

THE MODEL HEALTH SHOW

EPISODE 756

**Transform Your Health by
Transforming Your
Environment and Your
Mindset**

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ITUNES REVIEW: Another five star review titled Love the Show by Thriving and Striving, "Love how you deliver your show with relevance and always backed up with scientific knowledge. I also love your humility and love for what you do. I always look forward to your new releases."

SHAWN STEVENSON: Welcome to The Model Health Show, this is fitness and nutrition expert Shawn Stevenson and I'm so grateful for you tuning in with me today. On this episode We're digging into how we can transform our health by transforming our environment and our mindset. We're gonna be looking at the latest science around ultra-processed foods and how they're impacting things like our microbiome, the documented collateral damage caused by pharmaceutical companies that we need to be mindful of today more than ever. Also, we're gonna look at two critical mindset shifts to transform your health and success, the greatest health issue facing our world today, we're gonna dive into that and so much more. This was from a powerhouse interview that I did recently on the popular Fitness CEO show hosted by Bryce Henson. This amazing show is from the creators and managers of Fit Body Boot Camp, and they now have around 800 locations, which is crazy because it was started by my really good friend Bedros Keuilian, which prior to Launching the first Fit Body Boot Camp he was actually living in his car and working as a personal trainer, just trying to figure things out, trying to help people, and he's got an incredible story. We've had Bedros on the show a couple of times and he's one of my, truly one of my great friends in this world, in this lifetime, very, very grateful for him.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And this Fitness CEO podcast is one of the many shows that he's helped to create, and I'm very, very excited to share this with you. Now before we get into this powerful conversation, I wanna tell you about my favorite pre-workout right now. And I'm telling you I've experimented with many, many things over the years, I've been in this field for about 21 years now. And this is one of the few things that you notice a difference day one, and this is for most people. We're all different, we're all unique, but most people notice a difference in their energy on day one. Now obviously our training requires energy and to get the very best results we need to put our very best into our training. And with that being said, numerous studies including a study published by the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, aka the FASEB Journal, have found that exogenous ketones can be up to 28% more efficient in generating energy than glucose alone. Plus studies have found up to a 15% increased mean power output after recovery when utilizing ketones. Now, ketones have been utilized in the domain of fitness for the past few years at a high level, but ketone esters have been what folks have been utilizing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And number one, they taste nasty, all right, nasty, but for some people it's just like you gotta pay to play. So that's one barrier of entry, plus just the digestibility, the efficiency, it isn't something that's effective for the vast majority of people. Cut to the most recent innovation and what has been brought to the world of fitness and cognitive performance and just overall human health by HVMN and their product Ketone-IQ. Number one, it tastes a hell of a lot better than the ketone esters, not to say that it's delicious, but this is definitely way more palatable, and the energy that we experience is in a league of its own. I've been handing out Ketone-IQ to so many of my friends that come by and one of my friends actually, I just put it in his hands and he went for a hike the next day and he reported back to me, and I didn't ask him to, but he reported back to me that on this hike that he usually does, he noticed that he just had more in the tank, he felt like he had more energy available, he didn't feel that energy dip towards the end of that hike that he normally does, he just felt like he can keep going. And this is what a lot of people report when they utilize Ketone-IQ. Go to hvmn.com/model right now and they're going to give you 30% off your first subscription order of Ketone-IQ. Again, go to hvmn.com/model for 30% off your first subscription order of Ketone-IQ. Now let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

[music]

ITUNES REVIEW: Another five-star review titled “Pregnancy Episode” Request by TCO 0805. Long-term listener, nine years, your show has been extremely valuable and life-changing and I'm so grateful. I am now pregnant with my first and would love it if you could do an episode on pregnancy for us women and our partners to learn during such an important part of our lives.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Amazing, amazing. Thank you so much for sharing that over on Apple Podcast. Thank you so much for making me a part of your life. We're almost a decade together as a family and congratulations on your growing family as well. And we've actually addressed so many facets of this wonderful miracle of life on different episodes of the show, one of them actually was the special guest was my wife, Anne Stevenson. And so we'll drop that into the show notes for you, but also of course we're gonna do much, much more coming up here, because this is one of those things that we don't often get a lot of education around. There are a couple of seminal works out there as far as pregnancy related books, but we live in an entirely different environment right now, the terrain is very, very different, very different things to navigate to create healthy humans. And a lot of folks are struggling right now just in the domain of fertility and childbirth and all those things. It's been on the rise and so you need to definitely share more real-world science-backed education around the subject matter and you just gave me another inspiration to do that coming up here this year. So again, thank you so much for leaving that review over on Apple Podcast and without further ado, let's get into this powerful conversation that I had on the Fitness CEO show.

BRYCE HENSON: So I am so pumped to have you, a lot to cover just from your wealth of knowledge from a health fitness perspective. Before we dive into some other questions I have, when you look back at that story, what's your biggest one or two takeaway that our audience can latch on to?

SHAWN STEVENSON: I'd say number one it's the power of taking responsibility. It's so easy to blame, to finger point, and we have absolutely our stories are valid, the things we've gone through are valid. We go through some pretty messed up situations as human beings, and my story is one of those. I grew up in poverty but I even say that with hesitation because in the United States poverty can still mean you got a TV. We did get food from charities, food stamps, and the WIC program. My mother worked overnight at a convenience store, ended up attempting robbery, she was stabbed multiple times. It's just again a very volatile environment that I grew up in.

BRYCE HENSON: Yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: A lot of violence, going outside to play honestly, there's a risk, it wasn't a big risk, but there's a risk that I could be shot, a drive-by shooting, there was multiple shooting at the neighborhood basketball court that we played ball at during the year. But it's like, it didn't... It wasn't a regular thing but it happened, and there's a part of your brain that's always on alert, right? And so people hear that and it's just like, oh, there is a certain way of thinking of like poor you, but what people don't understand is a power that comes from an environment like that as well. Because there is such a highly evolved sense of creativity to survive and to make something out of nothing, there's this very powerful spirit of connection, like the people that you're around, you kind of like in you're in war together.

BRYCE HENSON: Oh, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's like a bonding, and there's just like a deep sense of people having your back and there's also this very powerful sense of overcoming. That was just like there's this muscle-built, like we're going to make it. Now here's the thing, it's like where is that creativity pointed? Where is that we're going to make it pointed? Is it pointed towards just getting by or is it pointing towards something bigger? Is creativity pointed towards just getting a meal on the table or is it pointed towards transforming the health of our family, right? Because those muscles were getting built, it's just I didn't know where to direct it, and so me taking responsibility, it eliminated this possibility of offloading or placing the responsibility on someone else to change my life for me. And unfortunately we do that, we do it automatically, we don't realize it.

