



Episode 23 Transcript

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Charles Staley - How to Lift to Stay Strong and Healthy at Any Age!

Nick Collias: Good morning, welcome to *The Bodybuilding.com Podcast*. I'm Nick Collias, an editor for Bodybuilding.com, and we're all melted to the scorching pavement in Boise, Idaho. Sluggish and low-energy, feels kind of like we're getting older and that's because we are. All of us actually. You too, and that's kind of the theme of today's discussion. If there are two things, two messages I guess that I feel like I try to hammer home through the articles I help publish with Bodybuilding.com, it's that you have more control over your body and its abilities than you think; and your body has more control over your life than you think, and strength training is one of the best ways to improve both quality of life and life expectancy as you get older.

This is showing up in the research more and more, and those two things together mean not just being around longer, but actually feeling better. But at the same time, as the years go by, responsibilities pile up. It's really easy to think, "This is who I am, this is my life. These are my capabilities." I've been guilty of that and each year that goes by it gets more tempting to slip into that fixed mindset, but working here and collaborating regularly with smart coaches like our guest today really opened my eyes.

And I wanted to share some of that perspective with you no matter what age you are. Our guest, Charles Staley, is one of the great strength minds in the last few decades. He's written a ton for us and everybody else, he's coached a wide range of athletes, and once upon a time was also the progenitor of the escalating density training protocol, which we'll discuss in this call. I grabbed him over Skype from his home in Arizona; so let's listen in.

Welcome to *The Bodybuilding.com Podcast*, Charles Staley, we're really happy to have you here.

Charles Staley: Nick, thanks so much.

Nick: Yeah, absolutely. And this conversation ostensibly relates to a new column you're starting for us called "Ask the Ageless Lifter" and we'll probably have you back on in the future to talk more about that. It really kind of starts a bit earlier with a very popular article you did for us called "[How I Got Into My Best Shape Ever at Age 55](#)," and that headline, to anybody who's been on our site, that headline is not going to seem strange to them. We do a lot of sort of transformation, life-changing pieces. So that headline is no shocker, but it's not usually by one of our strength coach authors. So yeah, it was a great read. I recommend it and will link to it, but basically you were an elite strength coach and trainer for many years, but you didn't feel like you were living up to your end of your strength potential or kind of looking the part and then it changed one day and you started taking a more serious look at things like body composition, being in shape, and not just being strong.

Charles: Yeah.

Nick: So my first question would be what took you so long and what really opened your eyes at that age?

Charles: Well, you know how when you don't see yourself the way that you actually look, the term is escaping me at the moment. But I'm kind of the reverse of that. I would look at myself in the mirror and think, "Oh, I look good." And then one time I got this photo of myself like, "No, I don't really look very good here." And there's the classic thing where women look in the mirror and they look much fatter than they think they look and men are the opposite.

Nick: "I'm looking good."

Charles: Yeah. So I didn't really follow that. And also I've got to admit through most of my twenties and thirties, I thought it was kind of narcissistic to train for appearance.

Nick: Sure.

Charles: I just thought it was beneath me. And then of course once I got lean in my fifties, like my whole tune changed because And especially professionally as a coach, it definitely makes sense to sort of exude the appearance that your clients want. It just took me a while and this also goes back to kind of a common theme of mine, which is that people tend to focus a lot on methods and not really the application to the method. And if you look at successful people, and this means people who got strong, or really lean, or really muscular, the methods really vary. So that's not really the linchpin. The linchpin is your ability and willingness to work consistently hard toward whatever method that is. And that's kind of what I was lacking. So knowledge is not enough, you know, as the saying goes.

Nick: So you were a strength guy, you say in the article. Really never more than five reps. And I kind of understand that mentality because when people start working in a company like Bodybuilding.com, sometimes they feel like, "Oh great, this is my chance. I'm going to change my body. I'm going to look like a bodybuilder," and then other people sort of back off and say, "That's a narcissistic approach. That doesn't feel right for me." And I sort of fell into that latter camp for a long time as well. And yeah, if I'm gonna get strong, I'm not gonna get muscular. But then, all of the sudden, you did start to prioritize things like fat loss and muscle gain in your training. How soon do

you feel like it started to pay off?

