



Episode 9 Transcript

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Mark Bell & Silent Mike on The Way of the Powerlifter

Nick Collias: Hello, and welcome to *The Bodybuilding.com Podcast*. I'm [Nick Collias](#), the man with the swole-est license plate in the state of Idaho. Got a swole ass license plate ...

Mark Bell: The swoliest?

Nick: It says 'swole' on it.

Mark: Wow.

Nick: I got it five years before I ever start working here, totally by coincidence. It was just God's ...

Mark: Just wanted to be part of the Swole Patrol.

Nick: Apparently I did. We also have [Krissy Kendall](#), science editor of Bodybuilding.com.

Dr. Krissy Kendall: Hello.

Mark: Science?

Krissy: And globe trekker.

Mark: I just got super nervous. I got to be all smart and stuff in this podcast? What is she going to ask me?

Nick: This is an intervention.

Mark: Oh, my God. What's going on?

Nick: He's dumb.

Krissy: Yep.

Nick: You've been saying some things.

Mark: Wow.

Nick: Everybody asked for this to happen.

Mark: Damn. I don't think I have a problem though, that's the thing.

Nick: We really love you, but ...

Krissy: But ...

Mark: I love the way I'm living my life.

Nick: [Cassie Smith](#) is also here, senior content editor at Bodybuilding.com.

Cassie Smith: Hello.

Nick: CrossFit games athlete, pal of Mark.

Cassie: Pal of Mark. You nailed that one.

Nick: Pal of Mark, is that a thing? A lot of pawns out there?

Mark: I don't know what that means, but okay.

Nick: We also have Mark Bell, the smelly Adonis.

Mark: Hello from the other side.

Nick: The power behind Power magazine, the ass behind my favorite ass to hold the slingshot hip circle. Did I show you? I walked in on my four-year-old doing lateral walks the other day, just like mommy does.

Mark: Oh yeah? Trying to get those gains.

Nick: Right, the first thing, I swear to God, the first thing I said when I woke up to my wife this morning, I said, "Strong ass, strong lass."

Mark: Yeah, there you go.

Nick: That's how I wake up.

Mark: Glute recruitment is crucial.

Nick: We also have, here, Silent Mike, Silent Mike.

Mark: Shh.

Mike Farr (Silent Mike): What's up everybody?

Nick: Occasional Power Cast. Host as well, yes? Or always?

Mike: I'm on that thing sometimes.

Cassie: Why do they call you Silent Mike? You're not silent. What's your deal?

Mike: It's this guy.

Mark: Everybody gets a nickname.

Mike: Joined at Super Training five years ago, maybe. Four and a half years ago.

Mark: Worst day in my life.

Mike: There were a lot of large men, heavy men.

Mark: Furry.

Mike: Strong men.

Mark: You're getting her excited.

Cassie: I know, I was like, "Do tell more, do tell more!"

Mike: Underage men, underage men.

Cassie: Where do we go for this?

Mike: I was just the youngest guy, the weakest guy, the smallest guy so I just shut up, learned my place. Then Mark, to remember my name, because he didn't care, made me a nickname.

Cassie: That sounds about right.

Mark: Yeah, we do a lot of voiceover work to the videos that we produce, and so he was lifting with me in one of the particular videos, doing some deadlifts. I'm like, "Here I go for X amount on the deadlift," and, "Here goes this guy," and then back and forth. Then he came on the screen and I was like, then "Here's Silent Mike." People got excited, they're like, "Silent Mike!" They got excited and so the name stuck.

Mike: Yeah. They got excited about silence.

Mark: Yeah, Silent Mike and Smelly. Sounds like a wrestling team.

Mike: Rap duo.

Nick: Silent and Smelly, that's sounds like hell.

Mark: That's the tag team champions of the world.

Nick: The sweet embrace of death is Silent and Smelly.

Mike: Chicks really dig it.

Krissy: Chicks really dig it.

Nick: Also former professional wrestler, right? Current strongest coach in the world. Anybody stronger come along recently?

Mike: I don't know. I don't know. I don't think so.

Mark: Depends who you ask?

Mike: If you ask me, I don't think so.

Nick: And competitive powerlifter since time and memorial?

Mark: Since birth, yes.

Nick: Do you talk about your first meet a lot? Is that a story that lives on in infamy as you coach people?

Mark: No, I don't remember my first meet.

Nick: Do you have an age, a year?

Mark: I do, well I do know that I lied about my age to get into the meet.

Nick: Oh, perfect.

Mark: I think I was like fourteen. You're supposed to be fifteen or sixteen or so. I lied about my age to get into the meet, but other than that, I don't remember a whole lot about it.

Nick: Except that you stunted your growth.

Mike: Just obviously.

Mark: Oh, yeah. Well I was on a lot of steroids going to that meet. I remember that. That was pretty, that's like kind of the only real memory I have was how hard it was to stick myself at that age with the needles and stuff.

Nick: Using the Internet? Buy all your steroids on the internet right? 1975.

Krissy: Yeah, 1975.

Nick: The Internet was the net inside a deadlift.

Mark: Yeah, the inter webs.

Nick: You don't remember what your totals were?

Mark: No, I don't really have an idea of the weights that I did. I do know when I graduated high school I benched 405, but I don't really remember a lot of the other numbers. I think when I was fifteen I might have benched 315 or something like that. I don't really remember all the numbers.

Nick: The significance of the first time around is really just ripping the band-aid off?