BRYCE HENSON: We do.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, that's number one. Listen, even as I'm saying this, you might think that you're taking responsibility, but it's like I'm talking 100% responsibility, no wiggle room, no, like just little outs. And you gotta catch yourself, because it's a daily practice as well, you're going to blame, you're going to point fingers, the faster you can point it back to yourself, the faster you can take responsibility for your part in it. Not to say that again, you're putting yourself in "bad situations" because things happen that are oftentimes unexplainable, but pointing it back to how am I going to respond now? What am I gonna do now? The thing happened, what am I gonna do now, right? So that'd be number one. Number two is just again it kind of goes hand-in-hand with that which is, it's not about resources, it's about resourcefulness, right? When I transformed my health and eventually, man, it's crazy to even sit here with you and talk about this like, I've impacted the lives of millions of people. I'm from Ferguson, Missouri, I'm from St. Louis, I grew... I'm not supposed to be here, and for me when this all changed, I didn't... I was making... I lived... More than once, but there's been times where I was like, I'm either gonna buy these groceries at Whole Foods and I'm at the counter hoping this card goes through, or I'm gonna pay my light bill. I'm literally taking a risk here.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so I was in that kind of situation where I didn't even have money to make it to the end of the month, there was a lot more month at the end of the money. You know what I mean? But by investing in myself and feeling better, suddenly I started to become much more adept at problem-solving and in procuring the money that I needed to get my life structures taken care of. My energy changed, my ability to see different possibilities, whereas again, I was kind of linear before, so that creativity was starting to get activated in a sense.

BRYCE HENSON: Oh, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so my ability to be resourceful with the lack of, again, I didn't have any health food stores around me, there was no yoga studios, I didn't know meditation existed, I didn't know what organic food was, all this stuff was foreign to me. But my ability to be resourceful and another one of those pieces I mentioned earlier, it was a friend and relationships and the power of ROR. We know about ROI.

BRYCE HENSON: It's ROR.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Return on relationships, I would have never told because I come from where I come from, I inherently developed a strong sense of self and selfishness, because I had to survive. And it made me very reluctant to trust and to be in relationships outside of my tribe, outside of my family.

BRYCE HENSON: Oh, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right? So there's a lot of like lone wolf type energy. And if I'm gonna make it it's all on me, it's not. Yes, again, this is... Don't mistake it from the taking responsibility part, but being successful is gonna be with and through other people. And so I would not have known this man if you would have asked me even 10 years ago, like what would be my greatest gift or success or my greatest asset? I would say something along the lines of maybe a financial thing to accomplish or some kind of career thing, no, my relationships by far, it is... It's not even close, it's in a different universe, is the most valuable thing in my reality by far. And that ability to work on those things, like I come from a situation where I didn't see what healthy relationships really look like, even my family that we all love each other and we got each other's back and we have this kind of sense of certainty, we will f*ck each other up though, you know what I mean? It's like a lot of fighting, a lot of violence, and I didn't really see what a healthy functional relationship looks like. I see a lot of dysfunction. And so but this is not just unique to me, many people have experienced that in relationships and what they saw as examples.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So wouldn't it be... If I'm telling you it's the most valuable thing, wouldn't it be valuable for you to make it a study, like to learn about relationships and healthy relationships and becoming the type of person that can manage a healthy relationship, that can actually receive the love that is given from somebody. Because I had a wall up. Not only that but to be able to contribute and find a way to be a value to the lives of other people so that they want you in relationships. And so that would be my other thing would be it's not about resources, it's about resourcefulness and flipping the switch in your mind, like that whole there's a will there's a way, I'm telling you when there's a will there's 10,000 ways. There are so many different possibilities, but it's the ability to think externally of your circumstances. It goes back to that Einstein quote for me, we can't solve a problem at the same level that created the problem, the same level of thinking that created the problem. And that's the problem so many times is that we start beating a problem down with our same train of thought that created the f*cking problem, instead of stepping back and seeing all the different creative ways that you can get from here to there. And part of that though is feeling empowered, being healthier makes it easier, right? And you know this.

BRYCE HENSON: Oh, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's like it's hard, it is... It's not that you can't find a way when you're not well, it's just harder.

BRYCE HENSON: Oh, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right? And so those would be my two things.

BRYCE HENSON: Oh, Shawn, man, we are just kindred spirits. From your story, your background, the inspiration, here at Fit Body, which is the franchise oversea, we talk about first and foremost, we're not in the fitness industry, yes, we do this, but we're in the people industry, we're in the people business, we're in the relationship business. In fact, two of our core values here at our organization is to have whatever it takes mentality. So using that resourcefulness you just talked about and taking extreme ownership, not taking ownership, taking extreme ownership. So you're speaking my language, my friend.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Powerful.

BRYCE HENSON: So I wanna go high level here and then we'll kind of will it down, but you are a health expert, you're a sleep expert, you're a nutritionist and nutrition expert. What would you say in your viewpoint are the big problems facing the health of our country right now? And there's many, but we'd love to unpack that from your lens.

SHAWN STEVENSON: When addressing any problem, I think it's always valuable to know what you're actually dealing with. A lot of times we're fighting with things we don't even understand, we don't even know what the situation really is. So, yeah, we can look around and see that we have some issues as a society as far as our health, but let's get very specific, I'm just gonna rattle off a few factual places that we are right now, few statistics. So the CDC's most recent numbers from last year have denoted that today, 60% of American adults have at least one chronic disease, all right? So the majority of our citizens today have at least one chronic disease, 40% have two or more, all right? So automatically, now immediately, if you don't have a chronic disease, you're not normal, do you understand where we're going with this?

BRYCE HENSON: This is wild.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Okay. So that's number one. Within that, within that context, about 60% of American adults have some degree of heart disease. We've got about 130 million Americans that have type 2 diabetes or pre-diabetes, we've got about 115 million Americans that have regular sleep issues and sleep dysfunction, and we've got, right now this is crazy I'm about to say this, when the new numbers come out, which they haven't been published yet, it's gonna be even scarier because they haven't been published post COVID yet. But prior to the pandemic and pandemic related shutdowns and changes, we had about a 42% obesity rate in our society, 42%.

BRYCE HENSON: 42.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And it was on track by 2030 to be at 50%. Okay, not to mention we're talking about clinical obesity, all right. We're not talking about the overweight component as well, because if we bring those together we're looking at it's knocking on the door of about 80% of American citizens who are either overweight or obese. And because of the launching pad for even more disease and dysfunction over all these shutdowns and changes and something called recidivism, basically gaining weight, especially for kids like... Matter of fact, let me just share this with you, with kids, because the CDC did publish this. And this was a study looking at kids during the pandemic and they found that for moderately obese children, their annual rate of weight gain doubled over the course of the initial year of pandemic shutdowns. Now, again that might be like oh, that's a temporary thing, but recidivism is like once we reach a state, it's kinda like a thermostat.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's like getting your body at that set point where it's more difficult. And anybody that struggled with their weight as a kid knows how difficult it is to change when you're an adult. Even as adults, once you hit a certain, like you put on weight, it becomes harder and harder to change that set point. And so, you know, we're going to hit that number of 50% before we get to 2030, which is just around the corner. It's like six years away. And so these are just some. I can go on and on. We can just do the whole episode on the f*cked up statistics. But here's the thing. We have the power to change this. We absolutely do.

