

Fatal Conveniences™: Wrapping Paper

[00:00:00] Fatal Convenience Intro

Darin: It's that time of the week for another fatal convenience. This is a bite-size segment that addresses some of society's fatal conveniences and the steps you can take to avoid becoming a victim of them. I define fatal conveniences as the things we may be doing because the world we live in makes us believe we have to. Tap water, shampoo, sunglasses, food... I dive into the hidden truths behind some of our everyday choices that could not only be harming us but even killing us, so let's dive in.

[00:00:41] Fatal Convenience

Darin: Happy holidays, everyone. This is Darin Olien. I'm stoked you're here for another fatal convenience. Before you wrap your gifts, before you buy ribbons and glitter and cards, listen up, you knew this was coming, this is the fatal convenience of holiday wrapping paper. That's right. That's true. Yes, it may seem very innocent. Of course, on the one hand, who am I? I just wrapped some gifts. That's right, but that same mentality creates issues. If we just accept tradition that is not the best tradition moving forward, then we undermine ourselves, our family, our community, and our global population leading to issues. Now, maybe wrapping paper isn't so impactful individually, but yet it is so I will impact that. Think of the wrapping paper as single-use. So we have single-use plastic, we know how damaging and detrimental that is to our planet, the oceans, the animals, and us, but this is also single-use, we wrap it, we rip it apart, we throw it away. We're gonna get into that. There's also a psychological aspect of this whole gift-giving thing. I'm gonna challenge you on looking at gift giving a little differently. Let's do this a little differently, rather than just thinking we have to. This wrapping paper industry has got sales of \$12.7 billion, this was in 2017. The growth is expected to nearly double to \$24.9 billion by 2025. Many people, including me, didn't have the full grasp of this thing until we looked into it. Most of us are uninformed by the detrimental aspects of the environmental impact that is generated by this industry and by this habit.

[00:03:03] The environmental impact of wrapping paper

Darin: The vast majority of wrapping paper including products concurrently with industry like ribbons and bows and glitter remain absolutely 100% unrecyclable. The United States alone produces roughly 2.7 million pounds of wrapping paper yearly that sits idle in landfills across the country. Additionally, the process of unwrapping presents creates an unnecessary burden on social pressure for many. As noted by Stefan Hoffman of Boston University, people want to be seen as appreciative, but one always runs risk by not conveying the appropriate level of appreciation. We adorn these gifts. We don't know what's in there, we're staring at the people, and then they rip it open, and it gets into this whole primal thing like did they really like it, I'm supposed to like it, I really hate it, all of this other stuff. That's a whole thing. So I'm just laying in that as a thing to think about. Now, there are some detrimental human aspects to this not just the environment. In 1978, although many of those things have



changed, there was a huge amount of heavy metals in gift wrapping paper. That's right, lead, cadmium, all these things. They showed up in many of these studies, so they started to do that. Now laying in these foils and plastic layers, now you're starting to get it. These foil wrappings and these plastic layers so it doesn't rip so easily, all that stuff unrecyclable, and why? Unnecessary.

