

# **THE** MODEL **HEALTH** **SHOW**

**EPISODE 481**

## **How To Deal With Negative Thinking & The Truth About Discipline**

**With Guest Light Watkins**

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**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 here with me today. With all that's going on in the world, it's easy to be entrapped by negative thinking, and today we have on one of the foremost experts in the world in mastering mindset. And I think this is really, really going to blow you away. And what I wanted to do was to kick things off with a little bit of a mini masterclass on one of the most important nutrients for helping us to really defend our bodies, defend ourselves, fortify our immune systems in the context of what we're dealing with right now, and that nutrient is vitamin C. We hear about this since we're kids, the importance of vitamin C, but why? How does it work? Why is vitamin C put onto this pedestal? Well, let's dig in a little bit and talk about why that is. Well, some basic pieces of why vitamin C is so important as far as immune function, is its ability to regulate inflammation, and oftentimes, we think that there's a thing that's doing something to us, right, there's a bacterial infection that's causing inflammation or a viral infection that's causing inflammation, what really is causing the inflammation is our body's response to interacting with that foreign body. It's our body's response, the inflammation is a response with the body trying to protect itself, but that inflammation can go into a place where it's hyperactive or it can underperform.

We have this very black and white opinion of inflammation, like it's just this bad thing, when in reality, inflammation is a critical part of development as human beings. Inflammation is happening all the time as a part of cellular regeneration, healing, eliminating waste products. The list goes on and on. So that's one of the most important dynamics of vitamin C. And also vitamin C is essential for the creation and regeneration of certain tissues in the body, it's not just this one thing regulating our immune system or helping to fortify our immune system in dealing with inflammation, it's also about building the body up and making the body stronger and more resilient. Another really interesting thing about vitamin C is the roles that it plays in regulating our blood sugar and blood pressure. And our blood is really kind of this incredible superhighway that's delivering nutrients throughout our bodies, that's helping to ship and move around even metabolic waste and things of that nature, and vitamin C playing a role in this is one of the things that's often overlooked. But the key is all vitamin C is not created equal, most folks will run out to get these synthetic vitamin C supplements and not really understanding how there's this capacity of bioavailability and actually being able to do something in the body, that's what's most important.

And what I wanted to share with you is some of the most powerful bio-available sources of vitamin C ever discovered. And for me, the very best source, something that I've been a huge fan of, and that I utilize for about 15 years now, I love it so much, one of my favorite things is called camu camu berry, C-A-M-U C-A-M-U. And under a teaspoon of camu camu berry will

provide about 700% of your RDA of vitamin C. But the key is, it really does show up as a powerful protection in the body, unlike isolated vitamin C products. This is highlighted, for example, in a study published in the Journal of Cardiology that had 20 male smokers consume camu camu berry daily over the course of a one week study period, and it actually led to significantly lowered oxidative stress and inflammatory biomarkers. So again, there's that inflammation, but what's more, here's the most important part, there were no changes in these biomarkers, there was no reduction in inflammation in the group who received ordinary vitamin C tablets, ordinary isolated vitamin C. For the researchers, this indicated that the combination of other antioxidants from the camu camu berries had a more powerful antioxidant effect than standard vitamin C products alone.

This is the power of food, but we tend to think of these things and these isolated components, but there's a synergy there, there are biopotentiators in these real food sources that make everything really do the job that they're designed to do. But this other study just blew me away. And this is a study published in the peer-reviewed journal, Gut. The researchers were giving mice a terrible diet of processed fats and high fructose corn syrup that would normally make the mice obese and develop immuno-metabolic disorders. So this is highlighting how the metabolism and the immune system deeply interact and are deeply connected. So they were giving these mice this terrible diet, processed fats, highly processed fats and high fructose corn syrup, giving them that pure. But when the mice were fed camu camu berry along with their diet, it prevented excess weight gain, lowered body fat accumulation, and literally blunted metabolic inflammation. So they're giving them this diet that's supposed to cause all of these negative things, but the camu camu berry, the compounds in there, including the vitamin C, protected the body against it, so interesting. They also noted that the camu camu berry led to improved glucose tolerance, improved insulin sensitivity, and also fully protected against excessive liver fat development.

Now, this was really cool as well, listen to this, they also found that the camu camu berry led to an upregulation in activity of brown adipose tissue. So this is our brown fat, and as we've discussed on the show, our brown adipose tissue or brown fat, is this incredibly metabolically active fat that actually burns fat for fuel, it burns storage fat or our white adipose tissue, visceral fat, subcutaneous fat, it burns it for fuel. And it's brown because it's so dense in mitochondria, these energy power houses in our cells, and camu camu berry is found to insight the activity of this brown adipose tissue as well. And again, this is just in these little critters, but this is kind of one of the gold standards of testing, and we're gonna talk about more with human models as well in just a moment, but this was so fascinating. And one other piece here, and there was so much here, it's just really shocking, is that the camu camu berry was able to create positive changes in the gut microbiome, specifically helping to move away from dysbiosis and even increasing the expansion of strains like Akkermansia. Akkermansia is very difficult to get that encouragement, or the blooming of Akkermansia, it's very difficult.

There are very few foods that are found to do this, like pomegranates is one of them, camu camu berry is another one. And Akkermansia is one of the strains of bacteria most associated with longevity, with a long lifespan. Really, really cool stuff. Now again, vitamin C is obviously a major player in the immune system function, but what's the mechanism? Well, a major part of that, again, is reducing infection-oriented inflammation, and a study cited in the journal, PharmaNutrition, investigated the impact of vitamin C in relation to the cytokine activity associated with COVID-19, and found that vitamin C is effective at inhibiting the production of these cytokine storms. Again, the things that we're hearing so much about, that seem like there's nothing we can do but be at the mercy of these things, there's now peer-reviewed evidence, and there's so much of it affirming that some of these basic things that we know are required to help our immune system to function, and it's understanding, getting back to the root, what is our immune system made of? Our immune system is literally made out of food, is literally made out of specific nutrients, and if we're deficient in these things, our body can do a patchwork job and put us together, but we're really missing out on the full power that our bodies have, in not just protecting us from infectious diseases and chronic diseases, but really thriving and being the best version of ourselves.

Another one of the most potent vitamin C dense foods in the world demonstrates this same anti-inflammatory performance, specifically in the endothelial cells. And as we talked about with Dr. William Li, who's a researcher out of Harvard University and the founder of the Angiogenesis Society, when he was on the show, and if you watched the video version of the show, you got to see some tissue cultures from a cadaver from a COVID-19 patient, and you can see where the damage is really at. And most folks have no idea where any of this infection or where... Where is this taking place? And what it really is, is the endothelial cells and the blood vessels that are involved with our lung tissue. This is where the damage was just shocking to be able to see it.

And so again, what are we doing to fortify and protect the endothelial cells and also to provide some form of reassurance and treatment if we do come in contact with infectious diseases that can damage this part of our bodies? A study published in the journal Diabetes, Metabolic Syndrome and Obesity, found that amla berry, which is one of the most potent vitamin C foods ever discovered, right up there with camu camu berry, the study found that amla berry significantly improved endothelial function and reduced biomarkers of oxidative stress and systemic inflammation in patients with type 2 diabetes. So these are folks with pre-existing conditions who are more susceptible to this infectious disease that's on everybody's minds.

We have solutions, very simple things, but are we doing it? These things don't have to be complex. We don't have to wait around for some new thing to be invented for us to protect ourselves, for us to be resilient, and for us to help to uplift our communities. Very basic, simple

things. Now, there are so many studies, literally mountains of studies affirming the effectiveness of vitamin C in a multitude of different health issues, and also these very super dense vitamin C foods as well. There's so many, but I'll just share a couple more with you. There's another study, and this was published in the Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture, demonstrated that the antioxidants in amla berry were found to have significant free radical scavenging activity and protection against cellular reactive oxygen species. So in essence amla berry has been found to help defend against cellular damage and accelerated aging that is spurred by this rapid increase of reactive oxygen species or ROS. It's one of the things that we've identified as being encouraging to accelerated aging and degradation of our cells. So really remarkable stuff. The Journal of Food Science and Technology states that a single amla berry can contain up to 600% of the RDA for vitamin C.

