

THE MODEL HEALTH SHOW

EPISODE 514

The Science Of Self-Belief, Neurobics, & Taking Control Of Your Life

With Guest Mel Robbins

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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 to me today. Have you ever thought about hijacking your own life? I'm not talking about Grand Theft Auto. I'm talking about actually getting in and taking control of your mental steering wheel. Now, here's the rub. Oftentimes in our society, we can sort of outsource a driver. We can get an Uber or a Lyft mentally where somebody else is driving us to the destination. Now, with an Uber or a Lyft, there's still it's an agreed-upon destination. So maybe that's okay. Maybe they might be a little bit weird asking for, "Would you like some mints?" Or all these random phone chargers, whatever the case might be. "Here's a little bottle of water, my friend." Alright, whatever the case might be. It might be a scenario like that where it's just some weird, it's a weird experience. But on a greater level, on a more foundational level for our world right now, we can be outsourcing a driver who is going completely off the map, who's driving to a destination that you didn't agree to go to.

And what I'm talking about is a hijacking of our brain that can be taking place via the media. Or that can take place via people who are in our lives, who are in a position of influence for us that might be knowingly or unknowingly disempowering us in creating or affirming disempowering beliefs about us and what we're capable of. So, we're having our minds hijacked all the time, whether we realize it or not. But that all ends when you learn how to get in there and to take control of your own mind. So, there is not a better person on the planet to talk about the actionable ways of making some of these things happen than our special guest today. And she's somebody who really takes some of the most solid and fascinating science and putting it into, sometimes very strange, but very effective actionable tools for us to really step into our power. And this is needed right now more than ever, any dose of empowerment, but also things that are backed by science, also things that we can utilize that are actionable, are needed today. Because I want to equip you and help you to keep adding things to your superhero utility belt so that you are well equipped to handle any joker that comes your way, alright. And this is our opportunity to really shift our own world. It starts with us.

You might have heard this statement before, that "The outer world is a direct reflection of your inner world." But take control of your inner world first so that we can then out-picture that to the environment around us. I'll picture that to the community around us. I'll picture that to the world around us. Alright, so really, really excited about this episode. And before most episodes of The Model Health Show, true story, what I do... I don't know if you've ever seen this television show or maybe you played the video game, I've never played the video game, called The Witcher. Alright, The Witcher. Now, it's a show that's on Netflix. They took it

from a video game, which they do that a lot. They take a video game and turn it into a movie. They've done that with everything from Street Fighter to Mortal Combat as well, is a more recent one, and Sonic The Hedgehog is another one really family-friendly, pretty good movie as well. They haven't done Super Mario Brothers. That'd probably be a pretty weird movie, to see a live-action Super Mario Brothers. But my point is, this Witcher film, it's basically this guy, he has this Witcher training, but he takes this little vial of something, who knows what's in that vial, and then he kind of taps into this is his super Witcher potential.

And so, before the Model Health Show, I actually have this little vial, and this isn't some magical potion of who knows what. It is something that's based on incredibly fascinating and powerful science that's actually based on things that have been utilized for centuries, and it's affirmed in a study. And this was published in Advanced Biomedical Research found that. And here's what's in my little vial of empowerment, is royal jelly. They found that royal jelly has the potential to improve spatial learning, so your body in space, your body being able to understand itself in your mind and to operate within its environment. And this is something that tends to decline as we get older if we're not taking care in developing our spatial memory, which this is an incredibly important ingredient to being human. And really, our bodies and our brain, that intersection, and your body being able to understand itself and to modulate and manage itself within your environment. This is great for things like sports, but also just day-to-day, being able to maneuver through the world and not bump into stuff, but that's kind of more of a blatant example of that. But really just being able to be aware of your body in space, so spatial learning.

Royal jelly's been proven to improve your spatial learning, also was found to improve your attention span, which we could definitely use more of today and it was found to improve overall memory. In addition to this... And this is the thing about real, whole-food-based nutrition. Things that have centuries of documented use that now our modern-day science is basically affirming how these things are so remarkable. It's not just going to be good for one thing, so these cognitive benefits are remarkable, but also, it's been found to be anti-microbial, anti-tumor, and anti-inflammatory. Royal jelly has been found to facilitate the differentiation of all of our various types of brain cells. Incredibly important. And to top it off, researchers in Japan discovered that royal jelly has the power to stimulate neurogenesis in the memory center of the brain, stimulate neurogenesis in the hippocampus. So, this is why I'm taking that vial right before jumping into the Model Health Show just to give me that little edge mentally for my attention, clarity. And it's a really kind of cool process as well, so it's based on royal jelly.

And royal jelly, another thing about royal jelly that I don't talk about enough is that it's a great source of acetylcholine. Acetylcholine is a neurotransmitter that's found in both the central and peripheral nervous systems. And in the central nervous system, specifically in the brain, acetylcholine is a major player in our attention, in our memory, and other executive functions.

So again, it's rich. It's one of the rare dense sources of acetylcholine that is truly... It's one of the things that is a part of neuro-nutrition, because your brain has a very selective diet, because of the blood-brain barrier allowing only certain nutrients to make its way into the brain. And so, acetylcholine is something that your body can kind of build with some other things, but to get it from an actual source, a real whole food source, if we're talking about royal jelly, this phenomenal B product, royal jelly... Again, centuries of documented use. But in addition to that, that's not the only thing that's in this incredible formula. We've got royal jelly, but we've also got Bacopa, which is one of my all-time favorite things.

Bacopa and this is a randomized double-blind placebo-controlled human trial published in 2016, found that after just six weeks of utilizing Bacopa, test subjects were able to significantly improve speed of visual information processing, improve learning rate, improve memory consolidation and even decrease anxiety in the study participants. We've got royal jelly. We've got Bacopa. B. Smart, that's the name of the formula from my all-time favorite source for all things honey and royal jelly. They're doing things right. They're actually testing for common pesticides and heavy metals that are coming through with conventional bee products to make sure no nefarious substances are coming along with these remarkable superfoods. Go to beekeepersnaturals.com. That's B-E-E-K-E-E-P-E-R-Snaturals.com/model. Get yourself B. Smart, and also check out their incredible array of superfood, honeys, their propolis spray. Phenomenal. And you're going to get 15% off. Again, go to beekeepersnaturals.com/model. You're going to get 15% off. Now, let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

ITUNES REVIEW: Another five-star review titled, “My Favorite Podcast Ever” by VA Yankee. “The Model Health Show is my most favorite podcast. Shawn is so engaging and real. I appreciate the way he researches everything, making me feel like I can believe what he's saying. Please keep up your work, Shawn. Everyone has so much to learn from you.”

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome. Thank you so much for sharing that and shoutout to everybody in VA. I appreciate you so much for taking the time to leave that review over on Apple Podcast. And if you have to do so, please pop over to Apple Podcast and leave a review for the Model Health Show. And on that note, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day. Our guest today is New York Times Best Selling author, Mel Robbins. She's one of the leading voices in personal development and transformation, and her work includes the global phenomenon, The 5 Second Rule, this hit book, and also four number-one bestselling audiobooks and number one podcast on Audible's platform. Her groundbreaking work on behavior change has been translated into 36 languages and is used by healthcare professionals, veterans' organizations, and the world's leading brands to inspire people to be more confident, effective and fulfilled.

And as one of the most widely booked and followed public speakers in the world, Mel coaches more than 60 million people online every month, and the videos featuring her work have more than a billion views online, including her phenomenal TED Talk, which is the first place that I saw her. And now, in this episode, we're going to be talking about her new project and the science really blew me away. Very surprising, hadn't heard anything like it before. But again, I want to equip you with more and more things for your superhero utility belt to really access your power and to truly create the life that you desire and deserve right now. So, let's jump into this conversation with the amazing Mel Robbins. Mel Robbins, welcome to the Model Health Show.

MEL ROBBINS: Well, thank you. I'm super fired up to be here. Are you ready? There's no seatbelts in these chairs.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I am. Well, it didn't matter if I was ready or not. You're just going to really blow our minds today because you already have even before we got started. And I got to know your superhero origin story. I know you're from the Midwest like me, but you having a career, you decided, "I'm going to go to law school and make that a career and then becoming one of the top..."

MEL ROBBINS: Okay. Well, hold on a second. You're giving me too much credit already, way too much credit already. I did not know what to do with my life when I graduated from college, so I did what a lot of us do, I followed the person I was dating like a little puppy. And I moved to DC and the first... I couldn't find a job, so I went to a temp agency, and they stuck me in a law firm working as a paralegal and I hated that job. But then the pressure of watching other people figure their lives out by the people around me, as other paralegals started applying to law school, the guy I was dating at the time started applying to graduate school, and I thought, "I'm going to get left behind. I guess I better apply to law school, 'cause I don't know what else to do." And that's how I ended up being a lawyer. And once I got to law school, I hated it, hated it.