[00:05:00] History of wrapping paper

Darin: The history goes all the way back to sweet baby Jesus right. So literally, the Wiseman apparently gave the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to sweet baby Jesus. Then the Three Kingdoms period, they wrapped items believed to be symbols of good fortune. Many of those practices, the traditions of the Korean folk wrapping gifts that so it was bestowed in cloth. Think about that. Why don't we use cloth? That old t-shirt that you want to throw away, why not wrap that? Why not get creative, and maybe when non-toxic glues. Glue some cool stuff on it. Make it your own. Make the gift as much of the journey of giving. Then in the mid-1800s, the advent of Christmas cards being mailed across Europe and North America, and a lot of the manufacturers printed this on tissue paper. In the 1900s, Christmas cards and tissue paper were widely popularized. Then more on modern-day, in 1917, the modern-day gift wrapping we see today was really established. The Hall brothers were the founders of Hallmark ran out of tissue paper to sell the customers to wrap presents, so they started printing large rolls. I still see that today. So then, of course, it evolves. In the 30s, they came out with ribbons and shiny things and more adorning things, jumbo plastic gift bags, all that stuff. Think about it, waste, waste, waste, waste. I'm not here to be the Scrooge because the truth is the ramifications of our actions have effects. It has effects. I actually am saying do it better. Don't buy this cheap crap. Don't buy this from companies that don't care. Don't buy this bow knowing that this says toxic material that says PVC, this says plastics, this has off-gassing materials. Don't buy into that. Think about creative ways to do this. If you're hearing right now, if you're hearing as I'm recording this, it's raining like crazy in California. So if you hear that in the background, that's nature, man. That's nature saying we agree with Darin, don't pollute me. In 2010, the US spent \$9.36 billion on gift wrapping paper, as well as the production of 4 million pounds of waste. That's equivalent to 5,787 football fields. Is it necessary? Nope. Is it a convenience? Yes. I get it, easy to just buy that roll of thing, wrap all your things or have someone wrap it for you, I get it. Be more creative. Let's do that. It's really easy to just buy this, wrap it around. To my girlfriend, I gave some presents just the other day and I had just a box. I know listen, you're not all going to do that, but I had all the presence in one box. It was a box I just had leftover from a shipment. I put them all in there, and then I actually told the story of each gift. I opened the box, didn't wrap it, and I told the story of every gift as to why I got it, and the meaning of it, and what it could do for her. So think about that. Think about really sharing and being vulnerable behind your gifts, instead of just buying some tchotchke crap. Obviously, it's easy to just do all this stuff and it takes just another level. Be vulnerable, be intimate, be loving, be conscious, be aware. All this stuff is sold everywhere. It's begging you to buy it. It's easy, it's affordable, it's a couple of dollars. You get all this gift wrapping paper. Let's dig into this a little bit.

[00:09:05] All that glitters is not golden

Darin: The wrapping paper, there's many of it. Stay away from the stuff that has glitter, that is literally plastic and aluminum. It can't be recycled, it goes right into the environment, pollutes



it. That's it, don't buy it. It's literally plastic and throwing on the ground or in the water or affecting your children or affecting the animals by the chelation of that plastic endocrine-disrupting compounds into the environment. It's microplastic, it looks like glitter, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years to break down, that's what happens. Let's not fake our life. Let's be real. Let's look at it in the face. What are we doing, and what do those impacts have on the people around us on ourselves and the environment? Colorful gift wrapping paper has become a material of concern in landfills. So check this out, 40% of the world's industrial logging goes into making paper. That's a lot. Then a huge portion of it is building houses. Roughly half of 40% of all of the logging goes to the single-use wrapping paper. Pulp and paper mills release pollutants into the air and waterways, and this is according to the state of global paper industry. In 2018, a report published by the EPN, "The chemical-intensive nature of the paper pulping and bleaching process is far from clean. The toxic chemicals used often end up being discharged as effluent into waterways where there are pollutants, rivers, harms ecosystems, bio-accumulating in the bodies of animals, insects, and us and into the environment, into the plants, into the soil, into the water, and eventually into the food chain. It's where it's all going. Only half is recyclable. 4.6 million pounds are produced in the US yearly, 2.3 million pounds are left in the landfill yearly just to have a present wrapped for a little time to rip it open and throw it away. It doesn't make sense.

[00:11:38] Signs that your wrapping paper is recyclable

Darin: Here's what you can do, you can start looking at signs your wrapping paper is recyclable, if it's craft paper. If it says 100% paper products, that's great, so it's not lined with foils or plastics. The colored paper, ink paper, constructed of organic products, these are things to think about. Signs your wrapping paper is not recyclable, produced with glitter of any kind, foil of any kind, plastic of any kind, velvet, and or other textures. Anytime you're getting elaborate with all that stuff, it becomes absolute waste, toxic waste. If it's lined with these plastics, then definitely don't buy them and don't support that industry. Other products that lack recyclability are of course, the bows, the ribbons, the sticky tags, holiday cards in general lined with glitter.