I absolutely love camu camu berry, amla berry, acerola cherry is my other favorite. And I could not believe it when I found finally, there was one place to have all three of my favorite vitamin C dense superfoods without any binders, fillers, any weird processing, synthetic ingredients, none of that stuff. And it's the Essential C Complex from Paleovalley. It's amazing, it's one of my all-time favorite things. I utilize it several times a week just to provide that additional support with bio-available sources of vitamin C. Again, done with integrity, great sourcing and no crazy ingredients coming along with these powerful vitamin C dense superfoods. Again, these are the three most powerful, all together in one place. Camu camu berry, amla berry and acerola cherry.

Go to [paleovalley.com/model](http://paleovalley.com/model), that's P-A-L-E-O-V-A-L-L-E-Y.com/model. Use the code "model" for 15% off the Essential C Complex, and when I say essential, it is essential right now, so essential. Pop over there and check them out, [paleovalley.com/model](http://paleovalley.com/model). They've also got great snacks for the kids, they've got wonderful bars with no artificial ingredients, high quality protein and earth-grown nutrients, real food ingredients. Alright, so pop over there and check them out right now, [paleovalley.com/model](http://paleovalley.com/model), definitely get the Essential C Complex, it's amazing. And check out their snacks, they do it better than just about anybody out there. Go to [paleovalley.com/model](http://paleovalley.com/model), and now, let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

**ITUNES REVIEW:** Another five-star review titled, "What we should be learning in school" by tinydanseuse. "As a nutritionist, I was shocked to hear the history of the calorie. The calorie is not king, should be must listen to for every nutrition student, trainer and doctor out there. This podcast has opened my eyes to all of the dangers and misinformation out there between the government, lobbyists and the diet culture. Thank you for your story and all the amazing info you share in your podcast."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's amazing, thank you so much for leaving me that review over on Apple Podcast, and that's in reference to the history of the calorie, one of our all-time most

downloaded episodes, we'll put that in the show notes for you if you happened to miss it. And again, thank you so much for leaving me that review over on Apple Podcast, it means so much. And on that note, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day. Our guest today has worked with thousands of people in trainings and retreats all around the world, as well as Fortune 500 companies and in championship sports teams. Our guest today is Light Watkins, and he's authored multiple books on happiness and productivity and is one of the most renowned meditation experts in the world. And I personally love Light's approach because he's made meditation and learning about mindset so approachable, so accessible and so easy. And really creating a bridge between this very powerful tool that has a tremendous amount of clinical evidence as to its efficacy into making it very practical so that everybody's invited to really access the benefits. And so that's what I really love about him.

And in this conversation, we're really going to dive into looking at our framework around our perception of reality and how we perceive stress in negative situations, and really how to be more empowered in our lives right now in a time when we really need it most. So let's jump into this powerful conversation with the one and only Light Watkins. Light, thank you so much for hanging out with us again.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Thanks man, and I'm happy to be here.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** First thing I want to ask you about is, how do you think stress is affecting people right now at this current time in human history?

**LIGHT WATKINS:** I think that stress is... It takes you in one of two directions, it either takes you in the direction of, "I need to cope with this, so let me drink more, party more and all of that stuff," or it takes you in the direction of, "Okay, I need to do something about this. I need to find a root cause to this," and it takes you to sleep smarter, or eat smarter, I need to meditate, and all of that, so, yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. It's a complex experience for sure, and I think, like you just mentioned, people handle it a lot of different ways, but one of the things that a lot of folks are dealing with is a lot of negative thinking. Is there a way to eliminate negative thinking?

**LIGHT WATKINS:** I don't think overnight. And that has been a part of my work for many years, is showing people tools to help them expand their thinking beyond just the negative thoughts, because here's the big misconception is that you can get rid of the negative thoughts, and I don't think that really is what... I don't think that's realistic. I think the negative thoughts are there for everybody, but if you can expand your awareness, which is what they talk about with practices like meditation, you can go beyond that and you can get perspective on that. And I just sent something out today, in fact, one of my daily doses of inspiration where Eckhart Tolle

talked about, looking at the negativity like you would look at the antics of a child, right, you don't take it personally, you don't let it run your life, you just notice it and be like, "Oh, that's a child. That's childlike." That way of dealing with things or reacting to life situations, but there's a more mature way to do that, so if you have that expanded awareness, then you can tap into those more mature options, those spiritually mature options for dealing with it. Which means what I do now is going to affect what happens later.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So you're saying happy, successful people have negative thoughts, like is that what you're saying?

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Everybody has negative thoughts, yes.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Why does it seem like those people that are doing well don't think the way that I think? And... Number one, and also, once you have that realization that everybody does have negative thoughts, I think you just mentioned, it's expanded awareness so we can understand what to do with those negative thoughts and choose other than. So is there anything that we can do proactively for us to kind of address and maybe is it making the positive voice a little bit louder?

**LIGHT WATKINS:** In India, back in the Eastern philosophy, they talk about this concept of self-realization, which a lot of people these days have heard about, especially in the wellness scene, self-realization. But I think it's still kind of a very elusive, ambiguous term like, "What does that even mean, self-realization?" And what they're referring to is that there are two yous. There's your individuality, and then there's a part of you that's much more expansive than that, which I call your universality. So the individuality consists of the facts of the moment. I am Shawn Stevenson, grew up in Missouri, went to such and such school. I had this, ran track, had this, all these facts of the moment. And so if that is our dominant reality, is that the sort of factual aspect of ourselves, and something goes south or goes left in our dominant reality, then we become intrinsically tied to and identify it with whatever is or is not happening. If we can tap into our universal reality, which is, "I am this person, but I'm also," this person is an expression of a spirit or an essence or a soul, and that soul is connected to all these other things. And so that will be your capital S self within that paradigm.

And so practices like meditation, gratitude, seva, which is essentially volunteering, and journaling, and these kinds of inner work practices, they tie you to that universal aspect. So then when things go left on the individual level, you still have a lot more spaciousness to see that who you are is a lot bigger than this thing that didn't go your way for five minutes yesterday.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Whereas, if you don't have access to all of that, then you're identifying, primarily, with what didn't happen yesterday and it's hard for you to see, "Oh, well, actually, my legs still work, I can still breathe, I can still digest my food. You know, I live in a society where I have clean water coming out of the tap," and all these things, compared to other people's experiences, and so there's a lot more to be grateful for. And so that's what self-realization really means, is you're identifying with a larger aspect of yourself, instead of just your tiny, little individual aspect. And so the natural by-product of that is you feel more optimistic, you feel more positive, you feel more connected. And when you feel all those things, you don't really have to try to be positive; you just are positive, you just are grateful, you just are feeling compassionate when you're around people who are maybe less fortunate than you, and you're more giving, and all of those things. And so I've been teaching people for many years, "Don't worry about trying to use all this discipline to force yourself to think positively. Just do the practices that will connect you to the larger aspect of yourself, and then the positive thinking will become a natural by-product of that."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This is so good, these are... So first thing for me and for many people, meditation being a tool to access, I never in my life really had that meta-perspective to be able... Because we're often just living in our bodies, seeing through our eyes. And to be able to step out from yourself and to look at yourself in the context of the rest of life, so these are these spiritual principles because they seem intangible. And oftentimes, my problem, like you just said, might be something that bothered me five minutes yesterday; they're often so small, when you can zoom out and look at the grand scheme of things. Just zoom out and look at the planet. How big are your problems now? So having these practices to be able to access higher orders of thinking, thinking from different perspectives, same thing. And this is what I want to ask you about because I think it's such a valuable tool that I wasn't expecting you to bring up, but it's so true, which is service. If we're talking about dealing with our own struggles and stressors and negative thinking, how service is so healing. Part of that, too, is another spiritual principle of putting yourself in someone else's point of view, in a sense. So let's talk more about that, how service can help us with addressing our own struggles.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Yeah, service puts you in close proximity with giving and actually feeling the connection between you and other people. And that's the thing, you don't need to necessarily take a masterclass in what it feels like to help other people. Once you help other people, you'll have the same feeling that most other people have when they go through that experience. But I consider a practice like meditation to be the sort of key domino. Volunteering is a domino, gratitude, all those other things are dominoes. But if you volunteer, it's not necessarily going to make you want to meditate, or it's not necessarily going to make you want to start a gratitude journal, or start practicing yoga, or start eating better, or start going to sleep earlier, or any of those things that are all... They all have a cumulative effect on our mental and physical



health. But if you meditate, if you meditate, meditation is sort of a balancing agent. And the reason we don't do those other things, it's usually because there's some imbalance somewhere. And it could just be even a time imbalance like, "I'm spending too much time watching Netflix," or, "I'm spending too much time playing video games," or whatever. But when you meditate, there's something that...

