now. Third level is buying directly from the farmer at the farmers market and getting to know them personally.

What do you feed them? What's so fun about them. And then the last is raising them and eating them yourselves. But you know exactly what's in it, and you what you're feeding your family.

And the scary part about the pork industry, just why I chose to go up against it was that people don't know what's in their food and you talk about you know kids maturing extremely younger going through puberty younger everything that gets with people getting sick with breakouts and acne i mean it is all tied together right yeah and So I think what people notice when they start really selecting what they put in their body and eating is that if you eat like a Whole30 diet, for example, which is a very specific type of caveman diet.

But if go that route, you see clarity in your skin and your eyes. And once you know that feeling, then you don't want to go back. I can be supplements and additions, but it can also be just the hunt for the best bite and supporting the local farmers, you know, and it's kind of a nerdy mission.

But once you're on it, like you see that buying food can actually be something soulful and connecting. You know? Like if I ate your family's pork. I'm connected to you.

Right? Right. And I think that makes food taste better, selfishly. I know these guys who raise this pig and it's delicious. If it is not delicious, I won't order from you guys again.

Yeah, you know the story behind it. You meet the people. you get a feel for the energy behind everything and who God created them to be and the pig to And I think that's what we miss in our food system.

I didn't get to go to farmer's markets. If you boil down to see what's in our food system, I mean, like what you look at the equivalent of the USDA in Europe and they've got like 300 and some items that are allowed in food and the U. S.

has 6,600. You're talking 300 to 6 thousand, that is so much more that we're fighting against. And I think you take an approach to once you, if you focused in on heritage meat pigs for a year, then you're gonna start doing with chickens, you gonna do what your cheese is, And now you're putting money in a place that you can actually make a change.

And I think that's impact. Yeah. You're going to get a lot of pushback on that. I'm a nutritionist, so people are like, I can't afford to buy that So have you heard that, you know, the whole time that you've been doing this on this mission?

Yeah. And I have a really weird saying, it's like, You can't polish a turd. and that's why there's so many sauces in the world, because it is flavorless meat that in a long run you pay more for it because you can get the same sustenance out of it and the nutrition, right?

And it actually fighting against your nutrition to make you hungrier. We don't really talk about that, but I think when you get a really good steak and it's well marbled, you take four or five bites, that's legit.

Right. And when something doesn't taste good, like you have to consume a little bit more because you're trying to like, oh, I need to put some ketchup on it.

I put soy sauces on. Like I got to cover it up. really good sourced food from real producers is, then it should be flavor packed or you just move on to the next source, right?

I mean, don't waste money on something that's more expensive that doesn't have any flavor. That doesn' make sense. Yeah. And well, if you don' t spend money o good food now, you're going to spend it on your failing health later.

So either way you are going t And I guess I wouldn't recommend it. Yeah. And it tastes good while you're doing it, so you might as well do that unless it's, you know, we've lived in this microwave culture, this McDonald's this Oreo culture for so long.

and I do think people are waking up and catching on and it has to be outside of government regulation. It has be you just taking your own responsibility for your health and deciding that you are going to pick higher quality foods

without they're enacting some kind of law or something so that you actually have high quality foods, because it's readily available right now.

Well, the amount of money that's in. I just call it medication for agricultural livestock and commodity settings. It's insane. I mean, it's big, big pharma.

Like on one side, we're the agriculture for the farming industry. You know, I think it is a scary system that we live in, but I find yourself really good people to surround yourself with.

sure some of them grow food. Before it was like, you got to have a lawyer as a friend. You got have to a doctor as friend, right? You've got a rich friend like a chef friend but I think it's really important that you have have few farmer friends.

And I just think that doesn't resonate with us like raising kids anymore. So I wanted like we grew up like if you wanted to grow up you want to be a farmer, a fireman, dentist, doctor, lawyer.

And that's I think the big space that I want to get back to is like, how do we get kids saying, I wanna be a farmer again and gamify it. So I there's a world out there still.

Yeah, it's making it more desirable. And I when you have that grounding, that centering around your food, around farming, whatever it might be, even if you're not a grounding that around food, I feel like that's the foundation for everything else.

I always tell people, you can't get well without a decent diet. Is it going to get you 1,000% well? No, but it's going get to you a long ways there. And then we just see what's left over, right?

And so it affects our brain. It affects how well we can exercise and just relate to everybody around us. So if you're not eating healthy food your brain is not healthy, and then you are just not a healthy enjoyable person to be around.

And I know you talk a lot about. like getting out of the rat race and figuring out like, what is your North Star? What is you're mission in life? Like, could you talk a little bit about that and how you help people kind of discover that, you know, as they're on this health journey?

Hey friend, just a quick break to remind you if calming your brain is the missing piece in your practice or in you home, my Mind Thrive certification course teaches you exactly how to do that with targeted amino acid therapy.