[00:12:40] Wish-cycling

Darin: Here's the thing, there's an interesting thing called wish-cycling, you feel better because you wish it's recycled, and you wish just by putting it in the bin, in California, we have a blue bin, just because we put it in there we go cool, it's recycled. It doesn't mean anything because most of this stuff can't be recycled. This wish-cycling was termed by the American Forest and Paper Association. People disposing of this in the trash wishing that it was recycled and that makes this assumption, and then it makes it very, very difficult to separate that from the actual recycled material. This is far too labor-intensive, and they don't have the manpower, they don't have the mechanisms to do that. It actually creates problems and issues for the real recycled material of maybe even getting discarded because it's all mixed with unrecyclable wish-recyclable materials. Most wrapping papers are completely single-use. I'm going to stress this again, single-use doesn't make sense, it doesn't. 227,000 miles of wrapping paper thrown away each year, get your head around that, do you want to contribute to that?

[00:14:00] What to do differently



Darin: The first thing we can do, be aware. So now when you're wrapping your gift, do you need to wrap it in that stuff. Become active and conscious about what you're using. Use creativity, allow your own creativity to come up with techniques of adorning presents. It still allows for the mystique element, but it also gets away from this toxic side. Of course, if people are still receiving newspapers, magazines, maps, that kind of thing, well, those are more recyclable and you can use those as wrapping paper and they're interesting. As the person is looking at the present and about to unwrap it, tell them hey, this is recyclable material, this is a waste product I used, and tell them a story and make it fun. It allows creativity, it allows for conversation. Fun fact, if every American family wrapped just three presents in reused material, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields. How crazy is that? How cool is that? Power numbers people, we have the numbers, you, me, friends family, the billions. We have the numbers, not the corporations. We have the power. Again, you can also use adorning materials, go out in nature, pick a flower, a twig, pine cone, how cool is that? You can spray it with essential oil, and then not only are they opening it, it's getting their senses. It adds a lively atmosphere, aromatic smells. It's biodegradable by nature. So the bottom line is, let's be creative. I'm challenging you, if you haven't wrapped your presence for anyone, don't use any wrapping paper or use recyclable, 100% recyclable with natural dyes and things like that, or use old material or use ornamental things from nature or use your bag from the market, that you just brought the groceries home and make it fun, make it interesting, make it different, be different, be very different, be you. Share that, be vulnerable. So that's my fatal convenience of how we can as numbers and share this. Share this fatal convenience with everyone that you know because how much could we save in that way of toxic materials being led into the environment? Let's change stuff, man. I know I'm talking about holiday paper. I know, but when you really look at the numbers, you really look at the pollution. We got to talk about it, or else nothing changes, man. I love all of you. I wish nothing but the best for you in this holiday season. If you want to check out my Campfire 121 Tribe Superlife Program. We're gonna have fun. Starting January 2nd, we're going to dive deep into creating new habits of moving forward in your life to take the ordinary into the extraordinary, healthy breathing, plant-based meals, recipes, connecting with people, finding your tribe moving forward having this best life ever. That's what it's about, 21 days starting January 2nd, sign up. I love you all. Happy holidays.

[00:17:47] Podcast Outro

Darin: Thanks for tuning in everyone. I hope that left you feeling inspired to take a closer look at the everyday choices you're making and how they could be impacting your health and even the planet. If you want to learn more about life's fatal conveniences, head over to fatalconveniences.com. You can sign up for the exclusive access to Fatal Conveniences episodes, news, insights, and more. And all this great stuff gets sent each week straight to your inbox, making it really easy. Now, that's a convenience without the negative side effects. It only takes a few seconds to join. Just fill in the form and take that amazing step towards making better choices. Remember, small changes can have a big impact. So, keep diving my friends, keep diving. And if you haven't had a chance to check out the interview, I released earlier on the week, here's what you missed:

[00:18:53] Snippet - The Impact of Words, Language & Poetry



IN-Q: I had a lot of anger issues, a lot of depression issues, a lot of feeling inadequate, and insecure, and that caused me to act out in various different ways or to disappear or both. I externalized my identity a lot as a kid because since I didn't have that strong male role model, I was always looking outside of myself for who I was supposed to be. When my father and I finally met, it was certainly an experience. We certainly didn't develop a close relationship or anything like that over the years. Ultimately, I think I moved from that rage of wishing life was different to acceptance and gratitude. And through my poetry, I've been able to pass on that gratitude to other people who've been able to mirror their own life experiences within the art and make some pretty positive changes to forgive themselves and to forgive others, and to move into life with empowerment.