# The Collision Between Theory and Observed Outcome

*When the outcome eventually became impossible to explain away*

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**For years, I believed I did not need to count calories.**

The model of ancestral eating, in particular carnivore and unprocessed whole foods, made sense to me. For a long time, I interpreted my experience through it.

Exercise fitted into the same picture. Exercise was good for health, strength and fitness, but I absorbed the idea that it was not necessary for fat loss if carnivore nutrition was doing what it was supposed to do. I also encountered the suggestion that abundant protein gave the body the ingredients it needed to build muscle, with little emphasis on the training stimulus required to build it.

The insulin model made the alternative to calorie counting seem even stronger. Carbohydrate raises glucose and insulin; insulin was described as the fat-storing hormone, therefore keeping insulin low should make fat storage less likely. Ketones and blood glucose seemed more meaningful than calories. If I kept glucose low and ketones high, I appeared to be measuring the metabolic state that mattered.

There was another argument that prevailed in the low-carb and carnivore communities I inhabited: calories are inaccurate, even meaningless. Food labels are estimates. Calorie databases disagree. Energy expenditure is difficult to measure. If the numbers are not accurate, why track them?

The overall argument seemed coherent. Eat meat and fat. Eat to appetite. Protein and fat are satiating, so the body will tell you when it has had enough. Give the body the right foods and appetite and satiety will regulate intake naturally. Calorie counting is unnecessary.

## When the prediction failed

I believed in the model, but I did not get progressively leaner.

At first, that did not make me question what I had been taught. It made me question myself. Perhaps I was not strict enough. Perhaps the occasional dalliance with sugar or alternative sweeteners was preventing the system from working. Maybe my metabolism simply needed more time to adjust. The answer, I thought, was greater purity and increased consistency with carnivore.

When that failed to produce the results I expected, I experimented with the ratio of protein to fat. I listened to carnivore doctors and influencers who recommended a higher-protein

carnivore diet. When that did not produce the desired result, I followed others whose recommendation was the reverse: higher-fat carnivore. Perhaps, too much protein was driving gluconeogenesis, producing glucose, raising insulin and preventing fat loss.

So I moved toward higher fat and chased higher ketones. I accepted the idea that my metabolism or hormones might need time to heal, and that high-fat eating was helping that process even if my body composition was not yet showing it.

**During my very-high-fat "priming" period, I became the heaviest I had been since becoming a carnivore.**

I had not been doing nothing. I had been testing, adjusting and measuring. But every disappointing outcome generated another explanation for why I should modify my execution before it generated a serious challenge to the model itself. That is the part I now find most interesting. Every time reality failed to match what I expected, I did not initially ask whether the theory might be incomplete. I asked what I was doing wrong.

## I was never really 'anti' tracking

There is an irony here that I did not recognise at the time. I thought I was opposed to obsessive tracking, particularly counting calories. In reality, I was quite prepared to measure.

I tracked ketones. I tracked blood glucose. I paid attention to whether I was in nutritional ketosis. I altered what I ate in an attempt to make those numbers move in the direction the theory told me was desirable.

**What changed later was not that I went from tracking nothing to tracking everything. I changed what I thought was worth measuring.**

I had been recording proxies for a proposed mechanism. Eventually I began paying attention to the outcomes I actually wanted: body weight as a trend rather than a verdict, body measurements, photographs, strength and performance - alongside controllable inputs such as food intake and activity.

None of those measures is perfect. But that is not the point.

## The unexpected doorway

The person who eventually opened that door for me was Anthony Phaèsse of *LeanSeven*. He spoke at 'Carnivore Live' in Melbourne in 2025, and I was in the audience that day. I almost did not go. I had attended enough low-carb and carnivore conventions that I did not think I needed to hear more health-success stories or talks from speakers I had already been listening to for years. Friends prompted me to go anyway.

Anthony was someone I had not heard before. The reason I was willing to listen to him is important: he was a carnivore. He was not asking me to abandon the way I ate. From the moment he started speaking, I knew he was someone I wanted to learn from.

I was already doing a great deal of work on my beliefs, attitudes and identity. I had been working hard to improve aspects of my life after becoming very unwell the previous summer. There were considerable stressors in my personal life, and I was struggling to recover from ongoing respiratory problems. Too unwell to do many of my usual activities, I spent a lot of time resting and, when I felt strong enough, listening to material about mindset and personal development. I had worked with various coaches over the years, and that summer I began working with a new coach whose approach had a profound effect on me.