But here's the thing about, I think what's really difficult in life, is that you can find yourself jumping into something because you don't know what else to do, and then it's like falling into the Colorado River and the current just takes you in a direction and it becomes very hard to try to swim to shore and to get out of the current that you're in. Because everybody else seems to be moving in this direction, it's an act of defiance to go, "I actually don't like this, but I'm going to get to shore." The funny thing is, though, is that I went to law school, I kept saying, "I'll use this for something else, I'll use this for something else." And I ended up the last year finding a mock trial. And my first job out of law school is a job that I would still be doing if I had not met my husband and he got an opportunity in Boston. My first job out of law school, a lot of people don't know this, is I was a criminal defense attorney for Legal Aid in New York.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That sounds like an intense environment.

MEL ROBBINS: I was a public defender. And so, if you think about what you do for a living and what I do for a living in terms of sharing wisdom, tools, advice, experiences that help people change their lives for the better when you're a public defender, you are meeting people in crisis. And the most interesting aspect about that job is that the person that I was representing didn't pick me, they got stuck with me. And so that job was a masterclass in building relationships with somebody like that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's powerful. And this is one of the things that you teach, and even bringing this up with me is that these things are leading you to something else, but we also... There are so many similarities, and it is freaking me out. I went to school pre-med, not because... And I literally, I hated it, and it was because I thought I should do it. I didn't have any real examples in my environment, I got it from television, watching The Cosby Show, I was like, "Oh, they look happy, doctor and a lawyer, I'll be a doctor." And I detested it, but it led me to where I am today, so it's so fascinating.

MEL ROBBINS: Okay, let me stop, let me stop, let me stop. Okay, 'cause we're going to keep spinning on this.

SHAWN STEVENSON: When I got out, I got out of it. I went in a completely different direction, I was like, "Well, I'll just do business school."

MEL ROBBINS: No, you didn't. No, you didn't.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And it brought me back. It brought me back and it's a thread here.

MEL ROBBINS: So, I want to unpack this, because this is a really important piece of advice that we're both talking about. Now, the way that I talk about this is I call this a high-five attitude, it's grounded in optimism and faith. Sitting right here, you can look back and you can see medical school as a dot on the map of your life leading you to this moment. I can see law school as a dot on the map of my life leading me to this moment. I now advocate for real people to break through the holding them back, to find the power within, to take control of their lives. You do the same thing with people's health. What I'm here to tell you is so powerful, is you can do that same thing of looking back and connecting the dots and stand in this moment, no matter how difficult your life is, no matter how the circumstances are, no matter how much regret you have, you can stand in this moment and you can teach yourself how to look forward from this moment and say, "This moment is a dot in the map of my life and it is preparing me

for something amazing that's coming." And when you can stand in that moment, you can face absolutely anything that is happening in your life.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, absolutely. So, I think it's getting ourselves to that place where we do the thing, and where I first was introduced to you was via your TED Talk, which was one of the most epic TED Talks of all time. The vibes are amazing. We'll put it for everybody in the show that hasn't seen it. When you jumped off stage in heels as well, by the way, don't think I didn't notice that. But you mentioned that a lot of times we're just going through the motions and we're living by this dirty F word. So, can you talk a little bit about that?

MEL ROBBINS: The F word's fine, fine. I'm fine. And actually, no, you're not. You're unhappy in your life. You're beating yourself up every day when you look in the mirror. You're living with regrets. You're talking to yourself out of what you want. Fine is the F word, because when you settle, when you say that you're fine, whether it's in the area of health or sleep or whatever, or whether it's about you, holding yourself back, you continuing to date losers, you telling yourself you're not good enough. Settling for fine is basically a death sentence, in my opinion. I want to tell you a funny story about that TED Talk, though. Because I think one of the big things that hold people back from going after what they want is they sit and they watch your show, and they're like, "Oh, man, I'm never going to be that successful." "Oh, that's so fancy." "Oh, look at how many followers he has." Or they look at my TED Talk and they're like, "27 million views? Holy smokes."

Let me tell you the back story on that because things are not how they appear. So, in 2011, I had liens on my house to the tune of \$800,000. I was three years into using something that I created called The 5 Second Rule, something I invented during the worst moment of my life when my husband's restaurants were failing, I was unemployed, 41 years old with three kids under the age of 10, and my anxiety about our financial crisis was so bad it would pin me to the bed, I could not get out of bed.

I invent The 5 Second Rule, drunk one night on bourbon, as an idea to launch myself out of bed like a rocket ship so that I would not be in the bed when the anxiety, the overwhelm, the fear pinned me there. Five, four, three, two, one, that's basically the 5 Second Rule. You got an idea, you got to move, five, four, three, two, one. The thing works. It is instant motivation, instant courage, it has a tremendous amount of science moving you from the subconscious part of the brain and activating the pre-frontal cortex to give you immediate control over what you think can do next. I use this sucker in secret for three years and turned my life around, but we're still \$800,000 in debt. We are still struggling to make the ends meet. I am nowhere, by any means, out of the gate in terms of the problems in my life. I'm still not out of the gate, by the way. That tends to be how I learn. I up my life and then I have to figure out how to fix it. That's Mel Robbin's way of motivation.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And helping others along the way.

MEL ROBBINS: Yes, correct. And so, it's 2011, and TEDx is not a thing, okay. Let's be honest, TEDx started then, and my college roommate's friend was putting on the first TEDx and they were looking for somebody who would change their jobs a million times to talk about career change. So, my college roommate's like, "Oh, you got to come out." She's like crazy, she's like a butterfly that darts from public defender to corporate litigation to the digital ad business to this, to that, to the other thing. And so, they call me and they are offering two plane tickets to San Francisco and to put us up at the Saint Regis. And I look at my husband and I'm like, "Free vacation, babe, let's go." Now, I had never given a speech in my entire life, I get that I was a public defender, but it's very different to stand in a courtroom and talk to a judge and a court officer and 12 citizens and a jury, then to stand in an auditorium on a stage and talk to 800 people? And back then, they didn't really prepare people. You know, they kind of did a little rehearsal, you got 20 minutes.

So, what you're seeing in that 21-minute long TEDx talk is Mel Robbins having an anxiety attack for 21 minutes. If you look closely, there is a neck rash all over my chest that comes on at minute one. I jumped off that stage completely disassociated not knowing what the hell I was going to do. I then get back on that stage, I'm... Like my hearts like this, which is why I'm darting all over the place. I am so disassociated that at the... At minute 19, I go...

And I forget how to end the speech. The speech was not about the five-second rule. I didn't even know why the five-second worked, so I was not going to get on a stage and tell a bunch of strangers, "If you count backward from five, it'll change your life." That sounds ridiculous. And so, I literally forget how to end the speech and I go, "Oh, oh, by the way, there's this thing I do, I call it the five-second rule, the moment you have an instinct to do something, you got to move within five seconds. Thank you very much." I think I even gave out my email address on that stage and then I leave.

A year goes by, they put it online. I don't even know. Another year goes by and now it's racked up a million views, and somebody starts messaging me on Facebook going, "Would you come talk to this thing?" And I'm like, "Oh, were you in San Francisco?" They're like, "No, I saw it online." I'm like, "Online?" And that's how it all began. Is that not crazy?

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is blowing my freaking mind, so this was something totally new for you, I was just like, "Oh, she's a seasoned veteran, she's been..." What?

MEL ROBBINS: Oh, hell no! I literally did not say... I did not wake up one day and be like, "I am going to become the most booked motivational speaker for women in the world. I am going

to set out and write books and I... " No. I got into personal development kicking and screaming. I think God, the universe, somebody else had a much bigger plan and said, "It is time for the world to know about the five-second rule, and this crazy lady over here is going to be the messenger for this thing." Because I do not believe it is mine, I believe it is a gift to the world, because when you count backward 5-4-3-2-1, you interrupt subconscious programming in your mind that is holding you back and you open up your prefrontal cortex, giving you immediate control over what you think and do next. Do you know there are more than 111 people who have stopped themselves from committing suicide because of the five-second rule? Veterans' organizations are using it to reprogram triggers associated with PTSD, pediatricians use it to help kids interrupt the thoughts and the nervous system responses that cause you to spiral in anxiety. And I'm so proud of it 'cause it's free, it's sticky, it's easy to remember and it works every time you use it... And what's so...

And I'm so passionate about it because this High 5 Habit thing is the exact same kind of thing, it sounds so stupid, it is so simple, and it works the first time you use it, and the science is like... Bananas.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Oh my gosh, listen to see... I literally just watched it again yesterday, and I remember that part where you're just like, "Oh, by the way... "

MEL ROBBINS: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now, to hear this, it's just like, these are the... Thank you so much for sharing this.

MEL ROBBINS: Of course!

SHAWN STEVENSON: Because people seeing it, we tend to, especially today, we tend to see the things in a superficial way, we don't know what goes into it. And to know that you basically powered yourself through that moment and all the doors that it eventually opened, that's just phenomenal. And I got to say this, so this was 2011?

