

Rip Esselstyn:

Does anybody else find it challenging to live Plant Strong, in a world that isn't? Our upcoming Plant Strong primer event will be live, and online, from October 23rd to the 24th. It's called Kitchen Rescue, because it's dedicated to helping you haul out the pantry, make over your menus, and discover the joy in Plant Strong cooking, as we head into the holiday season.

Rip Esselstyn:

Whether you've been living this way for a while, or if you're brand spanking new to the lifestyle, this event is a great opportunity for our community to come together, take a break from the election headlines, and talk candidly about our favorite foods, with you, our favorite friends. Let's hop in the kitchen, and make it happen.

Rip Esselstyn:

I would encourage you to invite a family member. Roll up your sleeves together, and join in the fun. Visit [primer.plantstrong.com](http://primer.plantstrong.com), to register today. If you can't watch it live, no sweat. Every ticket includes video access for a full year after the event.

Rip Esselstyn:

I appreciate all of you following along to our recent Transformation Tuesday episodes. I also appreciate any time you share a show, a message, or any information, about the things that we're doing. Especially if you think it will help a friend, or a loved one. That is our story today. Daniel Shoeman has been on his own Plant Strong journey since April of 2017, when he started out weighing 355 pounds. But he actually reached out to us on behalf of a friend, who was also struggling with her health.

Rip Esselstyn:

As Daniel says, "If they can see that someone like me can do something like this, and the positive impact it has on every aspect of my life. Medically, socially, emotionally. My relationship with my children and my wife. My intimacy. It's really unbelievable". That's what today is all about. Sharing Daniel's story, to propel others, and getting people to reimagine what's possible when you get out of your own way. Daniel is living proof that the possibilities are endless. Enjoy.

Rip Esselstyn:

I'm sitting here with a gentleman named Daniel Shoeman. Did I pronounce that correctly?

Daniel Shoeman:

Correct, yeah.

Rip Esselstyn:

Daniel Shoeman. Actually, Daniel reached out to me several months ago, after hearing the Plant Strong podcast. Because he had a friend who was suffering from, I believe it was Crohn's, or ulcerative colitis?

Daniel Shoeman:

Yes.

Rip Esselstyn:

You were wondering if I had any advice or recommendation. I sent you a whole protocol. It was based on a woman out of Columbus, Ohio, Doctor Pam Popper. Did anything ever come of that?

Daniel Shoeman:

One thing I've learned in this whole journey of mine, is that I can't change people. I could try my best. I try to present as much information as I can, that's backed up by science. Ultimately, it was up to my friend to make his decision. Obviously he's in his own journey, and he's going to have to figure things out.

Daniel Shoeman:

Unfortunately, I haven't been too successful with him thus far. But I believe I'm laying the groundwork at least, and hopefully giving him some of the tools to come to his own decision one day, and maybe see some relief that he can get. Because he really is suffering a tremendous amount.

Rip Esselstyn:

You mentioned a little earlier that, so you've had some phenomenal success. We'll get into your story and your journey. But when you have that kind of success, you want to scream it from the mountain tops, right?

Daniel Shoeman:

Oh yeah.

Rip Esselstyn:

Because it seemed so obvious that, "Oh my gosh, this is going to cure everything that ails you". Yet people tend to push back a little bit, right?

Daniel Shoeman:

Certainly.

Rip Esselstyn:

What have you found is the smartest tactic, as far as with friends, family, co-workers? In trying to impress this lifestyle upon them?

Daniel Shoeman:

I think the biggest thing that I as an individual can do, is to lead by example. Is to show, and it's pretty obvious, anyone who's seen me, who's followed me the last couple years, has seen a tremendous improvement in my life. In every aspect of it. If they can see, especially someone who knew me well beforehand. They knew I was not a fitness guy. I was not someone who generally worked very hard on himself. Especially when it came to nutrition, and health, fitness.

Daniel Shoeman:

If they can see that someone like me can do something like this, and the positive impact it's had on every aspect of my life? Medically, socially, emotionally. My relationship with my children. My

relationship with my wife. My intimacy. It's really an unbelievable thing to see. I think I was a little bit guilty in the beginning, of being maybe a little too gung ho, and trying to ... Because as you said, it does seem so obvious. It seems that there's so much science. This isn't just a fad. At least the way I see it.

Daniel Shoeman:

Hopefully learning throughout my whole life. I'm not a scientist. I'm not a doctor. I'm not going to pretend that I have all the answers to everything. But it seems pretty clear to me, that this is something real. I know you've seen it. I've seen it so many times. With people, who have not only prevented diseases, but reversed it, and have regained their lives, and have become empowered to do something. To really change their lives, and the people's lives around them.

Daniel Shoeman:

Just being that example. Showing people, "This is something to do". When people talk to me about protein, and I'm sure that you get that all the time. "Where does your protein come from, when you're eating a plant based diet?". If I could lead by example and say, "Do I look protein deficient?". I could show them my numbers, from when I get blood work at the doctor's office. That's where I'm at right now. Just trying to be that example.

