

**THE MODEL
HEALTH
SHOW**

EPISODE 389

**How Your Posture Affects
Your Brain & The Surprising
Science Of Play**

With Guest Aaron Alexander

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Shawn Stevenson: Welcome to The Model Health Show. This is fitness and nutrition expert Shawn Stevenson and I am so grateful for you tuning in with me today.

Welcome to The Model Health Show, this is fitness and nutrition expert Shawn Stevenson, and I'm so grateful to be tuning in with me today.

I'm pumped about this episode, we're talking about a subject matter that is so overlooked in our world today especially for us adults. Kids have this dialed in but as we get a little bit older, we start to put this on the back burner and we don't realize how impactful it is in all areas of our lives. In fact, this subject can influence upwards of 1200 different genes in our brain, the expression of genes that keep us younger longer, that bring more vitality to our lives, creativity, problem-solving.

The subject is play. Alright, play. When was the last time that you played, that you got out and just played. And for many of us, we grow up, it's just a part of our lives, it's something we can't wait to do, right, recess, all right recess was a major— if people asked me growing up like, "What is your favorite thing about school?" Recess, that would be the first thing that comes up. This is when we played kickball, alright, we played kickball.

When I was in third grade I came in contact with the kickball legend, all right. It was a little Vietnamese kid, my friend and his name was Sakao All right, Sakao He was a living legend in kickball, all the rest of us, we'd kick the ball as hard as we could, it would stay in the yard, not Sakao he's kicking it over the fence, all right, watch out cars, that red ball is coming.

But we had such a great time just playing and trying different things, playing different sports, playing dodgeball, just running around, playing tag, freeze tag— you can't move, somebody tags you with a freeze tag you can't move, your friend's got to come and untag you. And just the different creative things that we would do playing as well, and just using our imaginations.

Little did we know that this was actually training us for things we're going to experience later in life and how to adapt to situations and how to control ourselves and things we are going to be talking about today. And actually, this is just a small morsel, a small piece of the information that's featured in a new book from our special guest today and we're going to get to that in just a moment.

Now, one of the times that I first met our guest was in relationship to some of my friends and family over at Onnit. Now for me, I love Onnit because number one my favorite thing that Onnit carries is their MCT oil emulsified MCT oil that's kind of like a coffee creamer.

And the reason that I love it so much is highlighted in recent research coming out of Yale that found that even though there are all of these, there are hundreds of different nutritive components of food that we know about, even thousands and there's so much more that we're still yet to discover, there's only a handful, there's only a couple of dozen that can actually cross the blood-brain barrier and actually feed our brain cells, to actually nourish our neurons, which for many of us, we've been conditioned and this is what I was taught in my conditional university, that when we're born with our brain cells, it's basically what we have for entire lifetime.

They can grow and adapt and change based on neural plasticity, but what you get is what you got. But today we know that there is something called neurogenesis, you can actually create new brain cells in different parts of the brain, not all, but it's really fascinating stuff.

But it is important to take care of the brain cells that we have and we need to feed these brain cells and your brain has a different diet than the rest of your body, it's referred to as neuro-nutrition. And MCTs are one of those rare nutrients that can cross the blood-brain barrier and actually feed your brain cells, that's how powerful this nutritive factor in food really is. And so this is just the number one reason why I love the MCT oils.

Another way that they can feed your brain is the fact that MCTs can trigger your body to produce more ketones. Now we all know that we can produce more ketone bodies which is an alternative fuel source kind of a cleaner-burning fuel by having a low carbohydrate, higher-fat diet through fasting but even if you're



not doing either of those things, if you consume MCTs your body produces ketones which also are able to cross the blood-brain barrier and feed your brain cells. Super powerful stuff, I highly recommend you check it out because not only do they have the kind of clear MCT oil that you'll see a lot of different places but they have emulsified MCT oil, which again, is kind of like a coffee creamer, you can add to your coffees and teas, it's super easy to mix in, they taste phenomenal.

And I use him pretty much every day, it's 365 days in a year, maybe 366 on a leap year, 362 of those days I'm having Onnit MCT oil, I love it so much, one of my favorite things. Hop over there, check them out, you get 10 percent off everything they carry over at Onnit.com/model, that's O-N-N-I-T.com/model, you get 10 percent off everything that they carry. Pop over there check them out and now let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

iTunes Review: Another 5-star review titled "Literally love every show," by meme.go. "The information is exactly what I need to know, am interested in without all the fluff you usually experience in shows with similar content. That does not mean the subject content depth or credibility is light. Instead of "fluff", the show was filled with insightful, beneficial, eyeopening and motivating facts, studies and stories from both the host and reputable guest speakers. Become a better you by listening."

Shawn Stevenson: Awesome. And speaking of reputable guests, our guest today is absolutely incredible. And by the way, thank you so much for leaving me that review over on Apple Podcasts, please guys keep the reviews coming I appreciate it so much. And on that note, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day.

Our guest today is Aaron Alexander and he is a pioneering manual therapist and movement coach whose clients range from A-list Hollywood celebrities to professional athletes and everyone in between. And since 2014 he's been interviewing the world's preeminent thought leaders on physical and psychological wellbeing on his top-rated Align podcast.

And when Aaron isn't writing or speaking, he can be typically found somewhere in the Pacific Ocean or on the original muscle beach in Santa Monica, California doing his incredible movement practices and teaching. And he's got an awesome new book and that's what we're going to be diving into today. So let's jump into this conversation with the awesome Aaron Alexander.



I was curious and you got into it a little bit, but what was your initial interest in this space, in health and fitness and movement? And I know you describe yourself as like at one point early on it was like a baby giraffe I think?

Aaron Alexander: Yeah, I'm still working on it.

Shawn Stevenson: So what was the catalyst for you initially?

Aaron Alexander: Deep insecurity. You know, so going into like before getting a photo would happen, which wasn't as regular as it is now, in high school middle school. But if a photo would transpire, and I knew it was about to happen, I would literally run to the bathroom or someplace where people couldn't see and go in like do some push-ups and some pull-ups, some kind of like [training sound] do some clench my muscles in order to bring blood flow, so I could be more vascular and have this like pump, so creating this conspicuous show of strength, and it's showing relation to like the elephant and the brain stuff we were talking about before.

And so for me, to feel, and I was like obsessing over bodybuilding in like most of the unhealthy ways, minus steroids, I never took steroids. I would in high school/ middle school, but especially high school, I would go to the bathroom every 2 hours like without a doubt every 2 hours, I didn't have an alarm but I knew the hours and I would slam some kind of protein smoothie or some kind of creatine, glutamine, whatever acronym-in drink that I could find. Because I had the belief that if I was small— I mean really what it boiled down to is like I wasn't enough, or I wouldn't be worthy of love, I think, getting in kind of like Tony Robbins type talk.

