



[00:00:00] Intro

Darin: You are listening to the Darin Olien Show. I'm Darin. I spent the last 20 years devoted to improving health, protecting the environment, and finding ways to live a more sustainable life. In this podcast, I have honest conversations with people that inspire me. I hope that through their knowledge and unique perspectives they'll inspire you too. We talk about all kinds of topics, from camping up your diets to improving your well-being to the mind-blowing stories behind the human experience and the people that are striving to save us and our incredible planet. We even investigate some of the life fatal conveniences, those things that we are told might be good for us but totally aren't. So here's to making better choices in the small tweaks in your life that amount to big changes for you and the people around you and the planet. Let's do this. This is my show, the Darin Olien Show.

[00:01:11] Guest Intro

Darin: Hello, everybody. Welcome to the show. Thanks for tuning in. I am your pilot today as we are closing in on 2020, the end of 2020, and the beginning of a New Year. Man, it has been an adventure and I dare I say, an internal adventure about how you want to be, who you want to be, how you want to react to all of these things that have been occurring in our life, on our globe, in our environment and watching this cartoon play out. It's unbelievable. I'm excited for all the ugliness that has come out in several different ways. And I'm also excited for all the light that has come out, all of the people I have met, the businesses, the social responsible, the environmentalists who have the power, the potency to make changes in their lives. And I am for sure one of those people that I'm going to go down swinging, moving towards things that are better for us as individuals with our own sovereignty of water, power, food, shelter, internal freedoms of speech, freedom of expression, as well as the freedom to live the life that we choose without doing harm for our environment and for the people around us and to decentralize power. This next guest is a good friend and partner, co-founder in Barukas, Rodrigo Figueiredo. So Rodrigo and I have journeyed back now a bunch of years, and you're going to hear about that story, about how we got connected, how he helped me find the greatest nut on the planet, the Barukas. So we get into that story and we talk about the values. We talk about the pillars that are unquestionable, unshakable in the foundation of this company, as it's expressed in this, the muse of this incredible nut. But as we have gathered the right people to be partners with us, to build a business that is reforesting, to build a business, that is helping the environment, to build a business that we're proud of. It may take a little longer. It may not have the greatest of margins. It may be difficult getting it from Brazil to here and to have all of the checks and balances in place and to be better for the indigenous people and the environment and the wild food, all of this stuff. It's hard to get these foods to the United States. It's hard to do it right, but that is our choice, and that's what we're doing. A little bit of a mention here. We didn't get into the incredible value of Barukas, not only nutritionally every calorie take in, you're getting more nutrients than any other nut in the world, full of proteins, all the amino acids, three times more fiber than most nuts, antioxidants off the chart, 400% more than almonds. So Rodrigo is an incredible human. I love this guy because every turn of creating a business, he has always



done the right thing. So we've continued to continue and to continue. And when people get pressed, when things get hard, we almost lost the business. Certainly one time, maybe a couple of times, and we fought through it. And when you see people fighting for the right things, you know that these are the type of people that is extremely important. Rodrigo has a degree in clinical psychology from the University of Central Florida. So he was born in Brazil, but then he went to college here. He largely lives here, but he goes back and forth all the time, obviously, to visit family, but also to check in on our growing family at Barukas. Super exciting. He's got a master's in business administration from Business School Sao Paulo. He's just an incredible, incredible guy. He's like a brother. We like to get around, we kickbox. I lose all the time. And he's a brother and he cares tremendously. So he came from business managing in heavy gnarly industries, oil and gas and mining. Came out of school just like anyone, get a "good job," make some money, have your family proud of you. But as he found himself, this is having a negative impact on the world and had an awakening and therefore he started looking at he needed to break out of this corporate world, this corporate career that didn't have his values in mind. So he was searching for those values. And you will find out more and more on the show of what we talked about and how he got into Barukas and how he reached out to me and how we started to discover and explore if Barukas was actually possible to have in the business. So literally being the only people in the world able to break it out of Barukas and save a lot of the jobs and help the reforestation in the Cerrado along with other amazing organizations, we're proud of that. So this is a great, wonderful conversation, very personal to me because of this company and Barukas means so much. And Barukas is like a child that we're loving but at the same time, this powerful food that is gifting to the people and these trees that are gifting to the planet. So thanks for tuning in. Leave your comments. Make sure to subscribe and share it with your friends and family. Okay, enjoy my good friend and our conversation, Rodrigo Figueiredo.

