

THE MODEL HEALTH SHOW

EPISODE 578

How To Transform Your Mind, Body, & Mission

With Guest Eben Britton

You are now listening to The Model Health Show with Shawn Stevenson. For more, visit themodelhealthshow.com.

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. Have you ever thought about the fact that our thoughts take up physical real estate, in our reality? Our thoughts, if you think about for example, I'm just going to throw a random word out at you and you're probably going to have an image pop-up. Elephant. When I say the word elephant, you're probably going to have some reality or some image pop up, related to an elephant, and for everybody it's probably going to be a little bit different. Now, the thing is, even though we negate this and put this on the back burner, it's just a thought, it's a fleeting thing, where is this thought stored?

Where is the thought of that image of an elephant or an image of our mom, or an image of our bed? The list goes on and on. We can have an infinite number of thoughts, but they all pop up on the screen of our minds. Now we know that there are locations in the brain where our memories are stored, there's a lot of imagery that's getting pulled up from our hippocampus, it's known as the memory center of our brain, which is incredible. But in addition to that, we have whole brain learning, whole brain patterning in our brains, and our entire nervous system. You've probably heard the term muscle memory as well. There's some indication, again, that even the cells that are related to our muscle and muscular function and movement, have a memory bank as well, that is storing data, it's storing thought.

Now, the tricky part about this conversation, is that it's leaning on the standard definition of things. So, it's getting into a conversation does a thought have mass? If I'm saying that it takes up physical space, does it have mass? Is it measurable? Well, we do have some technology today, that indicates that thoughts do have a physical substance to it, but it's tricky to be able to measure. And of course, we're diving deep into a subject matter here that has a lot to consider, a lot to think about. But I just wanted to bring this to the front of your mental screen, to get you to think about how powerful your thoughts are. Our thoughts determine our reality. I'll say that again, our thoughts determine our reality. It's not just that, it's not just the thoughts themselves but our perception of those thoughts. Because even when I said elephant to kick things off, for you, it might have popped up a memory of going to the Barnum and Bailey Circus, and it might be a joyful experience. Or for you, maybe it was a trip to Thailand, or maybe it was the movie Ong Bak, but maybe you hated that movie, you're like, "Forget Tony Jaa, I don't like him."

Or maybe it's a sad memory, maybe you had an elephant lamp as a kid and it's a sad memory or the movie Dumbo. Dumbo, tearjerker alert. Man, still gets me to this day. I was not prepared for that. 'Cause it's all about the love. The mother and child vibes. And so, it's going to vary

from person to person our perception of those thoughts. And this is the power that we have because we get to choose our perception, we get to choose how we see things, we get to choose our thoughts to a great extent. Now, please understand a lot of our thoughts are happening on automatic. My friend, Dr. Daniel Amen, if there tend to be negative thoughts, he calls them ANTs, automatic negative thoughts, so they're just popping up repeatedly, we have these automatic negative things that we might be thinking, this could be in a relationship to some things that are happening in the world, in our relationships, in our finances. With ourselves. We could be thinking chronically negative things about ourselves. I know that many of us have been in that state.

But this is the thing, and this is what he teaches, and he is widely regarded as the leading psychiatrist in the world because he's not just telling you stuff, he's actually looking at the brain and doing brain imaging, to see like, are these things actually working? Can we actually influence how our brain is operating? And so, he teaches that we have the ability, to replace these ANTs, with a PAT. With the PAT, a positive automatic thought. But it doesn't just happen automatically, we have to sometimes go and replace that record with a different record. I don't know why I said record, CD, that whole thing. Play a different song, when one song pops up, or we can scratch up that record, that's probably why I brought up record in the first place, we could scratch up the record or the CDs.

Do you remember when disc became the thing? We went from the Nintendo cartridges where you had to blow in it to try to get it to work, I don't know why that worked but it just did and it... I thought it was just me and our family, but then I would see it in my friend's house and now there's memes about it, going back to those days, but when the PlayStation hit, we had the disc. And so, you had to find creative ways of trying to make the disc work, once it gets scratched up. And so, when we scratch a thing up, it no longer plays the same way, and let's just stay in the same vein as a record player. It can create some different textures and notes and jumping from thing to thing to thing, but by scratching up a record that we might be having playing in our minds chronically, so it might be a record playing of how unworthy we are, it's the record that's playing, it's the "unworthy of love" song, that we just have chronically playing and then we can just... Start scratching it up, mixing it up.