You know, so that was the beginning stage of that. And then perhaps a story that would make sense with that was like a sensation of feeling unsafe. And so if I feel unsafe in my home environment then my story that may or may not be accurate is it would make sense that I wanted to pack on and kind of build up the barriers and the walls around my biological environment.

And then eventually, you do that long enough, people can't come in because you've built the wall so high and then you start to almost suffocate inside of yourself, and then you have to figure out, "Okay, how do I break this thing down, reverse engineer the system and build from a healthier place?" And that's, I'm like still working on it.



Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, yeah and it's a thing, it's amazing because we're always in process, you know what I mean? And I think, just to take a quick step back, I'm curious what did you feel you needed to create this outside, this exterior of strength or courage, like what were you feeling unsafe about?

Aaron Alexander: Well so I mentioned in the introduction, my dad randomly, beforehand he was like, throughout my life he was like, he took me ice hockey practice, and we would get up at like 5 in the morning and go ice hockey practice and we'd go on hikes and he was a Falcon and we'd like hunt bunnies with hawks on our arms. It was a very interesting upbringing. And he was like a successful stockbroker and lead this very idealistic life, in a sense.

My mom, she was like the third runner up to Miss America and my dad was this GQ model superstar guy, it was just very like wow as perfect as you could possibly envision. That was that.

Then, all of a sudden, something happened in his mind, or life or I don't know what exactly but he became deeply addicted to crack cocaine. And from there, he got into like, he was like selling women, he like got into pimping, he'd come home with like bullet holes in the car sometimes, he'd have like black eyes from getting like beaten. He was like at the absolute bitter end of his life. Like every day repeatedly I would kind of rehearse, "Okay, today is the day, I am going to get back and he's not going to be there."

So there was this sense of— and I think really what it comes down to likely is— and now, by the way, he's doing really well, he's like in love and like sells insurance and he's looking to get a place in Florida he's like totally turned his life around which is really fantastic, it feels really good.

But yeah, I think there was like a deep sense of abandonment, like the primary male figure in my life which may perhaps be why I have kind of like an affinity towards respecting you a lot, because you very obviously, show like this really strong presence as a male figure in your home, which is a huge deal, like a really huge deal.

So I think I had this seed of abandonment perhaps kind of instilled at a really pivotal point in like a young boy's life. And then from there, you start seeking out these various different signaling devices to kind of seek love and validation,



acceptance. That's a story, I don't know how accurate that is.

Shawn Stevenson: You say it's from your perspective, but for me, man, it's just like when I see you and when I met you, this was years ago, these are the things you would never know about somebody if you just see them and you see what they're up to.

But it's that story and it defines who we are, and it's so amazing because those are like the catalyst for you to really do the work that you're doing today and your empathy and your ability to understand people, help people through stuff. So what was the shift though that took place from the bodybuilding obsession to something that's more— we can use the word holistic?

Aaron Alexander: Yeah, I think naturally, like there's an Einstein quote, "The particle is contained and regulated by its field," so like the feel, like you and I are these particles, everybody in the room we're all these little particles and we're all being contained and regulated by this room, these lights are affecting us, the window's affecting us, each personality we're like in this stew, you know.

So by you changing your environment sometimes that's the most powerful thing you can do to create a mental, emotional, physical shift. And so as long as you're in a toxic aquarium, it's like, we're like, "Oh I'm feeding the fish all the organic food, I got all the Onnit supplements like the fish is still sick."

Shawn Stevenson: They're on it.

Aaron Alexander: They're on it, like, what's going on. Like, "Have you checked like the water in the aquarium?" The field that the fish is contained in is regulating in such a way that it's not possible for it to all of a sudden just become that vision that you have for the fish. And so when I was 18 I moved to Maui, Hawaii and kind of just like up and left Lancaster, Pennsylvania like Amish country.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow, that's a move, move right there. Wow.

Aaron Alexander: That's a move-move. And I think just being there like I just got back we did a bow hunting trip and we kind of did like a revisit, it was very interesting to get to go back literally just a few weeks ago and re-see and experience that environment from the eyes that I have now as opposed to the eyes from 12 years ago. And realize like, man, just being there you can't help but be changed.



So that's in part inspiration for at least a section of the book that you become your environment, I like Bruce Lee stuff. You know, so by being around those clouds and the open sky and the cold water from the waterfalls and then also being around the other people that made a choice to be in that place and that are also at the same time being formed by that place with you, it's like you're getting, you're going into like a, it's like a new stew, new ingredients, you can't help but be changed by it.

Shawn Stevenson: It's a human gumbo, man, that's amazing. Obviously, and for folks that are listening, you've worked with a lot of people, you've helped a lot of people, you're creating a movement now with "The Align Method". And for me, one of the things that really jumped out, and even seeing you sitting here, for those who are listening, guys, make sure you're checking us out on YouTube as well. My man has got this incredible alignment and even now we're sitting in the chair cross leg and just you are the walking representation of what you talk about, first of all.

But one of the things that really jumped out was not just the fact that posture matters, right— when we talk about alignment, posture is one of the terms we use. But you dug in in the book and talked about how our posture actually affects our thoughts, our posture is a representation of what's happening with us emotionally, and when you hit that note, I started to just look around and see it in my environment.

And I saw my son, Braden, he was trying to cook some eggs, he's 8, and he can cook eggs, but it's been a little bit, and he is trying to cook them differently, he is trying to get the flip away, he is trying to do a flip. And so he did the whole thing, cracked the eggs, and he's doing the flip, but the flip was not successful and immediately— boom, shoulders drop, the head went down. And I went over and I adjusted him, I lifted his chin up, lifted his shoulders back and I was like, "Man, nobody is good at something the first time, it takes a little bit of practice."

And so he immediately, I've seen it change his state just adjusting his posture and I saw him responding with a posture that was conducive of losing, and he'd probably if he'd tried to flip again and that hunched overstate, it's probably going to suck again. And so can you talk a lot about that and just some of the research and how our posture affects our thoughts and our emotions?

Aaron Alexander: Yeah, yeah, so there is one really interesting study that we mentioned there, it



was done in San Francisco State University. There were 2 different groups of students going into what we call— I break down 5 postural archetypes and the relationship of the personalities and felt state of that physical experience.

And so they had one group of students go into what we call the mopey posture and then access different memories from that position. And then they had another group go into what we call the aligned position which also like Amy Cuddy, Harvard researcher you could call that like this, like the superwoman, the power pose, going upright, shoulders back, arms up overhead, and accessing memories from that.

And what we found, you alluded to Tony Robbins stuff before, amongst other things, other people get into what we're talking about as well, but we're continually anchoring certain positions and music or anything to emotions and memories and states. So when people are in that hunched over position you've been anchoring that position since you've been a child that, "Oh, Shawn lost," or, "Oh, Shawn is sad," or, "Oh you are breaking up with me?" Or like, "I'm losing the job."