Charles: Pretty quick, a couple of months. I walked around most of my thirties and forties at about 225, which is not like terribly big, but I'm drug free. And just for reference, when I was 18 I weighed 135 at six foot two. So basically, I'm 90 pounds heavier. And today I walk around at about 195. So it's not like I'm particularly that big. But one of the things as I look down the road, I'm 58 now. As I look down the road to being like maybe 70 or whatever, I'm already strong enough. I'm done lifting over 500, squatting about 400. I mean how strong do you need to be?

But the funny thing is that being lean, even if you got there from narcissism, but being lean really has really way more pay off toward health indicators and functionality and orthopedic status and all that. So it helps everything but powerlifting. So losing body weight is not really great for your max squat or deadlift or bench, but for literally everything else it really pays off. So yeah, I just started kind of changing my emphasis-

Nick: Well, lean and muscular is even better though, right?

Charles: Yeah, particularly. And what's nice ... I'm sure we'll talk about what it's like to train as an older person, but there's a difference between being a newbie when you're in your fifties and having a long training background. And if you do have a training background, what's nice is those adaptations kind of stabilize. So you don't really have to do that much work to maintain the muscle that you already have if you've been training for 20-30 years.

Nick: Do you find when you work with aging lifters though that their bodies are sort of starved for this muscular stimulus? Because I hear that from articles and coaches saying that even people 80 and 90 years old, it's amazing how quickly their bodies respond because they've just been kind of under-muscled for so long.

Charles: Yeah, if you're a beginner. I just started with a guy last week who's in his late fifties and when you don't have a training background, you have beginner's gains, you know?

Nick: At any age.

Charles: Yeah, at any age. Every single workout you're getting new PRs in the gym and the changes are really stark. You can really see them. So yeah, it's kind of nice. It makes it fun.

Nick: I was reading one of Dan John's books recently and he presented this little age model of how he classifies athletes, which I think is sort of predicated on the fit ranks model. And the groups were something like 16-35, 36-55, and 56 and over. And this was kind of an eye opener for me at age 37 to think I'm in the same group as a 55-year-old man and that I should prioritize my aging body and my training. But when do you think someone should really start to take their age into consideration? And that timeline, moving forward in their training and in their self-care?

Charles: I'd love to give you a number. I have clients all over the world and a vast majority of them are over 50. And one of the things that I tell them repeatedly is that you need to respect your age but you shouldn't allow it to define you. And the reason I say that is because yes, age is a factor that has impact on how you train and how you recover, but it's not the only factor and it's not necessarily even the biggest factor. So there's a big difference between two 65-year-old guys where one has good orthopedic status, he's got good nutrition, good hormonal levels, he sleeps well, you don't have

a lot of stress in your life versus the opposite of that.

You've got to respect it, you have to take it into account as one of the factors that you kind of look at when you're putting your training together and your recovery from training, but people get a little ... It's kind of like when you get older, people just sort of think like their age is the only factor that defines them; and it's really not. It's just one factor of many.

Nick: And especially if you've kind of lived the same way for years or decades you think, "This is just who I am and these are my capabilities. This is how I feel. I have this pain here, it's just a pain I've learned to live with." Do people over 50, do you find that their minds can still be blown by what they're capable of?

Charles: Oh trust me, there's no question. I've got a client in Belize who's 63 now. He had never lifted before, all of his coaching is from me online. He started lifting with me when he was 61 and now he's deadlifting, he's about a 200-pound guy, he's deadlifting 315 per sets of three. And two years ago he had no idea even what a deadlift was. So that is fun. That's why we do what we do, because it's just fun sharing this with people and it's pretty mind blowing.

Nick: And talking about the deadlift in particular is interesting because I feel like that's a lift that I see videos of older people doing more than any other I feel like. There's an 85-year-old grandma and she can deadlift her body weight and a half or something like that. Is the deadlift the fountain of youth?

