

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

EPISODE 567

5 Powerful Brain-Boosting Foods & Why Cooking More Can Save Your Life

With Guest Max Lugavere

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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 with me today. What did our founding fathers do without DoorDash? Alright, George Washington didn't have that, Dasher. Benjamin Franklin did not have Uber Eats. What did they do? How were they surviving? How were they getting access to food? Well, through human evolution, even dating back hundreds of thousands of years earlier, humans were preparing their own food, people were cooking, and this is one of the things that's really helped to impress upon our miraculous human brain and to create the highly developed human brain that we have... Cooking has been one of those remarkable phenomenon's and inventions, but it's not just cooking, sometimes it's un-cooking and it's having a relationship with our food in that way as well, but just having a hand in the process, that has largely been removed from our culture as each year has gone by. I remember being a kid and when we would ever order food, that was like a big event, when you was... Friday night, you're ordering a pizza and the pizza man comes, and you get the money for the pizza and...

The tip and the whole thing, and he gives you that piping hot box of cheesy Ninja Turtle goodness, just thinking about that is incredibly nostalgic. Now, it's evolved from that place or devolved, however you want to look at it, because pizza delivery, maybe some Chinese food delivery was one thing, and it was a rarity for most folks, today, we have virtually every restaurant, every type of food that we can think about at our fingertips. Now, this isn't necessarily a bad thing, this is kind of cool, because we can get the flavor sensations and the food experiences that we want, and that's a great gift, at the same time, it's taken another step away for us from being involved in the preparation and the procurement of our food. And that might be a point of concern. So, can we use these technologies? And of course, even going out to eat and all these wonderful things that we can do... Absolutely we can use these things. But is there something missing? Is there something removed when we don't have a part in the food preparation process ourselves, and I'm here to tell you today, absolutely, you already know the answer to that, because there's a familiarity that takes place when we have a hand in our food procurement and also preparation.

And to take it a step further, when we can have our hands involved in the preparation of our food, we, 99.9% of the time, we have the opportunity to create something that is far more health affirming, we have the opportunity to create meals and have food experiences that are light years beyond what the Door Dasher can hand you. Now, there are some wonderful restaurants who are stepping their game up and ensuring that they're giving higher quality ingredients to fuel our citizens, but for the most part, as you're going to learn today, most restaurants are not abiding by those standards, and we have the opportunity again by taking

this into our own hands a little bit more, not totally, again, not to say that we can't get our Dash on or go out to a restaurant, 'cause I'm going out with my wife tonight, I'm taking her out... We can take it to a little theater and a little one-on-one across the table, and maybe a little dessert, you feel me, but these are all accessible for us, but I don't want us to lose sight of one of the most intimate...

Even beyond intimate processes that we have, which is to be able to decide exactly what foods, what ingredients we're putting into our temple, we're putting into our amazing bodies, because every single bite of food that we eat literally is determining what we're making ourselves out of, and so that matters, and so we're going to rekindle that fire, we're going to spark it to a different level today with our special guest. And during the episode, he actually mentions one food that I've been having a special love affair with recently, myself, and it's blueberries. And one of the reasons why, first of all, it's just kind of a... It's a vibe. You've probably had this experience, where there's certain foods you're really just feeling at a certain time, and maybe that might change, but right now I'm just really vibing with blueberries and the health benefits are remarkable as well. Listen to this, there was a study that was published by researchers at the University of Michigan finding that blueberries potentially affect genes that control the burning of stored body fat, that's pretty remarkable, that's pretty cool, and there's some special pigments that are within the blueberry skin and the makeup of the blueberry that are rare in nature, but just in general, berries as our special guest calls them brain berries have so many remarkable benefits that are really system-wide.

So that's one of my favorite foods right now, but also in a specific concentrate, my youngest son, for example, we've got these little special go-packs of this red juice formula from Organifi that has blueberry, concentrated blueberry, concentrated acai. Acai is one of the highest ORAC value foods ever discovered, the antioxidant content is out of this world. It's 103,000 ORAC value, that means it's 10 times more antioxidants than most fruits that you see in a conventional grocery store. Also, there is beet juice in the formula as well in a concentrate. And a study published in The Journal of Applied Physiology showed that drinking beet juice boosts our stamina up to 16% during exercise. Beet juice is being utilized so much for different pre-workout formulas and exercise formulas for a reason.

They even experience in this particular study, less muscle damage and less fatigue after the training session, so having these combined with other super fruits, superfoods without any added crazy sugar and a formula that tastes good, kids love it. This is what I love right now. We can upgrade things and it's all organic and get some of the same flavor sensations that we grew up with by using real high quality super food concentrates. So, head over there, check 'em out, it's organifi.com/model and get 20% off their amazing red juice formula, also their gold formula, their amazing green juice formula. Again, that's organifi.com/model. It's O-R-G-A-N-I-F-I.com/model, 20% off. And now let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

ITUNES REVIEW: Another five-star review titled “Thoroughly researched and explained” by Ultimate tomato. “I appreciate how thoroughly every topic is researched and explained, it lends itself to instant credibility. I absolutely love how well thought out each episode is and how every episode seems to support each other. The seamless flow reassures a listener how passionate Mr. Stevenson is about health and how to better your life. I switched to intermittent fasting because of this podcast and immediately experienced more energy.”

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's so remarkable. Thank you so much for taking the time to share that and to share your voice over on Apple Podcast, it really does mean a lot. And if you have yet 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, Max Lugavere, he's been a science journalist for many years, and also one of the foremost experts in human nutrition, and he's also the host of another top-rated podcast called Genius Life, and he's here today to talk about his new project and some powerful insights that we can all learn a lot from and take with us in our lives moving forward, so let's jump into this conversation with the amazing Max Lugavere.

My guy Max Lugavere, you're on a mission to get people cooking again, first and foremost, what are some of the nutritional upgrades that we can see when we start making more of our own food?

MAX LUGAVERE: Such a great place to start, Shawn. I think that home cooking is one of the greatest leverage points for people to improve their health, improve the way they feel, increase energy levels, reduce brain fog, improve mental health, and the reason for that is that you can cook the same dish at home that you would pay your hard-earned money for out at a restaurant and it's going to be healthier, implicitly, it's going to have fewer calories, fewer fat calories, less sodium, it's going to improve the dynamics of the relationships with the people that you're cooking with and around and serving to, and most importantly, I think when we cook at home, we have control, we have agency, when you eat out at a restaurant, who knows what kinds of oils they're using in the preparation of your food, if you're eating something that's been sautéed or fried... Who knows how long that oil has been in the pan or the fryer? We know that oils like corn oil, canola oil, soybean oil, which you've talked about many times on your podcast, these oils are highly prone to a form of chemical disfigurement called oxidation, which is the least of the problems associated with polyunsaturated dominant grade and seed oils, they create various compounds like aldehydes are created when these oils are heated and then re-heated, which we know are mutagenic, they damage the mitochondria of our cells, which are the energy-producing organelles.

When you cook at home, you can use fats that humans have been using for hundreds of years, like extra virgin... If not thousands of years like extra virgin olive oil. We've been using extra virgin olive oil for such a long time because the way you make it is you crush olives... There's avocado oil, which is a close second, which is from a flavor standpoint, very neutral, and so I think all that combined is why we see observationally that people who eat at home more as opposed to eating out, they have healthier BMI, so they have reduced risk for obesity, cooking at home reduces risk for having an unhealthy body fat percentage, so body composition is very important, we see that people who eat at home more have better cardio metabolic health, and all this plays a role in brain health as well. So again, we haven't even talked about macronutrients or anything else really beyond just cooking at home, which is I think the one great leverage point that is at everybody's disposal, but unfortunately, and what inspired me to write this book is that culinary literacy is something that we've outsourced today, right?