Your shoulders roll in, that means the rotation, the head of the humerus comes in and you got hyper kyphosis of the spine, the valgus, knees, and whatever anatomical description you want to put on it, it's essentially just ways of saying the body starts to collapse. When the body collapses that's an indication of defeat or sadness or disconnect or disassociation.

And so when the people, the students were going into that pattern of descendance, it's easier for them to drum up these memories of feeling bummed out. When they go into more of this other, upright position, but we've anchored that position throughout the history of at least our lives, I would say beyond the ancestry and beyond, but at least the history since you've been like a little baby.

When you go into this open, expressive position that happens when something beautiful happens, your mother loves you, or you won the soccer game, we're like, "We did it" no matter whether you're blind, deaf, whatever it may be, everybody wins in the same position, everybody loses in the same position. Watch a hockey game, at the end of the game, if they're going through like the little dabs and fist bumps, you can see the team like, "Okay, that team won, that team lost."



Shawn Stevenson: Yeah.

Aaron Alexander: And so all of the, we're continually tuning our nervous systems and our personalities and even our memories based off of the structure of our body and this is something that I say in the book is like, "Your cells don't have eyes but they can feel you."

And you literally, an unnecessary term for that, that is called mechanotransduction. So as you go through and you twist and turn and pool and compress your cells, they end up having a biological, chemical response based off of that movement. So right now as we're sitting here, we have a choice to go through and mechanotransduce ourselves into feeling more creative or more confident or more strong or circulating lymphatic fluid and blood, interstitial and stuff, or we can mechanotransduce ourselves into collapse.

And if you look around the modern world ever since the disease of affluence or affluenza you know, the royalty sits up in the high chairs and then they look down at the peasants who are going into those positions that have been self-tuning mechanisms for millennia, you know. A person that goes down and swats all the way down to the ground in Thailand smoking a cigarette and eats some Pad Thai or whatever, they're literally tuning their hips they're tuning their ankles, they're circulating all those vital fluids for their health.

You know, and so we have the choice to be smarter than the present mold that forms us into kind of a statistic, in a way, and with statistics, there's like Mark Twain said, "There's lies, damn lies and then there is statistics." So you can kind of paint the statistics depending upon what you want to put your lens on and create that story.

But as far as statistics that are mentioned in this podcast and my podcast, they seem very apparent, statistically, the Western culture is veering more towards usage of anxiety medication and anti-depressants, and even like suicidal ideation among adolescents, among especially white, middle-aged men who conceivably would be like the king of the world right now in this present culture they are for whatever reason coming to the point where they want to end it, so they are like, "What is that?"



And so the aspect of that conversation that I see there's a deficit is the mechanical conversation around all of those sensations. And so it's easy to say, "Oh it's the taillights and the bottles or it's the electromagnetic frequencies in the lights or it's the blue light or it's the loneliness," I think loneliness is a big one actually. But the thing that I don't hear enough of is the movement conversation and so that was a big part of why I wrote "The Align Method".

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah man, that's so powerful. So just to recap a little bit, our movement and our posture are literally connected for years and years of our lives to certain emotions. And so by changing our posture, our brain has kind of hardwired those connections of the neural nets are connected to certain feelings.

And when you gave that example of the hockey team, the ones that win and lose, even on the losing squad when you see the slumped over shoulders, you'll see a couple of guys that are still proud and standing in a different stance, usually, the team captain that's going to go rustle the guys up and let them know, "Hey this was just this experience, we're going to come back next time." Right? So we have the ability to conscientiously, and kind of create the habit of changing our state through changing our posture and both of them kind of mirror each other. Is that correct?

Aaron Alexander: That's exactly right. Yeah. Also, that's the same thing we were talking about the whole Ramdev stuff and identifying with something deeper than just, "Okay, I am my victory in this hockey game." Or, "I am the stock market," or, "I am the housing market," or, "I am the success of this podcast." If I attach myself to that then I'm in a really slippery, vulnerable territory.

But in the end, it's like the difference between infinite games and finite games which is an interesting read. You know, we ideally, we can be living in a world where we are playing infinite games and the goal of the game is to keep playing and it's like, if I'm just like this smashing my opponent, it might feel good temporarily, but like I want my opponent to come back.

Ideally, in the end, like the longest longitudinal study was done in Harvard and started, I think it was like 1936 it was about they were tracking or following people throughout their whole entire lives, including their kids, their offspring. And what they found is the people that, and I am almost positive I know about this one, the people that were the healthiest into old age were the people that had significant relationships and they felt connected and they felt like they had



a tribe and they felt like they had a purpose, you know.

So if your goal is to just you go around smashing your opponent and being the best, it's like, well you really, you want— Jordan Peterson said like the way to play the game is play the game that you're invited back. We don't want to smash the game.

And so at the end of the game, it's like yeah, if you don't identify with it and the whole time you were just grateful to be there in the first place, like think like there are so many people at any time you can be immensely grateful for everything that you have or be just completely bummed out and miss the whole thing, it's like literally just a lens shift change.

And that's like Victor, I know I kind of bounce around, but the Victor Frankl the guy that wrote "Man's Search for Meaning" a really important book, that was, he called himself, he's like I'm more of an optometrist than a psychologist. So what I'm doing is I'm changing people's vision ever so slightly and then from there you know, then that's the shift, from their life starts to change. So if we can go in and realize like at any moment you have everything you could ever possibly need and also there's the choice to kind of neglect all that and just say, well it's me.

Shawn Stevenson: Right, facts. This is a good transition point to, and this is one of the special things that are in your book talking about the importance of play. So you even noted that play and the research which, this is just crazy, and I want people to get this but it's been found that play in this experience of like even that word we've got a kind of define it a little bit, but it affects like 1200 brain genes, the expression of certain genes just by implementing play into our lives. So why did you feel the need to put this in the book and first of all, let's kind of define what it is because you just mentioned smashing the opponent? So is this together with that?

Aaron Alexander: It could be. So play is another one of those self-tuning mechanisms that the human animal has had on board since forever to heal itself, kind of like the stuff we're referring to before like naturally there are certain positions that you want to kind of go into that many cultures do such as spending time on the ground that they're called archetypal postures of repose, there's a guy Phillip Beach "Muscles and Meridians," that's what he referred to that as and we kind of mirror that in "The Align Method" book.



Naturally, the body wants to go into these positions, look at your dog, look at your kids, they do these things you're like, "What is that dog doing that down dog position, it always does that." You know, it's that, is he trying to be cool? No, no, his body at a deeper subconscious level knows that that's helpful with opening up his lungs and his shoulders and you know, all that.

Why do those ducks or penguins or dolphins or humans, why are they inclined to play with each other? What a waste of time, you know. What you find out is that if we can create that, which you do really well with your family again, and just yourself and your life in general, it seems like you perceive the world from more of a filter or a lens of play, which I think is one of the most invaluable things that any person can learn from just you know experience in life.