Mark: Well, the just getting involved in powerlifting as a kid is neat to me now looking back at it because powerlifting is so popular now, whereas before it wasn't really a thing. I kind of kept it almost hidden that I powerlifted. Everyone's talking about football or baseball or basketball, so with powerlifting, people are like oh I heard you broke a record, I was like yeah. I did a little bit of this or a little bit of that, but it was just more of a real side thing. It was always a hobby for me. It was always something I knew I would get back to, so I played football. I did a bunch of other things. I did pro wrestling for a while. I always knew I'd circle back around to lifting at some point because it's the only thing I'm really good at.

Cassie: Can you explain for the folks at home the difference between powerlifting and weightlifting and bodybuilding?

Mike: Oh my god!

Krissy: Wait, they're different?

Cassie: Right. I know. This is crazy.

Krissy: Listen up folks. Take some notes here.

Cassie: Here we go.

Mark: First of all, I'll kind of start it out by saying that ...

Nick: This is a personal beef that you've got in the world right now.

Krissy: It's the most incredible.

Cassie: Let me have it.

Mark: First of all, I'll start out by saying that I think what I love about powerlifting is the fact that anyone can do it. It's very black and white about your results. Did you put the work in? Did you not put the work in? If you put the work in, you'll get stronger. Every person possesses the ability to get stronger, whether you're short or fat, tall or skinny, doesn't really matter. If you put in the work towards getting stronger, you have the ability to get stronger. Not everybody has the ability to do

bodybuilding. Not everybody has the ability to do Olympic lifting. Not everybody has the ability to do CrossFit. In CrossFit, there's so many movements that eliminate people. They just can't simply do the movements. Too many injuries; they're too old; not mobile enough. Weight lifting, same thing, mobility can be an issue, so doing a snatch sometimes people are automatically ruled out. When it comes to bodybuilding, who the fuck can follow a bodybuilding diet? I mean, really.

Nick: Not anybody at this table.

Mark: Yeah, right. No one can do it. It's impossible, but Mike and I have worked with a lot of people over the years, and I've worked with hundreds and hundreds of people over the years and given them diet advice. One out of every twenty people actually really follow what you said in terms of diet. In terms of lifting, it's usually not a problem. Probably almost 90-95 percent of the people really listen to you when it comes to lifting. The diet side is so hard. The big difference between some of those sports, between powerlifting and weightlifting. In powerlifting, another big advantage of power things, you get to lift more weight. In Olympic lifting, there's so much skill and there's other things involved, other dynamics to the lift that are involved that force you to use less weight. Olympic lifting is comprised of a clean and jerk, and snatch, where you're putting weight over your head and you're doing these weird tricks to get the weight up over your head. Powerlifting is comprised of a squat, bench press, and deadlift. In a powerlifting meet, you get to do nine attempts, and you're judged by three judges. You get judged on various things: squat depth, locking out benches, locking out deadlifts, and things like that. What was the other thing?

Nick: Bodybuilding.

Krissy: Bodybuilding.

Mark: Bodybuilding, yes.

Cassie: The most important, obviously.

Mark: Yeah, bodybuilding kind of plays into almost everything that anyone does inside of a gym almost because anything anyone's doing towards just building their body or bettering their body, I would consider bodybuilding, whether you're doing three sets of three or three sets of ten, I would kind of consider it all to be the same thing. You're lifting weights to try to make yourself better. The mission and the goal sometimes gets skewed by people. The mission and the goal is to always get more jacked and always gain more muscle whether you're male or female or whether you're old or young, because the more muscle mass that you have, the more that your body will work for you rather than you being a slave to your body trying to figure out how to burn calories and stuff like that.

Nick: That's a very nice way to put it.

Krissy: Yes, good answer.

Nick: What role does competition play there in powerlifting in particular? Do you feel like somebody, I mean, how many percentage-wise of the people you guys work with end up actually competing, and how much is that a priority?

Mark: I would say now it's a lot. It's the majority. In our gym almost everyone competes, right?

Mike: I think you kind of get kicked out if you don't compete, and that's, like Mark said, anybody can powerlift. That's kind of the point of it is we're kind of busy traveling and stuff so we might compete less, especially Mark than he used to, but you can compete, and when you do compete, your training, your diet, your sleep, your priorities start to get in line a lot better. That's why it's kind of cool. Yeah, I think anybody could probably get into a weightlifting meet, but it might take you a couple years to be able even to do the lifts. We could probably teach someone to efficiently squat, bench, and deadlift in a month and then throw them into a meet if you wanted to. Then your training's just going next level when you put yourself on the line like that.

Nick: Yeah, that was going to be my next question is if somebody says, yeah I kind of want to compete. Well there's a meet in four weeks, I was thinking of just signing up for it to sort of gauge where I'm at.

Mark: Yeah.

Nick: Do you guys endorse that approach?

Mark: Yeah, no you've got to take that shit seriously, do it sixteen weeks out.

Mike: No, I'd say go do it.

Nick: I was talking about Cassie here.

Cassie: I know.

Nick: I'm not trying to talk you out of this.

Mike: He threw you under the bus.

Mark: Yeah, we encourage people to get into competition. Somebody has a local 4k to run or something like that, a local run they get involved in, a Turkey Trot or whatever you call it. There's always something going on in terms of running or something like that and people have no problem hopping into that, and they never talk about what place they finish in it. They just go and do it. I'm sure they get slaughtered. There's probably a few freaks there that can really run, right. When it comes to weightlifting or powerlifting, people are like, no I only want to do it if I'm going to win. Well, it's like well that might take a really long time.

Nick: Or never.

Mark: You might run into a real maniac here and there. You might run into a really gifted lifter. Maybe you run into somebody who's going to compete in the Olympics or something at some point. Who knows who you're going to run into. That's not a great mind-set. The mind-set is to get in front of judges, have official lifts in the books, official lifts on the books, and it's something that you can judge yourself against other people and then you can judge yourself against yourself the next time you go out and compete.