But if we're not aware that we are the DJ playing the record, it's just going to be playing on automatic oftentimes because of our conditioning. And so, once we understand that we have the power, we could scratch that record up, we can break it, we could throw it away, we can replace it with something else. We could change the meaning of it. We can see the lesson, that this thought was, that we were carrying, was trying to teach us in our lives, where do we get this idea that we are unworthy of love, is it true? We can start to dissect it and break it down.

Because again, these thoughts are things that we can pull up and we can work on. And that's the whole point. This is what we're driving in to today, is how important it is and how powerful it is, to go within and to understand that this is the place, that we are creating from, this is the place that we are living from and experiencing the world, is within our own minds. And within it could be an absolute jungle. It could be nucking futs. Just flip the first letter of the first words. It could be crazy. But at the same time, it could be beautiful.

It can be empowering, it can be graceful, it can trigger more connection, more love, more passion, or on the other side, create more divisiveness, more anger, more vitriol. And right now, I want for us as a community to start to encourage within each other, to be able to go within and to be able to understand ourselves. This was the tenant, this was the tenant, know thy self, know thy self, this is legendary tenant statement. But is this something that we're proactively doing and investing in on our lives today? Why is it so important? Well, it's because once we know ourselves, that's when we become empowered, truly empowered in our lives, and no longer do we have to be a victim of our thoughts or victim of our perception, we can become the victor, we can become empowered in understanding, "Hey, I get to choose the thoughts that I want to think, and I get to see the world how I want to see it."

Now, this doesn't always mean that we're right or wrong, and we're going to get into this conversation today, but the reason that this matters so much right now is that there is an epidemic of divisiveness, there's an epidemic of people being able to inner-stand, to understand their inner world, and what their fears are, and what's driving them, what's motivating them, what their passions are, their desires, where is this all stemming from, and are they bringing about the life that we want to live? Because again, our lives are determined by the thoughts that we carry, our lives are determined by our perception. And so, I have a very special guest on and somebody that inspires me and is just such a beacon of inspiration in this domain, because of the work that he's done in his own life and on himself and it's pretty miraculous, the story that you're going to hear today. So, I'm really excited about that. And one of the things that he continued even after we wrapped our show today, he was sharing with me how impactful my book *Eat Smarter* was, he said that this was one of his favorite books.

And to say that not just health book, but one of his favorite books is really a remarkable statement, there are so many wonderful books that have been written obviously, but my intention was to make... Was to create a book that was timeless because it's adhering to timeless principles, but it's not just about how food controls our metabolism, which we cover that in the best way possible, as you know. We're not just talking about how food impacts our sleep quality, which we talk about that and cover in the best way possible. Or how it affects our cognitive function or emotional stability, but within it, it's really a thread and once people... The people that know that have read *Eat Smarter*, you know that it's also a very powerful personal development book, because I'm continuously guiding you back to yourself. And by

the way, in Eat Smarter I talk about a really important scientific tenant around nutrition, which is chronic nutrient deficiency leads to chronic overeating, chronic nutrient deficiency leads to chronic overeating.

Obviously, consumption has reached an all-time high, here in the United States, to the degree that there are far more people dying from too much nutrient intake, then people who are dying from a lack of nutrient intake. We're eating ourselves to death rather than starving, and that's this new phenomenon that has only taken place within the last decade or two, and it's a really interesting thing. But the question is, what are the biological mechanisms that are getting us to hurt ourselves through what we're putting into our bodies? And not to villainize any particular foods, but we know that ultra-processed foods make up 60% of the average Americans diet today, hyper-palatable ultra-processed foods.

Not just processed foods. Ultra-processed foods. You know what those are, right? You know what those are. But our bodies are constantly looking for the building blocks to repair us to heal us from the damages being done through our diet, through our lifestyle that requires key nutrients in order to help to regulate and heal our bodies and also to regulate our appetite to influence the hormones that control our appetite, from Leptin, to ghrelin, to CCK, to adiponectin and so many others, these hormones that are regulating our metabolism and our appetite are largely controlled by the nutrients that we consume or the lack thereof. So again, if we're deficient in key nutrients, we're going to have repetitive hunger, our bodies, creating that hunger and that craving to bring in food so we can get those nutrients, but also those creating pathways, as you know, can be manipulated.

