**CS Darin Olien – The Protein Myth**

**Voice Over**: Welcome to The Chalene Show. Chalene is a New York Times Bestselling author, celebrity fitness trainer, and obsessed with helping you live your dream life.

**Chalene Johnson**: So when you’re looking at a food label, what do you look at first? What do you really look at first? I think it’s different for a lot of us. Is it calories? Do you look at the fat content? Is it the protein, carbohydrates, sugars, or do you actually look at what’s in the food?

Now, I know you might look at all of those things eventually, but what does your eye go to first? Now, answer this question. When someone says, “You’re going to love that. It’s got tons of protein in it.” Is your first thought a positive thought?

I’ll just be honest and tell you mine has been there’s so much conflicting information out there about food and nutrition and what is the best and what’s optimal and how we’re all supposed to eat.

I think all of us are desperate for specific rules. I want to know the exact formula. Tell me what to eat and when to eat it and how much of it and what time. If we could just hear one simple answer, then we would all be satisfied. We wouldn’t be so confused, right?

Well, the bottom line is there isn’t one exact answer. My guest today, Darin Olien, is such a proponent of helping people understand how to live a super life. Darin Olien is the founder and the visionary of Super Life, which also happens to be the title of his latest book.

Darin is recognized in the food industry as the guy who sources super foods. He’s like a hunter. Darin’s been around the world and back and into remote locations trying to source and then formulate and research the world’s greatest, edible food sources.

He’s a renowned authority on nutrition and hydration, exercise and how our food relates to that. Here’s what you would love about Darin’s approach. No you’re not going to get some very specific exact rules that you need to follow, but he is going to simplify this so that you can use your common sense and some moderation and do what’s right for you.

Darin devoted his expertise, time, and research to help change the standard of supplement ingredients including his work on what many consider to be the gold standard of super food ingredients to supplement drinks – Shakeology.

In today’s episode we’re going to talk about the protein myth – about eating paleo, intermittent fasting, and other popular trends and how to evaluate if it’s helping you or hurting you, how long to stay on it, and how to get the most out of your life by eating super foods.

**[START OF INTERVIEW]**

**Chalene:** Hey, Darin. It’s Chalene.

**Darin Olien:**  Hey, Chalene. How are you?

**Chalene:** I am awesome. I’m really excited. I just finished a protein shake of which I know you were really one of the key people in putting together the ingredients and not just that but the science behind all of it. It’s exciting to have you talking to our Lifers today.

**Darin:** Thank you, yes. It’s fun to have other people consuming the thing that I helped to create.

**Chalene:** I love it. We’ll talk a little bit about that later. There’s so many people who are tuning in today, and I want to talk about the protein myth. But before we do that, can you share with our audience especially those who are not familiar with your work or your new book, *Super Life*. Share with us how did you get here? Where are you from? Have you always been the go-to guy from nutrition? Did you always eat healthy? Is this how you grew up?

**Darin:** No. It’s the answer. I was a small town kid from Southern Minnesota eating whatever as the meat and potatoes story goes. Just before all of that, I started life really fragile. I was three and a half pounds. I was two months premature. My message in coming in was, “Holy cow, this is a really vulnerable place to have a body.”

I might not live because my father then told me that I had a 50-50 chance of living. They’re watching my brain if it was developed and my lungs and the central nervous system, and all of these things. That set me on a path that – I was in incubator for three weeks. Although I was able to live, there’s some systems that were lagging behind.

I had a resting heart rate of 120 beats per minute. I have a hyperactive thyroid. I had some learning disabilities. I had glasses. I had patches on my eye. I had water on my knees. It’s a lot of weird things that just supported that, “Holy cow, this is going to be a tough go.”

**Chalene:** You’re really strong strapping guy. You’re known as the Indiana Jones of nutrition. I know you played collegiate football. So it’s hard to picture this sickly child. When did that change?

**Darin:** Yes, essentially, three and a half pounds to 200 pounds. Then at 16, I was still weak. I think I was 5’9, 135 pounds at 16, so really a small kid. I picked up my first weight, and I had some mentors in the gym. Then my body started developing. From 16 to 18, I put on like – with a little food adjustment and figuring out that food is power, I went from 135 pounds to almost 185/190.

