

Jonathan Hunsaker: Welcome, everyone, to another episode of Empowering You Organically. I'm your host, Jonathan Hunsaker, joined by my co-host, TeriAnn Trevenen.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Hey, everyone!

Jonathan Hunsaker: We have a very special guest today, Brendan Synott. Brendan, thanks for joining us.

Brendan Synott: Thanks for having me.

Jonathan Hunsaker: So, TeriAnn, do you want to read Brendan's bio real quick, get everybody up to speed?

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, absolutely. Brendan believes that by changing something as simple as your underwear, you can change the planet. Having cofounded organic food brand Bear Naked Granola and selling it to Kellogg for more than 80 million in 2007, Brendan is now taking on the \$3 trillion apparel industry, the world's second-largest polluter, as CEO of the organic fair-trade cotton apparel company, PACT.

Long before he started working to clean the dirty apparel industry, Brendan was advocating for natural products. After college, he launched Bear Naked, the brand that helped kickstart a food revolution, disrupting the market dominance of companies that churned out junk food, as consumers latched on to the value of organic natural foods.

After bootstrapping for years, he eventually sold Bear Naked to Kellogg's for 80 million, and Brendan's odyssey as an eco-conscious entrepreneur moved to pet food, with I and Love and You, organic, ready-made food with EVOL foods, sold for 48 million, and angel investing in innovative natural foods and consumer product businesses with Revelry Brands.

Now with PACT, he's leading a passionate team to change the apparel industry for the better, using organic cotton as the foundation for addressing the labor and environmental issues that surround clothing.

Before building food and lifestyle brands from scratch, Brendan worked backstage at Saturday Night Live, which I totally love, and later joined the cast of CBS's reality show, Survivor. Between being blindsided on the world's most popular reality show, working on live TV, and building and funding innovative food and lifestyle businesses, Brendan is also a proud father of four, including two adopted children.

So, Brendan, you have had quite the life, quite the life, incredible, incredible things that you've done, and something we're so passionate about with Organixx, the natural health space, natural food space, natural supplement space. So, we're so excited to chat with you about this today.

Brendan Synott: Yeah, thanks. I feel really lucky, after sharing all that stuff, to be able to work on stuff that I love and believe in.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah.

Brendan Synott: It's been a good ride.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, no doubt.

Brendan Synott: Up and down, every day.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, we get that, for sure. So, let's talk a little bit about how you got into this. I mean why the push for you towards natural? What was your story behind that?

Brendan Synott: Yeah, for me, it started out when I was very young. When I was like 11-12 years old, my grandfather had a heart attack. So, it was like that classic example of somebody having a—some sort of health emergency in their life, and then changing everything about what they consume, what they touch, how they live their life in order to help remedy that, or prevent it in the future.

So, I saw my grandfather go through it. He radically changed his diet, and as I watched him radically change his diet, it just gave me a different kind of understanding of food and the impact of what you put in your body is going to impact how long you live, how strong you are, how you feel every day, how you wake up, how you go to the bathroom, all of it, you know?

It was such a big important thing, and so, I was kind of borderline obsessed with it growing up. And then, when I was working at Saturday Night Live, I was off for the summertime, and I ran into a girl that I went to high school with, and she was selling granola in a local farmer's market in Connecticut, and I was just like "Oh, I'll help you go make it. I'll help you go sell it," and she was making it in a local deli, and selling it, and I just helped her and enjoyed it.

And she was like "Why don't you buy half my company?" And I bought half the company from her for \$3,700.00, and we both moved—

TeriAnn Trevenen: That's such a good entrepreneur story. Like that's the dream right there, the American dream. That's so cool.

Brendan Synott: Yeah, it was the right time, right place, like lucky to be there. And so, we both moved back in with our parents, didn't pay ourselves for the first two years, and took all the money and the proceeds that we had from the business and kind of dumped it into growing it, and had a great outcome in it, and selling it to Kellogg one day.

But that's how I got into it. Before that, I was always kind of like "that kid," where my—I had two grandfathers that were entrepreneurs, so I think I kind of knew the smell of it, knew what it felt like, and they—

One of the things I did when I was like in 7th grade, I'd go to like the local Costco and buy 150 Airheads for \$5.00, the little candies, and then, because they didn't sell candy in school, I'd sell it out of my locker in common time.