Charles: I'm not sure if I'm gonna say that, but maybe pretty close. On the one hand, if you're a bodybuilder the deadlift is not like a key movement because it's not the best way to train any specific muscle. But boy, it just accomplishes a lot. When efficiency is the goal, and that's one of the things you have to think about when you're older is just being efficient with your training; boy it really gets a lot done for one movement. And aside from what it does for your strength and muscularity, just in terms of teaching you how to brace and how to lift with good mechanics and just to give you functionality in your life, it's a big tool.

Nick: Yeah, that efficiency really is an interesting part of this because when I think of somebody like, I don't know, think about my father going into the gym thinking, "Oh, what am I gonna do?" He doesn't want to go over and pick up a barbell off the ground so instead he's just gonna pick his body into pieces machine by machine by machine; and there's something to be said for that from a muscle growth perspective perhaps, but it's definitely not the most efficient way to approach the gym. Do you feel like that narrative is something you have to battle against when working with people?

Charles: Yeah, and people come to me with different narratives and I try not to be dogmatic. There's a place for machines too. Sometimes I get people who are older and they cannot maintain a safe posture to do things like squats and deadlifts and we'll use machines for sure. But on the other hand, I just started a gal a couple of weeks ago who's 76, has never lifted before, and in two weeks she's doing a picture-perfect deadlift. I'm not saying that's typical, but these people are out there. So I think it's kind of a mix.

These machines and pre-weights are tools, they have specific benefits and drawbacks, so that's why coaches always debate each other about everything under the sun. Because there is no perfect method. There is no perfect exercise. There's just a profile of benefit-to-drawback and that's where your personal philosophy as a coach comes in, where you're trying to match that profile against the

client's goals.

Nick: Well and the other thing that's easy it seems like for people to slip into who don't go to the gym all that often, especially in the middle ages, my workout. This is my workout. I have a workout, I do my workout. But in your first [new column] article, which is called "[Is Going Heavy a Young Man's Game?](#)" you describe a three block system, around four weeks per block that's really ... Everything changes every four weeks. You can train for work capacity for four weeks, hypertrophy for four weeks, then strength for four weeks, then you rinse and repeat. It could be hard for somebody to wrap their mind around that; it's like they think they're training for something all of a sudden, they're not just out there doing my workout. How do you feel like that benefits somebody to think like that and to approach it like that?

Charles: Well and that's the difference between training and exercise, right? And I think, if I may say so, I think I'm the originator of this concept back in the 90s. Exercise is just an experience. It's a one-time thing, you do it for the endorphin rush or just because it makes you feel better afterwards and there's nothing wrong with that; it's totally fine. But when you're training, now we're talking about a process that's linked to an outcome. And I think a lot of people kind of relate to that way of thinking, you know? I like people to think like they're athletes. I've got clients who are competing in powerlifting in their seventies. And that's fun and that's something that the typical 70-year-old just does not think is even conceivable at all. It's just an athletic way of thinking and we try to have a block of training that's geared toward a specific outcome. And these blocks of training are all kind of linked. There's a succession that goes forward. So yeah.

Nick: So work capacity, the first block there. It's a term that can be really hard for people to wrap their mind around. You hear different people giving very different definitions of it. Somebody who's thinking about approaching their training that way, what typifies work capacity training in a four week block?

Charles: Some coaches call this training to train. Or like a prep phase. So you're just getting yourself to the point where you can do the amount of work that's necessary to provoke an adaptation. So this is typically just higher rep stuff. It really depends on what your background is and what your goals are. For example, if you are a powerlifter, work capacity training might be sets of 10 to 12. And that just kind of sets up a base so that later on when you're doing sets of four to six, you kind of sling shot in an adaptational kind of sense because the volumes are so much reduced, you can increase the intensity of that loading. So that's how that works. And this is just kind of traditional, sometimes called linear periodization, sometimes called block periodization. There's other ways to skin the cat but I find that this works really well.