[00:07:11] First Part of the Interview

Darin: This isn't necessarily an infomercial for Barukas, but it's really about understanding opportunity. I think everyone can relate also to small business about building something from kind of nothing in terms of it had certain pillars about the opportunity. The nut itself was extraordinary, the connection to the environment, learning about the Cerrado in a way that I never had learned. And I like to think I've been around a little bit in terms of the global, but that's the humbling side of this thing and I think connected us both on-- there was a heart center to this whole adventure. And again, people have heard my story, but let's just back up and let's hear your story. Give a little background of graduating, headhunting, corporate world, and then all of a sudden, this little nut showed up in your life and change your trajectory. What happened?

Rodrigo: Yeah, it's really important to give credit where credit is due. I think we're so used to having things so abundantly, especially here in the States. You want something, you just go to the store and you buy it. And a lot of times, just from not knowing the complexity behind what it took for that to get there, we can be sort of complacent and have a lack of appreciation for it. And so definitely giving credit where credit is due down in the ground and up and down the procurement, production, supply chain.



Darin: And all those words that he just said, people don't even have an idea of what that is. And I've spent decades in that place and you try to the best of your-- we've been on the ground there and we go there and we know what's going on, but there are hard-working people in the middle of nowhere that are gathering these nuts, lifting them around, putting them together, cracking the shell, getting them to us, people at our facility. If everyone understood the journey, especially of a wild food like this that is in an area that they don't even know, what the hell is Cerrado? What is the Savannah of Brazil that I don't even know about or where is it? And then it's spread out throughout this huge landmass. Thousands of people that have to collect these in the wild, bring them to central locations.

Rodrigo: It's no joke. I mean, just the immensity of the Cerrado and how big of a landmass it is that you have to operate in and responsibly run the procurement through these areas is just the complexity that goes through the roof, especially for us, because we're pretty much pioneering. This whole production chain has never been done at this scale before and to the fact that we do everything. We're 100% vertically integrated. So it's a lot different from a lot of other traditional businesses where some of them are working on the tail end. They're basically working on retail wholesale. They're buying something from a supplier and that's sort of where they operate.

Darin: And there's a distance there from knowing.

Rodrigo: And that's level one, and you've got other businesses who are purchasing it from maybe a farmer or a supplier of the raw materials, and they're just manufacturing it and they're selling it to the company that's branding it and retailing and wholesaling. So they're in that sort of middle ground. And then you've got the originators, the farmers that are operating the raw material, procurement. So the difficulty for us is that we're doing all of that. We're responsible from head to tail and doing it pretty much for the first time bringing something, a complete novelty to the world. And there's a lot of hardship in that. There's a lot of lessons to be learned in that. And it's so easy, the temptation, to cut corners when you're in business because it would make things a lot more practical. But our ethos as a business, as a company, as a mission, we would never do that. So we have to do what's right in the whole chain to all of the stakeholders involved. So we can impact that a little bit more later.

Darin: We should, and we'll get into the recycling side of things and the challenges that we're having, but the commitment that we're having to always improve on packaging, on sustainability, on carbon footprint, all of these things, and that's definitely an area that is a strong pillar for us without a doubt. So let's go back a little bit.

Rodrigo: Let's go to the story.

Darin: Let's go to that story in terms of like what were you doing? Was this not for you in the beginning?

Rodrigo: Well, yeah. I mean, it's a story about a serendipitous moment that brought me and you together. It's kind of weird and funny at the same time. It was basically the beginning of two 2010, 2011. I was living in Rio de Janeiro at the time. I was in my early 30s.



Darin: So everyone, Rodrigo's Brazilian. You went to school here, college, and you were born in Brazil.

Rodrigo: Yeah, well, I'm Brazilian and American. I sort of lived half my life in Brazil, half my life here flipflopping in this particular state. I was living in Brazil. I was living in Rio. And I worked as a consultant, full-on corporate gig. And our portfolio of clients were 100% companies from heavy industries. And when I'm talking about heavy industries, we're talking about oil and gas, mining, construction, energy companies.

Darin: Not friendly.

Rodrigo: Not friendly, not renewable ones. I mean, I was in a position where I made good money. I wasn't rich or anything, but it was definitely at that point in my life, very comfortable situation, definitely more money that I could spend on a monthly basis. And everything was supposed to be right. Everything's supposed to be okay. I was supposed to feel content, but I wasn't at peace. And it was a really weird situation because I think when you're younger and you're coming up and you're learning about the world and you're learning about things that make you happy, it's always like, okay, so when I start making some money, everything will be fine.