So, I was always doing stuff like that, just kind of trying to create something from nothing. A lot of it didn't lead to anything until I kind of got lucky enough to stumble and work with my partner on Bear Naked.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, it's like the perfect storm for you, and it's, I think it's a beautiful thing when you take a risk and you go and try something, but you're also passionate about it and it takes off. And I actually remember your brand, and it was one of the very first that really was at the tipping point of the food industry going into organic, which has just absolutely blown up, which speaks to what people want and that people are waking up. But yeah, very cool story, and I love it. I absolutely love it.

So, tell us a little bit about your evolution that we talked about in your intro, into dog food, pet food, right? And then into clothes. Like how—you just keep spinning into different aspects of organic, which I love, and I think is incredible. How do you keep evolving in this journey? Like you just continue on down this path, changing the world from an organic perspective.

Brendan Synott: Yeah, after Bear Naked, to me, I built the product for myself, all because it was like "I want to know what's in my food, I want to understand the ingredients, I want to know where they came from, and I want transparency in terms of what I buy."

Like I don't want any secrets, I don't want any secret sauce in anything, right? Like "Tell me what it's made out of and let me make my own choice," was how I felt, and that's what drove so much around Bear Naked.

After Bear Naked, I started a frozen food business, which is called EVOL Foods, which is love spelled backwards, and that was organic burritos, organic frozen pizza, just kind of ready-to-eat meals, and then, also started the pet food business, and then also started an organic candy business.

And really, what it was is I would go look at these big categories of food that I thought were important, where consumers had a deep relationship with them, and said, “Gosh, if consumers are going to eat this every day, if they’re going to feed it to their pet every day, if this is going to be what they take out of their fridge and make for themselves every day, they’re going to care about it,” and that really gives you the vehicle to then build a better product with a better story that’s made in a better way, because consumers are investing behind it.

And I always just kind of loved the idea of taking on the giants. I was like Kellogg’s doesn’t mean anything to the next generation of consumers, Stouffer’s doesn’t mean anything to the next generation of consumers, Purina pet food, like do I really trust those guys? No way.

And so, it was always, for me, like if you want to go make change and make products in a better way that are more sustainable, have high nutritional value, and made more thoughtfully, then just to go kind of category by category and build what I thought was right.

And I did all that for a number of years in food and built those businesses, and sold a number of them, and now today, I was—I’m always interested in white space and kind of taking on the next big thing, the next big giant, and trying to create a vehicle for consumers to go make change, and that’s what kind of led me to fashion, because it’s something that we wear every day.

Every day, you make a choice to put this on. Every day, you’re grabbing underwear. Every day, you’re putting socks on. And so, if every day, I can make a little bit better choice, that’s going to be much better for the planet and better for communities around the earth, and it’s not going to cost me more, like gosh, I want to go do that if I can, if I don’t have to sacrifice anything else, and that’s what we tried to build at PACT.

Jonathan Hunsaker: So yeah, I mean when we think organic, we’re always thinking food, we’re thinking what’s in the kitchen, but one thing you say is your closet should be as organic as your kitchen. I mean talk more about that. Why is it so important for clothes to be organic?

Brendan Synott: So, does anybody know where peanuts are grown? What are peanuts grown next to? What fields are grown—what other crops are grown with peanuts?

Jonathan Hunsaker: I don't know.

Brendan Synott: Yeah, cotton.

TeriAnn Trevenen: I was going to say, it's probably cotton.

Brendan Synott: Yeah. So, like your clothes are grown in the same fields as your food. So, if I grow my clothes with cotton that—and cotton's widely-known as the world's dirtiest crop, conventional cotton. It's responsible for like 25 percent of the world's insecticides and 20 percent in pesticides, the combination, 20-25 percent of that.

Almost a quarter of those chemicals going into the ground are just from cotton farming. Yet, cotton only takes up 7 percent of agricultural land. And cotton is also incredibly thirsty crop. It uses massive amounts of water.

And so, to me, like the real impact is just to realize that your clothes are grown, too, that is unless you're wearing a performance item, like you're wearing your Northface jacket, that's made out of plastic bottles. But for me, like I'd rather wear something that's natural, something that's organic, something that's not plastic on my body every day, when I'm not—when I don't need performance.

And so, that's why it's so important, and I kind of got after cotton specifically because, if you walk into your home, you walk into your closet, like 70 percent of what's in your closet is made out of cotton. You go to sleep in bed, what are you sleeping in? Cotton sheets. You just take a nice shower, you get out of the shower, you dry off. What are you wearing? Cotton.