There are food scientists, again, they're investing tens of millions of dollars, hundreds of millions of dollars every year, collectively the food industry to perfect flavor sensations, food combinations, chemical combinations that gets you addicted to the food, that gets you to eat another, to keep buying. And they even use it in the marketing terms. They'll tell you that you can't eat just one. Wow. Yeah, of course not. It's chemically constructed to be that way. And so, one of the things has been found to help the reset our palette to normalize our cravings and to help us to move away from the consumption of hyper-palatable foods. Funny enough, it's the green life blood, kind of like our blood, the green blood of plants, also known as chlorophyll. A study published in the Peer Review journal appetite found the chlorophyll can assist in weight loss and reduce the urge to eat hyper-palatable foods. This is why I'm such a huge proponent of everybody having a Green Super Food concentrate that they're utilizing on a regular basis, and it should ideally have Chlorella.

It gets its name, is derived from, its high chlorophyll content. Chlorella contains lutein and zeaxanthin, for example. It's abundant in nutrients. But in particular, these two carotenoids are proven to protect your eyes, for example, and lower your risk of macular degeneration and

also other compounds in chlorella have been found to help to chelate heavy metals. And a double-blind placebo-controlled study published in Clinical and Experimental Hypertension found that chlorella was able to normalize blood pressure of test subjects with hypertension. I can go on and on and on. Chlorella is one of the highlighted ingredients in the Organifi Green Juice formula.

Head over to Organifi.com/model. That's O-R-G-A-N-I-F-I.com/model, to get 20% off the Organifi Green Juice formula. They've got the original blend that has a hint of coconut and mint. They've got the brand new, refreshing crisp apple. Alright, crisp apple, as well. So, they've got a new green super food blend for you to take advantage of. Alright, head over to Organifi.com/model and now, let's get to the Apple Podcast Review of the Week.

ITUNES REVIEW: Another five-star review titled "Growth," by Joe Hermerding. "Shawn Stevenson's podcast has triggered tons of growth in my life, not just with nutrition and exercise, but also intellectually and emotionally. When I listen, it accelerates my growth. I would recommend it to anyone who loves to grow."

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's what it's all about: You're either growing or you're dying. That's the tenet, that's the statement. You can't stay in place, you can't stay static, and we get to choose. This goes back to the power of our thoughts, the power of our thinking, and the power of our perspective because we can choose growth. We can choose each day to get just a little bit better, to move in that direction, putting one foot in front of the other. Or on the other side, we could choose to try to fight it and stay stagnant but you're not really staying in place because all of life is continuing forward so we're going backwards if we're not choosing growth.

So, we get the opportunity to choose growth. And so, thank you so much for sharing that and for that acknowledgement. If you have yet to do so, please pop over to Apple Podcasts 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. Ex-NFL offensive lineman, turned yogi, and now best-selling author: Eben Britton, is on the show today to share his incredible insights and his remarkable story. And man, this is one that's going to stick with me for a long time and I'm so grateful to be able to share this with you. Let's jump into this conversation with the amazing Eben Britton. So, I want to start by telling you about the first time I saw you.

EBEN BRITTON: Okay.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright. We were at parent-teacher conferences. I had just moved to LA with my family and so it was all just weird to me already. And you know, we're big people sitting in a little desk at our kids' schools and I'm just sitting there and taking it all in, and then in walks

this guy. And I saw the other men in the room light up when they saw you, alright? And I'm just like, "That's odd. Why are these guys so happy to see this man?" And it was like... It wasn't like you seeing a celebrity kind-of-thing, it was like seeing a friend. And so I saw the guys come up and greet you and hug you. And I was just like, "Man, this guy must be a really good person."

And the parent-teachers conference stuff commenced, the teacher introduced herself and talked a little bit, but then she passed it to you to do a group meditation for us at a parent-teachers conference. Definitely a first, and I was like, "Oh, this is cool. This is really interesting." And I heard your voice, and I was just like, your voice, there was something familiar about it, not just that I might have heard your voice before but there was something familiar. You know what I mean?

EBEN BRITTON: Mm-hmm.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And from that moment, I was just like, "Man, this guy has something," but then that was that. Cut to sometime later and we ended up, of course, connecting, but that first introduction to you, man. You brought... You changed the room when you stepped into it.