Darin: Magic. It's supposed to make everything else okay.

Rodrigo: Yeah, I will feel fulfilled and everything will be cool. So when that doesn't happen, you really question yourself, and it kind of throws your mind into a little bit of war because you're like, okay, so I'm efficient at my job, I'm making good money, yet I don't feel at peace. So every day after work, I would pretty much come home and just think about life and my mission here and what I could do and what I was doing, and why I wasn't fulfilled. And I would pretty much spend hours on the internet just trying to research and learn what other people were doing and what other kinds of projects had a positive impact in the world.

Darin: So your spirit, it's like this one side you're like culturally, you're following what we're told.

Rodrigo: And kind of programmed to think that that's the route that we should take that's going to fulfill us.

Darin: But then your spirit was kind of over here looking for that deeper sense and investigating a deeper sense of purpose, and you started working that on the side a little bit.

Rodrigo: Yeah. There was a mismatch in internal frequency. I think that would be the best way to say it. And it's hard to pinpoint, identify exactly what it is. But to me, the more I research in it, I looked at a lot of non-profits and said, you know what, maybe I'll take my skills to a non-profit. Maybe I'll make less money, but I'll be doing something good. Something kept pushing me that way to do more research, learn more and more about who we're doing what. And I think somehow I came upon a nonprofit that you were involved with. I think it was RainCatcher. You remember that one?



Darin: Of course I do. Yes. On the board for that, we got clean water to 500,000, 600,000, 700,000 kids in Africa.

Rodrigo: So I read about it and I thought it was amazing. Just another example of an entity with a mission, with a purpose to create a positive impact in the world. And I think I must have skimmed through who the board members were. And I saw you on there and I read a little bit about your bio and somehow I found you on Facebook. And I added you as a friend but didn't say anything. I was like, this is a cool dude. He looks like he's doing something good with his life. It seems like he has a purpose. And that was the end of it. And that must have been, I don't remember the exact year now, maybe it was 2012, 2013 or something like that. Fast forward a couple of years. Unfortunately, I was still in the same situation, still searching and looking. And at the time, also thinking about leaving Brazil. And I took a trip to a town in Brazil called Alto Paraiso, which you very well know.

Darin: I love that.

Rodrigo: It's the name literally translates to High Paradise.

Darin: And it is every bit of that.

Rodrigo: Yeah. And this place, for your listeners who don't know about it, it's really a hidden gem in the world. It sits on a plateau dead in the middle of the Cerrado, and it's a funky town with a very mystical and spiritual vibe to it. So this place has this underground system of caves and these crystals and energetically.

Darin: And waterfalls and incredible. I mean, we went into some incredible Garden of Eden-like places where we're the only ones there. It's as if heaven just opened up and we just got to experience heaven a little bit in these areas. And it is just absolutely stunning.

Rodrigo: Yeah, extremely lush. A lot of amazing hiking through canyons, through mountains, hundreds of waterfalls, and a lot of water around there. And it's a place that-- it's funny because it attracts a lot of people from around the world. And a lot of Europeans go there. A lot of people from Asia go there because it has this holistic vibe to it. And with that, there are also a lot of ayahuasca ceremonies, peyote ceremonies, spiritual ceremonial, and all kinds.

Rodrigo: Spiritual ceremonies, exactly, and rituals. And a lot of people that visit, a lot of Europeans actually, that visit end up staying. They ended up buying land and just living there and creating these communities. So it's a very special place to visit and just beautiful. So on this particular visit, I happened to meet now our partner in Brazil, Sargam. And he was working with Barukas for a little while now, working on the production chain, very timidly. He didn't have the bandwidth to really get it out there.

Darin: But working with a decade of relationships. I mean, he doesn't have a strong business sense. It was more about the land, connecting with the people, connecting authentically.



Rodrigo: A lot of passion.

Darin: A lot of passion. And without that, I think Barukas and our ability to understand it largely came from him and was just a cornerstone of our Brazilian connection there. The Cerrado is so big and you have to work, you have to trucks and collection and tracking and processing, and it's not profitable until you actually have to do what we're doing and we're kind of like Rodrigo was saying, we have to upgrade all of the systems so that this can actually be a business that's viable.

[00:21:30] 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 healthiest 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. That's B-A-R-U-K-A-S dot com backslash Darin, D-A-R-I-N. I know you will enjoy.