MEL ROBBINS: Yeah, 10 years ago.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, I did a TED Talk in 2011 as well.

MEL ROBBINS: Awesome.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Same weird coincidence, it's freaking me out more.

MEL ROBBINS: Yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And from that moment, that's... Really, that was when The Model Health Show, this show that you're on right now, that was the first seed, was me going to that event and speaking at that event. If I hadn't done that, I wouldn't be here with you right now.

MEL ROBBINS: Amazing. So, we are so aligned. I'm going to say something else; I'm going to go right on the record, you are going to point back to this interview with Mel Robbins today, you and I talking in the future and go, "That was the moment that something massive pivoted and it led to this major thing that you're doing now." I profoundly believe that because of the number of intersections that you and I have, and it is so important that you be open to that kind of "sign seeing" and to claim it and say, "This is evidence that something incredible is happening." And believe it because that is what will pull you through your fears and your doubt to lean into something new.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, being a scientist, that evidence, I try... I have to mansplain it a little bit to myself, but this goes back to simple principles that you actually talk about in this new book, like what's happening with your reticular activating system.

MEL ROBBINS: Yes, yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Let's talk about that a little bit.

MEL ROBBINS: Alright. Well, one of the things that you and I also share, by the way, is an Albert Einstein quote that we both love, which is, "If you can't explain something simply, you don't understand it."

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes, I live by that.

MEL ROBBINS: Yes. Well, first, let me talk about how I discovered this High 5 Habit thing, and then let's get to the reticular activity system, which I like to call, "The hairnet on your brain." So... Well, visual, right? Do you not now have a visual? The live network, like electrical...

SHAWN STEVENSON: I've got... Yes, I'm a very visual person. I see it.

MEL ROBBINS: A hairnet on your brain. So...

SHAWN STEVENSON: I was thinking more of like a lunch lady, but.

MEL ROBBINS: A lunch lady, sure, we'll take the lunch lady hairnet too. So let me just tell you the story of the High 5 Habit, because then it'll make sense for everybody around the hairnet on the brain. So, I did not intend to write this book. Let's start there. After the success of the five-second rule, I got all up in my head and thought, "Okay, I got to have a book that's successful again, and it's got to be the five decisions, it's going to be hmm." And I wrote literally three or four different books that were all, really bad books, and that's how you usually figure out what's good, is by starting, by doing something really bad. And so, I find myself in the pandemic... And this is not a pandemic book. Everybody's got a story about quarantine, everybody's life got completely turned upside down, there were tremendous blessings from the pandemic, like for our family, for example. Thankfully, nobody died from it, and we got to spend time with our adult children that we will never get back again. Period. But my business in the very beginning went into a free fall. I had been hosting a daytime talk show, we were filming at CBS Broadcast Center, it got canceled with five minutes notice when they found COVID, and so I was fired from my dream job.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh my God.

MEL ROBBINS: Let's just be honest about what that is.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I don't know if you know this but...

MEL ROBBINS: Is this another one?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Your producer reached out. I was supposed to be your last guest on your final episode.

MEL ROBBINS: Oh!

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

MEL ROBBINS: So, there's another connection, see?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright, I'm done, I'm leaving. Alright. Okay. As you were saying, let's continue...

MEL ROBBINS: Something awesome's happening, let's call the signs everybody.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Continue.

MEL ROBBINS: So, then every single speech starts to cancel, of course. Then Houghton Mifflin, who was my publisher at the time, canceled my book contract, my fault because I had not produced a manuscript in over a year, which meant I had to return money I had already spent. Then my kids come home from college and like everybody else, everybody is in a free fall, emotionally, anxiety, panic-stricken, the whole team goes virtual, that I manage, and everybody's mental health is going down the drain and I start started having flashbacks to 2008 when Chris and I nearly lost everything. And I found myself one morning, I walked into the bathroom, I'm standing there in my underwear, I am leaning against the bathroom sink, and this is a moment that I think everybody can relate to. I'm brushing my teeth and I catch my reflection in the mirror, and I think, "God, you look awful, you look exhausted. Your neck is saggy. One boob is hanging down lower than the other. Your gray hair is coming in. Woman, you are tired." And I felt tired, I felt the weight of responsibility and sadness on my shoulders. And then of course, once you have one negative thought, it's like lint in a dryer, it starts collecting.

And so, then I think, "Oh my God, I got up late and my Zoom calls in eight minutes, and the dog's at my feet." I hadn't walked the dog yet, and I just wanted to check out, I just wanted to go to the couch and lay down, I did not want to have to deal with the responsibilities of my life, I was so overwhelmed. And I know everybody can relate to this moment. And even though I am one of the most booked motivational speakers in the world, I couldn't think of a thing to say to myself. And so, as corny as it sounds, I literally found myself raising my hand and I gave myself a high five in the mirror. Cheeseballs. But I'll tell you something like flipped. I was kind of like, "Okay." I felt my shoulder, I'm like, "Okay, I can do this. Get back in the game, Mel, let's go." That was it, that was it. The next morning, this was when the next weird thing happened. I woke up and I immediately thought about that moment in the mirror, and here's how I would describe it: You know how if you and I were going to meet for a cup of coffee and...

For me, if I'm about to walk in and see you, I'm getting excited 'cause I'm about to see you. When I wake up that second morning, I'm actually thinking about that moment in the mirror, and this idea of seeing and being with myself. Now look, I'm 52 years old. I probably have spent the first 45 years of my life either criticizing the woman I saw in on the mirror or ignoring her. So, I get into the mirror and there I'm... I'm with myself and research, new research out of the University of Florida shows that if you have an intentional moment in the morning of reflection about how you're going to show up for the day, it changes your mood, your productivity, it changes your impact on people. And so, I stood there with myself, and I really looked at myself and I raised my hand again. Now here's where it starts to get crazy, I know you're a science guy, so let me just lay some science on you because this is freaking bananas. First of all, it is impossible to high-five yourself and think, "I." It's impossible. It's impossible to high-five yourself and think, "Today is going to be a day." Neurologically impossible.

And let me tell you why. You have high-fived other people for your entire life, tell me what a high five means when you give it to somebody, or they give it to you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome. Good job. You're amazing. Let's go. All those things.

MEL ROBBINS: Yeah, keep going. If somebody's attitude's going down, you give them him a high five, it lifts them him back up, all of that messaging that is affiliated and associated with the physical movement of raising your hand, this is a field of study called neurobics. I didn't make that word up, this is about neuroplasticity and neuro pathways and the aerobic movement of an arm being married together, all of that subconscious messaging is stored right here in your basal ganglia from a lifetime of doing that. I believe you; I love you. We got this, I celebrate you, I see you. Keep going. Come on, here we go. So, when you raise your hand to your own reflection, it activates all that messaging and marries it with your own reflection. Is that not crazy? Silence is the critic and starts to reprogram the neuro pathways in your mind, and because it is associated with physical movement... What we know based on research is the fastest way to create new neural pathways is an unexpected physical movement married with a thought pattern.

So that's just the beginning of this. So, I did this for a couple of weeks, I started to feel my mood lift, I started to feel myself feeling optimistic and positive, I had my high five attitude back on like this moment's preparing me, "Just stay with it, Mel. Keep your head up. You got this. You can face this, I know this is hard, but keep going, woman." And so, I post a photo on my story, and within an hour there were 100 plus people that had high-fived themselves with their kids, all over the world, by themselves, and I thought, "Okay, there's something here." And so that's when I dug into the research. First, I talked to our audience, what were you feeling? And what they had to say was profound, and the second thing I did is I picked up the phone and started talking to some of the world's leading researchers in habits and neuroscience and brain and behavior, and the motivational power of a high five is not only documented, it is irrefutable.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Let's talk about that because there was one study that was done on school-age children.

MEL ROBBINS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Let's talk about that. That one is what really got me...

MEL ROBBINS: Oh, I know, right. So, you have two kids, right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: I have three.

MEL ROBBINS: Oh, three kids? Okay. How old are your kids?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Two still living with me.

MEL ROBBINS: Okay, so how old are your kids?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Two and they're... My oldest son is actually turning 21 in a couple of days.

MEL ROBBINS: Congratulations!

SHAWN STEVENSON: My youngest son's birthday is today.

MEL ROBBINS: Oh my gosh! That's fantastic!

SHAWN STEVENSON: He's turning 10 and my daughter is the oldest, so she's... Yeah.

