



**Episode 55 Transcript**

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### ***Bajheera on Games and Gains***

**Nick Collias:** Hello, everyone. Welcome to *The Bodybuilding.com Podcast*. I'm [Nick Collias](#). I'm some guy who sits here talking to people in the boardroom every once in a while. To my right, we have [Heather Eastman](#). She's an editor, personal trainer, physique coach, and judge, and also a talking person.

**Heather Eastman:** Hi. Yes.

**Nick:** And then over there across the table we have with us none other than Jackson Bliton, better known as [Bajheera](#).

**Jackson Bliton:** That's right. And though this is on my channel being broadcasted live on [Twitch](#), I can still probably introduce myself a little bit. So, I create content on Twitch and [YouTube](#) surrounding the games and gains.

**Nick:** The most jacked of jacked gamers.

**Bajheera:** See, probably not. There's some real deal, strong people who like the games and gains.

**Nick:** I was perusing some hashtags earlier. [#GamesAndGains](#) is got a lot of traction out there.

**Bajheera:** That's cool. I'm glad to see that.

**Nick:** [#JackedGamer](#), not so much. There's only 35 or so of those.

**Bajheera:** Ok, we'll work on that one. We do a little bit of games and gains on YouTube and Twitch and get to add this to my titles... "Natural Pro Bodybuilder" now.

**Nick:** I was gonna say, how does that feel?

**Bajheera:** Feels very similar to being *not* a pro bodybuilder in terms of just, I keep doing my thing, at this point. But it is cool to add that to the list of titles.

**Nick:** Absolutely.

**Bajheera:** If we're talking about World of Warcraft-style things. Also, am a sponsored Bodybuilding.com athlete.

**Nick:** That is another thing I was going to mention.

**Bajheera:** Why we're here. It's really cool.

**Nick:** It's nice to have you in the Bodybuilding.com headquarters doing a couple of workouts and a few live things with us here. I have to ask, though, what disturbs so-called *normal* people more; when you tell them that you're a professional gamer or when you tell them you're a professional bodybuilder?

**Bajheera:** Well, depends who you're talking to.

**Nick:** Grandma!

**Bajheera:** The thing that is number one most disturbing to my audience is when I shave my beard to compete in bodybuilding.

**Nick:** I do not recognize you there, so.

**Bajheera:** They lose their minds. There may be people in the chat right now wondering, where's my beard. And if you do have questions in the chat today, make sure you type them in the chat, maybe leave the "Where's the beard" comment out of this particular one.

**Nick:** This is our first ever live on Twitch, on his channel anyway, podcast. So yeah, send them and Heather will filter them. Only good questions, por favor.

**Bajheera:** My mom probably doesn't like it when I diet too much. The bodybuilding thing, most people are probably like, "Oh, you like to work out, that's cool."

**Nick:** Is losing the beard necessary for bodybuilding? It's not natty?

**Bajheera:** It's not necessary. There's Bulkjheera which is fat cheeks, big beard. And there's Leanjheera which is a bit tightened up. Leanjheera is competition mode. Bulkjheera is wintertime bulk. I'm a combination of both.

**Heather:** Does the beard help with the bulk?

**Bajheera:** You know if might. I think that much like equipping items in World of Warcraft, when you equip the beard you gain strength points. Right now, strength isn't the main focus, it's more the aesthetic. I think taking the beard off helps a little bit. But that's a matter of opinion.

**Nick:** Not really up to you. Aesthetics is in the eye of the beholder.

**Bajheera:** Just what it is, yup.

**Nick:** So, let's go all the way back to the start, to start here. You as a kid, who are you mentally, physically ... How did you plant the seeds of what you would later become as Bajheera, here?

**Bajheera:** I've always been into playing video games, and I've always been into running around. I would call it fitness. I didn't really think of it as training for the purpose of being better necessarily. Just running around, going adventuring and stuff like that. My favorite day would be going and adventuring in the woods and smacking stuff with sticks and running around being a nut. And then getting all tired and coming back and playing video games. That was just the combination...

**Nick:** One followed by the other.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, that I enjoyed. As I got older, I played sports but video games were always one of those things that I did to relax and enjoyed. When I was in college and I was noticing that gaming content was something that was becoming popular on YouTube, I was like, "Well, I'm watching a lot of gaming content, may as well give it a try myself." And so I started a YouTube channel that was based around gaming while fitness was still a passion of mine. And then I eventually incorporated fitness in the YouTube content, and now I can do fitness live on Twitch as well. So, it's just been very natural thing of me doing what I like to do, and sharing it with people who like to watch.

**Nick:** Sure.

**Bajheera:** So it's sustainable.

**Nick:** That's college, though.

**Bajheera:** The two were unified a lot longer than that.

**Nick:** Yeah, I guess I remember reading...

**Bajheera:** The content creation began in college, but yeah, they've always been hand-in-hand.

**Nick:** I remember reading about you doing pushup contests with your dad.

**Bajheera:** Yeah.

**Nick:** So, it's not just like, playing around—there's an element of training built into you from fairly early.

**Bajheera:** Yeah. When I was really young, I would say that the transition from just running around and playing to actually training to get better, was probably started at least when I was like 11.

**Nick:** Mm-hmm (affirmative). That's pretty early.

**Bajheera:** That's when I really made the change. I was watching a lot of Dragon Ball Z.

**Nick:** Okay.

**Bajheera:** It was just a cartoon that I loved, still do. And I realized that at some point in my life, I was probably gonna have to be strong enough to save the world.

**Nick:** Mm-hmm (affirmative), probably.

**Bajheera:** So, just naturally, I said, "Dad, I need to go to the gym. I need to get strong enough to save the world." And he's like, "Okay, you little psycho. Why don't you start doing pushups?"

**Nick:** Yeah, you're not allowed in the gym for another five years, kid.

**Bajheera:** Right, you've gotta be like 14 to go to the gym. So, he said, "Start doing some pushups." So, I would do pushups every day. I'd be running around, hanging out with my friends, playing video games, then like, "Oh! Pushups." Do 20 pushups and I got to like, I don't know, 200+ pushups a day.

**Nick:** Just by calling it out like, "Pushup time!"

**Bajheera:** Yep.

**Nick:** That's very familiar. Our YouTube guy, Derek Sanders, has been known to do that for years and years in Bodybuilding.com, once upon a time. "Push-ups!"

**Bajheera:** It's a good, strong start. So, I did that, and when I was 12 and I was doing pushups every day, my dad was like, "Okay, alright. You're disciplined enough to probably come to the gym." So that's when I started going to the gym, when I was like 12. I would just sit down on the little bench press machine, do the bench press, do some pull-down machine, and do some abs. I just grew up in the gym in a lot of ways, and I loved it. So, that's kind of where training to actually get better began, rather than just training to just run around. I wasn't training by just running around as a kid.

**Heather:** So, kind of going back to our previous question of, which one do people freak out to more.

**Bajheera:** Yeah.

**Heather:** This is from TIEfighter559 which is a great handle by the way, "How did the very first, 'I game on Twitch for a living' conversation go with your family?"

**Bajheera:** That's a fun story. When I was in college, I mentioned I had started my YouTube channel, and it was at a time where my family was going through a lot of transitions, my dad got a new job in L.A., so they were gonna move to L.A. And this is a time where I was taking a break from school, because I just needed a break to sort of get myself sorted out, nothing too crazy, just trying to figure out what I wanted to do, and it wasn't that at the time. I was putting a lot of effort into school and it felt like it wasn't going where I wanted it to go. It was draining me more than being fulfilling, so I took

a break to find out the things that were fulfilling to me, and kind of get back in touch with me, who I wanted to be.

And during that time, I was using YouTube as an outlet to create content and sort of do something creative, and it was also the time where YouTube was growing.

**Heather:** Right.

**Bajheera:** And so, I also started creating content live on a website called [Justin.tv](#), which later became Twitch. So all of this wave was building at a time where things were happening in my real life. Such as that, my parents when they were making the move, they're like, "okay, we're packing up, we're going." And the decision was made by me that I was gonna stay in Nashville, Tennessee, where I had grown up, because that was where I had grown up. That's where I know stuff was, I knew that I was ready to be an adult on my own at that point. I didn't want to be living with my parents in L.A., and I didn't want to be living by myself in L.A. because that's four times as expensive. I don't know where anything is. So, I decided to stay in Nashville, and they were fine with that, but the one rule was, "Okay, you can't quit your job when we leave." And I said, "Okay."

