



[00:00:00] Intro

Darin: You are listening to the Darin Olien Show. I'm Darin. I spent the last 15 years exploring the planet looking for healthy foods, superfoods, environmental solutions, and I've had my mind blown along the way by the people, the far off places I have been, and the life-altering events that have changed my life forever. My goal is to help you dive deep into some of the issues of our modern-day life, society's fatal conveniences. The things that we do that we're indoctrinated into thinking we have to, even though those things are negatively affecting us, and in some cases, slowly destroying us and even killing us. Every week, I have honest conversations with people that inspire me. My hope is through their knowledge and unique perspectives, they'll inspire you too. Together, we'll explore how you can make small tweaks in your life that amount to big changes for you, the people around you and the planet, so let's do this. This is my show, the Darin Olien Show.

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[00:01:22] Guest Intro

Darin: What's up everybody? Hey, how's it going? Welcome to another installment. Another episode, another journey, another fun connection with another great human being to unpack and talk with and sit down with and have him share his story, his insight and his accomplishments because my next guest, my great, great friend, Rich Roll. I not only just admire this dude, I love this guy. I get to speak with him pretty much every week in some form or fashion and, man, I've read his book, 'Finding Ultra'. And if you haven't read that book, it is so well written and so visceral in terms of a person's journey and the obstacles and the challenges and overcoming that. You have to check it out. An inspiration of someone that has had a lot of stuff stacked against them and he turned it around. I'm very grateful, and I'm stoked for you guys to get to meet this incredible human being, Rich Roll. Enjoy.

[00:03:04] First Half of the Interview

Rich: Well, how often do you get to sit down with somebody and ask them really in depth questions about their life? That context doesn't arise naturally, maybe at a dinner party or these



rare occasions but there's something about the formality of this construct provides that space to do it.

Darin: And then the witness, it's kind of like the microphone and the videos and the audience.

Rich: It's forcing you to think about what you're going to say and be a little more mindful and intentional.

Darin: And kind of contemplating talking with you and going back over, I mean, for everyone that doesn't know, Rich wrote an amazing book, 'Finding Ultra'. And I went back and read that because it's been so long. I couldn't help but to be touched by that early journey. So then when I was going through your book, listen, for everyone who hasn't read it, you need to read it. It's such a well written book but the addiction side of stuff, having a father that I watched very, very destructively die from alcoholism, how hard that is and your navigation through it. I think what I want to just say is fuck where you are now to where you came from and ultimately, what does it mean? It does reflect something of society has seen you, acknowledging you, and everything that this kid trying to find your way has been seeking. So what is that like?

Rich: It's a balancing act between checking my ego and remaining humble and understanding that in truth, it doesn't really mean anything but also at the same time, it is kind of like this symbol of culture and society, putting a stamp of approval on the work that I've done. And as a desperate people pleaser my entire life, when I look back over the course of my life, all I ever wanted was to be accepted and liked by people to a fault. And so here it is, okay, you are liked by people. That feels good but I think in terms of how that plays into the addiction and ultimately the recovery is that, I was the kid wearing the patch and the headgear and I was getting my hat stolen from me at the bus stop and getting punched in the gut. And I'm getting beat up and all that kind of junk, last kid picked for kickball, all that stuff. And so there's a lot of childhood trauma and wounding around that. And ultimately, I didn't have an alcoholic father. I didn't grow up in an alcoholic household. I didn't know anything about addiction and I came into alcohol later than most people I would imagine. I was very much goody two shoes, studying hard, swimming, very achievement oriented. So, it wasn't until I was 19,20 that I was really introduced to that in a material way. And when you take somebody who is socially awkward and introverted and has that kind of childhood trauma or wounding, not that it was that severe, I'm not trying to overplay that and then you introduce a mind altering substance, it's like magic. And I just had a very visceral feeling of relief, like feeling okay. Like all of that baggage that you're carrying around that you're unconscious of when you're young because you don't have any tools or knowledge or understanding about what it means, when it evaporates and you feel differently, you just want more of that. And that's when that train pulled out of the station.

Darin: Yeah. And this has occurred to me before, not to draw too many parallels but there's obvious ones when you talk about Al-Anon and people who've been affected by alcoholism. When I read your book, and I know you, there's parallels that I see so powerfully, which is



probably why AA works in so many aspects of my father. My dad was a swimmer. I grew up, him smelling like chlorine.

Rich: I didn't know that.

Darin: Not competitively, but as a professor at the University of Minnesota, I taught myself how to swim with my father at the university swimming pool. And so I'd swim with him. And my dad, he was kind of bullied in his own way and tried to find-- So there's a weird kind of thing that there's healing for me. And it was just kind of funny that this time and I think the last time I read your book was a few years ago and I just was in the space of reading it going, "Wow, this is.."

Rich: It helped you empathize with your dad a little bit. Your dad had long stretches of sobriety though.

Darin: 30 years.

Rich: And then he relapsed?

Darin: Then he couldn't get it together, but it's the power and the way you spoke in the book and how powerful it is just like you said now like that medicine, the antidote to the pain.

Rich: Yeah. I mean, the alcohol isn't the problem, it's the solution, it's the solution to the problem. And that's why sobriety is so tricky because you're taking away how that psyche has dealt with the world for so long and suddenly, you're left like this raw nerve, and you've got to find healthier ways to deal with that internal turmoil and trauma so that it doesn't basically derail your entire life.