BRYCE HENSON: Amen.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But we have to understand that we also have a \$4.2 trillion, trillion, like we can't even fathom how much money that is, healthcare system. So that's how much money is invested into our healthcare system annually at this point. We have the sickest society in the history of humanity Chronic disease, specifically. We're talking about largely socially, societally, structurally, culturally induced chronic diseases. We're not talking about infectious disease, which is funny that that's even gone up. We don't really think, like we thought we had that figured out, but no, it's not the case. And so with this being said, this is a situation that we're dealing with. With that healthcare model that we have, it's profiting off of sickness. And there are, again, trillions of dollars. Our healthcare system and the amount that's invested, like this, is knocking on the door about 20% of our gross domestic product. It's a big part of our economy.

BRYCE HENSON: It's wild.

SHAWN STEVENSON: If you want to bet on something, a safe bet in our society today, bet on sickness. That's how f*cked up it is. Now, with that said, what are we going to do about it?

What are the solutions here? So knowing that this is the state that we're in, and I started it off, I was pointing to where we're gonna go, which is if you're healthy today, you're not normal. You're abnormal. How do we change so that health is normalized? And what it has to do with is culture. For years, and I know you've done this, I've done this, we point people towards behavior change because it's powerful. Changing a behavior, changing a habit can change somebody's life.

BRYCE HENSON: Totally.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now, the other side of that, unfortunately, is that pointing someone towards a habit change in an environment that is reaffirming a poor habit is almost like using a drug to treat a symptom. It can mask a symptom, but if you're not addressing the root cause, the behavior can come roaring back or the symptom can come roaring back or manifest in a different way. And so at its core, and really what this new project is about is because I finally did something that... And again, the data was crazy. I couldn't believe that nobody was talking about this. Social science and how our relationships, how our environment, how our culture is the key controller of our choices. Because as we sit here, we think that we're making the choice on what we're eating. And now we do have more options. You and I, we're aware of all the different options. But just for example, a culture in Maui, they eat certain things because it's a part of the culture. A culture in Nairobi, they eat certain things because it's a part of the culture.

SHAWN STEVENSON: A culture in Hong Kong, they eat certain things. A culture in London, they eat certain things historically because that's what's in the environment. We eat, we make choices based off of our culture. Our culture is like an invisible guidance system. It's like an invisible hand that's directing us towards choices and blinding us to other choices. And to give an example of that, if we have a hunter-gatherer tribe, which we evolved from, but there are still a couple left on Earth today. But because of their culture, they are blocked from the awareness that Krispy Kremes are a thing. That they can just go to 7-Eleven and throw a spear through a hot dog, you know what I mean?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Rather than... So it's like their culture blocks them from the awareness, and that's a thing. Now, not to say that modern civilization folks are not dropping in and giving them some T-shirts and some Twinkies and like that. I'm not saying, don't make this a black and white thing. But truly, a hunter-gatherer, living in their environment, they are blocked from the awareness that ultra-processed foods are something that humans eat, okay? And in their culture, it's imbued into the culture that if you don't move, you die. Movement is required in order to procure your food. So movement is tied to life or death. In our culture, movement is optional as f*ck. Especially today.

BRYCE HENSON: At best, man. Holy smokes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And again, it's like allowing for a place where, like, yeah, this is great. We've got technology. We've got DoorDash. We've got all these innovations. But a lot of our innovations as humans in recent history have taken away activity. They've reduced over and over and over again our need for movement. And so what happens is, if we're not supplementing or fortifying that somewhere else, this is where the whole fitness movement came from, is because we're doing so much less just to survive. And so we try to simulate it here, doing this other thing. This is where we start to get into this strange paradox that we're experiencing today, which is we are the most advanced society. I know some people are like, arguably. But to grace this planet. And at the same time, ironically, we're the sickest society at the same time.

BRYCE HENSON: Dude, mind blows.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's a paradox. And some people will be like, well, and I... Because I... This is what I believed. Well, we're living longer now. I've got some news for you. Just in about the last 20 years, that has reversed.

BRYCE HENSON: Really?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Previously, every generation was outliving their predecessors.

BRYCE HENSON: Totally.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We're the first generation that's not going to outlive our predecessors. This advance in our lifespan has now reversed, and it's going backwards. And a lot of people aren't aware of that yet. And also, you've gotta take into consideration, when things were advancing, the main thing that was taking us out was infectious disease and issues in childbirth, which was pushing down that average lifespan, by the way. And so things more so related to infectious diseases. Today, the main thing that's killing us, the number one killer today is heart disease. By far. Heart disease, all manner of cancers. And just one of them, by the way, endometrial cancer. There's a seven times higher incidence. Not two times, not three. Seven times higher incidence of someone developing endometrial cancer if they're obese.

BRYCE HENSON: I'm not familiar. What is that?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Cancer of the uterus. And so, again, if we start looking at what are the conditions that are creating these epidemics, multiple epidemics of chronic diseases,

diabetes has just skyrocketed in recent years. There's a paper published in the New England Journal of Medicine, one of our most prestigious journals. And the title of the paper was effectively 200 Years of Diabetes. And they look back over the last couple of hundred years and looking at the diabetes prevalence. And only in the last 40 years, it's just in the last 40 years, diabetes has almost quadrupled in our society. Type 2 diabetes, we're talking about specifically.

BRYCE HENSON: That is wild, Shawn. That is wild.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, let's just hit right now one portion of the solution. We can go deeper. Understanding that your culture is controlling your choices. Your culture is controlling your awareness. Your culture is determining largely your health outcomes as a result. This is why, again, being in a certain society where I come from, every single one of my family members had at least one chronic disease. Everyone. Including myself, my brother, and my sister. My brother, my little brother, he's hospitalized with asthma multiple times a year.

BRYCE HENSON: Really?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Terrible asthma. My sister, terrible eczema. Myself, f*cking arthritis as a kid. My bones and my spine are breaking down. Not to mention asthma, hospitalized. Had my inhalers as well. My mother, obesity. Diabetes. Eventually, cancer. My stepfather. Just, again, on and on. Losing so many family members. It's just normalized in my environment. But guess what? I broke out of that. I broke that pattern. And how I did it was I changed the culture. I made it so that healthy options were easily accessible. Because when I made the decision to get well, they were not easily accessible. But I didn't let that story stop me. I started making it easier to access things that fortify my health. And that had to do with the people that I was around. And funny enough, when I started to feel better, I started to change my relationships. And it wasn't conscious. It's just like, this is a mismatch energetically. Like frequency, vibration. And that's a real thing. Don't even get me started. For years, I've been contributing to a place called HeartMath Institute. And so we can read fields that are broadcast from the human heart, the brain. And we know this, even the electrical output of the human heart. We see that on heart monitors. You know, you see it on a movie. But there's a field, there's an energy field that's emitted from the human heart. It's called a tube torus. And it's multiple feet from your body.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And these fields literally, because we're kind of, I'm not going to say we're ignorant, but the way that we're designed as a human, we see a certain spectrum of light. Other animals see different spectrums of light. And so because we see a certain way, we don't understand that there's a lot more to this story. And now we have these new fields emerging, well, recently, really becoming popularized of like quantum mechanics and things

of the like. But there's so much about our reality that we don't understand. But we act like we know. That's the problem. And so, yeah, so even that energy exchange. And I'll just share a study real quick. There were some researchers at Yale who put two people, I mean, they were strangers, but they allowed them to create rapport, maybe like five, ten minutes of small talk.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And they had them strapped to brain monitors so they could see their brain waves and their frequencies. And they found that even within ten minutes, their brains start to sync up the way that their brain frequencies and patterns of brain waves. So shifting, you know, beta and delta and all this stuff. Basically, their brains start to match. All right? And this is what we do, but it's unseen. We sync up with other people. We have to do that out of survival. We see that in the animal kingdom. Like, how the f*ck do those birds know how to fly like that? Like in the sequences. It's not like, "Charlie, you take the lead." They just know how to...

