



[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: Hey, everybody. Welcome to the show, thanks for tune in. I appreciate your time. I appreciate your energy that you've been given to the show. And listen, if things resonate with you, make sure to share it naturally to other people because this is the way we're supposed to get out information now because, you know, we can't trust all of these same platforms anymore. We just can't. I don't care what side of the aisle on it you are that there's just some gnarly corruption. And I don't dig it, man. I don't dig it. But I love to be able to sit down with great people, with their hearts in place and moving forward in their lives and affecting change. There's no one greater that's contributing to this than Shawn Stevenson. There's a lot of great people out there doing great things moving forward, but this dude is also dedicating his life to getting out information. So we kind of spent the afternoon together. He came out, we sat under an oak tree. We've both been meaning to connect with each other for the last couple of years, and we finally did it. And I was kind of blown away. He has the number one health podcast in the US, millions of listeners, millions of downloads. And I was so touched by his commitment, his authenticity, his intelligence. So we started to get into a little bit on the side of like when you see things and peel back the layers, you see that there are agendas going on and that's not cool. We need to push back. We have allowed, you know, big brother and big sister to control some things. We need to start saying, listen, this is our freedom. This is our sovereignty. We started to dabble into that. He went to the University of Missouri, St. Louis. He studied business. He studied biology and nutritional science. He was a founder of Advanced Integrative Health Alliance, a company that provides wellness services for individuals and other organizations. He's had a whole clinical nutrition background working directly with doctors and people straight on. So he really has an insight into what people are challenged with. He wrote an incredible book way before people were talking-- people are talking about sleep like crazy right now. And he actually wrote a book a while back called Sleep Smarter. I encourage you to check that out. But he also wrote a new book that is just released called Eat Smarter. Listen, this is not his point of view necessarily. It is his point of view based on data that he has gathered, clinical data. And this is an important thing to understand because he is digging into that research and putting it in a way that people can understand. He's been featured in Forbes and one of the fast companies,



The New York Times, Muscle and Fitness, ABC News, ESPN, all of this stuff. And he is just a solid, solid dude who's caring about you, me, and the world at large, and he's really hitting it. And I really loved sitting down with a brother like this and really number one, getting to finally meet him, but also really vibing with his mission. And I'm just going to say it, it's not the last time I'm going to be collaborating with this dude. So I'm really grateful that we were able to sit down and unpack some of the things that he's been working on for twenty plus years. He's got an incredible background. He's had to pull up the bootstraps and take a look at his life and take responsibilities, had some really diverse challenges in his life. And I just really appreciate this guy and I know that you will too. So hook in, hold on and enjoy my good new friend, Shawn Stevenson.

[00:05:33] First Part of the Interview

Shawn: You know, it's so crazy, and this was all out of St. Louis, Missouri. Of course, it's the health hub of the universe. That's sarcasm. I'm a very inquisitive person. You know, I think it starts with that. One of my big mandates is just to inspire your curiosity because rather than me doing the David Blaine thing and just trying to convince you, it's just getting you to ask the question within yourself. And once we could do that, man, some magical things can start to happen. And so much of what I'll say is going to be mirrored by what folks are doing. And, of course, you're doing whether we realize it or not. And one of the big tenets of reality is that food isn't just food, it's information. And every bite of food that we eat, literally, and these are some of the things I just integrated throughout the pages of Eat Smarter, the new book, nutrigenomics, nutrigenetics, literally is determining what your genes are doing. This is such a massively powerful thing. And I grew up and I think part of what has made it to where I've seen this level of like all these different cool things have happened, you know, in this space, my last book, Sleep Smarter became international bestsellers. It's the first wellness book to become an international bestseller. It's translated in like 20 different countries. And it was the first domino in this wave of-- I just did a talk for Tom Brady's TB12 company. They've got like sleep wellness coaches. This didn't exist. And many of these folks know the data. They use my language that I really pushed into popular lexicon, but they don't know me. They don't know where it came from. And that's the power of books have virility to them. Even though we have all these other sources of communication, it's still one of those really cool ones. So even that becoming a possibility, I think I'm good at it because of how terrible my health and my exposure was growing up. When I say I ate fast food every day, I literally mean that unless I didn't have the money and I just had to eat ramen noodles. When I was in college, at the age of twenty, because I was making my body out of these things. I was inundated in my environment. When I went outside of my door, I lived in Ferguson, Missouri. When I went outside the apartment complex, the first thing I see is a liquor store. The second thing I see is Lee's chicken, I see a fried fish place, I see Chinese food restaurant. But this is not Chinese food restaurant that you think. This is like bulletproof glass, you know, extra, extra, extra, hard, extra fried. And, you know, Papa John's, Domino's, McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, Steak n Shake if you want to get fancy, Arby's, Krispy Kreme, another Chinese food, I'm just going down the block here, Taco Bell. The list goes on and on and on. And this was all within a mile, mile and a half. So I didn't know that there was anything else but this. I just thought food was just stuff you eat. And so making my body out of