So, as soon as they left I quit my job. But that wasn't like a snap decision, it wasn't anything crazy. That had been a recognition by me that my work that I was doing on YouTube and Twitch was fulfilling, it was something that I felt like I was gonna be part of something that was growing.

**Nick:** You saw potential there, obviously.

**Bajheera:** In terms of the market for it all, and I saw that what I was doing was growing a lot, too. So, I believed in myself. And that was a tough conversation to have. "I mean, you guys know that I've been working on this for a while, you guys know that when I'm sitting here fiddling with my computer, like I'm working on something. I'm building towards something."

**Nick:** That can be hard for people to just wrap their minds around the idea of how that translates to the heat being on.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, so they may not have fully understood how that worked at the time but, I've gotta give my parents huge credit for the fact that, when I was growing up, no matter what it was that I was into, as long as it wasn't stupid, like destructive, they had my back. They were like, "Okay, you wanna play basketball? We'll get you some basketball shoes, take you to practice." "You wanna be a cross-country runner? Well, you're probably gonna keep running in those basketball shoes, but we'll take you to practice." So, they were supportive of me and doing what I wanted to do.

And I think that this was poetically one of their last challenges as a parent, is to support me, and believe in me in doing something that they weren't sure about. Getting good grades in school, "Great! We'll support you in doing that." Going and playing sports, doing things that are kind of established, "Great! We'll support you in doing that." But this thing, you're gonna stop going to school, you're gonna spend a lot of time on your computer, and quit your job, and we're not there to help you? This is a little scary." But, many years down the line, where we are now, they're just tremendously proud. And I'm very grateful to them for being supportive in the way they were.

But that being said, it did take some belief in myself, it did take some, "You're not sure about it, but I am," as a growing person transitioning from being a young person to a young adult, you have to

make some of those decisions for yourself.

**Nick:** Sure.

**Bajheera:** And I'm proud that I did that, I'm grateful too, but I'm also grateful to my parents for their support of me, not only supporting me in doing things that I'm passionate about, but also helping instill that confidence in myself, and that belief in myself that if I see an opportunity that I'm passionate about, and I see that it's leading me to somewhere that I wanna go, I can do that, even if they're not so sure about it.

**Nick:** So, initially, did you, or they want there to be a window, like a trial, like, "Alright, give it six months, give it a year," or were you thinking, "You know what? This really is something that might take three years to really see the potential"?

**Bajheera:** For them, I'm not sure what their internal discussions were like.

**Nick:** Well, let's talk about you then.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, they were probably a little more panicked. I felt like, "This is hitting every single thing for me. This is fulfilling, this is something I can do every day, this is something I see a path of progression towards." But I didn't really have like a, "Where do I wanna be in three years," at this point it was, "I'm gonna put in the work every day to make this something that is what I want it to be." So, I don't know what I had planned for many years, but I believed in myself that if I put in the work, that I was on a path that could lead me to being able to do this for a living, and years down the line, that's where we are. So, very grateful for that.

**Nick:** So, to bring it back to athletics, and things for a second, you mentioned you're a cross-country runner.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, that was like my main sport in high school and college.

**Nick:** So, you weren't just hanging out in the gym, and hanging out online.

**Bajheera:** No, I've always been involved in sports. I would say basketball was like my main sport leading into high school. But I've played everything, I ran cross-country in the fall, played basketball in the winter, played soccer in the spring. I just liked playing sports.

**Nick:** Sure.

**Bajheera:** Like I said, when I was 12, I had also started going to the gym. I was doing martial arts at the time, too, so I was pretty active. Once again, big shout out to my parents for making that a possibility but, as I got a little bit older, they were like, "Okay, we're gonna pick two." So, I decided to pursue the training in the gym, and the sports thing. So into high school, I usually just ran cross-country as like a way to condition for basketball, just to get in shape. I got like third place in the championship I think in my eighth-grade year, and I was like, "Wow, everybody else sucks. Like, why do I get third place? It must be everybody else is bad." Then my freshman year, I did the first practice meet, and I was the fastest guy on my team, and got like top ten in a race against a really good school. My coaches were like, "Oh."

So, I played basketball that year, my freshman year, and then after that I fully committed to distance running, so I would compete in the fall and spring, and I would train through the winter and summer. And I continued that into college. In college, I wanted to do my own thing differently, and so that's where I think the beginning of realizing, distance running is fun but, I can't keep myself out of the gym. And that was actually like a problem, maybe not a big deal, but I weighed like, 50 pounds more than everybody else, I mean, I weighed like 185 but still, that's big for a distance runner.

**Nick:** That's pretty big.

**Heather:** That's a lot of extra weight to carry around.

**Bajheera:** I actually weighed more then, than I do now. Dieted down for a competition. But, anyway ... But yeah, I think that the distance running was kind of one of those things that helped me establish the discipline, and help me know what it was like to train every day, and to tailor my diet as best as I could, make sure I was getting my rest, and having my fitness and my performance be a really high priority for me. That kept me away from a whole bunch of other silly stuff.

**Nick:** Sure.

**Bajheera:** So, when I stopped doing distance running competitively, I was like, "Well, I'm just gonna keep working out because I love that." And then there was a transitional period where I went from being a distance runner to being focused on bodybuilding. And that has been my expression of my training and dieting for the past like, five or six years.

**Heather:** And let me ask you about that, because we've had some questions from that.

**Bajheera:** Yeah.

**Heather:** Multiple questions on this topic, so I'll try to kind of...

**Bajheera:** Yeah!

**Heather:** ...condense them into one question.

**Bajheera:** Cool, thanks for asking, guys.

**Heather:** But, that transition from, I had this similar where I went from distance running to bodybuilding, and it wasn't instantaneous.

**Bajheera:** Right.

**Heather:** So how did that occur, and at what point did you kind of have that, "A-ha!" like, "Yes, bodybuilding, stepping on stage, this is where it's at"?

**Bajheera:** Yeah. So, I think it was a natural progression for me since I've been in the gym since I was 12, I always knew that I loved the gym, I would go to a full cross-country practice, and still make my dad take me to the gym after for another full workout. Which is, I don't know, I must have been powered by a nuclear reactor or something when I was 16, because I don't know where that energy comes from. So it was like, I've always been a good eater, that's another easy thing. I've always

been pretty good at eating, and I think that's one of the main things that changes. I mean, obviously training for cross-country or track is a different training style than training for bodybuilding, what you do to get better at it looks different.

But in terms of like, the main thing that changed I think was just like, it sort of clicked, was that I had taken a break from competing at anything, I mean I was playing my video game stuff which we'll get into, but that was as much competition as I had. And I didn't wanna join a rec league for basketball or anything like that, because what I loved to do was work out. So, it's like, "Well, how do I compete in working out?" You can do powerlifting, you can do CrossFit, you can be a strongman, but I think that what I enjoyed was the aesthetic and the expression of, you do a certain amount of work, and the prize that you get out of it, it's not a cross-country time, it's not a powerlifting total, it's literally yourself.

**Heather:** Something tangible.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, you're an avatar of your hard work, and you're an expression of how you decide to—you are literally the product of your effort. And I thought that was pretty cool. So, what changed at that point was, "Okay, so I know I like working out, we're gonna tailor my training a little more towards growing muscle." And definitely what changed the most, and one of the reasons I talk about it so much in my stream, is nutrition. That's what changed the most. And if there's one thing that I wish I knew when I was younger, it's not like, I wouldn't have done anything differently with my training, I think everything was fine. But if I knew a little bit more about how to track my intake, and how to change that according to my goals, that's what I wish I knew more about. So that's why I talk about it so much.

I'm not an expert, I'm not a dietitian, but just the very basics can take you really far.

**Heather:** Yeah, figuring out food is key.

**Nick:** Sure. I remember seeing a video of you where you bulked for like a year, basically, right?

**Bajheera:** Yeah. So, before this competition phase, I had done a bulk into some diets, and then I had just done my first competition. I decided to diet from where I was, dieted it down, competed, did well, had a lot of fun, and then that's when it got serious. That's when I got the bug. I was like, "Okay, this is really fun." Like I liked the lifting. The diet is like a special challenge that ends up being fulfilling. And stepping on stage to compete was super cool. Like I was like, "Okay, this is what I wanna do." So, I did spend the next two years bulking, lifting really, really heavy, trying to make as much muscle gain as I could. I got up to like, 225. A lot of that was body fat, but I also got really strong compared to what I had been before. And then I did a little mini [cut] because I was like, "Okay, I'm getting a little too husky here, Bulkjheera's getting a little bit of fat boy status."