Nick: Okay. And during a hypertrophy phase, it can be scary for someone kind of past that anabolic golden age of their twenties to think about adding muscle because they think, "Oh, I'm gonna get fat." I did a little hypertrophy phase for the first time in a long time recently, just six weeks long, and I know it can kind of be a mental struggle. You think, "All right, I'm gonna add a little bit of muscle and a lot of fat and one of them is gonna stick around and the other one's not really gonna stick around." Is that something you have to battle against?

Charles: Yeah, sometimes. Some people, too, have the concern that sometimes is legitimate that, "Well, I don't know if I can gain any muscle." And by the way, I probably can't gain any more muscle myself. I've been training 35 years and I'm almost 60 years old. So that's why I use the term hypertrophy/work capacity/anti-catabolism in a sense. In other words, maybe you're not training to

gain muscle, but maybe you're training to prevent the loss of muscle.

Nick: There's probably also some fat loss that could happen in that sort of training?

Charles: There's some fat loss that could happen for sure and there's some cardiovascular benefits. And also, that type of training is more efficient because if you think about it, if you're training in the 10 to 12 rep range, you don't need as many warm up sets. So your workouts are faster. By the way, you don't need as much rests between sets if you're doing sets of 10 to 12 as you do if you're doing sets of four to six. So the whole thing just becomes faster. It's easier on your joints and also if you're a beginner, beginners tend to adapt non-specifically. So in other words, if you're advanced, you have to do low rep training to get stronger and higher rep training to grow muscle. But if you're a beginner, you're doing 10 to 12 rep sets, you're going to have strength and hypertrophy adaptations. So that's another advantage of being a beginner.

Nick: And you're a big believer in cycling movements throughout these blocks as well. What movements do you feel like lend themselves best to that type of volume? Or don't lend themselves to that type of volume?

Charles: Yeah. Well, I tend to ... This is just old school stuff I guess, but I tend to gravitate toward so-called big, compound, multi-joint movements such as the various forms of squatting, deadlifting, pressing, pulling and so forth. And I like this because they're just more efficient. You're training a lot of muscles with a small number of exercises and I think those type of movements also have a greater ability to disrupt homeostasis and really get your body's attention; as opposed to doing a triceps kickback or bicep curl. Those things are fine. I actually had kind of a real storm of controversy on my Facebook page recently because I said that I don't have clients do curls with me. A lot of people are misinterpreting this, but the point of it is you can do curls on your own.

It's not the most technical feat in the world to flex your elbow. So I want my clients to do the more challenging work with me and then if they're gonna do like direct, single-joint type work they can do it on their own. But yeah, start with the meat and potatoes and maybe start with a row and a dumbbell bench press and if time and energy permits, sure you can do some direct arm work. But only if time permits.

Nick: I remember when you were logging your training on breaking muscle. There were curls in there. I remember seeing curls in your training program. It's not like you're just doing nothing but squats and deadlifts all day, right?

Charles: Yeah, yeah, yeah. You've got to learn to contextualize information. Everything matters, but some things matter more than other things. So that's important when you're trying to be efficient.

Nick: And that's a good point to bring up of thinking also. The person who's coming to the gym maybe who is in a phase in their life where they have little bit more disposable income is maybe more likely to work with a trainer. And yeah you can choose to either have the trainer guide you through everything or just guide you through the most important part and then trust you to do the rest of it. So if somebody is going to do that, they're thinking, "Okay, I want to hire a trainer." What sort of things should they prioritize with that trainer? Is it like, "Teach me how to squat. Teach me how to deadlift?" Is that the most important?

Charles: Yeah I think skills and habits. Skills involve understanding the technical execution of

fundamental exercises, but skills also involve how do you do your warm up sets? And what do you do if something hurts? How do you structure your approaching timing around workouts and things like that? So those are skills and habits that just relay a little bit more to recovery and sleeping and just getting your nutrition together and so forth. So yeah, I think that's the best place to start. Although sometimes I have clients who come to me, I have somebody who just started with me a couple of weeks ago and she just wants to learn how to deadlift. Of course that might morph into something else down the road and that's fine.

I think understanding the biomechanics are really big because you can learn how to program by watching YouTube videos and by reading people's articles and you can figure out nutrition that way too, but I think biomechanics are a big part of it.