[00:23:29] Second Part of the Interview

Darin: So you run into Sargam, who is a frickin amazing character. He's one of those people that they just overhear themselves, comfortable in themselves, uniquely themselves and so fun to be around, so easy to be around, and you literally, the moment you connect with him, it's his heart and his care. It just comes out. So you ran into Sargam.

Rodrigo: Yeah. I mean, you can tell right away after you meet him, that his heart set is 100%. This is a guy that's doing it for the love and he loves the land and he wants to create that impact. And once I learned more about what a Baruka was, how amazing nutritiously it was, and the impact that it could have, I'm like, wait a second, maybe this is what I've been looking for. And I'm planning on moving back to the States, dingding! Why not bring this superfood over there and introduce it to the market. And to me, it was kind of funny because I've never really been that knowledgeable about foods in general. I was a front label guy. You know the front label guy? Only looks in the front label.

Darin: The front label is good and sexy in marketing and it looks good, then you're going to buy it.



Rodrigo: That's it. And I have to thank Carolina, my wife, for just opening my mind to it and just sort of expanding my awareness of that, that the labels are deceiving.

Darin: Even the back labels.

Rodrigo: A lot of stuff. Even in the back labels. I was that guy that would see all-natural and think, oh, this is great. Wow, all natural. They can't be lying to us. So to me, it was also a journey of knowledge. So once I understood this and then I can link back to a personal health struggle that I had that also sort of pushed me in this direction. I said, okay, I think there's something here. So fast forward a little bit. I moved back to the States, and I started importing this from Sargam, very small quantity in the beginning. And it must have been in the first month or two at the most that this thing had started. And I had initially just set up to sell through Amazon. I didn't know about the whole ecosystem of retail, of wholesale or anything. I had business knowledge in a completely different area. I said, man, I'm going to need some help. And I remembered that there was this dude, that on my Facebook. I can't remember his name that I had added years ago. All I remembered was that it was a California surfer looking guy. And I think he was working or did something with superfoods. So I went through my list, found you, and I had no idea if you were alive, if you were a nice guy, if you you're a bad guy, if you will respond, anything. And I try your message, just completely carefree. I was like, hey, man, we don't know each other. I see you work with superfoods around the world and you seem to be experienced. I've got this thing that is amazing. Honestly, I just wanted your take on it pretty much because when you're doing something new, it's good to have validation, especially when you're doing something completely unprecedented before you're bringing in something completely into a market that you don't know. And then that's when I reached out to you. And thankfully, you replied really quickly actually. I was surprised. I don't reply much. It's just life is too busy, but I think there was a couple of lines that you could see when you just cruise in through these messages. Every so often you're like, am I missing something from someone that I care about or whatever. It said something about superfood or something new and it just boom! In this world, you quickly realize you don't know anything because I go to any country, even though I want knowledge about this one thing, I come away with yes, I've learned more about that one thing, but you come away with 100 other botanicals or whatever that I never even knew about. So when I saw something like this that I didn't know about, there's a part of me that gets really excited. So then I responded.

Rodrigo: Yeah, you responded and we met. We had lunch.

Darin: We met in person.

Rodrigo: We had lunch.

Darin: Yeah, because you were living in San Diego and you drove up here.

Rodrigo: Exactly. I drove to Malibu. We had lunch and I think there was an immediate like empathy and synergy. Just our thoughts and and what we cared about. And after that meeting, I



was still, you know, it was cool. You like the project and everything, but the next thing was like, okay, well, let's go down there.

Darin: Right, exactly.

Rodrigo: And I was like, holy shit. So this guy is really on. This crazy gringo. He's really serious about it, which to me was cool because it was a first validation that we actually had something here. But obviously, [00:29:33] was really understanding what was going on in the ground in the Cerrado and what it would take to really create this business sustainably and in a responsible manner. So it was basically, we met at the airport, showed up at the airport, and let's go down to Brazil. I think it was like two weeks.

Darin: Yeah, it was a while.