Darin: And it's something that you can't just say, "Hey, that was an event in my life. I got through it. Great." It's a constant like what is it? The alcoholics in the parking lot doing push ups while you're--

Rich: Yeah, it's just waiting in the background for that weak moment where it can strike again. And I think that's the thing that people that don't have experience with addiction, haven't experienced it themselves or haven't seen it in their families or their close circle, have a hard time wrapping their heads around. They're like, "Well, that was forever ago. You're past that, right?" And maybe there are people out there who can put it in the rear view and say, I'm healed and I'm recovered and I'm no longer an alcoholic or a drug addict but I'm very in touch with the fact that it lives inside me all the time and requires constant treatment in order to keep it at bay because left on my own devices, I'm going to engage with my character defects and I will very easily veer off the cliff if I don't do certain things every single day to maintain my foundation of sobriety.



Darin: And then you found the better addiction in exercise. You found your love back with swimming again and all of that stuff and quickly, that can turn against you too. So how do you now use this I love pain and I'm able to withstand a huge amount at the same time knowing that there's an addictive quality with the exercise? How do you handle?

Rich: Yeah, I think the first thing that I do is I acknowledge it. I acknowledge the truth of that. It's a very kind of flip question that I get all the time, "Oh, you just transferred all of your addictive qualities on to endurance training, that's not healthy." And I think the first thing that I do when I hear that is I go, "Yeah, in some respects, that's true." I have to acknowledge the underlying truth of that. I am at my core, an obsessive, driven, addictive mindset person. And there are things that I can do to deregulate that and live in a more balanced way, but fundamentally, that is part of who I am. So channeling that in healthier directions is part of my solution but I also have to be careful. Like left to my own devices, I'm going to get divorced and move into the woods and get a yurt and just train all day and not talk to people. I might as well drink myself to death, you know what I mean? But I think the equation that I run, like the algorithm that I run is, is this making my life better or worse? Am I becoming a more productive person by virtue of these pursuits or am I being destructive? And you can pursue anything to destruction, but I would say that my involvement in endurance sports and health and these things that interest me have helped me become a better person and to be a better servant, which is ultimately the most simple important role that I see myself functioning in. And I think the other thing also to bear in mind, my friend, Mischka, coined this but I always think about it, he's also in recovery, and he says, "The drink was always the easy choice." It's like the way out but like putting a running shoes on in the morning when it's cold out, you don't want to go, that's the hard choice. So it's qualitatively different in that regard.

Darin: And that's where life is so strange because there's an easy choice but that easy choice as let's call it easy, and you pick up a drink and drowned your perceived tensions, whatever that could be but then, the hard choice, but the rewarding one is riddled with facing whatever the pain is, dealing with it, but yet it has a long term benefit to maybe uncovering who you are, what you are, what you can do, the achievements you can have but it's not easy. And that's the rub. It's very easy for you to drop the podcast, leave the family, pick up the drink, and/or just run until--

Rich: You disappear.

Darin: Yeah.

Rich: Are you running away from something or are you running towards something? And I've seen people use Endurance Sports to run away from their lives. You can very easily do that. I got interested in it, originally, fundamentally, as a crucible for spiritual growth. I mean, my whole fascination with ultraman was born out of reading an article that portrayed this crazy double Ironman race as this spiritual odyssey. And I realized something clicked in me like, that's what I'm looking for. I don't want to just do an Ironman and check a box and make it like my midlife



crisis accomplishment. I want to grow and I need a vehicle for that. And I can do that through books and through 12 step and through working with other people but there's something about the visceral connection that happens when you're suffering, training for these races and participating in them where you can't hide from yourself. You're forced to confront yourself in a very fundamental profound way. And that reveals who you are. It reveals character, it reveals your character defects and flaws. And that set up where you can't escape that helps me confront those things and not live in denial.

Darin: It's almost like you set your own learning lined up for your walkabout or your spiritual odyssey like you said.

Rich: Yeah, it's like Kung Fu, walking off into the distance. Yeah, there is a little bit of an analogy to that.

Darin: The other thing, the other parallel, not to keep drawing them, but I'm also aware that you're a deeply empathetic person, and you're highly intelligent. And that combination of high intelligence with empathy is exactly what my father had as well. And I think that there's a lot of people that are like that, that can have a tough time navigating this weird world on the first face of it because you're receiving all of this, and I could be wrong, but I want to hear your thoughts because you're facing with "I'm feeling all of this and yet I'm aware of a lot, and I'm not sure how to rectify that," plus, getting bullied and all that stuff doesn't help.

Rich: I think it's been said that alcoholics and addicts are, I think they're, predominantly very sensitive people. They're like raw nerves. And they're spiritual seekers. This is something Russell Brand talks about all the time much more eloquently than I'll be able to, but they are people who are in pain, who are seeking a spiritual solution, who are very sensitized to their environments and the people around them. And they latch on to drugs and alcohol as a vehicle for that kind of expansion. Ultimately, it proves to be a fruitless endeavor and takes people off in terrible directions and just self destructive directions, but what's beautiful about sobriety is that you can then take that very sensitive person and channel them in a different direction. And I think there's a lot of baseline fundamental empathy that you find amongst addicts and alcoholics because they've experienced deep suffering. And by virtue of participating in the recovery community, you're privy to other people's pain. And you spend a lot of time listening to other people share their stories, share their version of your pain, and it becomes very difficult to judge people. And when you see somebody who was so broken and so destitute, repair their life and become a productive member of society and impart wisdom, then it gives you pause before judging another person's path. Every man is correct from his perspective. And if you backtrack somebody's life all the way to its origin story, it's very hard to judge the decisions that they've made. And so, yeah, I would consider myself deeply empathetic. And I think I try to bring that to the podcast and the other things that I do.

Darin: I used to sit when I was young watching my dad lead an AA meeting. And I was always so proud and I didn't know what it was, I just saw my dad kind of doing his thing. And then in



1983, so another fucking weird parallel just hit me right now. He created the first triathlon in my hometown. It was 1986 and that was when I did my first triathlon because my dad organized it. So at 16, I did my first triathlon in Watseka, Minnesota. So my dad was this endurance guy.

