

Nicki: Welcome to The Healthy Rebellion Radio. This is an episode of Salty Talk. A deep dive into popular and relevant health and performance news pieces mixed with the occasional salty conversation with movers and shakers in the world of research, performance, health and longevity. Healthy Rebellion Radio, Salty Talk episodes are brought to you by Drink LMNT, the only electrolyte drink mix that's salty enough to make a difference in how you look, feel, and perform. We co-founded this company to fill a void in the hydration space. We needed an electrolyte drink that actually met the sodium needs of active people, low carb, keto, and carnival adherence without any of the sugar, colors and fillers found in popular commercial products. Health rebels, this is Salty Talk.

Nicki: Now the thing our attorney advises. The contents of this show are for entertainment and educational purposes only. Nothing in this podcast should be considered medical advice. Please consult your licensed and credentialed functional medicine practitioner before embarking on any health, dietary or fitness change. Given that this is Salty Talk, you should expect the occasional expletive.

Robb: Well, howdy wife.

Nicki: Hubs. How's your hand?

Robb: Better. I was tickling Nikki and she jammed my hand into her chair and-

Nicki: I was defending myself.

Robb: Defending yourself. I'll keep that in mind the next time we have a little cross-eyed top happening.

Nicki: Hey, a woman can defend herself from unwanted tickles.

Robb: Indeed and should. No means no.

Nicki: Yes. What is our Salty Talk about today?

Robb: Well, I had a great time talking with Dr. Sina McCullough and Joel Salatin about their forthcoming book and it's-

Nicki: It's actually releasing this Friday. This coming Friday. Yeah. No, but I think everybody knows who Joel Salatin is. I think at least the majority of our listeners have either heard Joel's name or Polyface Farms, which is his farm. He's written several books and appeared in-

Robb: Just a mogul in the regenerative ag scene. Amazing guy, yeah.

Nicki: Yeah. Almost anybody in the regenerative ag space knows Joel.

Robb: Yeah. He was at a conference and both he and Sina were kind of the keynotes. She has a PhD in nutritional sciences, but went through, man, a harrowing set of health challenges. Mainstream medicine couldn't really figure it out. It was very gut, not autoimmune related. Found something looking kind of paleo or ancestral healthesque and-

Nicki: She actually went through a period of time though where she couldn't eat any meat at all. She was so sick that she couldn't tolerate meat, I think she said, for multiple months until her husband went and got some meat from Polyface.

Robb: Well, yeah. It wasn't just couldn't tolerate meat, couldn't tolerate conventional meat, which we-

Nicki: Couldn't tolerate conventional meat.

Robb: ... Karen Pendergrass and a few other folks that we know were sick enough to be in that spot. Even though we try to make the case that conventional meat is not a great option for environmental reasons, for most people, it's still very nutritionally dense. If you're living at the margins, then that's something to keep in mind. But there are some people that get sick enough that whatever is coming along for the ride with the conventional meat, it can break them.

Nicki: Affect them, yeah.

Robb: What's interesting is, they lived pretty close to Joel. They went and stocked their freezer with meat, and she started eating this pastured meat from Polyface Farms. That was really the turning point in her getting healthier. She immediately made the connection of, "Oh, I need good quality meat if I'm going to live." Basically. Good quality food across the board. Food sovereignty, access to good quality food became a pretty important feature in her life. She and Joel hit it off really well. Upon her first meeting, and I'm kind of giving away a little bit of their story, they describe more of the story, but she met him and 10 minutes later had him convinced to do a book with her. A pretty cool story.

Nicki: Yeah. Well, let's jump into the interview.

Robb: Cool.

Robb: Dr. Sina McCullough, Joel Salatin, how are you today?

Joel: Great.

Sina: Great. How are you?

Robb: Really good. Very, very excited to have you all on the show. The Healthy Rebellion is all about what you folks are doing with your upcoming book, Beyond Labels. Before, Joel, you had a little bit of internet connectivity challenges so the doc and I were chatting. But

she relayed kind of an interesting story about the genesis of this project. Which of you wants to get in and flesh that out?

Sina: Go for it.

Joel: Well, okay. Sina and I were speaking, we were both speaking at a shindig. I was not aware of her very much, but I had seen her book *Hands Off My Food* and I was intrigued. I went, not having heard her and she spoke first, then I spoke second. But I'll tell you what, she had me on the edge of my seat. I took about 12 pages of notes and by the time she was done, I was excited and in love. Then when I got done, she found me through the crowd and just said, "Hey, why don't we do a book together?" I said, "Okay." That's how it started.

Robb: I'm in the process of getting ready to launch another book and I got roped into co-authoring yet an additional book. I'm both excited for you and I commiserate with both of you because there are so many points in the process of creating a book that you're like, "How on earth did I think this was a good idea at all? This is the worst thing I could do for my health and my functionality being a ..." Sina, you were talking about the final sprint. It was 12 and 14 hour days to get this thing done. Joel, you were on a blistering travel schedule under the best of circumstances and then you layer another project in there and, man, it's a lot. Yeah.

Joel: It is a lot, but unlike all the other co-authored books I've ever seen, this one actually separates the players.

Robb: Oh, nice.

Joel: It reads like a play. In normal co-authoring, you're actually, whatever, signing off on each others things. Now, we did sign off on each others things, but it was pretty gentle. Sina was Sina, I was me. Because we designate Sina's talking, Joel's talking, Sina's talking, Joel's talking, that separation of actors I think actually made the process a little less arduous than it would be if you're both signing off on every preposition of the book.