We live in the era of specialization, and I think in many ways, our brains are suffering as a result of that, we outsource financial literacy, we outsource health literacy, unfortunately, and culinary literacy, the know how to be able to prepare food, delicious, nourishing food for ourselves is also something that we've outsourced, we go to restaurants now, we eat fast food when we're crunched for time, we have apps at our disposal, 24/7 that within moments, whatever comfort food we want shows up at our door steps, but by returning to our roots, which is a very ancient thing, knowing how to cook food, it's going to lead to better mental health, better physical health, and it's just going to be... It's going to taste better. It's such a gratifying experience. Food is how we... It's how we bond with one another, it's how we communicate, it's how we express love, and so I think it's something that we have to get back to.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, that's powerful, man. You just made me think about through our evolution, even living in tribes, everybody was involved in food somehow, whether you were procuring the food, hunting, gathering, processing, cooking, everybody had a hand in it, literally. And there was a closer relationship, today, like you mentioned, you could just whip out your phone, leave your door open and have the DoorDash person just hand you the... Whatever, from the blank. And I haven't really talked about this, but when I lived in St. Louis, I actually moved to an area called Wildwood, Missouri, and we were literally living out in the woods, alright. Which you would see me on the street, you're not like, that guy definitely lives in the woods, but my grandmother, when I was a kid, she had moved back to my grandfather's hometown in Piedmont, Missouri, which was like... They lived on a dirt road and the forest was a backyard, massive forest. It was just kind of in my DNA, little did I know. And being out there, DoorDash wouldn't deliver there. None of these apps... It was only when I would travel to go speak somewhere could I get Uber Eats or whatever.

So, I never had food delivered, I didn't really know... And even when I used the Uber Eats, I was super nervous. Are they going to find me? And then once we moved to LA, it's just like, game on, going to make up for this, because you could really get anything that you want, essentially any time, with the exception of, what you're pulling out is any type of effort on your part. Now, of course, this doesn't mean we can't go out to eat and kick it and order great food, that kind of thing, but it's getting more reconnected because there's something very visceral that's taken out of the equation, and I love that... And I want to ask you about this. You mentioned olive oil, you just crush olives. Step one, crush olives, step two, you're done, versus, you mentioned this kind of rancid or highly combustible even seed oils, what is the processing for those versus just crushing olives?

MAX LUGAVERE: It's such a good question. So, grain and seed oils, they are produced via a number of different production processes. They are extracted sometimes using hexane, which is a neurotoxin, sometimes they're not. And hexane... I don't want to fear monger, there's little to no left in the final product, but all of these seed oils, they come from... They're by-products, essentially, and you have to really... It takes a real stretch of the imagination to conceive of how they might... How food manufacturers might generate oil from corn, right? When you think about an ear of corn, is that a fatty food to you? No. Soybeans? I mean, I enjoy edamame whenever I'm at a Japanese restaurant, is that a fatty food? No. So, what they do is they have to take... First of all, corn and soybeans are genetically modified in this country to facilitate that... Which is one of their primary uses as a commodity, as a subsidized commodity crop in the United States. It's the creation of corn oil and soybean oil, which are now the most popular oils, the most widely consumed oils in the Standard American Diet.

And so, they get these oils which have bitter flavors, flavors that you don't want in your processed foods, and they wring them through a number of different steps degumming. One step in particular is called deodorization, and it's the food industry's equivalent of the witness protection program, because it takes all of these nasty oils and it makes them all flavor-less, it basically rids them of any notable characteristic. They have extremely high smoke points, which they post on the labels, and this is why food manufacturers are able to use these oils in any number of ultra-processed food products, from granola bars, to commercial cereals, to breads to... We roast nuts in them. Restaurants use them to fry foods in. They have no flavor characteristic, very high smoke points. But the problem with that deodorization process is that it generates a small, but significant amount of trans fats. There's no safe level of trans fat consumption.

The FDA, something like 10 years ago now, banned partially hydrogenated fats, because they realized that the data was overwhelming, that there's no safe level of trans fat consumption, and that was the primary source of trans fats in the American diet. When once the... Our governing body has steered the American population away from animal source, saturated fats,

those were the fats that we were told to use instead, margarines and such. The problem is trans fats still exist in the modern food supply in the form of these grain and seed oils. Now you're not ingesting a ton, but with the concentration that your average American is now consuming these oils, you are ultimately ingesting a significant amount of trans fats. And again, trans fats are poisons, they're poisonous to your cardiovascular system, they're poisonous to your brain. Even among young and healthy people, ingestion of trans fats is related to worst memory function, higher risk for developing Alzheimer's disease and worse cardio metabolic health. So...

That's just like the production process of these oils, right? Studies show that commercially available oils, you just pluck them off of the supermarket shelves, most of the time they're already... They've already... This process called oxidation has already been set into motion, which is again, a form of chemical degradation, oxidized oils are pro-inflammatory, and that's like, "fresh oils." This occurs because the oils are kept usually in plastic tubs, they're clear, they're exposed to heat. You don't know how those oils have been stored prior to you purchasing them, right? And then we cook with them, so they become further degraded, they further oxidize. The various oxidative by-products are created like aldehydes which are not healthy. And so, I think it's very damaging. And our ingestion of these fats... With soybean oil alone, our consumption of soybean oil alone has increased about 2000% over the last hundred years.

Over the last 50 years, adipose linoleic acid. So, our adipose sites actually store the fats that we eat. You know they say, you are what you eat, and it's literally true. Linoleic acid, which is the predominant fatty acid found in these grain and seed oils in our adipose sites has increased over two-fold over the past 50 years alone. So, it's a problem. I think the nutritional and the medical orthodoxy is still in love with these oils because they... Compared to saturated fat, they reduce LDL cholesterol. They're unable to see past that, which I think is a problem. LDL is certainly something that we talk about within the context of cardiovascular risk, right? But monounsaturated fats also reduce LDL to virtually the same degree. They are much more chemically stable, they're associated with incredibly helpful fats, like extra virgin olive oil, which we mentioned, which is a staple in the Mediterranean dietary pattern, right?

There's this irony that the western medical orthodoxy is obsessed with the Mediterranean dietary pattern and yet also loves to promote grain and seed oils like canola oil, corn oil, and soybean oil. If you actually go to a kitchen in the Mediterranean region of the world, you won't find any of that crap, it's just extra virgin olive oil. And so, to me, it's just... It's mind-blowing that those kinds of fats continue to be pushed on to the American people.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That was going to be my next question because they sound pretty terrible, why are they so prevalent?

MAX LUGAVERE: Yeah, they're prevalent because they're dirt cheap, because they're just highly marketed and they've got huge margins. They have... They boast very high smoke points. It's really interesting, yet I think it's important for people to know that smoke point and the temperature at which point an oil begins to degrade and thus become unhealthy are unrelated. So, a smoke point is really a culinary concern. You can take a fat like butter, which is very chemically stable.

Very well adapted to high heat cooking, but it has a low smoke point because of the solids that are in the butter, casein, and the lactose. You can take a butter derivative like ghee, which just have those solids skimmed off and the smoke point shoots through the roof. Grain and seed oils have very high smoke points, but again, that's unrelated to the temperature at which point they become unhealthy.