these things, literally, determining what my genes are doing, I had turned on programs to basically they were recycling me. And at the age of 20, I was diagnosed with degenerative disc disease and degenerative bone disease. I broke my hip when I was at track practice just running because my bones were so brittle. I was 15 and I ran a four or five-forty-yard dash, which is like NFL times. That was my way out. From my environment, where I come from is either sports or drugs. Basically, those are my two heroes, the guys who made it through sports and the drug dealers in the neighborhood. They had the nice car. They seemed like they had stuff. And that's all you want to do is just have some stuff. But, you know, my way, I was going to be a professional athlete. Unfortunately, again, I had some early exposure living with my grandmother and like a nice kind of quiet place for a couple of years. And so I got exposure to-- I don't know if some part is nature and nurture, but that inquisitive nature, I don't know if it was just there, but she really inspired it. I just remember it being on there. And I had this little Gaffield writing book and so it was like teaching me how to do cursive and stuff. And I was like, I can make stories. I can make up anything I want. And I just remember that curiosity turning on there and this imagination.

Darin: How old are you at that time?

Shawn: I was about seven. I was seven years old. I distinctly remember sitting at my little-- I had like a little kiddie table, little red chair doing the Garfield, writing and just having this insight like I can make whatever I want real.

Darin: Wow. That's a pretty profound awareness.

Shawn: But the world, of course, can suppress it. It's there in all of us. And so when I carried that love of learning, even though it can get manipulated, I knew how to do the thing. Like, okay, this is the Pythagorean theorem, you know, whatever, like, okay. So I did really well in school. It was easy. I didn't really try, but there was nothing that I fell in love with except writing was really my thing. So, cut to the story, getting diagnosed with this so-called incurable disease, not knowing I'm making my body out of the worst possible substances possible. And getting that diagnosis at 20, the physician put my MRI up and he told me that I had the spine of an 80-year-old man. I'm 20. I'm just in there like, okay, so how do we fix this? I got some leg pain because I didn't know it was connected to my back. And he tells me this. It really turned the entire universe upside down. And the most powerful thing that he said, whether it's positive or not, is he told me that this is incurable and there's nothing you can do about it. He wasn't trying to be malicious. He was just telling me what he believed, and that's the nocebo effect, which I talk about in the book, and the science on it is mind-blowing. How powerful? And we can come back and talk about this how our belief about eating something, how it affects what our hormones do. But I believed him. And for the next two years, I just--

Darin: You believed in that this is it. There's nothing I can do to change.

Shawn: He's the authority figure. He knows better than me.



Darin: This is very important for all of us to keep our power or give our power away to people in this position.

Shawn: Be very cognizant of those things and what you allow in because, from that moment, there was, of course, there's this thing in me that something isn't right. But I feel like a lot of people are experiencing that right now. Something's not right, but I believe this.

Darin: This person, because they're in this position, they must be saying they couldn't possibly be saying something that would harm me.

Shawn: Exactly right.

Darin: They couldn't possibly be-- And that's the dangerous thing, going back to the first thing, if we stop asking questions, then we're doomed to express that which was impressed upon us based on someone's point of view.

Shawn: This is so powerful. And again, all of these ideas now are going to be in Target stores across Middle America. Everywhere in America, you know, in Target, they have this wellness campaign with Eat Smarter, and these ideas are going to be accessible to more people because I talk about the power of questions. Our brains, the human brain is really like a survival mechanism and it runs on questions. And so there's a process called instinctive elaboration. When you called yourself a question, your brain has no choice but to find an answer to it. But the problem is we are often subconsciously unconsciously asking the same questions over and over and over again. When I got that diagnosis and for the next two years, when I was gaining all this weight, when I got into chronic debilitating pain, I couldn't sleep at night. I had to take all these different drugs just to sleep. I was habitually asking why me? And I was also bitterly asking, why won't anybody help me? Just over and over and over again. A friend would refer another doctor and I go there, they are amazing. I go and see them even though they meant well, they tell me the same thing. I'm sorry, son. This is incurable. Here's another prescription. They kept adding to my prescriptions and I got Celebrex added to the mix and then they would also diagnose and give me the recommendation of bed rest. I saw four physicians over the course of two years, every time I saw a new physician, and I could walk, Darin, I could walk. I hurt, but I could walk. Why would they tell me bedrest? Because not only is my spine going to atrophy, now everything is. And so they were giving me psychologically a permission slip to not do anything. And just watching my health degrade. And at that point, man, and this is where everything turned, it was actually a question. I saw the most recent, the last physician. He told me the same thing. And I was sitting on my bed, my mattress on the floor, Ferguson, Missouri, about to take my pills so I can knock myself out and get some pseudo sleep. And it hit me like, it's not that they're not well-meaning, but I'm just like he's not thinking about me right now. He's probably with his family having a nice dinner, you know, but he's told me I have to suffer for the rest of my life. And this was the first time I asked a different question. I asked, what can I do to get better? Boom. And that changed everything because now my brain is seeking out. So when I'm asking why me, my brain is seeking out all the reasons why my life is shitty. When I say, why won't somebody help me? It's looking for all the reasons why I'm terrible in relationships.