Well, there's a lot of things that happen inside, but one of the things is you end up creating more spaciousness within your mind, which gives you the ability to distinguish between what's most important, what's second most important, what's third most important, like that. So anybody who has poor health or when anyone is in a bad relationship, or your finances are in the gutter, that's a reflection, mainly, of priority, really. That's what it really comes down to. At some point, you weren't able to discern between doing this thing in the moment and where it was going to lead to in the future. Now, I'm not saying this to shame anyone because we all have different aspects of that, but that's where we typically want to look is, "Okay, where am I placing my attention?" And one of my teachers' teacher used to say, 'cause people say, you know, "Your most valuable asset is time." But if you have all the time in the world, but you don't know where to put your attention within that time, you're really still not going to be able to optimize your experiences. So he would say your most valuable asset is your ability to discriminate. Not the bad kind of discrimination, obviously, but your ability to distinguish between what is the most important priority in this moment.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** And if you can sense that, and I say that word, "sense" because it's really a feeling tone, it's your intuition. If you can sense where you should put your attention in that moment, then that places you in an advantageous position for whatever is going to come in the next moment because again, there's a thread of connection between what I'm experiencing now and what, ultimately, the kind of life I want to create for myself, and where I need to be in order to make that happen. So if I want better health, then I need to make sure I'm attending to these five things in the moment. And it could seem like small things, but they can have a cumulative effect on whatever happens in the next moment. So I always say, "You know, yeah, volunteering, all those things are great, but just make sure that you're also attending to the key habit that allows you to want to volunteer and do all the other things."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Wow, that's powerful because that is such a common saying that time is our most valuable asset, but really, within that construct of time, it's knowing where to look.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Knowing where to look, there you go!

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Which is the name of this incredible book, man.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** You just put it right back around.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's what I do. This is a buddy movie, man.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** That's right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Is it, I don't know this... Is it Lethal Weapon or is it The Other Guys.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Rush Hour.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Will Ferrell, you know?

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But this book, coming about, so first question is: How did this book come about? And I've got to preface by saying, you, out of every person that I've met, have made meditation the most accessible and just making it so tangible, so simple to interact with. You take away so much of the stress, and I really appreciate that about you. And of course, we'll have your past episodes in the show notes for folks. We talk more about the practice of meditation itself. But you putting your energy into creating this amazing book, Knowing Where to Look, how did that come about?

**LIGHT WATKINS:** So over 2020, I was posting a video a day, which is what we talked about on our last episode, those Insight with Light videos. And those were just little inspirational tidbits, stories, anecdotes that could be consumed within a minute or two that would give people a little bit of an insight into maybe something they were experiencing that they consider to be problematic, and just help them find their way through that. Well, those videos were an extension of these Daily Doses of Inspiration emails that I've been sending out every day since June 6th, 2016.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Every day?

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Every day. Every day, and I don't do bulk email, I don't gang them up or anything. Every day, as a meditation for myself, as a writing meditation, I write, I spend about two hours writing, composing an email that can be consumed in about 100-200 words. And I've got a list of thousands of people that I send it out to. And it's meant to give people a little dose of inspiration when they wake up in the morning, maybe before they meditate, maybe before they go to work, or whatever, however they want to use it. But yeah, that's been happening since June of 2016. And I was inspired by people like Seth Godin who are... He has a

very popular daily email. And it was a challenge. I was nervous when I got the feeling that this is what I'm supposed to do, with just how it started. And the feeling didn't go away, and so I knew I had to take it seriously, and I knew that I was going to run out of content in about three weeks 'cause I don't know that many stories, and it's all story-based.

And so finally, I decided, "Okay, I'm going to go ahead and start." And it was a huge commitment to say, "I'm going to do something every day." And sure enough, after three weeks, I ran out of content. No more stories. But something really interesting happened; it happened. And Steven Pressfield talks about this, the guy who wrote *The War of Art*. When I kept showing up, I found that even though I didn't have an idea, something would come through me that I never even anticipated. And it could have been go to a website and research alligators and you'll find a little anecdote or story or something, or pick up a book off the shelf and just flip open to a random page and you'll find... I got these ideas, these epiphanies, and stuff would always start to come, even if it was 10 minutes before I had to hit the send button, something would always come. So I just really learned how to trust that process. And so yeah, it's been happening every day like clockwork for... It'll be five years in June.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Five-year anniversary.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I'm actually blown away right now.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** That's crazy!

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I did not know that, man. Because I was like, "Well," even reading the book, I'm like, "Well, since he's been doing this since 2016, he must do a bunch of them together, and then he would take some days off." Yeah, it's incredible.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** No, man, every day. No matter if I'm traveling, sick, headache, holiday, birthday, it doesn't matter what it is; I'm getting up and writing. And so the book is really the, it's the... It's like a repository of many of the greatest hits from over the years. So these have already been focus-grouped and test-marketed, and as the ones that got the most... It had the most impact and got the most engagement.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Come on! Greatest hits of inspiration.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** The greatest inspirational hits.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I'm a big greatest hits lover. I was just listening to greatest hits of, who was that yesterday? Alicia Keys, the greatest hits of DMX. We got the greatest hits of inspiration from Light.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This is great, man.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** It's like a verses of inspiration.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Man, it is so good! There's so many wonderful stories, and you constructed it in such a way that you can literally just open it to a page and...

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Yeah, man, 'cause a lot of people don't like to read these days, so... Or especially just read a whole book, cover to cover. It's got to be really interesting for most people to read a book cover to cover, but it's... What we all had done is gone to a bookstore, you pull a book off the shelf that you saw that was interesting 'cause of the cover or the binder or whatever, and you just flip open to a random page. And then hopefully, something catches your eye. And so this book is literally, every page is meant to be eye-catching, not only just in the content, but also in the text design. And yeah, there's no detail that wasn't labored over for many, many hours.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I love the concept of Easter eggs.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I'm a big... I literally watch... My little brain candy is watching Easter egg videos of movies that I like or superhero movies and shows and things like that.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Yup.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so you basically put these Easter eggs in the design of the books.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Yup, lots of Easter eggs in design of books, yup.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's so cool, so cool. It's one of these books, truly, that everybody can just have sitting around and will pick it up and you will absolutely take something away from it, just reading a couple of pages. I want to ask you about a couple of my favorites from the book. And this one, I think it really, really leads into the fact... I'm literally, I'm sitting here blown away

right now. I still have not come to accept the fact that you have done this every single day since 2016.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Processed off. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And also, your life is a series of synchronicities, which we'll come back and talk to in a minute. But this coming out the five-year anniversary, I don't know if that was planned.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** No.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Of course, not. I know you was going to say that. But one of the things, for me, is just how in the world your discipline is magnificent. It's like Mount Rushmore discipline. Beautiful, incredible, out of this world. And the crazy thing when I thought about Mount Rushmore, I had a bunch of the top rappers there in my top four. Well, I'll ask you about that in a second. But one of my favorite anecdotes from the book is where you talk about the discipline illusion.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So please talk about that.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** That's what I was thinking when you said discipline. I was like, "No, it's all actually, all an illusion." People say that like, "You're so disciplined. You write all this stuff and you do all these things." And it's like I tell them, I'm like, "No, I'm not disciplined. I'm not any more disciplined than anybody else." What I have done, though, is I have been very honest with myself about my flaws and my tendencies to cut corners and shortcut. And as a result of that, I can put myself in proximity to the things that I want to do. So for instance, in that particular dose of inspiration you're referring to, I mentioned writing my first book and how that process actually happened because it was like I was dragging my feet, it was a self-published thing. I was dragging my feet for three and a half years, working on it a little bit here, a little bit there, but never really getting momentum on it, and just tired of thinking about it after a while.