SHAWN STEVENSON: They've already become unhealthy through their processing before it gets into the food and to you.

MAX LUGAVERE: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah. I mean, there was a study that I shared Cate Shanahan posted on Twitter a couple of weeks ago, but it was a peer-reviewed study showing us that that the level of oxidation that already exists in these products before we even get started cooking with them is already worryingly high, and a damaged fat damage you. I mean, fats are not like glucose, right? You consume glucose, you get a blood sugar spike, but if you're metabolically healthy, that sugar is cleared, it's cleared either into your muscle tissue or your liver.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Your body processes it.

MAX LUGAVERE: Your body processes it, right. But the problem with these fats is that they integrate themselves into all aspects of your being. We store them in our adipose sites, they get chugged around our body by various lipoproteins, whether they're chylomicrons or LDL, lipoproteins, which are related to atherogenesis. They integrate themselves into our brains. And so, that's why I think making sure the fats that you're eating are healthy fats is really important. And again, I don't like a fear-monger, the dose makes the poison to some degree, and I'm just as much a member of modern society as anybody else, I eat in restaurants. You're inevitably going to be prepared foods using these oils at some point, and that's fine. To me, what I urge viewers, listeners to do is to just make sure that in your home, you're cooking with extra virgin olive oil, avocado oil, you're getting rid of the products that have these cheaper oils, because they're really not doing your health any favors.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Man, that's powerful. Now, here's the craziest part about this, you just brought this up really gracefully, even how our body store these things. If you think about it, we don't really store that much carbohydrate. We don't really store that much glucose or even glycogen, it's a tiny amount compared to the rest of the things that we store in our bodies. And if you're thinking about, okay, well, how do we store all this fat that we can potentially store, especially in our culture, is getting converted into a fat. Like, your body has this really remarkable intelligence to do this process. But when you got a fat, it's not getting converted to a fat necessarily, you know? It's a much more sketchy situation that we really don't understand yet. And so, the ability for your body to integrate these fats into your tissues, like, you're just mentioning Cate Shanahan, I remember she shared with me something a while back about biopsies being done on humans about hundred years ago and seeing the constitution of a fat cell might be 2% PUFAs, you know, polyunsaturated fats.

Today, we're seeing about 25% of a fat cell from a biopsy being made of these PUFAs, like, the ingredients that we're making people out of has changed dramatically. So, it's not just the fact... Because we see the outer expression of obesity or of disease, but we don't think that the person is literally made from different stuff than what humans have evolved with. And it's just such a concerning thing because it's so pervasive. Unless you... I would say it's at least 90% of restaurants, and of course, processed foods, I'm going to be using these oils right now. It's shifted because I'm sure it was probably 95%, but there's been a movement for restaurants to kind of start to integrate higher quality oils. But the thing that we can do right now is control what we're cooking, and so that leads back to your incredible new cookbook, which is, it's not just the oils we can upgrade, but the nutrition itself. Let's talk about that. If we're cooking at home, I would imagine that we can be more intentional about even the quality of the vegetables we're getting or the animal foods.

MAX LUGAVERE: Yeah, I think that's a super important part of the equation. I mean, I love to talk about the health benefits of grass finished beef, which for many people is a luxury, right? But even grain finished beef, which I kind of don't like promoting it because it supports the factory farm system, that's where that kind of animal protein comes from today, unfortunately, but even that is going to be a better choice for most people for dinner than box mac and cheese, for example. So yeah, knowing where you're sourcing your produce from, your animal products from, I think is really important. But I try to... I went... I took great strides in the book to not be dogmatic about food and even to question my own biases with food by alerting people to the health benefits of even conventionally grown products, right? I think in the wellness industry, there's a lot of perfectionism and black and white thinking, you have to buy organic, your beef has to be grass-fed, pristine grass finished from a regenerative farm, blessed by Shamans. Who knows what, right?

So, for me, I have this system in the book, it's like this labeling system that I've devised where I go from good to better to great, and I think that we shouldn't let perfect be the enemy of the good. Even a conventional egg is still a good thing to eat, you know? A conventional egg is still a cognitive multivitamin.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Versus a Pop-Tart especially.

MAX LUGAVERE: Versus a pop-tart, yeah, yeah. So, it's really important, helping people to identify what are good fats, what are bad fats, or fats that you should do your best to minimize. If they're generally with a food product, if there's an ad on TV for it, you're probably better off avoiding it. With organic, you know, organic is something that gets talked about a lot. And when you look at research, I had to check my own biases. There's not really good evidence that organic produce is more nutritious than conventional produce, there really isn't. I mean, sometimes you see higher levels of certain nutrients, but then you'll see higher levels of other nutrients in conventional. So, it's really hard to say. I personally choose to avoid exposure to synthetic petroleum-based pesticides. So, I buy organic whenever I can, and whenever in particular, I'm eating the skin or the peel of a piece of produce. But if you can't access organic or you can't afford it, then don't feel bad about not. And just get... Buy your fruits and vegetables and just rinse them well.

So, sourcing is super important, but if you're not able to source the very best of the best, you shouldn't feel bad about buying and making use of whatever you do have access to. I mean, you can even go to a gas station, and there's this saying, I think Michael Pollan coined it, you don't want to fuel your body and your car in the same place, right? But even in a gas station, you can still buy canned tuna, which is a really great, super high quality protein source. If you happen to find yourself in a food desert and that's the only option, well, it's still a great source of protein and various other micronutrients. So, yeah, I'm... For me it's about making nutrition easy, accessible, approachable, and ultimately achievable.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, I've noticed quite a few gas stations having a little basket of bananas and apples, you know? That...

MAX LUGAVERE: Yeah. Usually red delicious apples, which are the worst, but still, I mean...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Why is that?

MAX LUGAVERE: Well, no, they're the worst from a taste standpoint.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh yeah, okay.

MAX LUGAVERE: Yeah. I'm an obsessed with Honeycrisp apples. I love them.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, there's so many.

MAX LUGAVERE: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: There's so many... Same with avocados. People don't realize there's like hundreds of different varieties. I had one guest brought me Johnny... Shout out to Johnny the Juicer, Johnny Juicer. And he brought me this avocado that looked like a papaya, it was so huge.

MAX LUGAVERE: Wow.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And there's different ones that are kind of more buttery or cheesy or oily, just depending on the variety, you know? Again, we tend to see just basically two types in conventional markets here in the United States, but this is speaking to another possibility we have when we are shopping for ourselves is, we can start to seek out more variety as well, which is really cool. Because man, there's so much that we have access to, but it doesn't seem like it when you go to a conventional grocery store, it just is very cookie-cutter things...

MAX LUGAVERE: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Which even with this, I want to ask you about, because circling back a little bit, when you mentioned kids having exposure to these abnormal foods, you said mutagenic, right? So, I immediately thought about Ninja Turtle, which is a whole different thing, but potentially transforming the way that our cells... The stuff that they're made of, and also how they function, but in a negative way that can diminish our cognitive ability, but this is happening early on. So, could Alzheimer's and conditions with our brain and the health of our brain, could they be starting really early in life versus what we tend to think is that there's an onset later in life, and then, boom, you have the disease?