EBEN BRITTON: It's amazing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

EBEN BRITTON: Thank you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, I want to ask you about this because that meditation that you held for us in that moment, how has this tool of meditation been valuable in your life?

EBEN BRITTON: Wow, dude. Thank you for sharing that. That's so interesting 'cause of my perspective of that experience, walking in there, and it was a new school for us, too. It was my daughter's first year in that school, and I had met the teacher a couple times. I think it might have been the first... I was super intimidated and that's kind of how I'm always like... I have a big self-worth thing which is part of my journey. And so meditation has been, to put it simply, the most transformational tool of my entire life. And I've been meditating now every day for the last six years and it's completely changed who I am on a molecular level, on a cellular level, radically. There was a lot of chaos in my childhood, a lot of alcoholism, a lot of physical abuse, and football was this vehicle for me to transcend all of that. And I was about eight years old when I saw in the news at my grandparent's house in Connecticut the Jets and the Giants in training camp, and it was just this seed was planted in my eye. That's what I'm going to do. In my mind's eye, that's who I'm going to be when I grow up and...

My mom would never let me play, finally my freshman year of high school, she let me play football. And I was always the biggest kid, and it was just a rocket ship to the moon from there. Everything I did, how I carried myself, how I lived, how I ate, how I spoke, was all in alignment with achieving this dream of playing in the NFL. And everything that... Any time, anybody would say to me, "Ed what are you going to do when you grow up?" I'd say I'm going to play in the NFL. They'd say, "That's cool, man. What's plan B?" I'd say there is no plan B, that's what I'm doing. [chuckle] And it manifested, I manifested that, I visualized, that I looked at... I saw it every single day, every time I woke up, every time I stepped in the football field I saw myself playing in the NFL. And with that though, I was proving to the world how big and tough and scary I was. Because I was really scared during my childhood. There wasn't a lot of stable ground, and I had a lot of rage, I had a lot of anger.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You said in your book, you said, "I saw football as the vehicle to transcend the darkness I found myself in."

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah, yeah, that's what it was, that's what it was. And I put that rage on the field and that's why I was the best player on every team I ever played on, until I got to the NFL, and I was team captain, I was always the most violent guy on the field, I was always the hardest... You'd see me on the film, I'd be the alignment sprinting down the field with the running back, with the receiver, picking the guys up off the floor, knocking people over piles, just... I was a devastating machine, and I loved it. I loved football. But through the process, finally, I was drafted in 2009, 39th overall by the Jags in the second round. And had a great rookie year. The next off-season going into my second season, I ruptured the disk in my back, L5-S1, doing these Keiser squat machines. And we were doing these max rep Keiser squats. And, it was the beginning of this deconstruction of that person, this warrior person that I was, that I had built myself up to be.

EBEN BRITTON: And for the next six years... I played four years in Jacksonville, two years with the Bears. I really was on this constant cycle of getting injured and then getting myself out of injury. And that's a really tough road to be on, 'cause you don't have time, when you're in the NFL, you don't have time. It's get back out on the field by any means necessary, the pills, the injections, tape it up, do the thing, whatever you got to do, get back out on the field. And that was my mentality as this warrior and this was my family, these were my brothers, the coaches were my fathers. This was my whole world, and I was willing to do anything. Literally give my life. Looking back at my football career, I was in the hospital a lot. I probably was on the edge of death a handful of times, whether it was my back injury, the shoulder surgery, the back surgery, I ruptured my appendix my last year in Chicago which was really the universe saying, "Dude, it's okay, you can be done."

And when I left the NFL, after six years, I was spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically destroyed completely. My third year, no, my fourth year in Jacksonville, I'd come back, I'd worked my ass off to get back after the shoulder injury, had shoulder surgery, came back. I had this ruptured disk, then had to have surgery on that. Came back from that, then I had an infection in the disk, after the surgery, had to go on eight weeks of intravenous antibiotics, came back from that, and then my last year in Jacksonville, first game of the season, a guy got thrown into my left ankle, which ended up being a low high ankle sprain.

Team doctor said two-to-three-week recovery, I got a second opinion through my agent, doc said, "This is really like a six-to-eight-week recovery, and you're lucky you don't need surgery." I rushed back after two weeks, had coaches on my ass, literally calling me, as I'm leaving a body work session, questioning whether or not I'm trying to sit out and catch a paycheck. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Wow.