BRYCE HENSON: They just go.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Sync up. Bees and like the list goes on and on. We do that too. And so the people around me, also moving from, okay, I've got this one kinda high leverage thing. Like, you always can find a high leverage spot. It's like Archimedes. Having that lever. And so for me, it was the university gym. That was my highest leverage. And I used the sh*t out of it. Because, again, in my environment, it was just a 15-minute drive to get to the university, by the way. But in my environment, there were no gyms. There's a safety concern with running in the neighborhood. But this university gym, I'm about to leverage this. I didn't know that I was doing it, though. But I was leaning into this is an environment that can fortify the results that I'm looking for. And also the food complex. So suddenly, ironically, all these years, there's a... Right outside of Ferguson, there's a good part of Ferguson, it's like that with a lot of neighborhoods.

BRYCE HENSON: Just like anywhere, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But there was a farmers market that had been going on forever, for years and years and years. I just wasn't in tune to it. I didn't know that it existed. But now that I'm focused on this, now the farmers market is just like five minutes from my house. And now, not only am I going to the farmers market every week, saving money, meeting the farmers. The people actually growing my food, I'm getting that much closer to my food. I'm taking my family with me. And my family, even now, they know it's a deep memory for them of us going to these farmers markets. Because it was a new adventure for all of us. I get the kids, they might make little stuff there, like little treats or whatever. And we're getting these foods, and they're talking to the farmers. And it was just like, it was a family culture shift by us doing these things together. And so, the mission now, for everybody, is to understand that you have

agency, coupled with, and by the way, I'm just gonna make this caveat. A lot of our struggle, and you know this too is trying to get other people to change. And the truth is, we can't change anybody. It's always an internal job. It's a choice within the person. We can force people to do things.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Even with our kids, we can force them to do things. But once we are able to give them a blueprint internally, a culture that they imbibe. And by the way, just to define culture, this is the attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors held by a certain group of people, passed on from one generation to the next, that's what a culture is, all right? So, we are inherently creating a culture for our children. A lot of times, we're just doing the sh*t that we were taught about culture, but we can intelligently, consciously choose the culture we're creating in our own household, so that our children have the internal blueprint, or the internal culture. Today, I went outside to work out with my wife, and I went outside, there was a random folding chair sitting in my driveway. And I'm just like, what the f*ck? I thought it was my, you know, my older son, who's a trainer, all right? And I'm just like, oh, he's out here doing, he's probably shooting a video or something.

BRYCE HENSON: He's probably in his early 20s now.

SHAWN STEVENSON: He's 22. And I started training with my wife, and here comes my older son and my youngest son, 22 and 11, walking down the street. They were training together. I didn't tell them to do that. It's just baked into our culture, all right? And it's just like, man, I was overflowing with so much joy in that moment. Like, I'm out here with my wife. Like, what is... This is amazing. This is real, you know? And everybody is, because the trick with the two of them, by the way, because there's... You have different personalities in the family. Is leveraging, finding the love and the value that each person would have for the thing, that connective tissue. So, caveat, we can't force people to change. But what we can do is take more control of our own culture within our household. And that's what the mission is. Because rather than me trying to, because that was my story before. My kids are gonna be out here in this world that is against them, in a sense, as far as their health. It's just feeding them constantly all these disempowering messages and unhealthy things.

BRYCE HENSON: Culture.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

BRYCE HENSON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's the culture that we're existing in. But we can create a microculture. And now the coolest thing, and that I realized when I went on a trip recently, we

left stateside. I realized something so remarkable. All in the midst of this new project, the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook. When we go to another culture, we take our culture with us. We take our culture with us. So, even when I went to this place, other people, other families, other people who make decisions were coming up to us and asking about our family and what we're doing. To act the way that we act, to look the way that we do, to exude the energy that we have. You take your culture with you. And so, that's how we change our society. That's how we change our community. You start with you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You start with the culture in your household. And that's what this new project is all about, the blueprint on how to do that. And from there, you become the model. You become an example. When people see you, they see what's possible. That's the one thing that I didn't have that would have made everything exponentially easier. But I had to create it myself. And eventually, I find out all over the world, there's these other people that are experiencing the same thing, having these revelations that I'm having. My really good friend, Bedros, man, I give thanks for Bedros all the time.

BRYCE HENSON: Dude, he's such a great dude, man.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And just like being able to align and to unify. It's just like an attractor. We just became like magnets for other people in our guild. And it's just like, it's so exciting. It's as exciting as time to be alive. But at the same time, we need to know what to do. We need to know, actually, how do we go about shifting the culture in my household? But culture is the key. Changing the culture, taking control of your own environment, controlling the controllable.

BRYCE HENSON: My man, Shawn. All right, my friend. Well, the last part of the conversation, I want to kinda tee up the new book launch. And you've talked a little bit about, in the conversation, the concept. But Eat Smarter, the cookbook, just got released. So can you unpack that for us? Just give us some high level, what our audience can expect to take away and some value there.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely. So earlier we mentioned how we evolved with community around food, and how that is essentially becoming on the endangered species list. Eating together with friends and family. According to researchers at Harvard, only about 30% of American families eat together on a regular basis. And we're devolving. We're moving away from a thing that has this protective capacity that, again, I was shocked to find out. I'll just share a couple of these statistics with you.

BRYCE HENSON: Please.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So a different set of researchers at Harvard University was tracking family eating behavior for years. When I found this research, which I've got several colleagues at Harvard, I was shocked. I'm like, why isn't this everywhere, talked about all the time? And what these researchers uncovered was that families that ate together on a regular basis had far less chronic diseases. In particular, they found that they had a much higher intake of essential nutrients that help, again, the immune system, that help the body to reduce the risk of chronic diseases and significantly less intake of processed foods, ultra-processed foods, chips and sodas and things like that. Again, not to vilify those things, but it's a smaller part of the overall intake. When you couple that with a really fascinating study that was done looking at minority children, and what they found was that eating together with their family four meals a week dramatically decreased their, again, incidence of risk for chronic disease and infectious disease as well, by the way, those can go hand-in-hand. What they found was, again, and I'm just going to give the specific numbers here, they found that the children who were eating with their families four times a week, they ate five servings of fruits and vegetables almost every day.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Five days out of the week. All right? And when the television was rarely on or not on at all, even lower intake of processed foods and soda. All right, that was already diminished regardless of the TV. But when it's not on...

BRYCE HENSON: Much less.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Much less.

BRYCE HENSON: Yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Couple that with, there's two studies combined, published in the Journal of Pediatrics and the Journal of the American Medical association. And this is the homework for everybody. All right? This is the one right here. So what the researchers found was that eating together, this is specifically the benefits for children. This is huge for our kids. Children who ate together with their families just three times a week, and this can be any meal, by the way, three times a week, had significantly lower incidence of obesity, lower incidence of disordered eating, and lower risk of overall chronic diseases and infections.