Darin: The list of victim now just gets further amplified by those questions.

Shawn: Yeah. And how isolated I am. It all gets magnified by asking this empowering question. I started to seek and look for answers because there can't be a problem without a solution. It's two sides of the same coin. It exists. And so I slept through the night for the first time.

Darin: Just by asking the question.

Shawn: I felt like I had a purpose. And the next day, I put my investigative powers. I was wasting in college writing these stupid ass papers into finding how I can get healthier. And that set me on an incredible journey. Like, for example, I had another question. I asked, okay, my spine is deteriorating, deteriorating. My disk, I had two herniated discs, severely herniated. They were degenerated. They look like little crispy pieces of baloney on the MRI. I asked, okay, what are my disk made of? And I found out that there are all of these compounds I never heard of. And I'm like third year in college right now. I take nutritional science and taking all of these classes, biology, but I was miseducated. I wasn't taught about things that actually were viscerally connected to me. And so I was just really disenchanted by the whole thing. And so I found out, for example, my bone density because of marketing, I'm like calcium, you got the milk mustache, but I'm guzzling milk every day as part of my shitty diet along with my three bowls of Fruit Loops.

Darin: Fortified Fruit Loops.

Shawn: Yeah, it's fortified with vitamins and minerals, healthy for your kids. But now I find out silica, magnesium. I just found out omega 3s were important in increasing your bone density. And I was just like, I'm not getting this shit anywhere in my Sunny D and my diet, my fast food, my drive-thru window diet, basically. And the first step and I'll just be 100 here. The first thing I did was I had a friend and this is the power of exposure and the transformative power of that. So even the folks that right now are like locked in on their belief, that might be very, very untrue about what's happening in the world. If they're around you, they can't help but to have their ideas start to change. We are a product of our environment, but we're also creators of our environments as well if we are aware. But I had a friend. This is a woman that I was, you know, hanging out with from time to time. And she was a chiropractor. And I didn't know what that meant. I just I was like, why are you doing that to each other? And she took me to Wild Oats. And this was after I asked this, I had known her for years. I had known her for a couple of years at that point. When I asked that question, within a week, she took me there. And I walk in, it's just like, what the hell. Why is the grass inside here?

Darin: So Wild Oats, for everyone listening, it actually started in Boulder. I didn't know either, but it moved to--

Shawn: The hub of health of the world, St. Louis, Missouri.

[00:19:15] 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.

[00:21:17] Second Part of the Interview

Shawn: But here's what I did, first up was I became a natural [00:21:20] I find out these nutrients make up the thing and I'm like this allopathic thinking, pill for every ill. Let me take this supplement, this supplement. Fortunately, I made the transition quickly to like food is where food first because there's an intelligence there. And what I later uncovered and what I'm trying to bring even now, making it into the popular lexicon. There isn't just one vitamin C, there are many types. There's isn't just one magnesium, there are many types. There isn't just one B12. The list goes on, the omega 3s. This is how powerful food is. When you get that isolated synthetic supplement, is that even the one your body needs? Food has the intelligence, and all the cofactors, the bio potentiators, all the things that make your body do the thing. So I start to identify those foods, flooding my tissues with all the raw materials my body needed. And it was, I don't use this word lightly, but I think it's appropriate. It was miraculous and how quickly I got better. I started to sleep better. And if you're not sleeping, you're not healing. I start to sleep better. I can move. I was out of pain. Eventually, I got a scan done. It was nine months later, completely reversed the condition. The light was shining through my MRI, through the disc. And I remember the physician standing there with me. He was just like stroking his chin, just looking at it like, whatever you're doing, keep doing it. Here's one of the big truths and one of the things that I'm going to keep directing people's attention to. We are the sickest nation in the history of humanity, self-inflicted, here in the United States. We are so good at being sick, it's become conditioned to be normal. Here in the United States, over 200 million Americans are overweight or obese, 43% clinically obese. Within the next few years, it's going to be 50% clinically obese. I come from this. This is my family. I've lost so many people to heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, obesity. 400,000 people every year die in relationship to obesity. 60% of Americans have some degree of heart disease and hardening of the arteries. It is a ticking time bomb. 135 million Americans are diabetic or pre-prediabetic right now. That number, 135 million, it makes no sense. And on top of that, 115 million Americans are regularly sleep-deprived. Now, here's the most incredible part of all of this. 70% of our citizens are already on pharmaceutical drugs. Why isn't it helping? Everything keeps getting worse. Heart disease, worse. Cancer,