Nick: Yeah I was just talking about this with somebody here who's a personal trainer this morning that the deadlift is just more popular than ever right now. It's just that I feel like two, three, four years ago everybody was saying, "Oh, you've got to squat, you've got to squat." And now in just these tiny little waves, the deadlift is just the thing right now on social media. Everybody is constantly putting pictures of it.

Charles: Yeah, and I think it's a good movement. Yeah, I did mention this earlier, but the deadlift is a great assessment tool. If you say, "Hey Charles. I've got this gal who I want to send to you. She's moving to Phoenix and she can squat 'XYZ.'" I don't know what that means. That can mean anything. But if you say that somebody can deadlift 'XYZ' or conversely if they can do X number of chin-ups, suddenly I know a lot about that person. So I think it's a good way to kind of compare yourself against others and kind of understand your status.

Nick: That's an interesting way to look at it. Are there any other markers like that that somebody can say, "If I want to know where I stand, as opposed to, maybe I can do this, but it doesn't mean what I think it means." Deadlift, chin-up, is there anything else that stands out?

Charles: Those are my two real go-to's. The chin-up is really useful because it tells you a little bit about somebody's body composition when you think about it. If you can do 20 chins, you are lean. I don't care what you weigh, it tells me something about your training habits. For example, if you're a woman and you can do 10 chins, and even as I just say that to you you're counting on your one hand how many women you know who can do 10 chins.

Nick: Right. And they're badassess.

Charles: It's just really ... Yeah, that's exactly right. And they're all lean.

Nick: Thinking of how somebody could envision how this fits in their life. Is three full body workouts a week enough? Or can it be done in two? Or does it have to be more than that if somebody really wants to start to make progress?

Charles: Such a good question. It just so relates to the individual. So if you are brand new to training, two does the job just fine. Because again, you are benefiting from beginner's gains and two sessions a week is two sessions a week more than you've ever done. So that will stimulate an adaptation. And then down the road, probably for most people that's going to have to morph into three sessions. But by that time, you'll have seen the benefits and you'll be kind of hooked and you'll be willing to do it. All things come in good time. There's a sweet spot.

Imagine you're experienced and you think about what you would have to do to make progress training one day a week. You'd have to do like a five-hour workout and that's not terribly pleasant. And then on the other hand if you envision training 10 times a week, that's just kind of annoying. Like sure, all your workouts will be very brief, but it's just a pain in the ass. It's just not practical. So somewhere between those two extremes there's a sweet spot. That tends to be between three and four days a week for most people.

Nick: Okay. And full-body workouts, you feel like for the vast majority of people?

Charles: Yeah, until and unless you get very strong. Because for example, if you're benching 225 or less, squatting maybe 315 or less, yeah you can train all the muscles of your body three days a week no problem. You get to the point where you're squatting 500 pounds, you can't train legs three days a week. You just won't recover regardless of your age. So then you get more into like a push-pull kind of situation.

Nick: Yeah I remember you did an interesting piece for us where you put this sort of theory out that the weight on the bar has something to say about how many days it takes for you to recover from it. If it's 500 pounds it could take five days. I was telling that to a buddy of mine who's a strength coach and he said, "It definitely seems overly simple but it's a great rule of thumb that maybe can just provide a lot of clarity for something that people don't usually see." Do you find that- [crosstalk 00:25:45]

Charles: Yeah, I think so. Yeah, I first kind of locked into this idea after listening to [Dr. Mike Israetel of Renaissance Periodization](#). And you know, he's got a point. You don't even have to read research papers to kind of be convinced of this. If you look at very ... You know the whole idea of doing a 'bro' split, where Monday is chest and back and you train chest and back only once a week. Well, if you are 280 pounds and 6% body fat and you can bench 500 pounds, you can only train back and chest once a week because it'll take you six days to recover. If you're not nearly as big and strong, you recover much faster. So if I've got a woman who weighs 115 pounds and she's a beginner, you can train whole body almost every single day for awhile.