Rich: And not to turn the tables on you again, but it must have been incredibly baffling and painful when he relapsed after being this pillar of this over community. I mean, how do you even wrap your head around how somebody could do that, but that is alcoholism. The default state of the alcoholic to is to drink so it's not baffling when they do it. What's baffling is that day after day, they don't do it.

Darin: Yeah. He's passed away 17 years ago. And just to button this whole side of it up in walking because he was then separated from his second wife, and in his apartment after he passed away, talk about the struggle. You're seeing it so there's a bottle of superfoods next to a beer bottle. There's the AA book and then this ranting journal entry about how horrible of a person he is. And then there is a cross and a Buddhist mala beads, like the dualism within 50 feet.

Rich: And the level of shame he must have been harboring. How horribly painful it must have been for him to relapse and then find him in that state and feel unable to get back.

Darin: Hundred percent. So shifting gears a little bit, your podcast is kicking ass. Even in the years I've known you from that until now, it's just boom, a whole other level. I remember the time when you actually said I need to take this up a notch and then you really did and then it just fucking started. I want to go after these guests and then the Lance Armstrongs and the Russell Brands. You're getting all of these, which is really cool. What was the moment because this is something that anyone starting anything can understand or maybe get something? When did you decide because podcasts weren't out that much, but what was the lead up and the decision making to go like, yeah, you know what? I want to do a podcast. Let's go.

Rich: Yeah, it's been a crazy journey. I mean, I've been doing it for over seven years now. So I would consider myself a fairly early adopter. It wasn't like I was the first person to do it. When I started, some of the big shows that you know now we're around. I mean, Rogen started before me and not to compare myself to him because he's the 800-pound gorilla. Corolla, a lot of comedians were doing it, but there wasn't a lot happening in the kind of health and self-improvement sector, but what led me to it was although I was fairly early adopter to doing my own show, I was a super early adopter to being a fan. So when I started training for these ultra endurance races, and I would go out for a 40-mile run or an eight-hour bike ride. First of all, a lot of that headspace is just time alone. And that's part of that confronting the self thing that I was trying to do so there was a lot of quiet time, but I also needed something to distract myself from the low-level kind of suffering that I was enduring. And that's when I cottoned on to podcasts. And at the time, it was very different time than it is now. Like you had to be very intentional about what podcasts you wanted to listen to. The day before I would go on iTunes and I would select six hours worth of podcasts and then you got to download all of them





individually, and then bump them to your iPod so that they're all mp3 sitting on a little device that would be in my back pocket but that's what got me onto it and I would listen for hours and hours and hours so I was acclimating to that kind of ecosystem before almost anybody else was, and I loved it. This whole world opened up to me. I was like, I'm learning so much. I'm hearing interesting conversations with amazing people but I was the only one that I knew that was listening. I was like, why isn't everybody doing this? You don't have to listen to the radio. You can literally program your audio environment and be intentional about it as opposed to being passive and just listening to whatever radio station decides they're going to deliver to you. And I couldn't understand why most people weren't doing it but it was those extra steps of having to download it and look at and all of that, that just prevented it from permeating mainstream culture. But as technology advanced, then it became more and more seamless to the point where now car dashboards have them. There's still tons of people that have never pushed that purple thing on their iPhone, but it definitely has mainstream. But when I started mine in 2012, what was happening was my book had come out in May of 2012. I did the book tour thing and marshaled all the energy I could to push this thing out into the world to the best of my ability. Now you go on Google and you'll see articles out, New York Times bestseller. Finding Ultra was not a New York Times bestseller. It did fine but it wasn't like some big sensation. And in the wake of that, I was kind of waiting for the phone to ring. I was like, all right, what's next? I made the decision when my book came out to not renew my bar membership so I was going to put being a lawyer in the rearview mirror. And that meant that I was gonna have to figure out how to support my family and my four kids doing something completely different and I wasn't sure what that looked like or what that meant. And we were going broke, like financially, books out. Anybody knows how book publishing works. I ain't putting food on the table from that. I was thinking, well, maybe I'll get hired to do speaking engagements and I did a couple here and there for 500 bucks, \$1,000. We're unable to pay our mortgage, bills are going unpaid, they're stacking up. The opportunities that I thought would be coming weren't really coming. And there's a quote in the book, when I'm really meeting my maker with how I'm going to, in a similar sense, I'm training for these races and trying to be a lawyer and there's this line that I say, which is, "When your heart is true, the universe will conspire to support you." And that's proven true in my life in the past. And here I was, again, feeling very true of hearts. Like here I am, I'm ready to be of service. How can I provide for my family doing these things that I love and pursuing these things that I care about, but the universe didn't seem to be conspiring to support me. And I just remember thinking, I'm so full of shit, man. I'm a fucking full of shit.

Darin: I didn't even know my own heart.

Rich: This book that I wrote is bullshit or I'm lying to myself or where's the denial? And I started flogging myself and I was feeling very emasculated, and the bills were piling up. And that's when I got a call from this guy, Chris Djabe. So Chris was an entrepreneur who had read my book, and we had met one time prior, and he was inspired by it. He's friends with Compton Rom. That's how I met Chris originally. Chris calls me and he's like, "Hey, man." Chris was a guy who made a ton of money. He was Mark Cuban's partner in broadcast.com. And when that IPO



happened, which was the biggest IPO in the history of IPOs at that time, he made a boatload of money. Unlike Mark Cuban, he just said, I'm done. I have more money than I will ever need, and I'm just gonna live my life. And he bought this beautiful piece of property in Kauai on the North Shore, called 'Common Ground.' It was a former guava farm, and he was converting it into this kind of communal space. He had a restaurant, a beautiful restaurant on the property, and he called me and said, "I'm trying to figure out what to do with this piece of property. I really want to create community events and I want to expand the reach and do some media stuff around it. I don't really quite have a grip on what it is, but you seem like a person that that could be a good, I don't know, consultant or like compadre in this mission. Would you come out to Hawaii, and try to help me figure this out?" Now, it seems weird because I don't have any expertise in this but here was somebody offering to help. And I was like, yeah. So we packed up our whole family, moved to 'Common Ground' and lived in yurts on this guava farm for three months.