Rodrigo: And we traveled all over the Cerrado meeting with all of the communities and just absorbing as much information as we could, understanding what the challenges were for us. Just being down there and seeing the level of devastation that had actually occurred. I think it was the real eye opener. And it was also a big driver for us to push forward and really create this a business that would be sustainable and it would have a very long lasting positive impact in this amazing and diverse biome that nobody knows about. So and on a side note, I mean, I know a lot of people haven't heard about it, but the Cerrado, it's this extremely rich tropical savannah that's right south of the Amazon. But what happened was and why 50% of it is gone now in just the last 30, 40 years, I think, it was around the '70s, early '80s, as the agro industrial complex was advancing onto the Amazon in Brazil. The rainforest started gathering world attention. So all eyes of the world were in the rainforest and there was a backlash to the Brazilian government. Thank you guys, you have to protect us. What's going on? You know, there's a lot of very huge land masses, swaths of land being cut down for soy plantation, corn plantation, for cattle ranching. So what the Brazilian government basically did was like, okay, we've got this other huge landmass right to the south of it. It is not as lush as the Amazon. So it's kind of like the ugly cousin, maybe people won't really care about it. So they created a bunch of subsidies and credit lines for these large scale farmers to push the agricultural frontier down into the Cerrado and away from the Amazon. Obviously, fast forward 40 years, none of it worked because the Amazon is still getting deforested. They've just increased the amount of devastation.

Darin: You know, Rodrigo, that's why it's like I'm also eternally grateful on many levels about this project because not only this nutrient dense nut, one of my favorite things in the world is just literally if I could give away superfoods for the rest of my life, I would do that because I know it's going to help them. And so to jump into this just from a nutrient satisfaction standpoint, but then when we were there, I mean, listen, there was a couple of times like I was so emotional. Those few times that we stop and that line.

Rodrigo: One side of the road is lush.

Darin: It was literally just cut.



Rodrigo: The other side of the road was Mars. It looks like Mars.

Darin: It's like it's Mars. And you're just like going, just staring at absolute destruction of this incredible biome. And so I knew so little about the biome. So you're learning as we're gone and we're meeting with these NGOs and we're hearing the real story of what you just described. And that is okay, PR intensity, too much on the Amazon. We got to slow our roll on devastating the Amazon, but we need to increase our unsustainable meat production and cattle mandating. And so we're going to push it to this area that no one knows about.

Rodrigo: Yeah. It's like the sacrificial lamb, almost.

Darin: Hundred percent. And largely, this biome, the Cerrado and the Amazon, keep each other in balance, as everything is, reducing things down in what we believe to be true is always false. You know, everything is connected to everything. So you're destabilizing the Amazon, you're destabilizing the Cerrado, vice versa. And so we're learning this on the ground in virtual, in some cases, tears of seeing the devastation. I mean, how many thousands of kilometers did we travel throughout the Cerrado and you're going, we're 500 plus miles today and all of it was destroyed and you're seeing 10% left.

Rodrigo: The scale of it is just unimaginable. And the saddest part about it is that it's mostly feed for animals. So 75% of it is probably the soy and the corn. And it's probably for pigs, cows, and chicken. So that protein efficiency generation, it's completely inefficient. It's amazing that it survives because it's going eight months of the year without a drop of water falling from the sky. So its defense systems are just incredible. And that's what gives the nut such a powerful macro and micro nutritional profile. That just checks all the boxes.

Darin: And the cool thing about it, we said this, I've said this other times so for people listening for the first time, you can't go out and pick the fruit or the nut from the baruzeiro tree.

Rodrigo: Respect the cycle.

Darin: Yeah, the cycle is it's already protected itself against us in a sense. Because if you're going to come up on me and take my nut, guess what? I'm not going to produce that nut before it's ready to fall. So it has to fall for that nut to even be ready to be able to be harvested. So once it hits the floor and then we leave, I think it's every third, so we leave a certain amount on the ground to allow for the next generation.

Rodrigo: We generate animals to spread around it.

Darin: Right. And the animals naturally do it like our dogs. I mean, my dog loves the fruit. They love the nuts. That's a natural part of spreading the nut as well. So one thing that became crystal clear to all of us was it's imperative that we be an advocate for the Cerrado and [00:36:55] come to find out, it's a very sacred tree, not only revered by the people, but also not only sequestering, but balancing out and giving nutrients and largely delivering information to the floor.



Rodrigo: That whole network.

Darin: The whole network of the Cerrado. So we said at the least we need to plant trees, we need to plant these baruzeiro trees again because these are grandfathers of the Cerrado, so that's something we started like initiating day one.

[00:37:36] 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. Sign up, and you get three free days. Join me on this hero's journey. Join the Tribe.

[00:39:01] Third Part of the Interview

Rodrigo: And they also support the growth of any other crops that you want will grow around it--

Darin: Because they're nitrogen-fixing.