**Nick:** Just taking over.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, so we need to do a little mini cut, down to like, 200. And then I did a little mini bulk back up to 210, and that's where I started my competition diet from there leading into here. So, we definitely are getting into that sort of bulk and dieting process, but I feel like it's just all part of the deal. No matter what you do, there's gonna be times where you invest into different aspects of your life, and I think that it's good to have an ebb and flow to that.

**Nick:** Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Bajheera:** To be able to really enjoy digging into getting stronger, into making muscle gain progress, and then when you're getting ready to compete you say, "Okay, it was fun being big and strong, I'm gonna have to take a little bit of a strength loss, I'm gonna have to be okay with losing some of my mass, I'm gonna be like a big guy anymore, but I'm gonna achieve the ultimate aesthetic that I've been working for, for the past three years. So, it takes a lot of discipline and patience, but that's kind of been the message for what I like to do.

**Nick:** Phases are a healthier way to train though, for sure.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, I think so.

**Nick:** And it's interesting that you say that the diet is fulfilling.

**Bajheera:** It is.

**Nick:** That's not a word that you usually hear associated with a bodybuilding prep diet.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, I'm a weird guy. I am, like just in terms of looking at what I've been drawn to over the years, I'm drawn to distance running, like I mean it's fun, but it's like, "You're running 80 miles a week, why?"

**Nick:** It's a grind.

**Bajheera:** Like you're pushing your body to a point where it's like, it's screaming at you if you don't stop running, you're going to die. And you say, "I know I'm not gonna die, you're just trying to get me to stop running. So I'm gonna go ahead and finish this race, and do my best ever." But I think there's an amount of being on that edge of testing yourself. And I think that's one of the things that's fun about the diet, is it's different than getting under a squat at a powerlifting meet, and saying, "I'm either gonna do this thing, or it's gonna crush me in this instant." It's more like, "Can you sustain this discipline for a long time?" It's like a slow, steady burn, and I think I like that style of putting in work every single day. Always having that resistance be present, but you can always look at it and say, "No, I'm in control, I've got this."

And it's the same thing with like, gaming or creating content. There's always this grind that I enjoy, I mean every day it's like, "Well, I'm tired today, maybe I won't stream," but it's like you say, "No, I'm gonna make a decision. I'm going to activate myself and put myself in position, and moving towards my goal, even if it's difficult."

**Nick:** Incrementally. Yeah, one day at a time for months, months, years.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, I like that discipline.

**Nick:** Who or what was guiding you in this process? Like was there anything out there that you were like, "This is what's really driving me, this plan, this person, this vision of it." Or was it just like, "Here I am, it's me trying to create my avatar."

**Bajheera:** Yeah, there's a couple different things with this. I think that, what I like to say early on was

my inspiration, like, "Who was your inspiration when you were young? What got you starting lifting?" Was number one: my dad, because he would go to the gym regularly and he was just the coolest guy. And then Goku from Dragon Ball Z, right? Those are my...

**Nick:** Goku plan.

**Bajheera:** Those were my two big inspirations. But nowadays when people ask me like, "Who's your favorite bodybuilder, who do you look up to?" I like to take the Matthew McConaughey quote and say, "What I'm doing, is I'm trying to be who I want to be in ten years. I'm trying to work towards that. I'm trying to work towards the best version of myself that I can be in the future." I know the harder I work now, the closer I'll be, or the faster I'll get there.

But patience is a big deal, so it's not really the faster I'll get there, it's just more like, I know where I wanna be, and I know that there's a certain amount of work that's required to get there, so I do a little bit of that work every single day to try to get there.

**Nick:** Are you like a deeply researching person, or are you much more just like, "I'm paying attention to what I'm doing, I'm trying to learn the lessons, you know, trial and error, myself?"

**Bajheera:** I think it's a little bit of both. I'm definitely like, when people ask me how to get better at something, like how do I improve my fitness or how do I improve my gameplay? Like there's definitely tips that you can provide, but I think one of the big things is just become a student of the game.

**Nick:** Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Bajheera:** If you're willing to, and you immerse yourself in the work, then it just comes naturally. So, if there's something that I'm curious about, I'll do the research.

**Nick:** Right.

**Bajheera:** But there is a huge... Application is very important too. And a lot of what I've learned from dieting has come from Bodybuilding.com, like Layne Norton did the very basics which has guided me a lot of different ways. But it's also application. My diet this time around for my prep is completely different than what I did in 2015. 2015 I did a low carb, more cardio, and I felt like that ended up making me not feel as good. This time I haven't dropped below 300 grams of carbs a day, I'm eating like cereal every day because I like cereal.

**Nick:** Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Bajheera:** Just eating the foods that I like, but I'm keeping my macros where they need to be, and it's allowing me to train twice a day. So, I'm doing less cardio, more training. Different kind of diet structure, and it's working the best it ever has, but it also is because it's fitting in with what I want to do. So, you have basic pillars of truth, you know, macronutrients and training, progressive overload, and then you just apply those in a way that makes sense to you and that is fun.

**Nick:** And make a million mistakes along the way and learn from them.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, and that's part of the fun. There have been some guiding principles, there have

been ways that I've done research, and I've learned, but I think there's a lot of trusting myself.

And if there is like, a shimmering moment, you have to listen to that, and if you don't mind me kind of telling my story, is like, that's kind of one of the things that helped me start the YouTube channel. As I was watching YouTube videos on whatever games I was interested in, I was like, "Man, I'm spending a lot of time doing this," and I mentioned this in the beginning. But I remember they were having like a parade, and I had to move my car, and I remember calling my mom, and telling her that I had this shimmering moment, and I was like, "Mom, I'm gonna start a YouTube channel."

**Nick:** Shimmering moment.

**Bajheera:** And she was like, "What's that? What's YouTube?" And it was just like, I knew that it was the right thing to do.

**Nick:** Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Bajheera:** And that was just the start, and then if you continue to follow the path that makes sense to you, my dad calls it the narrative, you know? What's your narrative? What's the story that you wanna tell, and have told about you? And if you continue to follow the path that makes sense to you, I feel like you're gonna lead yourself in a direction that's fulfilling and true to yourself, and hopefully successful.

**Nick:** Games and gains.

**Bajheera:** Games and gains! That's right.

**Nick:** It's the path.

**Bajheera:** Yep.

**Heather:** You have some fantastic fans out here. They're all giving you shout-outs...

**Bajheera:** Yeah, they're my peeps, man.

**Heather:** ...and saying your positivity is infectious. And GoldenFromSweden actually wanted to see how you keep yourself motivated? Because like all of us, I'm sure you have low days.

**Bajheera:** Yeah.

**Heather:** And kind of talking about that idea, we just touched on the whole narrative—is that works in your real life and also in your gaming life.

**Bajheera:** Yeah.

**Heather:** How do you kind of come back from those low moments or...

**Bajheera:** Right.

**Heather:** ...or learn from those challenges and those mistakes.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, motivation is a fun thing because we talk about this onstream a fair amount which is fine to talk about it now, too, because it's a really important topic, is that I find that motivation is a convenience. It's nice to feel like it, but you're not always gonna feel like it. I think that one of the things that's important to focus on is the concept of discipline, and commitment, and dedication, over motivation. Because, like I said, the days that you feel like going to the gym and tearing it up, fantastic. But the ones that are that really matter... It's important that you still do the work. You still take the action even if you're not necessarily feeling like it.

What's fun is that a lot of times, especially with the gym, I'm sure this is an anecdote of a lot of people have found, is that, on days you're not feeling good, you still get yourself to the gym you have a great workout and you feel way better afterwards. But that also applies to stuff that you just gotta take care of in your life. There's things that aren't super fun, like I don't love doing laundry, but you gotta do your laundry. And if you're able to like... One of the words I like to use is activate. In a moment where you're kind of hesitating or considering, you just activate. You just get it done.

That's something that I've had to learn how to do as I've gotten older, it's just get the job done. So, motivation is nice, but it's a convenience and dedication and discipline, and making a decision saying, "I'm going to get the work done whether I feel like it or not" is something that sort of needs to happen. But I would say that another concept that is important with motivation is momentum and it's in a similar vein where taking action helps get you moving.

Sometimes when you're in an inert state, when you're just like sitting, it takes a stronger push to really get moving. But once you do that, once you start stringing together effective action, and you get the ball rolling, you find it's easier to stay in motion. So that inertia and that momentum rolls in your favor. So, if you say, "I'm gonna get in the gym every day, no matter what." It's easier to get in the gym every day no matter what.