Daniel Shoeman:

Trying to show, "This is an alternative. I'm not going to have the hubris to tell you I know all the answers to everything. But this is at least an alternative. If you don't want to go down so many of the popular routes these days, this is a way to do it. A mindful way to do it". I don't think it's that difficult, honestly, at the end of the day. It's possible. It's an alternative.

Rip Esselstyn:

Let's talk about that for a sec. You said you don't think it's that difficult. Let's discuss your journey a little bit. Where were you ... If I'm not mistaken, you started this journey in April, 2017? Is that right?

Daniel Shoeman:

That makes sense, yes. April, 2017. I was 29 years old.

Rip Esselstyn:

What inspired it?

Daniel Shoeman:

It's a good question. I was obese most of my life. Morbidly obese for most of my life. Every day was really a struggle. There's a lot of discomfort when you're that big. At my biggest, I was about 355 pounds. It's not a comfortable way to live. Right off the bat, just being that big? I don't believe I was ever complacent with it. It was something that -

Rip Esselstyn:

Let me ask you this. You say it wasn't comfortable being that big. What are some of the things that somebody who is 350, and, are you 6' 1"?

Daniel Shoeman:

No, I'm 5' 10".

Rip Esselstyn:

Okay, okay. 355, 5' 10". What are some of the things that are uncomfortable?

Daniel Shoeman:

Oh, almost everything. Just being in public. Just taking the train on a normal day. Squeezing next to people. At its most extreme, I went on a family vacation to Universal Studios in Florida. I was very excited to go on this Harry Potter ride they have, that's in this big castle. I waited on line. We get to the ride, and we go to sit down, and the harness won't close on me. Because I was too big to fit in the seat.

Rip Esselstyn:

I've been to that ride. It is a blast.

Daniel Shoeman:

Oh, I'm excited to go back now, now that I can fit in the seat. But I was asked to leave the ride that day -

Rip Esselstyn:

You haven't been back yet?

Daniel Shoeman:

I have not, no.

Rip Esselstyn:

Oh, all right. You need to treat yourself.

Daniel Shoeman:

I do, yes. Most definitely. That was definitely a big moment though, was realizing, "I can't fit on a ride. It's not just that I'm a little overweight. I've got a real issue here". That's one small thing. Obviously that's not a daily thing, that I'm going to be going on a ride. But it was an indication of what I was doing to my body. What I'm doing to my family.

Rip Esselstyn:

How much weight have you lost to date?

Daniel Shoeman:

I've lost 170 pounds to date. It's actually, this has tremendously helped my relationship with my wife. But one thing, one funny aside. When my wife and I went on our first date, I picked her up. We're in my car. At that point I'm thinking, "Women want it to be a little warmer in a car". It was a stupid, maybe a little misogynist line of thought that I had. So I had the heat on in the car.

Daniel Shoeman:

My now wife turns to me and says, "Do you mind if we turn the air conditioner on?". I think, "Oh, she likes it cold. I'm so excited". For a long time, that was something that we really had in common. Now she

makes fun of me, of how cold I am all the time. She's in great shape. But it's a little teasing now, of how cold I get, and how little I want the air conditioning. When in the past, my line was always, "If it's ever in doubt, put the air conditioning on". At this point, I'm totally comfortable now. I actually enjoy it a little bit.

Rip Esselstyn:

Yeah. Well you look spectacular.

Daniel Shoeman:

Thank-you.

Rip Esselstyn:

You look vibrant, happy, joyful. I just can't imagine the number of lives that you've impacted on your journey. I'd love to know, what is your faith? What is your religion?

Daniel Shoeman:

I'm an Orthodox Jew. I believe that's very consistent with this way of life. Judaism does allow for the consumption of animals. But it needs to be done in a very mindful manor. It seems to me to be very obvious, and it's inherent in the system, that it's not something we're meant to be eating every day, at the very least. If even at all. If we are eating it, it's something that needs to be done extremely mindfully, with a lot of compassion. There's a lot of laws in Judaism, when it comes to how you treat animals.

Daniel Shoeman:

Just as an example, an animal owner is supposed to feed their animal before they feed themselves. To me, that shows that level of mindfulness that we need to have, and that level of sensitivity that we need to have, to all beings. Not just to human beings. There are very strict laws when it comes to how you treat animals. We can't be cruel to animals. To anybody. That's a big part of it. I see that as something that's extremely consistent with my faith, and my lifestyle.

Daniel Shoeman:

Now, I'm not going to say that hasn't presented some challenges too. Because culturally, we've evolved to a place where things like meat and processed foods are everywhere. They've become ingrained in pretty much any avenue of life. Very much so in religious circles as well, it becomes, the meals and family time are a very important part of that.

Daniel Shoeman:

I'm working very hard within my community specifically, to try and change the mindset a little bit. To show that alternative, and to show why I think this is so consistent with Judaism. I'm not the only one who feels that way. There are others within the faith, that feel that way too. But it's a little bit of an uphill battle.

Rip Esselstyn:

April, 2017. I can't remember if you said it or not. But was there a book? A movie? What was the thing where you're like, "All right. I am done being overweight, being miserable, hot".