But that social engagement with another being is the fastest way to jump one's autonomic nervous system, that part of their nervous system that we believe we can't control but we kind of can because we can augment the environment, back into a more rest, digest, healing restorative state. So if you are, again, you're looking for these supplements and I'm taking melatonin because my sleep is off, and I am taking 5 HTP because my serotonin is funny and I've done all of the— I've got all of the supplements man.

It's like, when was the last time you lightened up and had some human contact and like had to wrestle with somebody? Because that's all you wanted to do when you were 10 and then we got the signal that it's not so appropriate to do that because you need to stay inside the room, inside the walls, inside the books, stay still or else you have some mental disorder.

So we learned that at a young age and during that time, our deeper biology is pushing up against those walls and saying, I want to grow. So at some point play is kind of I think shamed perhaps for some in our lives and it's really like childish.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, stop playing.

Aaron Alexander: Stop playing, why are you playing? It's like Allan Watts talks about a serious relationship he's like, "I would never want to be in a serious relationship, that sounds terrible. I want to be in a loving relationship and nurturing a relationship, a playful relationship, a dynamic relationship." The second that you and I Shawn, are in a serious relationship, I'm ready for the door.



Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, that's scary, dude. Coming, from my culture, there's a term that is used a lot, like you play too much, you know what I mean? So it's just like we're already kind of cultivated to be more serious, to stop playing and get a job, grow up.

And this is true story, just last night I was working on a project all day like there's a deadline and I came downstairs and my son Braden just because this is the environment that we've created and we've done this many times, he's sitting on, we got a rolling chair on this hardwood floor that should not be there by the way, somebody just always ends up on it and he sits on he's like, "Dad, can push me around on the rolling chair?"

And we don't just push around like I go as fast as I can around the house and there are all kinds of, there are stairs, like there are all kinds of treacherous situations, but we're just rolling around, running around like literally like within 60 seconds of me coming downstairs from all of this tension, you know.

And so we did that and then after dinner, my oldest son who's 19 and my 8-year-old they were just like fighting for like 20 minutes, just play fighting, you know, just going back and forth, they're hitting each other, they roll it around and tackle each other, they're throwing objects. An arrow got involved, I don't know where it even came from, but literally, and of course, like we get to the point as parents like, "Would you guys stop now," you know what I mean? And they're just having a good time.

And so I catch it in my mind like, no, they're good, they're having a good time even though there's some screaming going on, they're having a good time. And so just remembering that and for me to engage in it more, because a lot of times I start it, you know and I get to the point of like, "Okay, that's enough," you know what I mean?

But for me it's just being aware of it in my mind and engaging in the play because dang, it feels so good and it's so fun and we all feel so much more connected which is a side effect that you don't really even think about it just happens. So I'm so grateful that you put this in the book, and the research on it because it's such an important thing and something we could take more advantage of.

Aaron Alexander: Yeah, so within that there's something like with— I mean there's so much there



what you just said there are like dogs, a young puppy naturally wants to bite and wants to learn to bite, it wants to use its jaw you know, so it's learning how to control its bite reflex. And so if you're like, "No, no, no, no," all that time you know, deducing out like all the neurological development such from getting to use the jaw and get through this ranges of motions, just it being able to learn how to effectively learn boundaries, "Okay, this is too much bite, not enough bite," it becomes such a precise mechanism to know down to like that smallest little decimal of a fraction of a distance of, "Okay, that's the perfect amount."

When your kids are doing that, they're learning a lesson that they absolutely will never be able to access in a textbook. If you teach them about, "Oh this is boundaries, this is respect," the time that your son all of a sudden like started crying and you like decided like you had to slap him because it was too much, like that— we had a learning experience, it's just great right.

But instead, we try our best to put things down into these 2-dimensional models and contain it and put inside of these boxes and like, "Okay, we'll get everything from the book." No, but there's a recent Michael Moore documentary I think it's called, "Where to invade next, who to invade next," have you seen this one?

Shawn Stevenson: I haven't, no.

Aaron Alexander: Oh it's good, I highly recommend it. And he studied, or goes to different countries, mostly in Europe and he invades their ideas to bring them back to the United States and he brings this flag and like puts it on school systems in Finland and whatnot, and what he found was the system I think he was going to Finland or Norway, it's irrelevant where the place was, you watch the documentary, but it was the best school system in the world, like the students, the GPA are great, they are killin' the school system.

And what they find with that place is that they have actually more recess, they go to school later, they get out earlier, homework is not a thing because like if you're going to be, if you're going to come here and sit in this room like we are now and we're sitting down and we're talking, we're exchanging papers and documents and doing all this stuff, when you get done with that you need to go play, you need to consolidate those memories and that information and you kind of allow yourself to go into like unwind. It's the other side of the coin.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, absolutely and I literally, I wrote down, when we're talking about play, I



wrote training next to it a few minutes ago, before you mentioned that, because it's just, it's training for how we live our lives.

Aaron Alexander: Absolutely, man.

Shawn Stevenson: I love that man and trying to uncover how to address boundaries and how much tension to use in certain situations, I love this so much. One of the things, and talking about the mechanotransduction and just kind of leaning back on that, I want to talk about Davis's law and how, because I mentioned how our environment is kind of set up in such a way, but it's not just the physical stuff, it's also there's a mental and emotional structure in the household as well, but our environment itself, the physical environment literally shapes our bodies, it shapes the way that we look, the way that our bodies are structured. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Aaron Alexander: Yeah, for sure, yeah so our body, and we continually have you could call it fibroblasts and osteoblasts, and osteoclast and you know these blasts and clasts that are the blasts are building tissue and the clasts are you can remember this chewing tissue. So throughout the day, so that's like for people listening, you can look up fibroblast and fibroblast and osteoblast and osteoclast, you continue, right now as we are sitting down having this conversation we are both under construction. It never stops.

So we have this belief, maybe not we, maybe me, maybe I've learned this belief but it seems you know like it goes beyond that that when you're in the gym, that's when your body is building. And when you're at the yoga class, "Okay, now or we're doing yoga," or pilates, or what have you, but the reality is your body like so many things it doesn't know, it doesn't have boundaries like that, it doesn't know the difference of, "Okay, now Shawn's using dumbbells and now Shawn's drinking tea," it just knows that whatever Shawn is guiding this ship we're going to follow suit and kind of build, because we trust, we trust Shawn's direction.

And so right now as we're sitting here, we're literally going through this process you can imagine scaffolding, wrapping our whole body and all of these cells tearing down old patterns and building up new patterns. And so if we can start to bring some attention into the way that we inhabit ourselves on a momentary basis, then all of a sudden, literally your whole entire day can become an opportunity for developing your mind and your body and your movements, it's



like the #thing that I use. So every moment truly is an opportunity if we have the basic mechanical understanding and like a splash of intentionality. That's the recipe along with like you know, some care and acceptance.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, right. So for me, I just think about how our culture shifted recently and our bodies just, and I don't think, we get this with the extreme circumstances like if somebody has a cast on or if they're, if they're bedridden you know, they're confined to a certain situation where they can't get out of the bed. But this happens all the time, like our bodies become adapted to chair sitting, they become very good at chair sitting.