That was a huge piece for me, the food, the exercise and weight training. Then that threw me to being pretty decent at sports. I decided to play college football starting my sophomore year at Fullback.

The first game of the season, I incurred a back injury. Physical therapy, Dr. World got me to a certain point. I couldn’t play again. So I was really frustrated. I was really depressed that from this small town, I thought going to the twin cities in Minnesota was a really big step and now that kind of dream of continuing to play stopped instantaneously.

Then I transferred schools and then said, “I need to figure this out for myself first.” It dawned on me the last kind of – not the last but certainly a big part of the bell that went off was, “I can learn about this through this education.” As weird as it sounds, I was like, “I actually love this because I’ve been having an experience with my body and changing it. Let me learn about it.”

So I transferred schools and went into exercise phys and nutrition. Then that was digging into that. I just sent off this lightning bolt of curiosity that last today.

**Chalene:** When did you start looking for these exotic super foods? How did that happen?

**Darin:** I graduate in 1994; it took me an extra year. Then from 1994 to 2005, I was just playing around. I was working with athletes. I was working with individuals. I was working on a lot of people, but 2005 was one of the biggest events in my life. I lost my father to alcohol.

He was an amazing, amazing guy and we’re super close. He was one of those people that saw a lot, felt a lot, received a lot but didn’t choose a lot.

He didn’t choose the life that he truly desired and it got him. He picked up the bottle. From there, when he passed away, - gosh, 10 years ago all ready – I said, “Okay. What am I going to do with this legacy? Now, it’s on me.”

I didn’t take that as pressure at all. I took that as I am in a place where I am ridiculously happy and curious about what I’m doing, but I have to actually now do it in a way that’s going to make an impact.

At that point, I had been finding – because I started to travel. I had been to India. I had been to some other places in South America. I said, “Okay. This is what I’m going do.” I’m just one plane ride, one country at a time, making connections with people because the first genesis again was I wanted to know exactly how to use the plant not from a lab coat or a research article but from the people themselves that have been using it forever.

I wanted to see it, experience it, and feel what it was like to be in the culture. In 2005, I decided to launch my own products and everything else. Because I had found super foods no one’s ever heard of it before. I had put formulations. I had tons in my head. I said, “Okay, well”

**Chalene:** I love that particular drink, Shakeology. No, I’m not a paid affiliate for it. When someone says to me, “Well, I’ve got my own protein shake that I drink or whatever. You cone. I read that in the back of the level. I know I can’t remember any ingredients.” So here’s always my answer. “It’s got the best stuff in it. It doesn’t even compare to yours.”

I think a lot of people are drinking protein shakes or doing supplements. They look at some key things like the amount of protein or fats or carbohydrates and nothing else. So go ahead and get up on your soap box for a minute here.

I think we know at a base level that not all supplements are made equal. But what are people putting in their bodies when they’re buying these really cheap protein powders?

**Darin:** God only knows and their bodies only know. It’s a really dangerous situation. Consider that we have a sheriff, which is supposed to be the FDA but there is no deputies to actually oversee anything.

It’s as if they gave you the instructions, “Hey, do this for your supplements and everything else. Obey these laws and good luck. We expect you to do that.” So if you’re looking at billions of dollars of an industry and you have really no watchmen, only when something bad happens – you have so many people creating products and so many companies distributing products that have no quality assurance that have no testing in place, that are just receiving ingredients so far removed from how they’re supposed to be treated, grown, processed that they have the blueprint, the signature that they’re supposed to have. They have the active components that they’re supposed to do, what they’ve been doing for thousands of years. You have just dust particles there.

**Chalene:** Really?

**Darin:** Yes. It’s really sad and it’s not the sexiest thing. It’s hard to let that information be out there because it’s easy to put a shiny package on something.

**Chalene:** Wait a minute. You said it’s hard to let that information be out there. What do you mean by that?

**Darin:** Not that it’s hard but it’s easy to just market. It’s easy to just make something look pretty and put a nice little ad together. Formats like these were – I’ve been behind the veil for so long in direct, growing, and processing, and manufacturing and sourcing of some of these foods.