Darin: No shit. The whole family.

Rich: In November of 2012. And it was a very bizarre, what are we doing here? Why am I here? There must be some reason for this. And as the weeks and months progressed of helping Chris on this project, I started to get a little bit of Island fever because I was thinking, I worked so hard to create this thing. And now I'm feeling very detached from society and culture. I need a creative outlet. And I thought, well, maybe I'll start a podcast. I know some cool people and I've had some experiences and I really love the medium and I thought, why not? There's nothing else to do out here really was the main thing. And my sons who are musicians had some mics and some wires and stuff like that. And I spent a day on the internet trying to figure out how you start a podcast, figured it out. And then Julie and I, my wife, just flicked on mics and had a conversation, a two-hour conversation out of the blue, episode one. I didn't know if I would do Episode Two. There was no grand plan. It wasn't like oh, this is my new vocation. It was just fun. That was cool. Let's do it again tomorrow. We did. And I was like, wow! We didn't bank a bunch of episodes and launch a show. It wasn't that. There was very little competition at that time. So the show just went straight up to the top of the iTunes rankings even though I think maybe I got like 2,000 downloads on the first one but that was enough at that time to distinguish yourself. And I was like, wow, this is actually a thing, "Look, it's like number three." I think when it debuted, it was in the top 20 of all podcasts for a month or something like that. And that was great encouragement. I was like, this is like the Wild West. This is wide open. And that's really how it began. I think my third episode, I did one with Chris Jay to hear about his entrepreneurial journey and then I had Gabby Reese on because Gabby and Laird would come to Common Ground every day eat. And Gabby was teaching her women's exercise class in the same shed where I was recording these podcasts. So she was nice enough when I was nobody to come on the show as well. And it just really grew from there. I mean, I don't remember there being any distinct moment where I thought, oh, this is this is gonna be my thing. And I did it for well over two years, maybe three years before I monetized it in any way. So it was really just a passion project. I didn't do it to make money. I didn't do it to do anything because I was enjoying it, and it was really cool to meet interesting people. And if you go back and listen to those early episodes,





they're rough. I've now done over 500 episodes. It's been seven years. Hopefully, I've gotten a little bit better at it, but it just was a very slow organic growth kind of thing. There was never a viral moment where everything went crazy and and suddenly it was a thing.

Darin: But you just get this trickling aspects of encouragement along the way, that first initial, "Oh, wow, I'm ranking. We had fun. Let's just do that again." But that's really cool because I didn't know that whole thing and that speaks to several things. Number one is you were interested in something and you were willing to lean into it because A, you were getting something from it. So you're doing these runs, you're learning, you're educating. That's what I love about the podcast because we all can learn something from another person. I believe you could pull anyone off the street and have an incredible conversation.

Rich: Of course. Of course, you can.

Darin: And so you followed that and then you just flung yourself into it. It's almost even better because you didn't put the pressure on yourself to thinking well, this is my way out and I'm gonna make millions of dollars doing this.

Rich: I mean, that wasn't even in the realm of possibility. Nobody was making money. I mean, Adam Carolla, I think was making money doing it, and maybe two or three other people, but it wasn't a professional vocation. It never even entered my mind that I would be able to become financially successful doing it.

Darin: Then two, three years later, it's just started to create some income for you, kind of deal.

Rich: And now it's embarrassing.

Darin: What do you mean?

Rich: I mean, financially. I get paid really well to do it and then it's hilarious because, again, that was not part of the equation at all. And I'm somebody who-- I've been broken so many times, and I've been somebody who's never been able to figure out money. That's been a huge stumbling block for me. And my personal growth curve, whether it's a poverty mindset or not feeling worthy or whatever psychological defect that I've had. I've always carried myself well, I'll never be able to figure that out. And like now, over the past couple of years, finally, I've been able to create financial stability and success, but I wouldn't say accidentally, but also not necessarily intentionally. It's really just been about following my curiosity, which is something Neil talks about all the time. His whole career is premised on following his curiosity.

Darin: Curiosity, passion, and then maybe a little splash of your enduring ability to persist.

Rich: I think the thing about podcast is it's a huge amount of work. I think most people underestimate how much work it requires. And I've worked incredibly hard to build this thing. And that kind of endurance suffering mindset has benefited me in terms of seeing it through. A



lot of people, they come out with a splash and they do a show and then they realize like, oh, this is a lot of work and you see these things fall off a cliff all the time because people just can't sustain that level of workload overtime.

Darin: And you're kicking out episode after episode. And you've mentioned several times, "Dude, I need a break. This is a lot of work that I load on myself," and then you're suffering along the way. And so just to take a break for you, it takes a lot.

Rich: Yeah. So I took a month off. I went to Australia for all of December. It's the first real break that I've taken in seven years since I was at 'Common Ground' basically and started the podcast and it was hard to detach. And to be clear, it's not like the show shut down. I worked to make sure that the show continued.

Darin: Front loaded it.

Rich: Yeah. So there was a lot of work that went into making sure that I could keep that going when I was gone, but it was great.