Robb: Absolutely. Because you can both maintain your own voice, but it makes sense in the context of a conversation or even just kind of a dual presented lecture. That's great. I wish I had had that idea for my projects. Unfortunately, I did not. Sina, the folks that are hanging out around *The Healthy Rebellion* are very familiar with Joel's work. I know that some of the folks are familiar with your work because I was talking to them about doing this interview. But for some of the other folks that your work will be new and your background, can you flesh out a little bit of your backstory and history?

Sina: Sure, no problem. Yeah. I have a PhD in nutritional science with a bachelor's in neurobiology, physiology and behavior. What I realized was, I learned a lot during my educational time. I spent 10 years in college, so I hope it was [laughter]-

Robb: You got something out of it, yeah.

Sina: Yeah, got something for that money. But what I learned very quickly when I got sick, was that what I learned there were a lot of holes in it and it wasn't very practical. In other words, everything I learned didn't prevent me from getting sick. Once I got sick, it didn't help me to heal myself completely. I got sick. In my early 20s is when I first started having symptoms that were inconvenient, severe GI distress. It puts a damper on your social life. You can't leave the house. In reality, now that I research it, I know that the symptoms really started in utero. But noticeable symptoms started in my early 20s. It progressed slowly over time. It took almost two decades to turn into a full blown, debilitating, autoimmune condition, which was rheumatoid arthritis. But at my bottom point, I couldn't get off the floor, I couldn't wrap my hand around a cup. My son who was five or six at the time had to come bring a cup over to me so I can drink water. It was accompanied by of course, leaky gut. I had arsenic poisoning from consuming supposed gluten free foods.

Robb: But doing a lot of rice, apparently.

Sina: Yes. Well, those certified gluten free foods are predominantly made out of rice and corn. We can get into that too, but those kept me sick because they also contain gluten, a form of gluten. I was so deficient in nutrients that I was borderline for both pellagra and beriberi. That even though I was taking a multivitamin and mineral every single day, that I wasn't able to digest and absorb the nutrients properly. At the end, is when I started to experience muscle wasting like a cancer patient would experience. I lost 15 pounds in one month. Even though I was scooping avocado just straight into my mouth, but I couldn't keep the weight on. I saw medical doctors in the Western medical system for about 20 years, searching for answers and did numerous tests. I saw so many specialists. I mean, you name it, I had it done, breath tests, urine tests, fecal tests, sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy, exploratory surgery, everything. They never had any answers except they wanted me to take more medication.

Sina: Which I always refused to do because I knew it didn't address the root cause. Then at the end, the last specialist told me that the symptoms had to be in my head. Which obviously that means they just don't know. I mean, I was diagnosed with fibromyalgia, which is another catch-all that we just don't know what's going on, and IBS. But other than that, they had no answers. At that point when they said it was in my head, I knew I was on my own and desperate and determined to find the root cause and to be healthy again. I mean, I was a competitive athlete for most of my life at that point. It was a real identity crisis for me to go from being a champion mountain biker and springboard diver to now I'm on the floor all the time and nobody can help me. Frankly, we knew that I was going to die. It was getting close. Anyways, long story short, my husband, who has a PhD in chemical engineering, he joined forces with me to try to look through all the scientific literature and piece together my clues.

Sina: Everybody has their own puzzle to piece together in healing and we were piecing it together. We got a lot of the pieces put together, but we were missing a few. That's when I found a functional medicine doctor who basically wrote a script for these last few tests I needed. I needed the functional tests, not the regular Western medicine tests. Through those tests, we were able to find my last handful of triggers and removed them from my diet. I did a chelation protocol, a natural one at home. Within three days,

I was able to get off the floor. Within three months, almost all the pain was gone. I was outside pulling bushes out of the ground. Then it took about a year, but now I'm completely disease free, no markers of inflammation of any kind. I'm pregnant with my third child, which is amazing-

Robb: Congrats.

Sina: Thanks. Because yeah, during my health journey, I'd had five miscarriages as well. This is a real indication that yes, I am truly healthy again. In that whole process, what I realized was the food ... I'm supposed to be an expert in nutrition. According to my degree, that's what I am. But I realized that I really didn't know what was in the food and the food was making me sick consequently. I researched it for about five years and the intention was to heal myself and to heal my family, who had also been getting sick along this journey. That's what I wrote in the first book, Hands Off My Food, is what I had discovered. Then what happened was, I went on this talk circuit to promote the book and everybody who was coming to my talks was sick. They were sick or their kids were sick. They're like, "Your story is my story. It's like listening to myself up there." They kept asking if I would take them on as clients, as a consultant. I didn't want to do that. It wasn't my intention. I was just trying to help educate people and give them hope.

Sina: I kept sending them to functional medicine doctors, and then they kept coming back and saying, "Well, that didn't work. I'm still sick." I pieced together some holes that were there in the system and then I started to offer the consulting. That's what I do now. My primary job is I homeschool my children. Aside from COVID, that's my job.

Robb: Right.

Sina: My-

Robb: That's a good distinction. Yeah.

Sina: Yeah. What happened was, when I was at my breaking point, when we knew that I wasn't going to make it if something radical didn't change, I ended up just praying to God. I remember just laying there in the bed because I couldn't sit up at that point. I was just laying there. I was in tears and I was like, "Okay, I surrender, I can't do it on my own. I've tried everything, I've exhausted all my knowledge, the doctors can't help me. I'm your servant, please save me so that ..." It still gets me every time, "So that I can be here for my kids." It was the day after that, that He led me to that functional medicine doctor that turned everything around. I had made Him that promise that if He saved me, then I would dedicate the rest of my life to help other people avoid these health challenges or get their second chance, if you will.