Most of these super foods I can tell you where they’re coming from. I don’t care what company it is. I can pretty much know who’s growing it, that you should or shouldn’t have it. It’s hard to really paint the full picture when the industry is moving so fast and it’s just marketing the next thing and the next thing.

**Chalene:** So little regulation like you said. That’s what I love about your book is you make no bones about it. It may be controversial but I love you are a spokesperson to all of us to say, “Listen. We’ve been sold a load of goods and it’s up to us to figure out what we should be putting in our bodies.” You have these five life forces that you believe help people live a super life.

But one of the things that I think is – really, man, you’re in the forefront of this – is the protein myth. That’s me. I pick up every package and I look at two things. I’m learning but I used to look at fat. I’ll go, “Too much fat. Put it back.” Then I would look at protein. “Too many carbs, put it down.”

Why have we all been trained to look at the protein? Can you dispel some of the myths that you go into in great detail in your book? Can you just share with us some of the biggest myths we need to be aware of?

**Darin:** Yes. We’ve been fed this stuff, pun intended, for so long. You go into all fat’s bad. Now, go fat-free so we chemicalize our food and somehow now that’s good. We’re in this culture right now. We’re just in another fad wave of saying that, “Dude, how much protein does that have in it?”

You’re talking about one macro nutrient when you’re really talking about food, when food is processed correctly, if at all, that has hundreds and hundreds of active compounds that are there. We’re talking about one macro nutrient.

That one macro nutrient is absolutely essential. It’s essential for every cell to the infrastructure of the mitochondria to the DNA all the way to our nails and our skin and our eyeballs. So we need protein. We need amino acids for sure.

But if we get too much of it, that’s where it starts going against us. When we start going over 15 or 20, 25 percent protein in our overall calories and this kind of – I don’t know – little crazy kiddogenic worlds that people starve themselves completely of carbohydrates.

You put yourself in survival mechanisms. Your body has many backup systems to counteract to that. People get addicted to this, “Okay, hey I lost weight because I ate like 10 carbs for the day. I hate all this bacon and fat” when in fact, what I ask is what do the cells require?

I was taught this from researchers to indigenous people. If your cells are hurting, you’re hurting. The cells essentially have about five to 15 percent protein requirements. After that, it creates a cascade of acidosis that your body has to counter back.

What is acidosis? Essentially, acid in your body that is created from excess protein. When you have excess protein, the difference between carbohydrates and fats is that you have this molecule called nitrogen. That’s the only thing you need to know.

Nitrogen is there. That’s what contributes to the creating of acid. So by consuming all of these protein, it creates an acidic effect, which then turns on your body to go we’re in trouble because we don’t want to burn from the inside out literally.

So we take calcium from our bones. We take magnesium, potassium, sodium, all of these essential electrolytes that are supposed to be used for something else, and then we turn those on to help buffer the acid.

Then for on that longer and longer, our liver then creates ammonia which is super alkalining, which is so alkalining it can actually over time burn the inside of your body as well trying to deal with the acidic situation.

**Chalene:** So let’s just take this worst case scenario for somebody who’s been extreme paleo for years and doing this to their body and trying to survive it like four to seven percent body fat or something crazy. They’re living this life. What could happen to their body?

**Darin:** So many things because you’re undermining…

**Chalene:** What do you see?

**Darin:** Well, you know the easiest thing is inflammation. What happens is a lot of these people – I’m not even against paleo because there’s more good things about that than there’s bad. There’s just a few things that just take a left turn that is just insane to me. So a lot of the principles of paleo is good. So I’m not here to bash paleo but people have conveniently created it different than it was actually meant to.

Some of the things are when you start this, you can definitely feel and see results. But if you stay on it, it was never meant to be stayed on. The body is never meant to be in the survival mode. It was never meant to be starved of the essential things than the cells require.

So what happens is the body then starts to create inflammatory responses. It’s trying to buffer the acids by taking water from inside the cell and diffusing it out to the cell. That’s inflammation. Now all of a sudden, the person is a, they’re completely lethargic. They have no energy, but then they reach for their coffees and their sodas or caffeine.