So, if we can just get consumers to say, "Go buy organic cotton instead of conventional cotton," I believe it's actually the single biggest solve that we can create for people that want to quit fast fashion, that don't want to destroy the planet with what they're wearing, because it's something that is so universal, is so loved, it's a great fabric, and it has such an impact on our food supply.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Now, is it important for it to be organic because you're going to absorb the toxins directly through your skin from the clothes? Or because of the environmental impact of being an organic plant?

Brendan Synott: From my standpoint, I look at it more as the environmental impact. So, not polluting the earth, and then not—by having an organic certified product, you're also saying there's no toxic metals in the dyes. So, there's—cotton has to be turned into the fabric, then the fabric is dyed, right?

And through that dying process, people ingest chemicals into the dying process, when organic certification says they're not injecting chemicals that are going to hurt you or that are toxic.

Whether or not stuff gets absorbed through your skin, I haven't seen specific science that says yes, that's true, but what I—where I have seen more instances of that's true is where people have skin conditions or have sensitivities to—whether it's eczema, or different skin troubles. One of the first solves that doctors say is start using organic cotton products, or organic clothing, because they're going to have less, less residues from pesticides and other toxic materials as part of it, which could impact somebody that has sensitive skin.

But if your skin is strong, I can't make the case to you that you're actually absorbing what is in the products from the outside.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Got it. So, talk a little bit more about the environmental impact. You talked a lot about pesticides, and obviously, that's a huge issue. We've talked a lot about that on our podcast and the impact that's having on the world. Talk about some of the other issues that we're seeing in the clothing industry, by the way that people are typically producing clothes right now, manufacturing clothes.

Brendan Synott: Yeah, so the apparel industry, textile industry, what we're wearing every day, what's in our closets, is actually the second biggest polluter, second biggest polluting industry on the planet, behind oil and gas. So, what we wear is the number two thing that is polluting our planet overall.

And it's primarily being done by that dying process. It's, alone, apparel's responsible for 25 percent of the world's water pollution, specifically.

So, when you buy organic products, there's two benefits for organic cotton. One is, organic cotton uses over 80 percent less water. When you're growing the product, when you're growing, you're actually growing it in the fields, it uses less water because of the organic farming practices in terms of crop rotation and irrigation allow for a lot less water usage than genetically-modified cotton that's sprayed with a bunch of chemicals in order to make it grow.

So, that's kind of one big benefit of it. The second big benefit of it is what I was talking about earlier, is when you dye, when you dye your clothing, the dying process, traditionally, if you look kind of overseas, and it was like this is in the US a long time ago, but waterways were destroyed by areas that were dying and fabricating textile production, because of the amount of water used to dye garments, and then the discharge of all those dyes was then going directly into water streams.

So, there's these pictures of places in India, and places in China, and overseas, where cities, the rivers of cities are just nasty, a nasty color, from all the discharge from the textile production.

So, it's—there's a huge amount of impact in terms of what we wear every day, and that's really what we're just trying to elevate, is what you wear matters, and it doesn't matter how other people see you, it matters like to our planet and to the people that are on the planet.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, and it's a big conversation right now that a lot of people are discussing. And you know? I've been in this conversation for quite some time now, and we're connected to a lot of people who are fighting against genetically-modified anything, and I had no idea that that was a huge part of it is the water and how much water it takes with the genetically-modified plants. Did you know that?

Jonathan Hunsaker: No. I find it fascinating that we don't—that I haven't heard of any of this before, quite frankly.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah.

Jonathan Hunsaker: We've been in this space for—

TeriAnn Trevenen: For so long. That was—

Jonathan Hunsaker: For five years.

TeriAnn Trevenen: That was news to me today.

Jonathan Hunsaker: And to hear that it's the number two polluter and all of that, I just find it disturbing that we don't—that this isn't common knowledge.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah. Well, and something you said earlier that I think is really important, when you were talking about your granola product, was you wanted transparency, you wanted to know where everything was coming from, you wanted to know it was clean. Like you wanted that control over it.

And that's something that really resonates with us, because that's how it is for us with our products. We really want people to know that we know where things are coming from, they can trust our product, they're clean. We have all of our products tested.