Robb: That's awesome.

Sina: That's what I do.

Robb: Well, it's interesting. Within The Healthy Rebellion, I would say maybe 40%, maybe more than that, 40% of the folks in there are pursuing some sort of a health coaching or an allied health professional, but with a focus in functional medicine. Because they had a massive health crisis, they nearly died from it. Then when you get to the other side of that, you are kind of a world expert in that thing. You almost get these hound dog ears where it's kind of like, somebody says something and an ear perks up and you're like, "Oh, I know exactly what's up with you." You get an amazing ability to help the folks that want helping. I super appreciate that. It seems to be a growing story. Our medical system may be replaced by folks wanting to dispense healthcare with folks that recovered their health and now actually want to help people.

Sina: Yeah, I absolutely agree. I really think that unless you've experienced it yourself, you can't really understand what they're going through. It's so humbling and I would have never ... For instance, like I said, I was a trained athlete. I had this mentality of, you just push through the pain, the pain is in your head. It was very humbling when I experienced the chronic pain from the rheumatoid arthritis. I have a very different understanding now of different types of pain and different thresholds, and then also then how to handle it. Because I didn't want to take prescription medications or even ibuprofen, anything over the counter. Learning to work with your body, like through learning how to do tapping, emotional freedom technique, things like that. You have a whole different perspective and appreciation for the people who are actually sick and for the obstacles that they face that you know how to help them with. I think there's a reason for everything. I never thought that I would be in this position where people are now coming to me looking upon me as an expert in disease prevention and reversal.

Sina: My training in graduate school was largely with athletes. It's a huge departure for me. But it's like what you said, once you're part of it, once you're immersed in it, once you've had a fight for your own life, you do hone those skills. I mean, to help myself, I listened to hundreds and hundreds of hours of those free online health talks. You do, you start to see a pattern. That's really how I was able to reverse the condition that I had, was because I saw that pattern and then saw the holes in it in creating my own program. It's been a blessing and it's been something that I couldn't have experienced from the outside. You had to actually go through it.

Robb: Live it. Yeah.

Sina: Yeah. Like you said though, it's interesting because I still have athletes that come to me because they want help and improve performance. My studies we're pushing back the lactate threshold through dietary modifications. When these athletes talk to me, I'm like, "What's your goal?" They're like, "Well, I want to win the triathlon coming up or whatnot." Then they start telling me problems that they're having and it's exactly what you're saying, I'm like, "Oh, you're already inflamed. Yeah, we'll get you to that athletic goal, but at this core basic level, we need to actually address this because you're already on the autoimmune continuum." Yeah, you do hone into it in all your conversations.

Robb: Well, and you sound like a little bit of a crazy person because everything seems related to the gut and gut health. Not everybody has access to a water trough that is just dirty

enough to keep someone healthy, like Joel, but not so dirty that it cripples them with Giardia. Yeah. Hey Joel, I'm going to do a little bit of a switch up here because you are famous for detailed, remarkably, picturesque descriptions of things. But I'm going to turn this thing around a little bit. What's your elevator pitch about Beyond Labels?

Joel: The elevator pitch is that people are desperate to be empowered in confidence for their food decisions. I think even people who seem fairly knowledgeable look at labels and they're confused, "What's animal welfare approved? What's organic? What's eco certified?" I mean, as you know, there are tons of labels now and each one has a pretty distinctive fit. Beyond Labels is to try to pull the curtain back, look behind the play that all the brand names are making and explain how Sina and I behind the curtain gained confidence that we are in a healing place with food.

Robb: Awesome. I love it. It's so interesting, in the opening section, you have your roadmap to health, happiness and freedom. Joel, I know you reasonably well, so we're kind of lunatic libertarians at heart and all that. So I get the freedom piece. But we've got three things we're thinking about health, happiness and freedom. Why did the freedom piece strike you as being so important and kind of what are your thoughts around that? Some people could say, "Well, I'm free to eat whatever I want, or I ..." But why was that important and what really was kind of that defining characteristic of freedom for you all the way that you were tackling this project?

Joel: Well, that was one of the words that initially drew me to Sina from day one. Generally, when people think about food, they think safety and efficacy comes through regulatory either certification or regulatory oversight. This approach of being able to see food as a free choice, we're going to exercise freedom of choice here and make our decisions not based on government orthodoxy, not based on brand orthodoxy or outfit orthodoxy, but we're free to make our own decisions and free to make our own path. That is an ultimately liberating approach, as opposed to, "I've got to find who to follow." That's a very confining approach. "I've got to find my guru and I'm going to follow my guru." It could be the USDA, it could be the FDA, food, dietary guidelines. I mean, and our point is, don't look for a guru, be your own guru and here's a template for you to feel confident in your own guruness.

Robb: It's so amazing and it really is liberating. It's something that I constantly work towards is, teaching folks how to fish. Like, okay, I've got an area of expertise. Not everybody has a background in biochemistry, not everybody's been doing this for 20 years. That's great. But if you hang out with me for a couple of years, you should know 85% of what I know and be able to do 110% better with it, because almost anybody I meet is smarter than I am. That should be a done deal. I really appreciate that. I'm really intrigued, again in the beginnings of the book, you all have this set up addressing convenience right from the get go. Even to the degree of looking at processed foods in a very different way. I don't know which of you or maybe both of you want to tackle that. But even I would say from the way that I have historically tackled things, I'm kind of in this paleo, low carb space. That's kind of where my bullseye is and where I start and then we start iterating from there.