BRYCE HENSON: What?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Just eating with your family three times a week.

BRYCE HENSON: Holy smokes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Okay. And now what about us as adults? I shared another study in the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook looking at employees of IBM, and basically what they found was that there was this dramatic protection against abnormal stress for parents if they were able to get home and eat dinner with their families. And the more that work was inching in to their ability to eat dinner with their families, the more their unhappiness at work took over and abnormal amounts of stress. And why does this matter? Well, another study that was published in JAMA Journal of the American Medical Association, the research did a meta-analysis, and they found that upwards of 80% of physician visits today are for stress related diseases.

BRYCE HENSON: 80%?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Upwards of 80%. Said it was 60% to 80%. And so stress is a huge component because your thoughts create chemistry in your body. It's a very powerful pharmacy. And altering your system, whether it's hormones, neurotransmitters, cell function, the function of your mitochondria can shift instantaneously based on your perception of stress. That's a whole other conversation for another day, but it's intertwined into the book. So with that said, three meals a week, this could be family dinner on Tuesday and Thursday and brunch on Sunday. And so for me, I'm a why person. I want to know why. Why? How does that work? And so one of the obvious reasons it works is that by you having that planned, and by the way, you need to schedule it, all right? We got stuff on our schedule that matters far less than our family.

SHAWN STEVENSON: For us in our busy lives, a lot of times, if you just don't schedule it, it's not real, it's fleeting. It's a maybe. Schedule it. When you do that, and you know that family dinner is on Tuesday, it immediately invokes the brain, even your subconscious, to plan, what are we going to eat? It creates more of a spirit of planning and purpose instantaneously because we know that the thing is in front of us. Use that to your advantage. Schedule it. And that's part of, like, so what are we eating? Even if it's a shared meal, like a DoorDash or you pick up something, once it becomes ingrained in your culture, and it is a day where everything just kind of goes off the rails and you've got to order something or pick something up, we still sit down and eat together. So again, it's creating a new family culture of eating meals together more frequently. It's protective for your children. Another reason why is that there is some powerful psychology that's in the mist at a dinner table. A dinner table is a unifier.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now, of course, there could be drama at the dinner table. I don't know if anybody's ever seen "Yellowstone," but Beth is a problem at the dinner table, okay? She's never going to finish a meal. So some families might have characters like that, but what I'm pointing you to, and this is also, I address this in the book, being a parent, and this is the

thing because we point fingers, all those years when I was doing clinical work, the number one reason that people gave men and women coming in to see me for not achieving the goals that they wanted to achieve was their family. So you got this thing. It's like, well, it's just like, my kids won't, my husband won't, my mom won't. You don't understand, right? There's pointing fingers at their family. They're the big obstacles. And the reality is this, you know your family better than anyone, but because we just want them to do the sh*t we want them to do, we don't have to tell them, or we won't have to cater things to them unless it's their birthday or some sh*t like that. But in reality, you absolutely know what inspires your children to take action and what makes them retract. You know what excites them, and you know what de-excites them. Use that to your advantage. Use that as an intentional, loving parent and start to put in place strategies to get through to your children and the people that are around you, your loved ones.

SHAWN STEVENSON: My wife, I'm like, I'm Pinocchio to her. She can, she knows how if she wants to, sometimes she doesn't want to.

BRYCE HENSON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And that's when we'll have conflicts. But she knows what will get me to be very influenced, you know what I'm saying? And I know the same thing for her.

BRYCE HENSON: Sure.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And sometimes we just don't feel like we have the emotional reserve to go out of our way. This goes back to even the love languages. The five love languages. And by the way, Gary Chapman's work is in the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook, because those different love languages, basically, we give and receive love differently, but all of us have all of them. So maybe, for example, with myself and my wife, maybe my love language is words of affirmation, that really makes me feel like she loves me. For her, it could be acts of service.

BRYCE HENSON: Acts of service. Yep.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, but if I'm just telling her how amazing she is and beautiful, I wrote her this beautiful poetry, it's like, oh, that's cool.

BRYCE HENSON: Fall on deaf ears.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But then it's just like, oh, she doesn't see me or love me, but the reality is, with those five love languages, food fits into all those things perfectly. So, for example, with acts of service. Oh, my goodness. When my wife had our youngest son and my

mother-in-law brought over food, she's from Kenya, so she made traditional Kenyan food, chapati and ndengu and mchele, sukuma wiki. So all these things, I didn't know what was... And basically, this is just, I just said rice and beans and greens and some chapati, some ground beef or whatever the case might be. So she brought over food. That act of service for her. She's not coming over, telling her daughter she loves her.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's not, that hasn't been in her family history. Me doing this for you, I love the sh*t out of you.

BRYCE HENSON: I love you. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right?

BRYCE HENSON: Yep.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And it's just like, man, it fills my mother-in-law up so much to cook for us and to provide that service. And for her, words of affirmation. So speaking that back to her just fills that pot, fills it up. And physical touch, nothing touches us closer than the food that we eat. It's literally, we're taking something from the environment, putting it in your body, and it becomes a part of you.

BRYCE HENSON: Totally.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's so powerful.

BRYCE HENSON: Totally.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I can go on and on with those connections, but it's interwoven in the book because I knew this intimately and I saw it in clinical practice, but also just in working with all of these experts in their respective fields. It's just like, there's something really special about food because it changes you from the inside out. Because food isn't just food, it's information. So it's providing certain nutritional inputs that's changing your chemistry. It can't help but do that. So you're consuming things that, for example, the microbiome is having a huge moment right now and understanding how important the health of our microbiome is and all the respective genes that these bacteria are carrying. If we go gene-for-gene, human beings, if we go gene-for-gene with all the bacteria that we're carrying, 99% of our genes are bacterial genes. They're not "human genes." So how much is that impacting our health? We know today that there's this huge interaction with our bacterial genes, their expression and our gene expression. And so putting all this together, like, what are the choices? What foods are we putting in that's interacting with our

microbiome? And we have the opportunity to become more cognizant of what we're feeding our microbiome and the health outcomes that come from that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And there's, even within that context with the microbiome, and this is really cool, your microbiome and this incredible bacteria cascade, they all want to have certain conditions in order to give you optimal health. So there's another field parallel to that. And I didn't know I was gonna talk about this. I'm just going to say it really quickly. And it's something I've been studying the last couple of years, which is circadian medicine. And so how our interaction with the environment, like I talked about to start all this out, our culture, how often are we actually interacting with our environment? Because we're picking up our cues from the 24-hour solar day. So we're a part of the solar system. News flash. I know it's weird, like we're just here on this planet, but we're synced up. All of our cells are... We can get out of sync, but all of our cells are constantly trying to sync up with the 24-hour solar day because that's determining when certain hormones are getting produced, certain neurotransmitters. What's happening with our microbiome? There's actually a changing of the guard even with certain bacteria cascades based on time of day it is.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And you could throw that off, jumping a bunch of time zones and not getting your body kind of synced up with the new place that you're at because your body, we've never been able to just jump from this place to another place so quickly in human evolution until like the last couple of decades.