MEL ROBBINS: Fabulous. Well, this works with all ages, but the study that you're talking about is super cool. So, they wanted to know, what's the best way to motivate somebody through a challenging problem or a challenging situation? So, they divide kids into three groups and they give them a very challenging problem to work on. And they use three forms of motivation, one is verbal praise in terms of praising a trait, we know this fixed... The fixed mindset, "Hey, you are so smart. You're doing a great job." That is the least motivating way to help somebody through a challenging problem. The second group got the growth mindset, which is to praise somebody verbally for their effort, "Oh my gosh, I see you working so hard. I see your grit, I see you putting in the effort, great job." That certainly works better than telling somebody that they're smart because you anchor them down in something they control, which is the amount of effort they put in. The third group of kids working on a challenging problem got a simple high five from the researcher. No words, no nothing, just a high five. Those kids that got the high five, they outworked everybody else, they had a better attitude, they worked through more challenges, they like 5xed the whole thing.

And the answer is, why? Here's why: A high five communicates even more than, "I believe in you. We got this. Keep going, I celebrate you, I love you." A high five validates your most profound fundamental emotional needs. Every single human being on the planet has three emotional needs, you need to be seen, you need to feel heard, and you need to feel celebrated and accepted for the unique individual that you are. When you receive a high five, especially during a challenging moment, you feel seen, you also feel heard because you feel like that high

five represents, "They get that I'm going down." And you feel celebrated. It is a shared moment of emotional affirmation.

And so, we have, for our entire lives, looked outside of ourselves for that, we chase likes, we chase validations, we think if we're dating or married to the right person, it means that we're lovable. The truth is you got to learn how to give that to yourself. And I am here to tell you that if you create a habit in the morning, just habit stack it, right with brushing your teeth where you stand there, you be with yourself, you set an intention for how you're going to show up today, what game are you going to play and then you seal that sucker with a high five, you are literally building in the habit of self-validation, self-support, self-respect, self-esteem, self-confidence, self-celebration. It is so freaking powerful.

And I am so passionate about this, not only because I'm standing on the research of people way smarter than me, but I am seeing the millions of followers that I have profoundly changed their lives. A woman, for example... Check this out. A woman for example who had dysmorphia for 20 years could not look at herself in the mirror. Just five days of doing this, can now look at herself and grin because she's not seeing a body, she's seeing the human being. We received the most amazing testimonial from a woman who was in a domestic violence shelter for battered women, she wrote to us about how she has severe childhood trauma, she's just escaped this very violent relationship, she has nothing but herself and her two kids, and by looking in the mirror and setting an intention and seeing herself and being with herself and high-fiving herself, she said, "I am realizing, at least I have me."

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

MEL ROBBINS: I can have my own back.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, I love this. It's the stories married with the science as well, you really speak my language. It's so amazing. That particular study, and it was published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, by the way, we put the study for folks, it surprised me that the affirmative words weren't more impactful, but then it made sense immediately because, in a sense, you have to believe it...

MEL ROBBINS: Yes, well...

SHAWN STEVENSON: When we're talking about... Yeah, so go ahead.

MEL ROBBINS: Yeah. Okay, so what you're talking about... So, we're going to talk about two topics based on this question, okay. So, you just said it's surprising that the affirmative words weren't more impactful. Here's why: Number one, affirmations and mantras don't work unless

you believe them. So, if you hate the way you look, you cannot stand in front of a mirror and be like, "I love myself, I love myself, I love..." Because you don't yet. There are two reasons why the high five works, though, because number one, you don't have to think or say anything, because the messaging is already programmed here with the physical movement. And then there's a second reason, and this was just validated by Dr. Daniel Amen, who I know you know. And so... The world's leading brain expert was 65,000 brain scans. So, I just met with him about the High 5 Habit, and here are two really killer things about the High 5 Habit and why it's so impactful to high five yourself. So, this motion, and this motion, the high five, we've been raising our arms in celebration. What do you do when you score a touchdown? "Whoa!" What do you do when you cross a finish line? "Ah!" What do you do when the band that you love comes out? "Ah!"

What do you do when you see somebody you love? "Give me a hug!" Right? When you high-five somebody you're raising your arm, the raised hand, physical movement is wired into your nervous system as a celebratory, "Whoa!" Kind of thing. And so, it gives you this jolt of energy when you do it, whether you feel energized or not, and more importantly, it also gives you a dopamine drip. And so, in addition to the subconscious messaging, the physical movement impacts your nervous system, it also gives you a little dopamine drip, which boosts your confidence and your mood immediately, which makes you more receptive to feeling that positive messaging. What the hell? This one movement has so much that's just... You can unpack with it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, there is this, obviously, a strong neuro-association that we've done this throughout our lives so often, and then marrying that with this... Again, the science on this is nuts, so I want to come back to this in a second, but I want to reiterate a point here. So, you mentioned some things that we require for emotional development, we need to feel seen, we need to feel acknowledged, we need to feel like we matter and so... But that self-acknowledgment or even self-celebration in our culture, we are oftentimes taught to not do those things.

MEL ROBBINS: Always. Not even oftentimes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Let's talk about that a little bit.

MEL ROBBINS: Well, I think this is conditioned into human development. So, in our family systems... Part of the problem with being in the business that we're in and understanding the science of things is every single day I do something and I think, "Oh my God, that's going to be three years of therapy for my kid," they're literally getting the messaging that there's something wrong with you, or "You better do it this way or I'm not going to like you." And so, you get taught to fit in and fold into whatever system you're in.

And so, you start suppressing your need to be seen and to express yourself in order to get along, in order to fit in, in order to not piss off mom or dad, in order to receive the love and attention that you need. And so, I feel like you go through this mode in life where you're born perfect, whole and complete, beautifully designed to become an adult, to grow. Nobody has to be told how to crawl, it's in your DNA to watch what's going on around you and to just keep going and trying and going and trying until you figure it out.

Every baby, when they can crawl towards a mirror, they don't look in the mirror-like, "Ugh, look at those fat thighs." They literally put their hands up on it and they love their reflection. It is encoded in your being to love and celebrate yourself. But what happens is you start getting told no, no, no, no, no, you get told to shut up, to sit down, to be quiet, to speak, to be seen and not heard. You start to see who's in, who's out, you start to long to belong, and so then all of a sudden you are suppressing your natural desire to express yourself and to be yourself in order to fit in with everybody else.

And it's normal. We all do it. We all betray ourselves this way. And then as you become an adult, you start to feel like I feel disconnected to myself, I feel like there's something missing here, and what's missing is that deep connection with yourself. And what I'm here to say is when you start to learn how to fulfill your own emotional needs, to see yourself, to celebrate yourself, to support yourself no matter what... A lot of people have a tremendous amount of regrets. So, one of the things that happen when people first try this High 5 Habit... And by the way, that's just one of dozens of tools in this book that are all about habits of support and celebration, all about bringing you from low point to a higher point, all about optimism, all about confidence and courage.

But when you first try this first habit, you stand in front of the mirror, you're going to do one or two things, you're either going to get it immediately and feel the boost and be like, "I cannot believe I've robbed myself of this forever, I am never going to not do this," or you feel massive resistance, and this is the part that's important to unpack. If you feel the resistance to celebrating yourself, this is where your low self-esteem, your regrets, your worthlessness lives, this is where you judge yourself. Because most people, what we found is they resist doing it because they have a story in their head that they don't deserve it. "I have done so many things in my past, or I have survived so much trauma in my past, I am worthless, or I am unlovable." Or the other side of this is, "But I haven't done anything worthy of celebration."

And so, here's the sad part, if you can't support, celebrate and power yourself because you have survived all those things and because you're standing here still breathing and still trying to do better, you will never change your life because you need support, celebration and empowerment to be able to make the changes, to be able to face the challenges. You see,

supporting, celebrating, and cheering for yourself, it doesn't remove the trauma, it doesn't remove the abuse, it doesn't remove the micro-aggressions and the bias in this world and the violence and the poverty, what it changes is you. It changes your ability to face these things, your ability to take the actions that move the needle on these things. That's why it's powerful.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, we've got a quick break coming up, we'll be right back.

Researchers at Yale University School of Medicine, the researchers found that one of the biggest culprits behind our obesity epidemic is neuroinflammation. Brain inflammation increases the propensity of obesity, and obesity increases the propensity, the likelihood of neuroinflammation, they go hand in hand. So, we've got to address this. One of the things that's been proven to help to reduce neuroinflammation is cited in a study published in PLoS ONE, Public Library of Science ONE, revealed that the super green algae spirulina has the potential to, one, improve neurogenesis in the brain. So, the creation of new brain cells, specifically the hippocampus, is where we get a lot... And the hippocampus is the memory center of the brain, this is kind of important.

And two, the study revealed that spirulina is able to directly reduce neuroinflammation. It's incredible. Alright, it's helping the structural integrity of this master gland, this master organ controlling everything about us. The most complicated object in the known universe is also one of the most fragile, we've got to protect it. This is why for myself and my family, spirulina, chlorella, ashwagandha, all of these powerful foods are put together in the incredible blend at Organifi, and this is a regular staple here in my family for good reason.

Spirulina being one of the highlighted ingredients, not only does it have this benefit for neurogenesis and neuroinflammation, but also has rare nutrients like phycocyanin, the same thing with chlorella as well, that phycocyanin is one of the few things that can trigger stem cell genesis, the creation of new stem cells, very few things have been found to do that. And then chlorella in the formula as well.