Robb: What's kind of the bullseye that you all are using to get folks going on this? It's just so intriguing the way that you've laid this out in the book. It is incredibly practical, but I also don't want to tell the story. It's your story.

Joel: I'll let Sina tackle that one. I've talked a little bit.

Sina: Well, Joel and I up front were very cognizant of the fact that we needed to meet people where they are. That's one of the things I learned in working with different clients. You may want them to get over here on this end of the continuum at food paradise, but if they're way over here, you can't jump that fast. They need to have a step by step process, and that's exactly how I did my dietary changes too. I didn't change everything all at once. If you do that, it's very overwhelming. In my experience, you're likely to not make it a habit. It's not now a lifestyle, it's just another fad diet that you're trying and that failed. We wanted to meet people where they are and so we created a continuum. Basically, on the far left side of that continuum would be like eating out of the gas station. On the far right side of the continuum would be, having your own homestead, growing all your own food, being self sufficient. Which is another component of the freedom aspect of not being enslaved by the industrial food system.

Sina: Which we're seeing the consequences of that now with the food shortages. We wanted to create something that was user-friendly, that was practical, that was budget friendly and that was doable by everybody. So that anybody who wants to eat better, who wants to provide better food for their family, for their children, anybody who wants to reverse a disease or prevent a disease, that you could open this book and feel comfortable jumping on the continuum wherever you are. You weren't judged for it, you weren't told, "Oh, there's all these toxins and chemicals in the food supply. If you don't throw out all your food in your pantry and waste all that money right this minute, you're going to die." It's, "Here, go ahead. Find where you're at on the continuum." We provide a fun little ... It's our cosmo version of our quiz that we provide in the book. You get some idea of where you're starting and just jump on it. If the tip resonates with you and you want to incorporate it, then we've made it very simple.

Sina: There's the tip and then there's how to do it, which it's less than a paragraph. It's designed for the busy soccer mom that doesn't have the time to sit there and read an entire book just to figure out a diet at the end of it. Then under the how, it's a longer conversation between Joel and I as to why. Why is this important for your health to incorporate that tip? You go through it at your own pace, and we even tell you, we set you up for success. There's no deadlines. You go through it at your own pace. If you want to do one a day, one a week, one a year, we're very aware that every step that you make, that is a success and it's something to praise yourself for.

Robb: That's great. I just have to ask. Was your publisher pretty excited about that format? The reason why I asked that is my second book, Wired to Eat, it was a little bit of a shit show because I tend to set everything up upfront. Then it's kind of like I'm almost waiting for the punchline and then it's like, "Okay, we're going to get to the how to later." I give people an out where it's like, "Hey, if you just want to skip to the goods, skip, but then you don't get to ask any questions. You just have to do exactly what I tell you to do,

because you didn't bother to learn this stuff." But it made my publisher nuts because she's like, "Well, when are we going to tell people how to do this?" I'm like, "When we get to that section of the book." It's like she wanted both parts of the book to exist in the same space, which as far as I can figure out, is impossible to do. But this seems like a really interesting middle ground there where within each section of the book, you've got these differing layers of buy in.

Robb: If you just need, to your point, that tip to just get it done and start effecting change, then you're like, "Wow, that worked. Why did that work?" Then it's immediately accessible and you don't necessarily have to grind through nutrition and biochemistry and anthropology to get to the thing that it's like, "Oh, okay, eating less processed food is going to be a win for me."

Robb: Now, a quick word from today's sponsor.

Nicki: This Healthy Rebellion Radio, Salty Talk episode is sponsored by Ned. Ned is a wellness brand, offering science backed and nature based solutions as an alternative to prescription and over the counter drugs. Ned produces the highest quality full spectrum CBD extracted from organically grown hemp plants, all sourced from an independent farm in Paonia, Colorado. Ned full spectrum hemp oil only contains two ingredients, full spectrum hemp extract, and non-GMO organic MCT oil. That is it. That also has a body butter, lip balm and natural cycles line. I love the full transparency into their products. They share third-party lab reports, who farms their products, the extraction process. It's all right there on their site. Cannabinoids have a wide range of benefits and regulate nearly every biological system in the human body. Some of the best known uses are, as a sleep aid, to treat insomnia, as an antiinflammatory, a natural pain reliever.

Nicki: Some people use it to treat anxiety and PTSD as well as depression. If you want to check out Ned and try their CBD for yourself, there's a special offer just for listeners of The Healthy Rebellion Radio. Go to helloned.com/saltytalk or enter code SALTY15 at checkout for 15% off your first order. Listeners also will get 20% off their first subscription order and free shipping is unlocked for purchases of \$100 or more. That's H-E-L-L-O-N-E-D.com/SALTY15 to get 15% off and 20% off your first subscription order. Now back to today's interview with Joel Salatin and Dr. Sina McCullough.

Robb: Was your publisher pretty excited about that or did they even comment on that?

Joel: We had a very benevolent publisher because, because I've written several books. I had some background in this. We self-published. Polyface is the publisher. This is certainly kind of the farthest out there project we've ever done. It's funny, in the last year, since we've published, whatever, a dozen books now, I'm actually getting manuscript requests from people that want us to ... I don't want to go there. I don't think we're ever going to publish anybody else's stuff. But this is one of the freedoms of self-publishing, is ... Of course, when you say, "Well, then you don't have a publisher behind you." I've had two books, not self-published. I've done two books, not self-published and both of them were disasters for the very reasons you're describing. Those high powered publishers,

they've got their ideas. They know. They know the market, they know the, whatever, they know how many words.