Daniel Shoeman:

Not being able to play with my kids. There's so many terrible things. The first thing I ever watched was a documentary called Fed Up. It dealt with the food industry. Really, it pissed me off. It upset me. I felt very much taken advantage of by the food industry. That really sparked me. That lit a fire under my behind a little bit. I decided I wanted to learn more at that point.

Daniel Shoeman:

I then read a book. My dad had a book recommended to him, Eat To Live. Doctor Fuhrman's book. His primary care physician recommended that to him, which I am incredibly thankful to today. I'm sure we could get to talking about how physicians, it's an unfortunate thing, that that's a rare thing, that a physician would recommend a diet like this. Or a lifestyle like this, I should say. My dad brought that book up to me. He had tried it a little bit. He had -

Rip Esselstyn:

Wait wait wait, let me backtrack for a second.

Daniel Shoeman:

Sure, no problem.

Rip Esselstyn:

You're saying it's not a good thing, that a physician would recommend a book like this?

Daniel Shoeman:

I think it's amazing that a physician would recommend it.

Rip Esselstyn:

Oh, okay. Okay, no. I was just going to say, yeah, no.

Daniel Shoeman:

I just know, in my personal experience, I've had a very hard time finding a physician that sees the world this way. I know my own physician, I've been looking for a new physician now. Because my physician, while he loves my numbers, and he's told me personally to continue on this path, he's not necessarily a believer in a whole food plant based lifestyle.

Rip Esselstyn:

Yeah, you definitely want to find somebody that's in alignment with that. You go to [plantbaseddocs.com](http://plantbaseddocs.com).

Daniel Shoeman:

Yes, I have. Yeah.

Rip Esselstyn:

Yeah, and it should be helpful. Is your father eating this way?

Daniel Shoeman:

Mostly. He uses it as a guide. I'm a little bit more on the program than he is. I would say my parents are probably about 90 percent whole food plant based. Still is a couple things here and there.

Rip Esselstyn:

Oh, that's good.

Daniel Shoeman:

Yeah, it's good.

Rip Esselstyn:

Now, are you 100 percent?

Daniel Shoeman:

I'm, I would say 99 percent.

Rip Esselstyn:

99? That's pretty close.

Daniel Shoeman:

Most days. I'm not going to say I don't indulge now and then. Rarely. It's not my regular thing. Very -

Rip Esselstyn:

I'm just wondering, after two years of doing this, if you're like, "You know what? I am so over meat. I am so over animal products"?

Daniel Shoeman:

I am, for a big part of it. I'm not going to say I don't give into temptation here and there. If things are around me. More to things like junk food, now and then. If it's in my immediate vicinity. There's a certain powerlessness that I think, when we talk about addiction. I do think food, in a way, is a tremendous addiction. If you look into how programs like Alcoholics Anonymous deal with addiction. A big part of that is a little bit of humility, and understanding that you are powerless to certain things.

Daniel Shoeman:

Now, I think it's important to be careful about that, and not let that turn into an excuse. But I do understand that there are foods that have been designed by very smart people, who have worked very, very hard, for a very, very long time, to get you to indulge in certain foods. To keep coming back for more, so you don't feel satisfied when you eat them. It's very tempting at times.

Rip Esselstyn:

Or you feel too satisfied when you eat them.

Daniel Shoeman:

Oh, absolutely.

Rip Esselstyn:

You can't stop.

Daniel Shoeman:

Oh yeah.

Rip Esselstyn:

Before you found whole food plant based in April of 2017, had you tried other diets?

Daniel Shoeman:

Oh, sure. Yeah.

Rip Esselstyn:

Yeah? Have you ever thought about weight loss surgery, or anything like that?

Daniel Shoeman:

Yeah, I very seriously considered weight loss surgery. Because I was at such, i felt I was really at this crisis point in my life. I needed to do something. But I also knew that, even with the weight, I've seen it myself. People who get the weight loss surgery, if you don't also change your lifestyle, it's fairly common that people gain the weight back. I knew ultimately, it wasn't going to make things easier for me. I needed to really address the underlying issue, and change my lifestyle, to find a diet that I could stick to.

Daniel Shoeman:

I wanted to gain an understanding of nutrition. I don't think I really was comfortable with what I knew about nutrition at that point.

Rip Esselstyn:

Most Americans really don't know much about nutrition.

Daniel Shoeman:

Oh, they really don't. I think we get this false sense that we do know sometimes. In this journey, I've talked to so many people. So many people come across as experts. Then you talk to them, and they start talking. It's unfortunate that we're led to believe so many things, and that we get this false sense of knowledge. We have so much knowledge at our fingertips right now, with this age of information. There's the cliché, that a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing. That's absolutely true. I've seen it with this in particular. So yeah, I've tried all sorts of things over the year.

Rip Esselstyn:

Have you tried -

Daniel Shoeman:

Weight Watchers.