**So when Anthony started talking about body transformation, the first thing that got through to me was not calorie mathematics. It was mindset.**

His talk had a huge impact on me, and I approached him afterwards to discuss coaching and his community. Over the following two or three days, I read and listened to everything of his I could find publicly. I joined his Skool community and worked through hours of classroom tutorials and articles. I was exposed to his system of tracking food, body weight, measurements and activity, but those were not initially the ideas that reached me most deeply. I did not enter this process expecting to track protein, steps, body measurements and calories. I entered through a conversation about mindset.

Anthony talked about structure, consistent action and becoming a different version of yourself. Phrases I remember from that period include “Struggle is progress in disguise”, “A different me brings new results”, and “Perspective drives Perception drives Belief drives Behaviour”. Also “Build structure where there was noise. Bring clarity of purpose,” and the idea of the “new Lark”. Some may have been direct quotations and some may have been conversational lines used by Anthony in the discovery call I had with him around this time. I wrote out these phrases onto a piece of butcher’s paper and stuck it to my bathroom wall.

**Looking back, the progression was not carnivore to calorie counting. It was carnivore to mindset, mindset to structure, structure to measurement, and measurement to evidence.**

## My first test was not really a fair one

I considered coaching with Anthony but initially decided against it. It was not that I doubted the value of his programme. It was more that I knew if I found something that worked, my friends would want to know what I had done, and I thought the cost would be prohibitive for many of them. I also believed I possessed most of the practical skills required to test the system myself: I knew how to train. I knew how to track food and macronutrients. I knew how to weigh and measure food. I had been eating low-carb and carnivore for years. I did not think I needed external motivation or accountability.

So I took what I understood of the system and tried to run it myself. For the first few months, I did that imperfectly. I introduced more walking and some of the structure. I saw some improvement, but I was not consistent. Overseas travel disrupted it further. For a period I stopped tracking, stopped pursuing step targets consistently, and my eating loosened considerably, including chocolate and some alcohol. By the time I returned home, I had regained weight.

Only in retrospect did I understand what that period had shown me: I had not actually given myself a clean experiment. I knew enough about the system to say I was following it, but I was not following it consistently enough to know what it would produce.

## Then I ran the experiment properly

The day after I returned from that trip, I made a different commitment. I decided I would still execute the system myself, but this time I would do it consistently.

**For approximately four months, I did just that.**

The results were dramatically different from my first, intermittent attempt. By my own measurements and observations, I lost a substantial amount of body fat (from 32% to 23%). More importantly for the argument I am making here, I had finally created enough consistency to learn from what I was doing.

**The first time I tried the system, I tested my version of it. The second time, I tested what happened when I actually followed it.**

Eventually, success created a new problem. My activity had become very high. I had been in a deficit for months. I was leaner than I had been for decades, but I was getting tired. I tried increasing calories because I thought more food might restore some energy, but I no longer knew how to make the next decision intelligently.

**The question was no longer, “Can I lose fat?” It was, “What now?”**

That was when I joined Anthony’s group coaching. Not because I lacked discipline. Not because I needed accountability. Not because I needed help understanding macros or entering food into an app. I needed help interpreting the data and deciding what lever, if any, should move next. I recognised that I had reached the limit of my own knowledge.

## The objection that finally collapsed

In a recent post called ‘Results Favour the Monotonous’ (*LeanSeven* Skool Community, 9 Sep 2026), Anthony helped crystallise something that had taken me a long time to understand.

The old objection was that calories were inaccurate. Of course calorie tracking is imperfect. A food database does not know the exact energy content of every piece of food I eat, just as a wearable does not know my exact energy expenditure. Labels and serving estimates are

imperfect. Even careful tracking does not give me a laboratory measurement of the energy entering and leaving my body.

But I had been asking, and listening to criticism of, the wrong question.

**“Is this calorie number perfectly true?”**

Clearly, no.

**The more useful question is: “Is this measurement system consistent enough to give me a stable reference point that I can calibrate against my real-world results?”**

That is the insight in Anthony’s article that landed so strongly for me.