And that growth factor, the chlorella growth factor, it's just remarkable. And also, it benefits in helping your body to metabolize and eliminate heavy metals and the list goes on and on. It's incredible. But the bottom line is this, it tastes good. It tastes good. I've experimented for at least about 15 years of all these different green formulas, these different green superfood plants, many of them is not very good. Many of them. They shall remain nameless, but I've tried them back in the day before tasting good was an option, it was just like just get it in by any means necessary if you got to do the whole pinch the nose and get it done. Whatever. But now, pleasure leads to longevity. Pleasure leads to taking a practice on and imbibing it and making it a part of your routine, your habits, your daily life.

So, this is why I appreciate the fact they've created a formula that actually tastes good, all organic, cold process, so you actually retain and get the nutrients that we're looking for in Organifi. So, pop over there, check it out, it's organifi.com/model. That's O-R-G-A-N-I-F-I.com/model. And you get 20% off, 20% off their green juice formula, their red juice formula, and also their gold as well, so they've got some incredible blends all done the right way with integrity, again, organic, low temperature processed, and yummy. Alright? Organifi, you got that? Yummy, yummy... Organifi.com/model and now back to the show.

To dig deeper into the science a little bit, where we associate this action... This is so remarkable, you're amazing. So, where we associate this most often if we're thinking about a high five is with sports, for example, and you mentioned that you actually talk about some research on NBA players. Let's talk about that a little bit.

MEL ROBBINS: This is super cool. This is a study that's really interesting where they wondered, what difference does it make if a team has a culture of back pats, high fives, and fist bumps, and sort of like... This sort of physical touch... What's it called? You probably know better. This is where my dyslexia comes on full display. I already learned neuro-association from you. I'm like, "Thank you very much, I'm stealing that." But the physical touch, does that have a difference in a winning team?

And what they found is if you go to... In this particular study, if you looked at the teams that made it to the championship rounds in the NBA, you could trace it all the way back to the pre-season, they had the most fist bumps, back pats, and high fives of anybody in the league, and the teams that were doing the worst had the least. Why does it matter? I'll tell you why. When you fist bumps somebody, you're in it together, you're in partnership, you're building trust. I got you, I got your back. When you don't do that, every player's out for themselves.

And so, here's the thing that I want you to understand, you can build that partnership with yourself, like the whole world, is trying to tell you, "You got to put yourself first, you got to take care of yourself, you got to be kind yourself, you got to have your own back." Nobody knows how the fuck to do it. I'm sitting here telling you, you can practice these small habits of standing in front of a mirror, setting an intention and being in partnership with yourself and creating and making that intention come true, celebrate it with a high five, and send yourself into the game of life with that kind of wind at your back, with that kind of partnership with yourself, knowing that no matter what happens today, at least you have your own back and that is why this is powerful.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, it's kinesthetic.

MEL ROBBINS: Oh kinesthetic. Thank you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's the touch. But what really blew me away was that scientists are asking these questions and who thinks that like, let's study physical connection and touch within a team and their camaraderie in this domain and track what happens?

MEL ROBBINS: It's true.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And this is what's exciting about being alive today, we can ask these questions, and there's so many more aspects of our reality, we haven't even scratched the surface, we haven't even reached half of a percent of the stuff that we can be testing and discovering. So, it's really, really cool. But something that you've been repeating throughout is this role of childhood and development and parenting, and you also brought up something really remarkable, which is parenting ourselves in a sense. Throughout our lives, we're kind of forced to do things, and they're supposed to be for our good, and in many instances they are.

But once you lose that regulatory force or that guidance, for a lot of people in our culture is around 18, you leave the house, you go off to school or whatever the case might be, and you no longer have that force or that guidance hovering over you. And then you look at today, many people, even folks listening, and I know we've all found ourselves in it, is that lack of motivation to get up and to do the thing we're supposed to do. We don't have someone yelling at us. And so essentially, it's parenting ourselves and creating the conditions to where we are doing the things that we need to do to be successful.

MEL ROBBINS: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, can you talk a little bit about that? Because I think that some of us can be a pretty parent to ourselves, and also some of us can be an absent parent, some of us can be a pretty good parent, but I think for most of us, we're a parent who's trying.

MEL ROBBINS: Yes, that's true. So, the concept of parenting yourself is this: When you're a kid, your parents forced you to do the things you don't want to do, "Get out of bed, make the bus, eat your vegetables, be nice. Look the people in the eye. Turn your homework in, don't talk back." All the things you need to do. And what is really interesting about becoming an adult is nobody tells you when you become an adult, now it's your job. Nobody is coming to save your ass. Nobody is going to tell you to get out of bed. Nobody is going to do the work for you. Nobody's rescuing you. Nobody's discovering you. It's up to you.

And here's the other piece that nobody tells you, you're never going to feel like it. By the time you're 18, you are already stuck in your ways, you're stuck in your story about yourself, you're stuck in the habits that you have, many of which you picked up by either witnessing what your

caregivers were doing or reacting and trying to survive the situation that you're in with your caregivers, so you have a whole set of patterns that you're stuck with. Your brain is designed to repeat patterns, and so now you have a choice, you either live with the patterns that you have, or you spot them, and you freaking breaks them and replace them. And this is why you're never going to feel like doing the things that you want to do, and you have to parent yourself because your brain will always default to its patterns.

And so, from this point forward, here's what you should assume: I will never feel like doing the I need to do, ever. So, stop waiting to feel like it. Stop waiting for motivation, stop waiting for inspiration to strike you in the ass and make you get off the couch and finally take the advice that you're giving and take care of your health, stop waiting to feel like you're going to turn off Netflix and do the kind of evening routine cycle to make sure that you're going to get a great night sleep. Stop. If you want an amazing life, you're going to have to work for it. If you want to change, you're going to have to break patterns.

And the number one rule that is going to help you is to assume you are never going to feel like doing that stuff, so stop expecting it and push your freaking ass to do it. And you can use the five-second rule. Count backward, five, four, three, two, one. That'll help you break the pattern and habit research; it's called a starting ritual that interrupts an old pattern and prompts your mind to focus on a new one and then you move. That is the only way to change. Just like your parent was annoying. "Get up, the bus is coming. I don't care, you're not getting up from this table until that plate is clean," you didn't feel like eating it, but you did. So, that tells you something. You are capable. You just don't feel like.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This... Let's go back to this neuro-association.

MEL ROBBINS: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: One of the important tenets I've been really working to drive this in a culture, this statement, the most powerful driving force of the human psyche is to stay congruent with the ideas that you carry about yourself about the world around you.

MEL ROBBINS: Oh, we're going to the RAS now?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright. Yeah. That's the... See, the segue. You see it coming. You see it coming, I'm rising.

MEL ROBBINS: I see it coming.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, with that said, our brains are wired... Our brains are fascinating. They're so powerful. They're unique, though. That's the thing I want people to understand too. There's never been a human brain exactly like yours in our entire species history and there never will be one. As a matter of fact, your brain in five minutes is going to be radically different from the one that you have.

MEL ROBBINS: That's right, 'cause you're going to hear what we're about to talk about.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's right. And so, through this process of the brain laying down these connections and laying down more myelin and accelerating these patterns and everything firing, those things become, in a sense very solid, and this is how we create our habits. And so, when we stray from those things, that's when we experience discomfort or when we try to do something that's not within our belief about ourselves, this is what gets us to draw back and to go back to what... Even if we're not happy with something about ourselves or our lives, we're comfortable with it in a sense, and so...

But here's the thing, and this is why I brought up the parenting connection, is that no one is going to make you do this, but you get to do it yourself, which is, you get to celebrate yourself, you get to create these new neuro associations. No one said it's going to be easy, and I love this about your work too, but you have everything that you need to make it happen. And so, the segue is into what's happening within our brain and starting to actually look for things to affirm the changes that we're wanting to make. So, let's talk about that now.

MEL ROBBINS: Okay, so the RAS, picture... I think about the hairnet on the brain, it's really a live network, the reticular activating system is a filter, that's what it is, and it has an enormous job. And the job of the RAS is to decide what information gets into your conscious brain and what information do we allow to kind of block out so that you're not consciously thinking about it. Now, the reason why you have this is because if you didn't have this filter, your head would explode off of your shoulders, literally.

You are processing, it's like 34 days' worth of cell phone data every single day in your brain. Okay? You just can't handle it. And so, there are four things that your RAS allow into your conscious mind all the time, only four. It's the sound of your name, and we've all experienced that, you're walking somewhere in a crowd, and all of sudden you're like, "Did somebody say Mel?" That was your RAS, letting it in. The second thing is any threat to your safety. One of the reasons why we go like this if you hear a loud noise that's near you is because your RAS let it in. There are loud noises all the time, but it blocks them out 'cause it's not near you.