Rip Esselstyn:

Yeah. Atkins? Have you ever done -

Daniel Shoeman:

I dabbled. But again, I knew that same thing. I knew myself. I knew that if I was consuming a large amount of ... There was no free passes. If you look at a keto, Atkins lifestyle, it's the balance of the fat to everything. To the carbohydrates. But I knew if I was still consuming 3000 calories a day of animal fats, of fatty foods, it wasn't going to be very likely that I would lose weight. I still knew, even that wasn't going to be an easy way out. The weight loss surgery? Not an easy way out.

Daniel Shoeman:

Just take a step back for a second. To think, to go through a major surgery. That would be something that's an easy step to do? Surgery scares me. I think it probably scares most people. It's a major thing. There's all sorts of complications. There's all sorts of things that can go wrong with a surgery. Obviously if somebody needs a surgery, they need to have it. But why undergo something if you don't have to? I wanted to give it a shot, and see, can I do this? Can I change my life? Can I change my family's life?

Rip Esselstyn:

Bingo. You changed it very successfully.

Daniel Shoeman:

I just want, before we get too much further into it, I just do really want to say to you, Rip, I have a tremendous amount of gratitude to you, and to everything that you do. I remember when I was first dabbling, and looking into this lifestyle. I found a video of you, I think it was giving a TED Talk. I see this guy standing up there, who's in shape, who's got big arms. Before that, the people who I was following were more into the science part of it. More into the ... Not to say that you're not at all.

Daniel Shoeman:

To see somebody who has busted those myths. The protein myths specifically, saying, "You can't gain muscle this way". To see you just being you, just standing there. Forget about listening to the whole speech for a second. Just seeing you up there, being that example, had a tremendous effect on me. I really want to say thank-you, for everything you've done. There's so much that you've provided this world. Be it the podcast, the books, your website, Engine 2, everything with your product lines. I went to Cleveland recently -

Rip Esselstyn:

Where I'm from.

Daniel Shoeman:

Where you're from, yeah. I went to a Whole Foods -

Rip Esselstyn:

Beachwood? Were you at Beachwood?

Daniel Shoeman:

I was in Beachwood, yes.

Rip Esselstyn:

Big Orthodox community there.

Daniel Shoeman:

Yeah, sure. I was there for an Orthodox wedding. We stayed downtown. One of the biggest challenges is finding food when I travel. The first thing I normally do is see, "Is there a Whole Foods near me?". I go to Whole Foods. I find some of your products. There's so much to choose from there. In just so many different ways, you've made my journey so much easier, and by extension, so many others. Really, thank-you.

Rip Esselstyn:

That's very kind of you. I appreciate it.

Rip Esselstyn:

If you have been to your neighborhood Whole Foods recently, you may be wondering why you're not seeing as many Engine 2 products on the shelves. We have been getting a ton of emails and messages from all of you. Do not worry. We're actually in the middle of an exciting expansion, which will include new and improved items, that will continue to make Plant Strong living easy, convenient, and of course delicious.

Rip Esselstyn:

For you podcast listeners, you're among the first to know this. We have just launched our direct to consumer, eCommerce, online store. We have a handful of your favorite food products that are available. We of course have our iconic Rip's Big Bowl cereals, in both the Original, and the Triple Berry. We have our Engine 2 granola. Both the Original, and the Triple Berry. They go great on top of oatmeal. Also on top of banana ice cream.

Rip Esselstyn:

We also have your and our cult favorite, the Engine 2 pizza crust. These are of course 100 percent whole grain, oil free. They come in packs of two, with a delicious, 100 percent oil free pizza sauce packet, so you don't have to worry about the sauce. They freeze beautifully, and you can really pile on the toppings as well. You can find these items, and a lot more new ones that we're going to be slow rolling out, by visiting [plantstrongfoods.com](http://plantstrongfoods.com) today.

Rip Esselstyn:

You were 355. Did you also have any medical conditions going on? Were you pre-diabetic, or anything like that, that you know of?

Daniel Shoeman:

You know, unfortunately I was neglecting myself so much then, that I didn't really go to doctors too often. I went here and there, if there was something for work I needed a physical. It was never good

news. My blood pressure was high. My sugar was high. I had never actually gotten a diagnosis of pre-diabetes. But I was fairly certain I was heading down that route. I was starting to notice things. I'd get very low blood sugar in the middle of the day. I started noticing little floaties in my eyes. That was stuff that really got me nervous.

Daniel Shoeman:

I was thankfully still young. But getting old enough to start having this stuff catch up to you. I'm very thankful that I was able to learn about these things then. Because it's rare that people my age, unless you have some huge reason to do it, look into something like this, and really try to change.

Rip Esselstyn:

How old are you?

Daniel Shoeman:

I'm 31 now.

Rip Esselstyn:

You're 31.

Daniel Shoeman:

I'm 31 years old, yeah.

Rip Esselstyn:

You're still a spring chicken.

Daniel Shoeman:

Oh, thank-you.

Rip Esselstyn:

You've got -

Daniel Shoeman:

It doesn't feel that way sometimes. But definitely more so in the last two years.

Rip Esselstyn:

You've got how many children?

Daniel Shoeman:

I've got two boys. A seven year old, and a three year old.