worse. Diabetes, worse. Alzheimer's, worse. The list goes on and on, everything. And yet we continue to invest our time and attention and resources into conventional medicine, which last year \$4 trillion, all put into the system that continues to churn out, piss poor results, and not only that, and anybody can look this up, Johns Hopkins, they had to dig around the researchers because of the coding is so difficult to catch these things. The number one cause of death every year in the United States in recent history is heart disease. Number two cause of death every year is cancer. Number three cause of death every year in recent years is iatrogenesis. This position created illness, medical error, third leading cause of death. And we act as if it's not a thing. And I would argue it's the first because it's so terrible and even encouraging of the first two. We have to wake up because our system is literally built on a model. A model is only as good as the underlying presumption. It's built on a model that's treating symptoms and not looking at what's causing the disease. I know the top guys now. I know the top cardiologist, the top gastroenterologist in the world. My friend, incredible gastroenterologist, went to school for 60 years to do this shit he's doing. His focus is on the treatment of organs related to the digestion, assimilation, and elimination of food. He treats organs that handle food. And yet in 16 years, he got two weeks of education on food. And it wasn't like some real shit, it was like, here's what to do if your patient has a rare, benign deficiency. And he shared this with me and I'm just like, perfect example. This is what the problem is. Your gastrointestinal tract is made of the food you eat. Your heart, cardiologist, it's made of the food that you eat. The arteries are made from the food you eat. The blood running through it, it's made from the food you eat. It's the number one thing. And yet they don't get any education on it. Our system is massively flawed, but we can change it. This is what, again, being at this time, I think we have such an opportunity because things are shaken up right now to change it and eat smarter coming at this time. It's like a tenet. It's like a mandate to eat smarter.

Darin: Absolutely. Yeah, you just hate to realize, well, you know, it's like I hope that people realize that there are these conflicts of interest that are all over the place. They don't make money on you eating vegetables off your land. They just don't. And empowerment and for you to ask those questions is detrimental to their bottom lines. And so I don't know why it takes so much for people to realize that and those authorities, but if we can get people to use their instinctual, beautiful, powerful, commonsense, align ourselves with the sun, the clean air, low toxicity of modern inconveniences and then build ourselves back up again with our first line of defense what we're putting in our mouth. I don't know why that is not the captain obvious of every human on the planet, water, air, food, breathing, clean food, whole food. Why is that not a thing? And when you look at all these stats, we blow that number off. If you actually take those numbers in and realize we're not educating ourselves in how to change how we're looking at health care and how we're taking care of our own people, you have to then contend with the systems and start to realize when you're asking those questions, these systems are not supporting that new premise of eating well.

Shawn: Let's talk about these systems. All right. So in the beautiful part is the data exists again, but we're going to really lean into it in 2021, really make sure that this becomes more common knowledge. So the Journal of the American Medical Association did a huge meta-analysis and they uncovered that poor diet, this was in 2018, poor diet is the number one cause of our



chronic diseases, which is no surprise. But this prestigious peer-reviewed journal highlighting this should be a big deal. Poor diet is the number one cause. And also very early on in this pandemic experience, the Journal of the American Medical Association looked at what was happening in New York City. They found that the three major comorbidities or also contributors to severe infections, hypertension, diabetes, and obesity. What are these caused by primarily? Poor diet. So what's happening with the system that allows this to be a thing and why are we not addressing it? So one of the things that I highlight in the book, by the way, the book is fun. So it's not just like dark, but I take people through different adventures and different stories, but we're just kind of in this topic right now, so I'll share it. But in this book, we actually take them behind the scenes and teach them how their metabolism actually works, the foods involved, the different hormones that do the processes, shuttling the triglycerides over to the mitochondria. We take them on the adventure. But one of the things that I highlight is how do we fix this? Like what's happening, what's making this what it is today? And here's the truth. Now, the United States government provides hundreds of billions of dollars in subsidies for crops that largely end up coming through the drive-thru window. All right, hundreds of billions of dollars. And so these agricultural crops, we're talking mainly like corn, which is big for high fructose corn syrup, wheat, soy, et cetera.

Darin: Factory farming, subsidized meat production or quality meat, all that stuff.

Shawn: Now, here's what's interesting. There was an incredible peer-reviewed study that wanted to track the pathway of consumption of these government-subsidized foods. Does this actually impact the health of the citizens? And what they discovered was the folks who had the highest intake of these government-subsidized foods had a 40% increased incidence of being obese. Direct one to one thing. We've got like these are the foods our government is literally investing in for your ass and here we know that this is going to radically increase your incidence of being obese. It's not a joke. We've got the numbers, and the question is why? Why would our government do that? And when I say our government, I mean, we are paying for that shit. We are paying to make those crops. And it might have even-- I always take a step back and try to have a meta-perspective and not say this is blatantly like Dr. Evil stuff.

Darin: Right. It started with a very good intention.