Now, the whole systems in your body are undermined and tired. That’s a whole compound effect but you’re going to eventually go, “Why can’t I lose that weight anymore? I sleep very well” because it undermines melatonin, serotonin, dopamine and all of that stuff so you can’t really fall asleep anymore.

Your breath will probably start smelling because the ammonia will start coming out. Your stools will give you a lot of really bad information. Your digestion will probably get off. The internal system of your microbes will start changing.

So now we go back to that very same thing I was telling you about. Before the call, we talked about this hosting principle, right? You’re either hosting disease or you’re inviting disease. You’re either hosting health or you’re not.

By all of these systems that are failing because you’re on these fad ideas for too long, your environment is then changing. Your environment now is creating different situations to host other things.

It’s as if you take out all the garbage and then if your systems can’t work, your garbage man can’t show up every Sunday. Now, you have a bunch of garbage at the end of your street. What happens then if your garbage starts building up?

You then have vermin, parasites, bacteria that are absolutely essential. They’re doing their job because the environment now is such that they can survive and live and thrive. We are not the only species wanting to live here, but the environments are very important for us to either create or destroy.

The simple thing is staying away from processed foods and heavy meat consumption and all of this stuff. Automatically, eating fresh fruit and stuff create life-giving, weight loss-dropping, sleep-improving benefits just like that alone.

**Chalene:** What are the likelihood of increased risked of injury for somebody who’s on this, as you say, unsustainable adaptation of one of these fad ways of eating? I love that you have this approach to things in moderation. There’s no good or bad but it can go bad. So for someone who’s been just taking this to the extreme for so many years, what are the risks of injury thereto because I see a lot of that?

**Darin:** Oh yes. if you’re creating this environment where what happened – we talk of acidic conditions and the acidic conditions come from processed foods and heavy meat and dairy consumption, even acidic thoughts. That’s a whole another topic.

But what happens when exercise, when you really kick ass in an exercise, you can get sore. What is that? That’s lactic acid. That’s more acid. So now if your buffering systems are all ready compromised, guess what? The lactic acid has no place to go. It has no ability to process through.

Yes, through oxygen, through respiration, a lot of that can help. But when you have the systems that are always bogged down all ready and you can’t even take out the garbage inside of your own body and then on top of it, you’re breaking muscle down and you don’t have the ability to recover, the environments and so many different systems are compromised, there’s no way you’re not going to get an injury.

You know that’s more than anyone. When you are working out, working out is only good based on your body’s ability to recover fast and efficiently, right? So if you can’t recover – that’s why it makes me crazy when I see these athletes. I’ve gotten to work with a few of them.

These professional athletes that are just eating mad. They’re just eating crazy when in fact, if you just dial in a few things, their bodies are all ready so amazing.

**Chalene:** What do you mean by they’re eating mad? What does that mean?

**Darin:** Well, they’re just eating bad and mad, just crazy stuff and they’re still…

**Chalene:** But what do you mean by that, like they’re eating bad food choices or they’re going to extreme with low fat high protein?

**Darin:** All of the above. I’m just not a fan of overriding these life force principles that are just like elephants in the room. My book goes back into like, “Okay. Come on. You generally know what to eat.” We generally know that if I were to take someone, if I were to take you Chalene and you’ve never been here and I threw you in a body for the first time. You’re like, “Okay.” What do you think you should eat?

Instinctually, letting your body inform you not being manipulated by your senses of the smells, the fats, the fried, all of that stuff. That’s manipulation and it’s very smart of the marketing wizards of trying to sell products.

But wouldn’t you know, “Right, I should eat a lot of whole fresh plants that are local here.” I’m sorry that when we’re born, we don’t have the instinct of grabbing our pet durable and reaping it apart and eating it. That’s not instinctually something we do.

Our bodies are definitely adaptive. That’s also the double-edged sword. All these people and all these books out there all have their own spin because our bodies can adapt to anything.

**Chalene:** That’s so true. I guess that’s why we can expect that there’s always going to be a new trend like the person who was – before the pleas for how much fat you’re eating is now the person is like, “You got to be eating chunks of whole butter.”