Nick: Yeah.

Mark: It makes yourself accountable for your training. If you go in and you bench 200 pounds in training and you're all excited, that's a training lift. That's a powerlifter would discredit that lift and say well, it wasn't in competition. You've got to go to the competition and actually do it on the platform as the rest of us are making it.

Nick: Or Instagram.

Mark: Or you can go that IG route.

Krissy: Would you say for that new person that's going to compete in four weeks, what do you spend the most time on, just learning the, obviously there's different calls, different counts, and it's different than what you see going on in the gym. How do you split up their training just to get them ready for the meet, make sure that they can get a few white lights, or is it to try to actually increase strength a little bit before they go in?

Mark: Rule number one is to always check with whatever federation it is that you're going to compete in because you need to know how the lifts need to be done. Each federation has a certain set of rules, you have to make sure you have the proper equipment going in. You might need a singlet. A lot of people don't realize that you need a singlet when you go in to compete in powerlifting so they show up and they don't have one. They think they can buy one there. For some reason, it never gets executed well enough where you can buy one there, even though I actually make singlets, we don't even have them at meets a lot of times.

Mike: You can borrow one.

Mark: Yeah, that happens a lot.

Mike: That does happen.

Krissy: That happens a lot.

Cassie: Really?

Mark: That happens a lot. I don't even know why there's a need for the singlet. I think it's a little overkill personally, but it is the sport and it is part of it. You need to just make sure that you understand all that stuff going in. In terms of trying to get stronger, you probably won't really get stronger. Maybe that would be a good time if you're not currently working on one-rep maxes to do a few one-rep not real maxes, but one-rep 80 percent, 90 percent, just to see whereabouts you're going to be because now you have to pick what are called openers. That's your first attempt in the meet. Those are lifts that should represent something that you can do really cleanly, very easy, even if you're sick or not feeling good, you can still blast those lifts out. We recommend that it's something you can do for like three reps. Your second attempt would be something that you could do for like two reps, and then your third attempt would be kind of getting closer to a max. In a powerlifting meet, it's a great environment to really go for a true max. Mike and I are kind of the same mind-set, we don't really believe in going for maxes in the gym. We might go for a PR, personal record, personal best, but a personal record and personal best if your training is done right and you're training optimally, you'll be able to get a personal best without it being a max effort.

Nick: What about going for a PR in the YouTube comments?

Mike: That's daily. That's the Bulgarian method.

Mark: Yeah, we love those YouTube comments.

Mike: That's my problem with one-rep max strength is that it's such a little thing on your driver's license online. I always thought it'd be fun to have a powerlifting where you have to get three reps, you've got to do three RMs.

Mark: Yeah, your credibility's on your license? That'd be great. "How much you bench?"

Mike: There's some stuff. CrossFit does ladders, like a deadlift ladder. That's really cool. We talk about that often, just making competitions just for fun, whether it is for YouTube or Instagram, or just for us having fun. Five-rep max competition or whatever it may be kind of events the playing field for some people.

Nick: Right.

Mike: Mark's going to out-bench me until he's probably seventy. But if we do I don't know, 135 all the way up to 315 and we've got to do some deadlifts in between or something maybe we even the ground a little bit.

Mark: Sure.

Nick: Do you find some little formulas where you're like, oh god this would be great.

Mike: Yeah, something. I haven't yet but I should. I should just come up with three games where I can beat him at.

Krissy: Yeah.

Cassie: That's a really good segue way into a question I wanted to ask you for a while, Mark, is as a meathead...

Mark: Do you think about me a lot?

Cassie: I do, weirdly. Sorry.

Mark: Yeah, I thought so.

Krissy: It's not weird at all.

Cassie: Sorry Mrs. Bell. As a CrossFitter, I get a lot of, and in this community, I get a lot of hate and people have a huge problem with this sport. You guys have actually really embraced it which I really appreciate and have worked with CrossFitters, particularly women that are strong. Can you talk about how that relationship started and how you like ... ?

Mark: The women, that's Mike's fault.

Mike: Relationship? We don't like to call it a relationship. We're acquaintances.

Cassie: We don't want to put labels on anything.

Mike: Throwing us under the bus now. It's all those relationships.

Nick: Fodder with bonus.

Mike: Yeah, bone something.

Cassie: Bone your ...

Krissy: Yeah, why don't you, what do you like about it?

Nick: Was it hard for you?

Cassie: Yeah, why was it hard for you?

Krissy: Wait, what are we talking about? Is it difficult?

Nick: Is it a difficult thing?

Mark: Sort of. To be more serious, we've embraced CrossFit from day one because I recognize that CrossFit is really fucking hard to do.

Krissy: Yeah.

Mark: It just seems brutal, and the fact that it's got people doing squats and people doing deadlifts, and it's got people with barbells in their hands. I really did like the fact that it had women even more so than the men. There's more women attracted to it, maybe it's because the guys have their shirts off, I'm not sure.

Mike: They don't look like us.

Mark: Yeah, they look the opposite of the way we look right now especially. I really like the fact that it was empowering women and getting women to kind of think with a totally different mind-set than they ever thought before. They're not flipping tires and just doing shit that they probably thought was never possible before, and then instead of them worrying about how much they weigh on the scale all the time, they're more worried about performance-based activity and how well they can do in a given contest or a given workout or WOD. When your mind is there, it's easier to make progress for your body, so it's interesting. Once you kind of ease off, and you're not trying so damn hard to lose a pound or two for so and so or for this and that, it's that much easier to actually lose weight because again, when you start to lift weights and you start to put a barbell in your hand and you start to do some of the workouts as CrossFitters do, you're going to burn fat and gain muscle, and when you keep that muscle on your body, your body's going to work for you rather than you working for it.