[00:35:58] 121 Tribe Ad

Darin: So for years, maybe most of my life, people have been asking me, "What kind of foods do you eat? What kind of exercises do you do? What kind of water should I drink?" All of these things and so much more we put into a 21-day program so that can take you through a theme every day of knowledge, action, and then eating these delicious meals, working out, getting support, anchoring in these new habits so you can do what? So that you can kick ass. So you have the energy, the vitality to live the kind of life that you really want. That's what it's all about. So all in this app, we have grocery lists, we have education about real hydration and what greater oxygenation and the balance of alkalization. All of these things we are diving into as you're heading down this hero's journey of implementation into a new life to give you the kind of life that you actually want. So join my Tribe. All you have to do is go [121tribe.com](https://121tribe.com). Sign up, and you get three free days. Join me on this hero's journey. Join the Tribe.

[00:37:24] Barukas Ad

Darin: Many of you who follow me know I've spent most of my life searching for the healthiest foods on the planet. If you look hard enough, there are a few unknown extraordinary foods around the world that people still don't know about. And a few years ago, I came across my favorite superfood discovery of all time, Barukas nuts. When I first tasted them, my eyes lit up. The taste alone just absolutely blew me away. But after sending them to the lab, which I do and getting all the tests, I realized they're the health theists nuts on the planet. No other nut even compares. They have an unusually high amount of fiber and they're off the charts in super high antioxidants and have few calories than any other nut. It's jam-packed with micronutrients. But they're not just good for you, they're really good for the planet. Most other nuts require millions of gallons of irrigated water, but Baruka trees require no artificial irrigation. Barukas are truly



good for you, good for the planet, and good for the world community. It's a win all the way around. I really think you'll love them, so I'm giving all of my listeners 15% off by going to [barukas.com/darin](https://barukas.com/darin). That's B-A-R-U-K-A-S dot com backslash Darin, D-A-R-I-N. I know you will enjoy.

[00:39:25] Second Half of Interview

Darin: Are you training for anything right now?

Rich: Training's on a pretty low boil. I was able to look after myself in Australia, which was really great. Then I've come back and throw myself back into the fire and the training routine has definitely suffered but I'm gonna do this, Otello Racing Catalina, at the end of February, just for fun. For people that don't know, it's this swim-run competition where you run and they set up these courses. It's a race that began in Sweden. This world championship race I did a couple of years ago where you take a ferry out of Stockholm to the Archipelago of Islands that are out there in the sea. And it's a 75-kilometer race, where you swim and run across something like 38 islands where you're swimming and you're running, you do the whole thing in a wetsuit with running shoes on. It's pretty cool event. And it's turned into a series of races that are predominantly in Europe, but their first North American event is happening in Catalina. So I thought this is cool. I love the people that created this race and organize it. So just to honor them also, I kind of wanted to participate in that race. I'm doing with a buddy of mine, but I'm doing it for fun. I'm not going to lighten anybody up.

Darin: So you can shift into that zone. You don't have to compete?

Rich: That's hard. I've never been the kind of guy who can just show up at races all the time for fun. If I show up I want to be 100% and so there's a letting go of, "Hey, it's okay. You're doing lots of other stuff, just go and have a good time. And don't put that pressure on yourself like you have to podium or anything like that, because that's certainly not gonna happen."

Darin: So you think you can do that?

Rich: Not based on my current training protocol, I can tell you that.

Darin: Right. So you have to let go. When is that event?

Rich: I think it's the last day of February.

Darin: Oh, wow. So it's coming up? So you're stepping it up a little bit.

Rich: I wish I could tell you that. I've barely done anything in the last week. It's six podcast interviews in the last seven days. They're hard, man. I'm very emotionally drained after I do a



podcast. I don't know how there are certain people that can do multiple ones in a day but not me, man. It takes a lot out of me.

Darin: Yeah, and it's a time thing. There's preparation for it. You do a lot of prep. And oftentimes, there's books and there's things that people have written or done and so you need to be--

Rich: Yeah, what's great though is that it's not about me, it's the ritual podcast, but I'm a cipher, I'm a vehicle for the wisdom of my guest, and I'm there to learn. I put myself in the position of the listener. I'm trying to continue to grow and expand. Yeah, I did these endurance races and people know me as this vegan athlete and all of that, but I participated in that world, like I said, to leverage it as a vehicle for personal growth, and personal growth never ends. So what's next? What are the other areas in which I can learn more and become a better human, more fully actualized person. So when I'm thinking about the guests that I want to have on, they're always hitting different sectors and areas of my life that I feel like I need attention. And so it's not about my opinions or anything like that, it's really just me trying to learn. And a lot of it is like when I was confused and 24 and trying to figure out who I wanted to be and what I wanted to do, what would have been the curriculum that would have been helpful in facilitating that decision making process? And so I think a lot about that too.

Darin: I mean, that's interesting. And would that 24-year-old even care or even receive it?

Rich: No, but if I was a young person and I could just at the touch of a finger hear the wisdom of other people, how different would my life be?

Darin: Yeah, and it's as if anything if you're able to put that out there and the said 24-year-old, whoever that may be is willing to receive it, then they are willing to receive it and the other ones aren't. So it's not for us to decide, but to be there and to show up. So we're plant based bros. We have to touch on that subject a little bit. We don't really have any conflict to go back and forth. So we don't need to talk about--

Rich: We are like yessing each other on this.

Darin: So what do you think about protein? Well, I think it's fun because I think we take a similar approach in the sense that-- I'll speak for me first and then you can add your parts. So, plant based means a lot to me in terms of what it does for me physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually. Obviously, if a fly comes in the yurt, I'm the guy putting the glass over it and sliding the paper underneath it and bring it outside.

Rich: A gentle giant.