Suppose an app tells me that my usual intake is 2,200 calories. The true physiological number may be somewhat different. But if I use the same method, weigh foods in the same way, choose consistent database entries and collect enough data, then what my system calls 2,200 begins to acquire personal empirical meaning. I can observe what happens to my weight trend, measurements, photographs, training and recovery while I hold that input reasonably steady.

If the outcome is appropriate, I can leave it alone, however imperfect the number may be. If the accumulated evidence eventually says an adjustment is warranted, I have something I can deliberately change and then observe again.

**Precision without consistency can be remarkably unhelpful.**
**Consistency, even without perfect precision, can be enormously useful.**

## Hidden in the monotony

I am not advocating that everyone eat the same twelve foods forever or live in dietary robot mode. The useful feature of monotony is repeatability.

Repeatability reduces uncontrolled variation. It allows a signal to emerge from the noise. If I change the amount of food, the composition of my diet, my activity, my training, my tracking method and my interpretation of the scale all at once, I cannot easily know what produced the next result. If I hold enough variables steady and change just one thing deliberately, the system becomes much easier to read.

This is what I had been missing when I dismissed calorie tracking because it was imperfect. I had treated imperfect measurement as useless measurement. I no longer believe that.

## From mechanism to outcome

The deepest shift for me may not be about calories at all. It is about the relationship between theory and evidence.

I once gave enormous explanatory power to insulin, glucose and ketones. Those measurements can tell us something about glucose and ketone physiology, but they are not

themselves measurements of whether I am achieving the body-composition outcome I want.

I can have a theory about why a diet should work. I can have biomarkers that appear to fit that theory. But if the predicted outcome repeatedly fails to appear, at some point the outcome deserves the right to challenge the theory.

That does not mean one weigh-in disproves a nutritional model. Body weight is noisy. Measurements contain error. Photographs vary with lighting and posture. Body-fat estimates are just that: estimates. Training performance varies. Appetite is information too.

**The answer is not to replace one sacred number with another. It is to collect several relevant forms of evidence consistently enough that patterns can emerge.**

That is a very different relationship with data from the one I once had.

## What outcome am I actually trying to produce?

I do not think the lesson is that I was foolish to follow a high-fat carnivore diet, or that everything I learned in that community was wrong. I still understand why the diet appeals to me, and Anthony himself was initially credible to me precisely because he was a carnivore. Nor have I concluded that appetite and satiety are meaningless, that insulin is irrelevant, or that a calorie app has somehow discovered the exact mathematics of my body.

**The simpler question I needed to ask was: "What outcome am I trying to produce, and how will I know whether what I am doing is producing it?"**

If the answer is improved body composition, then I need to measure body-composition-related outcomes as well as the behaviours I can control. I cannot let the imperfection of measurement become an excuse for having no feedback system at all. And when reality repeatedly fails to behave the way my preferred theory predicts, I should not automatically assume that I need to become more faithful to the theory.

**Give the outcome a vote.**

Perhaps one reason it took me so long to reach this conclusion is that my original goal was vague. I wanted to improve my overall health, and I assumed that improved body composition would naturally follow. Yes, I wanted to lose weight, but I had not made that outcome my primary target. I thought it would emerge as a consequence of improved metabolic function.

So I kept looking at the measures that seemed to represent metabolic health within the model I believed: blood glucose, ketones and other less visible mechanisms. Meanwhile, the body-composition outcome I also wanted was not being measured with anything like the same discipline.

Once the goal became clearer, the question became clearer too.

## The collision

I did not change my mind because somebody defeated low-carb or carnivore eating in a debate. I changed because I eventually accumulated experience that my existing model could no longer comfortably explain.

The strange part is that I reached that point through a carnivore coach. Our shared diet was what made me willing to listen. The mindset work was what first reached me. Structure taught me consistency. Consistency made measurement useful. Measurement made the results harder to explain away.

Somewhere along that path, calorie tracking stopped looking like an obsessive attempt to calculate an unknowable biological truth. It became a tool: imperfect, certainly, but repeatable. A controllable reference point. A way to run a better experiment on my own assumptions.

That may be the most important thing I have learned from the whole process:

**Do not ask a theory to keep explaining away your outcome.**

**Eventually, let the outcome test the theory.**

# Acknowledgements

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