Rip Esselstyn:

Wow. Well, you started this at the perfect time. I'm sure that, I would imagine these guys are also eating whole food, Plant Strong?

Daniel Shoeman:

Mostly, yeah. I haven't been 100 percent successful with them either. But to see my son get excited about cucumbers, it's a real feat for him. Because he's an extremely picky eater. I'm trying to, it's the same method with my kids as it is with the general public. Now, I am their father, so I can draw a line in certain places. But my method has really been to try to lead more by example. To show them.

Daniel Shoeman:

Especially my older son. He's really seen what this has done to me. He knew both versions of me. To see now that I can, just this morning, waiting for the bus with him. To be able to race up and down the street, back and forth. I could beat him. It's nice. I think it's a really good message for them to learn.

Daniel Shoeman:

I really don't want to be too tyrannical towards them, I guess. I don't want to force it down their throat, so to speak. There are certain lines. For example, fruit juices. I'm not going to, when it comes to something like apple juice or orange juice, that's not something I think there's ever really a good reason for. A highly processed, added sugar drink. Something like that.

Daniel Shoeman:

Then it's just picking my battles, and trying to promote as much Plant Strong healthy food, as much as possible. I've seen tremendous growth over the last two years with them.

Rip Esselstyn:

Nice. You're up from Queens?

Daniel Shoeman:

Yes.

Rip Esselstyn:

Do you work in Queens?

Daniel Shoeman:

Yeah, I do. I manage residences for individuals with developmental disabilities. There's been a lot there too. We have to be very mindful of, I'm ultimately responsible for the lives of the individuals that I service. That includes their physical health, as well as their physical safety, and their weight's a part of it a lot of times. Their diet plays a huge part of it. I'm trying to do what I can there, to try to help them eat as nutritious as possible. Try to make sure there's at least that option there.

Rip Esselstyn:

How many people are we talking about here?

Daniel Shoeman:

I manage a group home, which has seven individuals living in it. Then a few supportive apartments, which are individuals who require a little bit less support than the individuals in the group home. They

have staff that comes in for a few hours a day, and we have a clinical team that helps them as well. All together, I'm serving about 12 individuals, and the respective staff that goes along with that.

Rip Esselstyn:

Well, and in season two of the podcast, we're really talking about the heart of a hero. It sounds to me like the work you're doing there, in that community there, is really heroic work, and wonderful stuff. What you've done with yourself, on your journey, is very heroic. It probably took an amazing amount of courage to make that first leap. But it sounds like you were just so sick and tired of being the overweight, obese Daniel. That it seemed like, "You know what, I've got nothing to lose", probably.

Daniel Shoeman:

Yeah. I put up a post on Instagram not too long ago, talking about discomfort. When you're that big, as we were talking about a little bit before, you're almost always uncomfortable. That first step definitely includes a level of discomfort, in certain ways. Now, I said before, I really don't think it's as challenging as people think it is in the beginning. I think it's more different, than it is anything else.

Daniel Shoeman:

But one thing I try to impress upon people is that, especially for those who are really struggling with their weight. When you're used to being uncomfortable all the time, my hope is that an individual can channel that. It's a cakewalk, compared to what you've been through. Somebody who's been through something like that, who's been so obese for so many years, and has just dealt with that level of discomfort on a regular ... So you change your habits a little bit.

Daniel Shoeman:

Yeah, it's a little uncomfortable. But you face discomfort every day. If you could face that every day, imagine what you can do if there's something you're really motivated for, and something that you're really seeing progress with. It's paying the principal off of your loan, instead of paying just the interest.

Rip Esselstyn:

What does a typical day look like for you now? As far as breakfast, lunch, dinner. Are you a planner? Or are you impulsive?

Daniel Shoeman:

Both.

Rip Esselstyn:

Because, yeah.

Daniel Shoeman:

Especially in the beginning, it was very important for me to plan. To really sit down and write out a menu for the whole week. Now that I've gotten a little bit more confident, I can fly by the seat of my pants a little bit more. Right now, I make sure I have certain staples in the house. I have my whole grains. I get a Misfits Market delivery, of organic produce, once a week. I do my own shopping once a week as well. In the beginning, yes, it was a ton of planning. I'm happy to go through what a day of eating is like for me.

Rip Esselstyn:

I think it would be helpful for people.

Daniel Shoeman:

Sure. Because that's one of the first questions I get. "What do you eat?". People assume when you're embarking on a Plant Strong lifestyle, that you're not eating much. That you're okay with not eating a lot. That's just, that's not me.

Daniel Shoeman:

One thing I knew. With all that talk about discomfort, to contradict myself a little bit, I knew that if things were really bad, I probably wasn't going to be successful. I needed to really enjoy what I was doing. That was true when it came to exercise, and it came true with food. I needed to really enjoy what I was eating. To like it, to look forward to it, if I knew I was going to be successful.

Daniel Shoeman:

On an average day, breakfasts are either, I like steel cut oats, with fruit.

Rip Esselstyn:

Do you make that the morning of, or the night before?

Daniel Shoeman:

The night before. Generally I'll set it up on my stove top. I use a four to one ratio. I use some almond milk mixed with water, steel cut oats.