And that's something you talk about when it comes to being sustainable and ethical, really knowing that a brand is doing that, and how you can know that. So, what should people be looking for? Especially in the clothing industry, a lot of people in the organic space say, "Oh, we're organic," "We're sustainable," "Well, we're ethical." But especially in the clothing space, what can people really look for to know that they're getting a product that they can trust is really helping, that they're putting their money towards something that benefits what you're doing, your cause to change this industry?

Brendan Synott: Yeah, it's a great question. It's like we saw all this in the food industry, like when I was starting out in Bear Naked, like the words that people would use to describe their product that were faking it were "natural," were "pure."

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, and they still do it. I still see this. Yes.

Brendan Synott: And you're like "What does that mean?" Like pure what? Natural what?

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, you question it. So many people don't question it. They see that word and they're like "It's a clean product. It's a good product." We spent so much time educating consumers on that, because—just because something says something doesn't mean that's the case. And so, we push a lot for testing things, but you're so right. People don't—they think that, they see it, it's a marketing ploy, but it's not really the case.

Brendan Synott: Yeah, it's total green washing, and it's happening and it's part of it, right? It's part of when people make change, that people attach to it in that way.

But for us, in the apparel space, like people will be like "Oh, I make sustainable apparel." You're like "What does that mean? Does that mean like one percent of the fabric content of your product is made of sustainable materials, or 99 percent of the ingredients are made of sustainable materials?"

And another thing people—and so, when—sustainable's great, and everybody is sustainable to a certain extent, but from a definition standpoint, the way we back it up is the organic certification, because we know the organic farming practices are scientifically-proved to be more sustainable than traditional farming practices in the apparel space.

In food, you see the USDA label, right? That governs that, in the food system. In the apparel space, there's something called GOTS, and that's, that's the Global Organic Textile Standard, and that is kind of the gold standard of certification of organic practices throughout the supply chain, making sure that, all the way from the farm to the factory, and everywhere in between, is governed with organic practices,

both in the farming piece of it as well as the dying piece of it. Even our warehouse has to be organic certified. So, the whole system is governed by that one.

So, that's what I would say to look up. Anybody says they're sustainable, say, "Well, really, how are you sustainable? And show me your ingredients and how are your ingredients certified?" Because if you can't prove that, then you're lying to me.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, it's not good for you.

Brendan Synott: You're lying to me. It's too important.

TeriAnn Trevenen: It's so true. And it's fascinating that you say it like that, because we talk about that when it comes to food and supplements, where we're starting to have the conversation around skincare and household products. Like you say where are your ingredients coming from?

And it's funny, because we're talking about clothes, right? And most people don't compute like crops, food into clothes, but that's exactly what you're talking about. And I think that's going to be a big—it's a big disconnect right now, but something that people can really connect to and understand, especially our listeners, something we talk about so heavily.

So, I want to understand just a little bit more from your perspective when it comes to getting that organic certification. So, you're specifically talking about the crops that are produced to manufacture your clothes are certified organic, and then how do you get the certified organic certification for your manufacturing processes? Like what do you have to go through when it comes to clothing supply chain to have that certification? I just want to understand that, because it's a little bit different, but at the same time, it's not, and I think people will really resonate with this.

Brendan Synott: Yeah, it's actually remarkably similar, because again, we're starting with the crop that's being grown out of the ground. So, how you govern what's called—what's being called organic, that's coming out of the ground, is the exact same as food.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Interesting.

Brendan Synott: So, the exact same practices, the exact same—you can't use these thousand ingredients in these inputs into the process, otherwise, it will stop you from being able to label your ingredient as organic. So, that's very similar.

And then, in food, so say we would make—in our burrito business, we would have organic pinto beans, and we would make sure at the farm the organic pinto beans are actually organic, and then we would have them come into our facility. So, we'd have them come into the factory.

And the factory has to demonstrate capability of segregating organic and non-organic ingredients when they're manufacturing products to ensure that there's no cross-contamination. That's kind of the biggest feature of the organic certification at the factory level.

So, if one factory could be making burritos for two different companies, and how do you know if they're making sure they're putting in the organic ingredients into the one that's actually being claimed organic?

And then, there's also a cleaning process of the factory equipment, and then there's also standards, standard operating procedures that have to happen within the factory to make sure that it's a clean factory, people are being treated well, that the use of chemicals is not occurring where it could contaminate the organic ingredients.

So, it's actually, it's quite similar in terms of those regulations, and that's what, to me, was such an easy solve, based upon me seeing it happen in food and its impact in food, and translating it over into what you wear.