MAX LUGAVERE: Yeah, that's why nutrition is so important across the age spectrum. I mean, unfortunately now, hypertension is developing in children and adolescents, obesity, rates of childhood obesity are out of control, and we know that conditions like Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, they begin in the brain decades before the first symptom. I mean, Alzheimer's disease in particular, by the third decade of life, you're already showing signs in the brain, if you're genetically at risk for Alzheimer's disease that are associated with that condition, reduced glucose metabolism in the brain, for example, called hypometabolism. Air pollution is another feature, it's not nutritional related, but they've shown that in children, air pollution, in particular, fine particulate matter, PM 2.5 can actually... These are particles in the air that are not visible to the naked eye but are able to pierce the blood-brain barrier, initiate

inflammation and then cause an aggregation of these plaques like amyloid beta plaque that we associate with Alzheimer's Disease in the brains of 90-something-year-old people.

Like this “old person's” condition, which is really not, but we see this now in younger people that are living in heavily polluted areas. Food plays a major role. I mean, we know that the foods that you eat provide the building blocks that your brain uses to create healthy new brain cells, supple brain cells that have the characteristic of membrane fluidity. So, having brain cell membranes that are fluid is really important when it comes to how your neurons are able to communicate with one another. And fats play a role in that. So, making sure they're eating adequate omega-3 fatty acids every day, but pre-formed Omega-3 fatty acids. This is sort of an inconvenient truth that I think a lot of vegans have to come to terms with, that plant-based forms of Omega-3s are not very bioavailable and the ability of our bodies to convert plant-based forms of Omega-3s to their usable forms in the body, docosahexaenoic acid or DHA and eicosatetraenoic acid or EPA, it's a complex biochemical process utilizing what are called fatty acid desaturase enzymes. It's very... It's not efficient.

And the efficacy of our bodies to do that, to carry on that process differs from person to person, gender to gender, genetic background to genetic background. And so, a plant-based source of omega-3s, you're probably not influencing the amount of DHA that your brain has access to at all. So, we know that we under-consume omega-3 fatty acids, and then going back to the fat issue, when we over-consume grain and seed oils, one of the other problems with them is that they compete for those same enzymes, those same desaturase enzymes. And so, by overconsuming omega-6 dominant fatty acids, we're further handicapping our body's ability to generate omega-3 fatty acids from these plant-based sources. So, we have to continue to eat foods like fish, even though we know that our oceans are becoming increasingly polluted.

Still to this day, the benefits of eating fish outweigh the risks, and it's those Omega-3 fatty acids, DHA fat in particular, that keeps your brain cell membranes nice and supple and fluid, so that the receptors for various neurotransmitters, serotonin involved in having a healthy mood, dopamine involved in feelings of reward, acetylcholine, which is important for learning and memory, receptors for those neurotransmitters have to bob up to the surface of the cell membrane, and they rely on that characteristic, that membrane fluidity in order to do so. On the other hand, it's inflammation that actually make cell membranes more rigid. And inflammation is often brought by overly sedentary lifestyles, exposure to modern toxicants, again, over-consuming these grain and seed oils. It's not that the grain and seed oils are necessary inflammatory in the sense that you consume them, and you're going to see an increase in inflammatory biomarkers, but they provide the precursors for your body's inflammation pathways. So, when you do confront an inflammatory stimulus.

It's my hypothesis that you're going to see an over-response and we all are confronted with inflammatory stimuli, whether it's exposure to toxicants or we get injured somehow, or pathogenic threat, what have you, so making sure that we continue to supply our brains with these building blocks from fresh whole food sources or supplements, fish oil, for example, Algae oil, really important. And then also for young people, for older people, you also have to provide your brain with protector molecules, 'cause again, stress is inevitable. Vitamin E is one of the most important, it's a fat-soluble antioxidant, which consumption of foods rich in vitamin E associated with better cognitive aging, reduced risk for cognitive decline, there was even...

I remember when I was really getting deep into this research when my mom was alive, that there was a study that came out that found that high dose vitamin E, about 2,000 international units a day of vitamin E, improved functional capacity in patients with Alzheimer's disease, which is amazing that a vitamin, the humble vitamin E could do something like that, could have such a... Could have such a significant effect, it was a very small study, and it's certainly not a cure, but we know that fat-soluble antioxidant is crucially important to having a well-performing brain, carotenoids, plant pigments like lutein and zeaxanthin also crucially important. There was a study that showed... It was a University of Georgia study that found that college students, young healthy college students, saw a 20% improvement in their visual processing speed when they took lutein and zeaxanthin supplements, which you can easily find in dark leafy greens like Kale is an amazing source of lutein and zeaxanthin, egg yolks, avocados. So, these are all the foods that I call genius foods. I call them genius foods for a reason, because I truly believe that genius isn't something that is... You're not born being a genius, you build genius, and I think that eating the right foods can play a role in that, certainly.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's powerful, man. To parallel that, I believe everybody has genius capacity, and this even speaks to our system of education is very one-size-fits-all vanilla, and people might have a genius in being able to understand the structure of conventional education, rote memorization, following the rules, that kind of thing, but there are infinite expressions and an array of different types of genius, and so unlocking that is a super passion. This book, again, we've got Genius Kitchen and... First of all, it's beautiful. I was telling you before we got started, you're just on here, handsome AF, you're the Fabio of nutrition books now just... It's such a beautiful book as well, the food looks amazing, and I want to dig in more because it's called Genius Kitchen, and you mentioned here, we got fish is one of those foods that is really important for cognitive health. I want to talk a little more about that because tapping into our genius collectively, we've got to have a healthy brain, so can we dive in a little bit more specific on... You mentioned fish is one of those particular foods for DHA and EPA and the importance of this, but are there any specifics with the type of fish or anything we should pay attention to?

MAX LUGAVERE: Yeah, fatty fish is ideal because it's those fats... I'll tell you why the fat of fish is so precious, it's because fish inhabit cold waters, so cold-water fish is really what we want to consume, and what happens to animal fats at cold temperatures? They become really rigid. Like if you've ever refrigerated a steak, the fat in a steak is predominantly saturated in nature. And we're made of the same stuff, right? So animal fat... Mammal fat for the most part, when cold, it gets very rigid, so that wouldn't do for a fish, a fish has to stay limber and flexible at really cold temperatures, and so fish fats are predominantly polyunsaturated and monounsaturated, but it's those delicate polyunsaturated fats that help keep a fish really, really flexible and fluid, and it's that same quality that polyunsaturated fats give to your brain, keeping your brain cell membranes nice and fluid and flexible, and so that's why there's this interesting relationship that our brains have with fish fat, that's why fish oil is so important, and the fish that are most abundant with that kind of fat, in particular DHA fat, which is one of the most important structural building blocks of the brain is salmon...

It's a fatty fish. King salmon is the fattiest fish, and it's generally wild, so that's the type of salmon that I would look out for, but it can be a little bit more expensive. Sockeye is a much more economical, wild salmon, and it's very rich and it's in this red color, so while it's not as fatty as king salmon, it's a much better source of a unique Marine carotenoid called Astaxanthin, which is abundant in Sockeye salmon... Which gives Sockeye salmon that characteristic rich red color. A little more gamey as far as fish goes, 'cause it's leaner, but Astaxanthin is a very powerful antioxidant that improves your skin quality, it's powerfully protective to eye health as well as brain health, and it's actually one of the supplements that I've been taking for 15 years, even before I got started doing what it is that I'm currently doing, Astaxanthin was one of those, I just went down a research rabbit hole and the benefits of it, were so impressive to me. And it's one of the reasons why wild salmon is so, so great for you.