Rip Esselstyn:

Just for people, four to one ratio of water to the oats?

Daniel Shoeman:

Of the oats, yes. A cup of oats, four cups of water. Something to flavor it. Whether it's fruit, a spice, anise, or cinnamon, cardamom. Things like that, to help give it some aromatics and flavor.

Rip Esselstyn:

Then you just let it sit there?

Daniel Shoeman:

I'll bring it up to a boil, cover it, turn it off. Let it sit there overnight. By the morning, it's ready. I can just turn on the heat a little bit, just to get it heated up a bit, and it's ready to go.

Rip Esselstyn:

All right, so let me just repeat that. Four to one, put it on high. Put the burner on high. Let it boil for just a second.

Daniel Shoeman:

Just get to the boil, yeah.

Rip Esselstyn:

Turn it off, put the lid on, and then you're good?

Daniel Shoeman:

You're good to go for the morning, yeah.

Rip Esselstyn:

Wow, I like that.

Daniel Shoeman:

That's a big, I'm -

Rip Esselstyn:

That's overnight oats right there.

Daniel Shoeman:

Yeah. Overnight steel cut oats. You probably could do it with regular rolled oats as well. I know people do it in the refrigerator, and a mason jar, or something like that. Just the way I like it the best. It really feels substantial to me. It's a big meal, and I enjoy it a lot. That's one breakfast.

Daniel Shoeman:

I do a lot of, like I mentioned before, Ezekiel bread, toast, whole grain toast. Sometimes with nut butter, or a little bit of 100 percent fruit jelly. Something like that, that's just made from fruit. No sugars or anything added to that. Or just a banana on top sometimes. I love bananas. That's -

Rip Esselstyn:

Yeah. I love just taking fresh fruit, and putting it on top of toast.

Daniel Shoeman:

Oh yeah, that's great.

Rip Esselstyn:

Mashed banana. Raspberries.

Daniel Shoeman:

Even just toast on its own sometimes is great.

Rip Esselstyn:

Yeah. You're not doing the Earth Balance bread on top?

Daniel Shoeman:

No Earth Balance. No no no, none of that stuff.

Rip Esselstyn:

No, I hope not.

Daniel Shoeman:

Yeah, no no no. That was a process, learning those things. Learning that a food like Earth Balance, it's margarine. It's fat. It's trans-fat. It's not a great food.

Rip Esselstyn:

No, yeah. The first two ingredients are oils. Yeah.

Daniel Shoeman:

Yeah, that's one of those, people like to say, "There's no good foods. There's no bad foods". I tend to disagree with that somewhat.

Rip Esselstyn:

Well, you know what I like to say? There's strong foods and there's weak foods.

Daniel Shoeman:

There you go. That's a great way to put it.

Rip Esselstyn:

We like to focus in on strong, powerful foods. Let's move on to lunch.

Daniel Shoeman:

Sure. Lunch is, depending on the day. If I'm working, I'm very busy at work. I've got a lot going on. I tend to not be thinking about food a whole lot during the day. For me, what works for me is a big smoothie. I have a huge green smoothie every day, for my lunch. Sometimes a banana or something like that with that too. Depending on what I'm doing that day physically too. If I'm working out that day, trying to be a little bit mindful that I'm having some protein foods in there. Whether it's beans. A little bit of nuts in small amounts. Maybe a handful of something with the smoothie sometimes.

Daniel Shoeman:

But more often than not, the smoothie alone. I mean, I do recognize that it would be better if I would sit and eat a whole salad. I know your dad has talked a lot about the effect of chewing your vegetables, and how important that is.

Rip Esselstyn:

Right, yeah. It's one of the pillars in my newest book, The Seven Day Rescue. It's pillar number three. We don't want to drink our calories. We want to just drink water. However, yeah. I mean, listen. You're eating whole food plant based. You have a smoothie for lunch every now and then. Or maybe every day.

Daniel Shoeman:



It's a lot of days. For me, this was a process. I did not jump in, and I was not 100 percent plant based from day one. For a while there it was, I would eat meat on the weekends a little bit for a while. Until that phased out. I got a little sick of it, and just realized I didn't need it. For me, the smoothies now, it's a way to get in, I want to make sure I'm having a high amount of green vegetables every day. Of fruits every day. That's a way that I can ensure that I'm at least getting that into my body every day. I definitely recognize that I would be better off eating the big salad.

Rip Esselstyn:

Now, I've looked at your Instagram. You've got really beautiful food photos on there.

Daniel Shoeman:

Thank-you.

Rip Esselstyn:

You obviously take a lot of pride in it, and you love to cook.

Daniel Shoeman:

I do, yeah. I've always loved to cook.

Rip Esselstyn:

Dinner, it sounds like, is when you really bring it home.

Daniel Shoeman:

Yeah, dinner's the big, that's the ... In a perfect world, I think breakfast or lunch would be where most of my effort would be going. Just timing wise, I don't necessarily have the time to put together a huge, elaborate meal for breakfast and lunch. Because that's really when we should be eating, is a little earlier in the day.