Mike: I think it's a lot of middle ground of CrossFitters, bodybuilders, powerlifters, weightlifters, especially bodybuilders and powerlifters, they used to talk shit on each other. Like oh bro, you just look good, oh bro you're fat and you can only lift, right? When CrossFit came around it kind of just

became that thing that everybody's hating on for no reason. It's also that middle ground of trolls just like a YouTube comment that are the ones saying this. We've been lucky enough to deal with the top powerlifters, some of the top bodybuilders, the top CrossFitters, and those guys aren't like that. They know if I want to deadlift, I'm going to go to Mark. Or if I need to weight lift, I need to go see our friend Max Adair or whoever it might be rather than no, powerlifter's got nothing to teach me.

Krissy: Right.

Mike: They can't even do a handstand walk. Like all right bro.

Mark: It was a huge influence too having good CrossFitters around. The CrossFitters I worked with in the beginning were awesome, so that helped a lot. I could see their work ethic.

Nick: Then you find that those super strong people just don't pay attention to the comments online, or are they aware of comments? You hear oh an NBA player going into the finals, he's on strict media ban, you know?

Mike: Yeah, I don't know. I think they pay attention they just shrug it off. They have a mutual respect, like I said, for the other top people in the other sport, and what else do you really need, you know?

Cassie: Right.

Mike: Do you want respect from the ants down there or do you want from the real people caring?

Mark: Yeah, I think everyone hears the noise. You can't avoid it. You see comments over and over again. You can't help but have it be hurtful at some point. Really it's kind of absurd to have it even bother you at all because if someone was to shout something at you even on the street or something, which no one would ever actually do, but if they did you would be so shocked that you wouldn't even think they were yelling at you so you'd probably just keep walking.

Mike: Yeah.

Mark: You know, it wouldn't faze you at all. You might even look and be like that person doesn't have any clue. I don't even know who that person is at all. That would be your way of dealing with it. You'd be like okay, keep walking whatever. These people that make these comments online, I think that number one, I'd like to see people think a little bit more before they make a comment because I do think people can criticize, and I think they can have fun with criticizing, and I think they can be a little over the top and outlandish and still have fun with it without being so, they're way too negative. I think a lot of times it's probably just kids. It's probably younger people making these kind of crazy comments. They're not really making any sense. I see comments where someone will make fun of me. I'm like, you can make fun of me so much better than that.

Cassie: Try harder.

Mark: That's not that funny. I've had other ones come in that are funny, and I'll show it to Mike like this is fucking hilarious.

Cassie: Yep.

Mark: He'll show one that someone says something about him and we think it's actually funny.

Mike: Yeah.

Mark: It's like think about it before you actually put something down.

Mike: Yeah, yeah.

Mark: If you're going to criticize somebody on something, then maybe you should be knowledgeable on some of the subjects that you're trying to comment on.

Cassie: Yep.

Krissy: Yeah.

Nick: Knowledgeable is no fun. Krissy can attest to that.

Krissy: Yeah, yeah. I love the YouTube comments about my blue shirt. It's all they're about.

Nick: Those are the ones that are funny is the thing.

Krissy: Yeah, I get a good laugh out of them. I love them.

Nick: I don't know. It seems like those comments also sort of miss sometimes. It's like CrossFit clearly came into being at a time when the world of strength was totally ready for another strength sport in their land.

Mark: Oh, absolutely.

Mike: It met a need that was out there. What was it about the galaxy turning them over toward CrossFit can sort of explode like that. There had to have been other things like that in the past that just never had the chance to blossom.

Mark: Well that's the stuff that people just never want to admit. People don't want to admit that powerlifting is boring, and that strongman is, strongman is actually not boring, but strongman is a very dysfunctional sport.

Mike: Maybe too extreme?

Mark: Yeah, too extreme. It's messed up from top to bottom in a lot of ways. I love strongman. I like a lot of the athletes. I'm very close to a lot of the athletes in strongman, but holy crap is that sport really messed up.

Mike: Right.

Mark: Bodybuilding kind of same. Some of these sports, they've been around a long time. They have old way of thinking and it was that you're right, it was time for something new, time for something different. Thinking of Greg Glassman and Dave Castro, while it may be a lot different, at least it's their thoughts. It's what they want to do. If you're in their way, then you're going to get run

over. They do things their own way. They don't care who steps in or intervenes or wants to change stuff. Mike and I were at the games one year when the ESPN people were kind of complaining because things were getting switched up so much. They're like we spent so much time on these graphics and said certain things, certain weights and certain things, now it's all different, we've got to go back and change it. CrossFit doesn't, they don't care. They're going to do their thing their way the way they think is going to give them the best product that they can have.

Mike: Everything kind of goes in cycles, you know. Mark said he witnessed firsthand as a kid going to the gym, there was no powerlifters or bodybuilders. It was guys trying to get bigger and guys trying to get stronger. I witnessed that trying to study the history of lifting and things, and then you get to maybe the 80s and 90s and everything starts to go to machines. All these barbells are on tracks. Everything you're sitting in a seat. I think it was just about time that the barbell starts to come around. No doubt CrossFit had a huge impact on weightlifting and powerlifting, but I think with or without CrossFit, it was probably bound to happen that the barbell's going to come about in a different, more powerful way in the future eventually.

Mark: The fitness community tends to want to cannibalize itself a lot.

Mike: Cannibalizing.

Mark: The powerlifting does it a lot too where it's like even within the sport itself, there's too much in-fighting for the sport to really grow.