Shawn: A good intention, right, of trying to feed citizens. But that ratio, this is mainly driven by massive food companies, processed food companies, and lobbyists who are vying for those dollars to make sure they continue to stay funneled into the ones that payout the most for folks who are invested in these processed food companies, these multi, multi, multibillion-dollar companies. And so the subsidies going to folks who are growing fruits and vegetables is almost nothing. Hundreds of billions of dollars going into these massive commodity crops.

Darin: And it keeps these fast food things like 99-cent burgers.

Shawn: That's where it all comes out.



Darin: And then that's where you get to have these "cheap meals" because maybe the government has also suppressed you in certain ways and you haven't been able to make the kind of money you want or whatever. And the next thing you know, well, I have to feed my family.

Shawn: This is where I come from there, Darin. I come from this. We were on food stamps, WIC, got food from food pantries. When we can come across-- my mother would sell her blood to get \$20 so she could feed us. And even hearing this, so some folks might be like, why were you on food stamps? Why don't you guys just work harder? My mother did. I mean, literally, she worked overnight at a convenience store, became the manager. And because of the environment that we're in, one night somebody tried to rob her and she was stabbed eight times. And she was able to defend herself and subdue him until the police came. Man, I'm from a very, very tough, aggressive family, you know. But anyway, when she went to the doctor to get the stitches and all that stuff, the doctor told her that if it wasn't for all your excess weight, you would have died. You being a heavy woman saved your life. What do you think that does in her psychology?

Darin: Now it links the, literally, living and that fear.

Shawn: It's her protection. And so many other millions and millions of people are battling trying to lose weight, but this is emotionally driven thing, it's become a protective mechanism and nobody's addressing this either. The whole like, just pull yourself up by your bootstraps, there is a part of that, personal responsibility. And in the book, I go through the bottom-up things we can do, personal responsibility, but also top-down changes that make it actually doable and accessible for people. And so being on these different foods, if my mom got that \$20 from selling her blood, she's not going to get an organic rotisserie and some asparagus. She's going to go to fast food. She could feed all three of her kids for \$10. When we were really balling out, though, and I can get a Happy Meal, that Happy Meal was \$2.99, man. Burger, fries, drink, and a fucking toy for 2.99. An avocado cost to 2.99. How is that possible to create that burger and the fries and even the toy. These things are so cost-intensive to create, even a soda. To create a hamburger, the processing involved, the food procurement, the marketing, the sales and distribution, the packaging costs so much money and a wholefood falls off the tree, technically speaking. It makes no sense that this is-- but it's because of the investment by our own government making those foods cheap. So what do you think she's going to do? What do you think we're all going to do? We're trying to feed our family, get full, get a full meal. This whole system has to change. And once we can create some, again, top-down changes to make these other real foods accessible and available and even attractive, that's another thing. The marketing behind, you know, McDonald's, you know, Pepsi, they don't have, you know, LeBron James for avocados, you know what I'm saying? What if we, again, the crazy thing is, I know a lot of these guys. I know a lot of their trainers like real talk. These guys, they're not in that shit, and if they are like Dwight Howard, one of my really good friends. He actually did one of the endorsements for the book, Dr. Kate Shanahan. She worked with the Lakers for many years. And Dwight Howard, it was his first stint with the Lakers. He was massively, like he'd like have five king-sized candy bars a day. She had to work with the maid because he was hiding them.



He's so addicted. But he's also had this proclivity towards these injuries. And he circled back and came back with the team, this past year, they won a championship. But anyway, she really worked to optimize his nutrition. And pretty much all professional teams have this now. It's a thing. But if we can get more of these voices to not lower their standards and understand. They don't know oftentimes that Pepsi is like damaging their communities. And so the more that we can get these folks on board too because unfortunately, I wouldn't want to fight against some of these things, but it's just the nature of humanity for many years. We look to the warrior, we look to that a champion over there, we look to the jester or the king. And so let's use it to our advantage. And the same thing, I talked about it. For years, I was trying to get people not to go to McDonald's or fast food. But then I saw the data and I was like 84 million people go to fast food every day here in America. I'm trying to, like, we need to shift the environment that they're going into. I was very much against McDonnell adding Kale to their smoothies. Now, it's like add that damn kale and let's upgrade the ingredients that they're serving, take out the shit that's damaging us and let's just make the offerings better.

[00:37:28] 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.

[00:38:53] Third Part of the Interview

Darin: I want to talk about the psychology side and the food side, but also the sleep side. You're such an expert in that side of things. And so unpack some of your research around sleep, health, food, all of that stuff because, I mean, it's something I take very personally. And obviously, if you can't sleep, you're repair, your mood, your stress, everything is connected.

Shawn: You know what, the first thing that I do is always help to anchor in why it matters. And so, again, World Health Organization, you know, they did a meta analysis and they found that folks who are sleep deprived have about a two times greater incidence of having a heart attack, four times greater incidence of having a stroke.

Darin: And what is their definition of sleep deprivation?

Shawn: Four hours.



Darin: All right. So four hours total of sleep?