And my buddy, Drew, who you know, I came to him one day with a contract that I had made out and a check for \$4000 post-dated for three months from that day. And the contract said, "Drew, I'm giving you this check for \$4000 post-dated to such and such date. My agreement is to finish this book that I'm working on. If I don't finish it, and if it's not ready to literally go to print by that date, you are obligated to take this check for \$4000 and cash it and spend it on whatever you want." And then he signed it and I signed it. So now after that, there's no way I wasn't going to finish that book 'cause I couldn't afford to lose \$4000. And I ended up finishing

it a week early just in case anything happened, I don't want any ambiguity or anything like that. And so that was a way to kick my own ass into finishing that project.

And then I talked about working out. I work out all the time, I love working out. But I don't love driving to the gym, I don't love having to work out by myself. And I know that if that's the circumstance, I'm probably going to talk myself out of it if I'm a little bit busy. But if I find a place that's close to where I'm living and maybe that has group workouts, then I'm way more inclined to go. And so that's what I did, I found a place that was... Had a group workouts that I could join, and it was within walking distance, and I just started working out all the time.

And then one of the other examples was junk food, eating better. And I said, "I know myself. I know if I go to the grocery store and I'm hungry, I'm going to end up with a shopping cart full of stuff that I probably shouldn't be eating. And I'll have all kinds of really important justifications for it as well 'cause that's what happens in the brain. So I know that I need to eat something before I walk into a grocery store. And if I can just make sure I eat something, even if what I eat before I go in there isn't the greatest, but then it's going to positively impact what I put in the shopping cart." So those kinds of things that anybody can do. And again, I'm really big on pulling the veil back and showing people behind the curtain 'cause I don't want anybody thinking I'm special or I'm somehow more gifted or have more access to inspiration than anyone else. It's like no, I just have done these things, like with meditation. I struggled for three or four years to meditate. The reason why I'm...

I'm so accessible now as a meditation teacher is 'cause I paid somebody a lot of money at the time to show me the nuts and bolts of this practice so I could really understand it inside and out, and it changed my entire relationship with meditation, and I literally went from a reluctant meditator who was doing it sometimes to an enthusiastic daily meditator, and that person eventually ended up teaching me how to teach other people how to meditate, but it was all very, very pricey. But it's something that I was so passionate about, and as a result, I became very good at it, and now I help other people get very good at meditation, so yeah, it's just about being honest with myself about where I am.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's so powerful. And you just gave so many good examples, one of those is putting a risk in front of you, or a loss if you don't follow through, another one is an investment that you make making you more accountable is basically understanding yourself, understanding your strengths and weaknesses that you talk about. And the thing is we know ourselves, we know those spots, but I think a lot of times we give a lot more credit to our weaknesses, we don't acknowledge our strengths, and within those weaknesses, we just generally use them as an out rather than using them as an opportunity. And so one of the things, and you say this specifically in the book, you say, "Are you lacking a discipline in certain areas of your life? If so, that just means you're normal," and in the context of habit change...

And I want to talk more about this, asking ourselves, with this habit change that we want, is it a proximity issue, is there a way to bring it closer, and so for you with the gym... You like to work out, but you know if things start to get busy, it'll hit a lower tier of importance, just kind of eliminate itself, but if you know, for example, that it's really close or in this context, I want to ask you about, if somebody's wanting to have a habit change or just a generally healthier lifestyle, how can you get in proximity to that? For me, I'm a big fan of people and being around... If you're wanting to change your health, getting yourself around healthier people, getting yourself in proximity of that thing, so can you talk a little bit about proximity?

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Yeah, well, actually I have... There's another one in here that I think is really the root cause... 'Cause you mentioned it at the very beginning of this conversation, you talked about stress, you asked me about stress, and I would say that stress is really the root cause of why we put ourselves... Either further away from whatever it is that we say we want to do, or we create these crazy excuses for them... Would you mind if I read it? It's really short.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Please do. Please do.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** This one is called "So gullible," and I think it'll explain everything. So people think meditation makes you gullible, but it's actually stress that makes you gullible, stress makes you crave french fries, cookies and wine, stress makes you come up with important sounding excuses about why you can't exercise, stress makes you think the reason you're tossing and turning at night, is because you don't have the right mattress, stress keeps you locked in codependent relationships with emotionally unavailable partners, stress makes you do foolish things that you have to apologize for later. Stress even makes you think you're incapable of meditating because your mind is too busy. Meanwhile, meditation makes you bold, meditation makes it hard to put up with somebody else's, meditation makes it almost impossible to remain in a dead-end job or in a bad relationship, meditation makes you stand up for others and follow your heart with no fall back plan, meditation allows you to be guided by your intuition instead of your fear, meditation helps you accept others and let go of the need to control. It's meditation that helps you sleep like a baby, even though you don't have it all figured out.

So it's really stress, man, it really comes down to... When you have a lot of stress, you're going to talk yourself out of doing the things that you know, deep down, I should be moving my body more, I really should be eating more plants, I really should be forging more meaningful relationships. I don't want to be on social media for hours at a time, I don't want to be watching pornography all the time, I don't want to be gossiping all the... All these things that we do in the moment is kind of like junk food, but then it makes us feel terrible afterwards, that's all stress-based, so when we can get that stuff out in whatever ways we are able to get it out, I

recommend meditation, but again, that's not the only way. Then naturally, as a by-product, it makes you want to be... It makes you want to work out, you want to go move your body, 'cause you don't have that stress weighing you down, saying... "Nah, I'll just stay on the couch. You don't need to go anywhere. You've worked too hard at your job this week, just chill out, have a donut, have some wine," that kind of stuff. So I think instead of trying to find hacks for going and doing the things we're supposed to do, just get the stress out, if you get the stress out, then your natural inclination will be to do all the things that you... You naturally want to do deep down.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I would think that this would make it easier to access inspiration, because ultimately this is what...

**LIGHT WATKINS:** 100%.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Your book is really helping us to cultivate, so could you talk a little bit about your definition or your perception of what inspiration is first and foremost.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Yeah, man. So inspiration is a... It's a Latin word, root word, it means to blow into, and what that indicates is that there are ideas that come into us, there are divine ideas that come to us, and it initiates some sort of activity or a way of thinking about something or a feeling tone. And I think the mistake that we make with inspiration is we think we have to go out and find it, but when I'm... Helping the reader do is to cultivate it within, that's why again, it's called Knowing Where to Look, is because instead of looking outside of yourself for this, it's really about redirecting the attention back into your own life experience. You don't have to be Shawn Stevenson, you don't have to be Light Watkins in order to find inspiration, you don't have to even go out and exercise in order to be inspired, it's the inspiration that initiates the thought to go and exercise, or the thought to go and do these other things that you naturally want to do, paint pictures and go give a TED Talk, the inspiration is actually the root cause. What we have to do is we have to facilitate it, and the way you facilitate it really it's just by being present to it, so then how do you become present to it? Well, most of us in our normal conventional society are not very present, we're just not.