EBEN BRITTON: And this was a new head coach, and he just had... I don't know. And so, I rush back, get my ass kicked against the Bengals, I'm playing Geno Atkins, All-Pro D tackle who the year before, I had a really good game against, but I just get my ass kicked, I get benched at half time. And it was soul crushing. Coming in at half time, there was this commotion outside which I later learned was my line coach who'd been with me since the beginning, and our new head coach fighting over taking me out of the game. And then they came in, and they knew how much pain I was in, 'cause I was telling them all week, I'm like, "Dude, I can't push off my left ankle to move inside to the right, I'm playing left guard, and I can't move inside, 'cause I've got no power in my left ankle, and..."

I'm telling them this all week, they're like, "It'll be fine, we'll get you Toradol, we'll tape it up, we'll do a good job, we'll get you some pain medicine before the game." I'm like, "Okay." And of course, I'm just getting eaten alive, it's just what... It's hell and... So, they come... O line comes in, he's all huffed up, I could tell it was like, was he just in a bar fight or something? And he said, "Eb, we're going to sit you down," and the head coach comes over, he's like, "Eb, we're going to sit you down. We need to get you back healthy." And I just have tears streaming down my face and I'm like, "I told you guys this all week." So, I'm like, "Okay, you're going to sit me down." After the game, the head coach tells the media that the left guard spot's up for grabs.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Are you kidding me?

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Wow.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah. And I was just... At first, I said, Okay, b*tch. And that whole week in practice, I just kicked ass came back, had a great game against the Bears. The following week, I earned that starting spot, I guess that had been mine, and we went away from the biweek, came back, played the Raiders, lost to the Raiders. At this point, we were maybe one in eight, it's a horrible year, it's a horrible year, we've just been driven into the ground. Honestly, the coach is like, we're going to work... We're going to be the hardest working team in the NFL. And we were definitely the most overworked team in the NFL, and this isn't a rant against my coach, it's just like what is?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

EBEN BRITTON: We would run 200-plus reps a day in the sweltering heat, every guy, we had team captains going to the coach's office, saying, "Coach, man, we're done. We're toast, we got no energy on Sunday." The coach was like, "We're going to keep doing things the way we're doing them, we're one in eight." And so, after the Raiders game, I get benched 'cause they're making all these changes to the team, so I was named after being a team captain and an energy center of the team since day one, every team I've ever played on, I get benched, and I was crushed.

I was like, my confidence was destroyed. As an offensive lineman, the most important thing in your arsenal is your confidence, stepping out onto that field every play knowing you're going to dominate the guy in front of you. If you don't have that, it doesn't matter how big you are, how strong you are. I've seen the biggest, strongest, most freak athletes step out onto the field every Sunday and get their asses kicked and not be able to do anything because they have no confidence, they don't believe. That's the biggest thing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, you don't know this, but as of this recording, we just released this kind of masterclass on confidence.

EBEN BRITTON: I love that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And how it affects so many parts of our lives, so that's powerful.

EBEN BRITTON: Perfect, perfect. Of course, you do...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Listen, I got to... I want to make sure we stay with this because you said something profound, I've never heard this said before, you said, "We were going to be the hardest, quote, hardest working," but there's a difference between being hard-working and overworked.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And that balance there, finding there's grace that's involved in that.

EBEN BRITTON: Absolutely, that's been a big practice of mine in my life after football, is finding that balance. So, I get benched, I'm crushed. The end of the year was a wash for me. I wanted nothing to do with the team. I totally shut it down emotionally, mentally, I was just... I wanted nothing... I was miserable to say the least. I was in a lot of pain, physically. Now, I had been basically exiled, I'm trying to talk to the coaches like, "Dude, what's the deal, man? I've been the starter for so long, I've given you everything I have and now you can't even tell me why I'm being benched." I could see the lump in my O line coach's throat, Andy Heck, who I love. He won a Super Bowl with the Chiefs recently, and he's had a really nice stretch since, and he's one of the best O line coaches I've ever been around, and he just had this lump in his throat like he was about to burst into tears every time I talked to him. And the year ends, I'm going into free agency. Just about the worst way you could go into free agency, out of being benched halfway through the season.