It’s just crazy how people just latch on to that because we’re looking for guidelines. We’re looking for rules, but that’s what I love about your book. You already have the code. You already know what to do and to not get so caught up in these trends and fads and to really pay attention to what you’re feeling and how to maximize this incredible life by using all of those forces that we have available to us. Not to go off in attention to your book but really how each one of them has to be in balance with the whole thing is out of whack.

**Darin:** Exactly. Our whole healthcare system is all about specialty. It’s like, “I got to go to this specialist, that specialist.” I have a great friend of mine, Dr. Mosen tell me this one thing. He said, “Once you go to specialty, you go further and deeper into unknown and unchartered territory because you go further and deeper away from that which was the origin of the source of the truth or the problem.”

Then you go into fatal conveniences of all these other things that are supposed to – a fatal convenience is pharmaceutical drugs. You’re not at the source of what a system is telling you to change. You’re just at a convenience that you’re going to get through this day and have a less of a headache when you’re body is going, “You know what, I haven’t drink an ounce of water a day,” and the first sign of dehydration is fatigue and headache and back ache and all of these things.

Now, you’re going to a specialist for your migraines. Now, you’re going to a specialist for your back ache when in fact, if you started drinking enough water – I go deep into hydration into the book. Training your body to change its set point of how much water can it receive, those things start to go away.

**Chalene:** Wow. Another really popular trend that people are constantly asking about is intermittent fasting and how that’s gone haywire, too. What are your thoughts on that?

**Darin:** I’ve done it for most of my life. If we look at it, we’ve naturally done it to societies and culture. I always like to go back to things that have been used again. Like I said, that’s how I formulate from, that’s where my super foods and medicinal plants were formed from.

We’ve been fasting to certain extents for as long as we’ve known that we have civilized societies. But at the same time, these ideas of throwing out fasting and then do this and do that and not having a clear understanding of what to do before and what to do after is very dangerous for the metabolic systems and casually throw you backwards.

If you understand fasting, it’s always been connected to a deeply spiritual practice, always, because there’s a very sacred thing that happens when you’re stopping that process. There’s a lot of preparation beforehand. There’s a very clear map as to what you’re doing and there’s a very clear understanding of what’s going on afterwards.

Again, in our society, we like to cut the head off the snake all the time. When we have to look at everything in the whole, a, why am I doing this? Am I doing it for weight loss? Really bad idea. Am I leading in health first? If you lead in health first, which is one of the main undertones of my book, you get everything.

**Chalene:** So true.

**Darin:** The weight doesn’t want to stay on you. Inflammation doesn’t want to stay with you. Your pasty skin won’t be there anymore. Fatigue goes away. No more medications start to change.

**Chalene:** Isn’t it crazy though that it is the weight loss that motivates people to make change so often and it’s a shame. By the way, for those of you who – this is the first time we’ve even heard of the term intermittent fasting.

In my show notes ChaleneJohnson.com/podcast, I will link to several different episodes where we’ve had guests talking about different approach and opinions on intermittent fasting, so you can make an informed decision for yourself.

But Darin, can you tell us just generally speaking, do you eat within a certain number of hours each day? What is your intermittent fasting practice?

**Darin:** Yes. A, we’re fasting every night while we sleep. That’s a natural fast. Sometimes, I’ll do a day fast. I haven’t done that in a little while, but I’m very clear why I’m doing it. The intermittent fasting can be, you know, you wake up and then – a popular window which is I think a little safer is like that 10-hour window, where you’re only eating in a 10-hour to 11-hour span and then that’s it.

The other hours of the day, you’re just fasting. So you can wake up and have your breakfast and then 10 hours from there is when you finished your last meal. I get into detoxification a lot in the book, too. It’s a very important thing to stop eating and to allow for your body to switch into a regulatory functioning to clean itself out.

I don’t know about you but our society is just getting hammered with unknown stressors from 80,000 new unidentified toxins being emitted in our atmosphere every year, to WiFi signals to toxins in our food, to all of these stuff.

Our need to detox and to provide these scenarios for our body to cleanse itself is even more important, which is also my argument for why super foods and things like Shakeology are so important now because our bodies are compromised in invisible ways that we don’t even know.