**Heather:** Right.

**Bajheera:** If you start your day off early and you start knocking out stuff that's on your list of things to do, you're gonna find that your day is much more fulfilling, I would find, I think.

**Nick:** Is this one reason why you like to go to the gym first and then game after?

**Bajheera:** Yeah. For me, that's always been one of those things. I like to start my day with exercise. It's just one of those things that puts me in a positive mindset. I know that if nothing else goes well for me that day, I at least got my workout in. But it also generally does help the day go better if you start off by...

**Heather:** Sure.

**Bajheera:** ...doing something that's productive and positive and just... It's probably my favorite way to get started, for sure.

**Nick:** Do you view that as like a question of balancing one or you do one to earn the other, or...?

**Bajheera:** Sometimes. Sometimes, it's if you're not getting your stuff done that you need to do, it's hard for me to relax.

**Nick:** Right.

**Bajheera:** That's even something that I've... You know, we talked about the grind, we talked about putting in effort. That is actually one of those things that I've tried to get better at, is being able to allow myself to relax a little bit because that is important. It is important for me to spend time with my wife. It's been important for me to make sure that I'm allowing myself to rest. Because once you get really rolling on these objectives that you want to do, it's sometimes it's hard to say, "I know it's gonna be tougher to get this going the next day."

**Nick:** Right.

**Bajheera:** But it is important to relax and to enjoy the product of your hard work. That's for sure.

**Nick:** Sure. It sounds like when you were younger, perhaps, you are one of those people who kind of needed to deplete yourself before you could do something else.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, that's right.

**Nick:** Do you find that your relationship with training has grown in that regard...

**Bajheera:** Probably.

**Nick:** ...where it's like you can just go and punch the clock now or do you still like to go in there like, "I gotta leave it all here. Leave completely drained before I can do other stuff?"

**Bajheera:** Yeah, it actually really makes me upset when I do a workout and I don't feel like I've given it my best. That is where the sort of the dieting part becomes the mental battle. Because it's fun to go to the gym when you feel good and you, you can hammer the weights. But it's not as much fun when you're really low on energy and the workout itself becomes less fulfilling because you're not able to really apply yourself, and you don't really feel the same at the end of it all, but that's where it comes down to understanding, you might ... The experience that's right in front of you may not be pleasant, but in the back of your mind, you need to have a smile on your face saying, "This is just part of the deal."

**Nick:** Right.

**Bajheera:** "The better I respond to this situation, the better it's going to be later for me."

**Nick:** I remember we had a profile we did of you in 2015, that had like the Bajheera workout, right?

**Bajheera:** Yeah.

**Nick:** And piles of squats in it, like eight sets of squats, ascending in 8-to-10s... It's not the sort of workout that I associate with a pro bodybuilder.

**Heather:** That's a distance runner workout. That's just a punishing kind of workout.

**Nick:** Yeah. I mean somebody trying to gain 30 pounds in a year? Absolutely. But I think of a pro

bodybuilder, I think of a guy sitting there on the leg extension machine, because he's so depleted, he can't stand up basically.

**Bajheera:** Yeah. That was not a dieting workout right there.

**Nick:** Is that part of the reality of being a pro bodybuilder as well, where it's like, "God damn it, sometimes I just go in there and stagger around?"

**Bajheera:** It's so funny to hear this pro bodybuilder thing, because it doesn't... What I do really hasn't changed at all, it's just that when I go to compete, I compete in the pro category.

**Nick:** It's like "pro wrestler" or something. Right.

**Bajheera:** But yeah, my sister and her fiancé are big-time powerlifters. They're really strong and they look at my program and they're like, "Why are you doing so much volume?" And it's like you said, it's a distance runner workout.

**Heather:** Yeah.

**Bajheera:** Like when you do distance running practices, you're toast at the end.

**Heather:** Yeah.

**Bajheera:** And even on an easy day, I mean you're still running for 45 minutes straight and...

**Heather:** Yeah, and easy days like 8-10 miles.

**Bajheera:** Right, and then training days you're actually like dead at the end of it. So, if I don't have that intensity in my training, I'm like, "I could be giving this more than I am." And maybe it's like it might not even be the most efficient way of training. It might just not be, but I work out because I love it. That's the progression that I'd like to talk about in terms of why I compete is I love working out, so I do it a lot. And if I work out a lot, I may as well try to get better at it. And if I'm trying to get better at something, I may as well try to put my efforts to get better at it against other people doing the same thing.

So that's why I compete, is it's not necessarily just... There's this path that's been laid out by other competitors that I want to follow to have a similar experience, it's just that's where my passion has led me. And so, I continue to follow the path that I want to be on and step on stage as a reflection of what I have done. Not necessarily just I wanna get on stage and compete. You know, hire a coach, have him give me a training plan, have him give me a diet, and just achieve this particular thing that I have an idea of. It's, once again, this is just my self on stage as an expression of my passion for what I do.

**Heather:** It's really interesting. As I'm hearing you talk, you almost talk about your... And then you brought it up earlier when you talked about yourself on stage as the avatar...

**Bajheera:** Yeah.

**Heather:** ...of yourself. And it's almost like you're living both realities as an avatar where you have

this narrative of who I wanna be in 10 years, you're playing a character in real life and in your gaming life.

**Bajheera:** Yeah.

**Heather:** So, kind of switching gears a little bit, tell me a little bit more about kind of how all of that melds together in one lifestyle that you've created.

**Bajheera:** Yeah. And just one more thought before we fully move on to the gaming, is that's what's fun about me being an avatar of my own efforts, is that I feel like it's not only me, like I also represent my viewers who support me, right? The presentation that I have on stage is a result of the support people have given me. It's the support of companies like Bodybuilding.com who support me in doing what I do and my sponsors. So, it's like there's a lot more to it than just me, and so I like to do my best effort to represent the people who support me as best I can, which is really, really cool.

**Heather:** And this is the perfect moment to interject this. Kinetics, one of your fans, asked me to see how you would respond to hearing that your lifestyle has actually changed their lifestyle.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, that is amazing.

**Heather:** What kind of...

**Bajheera:** That's so cool to hear because when I was... This is another one of those random stories. I told you I would go to the gym with my dad like every night. And so, you go to the gym as a young kid and you get all your happy workout, you're all tired and you just have you talk with your dad on the way home. One of the thoughts that I had when I was young is that I didn't know what I wanted to do exactly, but the symbolism that I had is there was, you know like the night sky, you have like one star, you have like one light.

If that light can connect with another light and light up some other light, then it can then connect and it can take a very dark, bleak sky and make it lit up. I think that's a dream that I had when I was young that in a way is sort of being achieved now. Is that through my light and what's cool is I can interact with many other lights all across the world because of the platform that we, that we do this on, like YouTube and Twitch on the internet. It allows me to interact and connect with a lot other people.

And if they're able to make progress in their goals and they're able to sort of come to life as they want to be, and then it can maybe be inspirations for the people, it does a lot of good just by being yourself and pursuing things that you're passionate about. That is really cool.

**Nick:** Sure. But at the same time, you say you love working out, right?

**Bajheera:** I do.

**Nick:** There are plenty of people who really don't like working out. Either they don't like the gym. The gym is a culture, which is a culture that you are very familiar with from a very young age. How do you feel like... Is it your responsibility to be an ambassador for that, or...

**Bajheera:** Yeah. I mean, it's fine.

**Nick:** What do you recommend to people? You must have people come to you all the time saying, "You know what? I wanna change my life but I just hate working out."

**Bajheera:** Yeah. And fair enough. But what's cool is that like, I can help you. I can help you say, "You might not enjoy it, but if you track your macros and you keep your food where it's supposed to be, you will lose body fat." I mean, you might not love it, but if you do go to the gym and you do the training that you need to do, you probably will improve your physique. But what's cool is that eventually I feel like as you set goals and as you apply yourself and make progress, you will find them fulfilling.

But if we step away from the particular types of content that I'm creating and you say, "Well, I wanna be better at World of Warcraft and you've helped me do that by making warrior guides." Or "I wanted to get in better shape and you've helped me do that by creating videos and streams about working out." The thing that's interesting is, it's not necessarily limited to gaming or fitness. It's more like this is something that I'm passionate about.

If me pursuing something that I'm passionate about, whether it's gaming or fitness or whatever and this ignites your passion saying, "You know, I see you playing video games and I see you sharing this video game content, or I see you training, and I see you making progress and this inspires me to be a better guitar player." Or work harder in school or spend more time with my family and just find ways of balancing your life and pursuing things that you're passionate about that are productive.