We're either thinking about something in the future, or we are regretting something from the past, but very few people are actually in the present moment, and so the way we can cultivate that in a very simple, easy, accessible way... It's not rocket science, again, it's just... Gratitude is one easy way. You don't have to sit and meditate, just be grateful. Literally list five things you're grateful for in this moment, and if you can't think about five things you're grateful for, list five things you can notice in this moment, what is the taste, what is the smell, the sight, the sound, the feeling? Bring that into the moment, and what happens is you start to see inspiration that's been hiding all around you in plain sight, and it just may be the way the color falls on the wall



in front of you, or it could be a sound that you weren't aware of before, and then you get these little tiny mini-impulses, and the impulse may be, get up and go out to the backyard with your shoes off and just ground, and you're like, "That's weird." That's our initial reaction. No, no, no. That's weird, I'm going to look weird.

Everyone's going to think I'm weird. But here's the thing, when we think about the concept of inspiration, people think, "Okay, if I'm inspired, that's going to cause me to go and do this thing and I'm going to start this company and I'm going to be successful." It's like, "No, that's not how inspiration works," inspiration... The way you know you're being inspired, is it challenges you, it challenges you, it's going to nudge you in the direction of something that stretches you, just like me writing these daily emails. When I got that idea, I was like, oh, my first reaction was...Because there is a combination of excitement around it, just like if you were going to be in Iron Man or something like that, there's some excitement, but then there's this other side to it, which is like, "This thing is going to break me. I don't know if I'm ready for that." So that's how you know it's a legitimate inspiration, that's... And that's kind of on a bigger scale of inspiration, but a smaller scale of inspiration, everybody's had this experience. You're in an elevator, someone is next to you, what do people do in an elevator? They either look at the numbers or they look down at the floor.

You rarely acknowledge the other person. And maybe you're looking down at the floor, fine, alright, that's what we all do. Maybe you notice this person's wearing Yves Saint Laurent shoes and you're like, "Wow, those are some cool-ass Yves Saint Laurent hi tops and look at the paint splashes on his brother's jeans, this dude has got style." You're having this whole conversation to yourself... Beard is on point, everything. And so, something inside of you may say, "Just compliment the dude." "Nah, I'm going to sound... He's going to... "You start working on... Your mind starts working on you, your ego starts working on... "I'm going to look silly. I'm going to look gay, I'm going to look this, I'm going to look that." It's like, just go with the impulse. Whatever it is. And if you can get used to going with it and listening to it and acting upon it in the little times, and you do that over and over and over, then when you get the big impulse, write the daily email, quit the dead-end job, explore a different way of relating to your partner, go camping, even though you've never been camping, all these bigger things, then you're more inclined to do those things, and then ultimately it culminates into maybe, go nomadic or whatever your version of that is, which is, start this non-profit or...

But here's the other thing, it's almost always about service, ultimately, when you extrapolate any inspiration, it's about service, like complimenting you is less about my ego, and it's more about just acknowledging the effort that you are giving to the world. That's a service. That's a service... That's an act of service or an act of kindness, whatever you want to call it, and it's not about me, and that's how you know it's... That's how you can separate, this is an ego impulse or an inspiration impulse, because there's different voices in there too, and you have to split

test it and you're not always going to get it right. Sometimes it will be an ego-inspired action, and you'll learn from that and you'll learn, "Okay, that's how that made me feel. It wasn't the best feeling, compared to when I'm really inspired and acting in service to other people, that makes me feel much better." And so maybe in the beginning years when you're really intentional about it, six out of the 10 times that you're acting on these impulses, they're inspired, and then the other four out of 10 times they're ego-driven, and so then the next year, you're at seven out of 10, and the next year... So take the long view, this is a never-ending process, it's ever-refining, and you just get better and better at recognizing it, and then you get better at trusting it, and then ultimately you get better at following it.

And when you can follow it, you won't know what's going to happen. That's part of the deal. That's how you know it's inspiration. "I don't know how this is going to turn out. I'm going to write these emails, I don't know how it's going to turn out." I did not set out five years ago to write a book called Knowing Where To Look, and this is what I'm going to do to practice it, I just was following... I was scared... I was scared I was going to run out of material within the first month, which happened, but you don't get... I wouldn't have understood that it was going to come through me until I actually put it in those first three weeks, and then I got the next step in the blueprint, and that's what's so beautiful about it, because it turns into this adventure.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It brought qualities out of you that you didn't know, they was dormant.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** It made me have to look actively for inspiration in every experience I was in. I could have been in the hospital... Wherever I was, I had to attune my ears, my eyes to something that I felt naturally inspired by.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And they were already present. That's the beautiful part about it, too. I've never heard this before, put frame like this, but this kind of brings to mind that so many things in our lives are... They function sort of like a muscle, and they said, "Use it or lose it," and it's also, if you work on the thing, you become stronger and more versed at it, so working on our inspiration muscles, essentially. And so I love that exercise of doing the small thing when you feel that, but also here's the big thing too, when you said it earlier, like this is going to make you uncomfortable, or this is going to stretch you, I immediately thought, "Oh, people are not going to like that." We don't like that. We are funny enough, we want change, but we don't want to change. And change of ourselves and our character is often required... Always required for something new, that thing that we might aspire to. So getting to that place... And I love that... You giving us that gift of just working... Do the small inspiration to build that muscle, because you creating the life that you want and tapping into those big inspirational hits that we all get, we've got to be more comfortable with knowing that we're going to be stretched.

So that's incredibly powerful. Now, I've got to ask you this question, because you mentioned how earlier we can get kind of distracted, we can get pulled out of the present, which I would think a lot of the inspiration is going to be more accessible in the now. Do you feel that our really fast-paced way of living in a sense, and also our constant stream of media and social media can muffle our accessibility to inspiration?

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Yeah, 100%. There's so many ways to get distracted from it. Alcohol distracts us from it. Any substances will distract you from it. Basically, anything that takes you out of the present moment. So the news, as you've posted recently, is 90% negative, so when you're in that space, now you're in stress mode, and stress mode means fight or flight, which means anything about the present moment, but again, it's tough to expect people to just... Who had been obsessed with the news decades, to just stop watching the news, it's probably not going to happen, so then it comes back to whatever your foundational practices are, so if you can... And this is the displacement theory. Don't worry about changing your lifestyle at all, just keep doing what you're doing, and then add in one practice, just one practice, whether it's gratitude... I like gratitude because it's something you don't have to sit and close your eyes to do, although you can... All you need is, you don't have to write anything down, you just have your thoughts, you just consciously place your thoughts on item after item or experience after experience that you're grateful for, and it has... It shifts you. It shifts you.

Another one is breath work. Again, you don't have to be a master guru or anything... You can just breathe. Everyone can breathe deep, you can breathe inhale, you can inhale deeply. You can exhale deeply. You can do that 10 times. It will shift you and if you have an inclination to sit and close your eyes for five or 10 minutes, it will shift you, and if you do those things regularly enough, you will feel less inclined to do the other things over time, it won't happen overnight, but over time, you'll feel less inclined to watch all that negativity in the media and to consume all the junk, whether it's food or whether it's information, and then gradually you'll find yourself more inclined to follow the voice of inspiration as well.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You won't have to force yourself.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** You won't have to force yourself.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Because it just won't fit anymore.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** No, but here's the other thing, it's happening anyway, it's going to happen. On my podcast, At the End of the Tunnel, I just interviewed this guy named Marlon Peterson, he's done amazing work with kids, he's got these youth programs, mentoring kids, he came up very tough in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and got robbed and beat up and bullied and all the

things during his childhood. Marlon ended up getting involved in a robbery when he was 19 years old, which then took him to prison for 12 years... He got sentenced, 12 years in prison, spent 10 years in prison. That's where he discovered his calling, in prison. And so life is usually taking you in one of two directions, it's taking you the pain route, and that's how you're going to find your inspiration, or you can kind of catch the wave of inspiration earlier, which takes you on the adventure route, which means... I don't know how this is going to turn out, but I'm trusting because this is lighting my heart up, so I'm trusting that when I keep taking steps in this direction... And there's scary too. Prison is scary, and the adventure route is scary, they're both going to be scary routes. But the adventure route is a lot more enjoyable ultimately.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** In microdosing the pain.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Yeah, you're microdosing... You're almost kind of putting yourself in that situation, so you really... It's embedded within your spiritual DNA to find your passion, your purpose, your calling, the question is, how do you want to get there? Do you want to go the easy way, you want to go to a hard way, 'cause they're both taking you there, it's just... One looks like... It's a funny thing about it is the easy way that... What looks like the easy way is actually the hard way, what looks like the hard way, the uncomfortable way, 'cause you actually have to choose the discomfort, that's actually the fast track, that's the easy route. That's the adventure route, but we're all going there, and if you keep the camera rolling long enough, you'll see that by the end of the life, everybody gets there.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Take the path less traveled, or take your own path.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** It's always your own path.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** These little monikers like this...