If you don't like Salmon or you for whatever reason don't have access to it, Sardines are another great source of pre-formed omega-3 fats, they're also low on the food chain, so very low exposure to Mercury. Salmon is also a pretty low mercury food, but Sardines are great, they're a sustainable fish. They're just, they're plentiful, they're tiny. When they have bones in them, that actually is a great source of calcium, also selenium, which is a powerful brain antioxidant, also important for thyroid production, a viable source of Vitamin D. So, Sardines are great.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I would imagine we want them packaged in a good oil or in water.

MAX LUGAVERE: I'm glad you brought that up, so... Yeah, unfortunately, you'll still find a lot of sardines that come with these really unhealthy oils, like soybean oil and the like, and so you want to make sure that your sardines, if you're buying canned fish... Or any kind of canned fish, comes either in water or extra virgin olive oil. Sometimes you can find Sardines in Marinara

sauce, which is actually pretty good. So, Sardines are great, but at the end of the day, observationally, people that eat fish seem to have better health and the fish that most Americans are eating is not... Again, it's not pristinely sourced and what have you, so just eat fish at the end of the day, I think is the proper take home here, it's so beneficial. It's a great source of high-quality protein. Women who eat more fish, their offspring come out with stronger cognitive abilities...

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is well documented, it's so nuts when you think about that, because a baby is going to just siphon DHA and EPA, whatever the mom has available, and if you could provide more, it's just so nourishing for the developing brain for sure.

MAX LUGAVERE: Yeah, it's awesome. And most of the fish now that we get come from sustainable fisheries, like there is the question of sustainability, which I know comes up. We've had to scale our food production to support a growing population dramatically over the past 100 years. So, mistakes have been made. None of the systems that we currently have in place are perfect, but they're getting better all the time, and I think when you buy from reputable supermarkets, that helps to support these... The progress on that front.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, super powerful stuff. Got a quick break coming up, we'll be right back.

Mental performance is more important than ever, and there are specific foods that are proven to enhance our cognitive abilities, like few things can. A study published in *Advanced Biomedical Research* found that royal jelly has the potential to improve spatial learning, attention and enhance our memory, and to add to that, it was found to be anti-microbial, anti-tumor and anti-inflammatory. One of the biggest issues we're facing with cognitive decline, with diminishing brain health is neuro inflammation, specifically hypothalamic inflammation, with our hypothalamus being a master regulator of our endocrine system and our nervous system. And addressing this helps not just our brain work better, but our body working better as well. Royal jelly has also been found to facilitate the differentiation of all different types of brain cells, and to top it off, researchers in Japan discovered that Royal jelly has the power to stimulate neurogenesis in the hippocampus, this is the memory center of the brain, very few things ever discovered have been found to be able to do this, this is the power of royal jelly. Royal jelly has been prized for centuries for all of its metabolic and cognitive benefits, but this is just one of the most remarkable super foods for the brain.

Another one of my favorite things is Bacopa. A randomized double-blind placebo-controlled human trial, the gold standard of clinical testing published in 2016 found that after just six weeks of use, Bacopa significantly improved speed of visual information processing, learning

rate, memory consolidation and even decreased anxiety in study participants. Now, I've got both of these powerful super foods together, in one of my all-time favorite nootropic, and it's called B.Smart from the incredible folks at Beekeeper's Naturals. They're dedicated to sustainable beekeeping, that's where this amazing royal jelly comes from, to deliver the cleanest most bio-available forms of bee products, and they're committed to third-party testing for over 70 pesticide residues commonly found in bee products, with some of the most pervasive offenders being things like DDT, that's again, commonly found in bee products. They also test for a wide variety of other things commonly found in bee products that a lot of folks don't know about, like heavy metals like arsenic and lead, and also testing for E. Coli and salmonella and things that you do not want coming through with the incredible bee products that we're trying to get and get the value from. We don't want toxins and poisons coming along with those things, so I'm a huge fan of Beekeeper's Naturals and my favorite thing...

My favorite nootropic is B.Smart from Beekeeper's Naturals. Go to beekeepersnaturals.com for 15% off, the B.Smart and all of their other incredible products. You've got to check out their Superfood Honey as well. It's amazing. Go to B-E-E-K-E-E-P-E-R-S-naturals.com/model and you're going to get 15% off all of their incredible products. B.Smart is a must-have for mental performance. Pop over there, check 'em out, beekeepersnaturals.com/model. Now, back to the show.

So, we've got fish, specifically fatty fish, and I would imagine you've got a good fish recipe or two in the book for everybody, which again, just even looking through the pages, you start to get a little bit hungry. So, we got fatty fish as being one of these really important foods for our brain health and cognitive function. So, you mentioned vitamin E as well, a little bit. What foods can we find a good source of Vitamin E?

MAX LUGAVERE: Great question. Vitamin E is really important. You can find it in almonds... Any time you find... Actually, any time you find polyunsaturated fats in nature, because they're so delicate and damage-prone, you find vitamin E. So, any food that has polyunsaturated fats typically is going to naturally also contain vitamin E, which is actually... Vitamin E is kind of a misnomer. It's a squad of about 8 protector molecules that... You've got alpha-tocopherol, gamma-tocopherol, there are, I believe, six others, but yeah, avocados are a great source. Grass-fed beef is a good source of vitamin E and in grass-finished beef you get three times the vitamin E as compared to grain-fed beef.

I believe egg yolks are a decent source of vitamin E, wild fatty fish. It is a pretty abundant antioxidant in nature, although still today, I believe, 90% of people don't consume the daily recommended amount of vitamin E, unfortunately, because we're not eating whole foods anymore, we're eating ultra-processed packaged foods, so... Yeah, so I go into all that. Actually... In the book, I break apart each food component, I talk about dairy, I talk about salt. Actually,

dairy is an area where my views have kind of evolved over time, I don't know, are you a dairy fan?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Sounds a little bit like an oxymoron... Again, my views have evolved. But for me, it's just looking at, humans have been consuming dairy for, again, thousands of years, not typically from cow, but it could be goat, sheep, people out here milking camels for centuries, but I think it really boils down to where it's coming from, and your unique microbial health and just your genetics, how it's lining up with those things. I think that for most folks, they can do well with a little bit of dairy, but it's been so vilified that it's kind of a sketchy situation to even talk about, because it can be so damaging as well on the other side, it could be something that is definitely driving allergic conditions.

And I'll tell you this, true story, I completely transformed my health, age of 22, going from this vance-degenerative spinal condition when I was 20 and I was looking and feeling good, but I still had these allergies, like seasonal allergies would get really bad, hay fever. I had a history of asthma when I was a kid, I would be hospitalized occasionally with asthma, and when I stopped eating dairy, when I pulled that out of my diet because I was trying to upgrade the dairy that I was getting, I was getting organic dairy, but I constantly had a mucus-y thing going on as well, and spitting, this is so crazy and my wife, we were together at the time, was just like, how did you deal with me kind of just having that little thing, but anyway, so I pulled dairy out of my diet and I haven't had an issue since.

No allergies, no asthmatic symptoms. And it's been years and years and years have gone by. But here's the thing, I can have a little bit of certain types of dairy but if I teeter a little bit too far, I start to get a little bit of... A little something going on. So, my body is more sensitive to it, but because I'm overall healthier, I think that ultimately, it's still it's the stuff we're making our system out of the health of your microbiome, so that was like a loaded question, loaded answer for me, but you just said your views have evolved as well, so let's talk about that.