Darin: That's always been my feeling with animals. And to go off of that, of course, I ate meat growing up, when I was growing up in Minnesota, and then finally for the last 13 years. And it's easy to come around to morally, ethically, spiritually, that just resonates with me. However, I think the thing that we resonate a lot on, not to mention 99% of the other stuff, is that I've



chosen not to be that in your face activist because I don't want to take that responsibility of someone having to do it because I'm going to guilt them or there's plenty of guys, and there's nothing wrong, if that's their choice. There's plenty of vegans and plant based people that do that. And I also love, of course, the science that supports eating in this way too, but I don't like the, "You have to do it, you have to do it, you have to do it," in people's faces. I just want to give them information, and it's not my job nor my responsibility for you to make a choice. I'm just going to give you information and then move on. And I think you're fairly similar in that way. What's your thoughts?

Rich: Yeah, I would say I'm quite similar in that regard and this is something, first of all, I'll say God bless all the hardcore advocates out there who put themselves on the frontlines of whatever issue they're passionate about. And I think those people are super important in moving culture forward and changing hearts and minds. Fundamentally, that's not my blueprint. That doesn't feel comfortable to me to be that person. I'm glad those people exists, but it's not how I advocate. The way that I think about it really tracks back to my experience in recovery. And in the secret rooms of recovery, you learn early and often that you're not there to give advice. You're there to share your experience. So I come from a place of sharing my experience. I share my experience, strength and hope. What it was like, what happened and what it's like now. And I would much rather be a lighthouse standing in my strength, attracting people out in the world who are responding to whatever vibration I'm putting out and they will come to me. So rather than me chasing people and trying to change their minds, I'm just doing my thing and I'm sharing what has worked for me and what hasn't worked. I'm sharing the perspectives and the wisdom of other people that I believe in or that I see some wisdom in, and it's up for the listener or whoever's on the receiving end of whatever I'm doing to make up their own mind about how that applies to their life. I'm not here to tell anybody how they should live or shouldn't live. I'm just sharing how I'm living my life.

Darin: Hundred percent. I love that and it reminds me of a few talks I've done and I knew that I had a bunch of people in the audience that were from all over the place and loved their meat or whatever. And the first opening line was, "I'm plant based and you don't have to be." Just cut it right now. I'm not here to convince you, but I am going to share a bunch of stuff that you're going to benefit from and that's where I like that whole-- For sure, it's important for these other people to be there, and to show the slaughterhouses and all of that stuff. And again, that's just fucking painful. I already know it's there. I'm making my choices based on that but I don't want to show up in that zone.

Rich: Yeah, I think for you, just you getting up on stage with all the wisdom and the knowledge that you have about superfoods and nutrition and the impact on health and performance is super powerful and helpful, but let's not forget, it's the gun show with you. You get up and you're just a physical specimen of a human being, you're super healthy, you're strong, you're fit, you're vibrant. And just your presence alone, I think speaks as loudly as whatever wisdom it is that you're also imparting. And I think that there's a lot of people that probably, if anything, I would



encourage you to talk about it a little bit more because there's a lot of people I think that don't even know that aspect of how you live.

Darin: The physical side of my life or is that what you're saying or just like--

Rich: Just being, "Oh, I'm plant based." You bury the lead with that sometimes. You know what I mean? And you keep it kind of really close to the vest, maybe a little bit too close to the vest, but it's interesting. I was really touched the other day reading about how Joaquin Phoenix, who is a passionate animal rights advocate person, has made his speeches where he's being celebrated for his acting about like the issues that he cares about. And after winning the SAG Award for Best Actor, he went straight from the award show to a pig vigil. And he was still in his tuxedo. And he said basically like, I need to do that. It's like an exercise in humility. I need to counterbalance all the shenanigans around feeding my ego in the Hollywood world by getting to what he's most passionate about and what he feels is actually real and important. I think that's really amazing.

Darin: It gives me the chills. That's crazy.

Rich: And I'm not that person. Like you, I'm not the person who's showing up at all the pig vigils. I'd actually like to go to one, that's cool but that's not the cornerstone of how I advocate around this lifestyle.

Darin: And I appreciate that to about you in the sense that it's the magnetism or the invitation you create to people leaning in to ask questions because there's different ways. You can bulldoze people but then there's also a defensive nature that they can take pretty quickly.

Rich: Yeah, it's not that effective. I think it goes back to empathy. Empathizing with people and meeting them where they're at and fanning the flames of positive change however small. Even if it's just a spark, to be a vehicle of positivity for that person as opposed to judgment, I think is a much more effective strategy in fostering positive change in people.

Darin: What would you say your health is that now you've been vegan, plant based for a long time? How are you feeling? Not that it's about that but how are you just feeling physically?

Rich: I feel good. So I've been plant based now for over 13 years. I feel good, man. I'm 53. I've got energy. I'm not out training and pushing myself as hard as I have in the past, but I still get out and get after it and I feel good and I've been able to maintain my weight and my blood marker. I'm actually due for a blood test pretty soon. My blood markers are all pretty good. The thing that I struggle with is probably the most is adrenal fatigue because I just push myself so hard in my work, and I can definitely wear myself out that way. So that's one thing I have to stay on top of. There's always improvements that I could be making. I think at 53, I'm starting to feel stuff. I could just get away with things five or six years ago that I can't now, so I have to be a little bit more on top of little niggles and back stuff and things like that.





Darin: Podcast is kicking ass. You seem like you're in a good place. You're still managing your stress and your time and all of that stuff. You're getting pulled more because of success. You're still doing a lot of speaking. You get called upon a lot more. What's your next year, two-year, five-year plan? What do you want? I'm outting you right now. What do you want to be? Where do you want to be sitting in the next year or two?

Rich: Yeah, so it's hard to answer that question. People ask me what's the vision? What's the big goal? Where do you want to go? I've never thought like that. I've never been on a five-year plan.