Joel: I mean, the last one I did, I did 100 ... What was it? 110 words, 105 words. They said, "You can't sell 105 words, it has to be 85,000." I had to cut 20,000 words out of the book. I kick myself now. I lost all that material. Yeah, I thought it was pretty good material. But anyway, to the point, is that we're big believers in incremental snowballing success. I've seen it on the farm. I go to a conventional farmer, he thinks I'm nuts, but he's struggling with a problem. I don't drop him a whole big thing. I had a dairy guy. He was struggling with his baby calves. I introduced him to the New Zealand vacuum nipples to raise his little dairy calves. I gave him the address, he got some. I saw him about a year later, he came up to me, his wife wrapped me up in a big hug, said, "You've revolutionized our life because of this very simple little thing on how we raise our baby calves."

Joel: The farmer then walked over and he said, "Okay. What's next?" If I had started him on agronomy, composting, all this other stuff, controlled grazing, his eyes would have glazed over and it's-

Robb: He still wouldn't have addressed the problem with raising his baby-

Joel: It wouldn't have addressed anything.

Robb: Yeah.

Joel: Yeah. But as a result of just giving one little thing that he could do, and he did it and having that success, that started a snowball of inquiry that led him to eventually become a pasture-based organic dairy farmer. I mean, he went completely 180 degrees, but it was a five year process.

Robb: Right. That's incredible. That's really amazing.

Joel: Lots of times, in persuasion, those of us that tend to be, I'll just say that we're gurus, we've been wrestling with this or coming to ... My earbuds are falling out. We've been arriving at our place for a period of time. We've been living, eating, breathing investing in this knowledge base, this experience base for years and years and years. A person comes and asks me, they come and ask me, "How many paddocks do you have in controlled grazing?" Well, that's the obvious question of somebody who's never done it and doesn't understand it, because the answer is it's infinite because I'm changing every day. But I can't be frustrated at that question because that's where they are. If I don't respectfully answer that question where they are at that point, I will lose them in coming to a farther place. I mean, this is why entrepreneurs get frustrated at their businesses because we're entrepreneurs, we're way out here and every day new people are coming in and, "You're just learning about this? Come on."

Robb: Yup. But that next new person may be that next who goes and starts a big operation. Yeah.

Joel: That's right. That's exactly right. Yeah. That's why I really would Sina did this tip thing that first night when I heard her speak and I just thought it was revolutionary. Because I saw the incremental small success and the snowball effect. I thought, "Now that gal has an idea."

Robb: Okay. Let me ask you about that. You're starting at this very simple, practical, but very simple spot of these incremental changes. Where or how or why does the way that our food is produced, which is way out there in this lake, "Oh, man, we're capturing solar energy and recycling carbon." To me, that's really important, but I don't get out a lot and don't have much of a social life. This stuff makes complete sense to me, but how have you guys woven that story into the book? Sina, for you, you clearly had this expertise on the health side. I could maybe go out on a limb and say, you didn't necessarily need to have an expert in food production, regenerative food systems as part of this. Why was that important to have this as part of the book, I could see a non Polyface publisher say, "Oh, well, this is just extraneous material. We just need to talk to people about how they eat and just make it a diet book." Why was that important?

Sina: Yeah. I completely agree with you. Sure, I could have written the book by myself. But what's interesting is, a couple of things happened. As I was listening to all those hundreds of hours of the online health summits, one thing I realized was, where are the farmers? They have all these health care practitioners. I mean, you name it, functional medicine doctors, naturopaths, herbalist, all these people on there. Maybe even on the business side, they'd have these businessmen on there and I rarely ever saw a farmer. In my own experience simultaneously, I was really starting to understand the importance of sourcing your food. I'll give you one example. At my rock bottom, my body was not able to digest meat, any kind of meat. Which was detrimental to my health because as I mentioned, I was going through muscle wasting. I couldn't eat any grains. We knew at that point, I had non-celiac gluten sensitivity. All grains were out, beans were out, legumes were out, so where am I getting my protein as I'm rapidly-

Robb: Wasting.

Sina: ... losing and wasting away. That's when my husband drove out to Polyface Farm, Joel's farm and he brought back these two huge coolers of meat. I pressure cooked it. For the first time, in many, many months, maybe even over a year, I was able to actually eat meat and not get sick from it. I knew from my own experience how important sourcing was. I also knew from my academic experience in graduate school and then afterwards when ... I was a lab director at UC Davis simultaneously being a director of research and development for a supplement company. What I realized pretty quickly was that, we weren't taught in graduate school about the importance of sourcing. I'm sure and you probably had the same experience where you're reading these research studies and they pose a question to you like, is red meat bad for you? They give you all these research studies and the source of the meat is from cows that were raised in the industrial factory farms that had corn.

Sina: Of course the outcome's going to be bad. We weren't taught to differentiate between that in studies. We were taught to control macronutrient content, protein, carbs, and

fat. If you were lucky, you found a nutritional study that also controlled for micronutrient content, by providing a multivitamin and mineral, for instance. I saw those gaps in it, and then I had then my own experience. I realized that I couldn't tell that part of the story. I could tell the health aspect of it, I could tell the disease reversal, I could tell you the biochemistry. All that part, I could connect it to your health and why it's important, but I'm not in the trenches with the farmers and I'm not privy to that type of information. I thought, I really need to go to an expert in that field in order to round this book out. To give the consumer the full perspective of their food, from the soil all the way to inside their body. Who better to ask than the master farmer himself?

Robb: Right. The renegade farmer.