Nick: And to be clear, in the context of the article training heavy doesn't necessarily mean heavy singles or, "Okay, I can bench press this much." You talk about just making occasional forays into the three to five range for four to five week cycles; which sounds different than what you used to train, right? You were the never more than five guy.

Charles: Yeah, but that was mostly just like an ego problem on my end.

Nick: That's part of this though, right?

Charles: Yeah, sure it is. And by the way, ego is just fine as long as it has its proper place. One of my points is that, and I think I mentioned this in my column, there's this well-known saying that, "Don't do what you like, do what you need." And I sort of take umbrage with that. I think you should do both because doing what you like is what kind of keeps you going. It's what kind of keeps you in the game. So doing what you like is important because that keeps you engaged. But you also have to do what you need; and so for me, doing what I like is heavy singles on squats and deadlifts and doing what I need is kind of working on work capacity a little bit more, maybe a little bit of mobility work; that sort of thing. Yeah, it's kind of a mix.

Nick: So if somebody's looking to set up their ideal little full body workout, do you do, "Okay I do what I need first and then I do what I want for the last 15 minutes and save that time?"

Charles: Yeah, yeah I like that approach. And by the way, one way you can implement that is you can ... Let's say you tend to gravitate toward max's and you don't like doing reps. Go up to a max first, let's say you're bench pressing. Work up to a heavy single or heavy triple, whatever it is you're doing. And then reduce the weight a little bit and start putting some work in. And then you kind of get the best of both worlds.

Nick: And that sounds like a good way to get a lot of work done in a workout that might still take somewhere around an hour, too, which is a concern right? Once you get the lifting bug, it can be really easy to start going in there and just it's an hour and 15, and hour and 30. How do you enforce efficiency in your training?

Charles: Yeah, by the way, the stronger you get the longer your workouts end up being. And that's where people gravitate doing more sessions per week because it's a way to shorten your sessions. But one way that ... It's amazing more people don't do more of this. But one way to just really improve your efficiency is to do your exercises in a circuit or at least in pairings. So if you're doing four exercises, you can do a four exercise circuit or you can go back and forth between exercise one and two until they're finished and then go the same with three and four. And that just really is kind of a way to dissipate fatigue and kind of take shorter rests between exercises. And if you're not doing that currently and you've never done it, just making that one change will take 25% off the length of your workouts.

Nick: Yeah and it feels different at the end too, definitely.

Charles: Yeah, for sure.

Nick: I remember trying escalating density training a couple years ago when I was training for the RKC the first time, which is a system that you originated, and it felt totally different just taking pairings, taking three movements and just working on gradually bringing things, doing more work. It was a really interesting experience. Do you find that that style, which you can explain a little bit more about what that means, works well for the Ageless Lifter, as I guess we would call that person?

Charles: Yeah, I think it does. It's certainly easier on the joints, without any question. And there's a cardiovascular benefit and maybe more of an endorphin rush from that kind of training, at least with some people. And again, it's more efficient. If you're doing higher repetitions, shorter rest breaks, your warm ups are fewer and your rests between sets are shorter. And another way to even further compound the efficiency of that is to do slow eccentrics.

So in other words, you lift the rate in an accelerative manner, but you lower the rate maybe four to five seconds per rep and that further reduces the amount of weight you use. Which maybe you can't brag about how much weight you're losing on Facebook, but it allows you to get more result with less weight and that basically filters down to shorter workouts. So that's a great tool.

Nick: Right. Making light weights heavy. Is that a good goal?

Charles: Yeah, I think it's a great goal, especially when you're trying to improve body composition,

for sure. There's just no question. A lot of times, going back to the example before where you have your fun and then you do your work; I might work up to a heavy single and then I will back down to 80% of that and maybe knock out sets of five. But I have no concern about the weight on the bar because I've already done that. So now I just work. I make that muscle suffer and I execute full range of motion and slow, eccentric tempos, make everything super clean, and that's a nice, nice way to train.

Nick: Okay. I like that. Now talking just the slightest bit about nutrition. You had great success with the flexible dieting approach.

Charles: Yeah.