And so then we, when we try to go and do a hip hinge and lift something, a lot of people, when we think about injuries and I've spent time in physical therapist offices and just all these different health professionals, people aren't getting hurt deadlifting, you know they're getting her picking up pillows and like picking up a bag of groceries, a bag of just toilet paper, you know what I mean? Just because their body is so adapted to their environment which is for most of us, it's spending a lot of time sitting.

And so just bringing that up and understanding that and in that section, I think this was the section in the book, but you talked about some of these concepts, we talked about proprioception on this show before, but you also talked about neuroception, and interoception, right? I just said Interception.

Aaron Alexander: Yeah, that's good, too. Football play let's get in that.

Shawn Stevenson: Shout out to my son, he had pick 6 recently at his college game. But interoception, neuroception, proprioception. So let's talk about those 3.

Aaron Alexander: Yeah, absolutely. So the neuroception one is kind of a new one, from Stephen Porges Polyvagal theories, and the origin of that. And essentially it's the state of our, kind of what we've been talking about the whole time and the social engagement kind of jumping you up the autonomic ladder back into a rest digest heal state. Neuroception your body, your nervous system is continually regulating how safe it feels in the environment.

So if you're a person that feels really safe and supported in your environment, all of a sudden, it sends this signal through your nervous system that, "Okay, cool it's okay to grow and to repair and to restore cells," and if I'm a woman I'm



going to go through my menstrual cycle, your body is like, "Okay it's a safe time to work on that stuff," versus if you get the subconscious cue that I don't feel safe in this environment, then all of a sudden you're going to start to wind up and kind of pupils are going to dilate, you're going to contract and shoulders might raise up and the sternocleidomastoid and the trapezius and all the facial muscles, they'll start to kind of tense up and that's that indication, like you can see this—

Have you ever been around a dog, we're talking about your Rottweiler growing up, have you ever been around a dog that all of a sudden you can tell they switch and it's like, this is, get your face away from that dog, this is bad.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, absolutely.

Aaron Alexander: Yeah, I mean it's fine, but we need to slowly walk away from the dog.

Shawn Stevenson: You can see it and even if it's subtle like you can even feel it.

Aaron Alexander: Absolutely. So what are you seeing? You're seeing maybe the hairs rise up a little bit, you're seeing maybe the next stoops a little bit, you're seeing literally you might subconsciously not realize you're literally looking at the shape of their pupils and you see that he's like, okay, he's like in fight or flight like ready, he's ready to go, right now.

And so what we're looking at that, we're looking at that dog's autonomic nervous system, he is just being played by his environment and his history and something triggered that moment where that dog had the experience of its time to fight, whereas some other dog he might not have that experience at all.

And so if we can that neuroception is kind of our deep subconscious sensation of safety in our environment, and then that kind it wraps into our postural patterns can create feedback for how well and safe and secure that we feel in our environment. So we can start to kind of pull in these strings from different angles.

Interoception, now that we need to necessarily go in and bullet point and define all of them, but Interoception is your capacity, ability to feel inward. So feel like an exercise that I have in the book is to just feel your heartbeat, so something people can play with is just a nice way to check HRV which I know you probably

talk to in here a lot about, is people can do it now, you put your hands, my right hand on my left wrist right now and just put it on the check your pulse, just right behind the thumb and feel into that and as you're breathing, can you start to notice as I breathe out that pulse will slow up a little bit as I breathe in that pulse will speed up a little bit and no matter what the heck is going on in your environment in that moment, I literally feel calmer right now just from like doing this.

People listening, because they're being tuned by you, by both of our voices, they perhaps feel a little bit calmer as well because we're always playing each other's nervous systems, and there's a whole chapter in sound. You know, so that's a really beautiful, valuable practice is to start to pay attention to your internal world.

Culturally, we have, there's a large from my perspective, a large deficit of observing our internal world. For the most people, like a large part of people listening to this right now would be like, "I don't even know what the hell he's talking, observing my internal world? What were you smoking, what are you talking about?"

Because we're so culturally we're much more materialistic which is my origin story if something wasn't like measurable and I could put it in a beaker and I could hold it and grab it, I was like I'm not interested, I just want the linear mechanics of what's going on, I'm very grateful for that background because it gave me a support and a structure and a container to put all this kind of beads and internal world talk into. I think we need to have both.

Shawn Stevenson: But within Interoception, it's that your ability to feel you know, like, "I have a stomach ache," like that's Interoception, you're feeling like there's something going on in my belly, you know so the more that we can become quiet the more we can start to gain a relationship with what's happening from the inside and then when you have a relationship with what's happening on the inside and that inside can start to speak out, then the body can start to heal in a deeper layer or level.

Then, if I was always bombarding myself with more allopathic medicine and more foam rollers and more bands, and more stuff, I will do it, that's a very masculine way of healing the body and then there's like the other side of the coin of kind of like, "What if we just listen to the body?" Perhaps there are some



messages in the body that I wouldn't necessarily be able to impose upon it from this stuff I learned in these books, maybe if I put the books down for a little bit and I just listen, maybe there might be some inner wisdom in there.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, that's powerful and awareness really starts a process of healing obviously. I remember doing this show and we were talking, this was really early on about natural treatments for like migraines and headaches, we'll put that in the show notes, but there's an exercise that I would do with patients when they would come in, if they have migraines things like that is just identifying, "Okay, where is the headache?"

And, of course, like we do exercise eyes closed and I'm not going to do that now just in case people are driving, but basically, close your eyes and you really scan and just find out where is the headache. How big is it? What color is it? And you start to see it and as we ask, like I would go back and repeat the questions and again, just check out that episode, and it would change as you're observing it, it would change.

Because instead of this being this big, grand thing that's just overwhelming and you can identify it, it's happening within you but we're so again externally focused like you said, we can't really identify where things are happening. So this is such a great exercise for just really be more present in our bodies but how does this differ from proprioception?

Aaron Alexander: Yeah, right, I was going to say I was like, I have to define proprioception. Proprioception is your body's awareness of where your physical parts are in space. So me growing up in like the introduction of the book I mentioned like the confused baby giraffe, bawl cut, buck teeth like the whole thing my proprioception was a little funny because I had these long lanky limbs and they were like, they were everywhere. What's the blow-up, inflatable guy that sells cars?

Shawn Stevenson: I don't know, Slender man?

Aaron Alexander: Yeah, whatever that is. That was me. You know I am still remnant to that inside. And if we can start to gain some semblance of where our parts are in space, it's a much more, you feel more embodied, more autonomous, more stable, more secure. Or you can go the other direction and veer more towards hypermobility and then you will start to feel, and there's a reason that people will tend to veer



towards that, it gets into the posture archetypes we talk about in the book.