Darin: Me either.

Rich: I don't know that I've ever been on a one-year plan. And then I feel guilty and ashamed because all these successful people do that and talk about that stuff, and I've just never been that person. Like I said, the podcast is not the result of a vision board or like some goal that I set for myself. It really happened organically by following my curiosity and my passion. And so, that's how I approach everything. I have ambitions and projects and things that I want to actualize. I think when I think, where do you want to be sitting in five years, I just feel so blessed to be doing what I'm doing now. And I'm so incredibly fulfilled and everything is going really well. I don't need it to be any different than it is right now. If I'm doing the exact same thing that I'm doing now five years from now, I'm happy. If I got hit by a bus tomorrow and that was it, job well done. I feel pretty content in my life. And so I'm not driven by some sense that my life could be better doing something else but that being said, yeah, I want to be able to continue doing the podcast. I just want to get better at it. And it's not about it needing to be any bigger than it is. Everybody wants, "Oh, it would be great if more people are listening." Yeah, of course, but I don't really think about that. What I think about is, how can I deliver higher quality content? How can I be more of service to the people that are already tuning in? And when I'm in that headspace, as opposed to it needs to be bigger than it is or why isn't it bigger? How come that guy has more listeners? That's not good. It's just how can I be of service? Entering all of this from a service perspective. I did a live show in LA this past year as a test case to see if that would be something that I would want to develop and that went really well. So I want to do a tour this year and do a multi-city live podcast at cool venues across America. So that's something that is in the works. A couple other things I'm not ready to talk about. Another book project that I want to do. I'm putting together a book. I'm not ready to talk about that yet either, but I have like creative things that I'm babysitting right now, that are percolating up.

Darin: Well, that live podcast is something that-- Unfortunately, I was out of the country but I've been with you when you've interviewed live. We're at the Nantucket Project. And of course, the infamous great Dr. Zack Bush and Russell Brand. You had another little interaction with him and you're so good in that way, live. I was so impacted by the Nantucket Project, the way they conducted themselves.



Rich: Incredible event.

Darin: Incredible. And there's something about what they're doing about the community side of things and I really see that what you're doing with the live shows is towards that end. We just started this conversation. You and I've been friends for a long time, we see each other on the regular and yet sitting down, I'm learning more about you as well. And so when you're booking an event and cities, and people get to show up to, and now have a conscious intention, and a great guest, that's a different dynamic. What was that like for you to do that? And what is that? I mean, it's got to be vulnerable. It's got to be challenge. It's a total different level.

Rich: It was scary. We had a 1,200 seat venue. It's not a 300 seat theater. It was a big theatre to fill.

Darin: Or a tea shop.

Rich: Yeah. And it was scary, for sure. We sold it out though. It was crazy walking out on that stage and to see all those people there. And I think what struck me, a couple of things. First of all, as I said earlier, the show's about the guest. It's not about me. If anything, I downplay the extent to which people are tuning in for me because I really try to recede into the background as much as I can. And yet, whatever it is that I'm doing, people are connecting with it in some way. And so in the live event, I think I underestimated that aspect of it. And I made it about the guest and I realized in the aftermath, there were people there that wanted to hear more from me or whatever. And I think I can improve upon that and make it a more immersive experience in that regard, but I think more importantly, the reason that I wanted to do the live events and what was successful about the LA one was that, podcasting is a very powerful medium, but it is a digital abstraction. It's very intimate. Whoever's listening to this right now knows that. They're in their car or they're cooking or they're on the treadmill or they're doing something. They have their earbuds in and there's an intimacy and a sense of a relationship that's happening here that the audience member is participating in. And yet, it doesn't exist in the three dimensional plane. And so the live event, the main thing about it for me was to get all of these audience members to connect with each other to try to cultivate community around these ideas. It's drawing a certain kind of person because they're attracted to this wavelength, this kind of information, and to get them to feel like they're connecting with each other. I get messages all the time from people. I live in this small town in the middle of nowhere and no one understands me and you're like this lifeline because you're speaking my language, or I get to hear from people that I really connect with and identify with and I just don't have that in my immediate surroundings. And so the podcast serves that. It's a nutrient for that person, but how can we get people to-- I wanted to scale beyond me and my personality. I want it to be about those people sitting in the audience.

Darin: Well, the podcast itself, the long form discussion is serving. Like what you said, the nutrient also of this absolutely distracted social media short form annihilation of our senses. And so, being able to have this discussion where people can actually kind of stop and edutain themselves and connect with people because we're just talking and we haven't scripted



ourselves, we are not reading monologues. This is just two humans having a conversation and then when you're taking it to the theater, you're not only doing that. You're allowing people to show up and if we don't need more community of conscious, meaningful connection and conversation in this crazy world right now.

Rich: It is the one antidote to so many of the problems that we face. The long conversation is fundamental to being human and we've lost that. It is a return to the campfire and I think we yearn for it. And despite everybody saying attention spans have dwindled, and no one's gonna listen to anything this long. For years when I started, constantly, why is it so long? Make it a half an hour. I would get that all the time. I don't get that anymore. Nobody says that anymore because I think that people are realizing how nourishing it is, and it really helps us feel fully actualized like, "Oh, this is what I've been missing. This is what I need to feel whole." And all of the acrimony and the breakdown in communication and the siloing, and the tribalism and all of that, how are we going to fix that? The only way to deal with that is to have long form conversations, where we can hash out ideas in real time with the nuance and the complexity that they require in order to be fully examined ideas.

Darin: That's relationship. We need that in every aspect. We need to stop and have that with our families, with our spouses, with our loved ones, with our business partner.

Rich: And yet we don't. We have to tune in to podcasts.