That's kind of more what I'm interested in because they're obviously... Like I love fitness. I think it's a lot of fun. I think people will benefit from participating in fitness. I think gaming's a lot of fun. I think if you wanna play some games, you'll probably enjoy it, too.

I think what's the most important thing is igniting people's passion and helping them understand the structure of pursuing things that you're passionate about in terms of becoming a student of the game like I mentioned, in terms of setting yourself a schedule so that you can get things done in an order that allows you to do everything that you wanna do. You know, establishing...

**Nick:** Momentum. Like you said.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, establishing momentum so that you can...

**Nick:** Great idea.

**Bajheera:** ...continue to knock things off your list in a way that allows you to not only do the things that you need to do, but also things that you want to do. Similarly, like when I was a student, you got to get your work done at school. You might not love it, but if you are willing to learn how to do the things that are a bit like a bit of a grind, a bit tough. If you find a way to not only accomplish them, but also find fulfillment in that, then you're setting yourself up to be in position that when something that you wanted to do arises, you have the skillset and you have the experience to know how to do something that needs to get done.

Whether it's what you wanna do or not. So, when I have an opportunity I say, "I've been working hard in school this entire time, so I know how I've been working hard in sports this entire time, I know how to go after things, I know how to put the work in, I know how much it takes and I know how to

organize my energy and efforts in order to get that done."

So, when I see I have a chance to actually do something special on YouTube. I have a chance to actually do something special on Twitch. I have the skillset and the experience and the recognition to say, "This is my chance, this is where I applied these efforts, this is where I apply this knowledge and experience that I've been working on building since I was a kid. To go after this shining moment that allow that leads me into a future that's like a dream come true."

**Nick:** And you never know when that moment's going to be...

**Bajheera:** No.

**Nick:** ...there. You need to have your skillset ready.

**Bajheera:** You gotta pay attention, you got to be... That shimmering moment. You're like, "Ah." You gotta recognize that.

**Heather:** "Opportunities are not given, they're seized."

**Bajheera:** Yeah. So, even when there's things that you don't necessarily love to do, do the work, establish the framework of understanding to do it, and of course when you're seeing me do my fitness content or my gaming content, even if that's not your jam, even if you're not really into games... I feel like if you take a step back and recognize, "Ah, there's passion, that's energy. Oh, that's effort." You can apply that to whatever you're into.

**Nick:** Sure. I was wondering how the rigors of hardcore fitness and prep work fit with that gaming lifestyle, though. Because everything's different when you're preparing for a bodybuilding competition.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, for sure.

**Nick:** Sleep is different, food is different, activity is different, tracking your activity is different. Somebody in our compliance department, Alec, wanted me to ask you like, "How does he account for gaming, and his calories burned, and things like that?" Like how deep do you have to go into that?

**Bajheera:** Well, part of the fun is: If you, track your macros and you look at the scale, you'll see what you're doing, what effect that's having. But yeah, it definitely changes things for me. Like if I'm eating as much as I want, I can play video games for a long time and I can still go to the gym and just be fine. But if I'm limited by my calories, that also limits your time because you're saying, "Well, I've been streaming for four hours and I'm really hungry."

So, it's time for me to go do this because I've actually been training twice a day as... But it actually helps me with my hunger. So, if I can work out, eat, take a nap, stream, play video games, and then go back to the gym, it actually helps me manage my hunger better. So, once you're at that four-hour mark, you're... Now you're feeling a little bit toast, time to get that next thing going.

So, it does limit my gaming a little bit but similarly to how we talked about like the bulking and dieting being a phase. In your life, I feel like there's definitely gonna be times where this phase of my

journey right now, I would say my family is number one priority. The fitness would be number two priority and then the gaming is the third priority right now. My schedule is set up around my training and my diet, less so around my gaming.

Now, if I'm not in competition prep and I have as much food as I wanna work with, and I'm spending my time on different goals, maybe gaming will be my number one priority. In World of Warcraft, I like to do 3v3 arena. That's like the most competitive type of arena. The other type of World of Warcraft in my opinion, what you do is you cue in with two of your buddies against three other people and the last person living on each team wins. And so that's something that I like to do.

I had the opportunity to push for rank one, which means that you're in the top point 1% of all players. When I'm doing something like that, that's gonna change my schedule because, for example, like in North America, most people play at night and if I wanna play against the highest-rated players, get the best games in and the most points, I'm gonna have to stay up late. So, there's different times in your life where you're gonna have to have an ebb and flow and a reorganization of your time and your energy depending on what your goals are.

During the dieting process, you definitely have to sort of say, "The diet is like the pretty demanding, so we're gonna put that up top in terms of the order of importance." When not dieting, when I'm bulking, I'm still definitely into my training. It's just different. It's just I'm not limited by my caloric intake.

**Nick:** Sure, sure.

**Heather:** Now, speaking of questions that came from within this building, I had another question posed to me to pose to you, which is supplements for gamers.

**Bajheera:** Right.

**Heather:** Let's go down that rabbit hole for a second.

**Bajheera:** Yeah. One of the things that I've seen over the years, is there's a lot of different companies that try to sell caffeine to gamers in a lot of different ways of saying, "energy and focus." And that's fine. I mean, like if you wanna drink some coffee when you play video games because you like having the energy and focus associated with that, that's fine. The thing about supplementation for gamers, is that the tag for gamers is just like... That's just the target. That's just trying what we're trying to do. In terms of like myself, supplementation is primarily limited to my training.

But then again, people take supplements for all different kinds of things. People take supplements for like just health reasons and so I don't really know if I would really hop on board with the nootropics and the caffeine for gamers.

That's just different, but I'm not against it. But for me, personally, I've just saved supplementation for what I wanna do within the realm of training. But again, I guess if you're a gamer and you're like, "I'm not getting enough protein in my diet, so I'm gonna take a couple of scoops of whey protein." That's fine, but that's not really supplementation for gamers, that's just supplementation for people.

**Heather:** Right.

**Bajheera:** Just supplementation for whatever it is that you need.

**Heather:** Right. For humans.

**Bajheera:** When somebody is trying to market you specifically for something, I would just be somewhat mindful of why they're doing that, just make sure you're paying close attention and see, "Is this really that much different than another product that's not for gamers?"

**Nick:** Right.

**Bajheera:** So, yeah.

**Nick:** Did you find if you have ever tried like, "Hey, I took a pre-workout and then I played WoW for a while.

**Bajheera:** Yeah.

**Nick:** Did it make you any better? Or is that just something that people kind of a... That's the stereotype...

**Bajheera:** It's fun.

**Nick:** ... is this hopped-up gamer?

**Bajheera:** It's fun, but I think that the situation taking pre-workout for gaming is usually like, "Okay, I'm sip my pre-workout, I'm gonna go to the gym and like 30 minutes." Like we're good. And it's like two hours later, it's like, "Oh, boy." So, I would encourage you to use caffeine on the activity that you want to use it on. So, if you're trying to...

**Nick:** One activity a day.

**Bajheera:** Right.

**Heather:** One activity.

**Bajheera:** Because it'll make whatever activity you're doing really fun. So yeah, I mean I'm sure that if I was feeling tired and I decided to take like a half scoop of pre-workout to play video games, I'm sure I would feel more energetic and focused. But generally, for me, I try to limit my caffeine consumption for training purposes. But if you're going to supplement with caffeine for gaming, just be smart about it. Just like anything else, don't use too much caffeine.

**Nick:** Sure. As you've been traveling more for fitness, going doing shows, how many shows have you done?

**Bajheera:** I've done four this year. Fortunately, they've all been in California, so we have had to like fly for any of those.

**Nick:** Are you able to really effectively take your gaming life with you when you do that? Or do you

have to tell everybody, "You know what? I'm going to be off for like four days"?

**Bajheera:** So yeah, big shout-outs to my other sponsors, Origin PC and Corsair, for making it possible for me to have a laptop with good peripherals to take.

**Nick:** Nice.

**Bajheera:** You know, wherever I go. So, I can stream and I can game, but a lot of times, I mean just like I'm talking about you used your energy and your time differently, while I'm here, like for example, my focus here is handling business.

**Nick:** Right.

**Bajheera:** Doing what we're supposed to do, creating content, hanging out. And I'm still in competition prep. So, once again just sort of go down the list. Right? What's the most important thing for this situation, it's handling business, making sure I stay on my diet and my training, and then gaming's, if it happens, great. If not, we'll get back to it when I get home. But it's all good. You just have to find the right way to balance your time and energy and efforts.