**Chalene:** Yes, the invisible stressors. You know I guess the reason why I’ve always – even the term intermittent fasting, I didn’t even want to look into that much further because for me the term fasting has a very negative connotation as dieting. That sounds like something you can’t do long term. It sounds like something you’re doing to punish yourself, and that’s just my own past experiences.

When I think of what most people describe that’s happening in the body when we’re “fasting”, it’s what you just said. It’s your clean cycle. You’re allowing your body to rest and to restore and to process. So I think if people approach it from that standpoint and not like, “I’m putting myself on in starvation mode starting now.”

But like, “I’m allowing my body to do what it’s supposed to do and to go to that clean cycle and to rest and to allow for proper digestion.” It’s such a healthy way to look at it. I really wish that the term intermittent or fasting wasn’t associated with that we know has been a practice we’ve done naturally for thousands of years.

**Darin:** Yes, exactly. Well, people have used it. Listen, I think the intention behind everything will determine the outcome. You can have a massively different intention than the person eating the same meal next to you. You will have a biochemical differences in your body based on that.

The fasting thing has gotten something where people are looking for that quick fix. The quick fix is undermining so many things in the body that’s trying to regulate themselves and give you – the body’s designed. It’s a freaking miracle.

It’s designed to help you thrive. It’s doing everything it can to keep you up upright and keep you moving forward so that you know that this stuff’s going on. But if we keep doing weird things to it and not drinking – 70 percent of America doesn’t even drink an ounce of water a day.

**Chalene:** Wow.

**Darin:** That’s insane. Every system is going to be affected by that. Then we wonder why we’re depressed and our chronic disease is at the top of what’s killing America. Degenerative diseases are doing small things over a long period of time that’s creating degeneration.

That either creates health or creates disease. What are your habits that you’re doing everyday that’s generating you towards thriving in optimal health or it’s all these other habits that, Oh, that’s just who I am. That’s the weakest position to ever be in.

For me, those milestones in my life – believe me, you’re not born fragile than a three and a half pound child coming into this world. There’s so much that can go on. That journey for me was getting the access to these fundamental things that we have the power to choose and change. We can create and change so much for this amazing regenerative body.

That’s the message and the mission that I’m dedicated to. Super Life is not just a name for me. I co-created my super life with the mystery that is life. I want people to have the same because we have more responsibility and power than we’ve been willing to give ourselves. I want people to get that back.

**Chalene:** Darin, you can hear your enthusiasm like I can tell you just sat up really straight and move in close to the mic. It is your passion to help people learn that these simple changes can bring together a huge incredible change in your life. But there's simple little changes that allow you to do this. You’re passionate about it because you know that a super life is possible for anyone.

People can learn more about your book by going to SuperLIfe.com. is that correct?

**Darin:** That’s right.

**Chalene:** Well, there are some great tips in there. Again, what I really appreciate about you is the moderation, the common sense to all of this. It’s like your body is your friend. Don’t be an enemy to it. I just can’t thank you enough for your passion and your vision. So thanks for being a guest to The Chalene Show.

**Darin:** Thank you, Chalene. I appreciate it. It’s been great.

**[END OF INTERVIEW]**

**Chalene:** I don’t know about you but I just feel like the more knowledge I have, the more confidence I have when it come to my own nutrition, when it comes to helping others. I hope you’ll share this episode with your friends especially the ones who are really into this. They want to know more about their nutrition, what is the right amount of carbohydrates, proteins, calories, fats.

The more knowledge we have, the better we can make informed decisions about our own body. So all you have to do is click the Share button on this podcast. You can actually email the link to this show to anyone you know who would like this episode, or you can actually copy and paste that link and send it in a text message.

Thank you for your support of The Chalene Show. It means the world to me. Until we have a chance to spend time together again, I want you to know how much I appreciate you. You really are the Bomb.com.

If I keep saying that, that phrase will never leave me. I should probably come up with another one. So let’s do that. Why don’t you guys help me come up with another tagline for the end of the show or maybe I should keep “You’re the Bomb.com?” I just want your opinion. So let me know what it should be. Leave me a message. ChaleneJohnson.com/podcast.

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