But you will see certain personality types will veer towards certain activities, you know so a person that's really stretchy and they are vegetarian and they love color on the wall and they're creative and all that, and they're just, they just love yoga and ecstatic dance, that's great, that's beautiful but there may, it's not 100 percent, but perhaps stability and support is not the easiest thing in their lives.

So maybe they might show up a little bit late, maybe they have all these amazing ideas but very rarely do any of them actually get done because they don't have that containment to drive forward.

And then the other side of that spectrum would be more like a swole-type person you know where it's like they have all the linear structure, they're just like slabs of muscle and just weight and push, and they've got all of that stuff, but perhaps what they could use a little bit more of is a little bit more of like nurturing, a little bit more creativity, a little bit like less linearity in their world.

And so we can converge different people because every person's a different ingredient for the stew, then we have this really beautiful recipe. And so there's no one possible archetype that is better or worse, it's just you want to be able, you want to be cognizant and curate which ingredients you're kind of putting in the stew. So if you just surround yourself by all bendy, people then it's like that's great you'll all get along but you might never get anything done.

Shawn Stevenson: Right. This is awesome and something that integrates all of these things is play. And that's what's so powerful about it. And for me, when I think of proprioception, I think some of the best athletes, and even just in our own day to day lives, we know if somebody is behind us, or they are too close to us, like we can feel it, we're aware of our body in space and so like that running back and just kind of know like sometimes it seems like you might have eyes in the back of your head, but working on that, again play helps with that, and the internal stuff that we've talked about, we've given a couple of exercises for that.

So this helps to create an integrated, whole person, which we all are but we might not realize it. And so I want to talk a little bit more about some application and some exercises we can do to become more aligned and we're going to do that right after this quick break, so sit tight we'll be right back.

When I was a kid, I don't know about you, but I grew up drinking Kool-Aid, but we also were kind of broke as well, so again moving to the environment we had Flavor-Aid. Ok, so it wasn't even like the legit Kool-Aid, it was Flavor-Aid and it didn't quite taste as good, right, you had to put a little extra sugar.

And the amount of sugar that we would use it's got to be a law against it I mean it's got to be some kind of criminal act of like poisoning us out there, but it would be like a cup in like a 2 liter of Kool-Aid concoction, you got like a cup or 2 of sugar, you were just pouring in there. And that's how I grew up.

Or Tang, do you remember Tang? Right, Tang had a little hit you right here in the throat a little bit, it had a little tang to it. But for me, we had that experience but Kool-Aid was not very portable, it wasn't very portable unless when I was growing up and going to school, some kids would actually have a bag of Kool-Aid mix with sugar and it was straight just like put the finger in lick it, it's like they were walking around like that or have some type of an object to be able to dip and to eat the Kool-Aid mix with the sugar in the bag, it's true story.

Other than that not portable in liquid form until they came out with the Kool-Aid jammers. Okay, the Kool-Aid jammers, little plastic but it was shaped like the Coke bottle, we could twist the top, scort in and that was the portability of Kool-Aid was now up-leveled. Since then I have better moved on, or better learned about the dangers there's, I mean artificial colors and flavors and the massive amount of sugar obviously we know that that is not conducive to our health and wellness.

And so, but what can we do to get some of these delicious flavor sensations because what the Kool-Aid package said was strawberry or fruit punch, right but in reality there's 0 percent fruit in the fruit punch, 0 percent strawberry in the strawberry right. But today that idea has been upleveled, because what some of the best companies out there know is that we don't want to try to change society's behavior overnight, we want to upgrade the things that people are already doing.

So we know that people are going to drink coffee, let's find a way to upgrade that if we know that people are going to be drinking fruit punch and so-called juices, let's find a way to upgrade that. And that's what I have with the Red Juice blend with Organifi. So this isn't the artificial flavors and colors that we're used to, we're talking about real cold-processed acai, strawberry, cranberry, also



medicinal mushrooms are in there as well, like Cordyceps, blueberry is in there, round it out, give it a little bit deeper color.

And what I love about it they've upgraded the Kool-Aid jammer and now we have the go packs, the instant go packs of Organifi Red Juice. I just went on a trip to Phoenix and guess what I brought with me, guess what I had in my Dora the Explorer backpack, all right, it's not that Dora the Explorer is on my backpack but I'm being like Dora, all right.

And so I have my Red Juice packets in my backpack on the airplane, I open it up, pour it in the bottle, I'm getting a massive infusion of nutrition. So I was just in Phoenix hanging out with Shaun T who's been a guest on the show, Shaun T is like the best, I mean talking about a fitness icon, he is the guy, you know so I was there, hanging out with him, and his family and Twinsanity, he's got twins and it was just an awesome, awesome experience.

But when I'm traveling now I'm bringing my Organifi go packs with me and I highly encourage you to do the same thing. So again they've got the new go packs right now, you need to check out that Red Juice formula, it's just incredible. As a matter of fact, listen to this— I just came across a study and this was from researchers at the University of Michigan, they found that blueberry which is in the Organifi Red Juice, blueberries have been found to affect genes related to fat burning.

All right, so it's not just you eat something and it's supposed to do a thing or to manage like how does it actually work? Well, everything in our bodies, our metabolism is regulated by our genes, so this is influencing genes that actually activate fat burning, that's really, really powerful stuff.

And so they also found, this was in the Journal of Nutrition showed that the consumption of blueberries was also able to reduce insulin resistance in study participants. I'm just going to leave it at that, that's enough right there, because there are so many different incredible studies that are finding the efficacy of these really powerful fit fruits and it's again, low-temperature process, low sugar but it tastes yummy. Organifi Red Juice, so head over there, check them out right now, it's organifi.com/model you get 20 percent off. That's O-R-G-A-N-I-F-I.com/model for 20 percent off and now back to the show.

Shawn Stevenson: Alright, we're back and we're talking with Aaron Alexander about his new book



"The Align Method" that I have right here, definitely pick this book up ASAP. And before the break, I mentioned that I want to talk about some more things that people can put into play. And I would love if you can share a couple of foundational mobility techniques like the contract-relax, for example, let's talk about that.

Aaron Alexander: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I think we can be, it can become confusing being in a body and it feels like it's just it's complicated, "Am I picking that thing upright," "Am I breathing right?" "Am I looking right?" Like, "How do I walk, my walk what's my gait pattern, is this right?" And what we broke down in the third chapter of the book was basic fundamental principles to kind of like how to operate the body.

So you think of your body kind of like a cell phone, it's a fine analogy, where you just, if you understand basically how to use the apps you know you get on your gmail, inbox press that thing, press send up there it's not that complicated. You don't need to know about the LED screen and the wires behind and transmitting out to space like you don't need to know any of that to effectively work your cell phone.