**Heather:** Then kind of in that same vein of supplementation, so what bodybuilding and training skills also translate over into gaming skills?

**Bajheera:** Yeah. I think that if you understand the broader picture, I feel like bodybuilding and just training and sport, in general, can prepare you for understanding how competition works in the video games as well. I think that's one of the things I don't wanna make any sort of like sweeping judgments here but I feel like people who are generally more negative and like maybe toxic and video games, may not have a lot of experience competing in sports in real life.

Because I feel like you might learn a little bit more about what it takes to be competitive and what it takes to be somebody who's sportsmanlike and what not, so I feel like if you understand the setup of competition from playing sports as a young person, you may understand the setup of competing more in video games, as well. So, I think that there's definitely a carryover.

There's also the obvious carryover that we've been talking about throughout the entire talk that we've been having, which is just the grind, being willing to put in a lot of effort over a long period of time and understand that's gonna take effort, it's gonna take improvement. So, people talk about improving their arena ratings and I can tell them tips, and guides, and macros, which is stuff in the game to that can help them out.

But I think the main thing is, like I said, become a student of the game. When you play these games, play to get better. Don't just be like, "Oh, we won. Yay." Or "We lost, bummer." Like actually say, "We lost, why? How can I improve? What's a way that I can learn from this experience that actually helps me get better?" And I think that that's important. So, like you mentioned it, am I doing mostly research or am I doing mostly application? It would be both.

So, what's so cool about YouTube and Twitch, is there's so much content that's available now versus when it was not available before, people would have to like go either pay for guides.

**Nick:** Right.

**Bajheera:** Or just like sign up for like a forum or something like that to learn but now you have tons of top players, players from all skill levels who are sharing their content on YouTube and Twitch. And so there's just so much information available for free that people can make use of. That's the same thing for training.

**Nick:** Sure.

**Bajheera:** I mean there's so much free information about dieting.

**Nick:** It's trying to find you.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, and training. And so, you do the research, you find things that are sort of pillars of what you're trying to improve on, then you apply it in your own gameplay or you apply it in your own training or whatever.

**Nick:** Yeah, that's great point.

**Bajheera:** Definitely there's some serious carryover in terms of understanding the structure of success, for sure.

**Nick:** I was watching a video the other day by, you know who Jujimufu is?

**Bajheera:** Yeah. We actually had him at my gym...

**Nick:** Okay.

**Bajheera:** ...at my house, we did some deadlifts together. Yeah, he's a very energetic, awesome guy.

**Nick:** He seems like a great guy. I've been enjoying his videos a lot recently. He had a good one the other day that was a leg workout with John Meadows. Right? Great bodybuilding coach, bodybuilder.

**Bajheera:** Mountain dog, right?

**Nick:** Exactly. Yeah. And one thing that John said in there that I thought John Meadows said that was really interesting was that, the thing that he took away from sports growing up, because he was a big-time athlete, was just learning how to lose.

**Bajheera:** Yeah.

**Nick:** I imagine that's something that both of your arenas involve, as well, is learning how to lose.

**Bajheera:** Well, if I lost, I imagine I'd learn from it, but... I'm kidding...

**Nick:** But I mean that's a skill.

**Heather:** "If I lost."

**Bajheera:** ...I lose all the time.

**Nick:** That's a major skill. And just to hear you say that. Yeah, "What would I learn from it?"

**Bajheera:** Yeah.

**Nick:** It means you're able to take it objectively.

**Bajheera:** Yeah. I think one of the things that's so cool, is that for example, like StarCraft, competitive StarCraft, you look at like the absolute tip-top pros, and they're like a 50% something win/loss ratio. But like if they have a 53% win/loss, it's like, "Oh, that's insane."

**Nick:** Right. It's like a baseball batting average.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, that's 50/50. You're going to lose about half the time, so you just got to be prepared for that and understand that number one, in order to get really good you're going to have to play a lot, and that margin of maybe winning just a few more games than you lose is going to actually help you get higher rating or whatever. But you also have to learn to lose, learn to learn from that.

**Heather:** That ties in perfectly with the competitive bodybuilding aspect because everyone goes out there wanting to win the trophy and only one person wins that trophy.

**Bajheera:** Yep.

**Heather:** Most people lose when they do a bodybuilding competition.

**Bajheera:** I've been fortunate to do pretty well so far, but I think that... I had a competition this year at Muscle Beach where I got like second place in the overall, and I had a lot to learn from that competition. I think a lot of it was like... I know that I can't make a lot of muscle gains in a short period of time in a deficit, but I know that I can train.

For example, I thought that my back was like a weak point for me. So, I trained my back, not just to build the muscle, but to learn what it felt like to flex it in the way I wanted to. When I was doing my posing practice, I really focused on flexing my back in a way that... One of the things that changed over, this is kind of metaphoric too, is that instead of posing in the way I thought physique should be posed, like this is how the pros do it, I said, "What is my physique like and how do I pose my physique to best represent it?" And that's what I did.

So, I ended up trying to do all of this to try to pose my back better. Then in this competition that I just won, the Musclemania California championship that qualified me to be pro, I think that one of the things that was so strong was my back posing. Once again, it was because I posed in a way that... I did a lot of work to get better, then I also posed in a way that presented me in a way that I wanted to be. I said, "This is what's strong about me, I'm going to display that." Rather than focusing on, "This is what I should be. This is how I should be." It says, "This is how I am. This is how I'm at my strongest." I think that's kind of like a good metaphor for things, in general. Follow the path that you want to be on, not the path that necessarily has been laid out for you that you think is the right way to do it. You have some, once again, general pillars of the way things that work, and you work within them in a way that works for you.

**Heather:** That truly is the mentality of a champion. Arnold was famous for not having calves when he first started.

**Bajheera:** Yeah.

**Heather:** He's still around Sun Valley. I think he's got calves.

**Nick:** I haven't looked at them recently.

**Bajheera:** Once I transition out of physique, I better start hitting them calves. Fortunately, my dad's calves are pretty nutty, so I think I got a chance at it.

**Heather:** That ability to just admit when you have a weakness and work on it and not ignore it or sweep it under the rug. You can't do that.

**Bajheera:** It sounds silly. Just like I mentioned that diet can be fun, having weaknesses can be one of those things that's exciting because it gives you something to work on. This is like a criticism that I give the World of Warcraft community, as a people, always want to have everything instantly, and anytime they have to really grind for something they get kind of upset. But, the moment you stop having something to work towards is kind of the moment when it's not really fun anymore. So, if you can recognize weaknesses in yourself, if you can recognize things that need improvement, you always have something to work on.

Fortunately, as human beings, we usually always have something to work on. That applies to bodybuilding and that applies to everything. If you can identify the things that you're strong at, be proud of that, use that to your advantage, but also recognize your weaknesses and work on that, you're always going to have kind of like a certain structure of fulfillment that's pretty enjoyable, I think, if you have the right mindset.

**Heather:** Oh, I was going to say, I got quite a few questions racking up here, because we've been talking for a while.

**Bajheera:** Sure.

**Nick:** I ramble.

**Heather:** A question from CascaderLOL, "If you could gym stream with anyone, who would it be?"

**Bajheera:** I feel like the number one person on my list... There's so many great people that I know and like and follow. But I think the first person that comes to my mind is Kai Greene.

**Heather:** Okay.

**Bajheera:** Because Kai is one of those people, when I first started that mindset of like, "I think I actually want to do bodybuilding," Kai Greene is somebody that I watched a ton of his videos that he had on YouTube. They had documentaries about him.

**Nick:** There were a ton of those for him.

**Bajheera:** In college, I studied philosophy, and Kai strikes me as a bit of a philosopher bodybuilder. So, I definitely like his mindset. A lot of the things that I've sort of learned about...

In a way, I think a lot of the things that Kai teaches are kind of like the things that my dad taught me. Where you hear them over and over, and they don't really make sense to you until many years down the line when you do it and you're like, "Ah, that's what he meant."

**Nick:** He kind of speaks in little riddles and half-joke, half-philosophical sayings.

**Bajheera:** Yeah. My dad has his doctorate in philosophy. He's a medical ethicist, and teaches classes and does ethics consultations. He's a philosopher. Then, Kai Greene is a bit of a philosopher. So, I feel like that style, Kai Greene sort of teaching style, sort of fit with what I had grown up with. He probably wouldn't even fit in my home gym, honestly. But that would be cool to train with Kai.

**Nick:** He was here a couple years ago, and there's really nothing like walking past the gym and you see Kai in there. It's like he's got his hoodie on, his massive, massive legs.