MAX LUGAVERE: Yeah, I've become a bigger fan of dairy fat, I've been a fan of dairy protein for a long time because from a biological value standpoint, dairy protein is pristine, it consistently ranks among the top-quality protein, highly digestible, found in nature. I've been a user of Whey protein isolate for some time, which actually, even for people who are dairy sensitive, Whey protein is usually pretty well tolerated because... Especially When protein isolate, because it's largely free of any lactose and Casein, Casein is the other type of dairy protein that's usually skimmed off with the production of Whey protein, but dairy fat is a really interesting... I've become really interested in dairy fat lately, and I've started putting heavy cream in my coffee because... You got to think, what is the purpose of dairy? It's to grow an animal. In the context of a cow, it's to grow a calf into a cow, but in particular what is the organ that's under the most rapid growth and development? It's the brain.

So if you actually look at dairy fat has in it, it's got some really interesting brain protective molecules that I think, I don't know, may potentially play a role in helping us procure better brain health, in particular in dairy fat, dairy triglycerides are encapsulated by what's called Milk Fat globule membrane, and Milk fat globule membrane is basically like a bubble that encapsulates these fats to make the fat soluble in water, 'cause dairy is this natural, beautiful emulsion of oil and water, is essentially what it is, but the fats stay solute in the water due to this membrane called Milk fat globule membrane and Milk fat globule membrane is literally composed of phosphatidylcholine, various protein phospholipids, but one of them is phosphatidylcholine, which we know is a really important building block for brain cell membranes as part of the phospholipid bilayer.

So, phosphatidylcholine plays an important role there. It's also a source of a compound called sphingomyelin, which is an important component of myelin, which is the insulation of our... It's the myelin sheath, it insulates our neurons and it's degraded in conditions like multiple sclerosis, so there have actually been studies that have shown that feeding infants Milk Fat globule membrane leads to a significant improvement in cognitive function when compared to not feeding them Milk Fat globule membrane at all. It's a natural component of milk, so it's in human milk, it's in bovine milk, obviously, so I think it's potentially really good from a brain health standpoint if you can tolerate dairy, and I'll admit that 75% of the global adult population is lactose intolerant, but if you can tolerate dairy fat... Heavy cream is an example of a dairy fat that has virtually no lactose or casein in it, so very well tolerated, even butter, but butter is different in that the churning of cream, which is how butter is made, disrupts Milk Fat globule membrane, so there's no Milk Fat globule membrane in butter. And that's actually why we see that butter can cause an increase in LDL, so butter actually is processed by our body differently than cream, even though they both start out as the same base ingredient.

Butter has a characteristic that makes it potentially more atherogenic, whereas this Milk fat globule membrane protects the fatty acids, and it seems that we digest them differently than we do butter, and we're still trying to figure out why, but.

That explains why we have this paradoxical finding with relation to dairy fat that people who consume full fat dairy seem to be protected against cardiovascular disease, as opposed to low fat and fat-free dairy, right.

Because the past few decades, we've been told over and over again, saturated fat clogs our arteries, it's not good for our cardiovascular health, right. And it's true to some degree that saturated fats do cause your LDL levels to go up, but that's not the case with dairy fat, with the exception of butter. So yeah, so I've been sort of like... That's why I started putting heavy cream in my coffee now instead of butter, which I was doing for a little bit, and... Yeah, and I also...

'cause I go down these rabbit holes like you do, Shawn, I couldn't stop. Once I was making all these discoveries, I wanted to see if there was any relationship between dairy consumption and reduced risk of cognitive decline, 'cause that's my passion.

I have a familial risk factor for dementia, 'cause of my mother, and there was this paper that was... It was... It wasn't the highest quality paper, but it was published by this researcher who's work I've been following for a while, this guy Oriel Willett has published a lot in the past about the relationship the nutrition has to brain health, and he found it was a food frequency questionnaire study, that associated various components of subject dietary patterns with their brain health over a period of time, and they found that among all dietary components, dairy seemed to be the most... Dairy consumption seemed to be the most protective against cognitive decline. I wouldn't place money on that yet, more research needs to be done, but yeah, very interesting stuff.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, we've got to maintain an open mind with these things because again, your thoughts about it have evolved, so have mine and basing it more experientially, of course what feels good for you, and also paying attention to what the real data says, and not just say, certain vanilla flavor of data, this is how it is. Whenever somebody says that This is the end all be all, that's when you need to have a big red flag popping up, and even with... If we're thinking about the allergenic factor for the dairy, it might be for folks, you mentioned having the ability to break down the sugar, lactose intolerant, lactase enzyme, it's the carbohydrate fraction. What about the protein fraction? Maybe that's okay. What about the fat fraction? Maybe that's okay. But also, we've got to keep in mind too, humans are Milk drinking creatures like that's who our first food is milk, and so of course, the thought would come up, the argument would come up where humans are the only animal that drink milk from other animals. Have you ever said have some milk for a kitty? 'Cause guess what? That cat's going to be all over it.

Same thing with the dog. I just saw a video the other day, it was the dog was getting a bowl of milk and then the cat just basically start giving the dog the skibbity paps, being able to... Cats have them hands, man, do you have a cat?

MAX LUGAVERE: I have a cat.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You're a cat guy.

MAX LUGAVERE: I'm a cat... Yeah, that's what I never would have thought, but yeah, no, she's like a dog cat though. She's very, very personable. Cats can be weird, but you know... She's cute. Shout out to Delilah, the cat.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Delilah. Hello, Delilah.

MAX LUGAVERE: But dude, also like what... Almond milk is natural?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Wish I bought it.

MAX LUGAVERE: Dairy milk but almond milk comes from...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, I've never seen an indigenous culture stroking the teat of an almond.

MAX LUGAVERE: There you go.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Out there, but again, it's something we can do and we can potentially find some value in, but we've got to understand these are all new things, we're all trying to figure it out, and so also, if you think about the paradigm with these things, we're still trying to copy milk, that's the thing, it's just like, if you don't think that milk is okay for humans, don't try and get your copycat version of the thing because you still want the real thing, but then we get in the conversation too, like why are we so attracted to these things, casomorphins, for example, these compounds that tend to fit into receptor sites that make us like this stuff, especially when it's processed into things like cheeses. For most folks, I think it's the cheeses that can be a little bit more like, I'm not giving up my cheese, cheese and ice cream and things like that, but again, we got to put this stuff in a context, what feels good for you, and not to judge other people. Because if it works for them, it works for them.

And I love this about... Our message has a mutual congruency there, and it's just being more inclusive with these things, so we've got fatty fish, we've got vitamin E-rich foods, we've got dairy coming in with the surprising pick... Let's cover another... What's another great food for our cognitive health that you have a recipe for in the book?

MAX LUGAVERE: Man, another... Well, I'm a big fan of... One of my favorite recipes, it's actually a berry recipe, I'm a huge fan of blueberries, brain berries. Research shows there was a study, the Nurses' Health Study, that provided all this data that's been mined in a million different ways, but we've seen that people who consume about a serving, two servings a week of berries, whether they're blueberries or strawberries, have brains that are younger by about two and a half years, and we know that berries are a low sugar fruit, but in particular, blueberries provide anthocyanins, which are the pigments that have actually been shown to accumulate in the memory center of the brain and act as Protector molecule, so the memory center of the brain, the hippocampus, is the first structure to be affected by Alzheimer's disease, it's how we process and store our memories, and blueberries seem to provide this compound...