The only difference, the only real difference is that we're not—this is not edible, we're not making edible cotton, but in terms of the chain of custody, the lack of kind of bad stuff as part of the process, and the lack of contamination as part of the process, all extremely similar to food.

The one thing that's different for us, and we haven't touched on it, is just the other kind of really important part of apparel production, is the human aspect. So, everybody's heard of the factory collapses in Bangladesh, where Wal-Mart and Amazon and Target are making these products for super cheap, and then the working conditions of the factory workers are terrible, and it killed 1,100 people.

That's also as important as the sustainability piece of what we're doing is the ethical piece of it, of how are we treating the people that are actually making our clothes? And at PACT, we say the people that wear our clothes are equal to the people that make our clothes.

TeriAnn Trevenen: I love that.

Brendan Synott: We want that sort of equality within our system. And so, the way we certify our ethical claim—this is the other thing people claim they're ethical in apparel, but they're not. How do you certify

that you're ethical? From a third party. And we utilize the Fair-Trade Standard. So, people are familiar with fair trade, actual fair-trade coffee, or fair trade chocolate, or things like that, and that's to make sure that farmers are paid equal amount of—equal profits in terms of when people are buying their crops.

Fair trade also started to certify factories to make sure that women are treated equally to men, to make sure that they're paid the appropriate wages, and then specifically, the fair trade premium that we pay into at all of our factories is money that doesn't go to our factory and goes directly to the factory workers, that then they can choose how to spend it.

So, they might buy it on rain jackets for everybody, or they might buy it on ovens for everybody, or they might build a school next to the factory so that they can school their children. Those are all things that the fair-trade premium helps afford different factory workers to help make sure that they're treated as equally as possible to the folks that are wearing it.

TeriAnn Trevenen: So cool. I love that that's part of your mission, because people are so important to any movement, especially the people who are supporting the work that creates the movement, and I love, I love, love, love that you're doing that.

This may be a bit of a random question, but I'm familiar with the USDA certified organic seal and where that goes on products and labels and things like that. When people are buying clothing that is ethical, organic, sustainable, do you have requirements for where that seal goes so that people can look out for that when they're looking at clothing and understanding that it is actually something that falls in line with the requirements?

Brendan Synott: Yeah. It should be on—so we sell our product in Whole Foods, and we sell underwear in Whole Foods, and if you were to pick up our box, you'll see the GOTS certification on the outside of the box, and then you'll actually see it on the garment itself, so printed on the inside of the garment.

So, that's where it's kind of like—going back to just looking at the ingredients, we look at the ingredients on the packages that we buy, and then for apparel, because that kind of ingredient stays with the garment typically, you look right on the garment, and you'll see GOTS certified organic.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, love that. So, one other question I have for you is, there's a huge—there was a huge tipping point in the food industry and beyond when it comes to the organic movement. Have you received a lot of pushback when it comes to the clothing industry? Because this is not something that people talk about as much as other organic movements.

Obviously, with you doing something like this, and other people out there who are waking up, there's a tipping point here in this industry now and why you're taking it on. Something you are passionate about is going into a space where people aren't talking about it yet. But what has that been like for you in the conversations and how people are receiving this from you and your team and your company?

Brendan Synott: Yeah, so we've been working on it for 10 years. So, the company was started 10 years ago, and we've done worked on nothing but building organic product and fair-trade products since the day that we started. It's the only thing that we do. It's not just like 10 percent of our line, it's the only thing, and the only way that we do it.

So, that, it was frankly, pretty lonely to do it the first couple of years, because there were not a lot of people listening. But fundamentally, just like this conversation now, like I just think that it all started for me, like "Are people going to one day ask like what their clothes are made out of and who made them?" Like is that going to be something that people care about?

And considering what clothing means to us socially and culturally, and how it represents to the outside world, in a lot of cases, how we want to be seen. I just, for me, that message always connected with people, and when you took the time to explain it to them, they were always like "Oh yeah, I didn't even know that was an issue, and yes, I would love to do something about it."

So, to your point earlier is like it's an education issue, and I don't think we've reached the tipping point now, but I'm so proud, if you go to like the New York Times, and pretty much every month now, in the New York Times, there's an article about what your closet's impact to the environment is, or how you can try to quit fast fashion.