BRYCE HENSON: 50 years. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So what are those impacts? And now we know. Science has evolved enough to know, but we also know how to get yourself back in alignment faster. And so through food and understanding that, again, food isn't just food, it's information. When you eat that food, it's coming along with certain qualities, and this brings full circle, like why'd I bring up the microbiome? When you eat a food, you're eating that food's microbiome. When you're eating a blueberry, it has its own microbiome.

BRYCE HENSON: Oh, sure.

SHAWN STEVENSON: When you eat an avocado, it has its own microbiome. Lucky Charms doesn't have a f*cking microbiome. That leprechaun...

BRYCE HENSON: Take that to the bank.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The leprechaun is lying to you. It does not have a microbiome. It might have some microbes. But it's very different. And this is what also the message pushing

forward in the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook is, according to the British Medical Journal, this is one of our most prestigious medical journals, the average American adult is eating 60% of their diet is now ultra processed foods. That's been making some headway recently with a lot of people realizing this, but what they don't know and Eat Smarter Family Cookbook is the first book published that has this new data. Because when I wrote the book, it had just been published. This was published in JAMA, the Journal of the American Medical Association. They looked at the food intake of our children aged 2-19. Children and adolescents tracked it for 20 years. In 1999, the average American child was eating 61% of their diet was ultra processed foods. Fast forward to 2018.

BRYCE HENSON: I'm scared.

SHAWN STEVENSON: 67% of our children, our average child's diet here in the United States is ultra processed foods. What are we doing to our kids? And just so everybody's clear, ultra processed food is, again, Lucky Charms.

BRYCE HENSON: Lucky Charms, the leprechaun, man.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So it was corn at some point, some of the ingredients, but it's so de-natured. The additives, the preservatives, the processing, the high heat, taking the corn, also not just the substrate for building a cereal complex, but the sugar. The corn syrup. It's so de-natured that if you presented Lucky Charms to that hunter-gatherer tribe, they have no clue, no idea whatsoever, they couldn't possibly know where it came from. Most people, nope, we don't know where it comes from.

BRYCE HENSON: Yeah, we don't even know.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right? And so, versus humans have been processing food for thousands of years. This is what has helped us to develop this highly evolved brain that we have. And because we could take something like tomatoes and process it, minimally processing, adding some spices, some other different foods, and making something like a pasta sauce, or taking olives and pressing them, and olives by the way, this food is so historical, it's in many different ancient texts. But we could take that olive, cold-press it, stone-press and we have olive oil. That's minimally processed. And that olive oil, and I shared this study in the book as well, because I talk about the cultural contagions that we need to protect our children from, protect ourselves from as well. One of them being these abhorrent amounts of "vegetable oils," canola oil and the like, that I started using back when I was trying to get myself healthy because it said f*cking vegetables. But it's not broccoli oil or asparagus oil. These are highly processed. If you see how canola oil is made, I promise you'll

never consume it again. It has to be, it's treated with high heat processing, all these different bleaching agents, deodorizers. And why is it deodorized?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Because it smells terrible, by the way, and it's so de-natured. The fat complex, the polyunsaturated fatty acids, PUFAs, they're so damaged that you are just drinking pure reactive oxygen species, just pure oxidation, pure aging. And I'm not just saying this because I provide the data study after study. There's even a study in the book that's published in the journal *Inhalation Toxicology* that found that just smelling vegetable oil while cooking can damage your DNA. Real talk, again, people don't know this stuff, but once they become aware again, we can create a shift in our culture, so protecting against cultural contagions like that stuff. Extra virgin olive oil, on the other hand, researchers at Auburn University found that this is one of the few foods ever discovered that can repair the blood-brain barrier and reduce inflammation in the brain. And why would I want to reduce inflammation in my brain? Is that a problem? Well, researchers at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine found that as we're getting fatter, when we're accumulating more body fat, it's creating more inflammation in our brains. And they found that inflammation in our brain creates more body fat and insulin resistance. So it becomes this vicious circle.

BRYCE HENSON: Cycle, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: In steps olive oil that can actually do something about it. So of course we want to remove the cause, but sometimes you get caught in that vicious circle. What are some things that I can add into the mix? So there's over 40 specific foods that I identify and provide a wealth of different studies, but in a fun way. And then we talk about, let's cook with them. Let's take these amazing foods and make some delicious meals with them. So if I talk about the benefits of a long utilized food like sweet potatoes, let's make pancakes with them. So it's just like tuning into the joy of eating, the joy of food experiences, making great, wholesome recipes, having fun together, creating a new kitchen culture, and just, again, creating a new culture of health overall.

BRYCE HENSON: Dude, man, freaking love it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Got a quick break coming up. We'll be right back. Neuroplasticity, the ability of the human brain to grow and adapt and evolve and really to unlock our superhuman capacity, is driven by our experiences, our practices, our activities, but also our nutrition. Fascinating new research published in the journal *Neuron* found that magnesium, this key electrolyte, is able to restore critical brain plasticity and improve overall cognitive function. Again, neuroplasticity is the ability of our brain to change and adapt. Now, this is one key electrolyte, but it works in tandem with other electrolytes, like sodium. Sodium is critical for maintaining proper hydration of the human brain. If you didn't know this, the human brain is

primarily made of water. We're talking somewhere in the ballpark of 75, upwards of 80% water. It's so important because just a small decrease in our body's optimal hydration level, which note in the data, just a 2% decrease in our baseline hydration level, can lead to dramatic cognitive decline, helping to sustain and maintain proper hydration levels in the brain. Sodium is critical in that. And also, researchers at McGill University found that sodium functions as a "off-on switch" for specific neurotransmitters that support our cognitive function and protect our brains from numerous degenerative diseases.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right now, the number one electrolyte company in the world is delivering a gift for new and returning customers with each purchase of LMNT. That's L-M-N-T, the number one electrolyte in the market. No binders, no fillers, no artificial ingredients, no crazy sugar and sweeteners. My friend's son was just over at our house, and my son, my oldest son Jordan, was training them, taking his teammates through some workouts. And we opened the freezer and there's a bottle of Gatorade. There's a bottle of Gatorade and our freezer. And my wife's like, "Whose is this?" 'Cause we know we don't roll like that. We don't mess with the Gators. All right? We don't mess with the Gatorades. And we knew who it was. It was one of his friends. And he came in and he was like, "Well, at least this is the no sugar kind." And then I go through some of the ingredients with him and I find those curve balls of like, here's where they're sneaking in these artificial ingredients and things that the human body has no association with.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But he's taken a step in the right direction by being in our environment. So, you know what I did? I put the LMNT in his hand. All right, I made sure that he's got the good stuff, the very best stuff. And also this is backed by peer-reviewed data in a huge body of evidence, and we're talking about the folks at LMNT, that's L-M-N-T. Go to drinklmnt.com/model and you're going to get a special gift pack with every purchase, whether you're a new or previous customer with LMNT. So again, this is a brand new opportunity, free gift pack with every purchase over at LMNT. Go to drinklmnt.com/model. And now back to the show.