The anthocyanin complex that is very protective, seemingly of that structure, there have also been a number of clinical trials, small admittedly, but that have shown that blueberry extract can improve cognitive function in people... One of my friends, Robert Krikorian is a researcher who's published on some of that work, and so I have a recipe in the book that combines blueberries with another genius food, dark chocolate, and I show people how to create this fresh blueberry, these dark chocolate-covered fresh blueberries that combines both, these are bomb, kids love them, by the way. So, all you do is you melt down a bar of chocolate, you throw in a little bit of coconut oil to help emulsify the chocolate.

You get some fresh blueberries, rinse them off a little bit, dry them, throw them in the pot. Not at a... You don't want to cook the blueberries, so you want to make sure that the temperature is just low enough to melt the dark chocolate. And you cover the blueberries entirely in the chocolate, you put them out on a baking sheet with parchment paper, and then you sprinkle a little bit of a flake salt on top. You throw them in the fridge, and after the chocolate has reconstituted, solidified, you get this incredible chocolate candy shell encapsulating these amazing blueberries that explode in your mouth when you eat them with this little hit of sea salt on top.

And chocolate is amazing because it's rich in compounds called flavanols, a good source of magnesium, which we know half the population doesn't consume adequate amounts of. It's been shown to support cognitive health. Regular chocolate consumers have better memory function and so, yeah, so it brings those two together. And then you throw a little bit of sea salt on top which is like the icing on the cake, so to speak, but salt is another one of these really important nutrients that has been demonized over the past couple of decades. We're even told to avoid it, that eating too much is bad for our blood pressure. Ironically, the number one source of dietary sodium in the American diet are bread and rolls.

When was the last time you heard a dietitian say, "Avoid bread and rolls,"? Usually they'll say, "Don't salt your food," but only 11% of the salt that your average American ingests comes from their saltshaker or the salt that they add to their recipe. So, for me, it's really important to actually welcome salt back to the table, and whenever you have sweet in a recipe, you have to have a little bit of salt, it just makes the sweetness pop. So that's one of my favorite recipes. It's one of the easiest recipes in the book, kids love it, it's addictive.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome man. We talked about some of the nutritional upgrades that we get when we prepare food like this, and we talked about an upgrade with the oils, obviously. We talked about an upgrade of ingredients, but if you could, let's talk about the upgrade in a skill set that can actually help us to survive, because again, cooking and spending time preparing food, putting our stuff together has been slowly disintegrating in our culture,

especially here in the United States. So, what made you want to write a cookbook right now, and has this rekindled the relationship for you with spending more time preparing food?

MAX LUGAVERE: Such a good question. Yeah, I mean, it's such a powerful leverage point, and knowing how to cook, I think it's... I mean, we talked about the health benefits of knowing how to cook, but also knowing how to cook is a great way to economize, it's a great way to spend less money on healthy food and really, I mean, get in the best shape of your life in the process. With cooking, you can... When you know how to cook, you know... You have the know how to buy more economical cuts of meat, for example, and make them delicious.

So, I love to give the example of cooked chicken drumstick. I don't know how many times I've gone even to a restaurant, and I've bitten into like a chicken leg or chicken thigh or what have you, and it's just undercooked, like, I mean, it might be cooked to the point of Food Safety, but you still have collagenous tissue, connective tissue, tendons. You need to cook meat low and slow in order for collagen to break down into gelatin, that's how the best briskets in the world are made, that's how ribs are made, some of my favorite foods. And people need to know that parts of the animal that are closest to the joint contain collagen, right, and it's those parts of the animal they contain... That contain four times the collagen of white meat breast... Chicken breast, for example.

And so, you need to cook these items low and slow, and that's where you can really start to not only reap the benefits of ingesting more collagen, which is good for your... Provides the backbone molecules that your own body will then reassemble into the collagen that forms your hair skin and nails, teeth, bones, keeps your arteries elastic, right? So dietary collagen I think is actually worthwhile to seek out, but you have to know how to cook it well, and that allows you to then buy cheaper animal parts and make the most of them, like chicken breasts are great, but there... It's just protein, there's very little... Aside from the protein, there's very little nutrient density.

Whereas chicken dark meat, you know you've got that collagen, it's a good source of vitamin K-2. You can buy the whole chicken, which is the cheapest way to purchase chicken, or you can purchase the legs by themselves, and they're always going to be cheaper than buying the chicken breast. You can also... When it comes to red meat, you can buy cheaper cuts of the cow, and cheaper cuts of the cow, typically why they're cheaper, they're less desired because they tend to be tougher, but what do you think brisket is? It's just one of these cuts that really benefits from low and slow cooking.

So, I think that's one of the cooking tips that I offer in the book is like, people really need to know... People really need to slow down when it comes to not just cooking, but also eating. But cooking in particular is... Yeah, I mean, it... There is no food dish that I can think of that doesn't

benefit from a little bit more patience. I mean even like a scrambled. The humble scramble that we all make when we're running out the door in the morning. If we're lucky, right, a lot of us just start our days with commercial cereal, which is just junk food, but I mean, most people over-cook their eggs. Cooking a scramble on very low heat, low and slow, constantly stirring it, I mean, you get eggs that are better than I'm sure most listeners have had, like even in the restaurant setting.

So yeah, that's another example of just a basic tip that I offer in the book, like, if you're making eggs, cook them low and slow, take them off the pan before they're at your desired level. I've done this because they'll continue to cook similar to a... You want to take a steak off the grill before it's reached your desired level, I've done this, because it continues to hit up. Same thing with eggs. It's just like, a world of flavor opens up to you once you just have a little bit more patience with the cooking.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Just makes life better, man.

MAX LUGAVERE: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, this is awesome. So, so much here in the book, man, it's just so exciting, because having resources like this where we can... First of all, it's a beautiful thing just to be able to see your food, see recipes, to see what it's going to look like, and that aspect of it. But also, you provided something here in the book that a lot of cookbooks don't. You actually provide some insight on how all this stuff works, some nutrition insights that you don't find most other places as far as cookbooks are concerned. So, let's talk about that. Like, what did you do in the creation of your cookbook that's a little bit different?

MAX LUGAVERE: Yeah, I kind of wanted to create the Genius trilogy. I don't know, I'm like a... I'm a film nerd. So, I watch like Dark Knight trilogy, Star Wars. I wanted to have like the third... Wanted to like, end cap it with a third book. No, but I wanted to write a book that was not just a bunch of recipes, which would have been really easy to do. I wanted it to be a kitchen resource, so it's about 300 pages long, and the first half of the book is a nutrition and wellness guide. And as I mentioned, I break apart each food component from plants to animal products, eggs, fish, salt, herbs, and spices, even water, I talk about it. Because my first book came out, I don't know, four years ago at this point, and my views on certain things have evolved as they should. But ultimately, I wanted to make it really practical for people, like to distill all of my nutritional recommendations and everything I've learned over the past decade into really practical advice, where the rubber actually meets the road, which is the kitchen, right? Where we're actually preparing food for ourselves and our loved ones.

I also really wanted to separate fact from fiction with regard to a lot of different things, like, when it comes to animal products... I'm a big advocate of omnivory, and I'm unapologetic about that. I think that both whole plants are really important, and I also think that animal products are really important. With regard to animal products, I mean, one of the reasons why I think I'm so passionate about this is that my mom was a vegetarian and my mom had very poor health. My mom, as you know, at a young age, developed dementia and later on she developed cancer, it was horrible. And I think that because of my mom's diet, which was also influenced by the media and everything that she was hearing about how to live a healthy life, avoid fat, dietary cholesterol, things like that, most of the products that we had growing up were ultra-processed grain products, but they had the red heart healthy logo on them.