Daniel Shoeman:

Because we're eating, hopefully to fuel us. To be able to perform. But dinner is, just the way it works out, is generally a little bit more elaborate. Lots of different things. Green bowls is a big thing. Whole grains. You're looking at things like, instead of a white rice, looking at a brown rice sometimes. Or wheat berries. Farro, millet, quinoa. Things like that, I'm trying to add in. The rainbow of vegetables that we have, to give it more flavor, and to give me those nutrients that are in those foods. That's a big one.

Daniel Shoeman:

I do a lot of tacos. Also, just a lot of simple foods. If you see, if a period of time goes by on my Instagram where I'm not posting a lot of things, it's generally because I'm eating extremely simple things. The other night, it was two nights ago. I had back to school night for my kids, where we go and meet the teachers. It was a tight window between getting home, and going to back to school night. I don't want to eat too late at night, and I had worked out before. I had half a block of tofu, and a head of romaine lettuce. I think I had a banana. That was my dinner that night.

Daniel Shoeman:

It was maybe not the most exciting, photogenic meal. But it got me what I needed, and it tasted good.

Rip Esselstyn:

Now listen, I have found that, if you can find one or two breakfasts that you adore and love, three or four lunches, and then literally a handful, six, seven, eight, nine, ten dinners. You can rotate around those. Just fall in love with that process right there. Most people, most Americans, don't have that much variety.

Daniel Shoeman:

No, unfortunately.

Rip Esselstyn:

You just find a handful, rotate around them, and you're golden.

Daniel Shoeman:

Yeah. Even though I did like vegetables when I started this, nowhere near the level I am now. There was maybe a few things that I liked to eat. That's one thing I recommend to people, when they're asking me for advice on how to start this. I tell them, find that one or two vegetables that you love, and just make the crap out of it. Make as much of it as you can. Eat as much of it as you can. Fill up on that stuff.

Rip Esselstyn:

Are you a fan of potatoes?

Daniel Shoeman:

I do like potatoes. I don't eat a ton of them. Just calorie wise, I don't, no.

Rip Esselstyn:

Oh man. On Engine 2, man, we are a fan of -

Daniel Shoeman:

You're a big potato guy?

Rip Esselstyn:

Oh, yes.

Daniel Shoeman:

I do love it. Especially a sweet potato. I love a sweet potato.

Rip Esselstyn:

Oh, sweet potato. We don't really care what potato it is. If it's a little Yukon gold, a purple, russet, potatoes ... Anyway. You could live off potatoes.

Daniel Shoeman:

Oh, 100 percent.

Rip Esselstyn:

They're everything you need.

Daniel Shoeman:

If I had potatoes and bananas, the rest of my life I'd be a happy man.

Rip Esselstyn:

Steel cut oats. Bananas. Potatoes.

Daniel Shoeman:

Oh yeah. You know, one thing I made recently, I discovered through your podcast. Chad and Derek Sarno, and Wicked Healthy. That totally blew my mind. Getting that book, and diving into it. They have this recipe for spicy coconut corn crack soup. This thing is unbelievable. It's got potatoes in it, corn. It's just got layers and layers of flavor. It's incredible.

Rip Esselstyn:

Yeah, we -

Daniel Shoeman:

I've always been into food. I've always been into cooking. I love watching cooking shows. Even now. Despite eating almost entirely plant. I mean, pretty much entirely a plant based diet. I still love watching things like the Bar Stool Pizza Reviews, or Master Chef. In a way, it's contrary to a lot of my values right now. But I've always loved food.

Daniel Shoeman:

One thing that I think that you do get when you hear chefs speak, is that appreciation for natural ingredients. An appreciation for what's considered one of the best restaurants in the world, Noma. Which is somewhere in Europe. I'm forgetting exactly where it is. But the chef, he puts such an emphasis on vegetables, and appreciating where things come from. I really think an inherent appreciation of food comes with an inherent appreciation of vegetables, and plant based foods. It's such an easy fit.

Rip Esselstyn:

Well, I mean look at it. Yeah. Veggies are just, they have so many different textures and colors.

Daniel Shoeman:

Yeah, it's unbelievable.

Rip Esselstyn:

Flavors.

Daniel Shoeman:

I made, again, back to Wicked Healthy for a second. I made mushroom steaks for a July 4th barbecue. A friend of mine, his name's Akiva. He comes to the barbecue, and I told him. He's been very into my whole process, and to everything, my journey I should say. He's always excited to see what, I try to bring something Plant Strong, whenever we have a gathering. Just so there's that option there if anyone wants.

Daniel Shoeman:

Trying to lead by that example. Not forcing it down anybody's throat. Say, "Here's some good food, if you want to try it out. See that you don't necessarily need to have the steak. You could have this instead. See if you like it". I walk in. He's got a very thick New York accent. He says, "I don't touch mushrooms". I said, "Do me a favor. Try this. You don't eat mushrooms ...", -

Rip Esselstyn:

What kind of mushroom was it?