Mike: Bunch of haters.

Mark: Yeah, a bunch of haters. There's a lot of hatefulness just going around period, and it's just it's unnecessary. There's money to be made for everybody. There's a place of table for everybody. There's a place of table for everybody to get a little pat on the back, saying that 800-pound deadlift was pretty cool. Hey that six minute mile was pretty damn cool too from somebody else or whatever.

Krissy: Right.

Mark: Everyone wants to just hold on to these different things that they have, even me. Myself with my company, there's so much other room. There's other room for other companies to come in and make money. That's why there are new companies all the time. I think myself and Mike's been a big part of it as well in making the Slingshot brand so popular. With us making money and doing well, we kind of do a good job in making it look easy so other companies have followed suit and have done knee wraps and wrist wraps and they've hopped along the train there, the fitness train. But, the thing is, why would I get all upset and crazy about that when I can just keep focusing in on what I'm doing.

Mike: Right.

Mark: Keep making what I'm doing better, and not worry about what other people are doing. There's just money to be made for everybody. There's a place at the table for each person, so when it comes to strongmen or powerlifting or CrossFit, I think we should all just try to embrace what each other are doing because it's all in the fitness category. It's all in the category of making yourself better, self-improvement, and what's better than that?

Mike: Yeah, you can pick up a lot from each. We talked about this on a podcast last week. We had a very top level CrossFitter on, and obviously powerlifting leads the way in terms of periodization, strength, obviously with the barbell, bodybuilding's kind of always led the way with diet because their stuff's so extreme, but there's a lot of stuff that we pick up from that. CrossFit in my opinion has really led the way in obviously combining all these things but with kind of rehab, prehab mobility stuff. There's not a more educated community. Even on our team, which is an elite powerlifting team, that are numbskulls, that have no idea what's going on and they're all beat up and they're lifting like crap, whatever. You go into a CrossFit facility, or something like that, and those guys they know, like oh, Mark's knee hurt? I know it's not his knee, I know it's his hip because everything works upstream, downstream. They're just educated. They're self-educated. They're normally willing to learn and grow so there's kind of no reason to knock another one.

Nick: Right. Well yeah, it was interesting you were saying strongmen think of as being sort of the dysfunctional type. When I was growing up, I'd watch the world's strongest man, I'm like well that guy's walking at least. He's carrying something.

Mark: Yeah.

Nick: I would look at a powerlifter, and you just envision getting out of breath going up a flight of stairs. They're always like I'm the strongest man of the world, but I'm in pain all the goddamn time. Do you feel like it's getting more functional? The powerlifters are more functional than they used to be.

Mark: I didn't mean dysfunctional as a de-activity. I just meant the organizations are dysfunctional, not necessarily ...

Krissy: The athlete.

Mark: Yeah, yeah, not the athlete and the movements are fine.

Mike: That's super individual too. There's powerlifters that are fat as hell and there's powerlifters that are so jacked. There's CrossFitters that have a little bit higher body fat. There's some CrossFitters that are jacked out of their mind. Same with weight lifters. The strongest weight lifter right now is Iranian, maybe he's very overweight, what would seem, right. Then there's, who's the guy that's around sometimes with CalStrength? Gold medalist, I don't know. The guy's jacked out of his freaking mind.

Mark: Oh yeah.

Mike: There's a piece of everything. It's just like humans, right, we're all little snowflakes, whatever the hell you want to say. It's true.

Krissy: We're all different.

Mark: When it comes to functional strength and stuff like that, you know, I always think it's kind of funny because I'm like show me a non-functional movement. I don't know what that looks like or what that would even be. Just because you use the Smith machine or just because you use a machine to train your triceps or your biceps, I don't see how that would not be functional. It just happens to be functional for maybe something slightly different than what you want it to be functional

for. Maybe that person who's using it is using it for their goals, not your goals.

Mike: Specificity, right. Typing's functional for a secretary.

Nick: What about a really shitty squat? How does that carry over?

Mike: That means you need to watch more of our videos.

Nick: Oh, okay.

Mark: Exactly. Yeah, watch more videos and just use a little less weight maybe, you know.

Krissy: What? Whatever. Weight over form. Always.

Nick: It starts at 225. That's the one thing that I've absorbed is it doesn't matter what you're doing as long as there's 225 on the bar.

Mike: Two wheels.

Mark: You don't even have to lift it, you just have to look like you're lifting it every once in a while. Walk back and forth, pace.

Krissy: Set it up, yeah. Just walk up to it, pull back.

Mark: Yeah, yeah. Get the arms going.

Cassie: Walk around the gym. Take your water.

Mark: Pull back, stretch your hammies.

Krissy: Everyone sees it.

Mike: Kevin Hart does the best impersonation of that. It's like you've got three plates over here. He's all waddling up.

Krissy: Yep.

Mike: Checking the bar.

Mark: Just look like you're sweating and be like yep, that was a hell of a workout.

Krissy: Yep.

Nick: I may have discovered some of the history of that thinking though recently because a buddy of mine was telling me that he had this fantasy. He's like I always wanted to do this thing that I heard Arnold used to do where you take a barbell and you take two plates, you go out in the wilderness with a couple of women and a bunch of meat. You put the barbell down on the ground.

Mark: That's not a fantasy.

Nick: You do all the, everybody does as many deadlifts as you can, then you have sex with the women, then you eat the meat. Have you heard this story before?

Cassie: I think you just made that up.

Mike: I think you just explained Mark's life.

Mark: Yeah.

Nick: But it's like ...

Mark: Thanks for exposing me on this podcast here.