So it's a similar thing with effectively working your body or driving your body. So in particular, the contract-relax is just a nice method that people can do to create like almost, it almost feels like I'm sure you've used this technique before, that's probably why you asked about. It's almost like magic. So another way to say this is PNF, proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation, it's just fun to say it, no reason to remember that at all.

And essentially something that people can do right now is say you are kind of hunching over, looking at your phone and checking your messages and then you're on the computer and then you're driving in your car and you're in all these positions that kind of bring you into that forward upper cross syndrome with your neck is another fancy term for like forth head posture, shoulders can roll forward. Something you can do to begin unwinding some of those patterns and almost like a magical way is first stand up nice and upright in what we call the Aligned standing position a.k.a to tadasana or a mountain pose.

So get yourself upright standing and then from there reach your let's say your left hand, if we're going to work on the left shoulder down to the ground, so to create some length in within the neck and the shoulder and all the way down in



the hand, create some length in your ear down to your fingertips essentially.

And then from there you could start to keep that length, keep reaching down to the ground, reach, reach, reach, and then you go out to the side and then you can just grab a doorway or a wall or anything to kind of leverage off of and then you're going to slowly turn your body over to the right, since we're doing the left hand, and then from this position you'll feel a lengthening through all the way from the wrist, all way up through the neck, you're turning head to the right and then you can press that hand against the wall for just about 5 seconds. Hold that contraction and then— I don't know if you want to go through a whole thing, but I think it's good to describe what it is.

Shawn Stevenson: This is good, yeah.

Aaron Alexander: So you've got to hold that contraction for about 5 seconds you can go anywhere from like 20 percent to like even 80 percent if you want, feel it out for you, and then relax after that 5 seconds, emphasize the exhalation because the exhalation puts you more into that stretchy, rest, calm, digest, parasympathetic state and then have a moment, relax, relax, relax and then do that process again 2 or 3 times. And you will notice like it's almost like magic, it's very fascinating.

Shawn Stevenson: I do the doorway stretch when I do that, man, like for me, and I've been doing this, it's so crazy that I'm doing this again now recently, but I got, there's always something new so you get away from the basics sometimes. And so I was having a little bit of trouble with my AC joint and it was because of, and you know, I went to see a physical therapist friend and he was just like, "I'm really impressed with your alignment," I'm like, "What's wrong with me then?"

And then we did a couple of tests and just my, like my overhead, like just my ability to pull my shoulders back was a little bit questionable compared to other things. And so I started to do the doorway stretch and doing the contract-relax like I used to do.

Can you talk about how that actually works because it has to do with your brain, your nervous system and the muscles, but when you contract and then when you relax your body opens up so much more, like several inches more that you would think, "I should just be able to do this." But you kind of trick your body into, let's not say trick, trick or treat, right, you treat your body into doing this movement and opening yourself up.



Aaron Alexander: Yeah, what's kind of like so something that I've done over the last decade is a combination of manual therapies, like Rolwing and craniosacral work and visceral manipulation and then got into like Thai-style bodywork and acro yoga and just all sorts of weird stuff and that has been various different like little wormholes I went down, and still going down.

And one of the techniques you could say that I would do with clients occasionally would be taking them deeper into a pattern. So if a person has a shoulder thing like you're describing, sometimes what you can do is, and this is a metaphor for relationships so you don't have to be a massage therapist or you know, rolfer for this to be relevant, you can hold that pattern for them as opposed to them feeling the need that they need to hold it themselves and then actually take them in that, so as opposed to being the guy that's like, you know you're in a relationship with an alcoholic and you're like, "You jerk, you're ruining the— what are you doing," pushing them out of the pattern, what if we go, I got this from woman called Byron Katie what if we go the opposite and we love the pattern.

You know, you go in like, "Okay, like you need alcohol, let's you know, I'll be with you while you drink. And I'm going to love your pattern, I am going to love you where you're at," and then sometimes with that can create at a neuromuscular level I'm kind of bouncing back from like metaphor to literal, you know bicep tendon stuff.

At neuromuscular level if we can take that pattern into, I'm describing a passive approach right now, I'll get back specifically to the contract-relax, we can start to, that person will start to feel safe enough to release it from the contractive place, we're doing something where we're kind of sending the signal that like, "Okay, he's supported, he's contracted enough," so I deeply, deep down I don't need to maintain that contraction because his nervous system is already kind of going overboard and contracting already.

So okay, so I'm going to back up and kind of release that contraction for a little while because I'm getting the signal that he's well contracted in that place so you can kind of play your nervous system. I know I bounced around from like more of like a therapeutic perspective back to just like doorway stretch, but we can play our nervous system just the way we can play from a physical perspective also in like a talk therapy perspective, or like any relationship.



Like you working in your body what you're doing is you're gaining a relationship with your body and a person that has a deep relationship with their body is an invaluable asset. So if you're with a person that's like I have a lot of friends that are, they're like world-renowned parkour athletes and ninja warrior athletes and extreme whatever slack line, high line, all that stuff the amount of physical intelligence and depth of relationship that they have with their body is something that is, there's no way to replicate it, no robot will ever be able to do that it's like there is something special about that.

And you're thinking, and I know I'm kind of jumping away from contract-relax but I think this is interesting, a robot to be able to do a computer algorithm could do like chess and be the world's best chess master, you know it's like it's not that big of a deal.

But get a robot to do what we've been doing this whole time and reach out grab a cup of tea bring it up to your lips drink the tea and bring it back down and not make a big clank and knock the mic over and all that stuff— huge deal, we haven't figured that out yet. And so we put so much emphasis in our culture I think of like, "Wow, you're great at chess that's amazing," I think that is amazing but I don't think there's as much value put from what I see in cultivating a physical relationship with yourself.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, yeah, that's powerful, man. One of the things that you mentioned a little bit ago was being on our phones and that posture with the head down, shoulders slumped forward, that is indicative of our posture when we're sad or depressed, and we're putting ourselves in that position more frequently being on a device.

So I just want to throw that out there for folks because we might not be aware that we're doing it and start to even just change your posture when you're on your phone, but with that said, something that also helps to kind of open us up and to decompress is getting our hang on. And you talk about that in the book specifically which I was really happy to see. Talk about that, the importance of hanging and decompression.

Aaron Alexander: Yeah. So that was, as you were saying the AC joint stuff that was like, "Oh, hanging chapter," like that's it, that's the medicine. And so arguably, it's not arguable that our shoulders are built to brachiate or to hang it's just a fancy



word for hanging. Whether that comes from the ancestral roots of arboreal creatures hanging to trees or whatever, I don't really care.

What we do know for sure is that our shoulders hang better than that of monkeys, like apes and humans that's the more appropriate name for monkey bars to be like human bars or ape bars, like monkey bars is a total misnomer, we do it better. And so perhaps there is some key in the lock mechanism there that okay, cool, we're structured to do this for whatever reason, maybe it would make sense to do that and just see how it goes.