And there's so much more awareness on it, and for the first time, for me, I feel that kind of like same wave that comes up behind you in all these categories that we did at the Bear Naked, you work, you work, you work, and then this giant wave comes behind you and just like lifts everything that you're doing, and I feel that wave coming behind us right now.

Like I think over the next 24 months, and over the next 12 months, there's going to continue to be an acceleration of articles, stories, and educational pieces around what impact what people wear has, just because I just think culturally, it's what we wear is so important to how we are seen, and so, just all of that kind of waking up.

And then, what's also really helped us the past couple years is just people's desire to shop online. We sell all of our product online. We sell in Whole Foods, and then we sell 90 percent of our business is online. That's where the bulk of it is.

And selling online direct to consumer allows us to invest more in the ingredients, invest more in the certifications, make products in a better way, remove the middleman of traditional retail, and then give a better value to consumers, where they don't have to pay more to do the right thing.

If you looked five years ago, you'd have to go into a store and buying organic, buying fair trade meant sacrifice of style, and I had to pay more.

Today, we can give you the same style and you pay the same as GAP. Like why would you not go do that?

So, it's like, I think there's a couple things that are happening from social media standpoint, awareness standpoint, and then just distribution model standpoint, that is allowing everything to start to accelerate now for us.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, very cool. You know? I watched a documentary on a flight home a couple of weeks ago about a husband and a wife who took on a farm in California, and they did it all the way it's supposed to be done. You know what I'm talking about?

Brendan Synott: Yes.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Biggest Little Farm, or something like that. I watched it, and I've been thinking about that throughout our entire conversation, because when you think about something like cotton, that you've never thought about before, and how much it's impacting the environment, and I think about watching that documentary, and how beautiful it was that the earth just really all rejuvenated itself on their farm.

And it was all made to go in the cycle and this flow, and how at first, they're like "It's not going to work. It's not going to work," and then over time, this beautiful synergy happened with this farm and the way that everything started giving back to the earth, and to the animals and everything, the way it needed to.

And we've had the tipping point in the food industry and in other industries when it comes to organic products, but we really have to have that movement in everything in our world to start getting back to a place where the environment has that synergy again, and where we're not damaging the environment.

And so, I love this conversation. There's been so many points you've brought up, even with my knowledge and understanding, that I've never thought about before, never heard about before, and it's

just one more thing we can do to protect this beautiful world that we live in and that we don't even realize, as we go throughout our day, all the things, like clothes that we're wearing, that impact our earth and how it's going to provide for us long-term.

So, I love this conversation, and definitely a lot of things to think about, a lot of things that have resonated with me.

One other thing I want you to touch on really quickly today is clothing in our landfills. So, you're passionate about this in ways that people can really change this for the world. So, speak on that a little bit and how people can contribute to this issue that's going on right now.

Brendan Synott: Yeah, this is a fact that really grosses me out. It's just like—so, the question is, how many pounds of clothing does the average person throw away in the landfill on a yearly basis? Is it 10 pounds? 20 pounds? 30 pounds? 40 pounds? 50 pounds? 60 pounds? 70 pounds? Over 80 pounds of clothing the average person throws away on a yearly basis.

Why? Because they're making stuff, fast fashion is making disposable clothing really cheap overseas that's built to be worn once and thrown away. Like that's just like—let's not do that, please. We don't need to do that.

So, what we do at PACT is, every time you buy a product from us, we have a give back program. So, you can print out a free shipping label and take the box that you received our product in, or any other box that you want in your house, and then you can take your clothes, put them in that box, and then we will route them to a charity that needs them and try to reuse the garments, because ultimately, people are not throwing clothes away because they have holes in them or they're not wearable anymore, they're throwing them away because they're done chasing that fashion.

And ultimately, if we can try to eliminate what goes into our landfills, especially excess clothes that we wear once, when you think about just how much effort and energy it took to make that one single shirt that you wore one time and then threw out, it's a pretty disgusting piece of the fashion industry that not a lot of people have awareness around.

So, we always try to do our best to help people try to—the way we talk about it is kind of like guilt-free fashion. Fashion's going to be there, but how do I do it in a way that doesn't feel as toxic? And this is one of the ways that we try to alleviate it, because ultimately, we know that people are going to change their clothes, they're going to change what they want to wear, they're going to have stuff that they don't want anymore, that's part of being human, and so ultimately, how do we send that to a place that can benefit from it as opposed to continuing to kind of pollute the planet with our excess?