Nick: It's this mythical tale that he's like I've always wanted to do this. I was like well we can do it, but we're going to have my kids there.

Mark: Yeah, yeah, it's going to be a little awkward.

Mike: Seems doable. It doesn't seem that out there.

Nick: No, I think it's kind of a cool story. I mean whatever, the whole sex part is kind of silly.

Mike: It's to get those testosterone levels up I guess.

Nick: I'd just end up having sex with the weights.

Mark: "Coming in the gym, coming at home..." (in an Arnold Schwarzenegger impression voice)

Nick: Anyway.

Cassie: Anyway, I'm going to switch topics.

Krissy: Yeah, transition into the next one.

Mark: How about we talk about fat feet. That's what I have written on my pad.

Krissy: Fat feet?

Mike: Yeah, why do you have a notepad.

Mike: Just to be clear, wide feet are not fat feet.

Nick: Oh, okay. What if you have wide, fat feet?

Krissy: What is the difference between wide and fat?

Nick: I've got some wide-ass feet, but my feet are the most vascular part of my body.

Mike: Hey now. Buddy, buddy.

Mark: You're welcome, listeners.

Nick: They're shredded. Vasodilated. I've been told I have a man's feet.

Mark: Manly feet.

Nick: Yes, sir. A man's foot right there.

Krissy: A manly man's feet.

Cassie: Do you have fat feet? Is that why you wrote that down? Is there something you need to get off your chest?

Mark: I've got some round feet. No, he was just saying, oh your feet look round, wide.

Nick: I was complimenting him on his wide shoes because I like wide shoes.

Cassie: Oh, these are ...

Mark: Yeah, they have a wide ...

Krissy: I have sausage-y feet. In the heat, they definitely, like sandals, pudge out, it yeah, if you have sandals, it kind of squeezes the fat around it. It's a really good look.

Mark: How about when you were preggers? How were those?

Krissy: Did you have fat feet?

Cassie: They didn't swell that bad.

Mark: Oh, they didn't swell up?

Nick: She was supposedly pregnant. She wasn't pregnant.

Cassie: I got fat face.

Mark: Fingers swelled up?

Krissy: I think I eat a lot of sodium too.

Cassie: No, it was all up here.

Mark: Just in the face. Looking like a powerlifter.

Cassie: It was terrible.

Mark: That's awesome.

Cassie: I didn't notice until I looked at pictures. I was like, oh god.

Mike: It creeped up on you.

Mark: How far along were you when you did the CrossFit games?

Cassie: I was, oh man, about eight weeks.

Mark: That's crazy.

Nick: That's pretty crazy.

Cassie: I found out that I was pregnant about ten days before we left for the games, and I noticed about a month before that, I was like man, things are really hard. We did the triple three workout, which was a 3000 meter row, 300 double unders, and a 3 mile run. I was like this is the worst thing I've ever done. I was like, oh no. I had to stop and puke a couple times, and I was like no, this is terrible. I had no idea what was wrong.

Mark: That was this year?

Cassie: That was 2015.

Mark: Oh, gotcha.

Cassie: Then, so we were just practicing for the games, and then I took, I peed on a stick ten days before we left because I hadn't gotten my period and I was like, oh no. I didn't tell my teammates because I didn't want them to kick me off the team. I was like well give it a go.

Mike: That's great.

Mark: You think they would've kicked you off the team.

Cassie: I don't know.

Krissy: Jerks.

Cassie: Sorry guys. I don't know.

Nick: They might have done it just so like, yeah. They might have worried about you a lot.

Cassie: That's what I was, yeah. I lived, we lived. She's cute. We're all good to go.

Krissy: So cute.

Mark: That's amazing.

Mike: That's so crazy.

Cassie: It was terrible.

Nick: Speaking of that, speaking of Cassie. You hang out with a lot of really strong women. Did you kind of see this golden age of strong women coming off in the distance? It seems like ...

Krissy: Dream about it. Yearn for it.

Cassie: Yearn.

Krissy: I wonder where that word came from.

Nick: Is this a golden age of strong women?

Mark: I think that women are still just scratching the surface of what they're capable of. I think what we're seeing from CrossFit, and this is just in my opinion, I think the women are more impressive than the men when it comes to their muscularity and their strength levels. I don't mean, obviously they're not lifting more than the men, they don't weigh more than the men. I just mean in terms of where women were before to where they are now, and where the men were before to where they are now. The men are kind of in the same spot. They traditionally deadlift over 500 pounds in CrossFit and they're still kind of there. There's guys that squat 400 pounds. There's a bunch of them. The women, I think kind of in the beginning it seemed like a 275 pound deadlift, 300 pound deadlift was kind of a hard thing for women. Now, in a powerlifting setting, a 315, you start to get over 350 and you're talking about a really good deadlift for a female. It seems like almost all the top-level CrossFit women deadlift 350 and above, and even Brooke Wells doing a 415 deadlift in the CrossFit games this year after she ran a 7k trail run or whatever the fuck that was. It's unbelievable. I think you're just starting to see the beginning of what women can do because there's still not as many women maybe exposed to some lifting as there are men I think, in my opinion. CrossFit has helped that quite a bit, but I think that the more women that are exposed to it, the more freaks and the more crazy lifts you're going to see from the females.

Mike: Sure. And there are probably a lot of people they're not accustomed to the idea of seeking strength as a goal, like I'm going to get stronger.

Mark: Yeah, and the more people that think that, and that goes even with the men. The more people that at the age of seven or six are like I'm going to be a CrossFitter.

Mike: Yeah.

Mark: The more people that do that, the more crazy shit you're going to see because now it's a wider pool of people, you know. Football was kind of the only game in town for a long time. Baseball, those were kind of the two main things that, or even basketball to a certain extent.