And what you find is there's an interesting book called "Shoulder Pain" by a guy called Dr. John Kirsch, he is an orthopedic surgeon that saw patients for shoulder impingement issues with their AC joint and all that. And what he started tinkering with was what if I start to just give them this simple, free, easy, safe hanging protocol and just each day and this is it we break this down in Hanging chapter of the book and the 5 principles, each day what if we just hang for a total of a minute and a half.

You get a pull-up bar in between your office like in between here it would be great and every time you walk through that door just give a little like swing through, like have a moment, even smile for bonus points. And what you're doing as you go through that motion is you're literally restructuring the shape of the shoulder girdle, and what John Kirsch found with his work with patients was that a ridiculously high percentage of the time, he said 99 percent, I find it hard to believe but that's what they said in the book I never met John Kirsch personally, but a very high percentage of the time the shoulder pain would go away, just based off of this simple hanging protocol.

So that's just one component to that, but I know we've got to wrap up, so I'll wind it up. That is also opening up that space in between the ribs, so all of the sudden, all those intercostal muscles and all that space with the diaphragm, you're getting, you're like opening up those bags you know. So imagine your viscera, your organs it's almost like imagine like if you're paragliding and you want to get full wind in that sail, that's the way the kite flies, if you collapse a part of the sail the kite doesn't fly anymore.

If you collapse a part of your lungs or your liver or your kidneys or your heart, all of a sudden the Shawn kite doesn't sail so well. And so as you're going through and just raising up those this visceral bags, all of your organs, you are literally



opening them up to start to begin that process of healing. So something as simple as that that costs you absolutely nothing, the things that are the most healing for the most part are darn close to free. A pull-up bar is maybe 30 bucks, but you could get a tree branch, find a doorway or anything if you're going to like rock climbing crimps or something.

Shawn Stevenson: Human bars.

Aaron Alexander: Human bars, got yourself a human bar. And so the effect of that, and that's you know, there's like lots more free remedies throughout the book but that's one that I mean it's invaluable. And then the kind of trickle down or trickle up the long-term effect of that would be the impact on your postural patterns, so now my shoulders start to come back, maybe that forth head posture starts to recede a bit, maybe a little bit more elongation to my spine, my breath calms down, I breathe more of my diaphragm, I have better organ function.

I feel more at home in my body, I'm also longer more stacked, more confident that every time I look in the mirror I perceive myself a little bit differently, every time I walk into a room people perceive me differently, I'm creating this feedback loop, I have a new belief system around myself. And now all of a sudden I've changed my whole freaking life because you know, I picked up this book and started hanging for a couple of minutes a day.

So the little, tiny minute shifts that we create that we may not think deeply into in the moment as they aggregate, a little eventually becomes a lot, and just adding a little bit of hanging each day eventually can become a really big deal.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, man, there's so much good stuff in this book and so many other things I want to talk to you about, but I want people to pick the book up for sure. The chapter on floor-sitting, being a foundational piece, man, it's so good. And also information about how to structure our environment around us to encourage better alignment, so there is so much good stuff in there.

So definitely pick up the book "The Align Method" it's out right now, you can grab a copy and I got one final question for you man. What is the model that you are here to create for other people? What is the model you're creating with how you live your life personally?

Aaron Alexander: I think the first thing that comes to mind with that would be releasing shame. If



you're harboring shame of some aspect of yourself, I don't see value in that and I, doing workshops or mostly just walking into a room oftentimes I heard Jim Carrey say like the reason he was so kind of like his personality was so explosive and out there and wacky and ridiculous was that he was creating spaciousness for other people to kind of stretch beyond their like normal boundaries.

And so that would be something, a model that I'm seeking to be in my own self is just the process of like you know, I like loving everything. You know, so if there's anything within yourself that you don't love, I think it's possible to love it and the sooner that you get down to loving it I think the sooner then we can start to evolve into a more comfortable place.

Shawn Stevenson: Awesome, man. Can you let everybody know where to pick the book up? Where can they find the book and where can they connect with you online?

Aaron Alexander: Yeah, I mean Amazon, bookstores, wherever you get books. The Align Method. And everything for me is that Align podcast, so I host a podcast that I'd love to have you back on whenever you want to, we've done, I think we've done 2 episodes or so in the past.

Shawn Stevenson: It's been a minute.

Aaron Alexander: And this is interesting, this present moment is actually an immensely big deal because I've already told you, you were I would say I think maybe the first podcast that I started I kind of have somewhat of like an obsessive personality in a certain way.

Shawn Stevenson: Me too.

Aaron Alexander: And so this was the beginning of me obsessing over podcasts and so I was at my place in Bend, Oregon and I mean, I had a very tangible vision of me sitting on the ground, listening to your podcast and repeating and taking notes and I was thinking this morning, I was like, I don't actually know where that like insatiable thirst for the information that you're putting out was coming from, I don't actually know why I was doing exactly, but then that was the beginning of eventually starting my own podcast based off of in large a part your influence.

And then you were the first person Shawn Stevenson to say yes to come on my podcast 5 years ago and that was the beginning of me believing that there was

something to this. So absolutely, you are a pivotal part of the creation of this book.

Shawn Stevenson: Bro, that is so powerful, man, I love you dude. Thank you so much man, you know and I knew you know, certain people you just, you could see like they got the juice, you know what I mean? And over time you've just developed into this incredible person and people are just attracted to you and the people that I know that know you love you.

And man, it's just been really cool to see and I'm so pumped for your new book and it's so well written, we talked about this before the show, it's well written the studies that are in there, the stories, it's a masterpiece man, right out the gate. So thank you man, thank you for coming on.

Aaron Alexander: Thank you, bro.

Shawn Stevenson: Awesome. Everybody thank you so much for tuning into the show today, I hope you got a lot of value out of this. I'm smiling from ear to ear, this is just what Aaron makes us feel man and very, very happy for this experience.

And I think that this book is going to bring a lot of value to your life because it's not just about our nutrition, it's not just about getting out there and grinding with our exercise and our sleep practices, all of these things matter, our community but it's in the subtle things, it's in our subtle movement, it's in the way that we carry ourselves, in the 99 percent of the time that we're not working out, and to be more mindful of those things.

Because those can be a huge domino that really transforms our lives and all of those other areas. So I'm really pumped about that. Pick up of the book The Align Method right now, it's out everywhere books are sold and we've got some epic episodes coming up very soon, so make sure to stay tuned. I appreciate you so very much for tuning in, if you got a lot of value out of this episode tag me, share this on Instagram, Facebook, all the good stuff and tag Aaron as well, and let us know what you thought about the episode. Instagram handle?

Aaron Alexander: @alignpodcast.

Shawn Stevenson: @alignpodcast and check out the podcast too. I appreciate you guys so much have an incredible day. Take care and I'll talk with you soon.

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.