Darin: Yeah, and hopefully we can start to realize that and shift that perspective and then allow that craving to fill us up. And ask for that and require that and cultivate that in our own spheres because we have a gathering of guys that we get together with and we get to have conscious conversation. I get together with the community of workout dudes. It's innate within us, I think of my Viking blood relatives where they didn't even write anything down. It was orbital exchange of ideas and culture and all of that stuff.

Rich: We need it. I'll go to an AA meeting at seven o'clock in the morning and listen to somebody spill their guts for an hour in the most vulnerable, raw-- And you leave that and you feel unbelievable. You just feel nourished. And a lot of that informed how I was approaching the podcast in the early days as well. How can I take some of that energy and provide that for other people who aren't part of that kind of a community or don't feel like they have a group that they can go to and be honest with and open up to and be on the receiving end of other people doing the same thing?

Darin: Yeah. And that's so much of the space that you've created in your podcast and knowing several of the guests and me being one of them multiple times.

Rich: How many? Three times?

Darin: I think so, yeah.



Rich: I think three times.

Darin: And once I get some of this other show, I'll come on again and let it rip but that's the space that you've created. And back to what you said, the invitation that you create within what you're sharing, that is, again, knowing some of the guests on your show, you open up a type of conversation that's different than them maybe doing a circuit of other podcasts and that's clear to me.

Rich: Well, for me it's all about the emotional connection. Even if I'm sitting across from somebody who's hyper intellectual, it doesn't work for me unless I can find a way in and connect with that person on a spiritual and emotional level. And the way that I do that is I lead with vulnerability. You can't expect somebody else to be vulnerable if you're not going to be so I try to create that safe space and do that, and then just be present for what's happening and not to have an agenda about it. And the trust that if you prioritize the emotional connection above everything else, that whatever information is meant to be imparted will be imparted, but I think what most people do is they focus on the intellectual aspect of it, like here are the points that we got to get, here are the questions I need to ask. And they're missing the larger opportunity which is the fact that people learn and are able to absorb information when they, the listener, are able to connect emotionally. And if you can't create that for the person, that information is just going to wash over them and it's not going to really resonate.

Darin: Well, that's very apparent by that and I think that's your nature to create that space.

Rich: Yeah, it's just the way I would do it anyway. I think it's just my disposition.

Darin: Yeah. It's that empathetic side of you, that feeling part of you and listen, you care. And that's the bottom line. So that's a good place to end.

Rich: Right on.

Darin: Thanks for gifting my audience with you who may not know you as well. So I appreciate you, brother. Love you, man.

Rich: Appreciate you. Much love.

[01:06:47] Fatal Convenience Intro

Darin: Now we've reached a part of the show where we address society's fatal conveniences, and how we can avoid falling into them and being a victim of them. I defined fatal conveniences as the things we may be doing because the world we live in makes us believe we have to. Even though they may be saving us time, or tricking us into thinking they're good for us, the truth is, they're not. In fact, they could be slowly harming us and even killing us.



[01:07:26] Fatal Convenience

Darin: Hey, everybody. How's it going? Okay, we're gonna get into this one and I'm sure maybe you've heard this one before but this is plastic, but the plastic we use. So I've talked about how incredibly dangerous plastic is with water bottles and wrapping our food in it, but the other level to this is just using this plastic and also the single use from straws to Q-tips, to coffee containers and those little caps that we use and we just drink the coffee and throw it away, to plastic bags that we just put a few groceries in, and move on and all of this stuff. So we need, as a society, to change our habits. And this is the fatal convenience. It's so bloody convenient that our whole bloody modern world has shifted from glass and other tin containers that we use to have coffee in and these cool tin containers. We used to have a glass bottles. I used to drink huge amounts of coke from all the old fashioned coke bottles. It was great just to have glass. So here's the thing, plastic that was created in the last 50 years and from the beginning of our time of using plastic, none of it has ever left. It's still here. We have 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic in the world, the stuff that's been created and all the new stuff that's being created, and of course, it's from petroleum, so it's oil, it's PCBs, it's chemicals, it's gnarly stuff combined to make this plastic estrogens and it's getting into our waterways. And so, there is so much that we need to do. And listen, 9%, and believe me, I believe that is a stretch, 9% of our world plastic of the 8.3 billion metric tons, only 9% is recycled. So let me tell you, everyone. The fact that you think you're recycling and you're separating your stuff and you have bin over here and you have the other blue bin and you're separating this stuff and you feel good. You put it out in the curb, and the trash guy comes and takes it in the recycling truck is separate and he takes it, guess what happens? Nothing. They take it to a landfill and 91% plus of everything is just buried and leaching into Mother Earth. That's it. There is no recycling. There's barely anything. So everything that you're recycling is not recycling. It's not being recycled. That is the dupe. We feel good. And the delusion is we feel good about it. That it's out of our house. It's off of our curb, and it's away in some far off place in a landfill, but it's affecting all of us. It's off gassing this huge amount of petrochemicals and it's seeping into our waterways, all of these petrochemicals and estrogens. So we need to stop as much as we can using at least the single use stuffs, and it's the fatal convenience for the planet. Do better. It feels better to be proactive. Believe me, it does when you know you're doing something right. So it is my mission to raise attention so that you can do something else to be a better contribution to the planet and have a little more awareness so that we can have a better place for our kids to live and for future generations. Okay. Thanks everyone.

[01:11:57] Generic Outro

Darin: That was a fantastic episode. What was the one thing that you got out of today's conversation? If today's episode struck a chord with you, and you want to dive a little deeper on a variety of topics, check out my live deep dives on [darinolien.com/deepdive](http://darinolien.com/deepdive). More episodes are available on [darinolien.com](http://darinolien.com) as well. Keep diving my friends, keep diving.