Shawn: Just an average of four hours, which is not that uncommon, unfortunately. Now, that looks like an extreme case. All right. That does look like an extreme case. But coupled with more recent data that we have finding that just one night of poor sleep quality, one night of sleep deprivation can effectively make your insulin sensitivity, make it look like your type two diabetic. You know, it can really disrupt your blood sugar.

Darin: And your immune system too.

Shawn: It's another one of the things I talked about, this was in psycho neuro immunology found that just one night of sleep deprivation dramatically suppresses your immune system and increases your likelihood of contracting an infection.

Darin: That's like 30% of some crazy stat.

Shawn: The specific one that they found was it really creates disruption to your natural killer cells. And in this particular virus, the FDA had actually fast tracked a drug that targets our natural killer cells because it was found NK cells are so effective at killing SARS-COV-2 infected cells, but you won't hear that shit. Another study, this Appalachian State University, just go for a walk. A short walk was found to immediately boost immune parameters, most notably for your NK cells. But again, if they're jumping on TV saying, okay, wear a mask, you should also say make sure you get your 20-minute walk in Today America. It's the number one thing that's going to support your immune system, which is the number one thing that is going to protect you. And again, we see the numbers right now. We're at about 70 million confirmed cases. Even the testing, of course, has many questions there but if that's the case with about 1.6 million folks have lost their lives, that's about 68 million people who didn't. Nobody's talking about that. There is no survival taker on the screen. And the question is, how did it happen, how did they survive? What was it? Was it a transfusion? No, their immune system just did what it's designed to do. But when we suppress it, that's the thing too, when we're just like perfectly healthy people as well. You don't know because you and I, we can be as healthy as just absolute model of what that is. But then we get excessively stressed, we're sleep deprived, whatever. We can get very sick. We can even die and we can even die from things we're carrying around with us right now. We all carry around pathogenic organisms, you know, and we think we "catch a bug." A lot of times, it's shit you're carrying already. They're called opportunistic, but they're also there because they serve a purpose through our evolution. They could be helping to make B12 in you, for you. But if that ratio gets skewed because of the way you're living, they could take you down. So on that front with sleep. And again, this was like 2013, 2014, when I really was getting this information out. And since then, many books have come. But again, this was a fact. This is so crazy to say this stuff. It wasn't my intention. I was just like, this is not being talked about, you know, and like people coming into my office and we got their nutrition dialed in, like for them, not anybody else, for them. And, you know, their exercise is on point, but their blood sugar is not normalizing or their blood pressure still just way too high. I started asking people about their sleep. It took years in practice.



Darin: There it is again, the questions, started asking questions.

Shawn: I couldn't believe what people are telling me. Part of what healed me was getting my sleep together. Once your sleep is good, you never really think about it. But I know that people want change, but they don't want to change that much. So I knew that and when I hear these stories of like let me look at the data and find some simple things that are clinically proven to improve their sleep efficiency. I'm not going to tell them to sleep more. And once we did that, once people's sleep improved, man, finally, the weight came off. Finally, their blood sugar normalized. Finally, their blood pressure normalized. The list goes on and on and on. And so here's the thing. So I've put the data out on the relationship with the light, you know, this "light pollution" today and the data around body temperature, this thermal regulation, and getting a room the right-- all of these different external things we could do that definitely help, but here's the thing. You could have the perfect most optimized pillow and all the different blue light blocking things, but if you don't have the building blocks of your sleep related hormones and neurotransmitters, you're missing the point. And so that's what I focused on in Eat Smarter. There's a chapter called Edible Sleep, and we're looking at the specific nutrients that actually build your sleep-related hormones and neurotransmitters. I've seen this time and time again, man. They're diagnosed with insomnia, struggling with it for years, they're doing all the technical stuff but I just find out, they have a vitamin C deficiency, you get that fixed, and this is again, peer-reviewed journals. PLoS One, for example, found that folks who are deficient in vitamin C have much more interrupted sleep. So they have a tendency towards waking up more often. And by getting those numbers up for folks in the study, they were able to normalize their sleep quality. So that's one. There's a whole list, but another one is just coming up for me when I say specific building blocks is tryptophan. This essential amino acid and it's abundant in different foods from pumpkin seeds to turkey, depending on what diet framework you look to. Spirulina, there's a bunch of places you can find it, but if you're not proactively getting these things and it's kind of easy to become deficient on it because it does a lot of other things besides sleep. Tryptophan is a building block for serotonin, which is a building block for melatonin. And so if you're deficient in the core thing, we can have some issues with your sleep quality. By the way, melatonin is not a sleep hormone. That's a big misnomer. It's a master controller of your circadian rhythm. It's a master controller of your "biological clock." All of our cells are lined up with nature and it's always trying to sync up and is determining when every other hormone is getting produced. That's how powerful melatonin is. Is that something you just [00:46:14] we take as a supplement, or do you want to make sure your body's producing it adequately for yourself? And so here's what I was taught in school. When we talked about melatonin, I was taught that it's produced in your pineal gland, turn the page, that was it, end of story. Today we know that there's 400 times more melatonin in your gut than in your brain. And researchers at Caltech found that there are specific gut bacteria communicate with cells that produce these enterochromaffin cells, that produce your sleep related hormones or neurotransmitters, your bacteria communicating with these guys which are feeding your bacteria, inherently controls your sleep. It is like a master controller. And a lot of folks at this point, of course, is heard that upwards of 80% and even upwards of 90% of your serotonin is in your gut too. And we think it's a head thing, like feeling good, but it's that gut brain connection. And so the environment in that micromicrobiome, we focus a lot on that in Eat Smarter, but in a way that it's getting very