Rodrigo: -that are shorter cycle crops as well, which is really important for the local communities and the local farmers to be able to monetize their land in a responsible way because of baruzeiro trees. Baruzeiro trees take years and years to grow. So there is this way of people talking bad about capitalism is evil and it's destroying and it's more of capitalism is the system. There's a way to use it in a conscious way to do a lot of good and create a lot of good impact. So our mission with these communities and these cooperatives that we work with and our whole reforestation program is to make it in a way so that tree standing up, that land being untouched is worth more than the whole thing being cut down. Because the nonprofits, they do an amazing job in the world in preservation, but it feels like to me sometimes that they're bringing a knife to a gunfight because they're going against an economic force that is just a juggernaut. So the way to reverse that is to create a system of economic preservation. Then you're not relying on the goodwill of some very good people to keep that standing. It just makes sense and you can scale that. So our reforestation effort in Brazil has sort of that ethos behind it where, yes, we're going to plant baruzeiro trees. We're also going to do a massive seedling operation to restore the natural grass and bush. And we're also going to encourage you to plant these other, let's call them commodity crops, you know, potatoes, beans, manioc, chili peppers. They grow very well with the baruzeiro tree.



Darin: But I like what you said because that's what we believe as a company. Because I too, listen, I can't pooh-pooh on every nonprofit, but I've definitely seen more nonprofits not that effective than I love the economic model of, you know, our customers are great because they're awake and they're awakening, they're loving the nut of the taste, but they're also aligned with our mission, give great fair wages to the people, let them have independence again and then. And then care about not only what's going in their body, but also for us taking a stand and planting trees again and caring as being stewards of the Cerrado using our model to understand that our customers, every time they order and they get on a subscription model and all of this stuff that that is consistency that we can then translate to those farmers, collectors, foragers and the consistency we can make toward the future of planting more and more trees to then support the Cerrado to give that independence. Back to your point, let them have their economic future literally in their own hands again, so that they don't find themselves in a situation where I don't have enough money to put enough food.

Rodrigo: Sell off to these big agriculture.

Darin: Yeah, sell it and then they like, okay, well, this land has been in my family for a thousand years and I don't have any money. I'm in the middle of nowhere. Okay, take a hundred acres and for us. But if we can plant trees again, we know that that economic model can work if we can help them reforest. We've all sacrificed with this company. We've all taken a lot lower pay. We decided it's not going to happen. We're going to make sure we're okay. And once we get to a certain point when the economic model starts to really start to ramp up, then we can start kind of paying ourselves a little more of what we deserve, but we all went in. And I apologize if this sounds at all like we're trying to sell you on our company and the product. We're actually not. We're proud of the foundation that we've created in terms of the foundation of how we want to move forward in the world. And it's so great to hear your struggle in the beginning because that very struggle you're looking for meaning. And it's like now you not only signed on to that so much, you took a lot less of pay to have a rewarding experience that was beyond profit-centered life. And it's like a full circle now, hearing the fullness of that story and realizing the sacrifices that you've made to put Barukas out in the world in a bigger way and be a steward for the Cerrado. And I just want to say for that, and to hear just the full cycle of that, I just want to say thank you because that means a lot to me. And without your contribution to this company, it just wouldn't be here at all. So super, super happy for that. And I'm impatient like you. I want to put 20 million trees in the ground tomorrow and I want to get 20 million people eating Barukas to support that model and getting hundreds of thousands of collectors to have economic sovereignty again in the Cerrado. I mean, those are some of the light goals that we have but yeah.

Rodrigo: Yeah, for sure. I appreciate that. And without you being part of it, it also wouldn't be anywhere near where it is today, might not even have happened. So along with everybody else who's on the mission, working really hard here in the States, you know, Justin and Lucy and along with all the other crew, everybody gets a sense of meaning from it. No one's in it for the money because it's just when you're creating something like this, you're trying to just gain efficiencies everywhere you can, but we're restrained by what we talked about in the beginning,