Jonathan Hunsaker: Yeah, I mean I love that you're touching on every angle, right? So, from organic certification, to making a product, to being fair trade certified, to making sure that there's no slave labor creating the products, to even on the back end, when people are getting rid of their old clothes, having a way to go and give it to charity and people that need it.

I wish more people did business like you. I think our world would be a much different place.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, absolutely. And let me ask really quickly, what would be something that—just one change you think people could make when it comes to their clothes? And you already said one, but I'm going to ask for one more suggestion for people. You said give your clothes to other people, don't just throw them away. If you're not going to use them, give them to someone else. Let's not fill up those landfills.

Brendan Synott: Don't buy new stuff. Don't buy new stuff. Don't buy anything new.

TeriAnn Trevenen: That's where I was going. What's your next piece of advice for them?

Brendan Synott: Yeah, like don't buy anything new. Like there's so many great thrift shops online now, you can—there's so many places. Like go find an authentic garment that was well-made from a long time ago and that's been worn a bunch of times, and you go make it yours.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, that [*crosstalk*]. The history of fashion.

Brendan Synott: Yeah, it's like there's really nothing—there's nothing new. There's nothing new. Just look back, it's all the same. And so, if you can go, go pull something vintage out, or secondhand, or something that has been used previously, I mean that's fundamentally the best thing that we can do is just not buy new stuff.

But if you do have to buy new stuff, then try to buy it organic, try to buy it fair trade. But ultimately, like if you want to go buy some used underwear, like go for it. I'm not necessarily—my journey is not that perfect. I can't go do that. But like that's—

TeriAnn Trevenen: You're hardcore. No judgement.

Brendan Synott: You can't be—nobody—it is not a perfect journey, right? Like it's not about being perfect, it's just about being a little bit better and consistently better.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Exactly.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah. I heard someone on an interview the other day, oh, her name's Greta, I think Thunberg or something. She's the one that's on the news all the time and kind of talking about how we're impacting the environment. She's that young girl. But she talked about one of the things she's doing is called Stop Shop.

I'd never heard about this before, but I guess a lot of people in the world, they're doing it. It's a huge movement, and it's like they only buy things that they absolutely need. Like they're not buying anything that they don't need. They don't go to the store and just fill up their cart with things like clothes and food that they actually need. It's like everything they purchase has a purpose and they're not wasteful with anything.

So, I think it's such a good piece of advice, quit buying clothes that you don't need. Go to that thrift store. And give your clothes to other people if you're done with them. Don't just throw them away. So many people are in need. Why not take that opportunity?

Jonathan Hunsaker: Absolutely. So, Brendan, where can people find your website, your clothing brand online?

Brendan Synott: Yeah, it's WearPACT.com. We're on the social channels as well, with that same handle. And then for all the listeners out there, we have, if you guys want to try to change the conversation around what's in your closet, we have a 40% off intro offer that is OrganicCloset is the coupon code. So, if you use that and want to try to change what your closet looks like, it's a great way to get started.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Yeah, that's very generous of you. So, thank you very much for that.

This has been a fascinating conversation. I've learned a lot that I never even knew before, and very grateful that you took time out of your day to come join us on the podcast.

Brendan Synott: Thanks so much for having me. It's like these conversations that change stuff, so I appreciate you all having it with me. It's been great.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, and last question of the day, I ask everyone on the podcast this question. If you had one message you could leave with the world, what would you tell the world? What would be your advice or your thought to them?

Brendan Synott: Yeah, I think—I'm big—I think take as many risks as you can as young as possible, because it only—it only costs you more as you get older, as you get time, and when you're young, you have nothing but time. So, if a risk is costing you time, it's probably the best investment that you can make in yourself.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Awesome.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Spoken like a true entrepreneur.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yes.

Jonathan Hunsaker: I started my first company at 17, so when I hear you talk, I'm like I totally get it.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, and it's so cool that you've taken risks changing the world. So, good for you. Kudos to you.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Alright, so for all of you listening, go to EmpoweringYouOrganically.com for all of the show notes, transcripts, links to Brendan's website, the coupon code. Anything you need, go to EmpoweringYouOrganically.com. Like us on iTunes and give us a nice five-star rating.

Brendan, thank you again for taking time out of your day. It's been a great conversation.

Brendan Synott: Thanks so much, guys. Great to meet you.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Thanks everyone.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Thanks, Brendan.