So it's real science, real results, no band-aids. Enrollment is now open. Link is in the show notes. So back to the. Yeah. I mean, I think for us, you know, looking at people who, who do want to feel better and they do wanna know how, like they want a destination based outcome.

North Star method and life direction

And I. You need to have process for like your destination to reach it, and I, I grew up in Iowa. I went to entrepreneur class, entrepreneurship classes.

So by far, entrepreneur by default and to the point where I'm paralyzed with procrastination at times, right? And I am always trying to figure it out still.

And if I didn't have a mentor come to me when I turned 38, and say, hey, have you done the North Star Method? I was like, oh, it's all business plans.

You need business plants. Farmer, you need a business plan. Business guy, he need to business plant. If you don't have a plan, your not in business. And then I realized that there's a lot of people going independent and that it not necessarily always fits to have just the isolated business plan, but really to really have a clear picture of where you're going.

And, then, the North Star Method really kind of came in clarity for me. It's like, all right, and the way I explain it is, you know, three wise men, right?

Religion aside. We all know the story that there's a North Star and there are three people heading in a certain direction. Right, right. And they know where they're going, rainstorm, windstorms, hurricane, clear night.

It doesn't matter, but when that clear nights hits again, they all focus right back on the direction that they are heading. I think North star has that magnetism, if you can give that to your team, to you spouse, When was the last time we sat down with our kids or our, you know, spouses, like, all right, well, let's take the next two days to really map out our next five years.

Like, where do we want to be? And this is not a shorthand. This is like big, hairy ass goaltime. What do want? We want it to have our dream home. We wanna have three kids.

we wanna do this. this Is what I wanna drive. My office should look like smell like. Here's how I want my day to go into the nitty gritty. If you have a destination in mind and it's very clear, the chances of you reaching it are a lot higher than if you don't have one at all.

Yes. And I think a lot of people discount that that process needs to take place every four or five years, you have to circle back around your North Star.

We called them goals, we call them daily check-ins, right? But those are short winds, those were tiny rocks in the big river of life. You need boulders to cross the river.

And that's what I Think North Stars are all about is really trying to figure out What is it that you want to get to as a dream state? What does your current reality state and looking reality in the eye and saying, what do I need to do to Get to that dream State?

And even if I get 80%, I still am a lot closer than I was without it. Right. And I think business plans can't do that. Business plans give you performance and executive summaries and help you understand financials and explain it to investors and team.

But it's not going to tell the team that your success is measured on us reaching the goal together. And so I think with food and, you know, with the food North Star, knowing that process, where I was in that moment of my life, I knew that I wanted to create a charity called Piggy Bank.

And I wouldn't be able to do that without a Northstar method. We created it, we put it out there, it lived and breathed, raised a million bucks, put a bunch of business plans in a small family of farmers across the country, which it was designed to do.

And then it moved to Africa and now it's working in school systems there. I mean, like that's a North star. Like I had no idea. Then as soon as you do it then, picks up, should pick up on its own.

That's when, you know, our friends had built on and they're like, this could really work for like 15 programs in Africa. would you guys do it?" And I was like, yes, here's an endowment, let's go.

So that was a really big thing to be able to do in 10 years. And so it's a goal of mine to help people see that, right? And how can we do that? How can they get into it?

how do you make it easy? Because I think everything is too complicated and most of the time I make them too I've been on a mission to give people access to a North Star method and make it live and breathe in their life.

So what is some of that easy process? Like if people wanted to take those first steps, what do they do to figure out their North star? I think being brutally honest, like where you are and then really having kind of a gutsy talk with yourself about what your goal is, right?

And it can be health, like mine was, I wanted to get under 200 pounds the first time in 25 years, so I- That's a big deal. Turned 50 this year, yeah, and I got to 199. I've got it to one day, then I slipped up, you know, now I'm at 210, but I know I can do it.

And that was enough, Was it tied in with like 30 other goals? Yes. But I think it can be tied to like health, it could be tight to business. And I you have to be brutally honest with where you are, where do you want to go?

And then I need to have a process. The process that we created for mine was Without Chad's GPT these days, like, I don't know how many hours I would be going to town on trying to figure this out and how much money I spent for a North Star mentor.

And I've basically distilled that all into a GPt. So it literally comes up with a prompt and it says, who are you, where are, you where do you want to go?

And then it's like, and you talk to it, you just speak right into your phone and to GPT with this GPG agent. And it starts asking you questions, like maybe 10 questions.

Do it on a 30 minute walk. And mind blown afterwards, it will just keep going and you'll just be like, and the structures and what I built this thing on is insane.

Like it has every one of my coaches, mentors, books, like it had, its built on such a knowledge base that it's not nonsense. And you know, I had one buddy who's went in there and he's like so we want to get into a, we wanna go from 6 million to 9 million in three years in sales.

So current state, dream state. Okay. Let's put it in there. I'll do it later. No, let's do right now. We're on a ride to lunch in New Orleans, you know?