Sina: Yes. For me, it was just an easy sell. I was already eating his meat. I credit his farm to a big piece of my own recovery from the illness that I had. I already knew that. I had already been reading some of his books. I knew about him. I knew his philosophy. He's very in tune with nature, more so than anybody I have ever met. Which is where ... You want somebody in tune with nature who's going to be producing your food because they produce it in harmony with nature. All the way to the worms, to the microbiome, you name it. I knew he was the best of the best. I wanted to provide the readers with his knowledge and his experience. We're both libertarians, so I knew it wasn't going to have to fight him on, "The answer is not more government regulations because it's the people." We had a solid foundation to start with, with similar belief systems. I thought it would be a good pairing.

Robb: That's awesome. I'm thinking a million different things here and have a ton of questions that I'm not going to be able to get to. But Joel, I just have to mention, I got to see you do a presentation on beaver and beaver dams. You talked about how the West was a dry area but the folks coming from the UK needed to drain everything. I have bastardized and stole that thing a million times since you gave it. My poor rendition of that has changed so many people's minds because I would just give them enough information, "Hey, go look at how many beaver used to exist and how many waterways were altered as a course of this and just think this through." It's really changed a lot of folks' minds. Sina, to your point, having somebody who really understands nature at a fundamental level, it's interesting because it works out both intuitively, but then the most rigorous scientific investigation, that's where you arrive. Because at the end of the day, all that science is looking at is nature. That's the purview of science. Joel, I really have to credit you with that.

Robb: So many of the things that you've unleashed on the world have just had so much benefit and have just been powerfully transformative for people. It's interesting because I'm kind of a food guy, but I want to say maybe a year into tinkering with this stuff, I got the question about like, "How do we feed a global population with whatever food system you have going on?" I just kind of thought about it I'm like, "Oh, well, you don't feed them grains." You just dismantle that whole system and you feed them grass. With some very back of the envelope numbers that I did. But the thermodynamics work out great, the economics work out great. I want to ask you guys, and both of you all are probably are sick of COVID as I am, but we're going to be dealing with the after effects of this thing for a while. One question, where are we in any of the legislation around the

PRIME Act? What is that looking like? I had heard that we have 18 backers now with the PRIME Act. Joel, do you have any other updates on that?

Joel: I don't have any updates. I did a podcast with Congressman Thomas Massie just, I don't know what, 10, 12 days ago. Yeah, and he has picked up 18 co-sponsors in just the last two weeks. There's a brand new kind of you know buzz since the supermarkets ran out of meat. There's kind of been a brand new buzz over this. I'd love to see it pick up some steam. It is a very ... It's not an easy differentiation to portray. As Sina well knows, we've been back and forth on it. Because again, if you're not in the space, what's the difference between inspection and custom and not for sale? You just don't live in that space. I appreciate that it's confusing. All I can say is, every day that people are more concerned about food security, is one more, whatever, impetus to move forward with a solution that is as simple as just opening up decentralizing lots of community, neighborhood abattoirs, so that more animals can get in. I mean, in our county right here, if you want to take a beef in to get it dressed right now, everything is booked through February.

Joel: Our own abattoir that we co-own, they're not letting us bring all that we want. We've got animals in the field ready to go, we've got customers wanting them. We want to take 15 and they say, "Well, you can only bring 13." They're trying to spread out to serve as many people as possible, and I get that. But the crush of trying to get these animals in there, it's phenomenal. The timing for the PRIME Act could not be better-

Robb: It couldn't be better.

Joel: ... and the need couldn't be more obvious.

Robb: I know I'm kind of singing to the choir here, but I kind of feel like basic economics is something that has to be ... It's like putting layers of paint down. You got to do a lot of layers before you get a good seal on it. But if there was any ... I can't think of another situation where if there was this type of demand for something that there wasn't an immediate solution. Can you think ... I mean, I guess if you get into energy production, but again, it's all the stuff that is this massively regulated areas. But if people got super excited, "I want a bicycle." And there's a run on bicycles, damn sure somebody is going to go build bicycles or something. But-

Joel: Somebody is going to make bicycles.

Robb: Yeah.

Joel: Yeah, that's right. That's part of what's maddening about this. That there is such this demand, but the regulatory engine is so methodically, whatever, stalled that it's really hard to crank that key. The Food Safety Inspection Service, FSIS, is kind of they're above the consumer. I mean, they get a paycheck whether-

Robb: No matter what.

Joel: ... no matter what. So there's not a real incentive to decentralize and to undo some of the concentration that they ... I mean, right now in the country, if you think about it, some of the only places in the country, perhaps the only places in the country where right now thousands of people are crowding every day shoulder to shoulder in a dark, damp, cool place, are these big packing plants.

Robb: Right.

Joel: They're not in office buildings, they're not in theaters, they're not in stadiums, they're not even at the CrossFit gym, they're at these big packing plants. Instead of having 150 of those, if you had 200,000 scattered all over the countryside, it would fundamentally change the resilience of the system, completely on so many levels.

Robb: Well, you're singing to the choir with me on that. But we did innumerable email blasts, I think three podcasts now dedicated specifically to the PRIME Act. We're trying to turn the crank on that-

Joel: Thank you, thank you. Good for you. What's interesting is, that even within the craft food tribe, if you will, we've got a lot of people that are unhappy with this who have invested in small federal inspected slaughter houses. Even our own tribe is very divided about this. I mean, I happen to co-own a small, 20 employee community federalist plant. But I don't care. I mean, this would directly compete with our monopoly on the local business, but I want freedom. I want people to get food. That's way more important than whether my business has a monopoly-

Robb: A competitive advantage, yeah.

Joel: Yeah, a competitive advantage. That's correct, yeah.