not cutting corners. So that requires also personal sacrifice from all of us. But we have a feeling that, and hopefully, some of your listeners can relate to it, that in the long run, it's all going to be worth it, and we're going to find that piece that we actually created something that has an enormously positive impact in a part of the world, has an enormous impact in the lives of people who have much higher needs than we do. And I mean, look, going back to what you said, the people and the farmers on the ground, you mentioned the term that's very important, "frequency." They don't want the same things that we want in the western world here in the States, most of us at least, you know, big house, big cars, millions of social media followers. They want to live in nature, be happy and be healthy and not have to struggle to make a living off their land in whichever way possible. And if we can provide that to them in a sustainable way, in a responsible way, in a fair way, while also bringing this amazing superfood to the world and sharing the story, the impact just becomes greater and greater. At the end of the day, it comes back with a lot of what you said about voting with your dollars. So it comes back to the consumers. The consumer is king. Consumers dictate all these tendencies. And there's a lot more power on the consumer side to create and to motivate these enterprises to change than people really realize. The good thing is that there's so much information out there that people can access and that people are interested in, so the consumers are becoming a lot more knowledgeable. So that's the thing. I mean, I can't thank enough all of the consumers of Barukas. Because of them, it's why the business is growing and we're able to do these things as we can, but there's still a long way to go as well. But I get extremely optimistic and seeing the whole movement around people wanting to eat better and actually caring about what they're putting in their bodies, not being just the front label guy, and caring about companies that are practicing conscious capitalism into their business model. And it's very important, but there's still a long way to go. And I know that because I grew up that way. I grew up eating meat. Obviously, I grew up in Brazil, an extremely meat-heavy country.

Darin: It's probably even worse than the US in a certain way.

Rodrigo: Probably. It's so ingrained in the culture of Brazil, the churrasco. There is a change, very small scale, smaller than here in the States towards veganism and vegetarianism, but it's still very far out. And to me, I was that guy. So I grew up with that and I grew up drinking tons of cow's milk, tons of cow's milk and cheese, and everything else. And this is just to go back to the health issue that I struggled with for a long time. I was extremely allergic, sinuses, stuffed noses.

Darin: The dairy?

Rodrigo: Yeah, exactly, to dairy. I would say from when I was 15 until I was in my early 30s. And to me, it's a story that also pisses me off because I spent years and years going to an array of different doctors and allergists. To give you an idea, I did two surgeries in my nose. The first one was I had a deviated septum. So they said that would help with your allergies. It didn't work. The other one was a laser surgery where I cut out the polyps. I think they call it polyps that they inflate once you're having an allergic reaction.

Darin: You're in an inflammatory state.



Rodrigo: Exactly. And I met with very renowned doctors and allergists in Brazil. And the same diagnosis was always, oh, it's a mixture of house dust with maybe pets, maybe some kind of fabric. And never one of them, never for 15 years mentioned a word about diet, which is the most important thing that is going to affect your body. So I also did two rounds of vaccines. There's like a vaccine program for two years that you have to inject in yourself to sort of try to desensitize your body from whatever it is that's causing. None of it worked. I was a slave to that Afrin, the nose spray, always in my pocket. It was like key cell phone Afrin for years and years. Fast forward to 2014. Again, I have to thank Carolina, my wife, for saving me in this regard. She was learning a lot about food and nutrition. She was really interested in it. And she had visited a very good nutritionist in Rio. And her seeing my struggles with this and this thing would never go away. She said, look, why don't you go talk to this guy? And I was like, nutritionist? What's a nutritionist? What is he going to do? I've talked to all the allergists. I've talked to all the doctors.

Darin: Talked to the best.

Rodrigo: All right. I've talked to the best. I've done two surgeries. I'm just going to have to live with this. She's like, look, just go. Just have a chat with him. I was like, all right, whatever. Completely not giving this guy anyway. And I meet with this guy at his office and he said, oh, you know, a very nice guy and very knowledgeable actually. And he said, takes down everything that I, you know, my whole diet. And he goes, look, let's just do one thing. Stay away from anything derived from cow's milk for a month. And I'm like, you're fucking crazy. I love butter. I love cheese. And I'm like, listen, guy, you know, I've already tried the lactose-free milk. It's done nothing. He's like, you know, humor me. And I was like, oh, man, it's going to be tough but I said okay. I kid you not. This was almost 20 years in the making when I was like 15 to my mid-30s. In two weeks, I already felt a difference. I already felt the sort of lightness in my face where things weren't just kind of always in this inflammatory. after a month, my whole face cleared up. I didn't have a stuffy nose. I didn't have itchy eyes, runny nose, anything.

Darin: Gone.

Rodrigo: Gone. And I go back to the guy, I was like, what was that? Because then I was pissed that all these doctors had never mentioned it. He was like, it had nothing to do with lactose. You're allergic to casein, the protein. Saved my life. So that was also a boost for me to wake up, pay attention to what you're putting in your body because a lot of doctors don't have that, just don't have that knowledge or haven't been trained to give you those solutions. They're working only on the effect and not on the cause.