And I'm like, what's this do? Results outstanding. Worked for him. They put in an implementation. He presented to his team and they're now moving in the direction.

So like for a small family farmer, I had no access to give them this tool. you know, years ago. Yeah. And now this technology is here and we're still not sure what, how to use it to its potential, but that's kind of where I felt that we could be very helpful with people is giving them a free easy tool until I try to get in.

I think brutally honest with yourself where you are, where do you want to go? Understanding what your unique selling proposition is, like who you, what value do provide to the world is one of the exercises.

It's just getting through those pieces. I think it's funny how quickly people can get results. For sure. One of the hardest pieces would be, I don't think most people know what their value is to the world.

How do you help people to tease that out? It is a real struggle, right? Yeah.

Tools, resources, and closing remarks

That's why I thank being brutally honest with yourself. I mean, one, can I talk to AI and tell it who I am? And will I trust the output? Right. You know what I'm mean?

Yeah. And then I like, well, who in my life, my wife, mom, dad, whoever, like brother and sister, Who else do I have? Can I tell brutally like clear secrets and honesty too?

That's going to like give me like some kind of response. Right? It's not what, I need to hear it's what's being told, you know, it was just, so, Yeah, I think it's a really good way for people to kind of like look at why are you here and what do you want to give to the world.

Right. I thing is really just like, so going through those questions is the best way to dig it up, you know, but I If you

don't have that solved, then people don' t know how to help you, you know?

Mm-hmm. Yeah, that's so true in everything. Or how, or how or to work with you. You know. I had people go to my website two years ago, and they're like, what do you do?

You're so confused, I don t understand what this is. We got some wine, we got cheese, but we don''t know what else. What are you doing? I can do just about anything.

I mean, really, it's just, I just want to help you figure out where you want go and who you wanna be. And if I can do that and make it easy for you in a transformation, then that's kind of a fun goal to have, you know?

And I think a lot of people start with something that's painful. Sometimes they get sick, sometimes it's food, and sometimes, you know, it is a financial drop in revenue.

And they just know. They're like, I need a change. I don't want to work on this cubicle anymore. Or I want race pigs. Okay, so who's those transformational partners that we have in our life?

I remember going to college or, in the last five years, being like hey, You need a transformation team because you're constantly involved. Yeah. I mean, your doctor says, hey, come in, let's do a checkup.

Oh, you going to need this to transition back to healthy. It kind of feels like we're alone sometimes. It does kind of feel that way. So if somebody wanted to transition into small heritage breed farming, sustainable farming.

You have a lot of resources. Can you outline what that would be, where they could go to access those? Yeah. Piggy Bank is piggy-bank.org. That's the website.

In there, you can download a free business plan. 40 to 50 pages. And that resource alone is based on a 250 pig head operation, which is just north of a hobby farm.

But the only thing that's a difference between pig farm, goat farm chicken, beef, cattle, et cetera, right? Is that the feed calculator changes and the reproduction cycle changes, But otherwise, it's a calculator.

Like, you put this much of input in, and you get this output. And, if you know how to change those numbers out, or if your getting into that side of the business, these are just plug and play numbers.

So we wrote a business plan that on one side served the Heritage Feed Pig farming community, And on the other side, everyone else could plug their own agricultural system into it.

Nice. You know, I think with a lot of farmers, so that's the big resource there. You know, of course, and me. If you download the business plan and you've got questions, reach out to me, you know.

My Instagram is bradielow75 is a really good place to find me so I would definitely say that's a great place. Okay. As well, if you get into the Business Plan stuff and yet questions.

I love it. Well, I found this to be super helpful. excited about, your mission and everything that you're helping people do. Is there any last thing that You'd like to leave the audience with?

No, you know, I think that the North Star is really kind of like, if I can help anyone get further down the path and not make, you mistakes that don't need to be made.

You know, I think the North Star is a fun one. So you could just DM me the word on my Instagram at BradyLow75. Just DM the work vision to me and we'll share the workshop with you.

It's free. it's just, you know 10 minutes of your time to hopefully get to the next stage in your life, and I that's a really important thing. But other than that, if you want to eat and drink and see some beautiful events around the country,

then just follow along.

That's kind of what we do. Just keep introducing small family farmers and good food sources and beverage sources to consumers and enthusiasts nationwide.

I love it. So I'm so glad I met you. This has been a great interview. Yeah. Appreciate you a lot. Thank you, I appreciate you having me on. It's been an honor.

Awesome. Well, thank you everyone for listening. I know you know somebody that really needs to hear this episode, so make sure you like, subscribe and share that with someone.

All right. We will see you in the next episode. God bless. Thanks for listing to Take Back My Brain. If today's episode helped you connect with hope or direction, I want you to follow the show, leave us a review and And if you're ready to start your own healing journey, explore our courses and our coaching programs at lorihammer.com backslash store.

So until next time, remember you cannot medicate away a nutrient deficiency and healing your brain isn't just possible, it's powerful.