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Like Joseph Campbell said, if you can see your path before you, that's not your path. That's not it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I love that. Got a quick break coming up, we'll be right back.

Our microbiome plays major roles in regulating our metabolism, literally playing a role in determining how many calories are absorbed from our food, for example. Our microbiome also controls so much about our mood with the vast majority of our body serotonin being produced in our gut. And our microbes interact with these enterochromaffin cells and enteroendocrine cells that produce our hormones and neurotransmitters in our bellies, and one of the biggest issues we're seeing today is gut dysbiosis, where friendly microbes are getting overrun by opportunistic bacteria. One of the few amazing sources of nutrition that's

been found clinically to reverse gut dysbiosis is highlighted in a study published in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry. It discovered that the traditional fermented tea called pu'erh may be able to reverse gut dysbiosis by dramatically reducing ratios of potentially harmful bacteria and increasing ratios of beneficial bacteria. Another peer-reviewed study published in the Journal of Nature Communications, uncovered that a unique compound called theabrownin found in traditional fermented pu'erh has remarkable effects on our microbiome as well.

And the research has found that theabrownin positively alters gut microbiota and directly reduces hepatic aka liver fat and reduces lipogenesis, which means the creation of fat. Pu'erh is absolutely amazing on so many levels and is also a powerful adjunct to any fat loss protocol because it's been found to support fat loss, while protecting muscle at the same time.

And this was documented in a recent study featured in Clinical Interventions in Aging. Now, the key is the source of the pu'erh matters a lot, and the only pu'erh that I drink uses a patented cold extraction technology that extracts the bioactive compounds in the tea at cold to low temperatures for up to eight hours, and this process gently extracts natural antioxidants and phytonutrients and preserves them in a whole bio-available form, and this is the purest way to extract the phytonutrients for maximum efficacy. This pu'erh is also wild harvested making it even more concentrated in the polyphenols that we see having benefits in those clinical trials. Also triple toxin-screened for one of the highest levels of purity, tested for pesticides, heavy metals and toxic molds, and making sure that it is not in your tea, which is common in most other teas. This is why I'm a massive fan of Pique Teas. Go to [piquetea.com/model](http://piquetea.com/model), that's P-I-Q-U-E-T-E-A.com/model, and you get 10% off their amazing fermented pu'erh and all of their other incredible teas. These teas are in a league of their own. Their pu'erh is amazing, I'm a huge fan of their ginger tea as well.

Go to [piquetea.com/model](http://piquetea.com/model), again, you get 10% off everything that they carry. One of the best investments in your health, supporting your microbiome, supporting your metabolism. It is absolutely amazing. Head over to [piquetea.com/model](http://piquetea.com/model) and now back to the show.

This is bringing to light this really important thing which is, and this is getting outside of the realm of what we can fully explain, but... So many people have experienced it. I'm a big proponent of peer-reviewed evidence, I love that stuff, it's just like we can use signs to affirm and discover certain things, certain principles about life and reality, but it's still limited, we know so little. And just to provide a context like right now, we don't understand how gravity works, we are just kind of planted here on this planet, we're spinning around in this immense massive universe, and if we talk about the known universe, we know now there are billions of galaxies, we're in one, there are billions of other galaxies. And so the expansion of our knowledge of how stuff works is tiny, it's nothing, but we still, we find the comfort in affirming

things and trying to prove things. So, I want to preface with this, and that thing that I'm talking about is these synchronicities and these kind of happy accidents and these things that connect, many people have thought about somebody and they'll send them a text, you'll get a text from that person or you'll run into them out of the blue, maybe somebody you haven't seen in five years and they pop up in your mind or you'll be... Now, your phone's listening to you though, now, so just to be clear, like you... I was just talking to my girlfriend about these yoga pants, and then they got this ad for yoga...

They're listening. No, but even how we met, we bumped into each other, I was coming out of a coffee shop, and then you were along with Drew, and I'm assuming you knew a little bit about me, and then boom, here we were in front of each other, and that's literally how we met in the first place, and so just holding that space in our minds, maybe it's like an idea, is a person or experience, and it's funny how these things continue to show up when you go with the inspiration. So you start the book off sharing a story, which I don't know if I want to give away right now because I'm reading this story and I'm just riveted, like, "What? No way." But you jumped on that inspiration. It was probably incredibly uncomfortable, but it landed you even here today, where you are, so if you can speak a little bit about that dynamic of reality that it happens... For all of us is happening a lot actually, but maybe we can't quite describe what it is.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Yeah, you're referring to a story about these remarkable string of coincidences that happened to me when I quit a job, I quit my first real job out of college. I had this idea that I didn't really know where it came from to go to Paris, so I took a leap of faith, I didn't have any money, didn't have any connections, I didn't know the language. And then just bought a one-way ticket to Paris and missed a couple of flights and when I landed there, went to go...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Wait, you purposefully missed those flights though...

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Yeah, purposely missed the flights and ended up getting vouchers, so I made some money at the airport, unexpectedly...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** For a possible trip back.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Now I had... Trip back, yeah. And then the first day there, I ran into some friends in the most coincidental, random serendipitous way that I didn't know were there, one of them happened to have a spare apartment that I stayed in. So everything that I needed was all set within about three hours of landing there, and this was... What was interesting was the timing of it all. Because if I hadn't missed those flights, I wouldn't have run into those people when I did, so it's like even though it looked like things were just happening randomly, you could make the argument that... You can make the argument that one serendipitous moment

is just coincidence, two... There were like five or six things that I was aware of that happened that kind of landed me right to where these people were. And I would argue that this is happening all the time, but again, it's like if you're present to the moment, you're able to see it a lot easier and not... Otherwise, it just looks a little bit blurry, it's kind of like... I'm in my 40s now, I don't know about you, but my eyesight is... In the mornings is not as good as it is in the latter part of the day.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You got that pre-Spider-Man vision.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Yeah, so I got some reading glasses from the grocery store, like the old man reading glasses, I haven't worn them, I just got them.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Let me get my glasses.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** And every now and again, I put them on and it's like, Wow, this... It goes from SD to HD, with the glasses on, is like you can see all the little details and the nuances of everything, but without the glasses on, I feel like I can still read well enough to get by, so I don't really think about it much. But I feel like inspiration is all around us like that, once you cultivate it, it's like having those HD inspiration glasses on and you can start to see it, it's actually all around you, but without cultivating it, it just looks a little bit... Is that coincidence? Maybe, yeah. It's really easy to dismiss.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I want to share this, this is something I talked about back in the day, a little bit on the show, but for me, it's blending intention along with inspiration and action as well, and I did this, I read a book or read a post, I garnered some inspiration from something in the first place, and I did the thing, I followed along. And it was to accomplish 100 goals in 100 days. Now, the hardest part was writing the 100 goals, that took several days to do, and it was a combination of big things, moderate things, and a lot of small things, and those small things really helped to exercise that muscle of like something is happening. And so I did it and I had things like, get a lawn mower. We needed a lawn mower at the time, get a washing machine, we needed a washing machine, but then big goals like do a television segment, I had never done that before, it was just in my clinical practice and teaching some classes at the time. And what happened within that week of writing down those goals was beyond my explanation. I literally was driving down the street, headed to the gym, and there was a practically new lawn mower with a sign that said Free Lawn mower on it.