**Bajheera:** He's got his monk. He's a monk with his hood up.

**Nick:** And he's walking so slowly on the stair stepper. It's an otherworldly sight. Talk about something out of World of Warcraft.

**Bajheera:** That would be pretty neat. Because I've definitely studied a lot from him. There's like tons of people that I've learned from, a lot of different things. But, yeah, he'd be number one on the list.

**Heather:** Then, we have a lot of questions on your foods.

**Bajheera:** Sure.

**Heather:** What are the top foods you recommend for clean bulking?

**Nick:** Chicken and ranch is what I've heard. Right?

**Heather:** And do you think it's possible to stay fit and get fit but still eat the foods that you love?

**Bajheera:** This is one of those topics... It's not a problem, but I sometimes try to avoid, just because I feel like it can... For somebody who is asking a question for what foods should I eat to bulk or diet, you're already on the wrong track. Because I feel like once you understand that it's important to track your calories and your macros, the foods that you eat very much can be the foods that you like to eat. Prepare to get mad at me, but my diet that has gotten me fairly lean has been eating a container of Fairlife chocolate milk. Sorry, sorry, *skim* milk.

**Nick:** Don't eat the container. It's bad for you.

**Bajheera:** Skim milk. The whole thing, like a pint or whatever of Fairlife skim milk, a bag of like Kind chocolate granola, and whatever other carb source I want, like Cheerios or protein bars. It's not like sexy chicken and rice diet or super complex stuff.

**Heather:** There's nothing sexy about chicken and rice.

**Bajheera:** It's just, this is what I feel like eating every day. It takes the thought process out of it. It tastes good, it makes me feel good. So, I'm going to eat this every day because it hits my macros and it's what I need. If you want to eat chicken and rice every day, I've done it, you can.

**Nick:** I was going to say, when you did a profile for us in 2015...

**Bajheera:** Yeah, that's what I was eating back then.

**Nick:** ...it was chicken, butter lettuce and ranch dressing and rice, and that was all it was.

**Bajheera:** That was what I was eating. I tend to eat pretty much the same thing because it makes prep easy because it's already all there for you, and it takes the thought process out of, "What am I going to eat today?" If I have to mix something up, it's going to change my macros, what am I going to do? It's nice when you're dieting to just not have to think about food, and say, "I get to eat this and that's just what I'm eating." Find enjoyment out of it and move on to the next thing.

You definitely can eat whatever you want, that's why we talk about every day on the stream is learn how to get your calories under control, further divide it up into macronutrients that help you accomplish your fitness goals. For me, right now, even dieting, I'm eating like 50% of my calories coming from carbohydrates, and like 25/25 from fat and proteins. Sometimes even like 20% on protein, because I just would rather have more carbohydrates. I'm getting enough protein that I can have a little more energy right now. But as my dieting process continues, my protein and fat stay about the same, and carbohydrates come down. Not to low carb. I have dieted on 300 grams+ of carbohydrates this entire time.

The fixation on what foods in particular to eat, there's not really like bulking food and a dieting food. There's not like, "What's this food going to do for me?" It's more like understanding the energy that you take in and the macronutrients that you take in, that's what matters. Caloric deficit is going to lose you body fat, caloric surplus is going to help you gain some muscle, maybe a little bit of body fat along the way. But you can do keto, you can do vegan. You can do whatever you want. If you want to do high carb, low carb, any of this stuff. It's more about the balance of your energy in, energy out that's going to make an effect. Science suggests that if you hold protein and calories consistent, it doesn't really matter what you do.

**Nick:** Protein and calories.

**Heather:** Calories, there you go.

**Bajheera:** That's the deal.

**Nick:** So, is there a way to integrate this into gaming somehow? The idea of you have little readers of macronutrients that you can balance.

**Bajheera:** Sure. I'm sure that in different games, what you give your character, or the things that you do for your character, will have an effect on your character's power or progression. The same thing for you. Even if you don't want to work out all, you just want to change your body, get your diet right

and stick to that and you will see your body change. Exercise is great, but even if you just go for a walk. But even if you can't. Even if you say, "I really have no interest in exercising at all, I just want to get leaner." Just tailor your intake of food and your body won't change.

**Nick:** You're preaching to the choir over here now with her. She's like, "Stop exercising, just eat right."

**Heather:** I'm the anti-workout person. I would rather eat broccoli and vegetables all day.

**Bajheera:** I'm just a nut so I just like working out.

**Nick:** I mean, that is a question, though. Correct me if I'm wrong, Heather, but it seems like in your competition and things kind of got burned out on exercise.

**Heather:** I burnt out really early on exercise with competition, and I got injured early which also kind of killed it for me. Neck and hips.

**Bajheera:** Ah, that sucks.

**Heather:** So that pretty much eliminates all the exercises. And even when I was competing, I preferred dieting. I loved the chicken, broccoli, rice. It's so simple. I buy six things at the grocery store. It's super, super easy. I fell in love with that. The lifting weights part, that's what most people love. So, I think it's just... If I may be so bold as to answer the question posed by...

**Bajheera:** Please do, because they hear it from me all the time.

**Heather:** It's that you have to really find what works for you, and there's no one food... To your point, there's no one food that's going to make you lean, there's no one food that's going to make you build muscle. You have to find... I know people that can get lean eating cheeseburgers, and I know people that can eat salads every single day and still gain fat. It's got to be what works for your lifestyle. Really, again, tying this whole thing together, your passion.

**Bajheera:** Right.

**Heather:** If you're passionate about going to the gym but you'd rather have a milkshake on the way home, do that.

**Bajheera:** Sure. Just fit it in.

**Heather:** If you're passionate about eating vegetables, but you'd rather not go to the gym, do that.

**Bajheera:** Yeah. Make it work. Like I said, they hear from me all the time. So, it's good to hear it from you too. I'm just making this stuff up.

**Nick:** Me, too.

**Heather:** I just love having my opinion reinforced.

**Bajheera:** Yeah. Go team. That's what we need.

**Nick:** I have a question for you. You mentioned the idea of transitioning out of physique. Where is this going? Where is the fitness part of you going next in the narrative?

**Bajheera:** I think the thing that would transition me out of physique it just progression.

**Nick:** Getting too yolked.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, I mean, hopefully. We'll see. I think we're a little while away from getting too swole. Once again, I train this way because I love it. I think eventually it would be cool to get the full physique picture. Say, "This is what it's like to compete in physique." But I don't think I would do not physique and then one other thing because I'm pretty sure in these competitions I can do both. So, I would maybe compete in physique and also do classic bodybuilding, as well. Just because I feel like as my physique progresses, it would be fun to learn different posing, learn different ways of posing my physique and work on different aspects of my body that can be improved.

It's just I feel like a natural path for me. Just as I get better, you lead yourself into this next thing, which is just like the same thing as me going pro. I haven't really changed anything about myself, it's just the work that I've done has led me to here. It's just me following what I like to do. At some point, classic physiques, that could be fun. We'll give that a try. It's different posing, it's different uniform, too. But you get to show off your legs, which I do train hard. That could be fun.

**Nick:** Okay. So, the other strength sports and martial arts and things like that aren't calling to you ever?

**Bajheera:** Not yet. I haven't ruled it out. Like I mentioned that my sister and her fiancé are big-time powerlifters, so I'm sure they're probably looking forward to my bulk where they can write me some powerlifting programs.

**Nick:** The one day where you're like, "I'm ready. I'm ready to get under the bar."

**Bajheera:** I wouldn't say that I'm burnt out by competition, like you're mentioning, but I think the performance sports where you do all your training, like distance running where you do all your training for years, and then on this day you have to be your best ever, that's tough. For bodybuilding, it's like you do all this training, you do all this work, and on this day you are your best ever and you get to celebrate it. You get to express yourself through your posing, through your physique. It's like a, "Hey, I did all this work and here we are. We're in this moment," and we get to have this cool experience to celebrate that.

I like that right now. I wouldn't rule out powerlifting at some point, but I definitely think that bodybuilding has a firm hold of me right now, in terms of how I enjoy it. I've done the other stuff before, and it's fun. Maybe I'll get that bug eventually, too. Because I think my options are definitely open, as long as I continue having fun doing what I'm doing, we can do whatever.

**Heather:** There's plenty of room to level up and move around in bodybuilding.

**Bajheera:** Probably not going to be a professional basketball player. Some things are probably more barriers to entry.