Robb: Yeah. I know this gets a little speculative, but if there were to be a silver lining out of this COVID story, do you think that the repatriation of big chunks of our industrial block and maybe ... I've heard some discussion around either not allowing or really curtailing the importation of meat from out of country and at a minimum, at least the labeling it that it's from out of country. Something crazy like country of origin. What type of legs do you think we're going to get on all that? How far do you think that's going to go?

Joel: Yeah. Well, I don't know, but I think there have been some big aha moments throughout this whole pandemic. One was when Americans discovered that 96% of all of our pharmaceuticals came from China. That was a big aha moment. I think it's just astounding that in December, part of the whole trade deal with China was that for the first time in history, the United States would take chickens raised in China and processed in China. Now, do we really need chickens raised and processed in China? Another big aha moment is when Americans are realizing that half of all of our four large processing facilities are owned by, one's by the Chinese and one's by the Brazilians. Even our capacity here, while the supermarkets were emptying shelves, Smithfield was still sending 20% of their pork, American pork, to China because China had the African swine fever. It dropped half of their swine population in China over the last two years. When

they bought Smithfield, this gave them direct access to American pork and they didn't have to deal with the water to raise the pork either.

Joel: This whole global thing, I think that there is definitely a kind of a ragged edge on this that says, "Bring it home." Whether it's manufacturing, food, whatever, I think that the vulnerability that Americans are feeling right now with dependency on foreign interests is real. I don't know how far it'll go or how long it will last, but I know for me, there have been aha moments in here where, "Well, I didn't know that." I'm pretty well informed and I'm shocked. I mean, I've even had people come out to the farm now and say, "I'm never even going to go back in the supermarket. They're ready to be done with the supermarket even. That's fine as well.

Robb: Right. That's awesome. Well, fingers crossed on that and we'll see how much ... Because I mean, there was a pretty interesting report, 2015, talking about how a very modest terrorist cell activity could scuttle our food system because of the centralization. It's not dissimilar to our national power grid, and so hopefully we take more of these things seriously. Yeah.

Joel: Right. Well, I mean, just the warehousing of food, the fact that on our farm we have several freezers but we live there. No terrorists are going to come out to our farm and do something in our freezers. But you take a big outfit where they've got 2000 freezers in cold storage, something there, that's a prime target. Then these great, great big processing plants where there's three or 4,000 employees. I don't want to be xenophobic here, but you and I know that that most of those workers in those plants have come from a different place. In fact, they are living many times in what Americans would consider squalor by American standards to save money to bring the rest of their family over here. There's all sorts of dynamics here in that whole thing. Whereas, an embedded community processing facility that has 20 to 50 people, small scale neighbor people who live and go to church and work in the community, and by definition are way far apart ... I mean, in our plant, because we do all hand work and it's all workstations, nobody's up against each other.

Joel: We've got a couple of guys on the kill floor, a couple of guys in the backpack room, four guys in the boning room, two guys over there running the meat stuffer. It's not 500 people in one great big room, shoulder to shoulder with dripping coming off the ceiling. It's a completely different environment. I think that bringing the farmer aspect into this book that Sina has done, I think people they want to see that farm behind the curtain. If you can make it interesting so that you give them aha moments, that's part of the empowering.

Robb: Right. Awesome. Sina, circling back to you, I'm always buggered when people ask me the question, who is this book for? It's like, "Oh, it's for everybody of course." But it sounds like somebody who has an athletic background would likely benefit from this, clearly anybody with some chronic health issues will benefit from this. But moms, kids, pregnancy, are there any boundaries where you're like, "Well, it might not be as good a fit." Or who do you feel like would be optimally served by reading this book? I think everybody would, but who in your mind are kind of the optimum folks?

Sina: Yeah, great question. Joel and I talked about this a lot in the beginning because it determined how we were going to structure, not only the book, but each tip individually. Clearly, I think Joel and I both agree that across the board, everybody can benefit from the book because we divided it into a continuum that you can jump on and off. But in writing the book, my primary focus was, what would a busy mom benefit from? The mothers or women in general, and I'm not being sexist this is just the statistics, they're the ones that do most of the grocery shopping.

Robb: Let's see here. Women are generally smarter, live longer and make most of the decisions. I don't think that there's much science contrary to that.

Sina: Yeah. For me, and part of this comes from as a mother of now three, who went through an illness, who is busy. I have two jobs myself. I thought, "What would help me as well?" What we did was, we would write some of the tips, especially in the beginning, write them all out. Then I have a close circle of friends that are from all different types of backgrounds. Some of them are in their 60s, some of them are their 50s and their kids have moved out, some of them have two and three year olds at home. You get the picture. I sent them out to this close circle of friends that I have and said, "Okay, just rip it apart. You're not going to hurt my feelings. I'm trying to help people. Is this helping you? What do you want to see change?" Hands down, everybody came back and said, "Okay, this, the way that you structured the tip was telling me, one tip per chapter, I can flip to it easily. It's on the table of content and bam, bam, I'm done."

Sina: One of the girls said it best, she was like, "This is a book where I could open up and read one tip while I'm waiting for my kids to come out of school to get into the car." It's quick like that. Like Joel said, we really aim to make it a fun conversation. It wasn't this downer of a book where you're going to be totally depressed after you read each tip. Because we realized, a lot of people use fear to motivate people. Especially-

Robb: We're seeing a little bit of that right now. Yeah.

Sina: Yes. But, right. In the food movement itself, I see a lot of people using fear to get you motivated to do something on both sides. We didn't want to do that. We wanted to motivate and inspire and encourage people, not from a space of fear, but from a space of you yourself have the ability to change your entire destiny. You have the ability to sculpture health, to change it right now, starting with changing your belief system and your perception. These are easy ways step-by-step that you can do it so that you can become empowered making changes from this place of loving yourself and wanting to care for yourself versus making changes because you're terrified.