We used a little bit of extra virgin olive oil, but we shied away from animal fats, and I'll always remember the big tub of corn oil that we had by the stove, all of our... All of the sauteed or fried dishes that my mom made for us as a kid were all made in that corn oil, right? So, I think that by getting back... Had my mom had adopted a more balanced diet that was inclusive of a wider array of animal products, that she would have been better off. Now, my mom was a big animal rights advocate, I definitely respect my mom's choices and what she developed, it wasn't her fault, and nor is it the fault of anybody who develops any of these kinds of conditions. But, I mean, animal products like grass-fed beef, it's one of the most nutrient-dense categories of foods that we have available to us. And I think even the ethical argument, it isn't really sound in the context of the Standard American food environment.

If you're shopping in a modern supermarket and you're buying only plant foods, you're not somehow indemnified from the damage and the exploitation and the death that modern food production, that the effect that that has on local and global ecosystems. There was a research calculation that I cite in Genius Kitchen that even plant agriculture is potentially responsible for up to seven billion animal lives lost every year, which is on par with what animal agriculture is responsible for. This is due to the widespread tilling and monochrome of land that decapitates innumerable rabbits and field mice and squirrels and plants, the spraying of herbicides and pesticides effects birds and the run-off effects fish. So, there's blood on all of our hands, unfortunately, and the way to change the system, in my view, isn't to opt out entirely, it's to vote with your wallet for the system that you want to see. And so, I sort of go into that in the animal section, and then with plants, I talk about that. I go into every category of food and just sort of break apart my rationale for why this should be included in your diet. And yeah, I'm very proud of, I guess, how it's come out.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, man, I'm just very happy for you, man. The trilogy is complete... Completed in a big way. As of this recording, the books are going to be flying off the shelf, people are going to get access a little bit early, because they're here listening to The Model Health Show, and you've got some bonuses for folks too. We're pre-ordering the book. Again,

it's going to fly off the shelves when people get this access early. So, can you let everybody know where to go to get the bonuses?

MAX LUGAVERE: Yeah, so these are exclusive bonuses that once the book drops are going to be... Are not going to be available anymore, but if you go to geniuskitchenbook.com and you order from there, geniuskitchenbook.com, and then you fill out the form on that website, you're going to get a free PDF e-book that I wrote called 15 Daily Steps to Lose Weight and Prevent Disease. So, it's a 15-page document packed with real useful information.

MAX LUGAVERE: You also get an E-book that I wrote a couple of years ago actually on How to interpret scientific literature, so...

SHAWN STEVENSON: That could be helpful right now.

MAX LUGAVERE: Yeah, dude. Yeah, so I was really... Health literacy, I'm really passionate about this and not just being the arbiter of it, right, but I want people to be able to meet me where I'm at, 'cause I think we should all have a seat at the table. You do such a great job with promoting scientific literacy. It's so important. So, I wrote this little EDF... EDF... This PDF e-book. Basically, I think that the title of it is How to become a citizen scientist, so how to assess study quality, what to look for, etcetera. So, we got that, and then I also have a sort of community where I share bonus content, we do live Zoom calls every month. It's called the Genius life VIP, you also get a free month to that, so you can get all that at geniuskitchenbook.com, but I'm mostly proud of his book, which is... It's really... It pays homage to cooking and what it's like to share a meal with somebody, something that I inherited from my mom, that was always really important to her, eating together, and I ultimately don't think that nutrition should be as complicated as it is. I think we over-complicate things, so it's sort of a return to simpler foods that are still super delicious.

I've got a lot of comfort foods in there that I've put my own twist on and made really healthy, like... One of my favorite dishes is actually... It's actually a plant-based dish, believe it or not, I've got some plant-based dishes in the book, it's a vegan mac and cheese with carrot noodles, so we use carrots as the noodle, you can use a spiralizer and we've got this amazing, amazingly indulgent cheese sauce that tastes like the Kraft mac and cheese that I grew up loving as a kid, but we've got that with all super healthy ingredients, the whole book is gluten-free grain-free, and 99% dairy free. I use a little bit of ghee in certain recipes, but yeah, whatever dietary plan you're on, the recipes are sure to be supportive, to say the least.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's another great resource to add to our superhero utility belt, and again, to get those bonuses, geniuskitchenbook.com, go there ASAP, take advantage, those bonuses are awesome. And again, this book is going to be flying off the shelf, get yours ordered

and be ready to make some delicious meals, to get healthier, and this is a great time to do it, man, and thank you so much for coming by to hang out with us again.

MAX LUGAVERE: My brother, thank you, man, I really appreciate it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: My pleasure, Max Lugavere everybody. Thank you so much for tuning in to the show today. I hope you got a lot of value out of this. This is a mandate for us. The new mandate is to improve our nutrition, to improve our relationship with our food, because it's truly what is making our body... We get to choose what we're making our body out of, so having a little bit more connection is obviously going to be pointing us in a healthier direction, and also... This is one of the things that we strive to do is to be more inclusive and also to keep an open mind and understanding that things change as far as our understanding of nutrition and the human body, but I think that one of the most powerful and primary tenets for us to keep in our back pocket at all times is that if in doubt, look at what humans have been doing the longest, what has helped humans to reach that status where we're the apex of creatures here on the planet and has enabled us to have such a remarkable complex brain that enables us to do all the things that we've done in the world, and just even to pivot off of the conversation around milk, for example, got milk? Man, milk has messed a lot of people up to be 1000, but at the same time, many different civilizations have thrived, having access to milk and dairy products, my wife being from Kenya, she's from the Kikuyu tribe.

Also, a lot of people know about the Maasai tribe, and the Maasai again, they don't have these crazy rates of obesity and heart disease and diabetes and all these things, these are virtually irrelevant, non-existent in their culture, and their diet... A major part of their diet is milk, so we can't completely vilify something because of a belief system that we have, and also because it might not work for us, we have to keep all this stuff in context because again, we could say that humans are the only animal that drinks the milk of another animal, I gave the example of kittens and puppies and any other animal really, they get some access to some milk, they're getting there... They're getting their sip on, but also if we say that humans are the only animal that does a certain thing, humans are the only animal that cooks. We could play that game all day, there's a lot of things that we do differently than other creatures, and so... And I'm saying this because these are the things that I thought... These are things that I would say because it just made sense, but it was surface level, it was a surface-level understanding, because everything has its place and there's this beautiful life cycle and association that human beings have with the planet, have with other creatures in nature.

If we can see it, if we can rekindle that relationship because it's there, it's present, we can't run from it, unless you leave the planet, but even when you leave the planet, guess what, you're taking you with you, you're taking Earth with you because you're made from the earth, but so it's being more aware of this process, in this power that we have, and so there's so many

wonderful foods and varieties and things that we have access to, that we can explore, and that's the beauty of it all, and that's what I want to implore you to do moving forward, open up your mind and your palate and your experience... Let's get our hands on some food, let's get our hands more involved in the food preparation process. So, I appreciate you so much for tuning into the show today, if you got a lot of value out of this, please share it out, you could send this directly from the podcast app that you're listening on, whether it's Spotify, whether it's SoundCloud, Apple Music, whatever the case might be. Shout out to everybody listening on iHeart Radio, I appreciate you, and of course, you could share this on social media, take a screenshot of the episode.

Tag me, I'm at @Shawnmodel on Instagram and on Twitter, at The Model Health Show on Facebook. I appreciate you so much for tuning in. We've got some incredible episodes, interviews, powerhouse masterclasses coming your way very soon, so make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day, I'll talk with you soon.

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