Daniel Shoeman:

It was an oyster mushroom, using the Sarnos' technique of pressing and searing it, with the cast iron skillet. He looked at it. He said, "That's a steak. That's not a mushroom". I said, "No, that's a mushroom. Try it out". He took a bit of it. "I can't believe it". He's going around, he's showing, giving, telling everybody at the party, "You've got to take a bite out of it", and -

Rip Esselstyn:

Now what else did you have on your July 4th? Did you also have a carrot dog?

Daniel Shoeman:

I did, yeah. I made a carrot dog. I bought into the hype, and it was good. People liked it. That was another thing. He was going around. He took it, "It tastes like a hot dog. I can't believe, it tastes like a hot dog". He's going around -

Rip Esselstyn:

Yeah, if you do the carrot dogs correctly. Especially if you do something like 24 hours ahead of time, and you put it in a brine and everything, and then you cook it? Oh my god, it's amazing.

Daniel Shoeman:

It really tricks your mind a bit.

Rip Esselstyn:

Yeah.

Daniel Shoeman:

I had it on whole grain buns. But I would imagine, if you were indulging a little bit and put it on a white hot dog bun, it would really, really trick you then.

Rip Esselstyn:

Yeah, with the ketchup and mustard, and the pickles.

Daniel Shoeman:

Oh yeah. Or sauerkraut or whatever.

Rip Esselstyn:

The relish.

Daniel Shoeman:

It's incredible. There's just so much now. It's amazing.

Rip Esselstyn:

It is. Yeah, it's infinite. It truly is. Daniel, let's see. Where are we right now? Well, we're September, obviously. 2019. You've been at this for a little over two years.

Daniel Shoeman:

Yeah, almost two and a half years now.

Rip Esselstyn:

Yeah, and you've had tremendous success. It sounds like you're in this lifestyle for good, right?

Daniel Shoeman:

I definitely believe so. I don't see a reason not to. I don't feel like I'm holding myself back. I don't feel like I'm depriving myself. Like I mentioned before, if there ever is, once in a while I want something? Sometimes I'll indulge. Generally, it isn't as good as I thought it would be.

Rip Esselstyn:

Yeah. Well you know, I heard a quote last night during, we had a Q&A panel after this screening. James Wilks said, because somebody said, "Is this something where you have to be 100 percent?". He said, "Listen, this isn't necessarily all or nothing. This can be all or something. You just go on your path, your journey, and figure it out". It sounds to me like you are all, and then every once in a while it's a little, little, little bit of something.

Daniel Shoeman:

A little bit of something.

Rip Esselstyn:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. But for everybody out there, listen. More plants the better. That's why this is Plant Strong. It's not Plant Perfect. Then my hope is that the more you go down this wonderful, wonderful path, you realize, "You know what? I don't need it. I'm so over it". We want to protect the animals, we want to protect Mother Earth, and we want to protect ourselves. There's really no better way.

Daniel Shoeman:

Yeah, and you know, we have so much in common. It would be very beneficial to all of us, to look at everyone in the nutrition space, and the wellness space. That while we may have disagreements with people. We all have a different ideology of how we should be eating. We, and you have presented this beautiful lifestyle. There are naysayers. I believe they're wrong, personally. Again, I'm not a scientist. It's just on the preponderance of what I've learned over the years.

Daniel Shoeman:

But I also think, even to the naysayers, we have so much in common. More in common with them than we do differ. I got my original smoothie recipe from a YouTube video by Joe Rogan. Joe Rogan's a huge meat eater. We have very different values when it comes to food, for the most part.

Rip Esselstyn:

Yeah, no. Joe for sure.

Daniel Shoeman:

But ultimately, I do think that he understands the importance of eating a lot of vegetables. I was able to take that from him. While I probably wouldn't feel comfortable sitting at his dining room table necessarily, we do have to appreciate where we do see things the same way. It would be really beneficial to all of us, to be mindful of that, and to work with each other and see, what do we have in common? How could we change this world? How could we make it better?

Daniel Shoeman:

Because there's so much. This could save the world. If more and more people knew this, and saw these examples, and had the myths busted to them, we could really change the world. Whether it's healthcare, depression. So many of the horrible things that are facing this planet now. I really think it could be traced down to this.

Rip Esselstyn:

Yeah. We've said it once, and we'll say it again. It checks every box.

Rip Esselstyn:

Daniel Shoeman, he is something special. I thought that was just fantastic. What I love about that conversation, is that Daniel is obviously on a journey. He's not perfect, and none of us are. But remember, adopting a whole food plant based diet isn't, and doesn't have to be, an all or a nothing approach. It can be an all or something approach as well. It really does check every box.

Rip Esselstyn:

If you are inspired, or if you'd like to help a friend, consider joining our Kitchen Rescue event, on October 23rd and 24th. Details and registration are at [primer.plantstrong.com](http://primer.plantstrong.com). The Plant Strong Podcast team includes Laurie Kortowich, Ami Mackey, Patrick Gavin, Wade Clark, and Carrie Barrett. I want to thank my parents, Doctor Caldwell B Esselstyn Jr, and Ann Crile Esselstyn, for creating a legacy that will be carried on for generations, and being willing to go against the current, and trudge upstream to the causation.