Mike: For ladies, not even. What did every girl play, soccer? That's it.

Krissy: Volleyball.

Mike: Maybe volleyball and softball.

Krissy: Softball, yep.

Mike: Maybe basketball's a little bit more. Maybe there's some fringe golf or tennis or something. Gymnastics.

Mark: Well the women are always kind of pushed aside, especially in strength sports. The women are always kind of like, yeah we'll have some stuff for the girls.

Krissy: Yeah, but we didn't even, like even playing high school sports, the guys always weight-trained. The girls never got to weight train. Or we'd go in like once a semester.

Mike: Even that's evolved for the guys. Michael Jordan didn't lift weights until 1992. Even the guys. Now every basketball player's doing something. Every football players. Tennis players, you hear Tiger Woods benches 350. Everything's starting to evolve.

Mark: They used to talk for years, they talked about how dangerous cheerleading was. I was like, cheerleading's not dangerous. The girls are out of shape. I'm not saying they're out of shape in terms of their ...

Mike: You made a bunch of cheerleaders cry.

Mark: The way their bodies look.

Cassie: Well we have a lot of cheerleaders listening to this.

Krissy: Well yeah, they're untrained, sure. Try to lift without ...

Mark: Untrained. There you go. That's a better way of saying it. I'm not saying that they look bad. I'm saying that they're not physically fit enough to handle the jumping and the different things that they're doing and they're crashing down on their ankle, and then they're busting their ankle.

Cassie: Yep. It's a huge disservice to women I think in general. I remember I had to in high school lift with the football team because there was no one to lift with my girlfriends on the lacrosse team.

Mike: We're playing footsie, don't mind us. With wide fat feet.

Cassie: Women, I mean I think part of the reason, and Krissy you can correct me, but women tear their ACLs to death, and maybe if they learned how to squat.

Mike: Q Angle, am I right Doctor?

Krissy: You are. You're so smart.

Cassie: I feel like learning how to properly jump and land and run, and I think boys get to learn that and girls don't.

Nick: All he said was a letter.

Krissy: Q?

Mike: Anyway, continue Cassie.

Cassie: I just think it needs to get worked on.

Mark: Even in dressing, women with, women typically will have wider hips and then their knees are kind of inside of where their hips are and then the feet kind of trail back outward a bit. When you go and you travel down the leg towards the knee, the knee is like inward a little bit so a lot of times, their knees will cave in a lot when they do different exercises. Even with that being said, that they have child-bearing hips, that's not like something that's going to automatically blow out your knees.

Krissy: Exactly.

Mark: Through exercise, but if you exercise more and become stronger, that will be less of a problem. You were built that way for a reason. You're not built that way so you blow out your ACL all the time from doing anything. If you make yourself stronger in some of these positions you're trying to get in when you cheerlead or when you do powerlifting or any other sport, then you won't be injured.

Mike: Going back to you asked about a semi-different, but four weeks, what do you do for a powerlifting meet. It's all skill and motor power and improvement, right. That's kind of that whole knee deal. A girl squatting 315 won't improve her ACL like rehabilitation or chances that she won't bust it, but her getting her knees out in a proper knee tracking in a squat will. Then under high impact of cutting on a suicide basketball sprint, or a girl comes and clips her from the side in soccer, she's more likely to land in a proper position where that thing's not going to burst.

Krissy: Yeah. It's interesting though because I think we see it a lot that people want to treat women athletes like they're fragile and a special case, and yeah there's a few differences between men and women, but how they train and how you can train them and coach them, really no different. I think part of the reason why sometimes we may get injured is because we are treating them so different, or we're changing their nutrition to a point where it's like look we can eat carbs, we're women. Trust me, I eat, I put down carbs.

Cassie: Lucky Charms.

Krissy: I don't need to stay away from them. It's like oh the hormones are different, the training patterns are different. You put them on this completely different, it's like no. Trust me, we can do the same thing, just in a different approach.

Mark: I think it's a real popular thing right now, and it's a selling point for coaches is to say, oh I'm not going to put you on the same program as Silent Mike. Well, why wouldn't you put me on the same program?

Krissy: I want to be on that program.

Mike: Cookie cutter's kind of good.

Mark: Silent Mike's lifting pretty good.

Mike: Strength to strength.

Mark: Well, also if a cookie cutter, "cookie cutter" program never worked, then how does any team ever get successful? How do the Green Bay Packers build what they used to have? The Chicago Bulls or any of these teams.

Mike: The Bears.

Krissy: "Da Bears."

Mark: Any of these teams that have built these whole dynasties how they've done it, they do train as a team, so according to what coaches are selling now, you can't train like the guy next to you, so that wouldn't work technically right.

Mike: I think it's broader than just sexist. Age, obviously you're not going to max out if you're not a powerlifter arguably. Or if you're fifteen first time squatting. Age, height, weight, sex, there's a, even sports. Bodybuilding and powerlifting are way more similar than people want to say. There's different exercise selection, but we do plenty of bodybuilding type movements in terms of isolation movements if you want to call them in our off season.

Krissy: The tan part.

Mike: The tan part is very similar. You've got to look good in your singlet. Even CrossFit, whatever it may be, there's certain laws that work and everybody needs to follow them almost regardless of your goal. If you're trying to gain weight, you're going to eat more calories. You're trying to lose weight, you're going to eat less calories. Yeah, there's a little more to it, but not that much. If you want to get stronger, you're going to have to lift a barbell with progressively more weight or reps or sets over fucking ten years and you're going to eventually get stronger. In bodybuilding, that's going to do the same because you're going to have to grow more muscle to lift more weight to support the fucking progressive overload. It's simpler than people want to make it because they do want that answer. They do want oh, oh you're a girl Stephanie, you're over here on the step mill. Oh, little Tommy, we're doing curls, you know. Or you're a bodybuilder, we're only going to do dumbbells, we're not going to do flat bench or whatever it is.