The third thing is that your partner is interested in having sex with you or someone else. We've also experienced this, we're like, "What are you looking at her for?" Right? And then the fourth

one, and this is where all of the money is, right here everybody, is whatever you tell your brain is important to you. You see, your brain... And most people don't understand this. It took me 52 years to realize this. Your brain is designed to help you get what you want. Your brain will filter the world in real-time and change what comes into your conscious mind based on what's important to you, and we have all experienced this phenomenon.

If you have ever shopped for a car, you know what I'm talking about. The new Broncos are out right now. Right? And so, let's say that you wanted to get a new Bronco, and they've been... You've seen Broncos forever. But once you start thinking about it like, "Oh, those are interesting. I think I want one of those things," your mind is like, "Oh," it's called the Zeigarnik effect. It opens up a little checklist in your brain, it goes, "Oh, oh oh wait a minute, her nervous system just lit up. She's all excited about this thing. Let's put this on the list. It's important. Let it in."

And so, one day you're driving down the road, you don't see a single Bronco. The next day, the new models aren't even out yet, but what do you see everywhere? You see a Bronco, you're like, "Where the hell did all these Broncos come from?" They were always there. It's just that your mind now got the message from you that this was important to you, so it's like, let it in, let it in, let it in. The second that you're interested in a Porsche, you're not going to see Broncos anymore, you're going to see a Porsche. That is your mind trying so hard to just manage the world and change in real-time. And this also works in the negative, by the way.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

MEL ROBBINS: If you have forever thought that you are a bad person, you're a piece of, that's what you say to yourself. A lot of people say that. It's terrible. Maybe this is what your parents said to you. Maybe this is what some coach said to you. Maybe this is what you picked up from childhood because you were discriminated against, or you were the victim of abuse. All kinds of stuff that you're not responsible for, by the way, but you absorb that, and you kept thinking about it. And so, what's happening in your mind is that your mind literally is like, "Oh well, Mel's thought this thing, I'm a bad person for so long", that she actually thinks this is important.

And so, the littlest things, like you forget to go to the dentist, and then they call, "Did you miss your appointment?" Your brain immediately lets it in and makes you think, "See, I screw everything up. I'm a bad person, I can't even get to the dentist." And so, what I'm here to tell you is that just simply repeating, I'm a good person, I'm a good person, I'm a good person is not going to be enough. You got to start to do the High Five Habit, you also have to start to come up with what I call a meaningful mantra, which is something you can believe right now while you still think you're a bad person. I may be doing things I regret, but I'm trying to be better. That kind of gets you a little bit out of the bad person. Now my brain's like, "Okay, hold

on, hold on, hold on, she's looking for reasons that she's trying to do better." Oh, I missed the dentist appointment. I didn't mean to. Just that little flip, like a little high five in your mind, a little attitude adjustment.

That wipes away the, "See, there I am again, screwing everything up. Oh, didn't mean to, trying to do better, doing a little better every day." And those things start to change the way you see yourself. Now, there's another exercise, another habit that I have, I call looking for hearts. This is going to sound so dumb, but please, this is so freaking cool, it's unbelievable. You won't try this stuff in terms of the big stuff. It's hard to change what you think about yourself, really hard. That stuff is wired into your nervous system, you look back, you see tons of evidence, but I am damaged, but I have done things that I regret, but I am a bad person, but I'd screwed up that relationship and I did this thing and I'm a up and... All this garbage you say to yourself, it is in body. You're going to have to get intentional and be like, "I'm done living with this crap."

And the imagery that I have is, imagine it snows. When you get intentional with the High Five Habits, you can literally plow a new path in snow. That's what a neural pathway is. And I can show you that it's true if you play the heart rock game with me. I want you to, after listening to this, spend the rest of the day and just tell your mind, "I really want to see a heart." Just a naturally occurring shaped heart, whether it's a rock on a path, or a symbol on the top of your coffee, or a stain on the floor of the garage, or a leaf on the ground, I want you just to be like, "I got to find a heart today." And just be open to it. And all of a sudden, you're going to find one. And then here's how you really amp up your hairnet on your brain go, "Whoa, she really thinks this is important. Let's look for more hearts." I want you when you see that heart to go, "Oh, , I found it."

"The universe, God, that was put there for me. That is cool." And when you kind of do that little mood vibe through your nervous system, it is like the opposite of negative trauma, it's like a positive wave in your nervous system that makes your brain go, "This really important." And so now you'll start to see... Once you play this game, you'll start to see it everywhere. And when you play this game with your RAS, look for hearts, and you start to see, "Whoa, wait a minute, my brain is showing me what I'm telling it I want to see. Oh, wait a minute, there's a Bronco. I don't even want one and just 'cause I heard Mel talking about it, now I'm seeing a Bronco. Whoa." Now you can get into the deeper thing of getting intentional about how you talk to yourself, intentional about not getting dragged down by guilt or insecurity or people-pleasing or anxiety or fear or failure, all that crap that takes your attitude low. I want you to stay in a high five attitude.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Let's run this experiment. Everybody listening, run the experiment, suspend your disbelief, Mel and I, and collectively, just all the countless people that we've worked with who've employed these very simple things, but when you start to lay the

groundwork when you see this happen, it changes you. Literally, I can think of the scenario when this particular thing happened for me.

MEL ROBBINS: What was it? Tell me the story.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Mel, are you going to have me tell the story?

MEL ROBBINS: Why?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright. I was wanting... This was a time when I was in the midst of really kind of stepping into my power because I come from a very complex, volatile, violent, just a tough environment. And so, there's one sort of aggression and assertiveness to survive in that, but then there's another flavor of that that is kind and compassionate and peaceful. I'm trying to break and evolve in these things, but I'm not letting that drive my life and instead be forced for good in a sense. And so, I was just feeling out of sorts, and I had this song in my head and it's a song... I didn't even know the name of the song, but I knew a couple of the lyrics and I knew the melody.

MEL ROBBINS: Tell me the lyric.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It was... Well, I knew the name of the song after I looked it up, but it's Glycerine and it's by Bush if I remember correctly. I know he's Gwen Stefani's ex-husband. I know like these random things...

MEL ROBBINS: Okay, okay.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright. And so, I don't know anything about the group, the song was just in my head and it was in my head, we'll just say for 24 hours.

MEL ROBBINS: And the more you repeat something in your head, the more your hairnet in your brain literally moves around and is like, "Okay, this is important."

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, I might have picked it up, maybe it was a movie that I watched or something like that, but it was just in my... It was just melody. And so, I'm driving and I'm just feeling like I need a sign, I need a sign that I'm on the right path here. And I turned on the radio and the radio station that I've listened to normally wasn't... It was like static-y or something, it wasn't working. So, I pushed another button on my car and it jumped...

MEL ROBBINS: Just random?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Random. The song was playing, and this song at this point is probably like 10, 15 years old, it would not be playing right now, and it was playing, and I had to pull over the car and I just was crying, like how is that possible?

MEL ROBBINS: What did it mean to you? What did it mean to you?

SHAWN STEVENSON: For me, at the time, it felt like the universe was listening.

MEL ROBBINS: Yes. Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I couldn't put it to words, and I felt like I was connected to something and there was no... I'm a very logical person so I'm trying to... And I'm just like, I cannot rationalize this moment happening right now, it's for me.

MEL ROBBINS: Yes. And here's the thing, whether you're a person of faith or not, there is nothing more incredible than knowing that you have the power within you to be your own beacon, and when you start to realize that your mind from your birth has intelligent design and it's trying to help you see the signs, it's trying to help you change the narrative and you start to connect the dots, "Wow, I can see hearts. Whoa, there's that song," you realize just how powerful your future could be because when you start to believe that you can have your own back, that you know what's right for you, that you've got the courage to lean towards the things that feel right and to pull away from the things that no longer serve you, that's the secret to everything.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I want everybody to be able to get started doing this work. And by the way, a little sidebar, in that kind of internal conflict, in the outer world what was happening was I'm transitioning from a clinical practice, working in a gym at the same time too, like I felt this bigger mission. I didn't know what it was.

MEL ROBBINS: Yeah, you don't have to.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I felt like there was just something more in store and I had to open myself for it to happen, which means, again, being here, teaching teachers, and helping to empower people in a different way that I didn't know was possible.

MEL ROBBINS: Well, that's actually how you could get started, everybody. Because I think when you give yourself permission to hear that calling, there's something more, I'm feeling myself pull, I don't know what the hell it is. Most people jam it down because you're so busy saying, "But you, but you're worthless, but you're this, but who's going to listen to you?" The real thing that you could do is tomorrow morning when you stand in front of that bathroom mirror in

your underwear, and you think about an intention, start to tell your mind, "I believe there's something more for me. I believe that there are signs that I'm meant to see, and today I'm going to be open to 'em and I'm going to start by looking for a heart, and I'm going to believe that something amazing is coming in my life." And then you're going to raise your hand, and when you raise your hand and you high five your reflection, you will feel in your nervous system and your body a little boost in your mood, you'll feel a sense of relief, you'll feel your shoulders go back because you're saying, "I believe it too. And I got you. Let's go do this."