Nick: But if somebody kind of balks at the idea of measuring things and counting macros, what can they do if they look at that and they say, "Yeah, it's great, but I don't want to get out the scale. I don't want to count my macros?"

Charles: Yeah and by the way, although I have most of my clients do use flexible dieting, but hey, if you can get from point A to point B without tracking, let's do that for sure. So then what you have to do is you have to kind of find a proxy for tracking. So one of those proxies is focusing on food composition. We're talking fruits and vegetables and lean proteins. And if your meals are composed mostly of those foods ... Don't get me wrong, you can gain body fat if you eat too much of it, but of course it's just very hard to eat too much of those kinds of foods.

So that's like one of the tricks. And if you look at competitive bodybuilders all the way back to the 60s, that's kind of how they ate. And those foods are also helpful because they don't stimulate cravings. So flexible dieting can be problematic. If you are the kind of person where you eat one cookie and then 10 minutes later the box of cookies is gone, flexible dieting may not work for you. And we're all different. So I think one of the things that's really useful to do is to determine your personality type when it comes to cravings.

Nick: And be realistic about it, yeah.

Charles: Yeah, and it's not right or wrong. Like there's no morality in this. People are just wired different. I can eat a cookie and call it a day and move on to the next thing. Not everybody can do that. So that's the first step in kind of learning to know yourself.

Nick: Okay. Just really taking stock of this. It sounds like in taking this project seriously, it's not just ... It is sort of the project of your life almost.

Charles: Yeah and understand human behavior is huge. So from a biochemical point of view, you could lose body fat eating nothing but cookies and ice cream and donuts. You could totally do it. But the problem is—there's two problems. One is long term, you're not getting the micro nutrients you need for good health long term. But just functionally, those types of foods do not satiate you. They don't make you full. So it's just difficult to be in a caloric deficit when you have low nutrition, low bulk, high-calorie kind of foods. So it's doable biochemically, but often not behaviorally.

Nick: Great. Hey I really appreciate all the perspective you've been giving us here. We have one article that I think is going to come out today or in the next couple of days and then this is going to be a regular occurrence. Charles Staley has been a regular occurrence on Bodybuilding.com for a few

years now. I think you were before in the old days as well, right?

Charles: Yeah, way back in the day and then I had a little hiatus and now we're back.

Nick: Yeah, so if you go [his author page](#) on Bodybuilding.com, you will find many different topics that he's covered over the years; and then working on a book now as well.

Charles: Yeah. That should be out in the spring of 2018. We've got a couple of different working titles for that, but the working title we're going with right now is "Confessions of an Unlikely Fitness Pro." And the emphasis is on transparency and honesty; and my personal story is that even though I'm a very visible and well-known fitness authority, I did not really have all aspects of my fitness in check until my fifties. And so guess what? Even if you're an expert, you're a real person and we all struggle with certain things.

And so at this age of Instagram in particular, there's not a lot of transparency and there's all sorts of people using fake weights and there's a lot of ... It's not the most honest medium in some ways. So it was my feeling that what is really missing in the market place is an honest discussion of fitness from somebody who's like an industry insider. So that's what we're trying to do.

Nick: I like it. That title brings to mind an old book called "Muscle" by Paul Fussell. Have you ever read that book? It's called "[Confessions of an Unlikely Bodybuilder](#)." It's from the late 80s, early 90s.

Charles: Interesting. Now that you say that, it kind of vaguely rings a bell. So I hope I'm not going to be ripping off his title.

Nick: Not at all, I would recommend it highly. It's totally to the hilt, insane, deep dive into bodybuilding in New York City in the 80s and 90s and it's one of my absolute favorite books. Any time anybody starts working here I force them to read it and their life is on hold while they're reading it because once you start it, it just consumes you.

Charles: I've got to read that for sure.

Nick: All right. And you are easily found on various social media as well. Facebook and Instagram, right?

Charles: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), website is [Staleystrategies.com](#), and any of those three work out just great.

Nick: Great. All right. Well thanks for talking with us, Charles.

Charles Staley: Thank you, Nick—appreciate it.

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