**Nick:** If you hang from a bar for a really long time, you'll get taller.

**Bajheera:** Decent basketball player if I give myself the time to get back to it. But I think bodybuilding is definitely what I really enjoy. I think that everything about it is just very much in line with where I am in my life, and it's just a good fit.

**Nick:** Yeah. More questions?

**Heather:** More questions. Again, very specific on training program, but is it bad to do a full-body workout after working for 12 hours afterwards? How I'm going to kind of apply it to you is, do you ever have to pump the brakes a little bit? I know, as a distance runner, it's probably not something that you personally experience, but what are you going to tell people who maybe don't have the same mentality that you do?

**Bajheera:** I would say, one of the things I remind myself is it is categorically, which means all the time, better to go to the gym than not go to the gym. Not if you're sick, and stuff like that... If you're kind of like, "I don't know. Should I go to the gym? I'm not really feeling it." Yes, you should go the gym.

Now, if you've been working for 12 hours and you're exhausted, and you're feeling beat up, maybe this is not the time to do your biggest, most-intense full-body workout. But, I would definitely think that after 12 hours of working and being a little tired, you probably want to go shake it out a little bit. Go get some blood flow. If you are feeling sore, sometimes getting to the gym helps recovery. You're pushing blood around, you're pushing nutrients around. You're putting yourself in just a better mindset of when your head hits the pillow instead of like, "I worked for 12 hours, I couldn't even go the gym." It's like, "I worked for 12 hours, and I still got my workout done. Now I can rest and feel good for tomorrow." That's me. I definitely think that you have to pay attention.

For example, in coming here, I'm dieting, and we had travel and a lot going on in my real life. So maybe when I get to Bodybuilding.com HQ, I'm just going to hit those machines and have some fun and say my normal training plan is a little bit on hold right now. We're just going to go and have fun in an awesome gym and get some exercise and work out because I love working out, not like I have to do this most intense workout because that's what is required. I mean, there may be people in that situation and that's fine, but if you are in a position where you can say, "Hey, I had a big day at work today, I'm just going to go to the gym and get a little something done just to stay in rhythm," I'm not against that at all.

**Nick:** I think that's a really important point to make, too. That's part of the bodybuilder mindset, that is actually a good thing for the rest of the world. When you look across, when you look at powerlifting, both of which are just exploding in popularity right now, they're heavy workouts, and you go in and you follow the plan. You do what you're told, regardless of how you feel, potentially. Whereas a bodybuilder goes in the gym, he has the full gym at his disposal and he has the option, or she has the option, of, "I'm going to move a little blood around. I'm going to get a pump, I'm going to go home." That's something that took me a long time to wrap my brain around. When I started working here I was like, "Oh, I want to get strong, I want to do this. But, man, there's that other workout, it's just as important sometimes."

**Bajheera:** I think balance is like a huge thing to mention in this situation. I mean, making sure that you set things as a priority, for sure, but you also understand that it's part of a greater whole.

**Heather:** The one thing I did always like about bodybuilding is if you have a split day, you don't necessarily have to stay with the same set of exercises every single time.

**Bajheera:** Right.

**Heather:** So, it can be an arm day, but you can do whatever you want for arms.

**Bajheera:** Right, right.

**Heather:** That to me was much more appealing than the CrossFit WOD where you are only doing this, this is what everyone's doing, and you can't choose anything else.

**Nick:** Get in line.

**Heather:** It's like, nah, I'd rather choose my own thing today, choose my own adventure.

**Bajheera:** Right. One last thing to mention just along this vein is, I think I talked about it before, but if you're not really feeling it, just get yourself to the gym, and a lot of times, once you start getting warmed up you can work into a pretty good workout.

That's generally how I will do it. I will always kind of work up into heavier sets. If you work up into something and you're like, "Oof, that 60% feels pretty heavy today," maybe that's just as high as you go for today and hit some good reps and hit some good sets with that weight. Yeah, I mean, if you have a workout that's planned, go ahead and see how close you can get to that workout, and then you might find yourself, once you start getting warmed up, once you get that 60%, okay, now we're warmed up. That 12-hour day, I'm good. I'm here now, let's get it.

**Nick:** One of our writers is a great strength coach named Paul Carter, and he has this idea of like an estimated daily max. Where it's like it may say 90% on there, but when you touch 70%, you know 70's 90, that's what you work from.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, and that's fine.

**Nick:** There's nothing wrong with that.

**Bajheera:** The weights are a tool for you to build your body. I think what's most important... This is another thing people talk about is like, "Give me my food, give me my macros I should do, give me my training I should do." Those are all sort of expressions of different things, but I think one of the biggest ingredients is effort. You just apply your effort. So, if the 70% is 90% today, fine, just work as hard as you can, whether it's 90% of your max, 70% of your max, give it 100%.

**Nick:** Is it true that you start every day in the gym with just getting a nice biceps pump?

**Bajheera:** Yeah. We recorded a workout today. I'm like, "Guys, this is just how I do it." I walk in the gym, straight to the dumbbells and pick up some like 20s, like really light weight and do some curls.

**Nick:** Warm up them elbows.

**Bajheera:** Yep. Every time you see me stream, I'm like, "All right, guys, good morning. Just getting some blood flowing. I'm going to get some curls going. Do some of the shoulder press, the lateral raises." Leg days start like that.

**Heather:** Then, while we're on the arms topic, I've been told for about 20 minutes now to say, "Hit 'em with the flex."

**Bajheera:** If somebody subscribes to the stream, we hit 'em with the flex. That's how it goes. That's right. We'll get a few flexes in the chat. Why not?

**Heather:** Then, one more question that I've been sitting on for a while is where did the name Bajheera come from?

**Bajheera:** Yeah, okay. When I was growing up... He's still around, he's still kicking... I had a cat named Bagheera that I named after the panther in "The Jungle Book," just because it was a cool name. He was my buddy. I'd have him running stairs and stuff with a little cat toy. Had him run up and down the stairs, train him like Rocky. He was my buddy. When I was thinking about naming my WoW character, I was like, "Well, we could name him Bagheera. That's a cool name. I like Bagheera. It represents a cool guy that I like." Then I realized that when your character perishes in World of Warcraft, in the little text box it says, "Your character's name has died," and I did not want to see, "Bagheera has died." So, I was like, "Okay, we can't have that. That's unacceptable." What I said, I said, "What can we do?" So, I took the J from Jackson, my first name, and put it in for the G, and it was Bajheera.

**Nick:** That is a complicated origin story right there.

**Bajheera:** I was like, "Oh, that sounds like a legendary warrior name right there." And it stuck and it served me well.

**Nick:** Deep, deep in the warrior's past so he did not want to see his kitty's name.

**Heather:** I love that.

**Bajheera:** Nope, did not.

**Heather:** That would hurt to see Bagheera die.

**Bajheera:** Have my battle cat, alive and well.

**Heather:** Actually, while you were telling that story I was panicked because I was like, "Oh, my God, I said Bagheera wrong."

**Bajheera:** Nope.

**Heather:** But it is Bajheera.

**Bajheera:** It is Bajheera. Yep, you got it.

**Heather:** Okay, okay.

**Bajheera:** Definitely.

**Heather:** One more time, we need to hit 'em with the flex so we can get an actual picture of it.

**Bajheera:** Okay. Got to get all these guys. Ready? Hit 'em with the flex. There we go. Good stuff.

**Nick:** Thanks so much for coming and talking with us.

**Bajheera:** Yeah, thanks for letting me ramble on for a little while with you guys.

**Heather:** Thank you.

**Nick:** I'd ask where people can find you, but it seems like they know where they can find you.

**Heather:** I think they found you.

**Bajheera:** We'll hit them with it. You guys are currently watching [Twitch.tv/Bajheera](https://www.twitch.tv/Bajheera), but I'm also BajheeraWoW on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/). And that will pretty much cover it, of course. You guys watching, if you're not watching from [Bodybuilding.com](https://www.bodybuilding.com/) or some organization...

**Nick:** This will probably be on YouTube at some point.

**Bajheera:** If you guys are not currently watching on [Bodybuilding.com](https://www.bodybuilding.com/), make sure you check them out as well, because they were kind enough to invite me out and let me kick some butt in their gym and hang out with them. So, it's been a lot of fun. They got a lot of good information.

**Nick:** We have a couple of good workouts coming out of this visit, right?

**Bajheera:** Yeah, we're going to finish up our day and I'll be back in the gym.

**Heather:** Stay tuned.

**Nick Collias:** All right, Jackson, thanks for coming and talking with us.

**Jackson Bliton:** Thanks so much.

**Heather Eastman:** Yes, thank you.



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