SHAWN STEVENSON: And you got so much more, so much more in the book, but also, you've got so much as far as additional support and coaching and resources, so can you tell everybody about that?

MEL ROBBINS: Yeah, absolutely. Obviously, pick up the book if you can, but we're doing this free challenge because nothing's more empowering than being part of a community that's all celebrating themselves and each other and empowering each other, and so I've created a free challenge, it's called The High 5 Challenge. So, for five days, you're going to join five million people who are waking themselves up with a high five in the mirror, five mornings in a row. There are journal prompts, you get free access to this amazing app by Brendon Burchard called GrowthDay, a huge community, it's all free. Because changing is hard enough, it's really fun when you do it with an awesome group of people, so just go to... You've got the URL, yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes, go to themodelhealthshow.com/mel. M-E-L. Again, that's themodelhealthshow.com/mel. Go there now, like pause this, go and take advantage of this. Take advantage of it.

Because right now, more than ever, our world, we say around here, everything is a little fluxed up, but because of all of the flux taking place, it's also very malleable and very much like our brains, there is an opening when things are different, and you even talk about this in the book. Like the opening that takes place when you, for example, brush your teeth with your other hand, and your brain has to operate a little bit different, we shared this... Do you know my really, really good friend Jim Kwik?

MEL ROBBINS: Oh yeah, Jim. Yeah, of course.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes, of course, you do. Of course, you know Jim, but he shared that on the show many years ago, and also, we can install a new message when you're doing that new thing. So, our mind is incredibly powerful and fascinating, and we get to truly take advantage of this time right now because there's a lot of... Even though it might not seem like it, there are some gifts within all the craziness.

MEL ROBBINS: Always. Life is the most challenging, exhilarating school you'll ever attend. Everything's a lesson.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Well, Mel, thank you so much.

MEL ROBBINS: Thank you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I've absolutely loved every minute of this, ever since you got to the studio, I appreciate you so much for being who you are. You're just an incredible human being. Thank you so much for sharing your story with us, your experience, the real stuff, it just really means a lot.

MEL ROBBINS: Thank you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome, everybody, Mel Robbins.

MEL ROBBINS: High five, baby.

SHAWN STEVENSON: High five. Let's go, let's go. Thank you so much for tuning in to the show today. Again, I want to reiterate this point because the human brain, as Michio Kaku says, theoretical physicist, is the most complicated object in the known universe. It is infinitely complex and infinitely powerful, but there are some simple principles that guide the function of this amazing brain, and here's the cool part, you have one, you have one of the most complicated objects in the known universe that is yours and yours alone.

Now, oftentimes, it might seem like we don't have a really good owner's manual for how it works, but we do know that we have these very important guiding principles to optimize the function of our brain and to really set success and empowerment and this constant state of discovery on automatic for ourselves, and I want to talk a little bit more about how to do that. So as Mel talked about on this episode, she talked about just one facet of the brain, the reticular activating system, we also have the reticular cortex, so these aspects of the brain are sort of like a servo mechanism or like a heat-seeking missile if you want to think about it like that. When it's set on a target, it is constantly navigating our environment, both our internal and external environment, to lead us to that thing, to that destination.

Because what I want to point out is that it's not just you seeing the thing in the environment, there's something pulling you physically into this space where you can even acknowledge that that thing is there. So, there is a pull, there's a magnetism taking place, and this gets into the domain of quantum physics and how everything is really interconnected, and we could talk about String Theory and all of these different amazing aspects of how the universe is wired

up, but in truth, we are connected to every single thing in the universe. It might be some very, very minute thing, but it can also be something very powerful and expansive, and it's kind of what we are tuned into.

But to simplify things, if we look at how this aspect of the brain is working and then use it for our good, as she talked about it if we're constantly relaying messages to ourselves... And I want to show you one of the most powerful ways of managing this, whether it's conscious or unconscious, and whether it's positive or negative, is through the questions that we ask ourselves, the habitual questions that we ask ourselves are guiding our attention and they're guiding our results because they're guiding our actions as well.

And what I mean by this, it's a process called instinctive elaboration, right? Instinctive elaboration. And essentially, the human brain is obsessed and hard-wired to answer the questions that you give it, and again, this could be conscious or unconscious. And so, if we are living our lives... Like when I was dealing with a tremendous health issue when I was 20 years old, this the so-called incurable arthritic condition of my spine, I was habitually asking this question, "Why me? Why me? Why did this happen to me? Why won't somebody help me?"

And as this is constantly playing in my mind, again consciously, but mostly it goes into the unconscious, my brain is obsessed, these servo mechanisms are obsessed with finding reasons, uncovering reasons why this is happening to me, why my life is so terrible, why I'm in pain, why nobody will help me. And so, I start to reaffirm that I'm not somebody that's helpless, I'm not somebody that's capable of that kind of attention. And I felt so alone and so isolated, more so at that moment in my life for those two years than at any other time. I didn't know that I could feel so alone, and I was guiding myself there constantly, just habitually asking these questions. And again, finding more evidence in the world around me and also evidence within myself, "Oh, here's why your life, You're... " Fill in the blank. You're constantly fighting, you're fighting with other people, the world around you, you're constantly feeling like you are cut adrift, you come from circumstances where you don't have opportunity.

You don't have people who got your back, or who are supporting you financially or with your health, or with your mental health, you don't have that. So, these are all reasons that I start to prop up because I'm asking that question, "Why me? Why am I not capable? Why am I not lovable? Why am I dealing with such pain?" And I found all these negative things about myself that just got highlighted. Now, there's another side to that, because not only can you shift the question... And I did, that's when things changed, it took two years and for some people, it takes a lifetime, for some people it happens faster, but fortunately, I realized that the change was there when I was ready to actually decide for that change to take place. Now, that sounds very subtle, but I decided that I was going to get well, I decided that my story was going to be different, and part of that was I simply asked a different question. Instead of asking Why me?

Why won't somebody help me? I asked, what can I do to get better? What can I do to feel better? What can I do to be healthy?

And this isn't, again, like some types of the clouds are parting or genie comes out of the bottle, or in that case, I was in my one-bedroom apartment in Ferguson, Missouri, mattress on the floor, that genie didn't come out like the crack of the mattress in the floor. A hood genie-like, "Hey, I got you. I've been waiting for you to call," it didn't happen like that. It was a subtle but powerful shift took place in my perspective, because now my brain began to hunt for things to help me to be healthier, it started to be on a ravenous lookout for things to affirm the possibility of me being healthy because I decided that that's what was important, that was going to be my focus from that day forward. And my decision was with so much power that it came from a place of, come what may, no matter what, I'm going to get healthy. No matter what, burn the boat scenario. Nothing is going to stop me. And that type of passion going... You don't have to believe to that degree, but it helps because that wiring in the brain changes not just with habit, but also with emotion. When you have an emotional event take place, it helps to lay down more myelin, more rapidly just as if the habit is being done over and over and over again.

This is why some of the most emotional moments in our lives are the things that stand out the most, these are the things that we remember, both positive and not so positive, those emotional moments. So, use your mental Rolodex to affirm that this is true because we know this all experientially, but we can use this to our advantage if we can imbue our decisions with emotion as well.

So that's part one, asking a more empowering question because instinctive elaboration is going to kick in and start to cultivate and make that your dominant question, as we call it, your dominant question, that you are living by and living through and constantly asking. And we had accelerated learning expert and New York Times best-selling author, one of the smartest people that I've met, really good friend, I've known him for over 10 years, Jim Kwik. We mentioned this in this episode, and he's the guy who's brought into all these different corporations, he's brought in all these different movie sets to help the actors to learn their scripts faster.

But he was working with Will Smith, the Will Smith, shoutout to the Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, shoutout to Parents Just Don't Understand, shoutout to Men in Black, to his most recent... And by the way, I mean, his catalog is so expansive, so many different and eclectic things that he's done. But one of his most recent features was in, Jim is a huge fan of superheroes, was in Suicide Squad, where he played this character named Deadshot. Jim was there on the set with him, and they were digging around to find what is Will's dominant question. And Will's dominant question that is always going on in his mind that he brought... Sometimes we don't

even have it verbalized. We don't have it vocalized. And his dominant question was, "How can I make this moment magical?" How can I make this moment magical? And suddenly, Jim was able to think about the conditions he was seeing Will in onset where everybody's shivering, it's a cold set, he's bringing people blankets, making hot chocolate and all kinds of things like this, just hoping to make the moment magical.