This really happened, I wouldn't believe this. And so I drove past it for maybe like a block before my brain, like, "What?" And then I hit reverse, went back and I had an SUV I was driving, and I put that bad boy in the back of my truck and then that was that. That was the lawn mower. And the same thing, my grandmother had recently passed, and my uncle called me, he's just

like, "Hey, we've got this washing machine, I know she would want you to have it," so the washing machine showed up within that week as well. And I ended up on television, it was probably maybe two to three weeks later for the first time, and now all of these things could just be like, "Oh, those are just coincidences, it's just luck." And we can play with these acronyms, I love the acronym I got from Michael Beckwith, LUCK being Living Under Cosmic Knowledge. And there was an intention there, so I got clear on the things that I wanted, and for me, it's just like I'm still trying to science-splain it, and like the reticular activating system, reticular cortex filtering, what I'm seeing in the environment. But there's also a part of that thing in you coming in contact with each other, and so this leads into like, "Is there a little bit of energy that's intersecting with those things and putting you in proximity," and then if we look at some of the quantum dynamics, just the process of having a thought creates an influence on the world around us.

And so this starts for me to get a place of more comfortability with the concept of synchronicity, but what I wanted to ask about and to encourage other people to do is... Number one, set an intention, of course, and allow for these synchronicities to take place. I had a journal, I stopped doing this, of writing them down when these things would happen, because they would trip me out and I stopped doing it because probably because it became so normal. But also, and I want to talk to you about this part, the action part, because it didn't just come to me, I was just out in the world doing things as well. It doesn't mean you have to be doing a certain thing, because I would imagine do you have to be doing a certain thing for that thing to show up in your life, or do you just kind of start moving in the world and take in action?

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Yeah, man, it's just... Again, I think it's all embedded in our spiritual DNA, the whole path. I'm not saying that everything is pre-written necessarily, but I just think it's like GPS in the sense that there's a destination, and that destination could be learning a spiritual lesson of forgiveness or love or what have you... And maybe that's a 70-year, 80-year process. And so within that destination, there is this internal guidance, like a GPS, and with GPS in your car, it doesn't force you to go in that direction, but whenever you veer off of the direct path, what does it do? It re-routes you. It says, "Okay, it's fine, you go this way, but then the way you get back that way is to take these other turns." And I think it's a lot like that. So I think the potential to intersect with coincidence to whatever you feel inside is always there, it's always present no matter where you are, but the argument I like to introduce to the conversation is... 'Cause I think deep down, and I may be projecting, but I think deep down, everybody either agrees that there is some sort of higher intelligence or some sort of path that they're on, because we take credit for it when good things happen.

If you have a lot of abundance or if you have a lot of love, people start to become experts about this, This is what I did, I read 5 Love Languages, or I read Attached and I did these things, or I've been working out, of course. I've been meditating, of course. So it's easy to take credit when



things seem to be going your way, but what about when things go left? Now we start to look at, "Oh gosh, what in doing, I'm feeling blocked, I'm stuck and..." We start going to that realm. And what I like to do and what I'm wanting to do with this book is show people that, "Well, you're still manifesting, you're still on your path, even though it looks like you've hit a brick wall, that's still a part of what you're ultimately creating for yourself," and one of the examples that I give is a story called Phantom Delays, it's something that actually happened to me, a crazy thing, man. I was teaching yoga years, years ago in LA, and I had my commute timed out, I was in West Hollywood, and it took me, 15... It took me five minutes to drive to the place where I was teaching, so I would give myself 15 minutes and I had plenty of time to drive there, get a tea, walk upstairs, set up my music, meet people. And so this morning it was like a random Wednesday morning, 10 o'clock, there shouldn't be any traffic.

Well, there was a huge traffic jam. Backed up, bumper to bumper. It's like, "What the hell?" So of course, being the savvy LA driver that I am, I'm zig-zaging to alleys and other streets, still traffic on all these other options, so I'm just like, "Man, this is crazy," but now, I didn't leave enough time for me to be stuck in traffic, so I'm running late and I hate being late. So now I'm like working on myself like, "Oh my God, I'm late," I'm giving them permission to come late, I have this whole storyline around being late, not being perfect as a teacher, now what am I teaching. So I get to the main intersection after sitting in this traffic for 10 minutes, and then all of a sudden the traffic just clears up, and I'm looking around at the intersection, I'm like... You know, you're looking for an accident, is the president in town, was there a construction, was somebody going crazy in the middle of the road? What was the deal with the traffic? I didn't see anything. So now I'm even more pissed 'cause I had nothing to blame it on, I'm just late.

I get to the class 10 minutes late, and I'm bolting up the stairs, and then I slow down 'cause I'm the yoga teacher, so I got to be calm. Can't be seen rushing. But inside, I'm like pissed, and I'm anxious and I'm late. And I get to the room and I see all the students are in the back of the room, and there's some guys in the front of the room with brooms. And I go in there, I can feel little shards of glass underneath my flip-flops and I look up man, in the front of the class, in the front middle of the class, there's all of this... There's a whole wall of mirrors, and the middle mirror, somehow the pane of mirror dislodged right in the middle, right where I would have been sitting and came crashing down on the floor. Right where I would have been sitting. And it happened right at the top of the hour, so if I had gotten there on time, I would have been sitting right there when that big nine-foot mirror came crashing down. So that phantom traffic jam that I was cursing 15 minutes before was actually saving my life, or at least saving me from having a very bad start to the day.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We'd be calling you Mr. Glass.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Or something. Mr. Stitches. Hey you're Stitchy, come on in Stitchy, for the interview. And I'd be telling a story about how I was in the hospital for four months. No man, but... So the idea behind that story is not just the good stuff that means you're on track, it's also... When it looks like life is not going your way, it's the whole concept of rejection equals protection, which again is like a positive thought thing we see, we click double tap on, it sounds great, but those are the moments that take us out of our presence. But what if we can get into a place of inspiration where we can sit in that and understand or at least trust that, "Hey, I'm in this experience, and I've done everything I could to do my best and all of that, and so if I'm still being blocked and there's a pretty good chance that I'm being spared something much, much worse than just being in this little traffic jam." And that's something that has shown up a lot in my life as well, and I've put as many of those stories in the book as possible because I wanted people to be able to relate to those kinds of things, and when you can sit back and sit in that, then you can see things and hear things and feel things that are all around you that you would not have gotten before because you were stuck in the future or stuck in the past.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Wow, man. That's powerful, that's really powerful. There's so many things I want to ask you about and there's so many wonderful things in the book, but before I let you go, I've got to ask you about this because I know a lot of folks... It's going to be coming up that I want to follow my inspiration, I don't mind going after the different things that might show up, but I'm just so busy. There's so much going on in my life, I just don't have the time to do it. And this is one of the things in my clinical practice that I saw most often, people use as their reason, very justified, that they're too busy for... Fill in the blank. And you've got one of the stories that you talk about in the book is called "While You're Busy."

**LIGHT WATKINS:** "While You're Busy." I'm pulling it up right now.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And that one really, I love that one so much, so much, because again, it's one of the biggest reasons that we give for not accessing our great news, so let's talk about this particular one, "While You're Busy."

**LIGHT WATKINS:** So man, I came to you when I was thinking about launching my podcast, and I said, "Shawn, you got any advice for me and you were very generous with helping me out," and one of the biggest obstacles that I was having was just, "How do you have time to do all of this on top of everything else." And I think one of the misconceptions that people sometimes have is that those of us who are doing these kinds of things, that somehow life slows down for us, and the idea behind this piece, "While You're Busy," is that successful people just are more willing to do more than what the average person is willing to do. In other words, they do it while they're busy, and that's the secret, is to just do it while you're busy, 'cause life is not going to slow down any time soon. If you want to start your daily meditation practice, you want to write a book, you want to start your podcast, you're going to have to do it while you're busy.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It sounds so simple, but it also can sound impossible. How on earth can we start while we're busy?