Darin: So I want to get into one thing before we go here, and that is our sustainability pillar, what we stand for. We're a small business, constantly trying to improve packaging. Now, I have some experience with Beachbody and what we've always tried to upgrade and do in terms of supplements and better packaging and all that stuff. The issue fundamentally is that with supplements and food, there needs to be barriers that seal, keep freshness in, keep oxygen out, or else putrefaction, oxidation, rancidity, all of that stuff can occur. So here's a challenge. We're using plastic with covid. You and I talked about this just before the call. And as we were trying to



source, you've been having a very difficult time sourcing anything in Brazil for packaging. So we just got enough to be able to put this in our own jars. We have not yet been able to get supplied recycled plastic. We're trying to find a different alternative to the plastic that we're using. We want to put it in glass. But as of right now, the cost in the carbon footprint is so high because everyone we are, it's all coming from Brazil, finished packaging, labeling, shipped to us to our warehouse here. It's finished product. So it would increase our carbon footprint of sending glass because of the weight. But now we're looking at all those numbers to be able to transition to glass when that doesn't spike our carbon footprint to a huge degree and then when we can put that on the water from a shipping perspective. But I just wanted to bring this up because you've been at the front lines trying to solve these problems. Why don't you talk a little bit about that? And I know that in theory, when you're receiving a product, especially for me and especially from Barukas, it doesn't make sense that it's in plastic. But I promise you, our commitment to you and everything that we stand for, we are certainly trying to do this. COVID has made it very difficult. Any packaging person will know that getting containers and then getting recycled containers on top of it is extremely difficult. At the same time, I'm working with one of the top alternatives of plastic called Footprint. I'm on the advisory board. So you damn sure I'm going to have them put this in their list to help us, help the industry get some alternatives to not only our container issues but our bag issues and stuff like that. So why don't you just add some color to that as well?

Rodrigo: I think you covered most of it. I think the most important thing for people to know is that we are aware of the situation. And as a business, we obviously are pushing in that direction and talking to different suppliers and looking at different alternatives for--

Darin: Food safety. And that's the challenge.

Rodrigo: Recyclable, compostable, biodegradable, all these have to be sustainable packaging while being providing the barriers that we need to be able to get a product fresh to the final consumer. If not, it somewhat defeats the purpose.

Darin: Well, it becomes dangerous too.

Rodrigo: It becomes dangerous. But not only that, we're talking about having this available in a very difficult part of the world, which is having this available down in the Cerrado and COVID has thrown a huge wrench into all of the supply and production chains of packaging material, in general, getting to Brazil. The lead times are just extremely long and there's a lack of materials across the board for everything. We're hoping that next year we'll be able to launch some new solutions as these companies are able to also develop better alternatives for us to use and will be very exciting once we're able to fulfill that completely.

Darin: Well, dude, thank you. This has been really fun. It's been great to kind of get that full picture. And all of you listening, this is about many things that you've heard, but it's about any entrepreneurial person, any person involved in business, any person in a big business. I met a lot of great people at Microsoft doing a lot of great things in the last couple of weeks, you know what I mean? I want to be careful demonizing big companies because there's a lot of great



people within those companies trying to do some good work as well. And I and I will continue to speak about the ones that I can speak about because I think it's important for us to understand that, which is why I'm grateful to tell this story, the Barukas story of from all of the elements that we're committed to. And again, I appreciate you and your time and letting the world hear from the other side of the Barukas story.

Rodrigo: Yeah, great man. I had a great time. Thanks for having me. I appreciate everything that you do. And we couldn't have a better spokesperson than you. And, um. And yeah, I mean, I hope that some of your listeners hopefully can pick up some words of encouragement if some of them have that itch where ideas could come from and create new businesses that will also create a positive impact. So it's a great, great talk, man.

Darin: Dude, that's what we need more than ever to get people inspired to do the right thing for sure.

Rodrigo: That's it. You're doing a good job.

Darin: Give it another go. Thanks, brother.

Rodrigo: All right, man. Thank you.

[01:01:18] Generic Outro

Darin: What a fantastic episode. So tell me, what is one thing you got out of today's conversation? If this episode struck a chord with you and you want to dive a little deeper into my other conversations with incredible guests, you can head over to my website, darinolien.com for more episodes and in-depth articles. Keep diving my friends. Keep diving.

[01:01:55] Amplify Plug

Darin: This episode is produced by my team at Must Amplify, an audio marketing company that specializes in giving a voice to a brand and making sure the right people hear it. If you would like or are thinking about doing a podcast or even would like a strategy session to add your voice to your brand in a powerful way, go to www.mustamplify.com/darin. That's www.mustamplify.com/darin.