Robb: Right. That's fantastic. Yeah. The motivation via fear doesn't last very long. Yeah, it's a super short run. Yeah. Well guys, literally, I have dozens and dozens of questions and I could consume dozens and dozens of hours of your lives. But I'm not going to subject that to you because I want you both to continue to be my friends. Let folks know when the book is released and this is going to be available everywhere, I assume?

Joel: Yes. We expect to actually have the physical copy in hand either tomorrow or the next day. This week, it is on its way to the warehouses where it can be shipped. Yes, it's available anywhere books are sold. We're just grateful for the opportunity to get it out there and hope that it touches and affirms a lot of people in their quest for their own health journey truth.

Robb: Awesome. Well, again, for folks, the title of the book is Beyond Labels and I will get links to that in the show notes. This will go out via our email and social and passenger pigeon, and anything else we can figure out.

Joel: Thank you, Robb. You're a real stalwart of our tribe and we love you to death.

Robb: Thank you.

Joel: Thank you.

Robb: A huge honor to call you my friend. Sina, it's a really a huge honor to get to meet you a little bit and can't wait to meet you in person.

Sina: I know. I was so bummed when the fair got postponed, but now we have a date for next July at Polyface.

Robb: We'll make it happen and I'll have my whole family there. Joel, you'll get to meet my, not better half, probably better 98%.

Joel: Yeah, that's right. That's the way it is.

Robb: Okay. You guys, take care and we'll talk to you soon.

Sina: Talk to you soon.

Joel: Thank you, Robb.

Robb: Okay. Bye-bye.

Nicki: All right. Beyond Labels releases this Friday and you can grab a copy at your favorite online bookseller. That was a great interview, Robb.

Robb: Well, thank you. I mean, it makes it easy when you have fun, interesting people like Joel and Sina. We have Sacred Cow coming out soon. If you care about food freedom, food sovereignty, the quality of our food systems, please get in and support stuff like this. Again, I guess it's self-interested because we're authors and we make money off of this stuff. That should be fairly transparent. I am in New York Times bestselling author, but people oftentimes mistake that with-

Nicki: But let's go there a little bit. You make money off of selling a book. This isn't like, I mean-

Robb: I just feel in this day and age, you have to be an apologist for just-

Nicki: You have to be apologist for everything.

Robb: ... having a fucking pulse.

Nicki: Or because it's like ... Yeah, I don't ...

Robb: The point is that, for the folks that enjoy work like what we do, what Joel and Sina do-

Nicki: It's often a labor of love because often the remuneration ... Is that the word? Is fractional compared to the effort that goes into a project-

Robb: It's sometimes like working-

Nicki: ... often for books. Also, as we know with Diana's film, she has poured her heart and soul into this film for the last four years. The financial return on her time is likely to be one penny per hour, if that's-

Robb: Literally, if you folks think we're kidding. It's literally down to that.

Nicki: It is really ... A lot of folks like Joel, like Sina, the authors, these filmmakers, it's not about the money it's because they are so passionate about getting this message out and ...

Robb: Well, the long and short. The point I was trying to make is, if folks value stuff like this, you got to support it. You got to throw a little bit of money towards it. If you don't necessarily want to read the book yourself, buy a copy and give it to your local library or something like that. But these things are really important. I've mentioned things in the past like What the Health film ended up crowdfunding nearly \$2 million in a day. It's taken Diana four years to crowdfund \$750 million, which is incredible. Or \$750,000.

Nicki: 750 million? Yeah. The cost of putting a film like this together is every bit as much as that. It's not like there's any leftover to pay for her time-

Robb: No, she's also dumped her small savings and do it and all kinds of other stuff. Yeah, I just ... It is funny. We're in this day and age where it seems like-

Nicki: I don't know. This the second or third time where you've said like, "I have a financial interest in it because obviously I wrote this book, blah, blah, blah." For some reason, each time you've said that it's rubbed me a little bit the wrong way. Because yes, as an author, you do make some money, but it is tiny. I think people have this sense that if ... Not everybody writes Harry Potter, right?

Robb: Well, wife, you don't-

Nicki: I don't know. I don't know where I'm going. I'm in a little bit of an off mood, I guess today.

Robb: You don't answer all the fucking questions I do one on social media where people are like, "Well, what money did you make off of this?" I'm like, "Well, enough to be able to continue doing seemingly what you enjoy me doing." I didn't make enough to peace out and be done.

Nicki: To go farm coconuts farm yet.

Robb: To go farm coconuts. Yeah.

Nicki: All right, sorry. End rant. Thanks everyone.

Robb: Thank you guys. You've had a-

Nicki: ... for joining us.

Robb: ... little window into the neurosis that is the Wolf household.

Nicki: Yeah. Please check out today's episode sponsor, Ned. Go to helloned.com/SALTY15, or enter code SALTY15 at checkout for 15% off your first order. Listeners will also get 20% off their first subscription order. Free shipping is unlocked at purchases of \$100 or more. Again, that's [H-E-L-L-O-N-E-D.com/SALTY15](https://helloned.com/SALTY15), and have a great rest of your week.

Robb: Take care, everybody.

Nicki: As always, Salty Talk episodes are brought to you by Drink LMNT. The only electrolyte drink mix that's salty enough to make a difference in how you look, feel, and perform. Get salty at drinklmnt.com that drink [L-M-N-T.com](https://drinklmnt.com).