practical, do this thing, do this thing. The biggest thing is removing the things hurting the microbiome. That's the biggest thing. You can take all the supplements you want, but if you don't remove the problem. And so our last point here in this front with, you know, edible sleep, so again, there's a list: tryptophan, I mentioned vitamin C briefly. If I had to make a wager, this is the one that for the greatest amount of people makes the biggest difference, and it's magnesium. And it's because it is also, just so happens to be the number one mineral deficiency in our society, about 60% of folks are chronically deficient in magnesium.

Darin: Iron is second.

Shawn: Very close. It's like second or third. But magnesium, here's the thing. This was just two years ago, and I would share the data that we had. It was responsible for over three hundred fifty biochemical processes. Now, we found it's over 600 biochemical processes that require magnesium. And that means at 600 things your body can't do or can't do properly when you're deficient in it. And many of these are in response or in relationship to the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system, managing those two, especially the parasympathetic tone. It's also well known to be like kind of this anti-stress mineral. It's kind of these labels we put on it.

Darin: Put on the biggest label.

Shawn: How much stress are we dealing with today? You feel me? It's so much stress, it just saps your system of magnesium so quickly.

Darin: We're chronically in that stress. So much that you're not even conscious of it, but just being in 2020, you're just living in the stress pool.

Shawn: And chances are you are deficient in this mineral. We need to be proactive about it. Always food first for me. Anything that's a dense green food is going to be a good source of magnesium.

Darin: Super dark chocolate.

Shawn: Oh yeah, chocolate as well, funny enough. And iron too is in that camp and tryptophan. Chocolate has tryptophan too. So funny, you know. This is one that even in my practice I would have folks supplement with. Supplement should supplement. But this one can be helpful, especially stressful times, and especially just to get your sleep back on point.

Darin: So how do we identify when someone's listening right now because so many stressors now are lighter and their chronic and they're persistent. So how do we identify that we're stressed and that under that stress, hell, eating in general under stress is not a good idea, but then eating your pleasure foods, how do you identify that stress you think?

Shawn: The first thing is being aware of what our overall stress load is, this term because everything adds on to your-- when we're talking about stress, we're really talking about the management of our nervous system and external and internal stressors and that integration with



your endocrine system, really happening with your hypothalamus. So again, work stress is one thing, but then you have relationship stress, you have exercise stress, could be a good stress or medic stressor. You get the benefits when you heal from it. Again, as healthy as we might be, we can go and do a 30-minute intense workout and then go get a blood and hormone panel done, and we're going to look like we're two fucked up people. Our blood sugar is going to be this dysfunctional, stress hormones are going to be elevated, blood pressure is going to be wonky. So many different things. And we can end up with getting a prescription, and we all we did was work out. But so just understand that adds to the stress load. Put that on top. Diet stress, a major stressor in our world today, emotional stress, mental stress, just goes on and on and on and on. So this creates our overall stress load, spiritual stress, feeling disconnected, cut adrift, not feeling like you matter or have a purpose.

Darin: Especially now, social stress. You're not around other humans. We need other humans. We need to be social.

Shawn: That's what our genes expect us to do. If you want a picture like a cranium opening up, that all goes into that overall stress load of a human. So being aware of those components, that's step one. Now, step two, I think this is really summarized by one of my really good friend. I actually mentioned him in the book. He's got this marker for his patients of it's like it's checking your heck, make sure your check is in check, hunger, energy, and cravings. These are direct feedback mechanisms to tell you something is off. If you're excessively hungry, it's abnormally hungry, something is wrong. But in our diet paradigm, we've been taught that hunger is actually, that's when you know weight loss is working. For example, I've had many patients I've worked with who thought that that was a goal. When you're hungry, you're doing it right. This was impressed upon culture by the very physician who indoctrinated our population with how important calories are. Dr. Lulu Hunt Peters. She made the switch from food being food to food being numbers. She said you no longer eat food, you eat calories of food. This was the early part of the 1900s. She sold over 2 million copies of her book at this time, like everybody who could read had that book. And so she said, you will no longer eat a slice of bread, you'll eat 100 calories of bread.

Darin: It still persists?