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Well, here's the thing. Let's change the question. Let's say that you do well in your podcast, you've been doing it for a long time, how many episodes in are you? 500 or something?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Close to 500.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Close to 500 episodes, okay, so...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That sounds crazy already.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** I know you've got millions and millions of downloads, you have sponsors, you know everything, and let's say you continue going, which you probably will, and this happens and you get your studio, custom studio and all that, you're one of the biggest podcast names out there, right? You and then Joe Rogan, and then whoever else. So Spotify comes to you and offers you... Your \$200 million deal to exclusively distribute your podcast on Spotify. Now, that's where it ends up. So then let's take it back to day one, and let's say you had a proposition and someone said, "Okay, Shawn all you got to do is to start the podcast and then you'll have a \$200 million pay day in 20 years." Everybody would do it. Everybody would do it, 'cause it's like you do the math in your head and you say, "Okay, well it's going to be hard? And I'm busy, but it's \$200 million. I can help a lot of people with \$200 million. So I'll do what I have to do to get to that point." But the problem is, we don't have the benefit of knowing what's going to happen later on down the line, so what we are invited to do and what we have an opportunity to do is trust in the process that if I do my best with what I have available right now, then the next step in the plan is going to come to me right when I need it. And there's a story in the book that just came to mind. It's about Moses. I don't know if you read that one about Moses, but...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I didn't see that one.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** It's a biblical story, it's a very common story that a lot of people know, but there's one detail that most people don't know that I came across. And so this is Moses at the burning bush, we all know that story. God is speaking to Moses through this, this self-effulgent burning bush, and God basically is directing Moses... He's not asking him to, he's directing Moses to go to pharaoh and request that pharaoh let his people go, the Hebrews, who are essentially pharaoh's slaves. And so, we... I don't know about you, but I'm old enough to remember the original Moses movie by Cecil B. DeMille, Charlton Heston was the lead, he

played Moses, very charismatic and all of that, and the staff and very confident. Well, that wasn't the reality of that situation, the reality of the situation was Moses was reluctant, he was very scared and he was not sure of himself, and he was just... He was just this guy, he's a regular guy. So regular guy at a burn... It's like you being up in one of this Laurel Canyon or something or Ranyon or something, and you see this burning bush and you're getting this message supposedly from God...

We don't really know. And no one's going to believe you. And God is saying, You have to go to Vladimir Putin and tell him to release all the oil or else. You're going to go to the most dangerous person in all of Russia and demand that he let go of his property and basically give it over to you. Now, here's the other component to that. Scholars have now said that Moses had a speech impediment. Moses was a stutterer.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So he wasn't even fully Moses yet. He was like... People called the little Mo. "Little Mo, you suck it to a blow mo"

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Slow Mo.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Slow Mo.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** So imagine you have a stutter and God through the burning bush is telling you to go to this... The most dangerous man in the land, and demand that he let his property go. So naturally, Moses is like, "I think you got the wrong person. You don't want me. I wasn't even supposed be here today. I don't know who was supposed to be here, I can go find somebody," and God's like, "No, no, no. You're exactly who I wanted." So then once Moses kind of gets his head around this idea, he asks the next most sensible question that anybody would ask. "Alright, let's suppose just hypothetically, I was able to pull this off and get in front of Pharaoh, what am I supposed to say?" And God said, "Don't worry about that. Just get there and then you'll know what to say it." And that's what we all do, that's the game we all play with ourselves. We have these big ideas and these dreams and these passions, and we fantasize about it, but we don't think we have everything that we would need in order to really pull it off. So we talk ourselves out of it.

We let ourselves off the hook. And so the whole idea behind this is to remind us that you don't need to know the whole thing, you just have to know enough to take the first step, just get in front of Pharaoh... Whatever your version of that is, whatever scares the hell out of you, whatever you don't think you're qualified to do, just take the first step in that direction, and then the next step is going to get revealed to you, and that next step is going to lead you to the third step and the fourth and like that. And before you know it, you'll have your podcast, you'll have your book, you'll have your class, you'll have your family, you'll have your garden,

whatever your thing is. But you got to take that first step. And there's another saying that I always remembered, it's not in the book, but it's something that I just walk around with all the time, it's from the book Conversations with God by Neale Donald Walsch, where God tells Neale Donald Walsch in that book, he says, "Look, you can relax to the extent that you can trust in life."

You are relaxed to the extent that you trust in life, if you're anxious and all of that, that's an indication that you're not trusting in your own process, and the trust in the process means you just take it one step at a time. Once you start projecting beyond that step, you get into anxious mode. Pull back, just take a few deep breaths, what can you do right now with what you have and that's it. It can be that simple when we just keep it in the moment.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So many great people that we say their names, have given us something very similar, Martin Luther King Jr said, you don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** He was petrified in the beginning when they nominated him to lead the Montgomery Bus Boycott, 26 years old, new family, didn't want to be in the front, reluctant, just like Moses was, petrified. But here's the other thing, once you step into that role, you come to realize, I'm actually not so bad at this, I'm actually pretty good at this. Next thing you know, you're throwing down staffs, just turning into snakes, you're making it rain toads, you're doing all kinds of crazy stuff.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Same thing with Martin Luther King Jr. They didn't call him that at first, it was Marty Mar. Then he became, by...

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Gandhi. Petrified in the beginning. Gandhi G.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This is so incredible, man, thank you so much for sharing your wisdom.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** 100%, man, thanks for offering your platform for me to share. If you hadn't taken all the steps you've taken and all the trusting you've done, then we wouldn't be having this conversation. So I appreciate you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I'm so grateful, man. And if you can, two things, number one, let folks know where they can pick up your book, knowing where to look, it's available now, and also let them know where you can connect them with how to just get more Light. I love following you on social as well, so please share.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** I'm at Light Watkins everywhere, including on the website [lightwatkins.com](http://lightwatkins.com), where you can see the book and get bonuses and all that wonderful stuff.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Awesome. And books... Also, everywhere books are sold as well.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Everywhere books are sold.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Perfect, perfect. My man, thank you again so much for sharing your wisdom and can't wait to see what you do next.

**LIGHT WATKINS:** Thanks for sharing the love, brother.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Light Watkins, everybody. Thank you so much for tuning in to the show today. I hope you got a lot of value out of this. There's so many big takeaways, one of them is the illusion of discipline, and it's really about putting yourself in position where discipline does not become necessary, putting yourself in proximity, creating conditions to where the habits that we want become automatic. There's always going to be a struggle point to change our habits, but we can shorten that and we can make that turbulence so much less turbulent by putting ourselves in proximity. And so that's one of the big takeaways. And also, of course, taking that first step and moving away from our conscious prisons that we put into our minds about being too busy, about not knowing what necessarily to do to get to that in-destination, but as Martin Luther King Jr stated, You don't have to see the whole staircase, you just take the first step, and we've got so many people who've reiterated this, the same tenet over and over again, some of the most successful people in the world.

They didn't know how they were going to do it, they didn't know how they were going to get there, they just took the first step. They take steps in that direction, and that's what it's really all about. And you are in the driver's seat of your own life, you get to decide where that destination is, and I love his analogy of the GPS, wherever it is that you're meant to be, you might veer off the path, but you're going to get re-routed, but it's most important is to just have that in-destination in mind. What do you want? What do you want your life to look like? Who do you want to become? You are the leading actor, the producer, the writer, the set director, all the different parts in the movie of your life. But again, so many times we outsource that to other people, the supporting characters in the story to basically tell us what's possible for us, to basically tell us, what we can do and what we cannot do. And you are in the driver's seat. So many great takeaways again, and if you got a lot of value out of this, make sure to share it out with the people that you care about.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You can tag me, I'm @shawnmodel on Instagram, you can tag Light as well. He's @lightwatkins, and I'm on Twitter as well, @shawnmodel and at The Model Health

Show on Facebook. Make sure to share it up, share the love, and we've got some epic powerful shows 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. And for more after the show, make sure to head over to [themodelhealthshow.com](http://themodelhealthshow.com), that's where you can find all of the show notes, you could find transcriptions, videos for each episode, and if you 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.