Nick: It is still, it's hard to get as strong as you could be. All right, I bet you have people coming to you all the time, oh I want to get strong AF right here, you know. I'm going to be the best strongest version of myself. Do you find yourself warning those people, like no getting strong ain't no joke?

Mark: Yeah, it is difficult. It's difficult to make progress over a long period of time. It depends on the commitment level of the person too. If they come in and they have at least a decent understanding of training, that helps a lot. It kind of shows you like, okay this person did at least a little bit of their homework, maybe they're not crazy strong right now. Maybe they haven't really built up or acquired a lot of strength yet because it just takes time, but at least they've done some research. At least they know who Mike is. They know who I am. They know about some of these various training methods, and they've tried a couple different things. Then it's actually very easy to try to steer them in the right direction. A prime example is we have a lifter in our gym who is a bodybuilder as well, and he came in and I think he was deadlifting around 635, and within I think four months, he deadlifted 715. Now 635 deadlift is already like ...

Mike: It's no joke.

Mark: Already very strong, very very strong. Even in powerlifting terms, it's pretty damn good. For him to go to 715 that quickly, it's not anything crazy that we did in super training, it's more a byproduct of him coming in already at least knowing some of how his body works along with just training alongside us.

Mike: Get some tips and have our eyes on them.

Mark: Yeah, be in a good environment and we do try to kind of coach like nearly every rep and every set and we're on each other about the form and stuff like that. That's a huge factor is people that want to get stronger, people that want to get better, the commitment level they have to that is going to be the biggest determining factor on how fast they can get stronger.

Mike: I think it's a matter of how much, like Mark said earlier, powerlifting is boring as shit. If you can bench/squat/dead for the next ten years and not get injured, you're going to be pretty strong. Almost regardless of program, almost regardless of nutrition, those things will obviously accelerate the process, but it's boring because it's I don't even know what to compare it to, but you're just doing the same thing over and over and there's a lot of skill involved and there's a lot of grind involved. All the cliché of oh so grind, but it's so true because every Thursday for the last five years, me and Mark have benched together and we've, Mark's benched between 315 and 455 for those years in different sets and reps, and I've benched 225 and 315 every freaking Thursday at 2 o'clock, that's what we do. Is that glamorous or fun? Not really. We try to have fun. We try to mess around and that's where the Instagrams and the YouTube and stuff kind of comes into play, but the actual process of self-improvement is the same thing of if you want to get deep and talk about becoming a better person or nicer to people, you can't just do it, but once you start thinking about it daily, you think about doing one nice task for someone every single day and then over time maybe you're a better person because you opened the door for a lady now where you before you used to not give a shit what they're doing. Self-talk.

Nick: Used to be you couldn't even reach for it. You're such a dysfunctional individual you couldn't get your arm high enough.

Mike: You just got to open the door and then you're going to Heaven.

Cassie: Just got to mobilize that shoulder.

Krissy: Yeah.

Cassie: Taking your mind, I think that's what helped me with CrossFit is being willing to do stuff that's scary, like put 225 for me over my head was like terrifying, but you have to do it. You have to go there in order to improve, and that's ...

Mark: That's a lot of weight.

Mike: What's that, a jerk?

Cassie: Yeah.

Mike: That's pretty strong.

Nick: I can do that.

Mark: You have to challenge yourself.

Cassie: Right.

Mark: It's going to make you in a lot of ways, going to make you a stronger person. I think sometimes what Mike and I run into, unfortunately we run into some really, really hardcore meatheads and all they know is lifting. It's sad to see sometimes because you're like man, I wish this person would just understand what they could do with the rest of their life. If they're able to make some of these awesome changes inside the gym with the weights they're able to move, like how awesome of a person this person actually is, and they don't even recognize it because they're such a meathead they're just kind of intertwined with the weights. Yeah, if you're somebody who's able to make big changes with fitness, you're able to lose body fat, you're able to gain strength on your bench press, then you could probably make some big positive changes in your life that will impact your life and other people's lives.

Nick: That's a pretty good spot to wrap up the conversation.

Mike: Hey now.

Krissy: Yeah, I feel like a better person.

Cassie: I do too.

Krissy: I'm ready to get home ...

Mike: Well no, could be, you could.

Krissy: Wah wah wah.

Mark: You could also be the ...

Cassie: You could deadlift yourself to a better person.

Nick: Exactly. Thanks for coming and talking with us guys. They're going to go give us a bad ass bench seminar over in the Bodybuilding.com gym here in a little bit.

Mike: Yeah, I think it's time to lift.

Mark: Is it really?

Mike: I think so buddy.

Nick: We'll have a ... You can go to 'supertraining.tv.gov.'

Mark: You can go to HowMuchYaBench.net.

Cassie Smith: That was close, Nick.

Mark Bell: You could get all the greatest strength-training gear that you can find on the market. I'm @MarkSmellyBell on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). My YouTube Channel is SuperTraining06, I'm sorry it's [YouTube.com/SuperTraining06](https://www.youtube.com/SuperTraining06) and here's Silent Mike.

Mike: You can find me on his shit and iTunes: [Mark Bell's PowerCast](#).

Nick: Perfect.

Krissy Kendall, Ph.D.: Awesome.

Nick Collias: Thanks, guys.

Silent Mike: Appreciate you. Thank you.



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