BRYCE HENSON: In this short period of time, just a couple takeaways, Shawn, from you, I'm gonna change the way I eat with my wife, my family, like turn off the TV, setting on my calendar. I do everything by my calendar, but you're right, like even for me, it's like the last thing that I planned. So I got a ton of value from that and I know our audience did too, so I appreciate that. All right, my friend, you've been so gracious. We got a little bit more time for the bonus round and I think I was right. We're gonna have to have you back on to digest Sleep Smarter at some point if you're up for it 'cause that's a lot of awesome content, too. But from our bonus round, you've talked about your passion today, but if I can get hyper-focused, what would you say, Shawn, is your passion and why? And specifically what do you want your legacy to be?

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is it right now. Being somebody who's worked in the field of health and wellness for as long as I have, my bridge into it, what changed me personally was food. And so I made food everything. So that was, for me, the solution for everybody. I really felt there was a cause and cure, but it's so much bigger, and we know that today. And that was what drove me to write Sleep Smarter. I didn't plan on being this kind of global sleep expert or subject matter expert with sleep, but that put me in a different stratosphere. But for me, and my passion and what I'm pushing forward, I feel that, and this is for everybody, if you're curious about what your purpose is, it's probably something that comes natural to you, that you have a natural curiosity about, that it might not be as easily accessible to other people or it might... Other people might not have curiosity about that thing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So what comes easy to you, that's difficult for other people. I think about that. For me, my greatest gift, and the thing that is just so natural to me is my family. The love that we have, the connection that we have, the... We don't even... I don't like using these labels because it just, it's what is the culture that we have, that we've developed despite our circumstances. And to see that transitioning over to where my son is impacting the lives of so many other people now, is so powerful, man. It's so freaking powerful. So for me, that's what my passion is, is my family. And unfortunately, so many of us hear these stories, we work so hard to provide for our families and then we miss out on our families. And I'm here to tell you that it's a both end world.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's just a shift in our priorities. It's just a shift in getting clear and honest. Like, is your family really the most important thing? F*cking act like it. And so by exercising that muscle, and of course this has not been easy by the way. But figuring some things out along the way and being able to put that into a shareable resource now, and now what's different about this right here, it's not just me. Sleep Smarter was just me. Out here on CNN and the Dr. Ash Show and Fox and all these different things, and traveling all over the place, Eat Smarter, same thing. With this, it's my family. Everywhere I go, they go. They're the model, they're the representation. They're demonstrating what's possible. And so this is truly a family mission, and yeah, so that's what it is for me.

BRYCE HENSON: Love that, man. Who is your biggest hero and then who's your biggest enemy?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Easy. My biggest hero is my mother-in-Law. She's the person who really flipped the switch in my mind. I was working at the university gym, that's where I met my wife and I wasn't like, I didn't... I was just in my bag trying to help people, the whole thing, and I just saw her coming in kind of dedicated, whatever. She dropped her headphones one day, I picked it up, we started talking, that kind of thing. [laughter] But I didn't know this until like

literally maybe three or four years ago, that she had her eyes on me. All right. So she was like, she told her friend like, "I want him to train me."

BRYCE HENSON: She dropped her headphones then, huh? [laughter]

SHAWN STEVENSON: And listen, it was the most awkward machine, that adductor machine?

BRYCE HENSON: Uh-huh.

[laughter]

SHAWN STEVENSON: Where the leg... Yeah. So it was just like, so I was very, like, I tried to do it in a cool way, you know? But yeah, but meeting her, getting the package deal and having my mother-in-law and seeing the transformation that she created in her own life and how she was impacted. She's an occupational therapist, and she really leveraged it because she saw that people in her field, she's got all these great therapists who want to help people, but a lot of times, they're not getting well. And so she started to implement pieces of nutrition and meditation and all these other tools that, again, for me, I thought it was super weird at first. And it wasn't until I was, like I said, just growing up in the kind of health conditions that I had. Once I didn't have chronic asthma, I still had seasonal hay fever that would hospitalize me pretty much every year. I couldn't breathe that night.

BRYCE HENSON: Dang.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And this was just like, we'll just say 2005. And outwardly, very healthy, but I was still including some things that were causing this kind of histamine reaction, making me hypersensitive to the world around me that I should not be allergic to the world, right?

BRYCE HENSON: Sure. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so I went over to see my wife, my then girlfriend, she took me to the ER, and I got my script, my prescription. And we stopped by my mom-in-law's house and she told me, "My daughter tells me that you have this hay fever, or you have these allergies and you can't breathe." I was like, "Yeah, it's the weather, this happens every year." She was like, she just looked me in my eye. She's like, "Is the problem out there, or is the problem in you?" Bro, that's like, it baked my noodle, man. I couldn't, I was just like, "Oh, my God, I never thought about it like that."

BRYCE HENSON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so that sent me down the path, and again, I'd already made so many great improvements and helped a lot of people, but that made me start to reassess the environment, my internal terrain, and looking at what is right for me right now versus other people, because all of us are unique, and that's the future of medicine is personalized nutrition, because a certain food, even for you right now, might really be something you can thrive with, but it might be detrimental later. And we have to have the tools to be able to reassess like, no, this doesn't feel right right now, let me do this instead.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But a lot of times, we are caught in diet dogma and it's just like a certain framework and we stick to it even if we suffer. And that framework can be leaving out things that can transform your life. And so for me, it's my mother-in-law, definitely my greatest hero. She also taught me meditation as well, which of all the stuff that we talked about, that's probably changed my life more than anything. My greatest enemy, greatest enemy, [laughter] I don't know if I wanna open this can of worms, but right now, it's the pharmaceutical industry, the pharmaceutical model, and the processed food industry. They're both profiting from our sickness.

BRYCE HENSON: Totally.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And the reason I didn't want to open this up is because for me, it still isn't necessarily an enemy in the traditional sense, because over the last couple of years, I've shared a lot of the data regarding the crimes committed by drug companies. For example, Pfizer was convicted of the largest healthcare fraud settlement in the history of the Department of Justice. We're talking about billions. They're the first outside of like, if we're talking about RICO charges, for racketeering and like organized crime, they're convicted of RICO charges, organized f*cking crime. And just like, but oh, whatever. And it's not to say again that they can't do good or create products that can be helpful in our society, but we need to know the system that we're dealing with that's profiting and doing unethical practices that are largely hurting so many people.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so with that being said, if I would share some of that data, 95% of people like just taking the data, like, I didn't know this, thank you so much, this is a huge problem, that kind of stuff, but then every now and then, it'd be somebody that listens to my show that works at Pfizer. It's like, Shawn, I hate when you share this stuff. I know you're right but it's like this is where... Because they went there to help.

BRYCE HENSON: Sure.

SHAWN STEVENSON: They went to work at Johnson & Johnson. This happened multiple times. I have people who work at Johnson & Johnson that listen to the show or follow me, whatever. They're just like, "Shawn, this breaks my heart." Or Monsanto, whatever it is. It's just like, I'm just sharing the data because there are good people in all of these organizations. Really good people. Matter of fact, I would venture to say the majority of the people are good people. It's just their perception, the culture that they were exposed to has them unfortunately, working in an overall situation where the outcomes are often detrimental. When they're trying to help, and the good that they are doing is often overshadowed when we're talking about real world data by the damage that they're doing and they don't know any better. And so that would be... If I was to say my biggest enemy, but it's more like a frenemy.