And so, they were like, "You know what, you've already got a dominant question really dialed in, let's take it up a notch." And this is the beauty about life, there's always another level. Instead of, "How can I make this moment magical?" let's change your dominant question consciously to, "How can I make this moment more magical? How can I make this moment even more magical?" And with that, it's already affirming that what's taking place is magical, and we're just going to take it to another level. What's happening, the happening is already magical, but how can we take this to another level? So again, this is happening whether we are conscious of this or not. We have a dominant question that we're living our lives through, and it can be something that's affirmative or something that is detracting.

It might be an instance where we're going through life, "How can I get people to accept me? How can I make people like me? How can I find a way to survive? How can I find a way to be successful? How can I find a way to get out of pain?" These can be these fundamental questions that we're driving our lives through that lens. So that's the first part, is simply consciously shifting the question to something that is more powerful and affirmative because your mind is going to follow. You get to be the director of your mind and not just have your mind constantly playing the same movie over and over again.

Now, the other part of this is even what might seem like a negative question can be something that is incredibly powerful and evolve us to another level as we evolve with our ability to take a meta-perspective about the question. So for instance, for me, when I was habitually asking that question, "Why me" and I was finding all of these things in my environment to affirm why I deserved to be in so much pain, why I deserved to be in so much misery, once I worked on myself and I evolved my thinking, and I asked that same question, an entirely different reality manifested right in front of me, and the answer to that question was, "Why me? Why was this happening to me", it was because I was strong enough. It's because I was capable to overcome any of these obstacles that I was faced with. I was born for it.

And it changed my life. The same question evolved thinking. So, we've got different ways that we can play this for ourselves, but you've got to jump in and take control of your own mind. You can reframe that dominant question, or implant a conscious dominant question, or you can think more expansively about that seemingly negative question that we might be holding top of mind and guiding our lives and see the truth about it. Because sometimes the truth-truth is far bigger than this emotionally driven temporary truth, this short-sided, very isolated,

small thinking. You are bigger than that. And so, in addition to this, and really jumping in and taking the wheel of our minds and guiding us to the destination that we want to be, we can employ other exercises as well. And things that, again, on the surface might seem kind of weird, even with Mel's a new project, for me, I was just like, "What are you talking about?" Then suspending my disbelief, diving in, looking at some of the research and looking at, "Oh, this makes sense," and then talking with other people.

And seeing how this is playing out in the real world as well, again, the stories, but also the scientific evidence that we have, this particular exercise, and I'm going to share with you, is also very remarkable in guiding our reticular activating system to start to filter out, and when Mel talked about this, that we're literally taking in trillions of bits of data in the day, really, even in a microsecond here, there's trillions of different pieces of data that our bodies can be taking in from all... Every cell in our body experiencing the environment, our more conscious senses, like our vision and our sense of smell, and our breathing, and our taste, and the things that we're hearing. You could start to hear subtle things if you pay close attention to what's happening in the world around you and isolate certain sounds. There's so much data coming in and many different things that are beyond our awareness. And here's the cool part.

Your brain records all of it, all of it, forever. It's recording all of it. This is why you see practices and look into some of the science with hypnosis and folks... You might have seen even some of the comedy-style hypnosis aspects where they have people going through a specific environment and then they suddenly have these things, these cues, these subtle cues that they give the person and they're not aware of. So maybe they walk into a building and there's a tiny ornament off to the side that they didn't even see consciously that's shaped like a heart, for example, like Mel talked about, or maybe a star, and then they are questioned afterward about their experience coming into the building, "What do you think about the building? If you could put a certain shape to your thoughts of the building, what would it be?"

Even though they didn't consciously see the heart, or they didn't consciously see the star, they're like, "You know what, I would say a heart." And it's that subtle implanting of that message, right? So, your brain is picking up everything. But here's the rub. What you are consciously picking up from the environment is just a tiny, tiny fraction. It's said it's like 1%, but that might be too much. And as he mentioned, if we were to take in all the data coming in around us, it would drive us crazy. And some folks have had an experience of tapping into more of that. I was just watching a Marvel movie with my son, Braden, and it was classic Captain America Civil War. Alright, now, if you go and watch Civil War right now with what's happening in the world, listen, I implore you to do that. Watch Captain America Civil War and look at what's going to happen with the people who want to impress upon policy and mandates versus the people who want to maintain sovereignty and freedom. It's freaky.

But anyways, within the movie, this is when Spider-Man is introduced, the new Spider-Man, the latest Spider-Man, and his character, he wears these weird goggles when Tony Stark, AKA Iron Man, happens upon him in Queens when he goes to visit him and he sees his outfit, he's just like, "What's up with this eyewear?" And he's just saying, "Listen, since what happened to me happened to me, these superpower's kind of engaging," he's just like, "Everything is like 10X HD. I'm picking up so much more data of what's happening in the world around me." And so, the reticular activating system is there to filter that, because truly, we would go crazy. And it helps us, it helps your conscious mind to focus on what's important and you get to tell your mind what's important. And so, with that said, here's the exercise. This, again, might sound superficial, but it's backed by very solid science, and what it is a simple gratitude practice. You start a practice, and this is something that I've done with my family for years now, even in the evening, it's going to be something you do as a group or something you do by yourself and taking a moment just to write down or to talk about, we'll do this around the dinner table, three things that you're grateful for from the day.

We go around and we share three things that we're grateful for. And your brain, our brains know that we're going to show up, here again, tomorrow and we're going to need to know, pick up some things to be grateful for. Or that gratitude practice in your journal at the end of the day knows, "I'm going to need to find some things to be grateful for." And it might be small things starting out, which might be like, "I got to work on time," or "I got the opportunity, somebody brought me a wonderful organic coffee today." "I got a chance to finish a project early," or it can also be something that's big and luxurious, maybe it was a certain vacation you got to take, or you got a special gift that you weren't expecting, or maybe you got a raise, whatever the case might be. Something that is a little bit more visceral or poignant than the small subtle things we might look for in the day. So having that practice of gratitude. And remember this term, that what you appreciate appreciates. What you appreciate appreciates.

You're training your brain to look for more things to be grateful for. Whereas for many people in our society today, and we can all get wrapped up in this, we're looking for problems. We're constantly looking for the next problem. We're constantly looking for the next thing to worry about. What if we can change the channel? Because there is always going to be problems. There's always going to be things to worry about and to be stressed about and be worried about always, and that doesn't make them not matter, that doesn't suddenly disappear those things. And this isn't wishful thinking. Because there's a new term being used, and it's called toxic positivity. So, when these negative things that happen, it's just like, "Oh, it's all love, it's all good." Is it? Is it? It's being honest about the thing, acknowledging that it's there. And I actually talked to Michael Beckwith about this, about this term with toxic positivity, where we're speaking over, looking past the tremendously negative thing or the problem, and he just said, "Oh, that's denial." It's just a simple term. What river are you trying to travel up? Oh, denial,

trying to go up denial. And denial doesn't allow us the empowerment and the awareness to actually get in there and to do something about it and to solve the issue.

We can still operate from a place of positivity and affirmation and understanding our capability to solve the thing. There can be many wonderful gifts within it, but we don't ignore that the problem is there. And so, this is another reason I want to call to you and why I'm bringing this up for you to take action today, to speak up, to not be that person who's like, "Oh, I know that this thing is going on, but it'll work itself out, or somebody else will take care of it." You are that someone. You are that someone. We need you to step up in a major way, collectively, truly. This is the time to do it. We're writing our species' history right now, and what our world is going to look like for our children and our grandchildren. Truly, the decisions that are being made right now are going to determine the actual future of our species.

It is that important. So where are you going to be in the history books? Where are you going to be? Are you going to be somebody that stood on the sideline? Are you going to be somebody who was proactively speaking up, stepping to your power, and sharing your voice? And so, part of that, taking a step above denial and toxic positivity, these new terms that we're using and throwing on these things, but having that gratitude practice. Sometimes we're even grateful for the challenges that we go through because my toughest experience in life was also the greatest experience in my life. It was the greatest gift that I've ever had, personally, within my own being, because it helped to bring forward qualities and capacities in me that I didn't even know that I had, talents that I didn't even know that I had, that I can then pay it forward in a way that I didn't even know was possible by connecting with the hearts and minds of millions of people at this point.

So, use these tools, continue to empower yourself, take advantage, because somebody's going to be steering your mind. Is it the media? Is it the people who don't believe in you and your potential? Is it some teachers from back in the day, parents, whatever the case might be, who might not have been affirmative and empowering for you? Somebody's going to be steering your attention. Is it now a good time for you to jump in and take control, for you to jump in and grab the steering wheel of your own mind and direct it to where you want to be, so the adventure can really begin? Consciously decide what is your dominant question. What are you going to focus on and allow the world to conform to your perception? Allow, watch the universe bend to your perception of reality and what you hold top of mind. You are that powerful. And if you put it in place, you're going to prove it to yourself. I appreciate you so much for tuning into the show today. Again, go to themodelhealthshow.com/mel, themodelhealthshow.com/mel right now, and take advantage of the continued support and empowerment because there's so much more to come.

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