Shawn: Yeah. And nobody knows where it comes from. And one of the things we talk about in Eat Smarter are epicaloric influences, the things that control what calories do in your body, but she made and it's still true in my nutritional science class, calories are the boss. But it's not Tony Danza. It's not. So she also indoctrinated our culture with this idea that being hungry is the goal, and this was a time of food rationing, like around World War One, she said that. And I went back and just read. I cannot believe what she was saying, but she said, for every pang of hunger you feel, you should have a double joy knowing you're saving the hunger pangs in another person. And so but the sidebar is she battled with her weight her whole life and she associated food with morality. That was the first time that that happened widespread. So it's a character defect if you can't manage your health and manage your weight. And she related words like punishment and sin to diet. But anyway, so these ideas exist and permeate our culture. And so hunger being a



goal, you can be hungry, but if it's a chronic, persistent hunger, that's a sign something is wrong. And here's a big tenet to take away from Eat Smarter is that chronic nutrient deficiency leads to chronic hunger. Again, they should be Captain Obvious, but also chronic nutrient deficiency leads to chronic overeating. So checking your hunger, if you're abnormally hungry, it might be a sign you're stressed. It's probably a sign of stress. It's just which type of stress. Energy, if your energy is off, chances are, especially if you have a baseline understanding connection with your body, something is stress you. Something is off and your body's giving you a feedback. You need to check in, but we tend to just keep going and we punch the gas down harder. So energy and cravings. Cravings is different from hunger. Cravings is like specific. There's something I got to have a salty crunchy or I need a honey bun, like there's something specific. And what that really is, again, this has to do with nutrient deficiency largely, but also stress. And I'm saying this because one of the things that I talked about was the science of flavor. And as we evolved as humans, there's this phenomenon called post ingested feedback. And so when we would eat a natural food through our evolution, our body, our biology is like literally taking notes. Like, okay, so I eat this, we'll just say I found some wild berries, I eat the berries and your body's writing it down like, okay, I got copper, I got some cobalt, I've got some selenium and I got a couple of amino acids. And so your body makes an association between that flavor experience and that food. And so whenever we would have a craving, your physiology knows where to go to get it. And there was a great animal studies that found the animals do the same thing. Clearly, our taste have been hijacked by food manufacturers and they're very, I mean, they spent hundreds of millions of dollars to just hone in and mess up our ability to regulate the system. So cravings today, they're going to be unusual, generally, what we're craving because of muddying up the waters of that system. And so when we have the cravings come up, it's usually driven by some type of stress often related to diet stress, nutrient deficiency. So we get the craving, we get some stuff in our body. It may make us feel happy in this. Again, if we are stressed and you have the glass of wine or you have the chocolate, I don't want to again get neurotic about it. I want us to be aware and also give ourselves permission. But also, how about we upgrade the quality when we do it. All of these things so we can feed into getting back to a healthy baseline.

Darin: Pay the little extra for that special little treat that you're having and not doing it under duress or lack of this is going to make me feel better. And that's a dangerous position because again, it's almost like you've given your power away, just like you gave your power away to the doctor when he was saying all that stuff to you in the beginning. So number one, just thanks for coming here. This has been a blast. And I know we're going to get connected on your show soon. I look forward to diving in some more. Where can people find your book and when is it coming out?

Shawn: When this comes out, you should be able to go and pick it up nationwide or order it from your favorite retailer, Barnes Noble, Amazon, Books-A-Million, all that good stuff. It comes out December 29th. So we're ending this year on a high note and ushering in some change for 2021. And as mentioned earlier in the show starting January 3rd, to kick off the New Year, we are part of a national wellness campaign with Target stores. So the book is going to be in just about every Target store in America and not in the book section. It's going to have its own like 2021 wellness display. So definitely these are the moments where we show these big



organizations, this is what we demand. We want information like this. Big idea, nutrition books like this don't end up in this position. We have to demand more of it because the funny thing is, I'm pointing out the problems with the food that they're carrying in that store. But I wrote the book, it was such a graceful way that it's it's unassuming. It's not a threat. It's like we can partner and fix these things. And so higher ups read the book and they just felt like this was an important message for their customers. So definitely head out to your Target store, order online. This is a book to get a copy from somebody for somebody that you love, a book club. There are so many fun tales in the book. So many fun stories. There are going to be some moments you'll laughs. Once you get to chapter one, I promise you, every single page is going to be an aha moment. And there's nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come. And this is the time for our citizens to eat smarter.

Darin: And citizens and everyone listening, this is a time to ask good questions and different questions of ourselves and take responsibility. I love it. I love the message. I'm 100% behind you in that mission and I will support it in every way I can as well. I'm grateful that we got to meet finally and stoked for everything you're doing and everything that you're pushing forward to empower coming from the kid that needed to empower himself. And now you're perforating that message to millions and I'm grateful, man. Thank you.

Shawn: Thank you. I appreciate that.

[01:00:01] 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.

[01:00:38] 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.