BRYCE HENSON: I like that, man. Last few here. You are in the business of giving incredible fitness health advice in general. What's one of the best piece of advice you've ever seen, Shawn, and why?

[laughter]

SHAWN STEVENSON: The best advice that's just jumping to mind, and I'm just thinking recently would be who's funding the study? Asking who's funding the study? And this is from my friend John Abramson, Dr. John Abramson. He works in healthcare policy at Harvard, and he's been involved in a lot of pharmaceutical litigation, not because he wanted to or it was a mission in his life. He was just brought in as an expert on a case and he just kind of fell into it. And he got to see all the emails and all the things that people don't see, and he has to sign the NDA and all the things, but he's seen where the bodies are buried, kind of thing. And it's just like, he knows that most of our university funding today, which is where most of our data's coming from, is largely funded and controlled by drug companies. Like, you're just not gonna get a grant if this is taken away from our bottom line.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This particular supplement or whatever, if you're painting our primary product, that's generating trillions. It's a trillion dollar industry. So unfortunately, we have this kind of twisted system right now. And so even when we are... I've shared a tremendous amount of studies today, but one of the reasons that you can rely on the efficacy of what I'm talking about is, I do something that a lot of people don't wanna do, which is I look at the studies that disprove what I believe. It takes courage to go and proactively find something that is framed in a valid way that disproves what you believe, because the truth is usually somewhere in the middle. And so what I do is, after looking at a subject matter, I share with what does the majority of data say? Because we could probably rely on that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But even with that, it's still gonna be case sensitive. It's gonna be situation dependent, it's gonna be person sensitive. That's the problem that we have as well, is that now it's just this global one-size-fits-all kind of framework when it comes to diet and when it comes to drugs and the list goes on and on, and we are far from uniform. We're very unique. Each of us has a unique metabolic fingerprint, a unique microbiome fingerprint that can be dramatically different from even with identical twins. One of the largest studies done, like looking at identical twins and their microbiome changes, we can have kids that are in the same environment, but if one of the twins, again, identical twins, has a higher ratio of bacteria class called firmicutes versus another bacteria category, they're going to gain more weight than their twin, same environment, same diet. So I can go on and on with those kind of examples, but that would be the best advice recently. This is maybe, this is some years ago, but that's something I've paid more attention to, is like, who's funding the study? What does the majority of data say? Let me also always counterbalance with something that disproves what I believe.

BRYCE HENSON: Come on you, man. It's sage advice. So Shawn, what would your parting piece of wisdom be? Our audience here, they're inspired, I'm inspired. I'm a fitness pro. I learned a lot right now. And I would imagine our audience did as well. And not only for themselves, but also too, to be changing in their communities to affect their culture. What would you say, Shawn, from your lens, would be a parting piece of advice from this episode today?

SHAWN STEVENSON: As I said earlier, we've gotta really get it through our skulls that we can't change people. We can't. Change is an inside job. We can inspire, we can create conditions, but ultimately, real sustainable change is gonna come from within. It's gonna come from an internal revelation. And so the very best thing that you can do is be as healthy, as fit, as resilient, as creative, as compassionate, as patient as you can possibly be. Train yourself, work on your own mind and body, so you can be an example, because I promise you, people learn a lot more from who you are than what you say. So that's really the message and another mandate here. I mentioned three days a week with your family, family meals and friends are also included, by the way. If you're like, well, I don't... I'm not living with my family right now. Friends are included as well. That piece, and also focus on you first is said a lot, but we don't do it. Invest in yourself every day. Invest in your body, your mind, train your mind. Especially now, you need to train that mental fitness every single day so that you can better influence, so that you can better create conditions for other people to change.

BRYCE HENSON: Mic drop, my dude. All right, well, I got one last question, which is my final one. And the title of this podcast is the Fitness CEO podcast. Shawn, for you, what does it mean to be a CEO?

SHAWN STEVENSON: This all ties together in a beautiful sequence, which is being the example, leading by example, being the model. Again, people will listen to what you do far more than what you say. And we're all intelligent in some capacity, and so being able to also see the gifts in other people. I talked about this in my relationship to parents. You know your family, you know them, utilize that, help to bring the best out of everybody. That's gonna require, again, you working on yourself and having the patience, having the bandwidth, having the capacity, especially when stress is around, to encourage, to support the people that you care about in the context of being a CEO. You're the CEO of your family. You're the CEO of your body. And so that's what it would be for me, just leading by example.

BRYCE HENSON: Look at that, my dude. All right, before we wrap today, where can our audience find you in the case they don't follow already?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome. Well, where they're listening to this amazing podcast, they can find my show as well. It's called the Model Health Show. The Model Health Show, and my home online is themodelhealthshow.com. If you wanna connect with me on Instagram, I'm @Shawnmodel on Instagram, S-H-A-W-N model. And that's probably where a lot of the hangout and content sharing is as well. And most importantly though, go into eat-smarter-cookbook.com and get your copy of the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook. Be a part of this mission and movement, get your free ticket to the Family Health and Fitness Summit. And also we're doing a 25k health and fitness giveaway too, so you can enter into that. So many great things there. But again, just invest in yourself, invest in your family, and we can change this sh*t.

BRYCE HENSON: Yes, sir. Well, my dude, before we wrap today, I just wanna take a second to acknowledge you, not only for you coming out here today, which is awesome. It's been a long time coming, so finally excited to connect in the studio. But for your heart, dude, your knowledge, your passion, and your soul, but most importantly, and I'll never forget this about you, man. Like I said earlier, my wife has been a big fan for quite some time, and we reconnected at Bedros' house like Christmas party last December, and I was excited to reconnect with you and chitchat, and I was able to introduce my wife. And I just generally thought you'd chat with her for a few minutes. You sat and talked with her for like 45 minutes, and she went home that like the only thing she could talk about was how awesome the experience and how a genuine salt of the earth of a dude that you are. And for that, if that doesn't say anything about you, I don't know what else will. So with all that, my friend, I just wanna thank you again and I appreciate you being on the show.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Amazing. Thank you, man. It's my honor. Thank you.

[music]

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thank you so very much for tuning into this episode of the Model Health Show. If you got a lot of value out of this, I highly encourage you to share this out with somebody that you care about. Of course, you could share this on social media. You could send this directly from the podcast app that you're listening on. And if you're listening to the audio version of this show, you could pop over to YouTube. You could hang out with us in the studio. And also we'd love to throw some of the visuals up on screen, so some of the studies that we go through and things like that. And just also just be in the room with us, get the vibe and enjoy the Model Health Show in that format as well. And make sure to subscribe to the Model Health Show on YouTube, because we're doing exclusive content there that you won't get anywhere else. So definitely subscribe to the YouTube channel. And listen, we've got some epic masterclasses and world class guests coming your way very, very soon. So make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day, and I'll talk with you soon.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And for more after the show, make sure to head over to themodelhealthshow.com. That's where you can find all of the show notes, you can find transcriptions, videos for each episode. And if you've got a comment, you can leave me a comment there as well. And please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave us a rating to let everybody know that the show is awesome, and I appreciate that so much. And take care, I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.