I've had a lot of injuries; I had a couple of conversations. Finally end up... I decided to give it another shot. Signed with the Bears, have one great year in Chicago, come back for last year in Chicago, a second year in Chicago. It was the business of football was really starting to wear away at my interest in it and my love for it. So, my appendix ruptured, and I saw that light at the end of the tunnel, which I had been thinking about for a long time. Because when I was a kid, I was like, "I'm going to play this game forever, I'm going to play 10 years in the NFL." And here I was after year six. And that year, I remember coming back from the ruptured appendix, which happened here in LA, my high school was retiring my jersey, and I was at this ceremony, and I'm doubled over in pain, 'cause I've got this... My appendix is rupturing as I was watching the game after the induction ceremony, got rushed to the Emergency Room two days later, 'cause I refused to go, it was like... There's something...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Typical.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Typical.

EBEN BRITTON: Of course. But we were about to go and get on the plane that afternoon to fly back to Chicago, and I said, "I can't get on the plane, something's really wrong." Went to the emergency room, find out I've got a ruptured appendix, have emergency surgery. I'm in the hospital here in LA for a week, I lose about 25, 30 pounds. I have to call the coaches, the trainers, all the people. And finally, I go back, they say, "Eb, take it easy for a month, get your weight

back." This was probably week nine, so I had a month off, and then we had maybe four games left at the end of the season where I was playing again. And I remember when I had just gotten back to start practicing again because they were doing... They'd been doing blood tests and all sorts of things to make sure that all the toxicity and bacteria from the ruptured appendix was out of my system.

And I remember I was just back to practicing and I'm watching this film and I'm thinking to myself, "What am I doing here?" It was so clear; it was like a light somebody turned. It was like I had been sitting in a dark room and someone turned the light on, then I thought to myself, "What am I doing here?" There's a thousand places I'd rather be. I'm in so much pain from my neck to my toes, I'm popping pills just to sit here and film, I'm watching this film and I'm looking at myself blocking this defensive lineman, and I'm thinking to myself, "Man, I used to want to kill that guy, and now I have none of that left."

I have no angry, I've no energy left, I have no rage left. And I'm thinking to myself, "I'm fine sitting here going through all this pain thinking it's glorious or something like I'm proving something to somebody." And this coach behind me, God bless him. But if I walk out of here tomorrow or right now, he'll just plug somebody else in there right, so what am I doing here? We finished out that season, and I knew I was done, because that's the moment in football, especially if your heart's not in it, you're going to get yourself hurt and you're going to get somebody else hurt, and there's no reason to be there 'cause it's just too violent of a game to be out there half-heartedly, you can't do it. We move back to LA; my wife is from Pasadena. We had at the time our daughter was... This is 2014, our daughter is three years old, I decide let's move back to LA, we'll set up shop, buy a house, start doing this thing called life after football.

And it was a roller coaster, to say the least. It was at first a relief, I'm done, I did it and I had no gripes. I went into the NFL; I went into my football career thinking I'm going to play 10 years. I played six. The average is 2.3. I gave it everything I had, every moment I had it. I had nothing left to give. I was in, what am I going to do? Win a championship? I don't know, it's a team, it's the ultimate team game. And I felt really good about being done, like that was absolutely the right decision for me to make, but I had no real idea of what that process was going to be like emotionally, mentally, spiritually, of coming to terms with myself, learning about who I was, healing trauma that had been swept under the rug for 20 years. And it started with writing, it started...

I wrote this article for SportsIllustrated.com called "What does it take to stay in the NFL." I talked about dealing with injuries and the day-to-day offensive lineman experience and the pill protocol. I talk a little bit about Cannabis and Adderall and the mental health issues, depression, anxiety, all the stuff that I had dealt with during my playing career, and it got a lot of attention. I had a lot of my former teammates call me saying, "Eb, thank you for saying this,

it's really powerful, it's my experience, that's what we're going through, thank you for shining a light on it". I had old trainers call me going, "What the f*ck are you doing? How could you say that?" I'm like, "Dude; A, I didn't use your name, B, I wasn't trying to throw anybody under the bus, I'm calling attention to a broken system"

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, very broken.

EBEN BRITTON: This is a broken system that needs to be addressed.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The first person to enlighten me to this, 'cause you have your own assumptions, but Curtis Conway is a good friend, and he was sharing with me because he was one of the guys trying to not take this stuff, but it's just like the pill protocols and the injections and all these things became so normalized that he kind of lost himself.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And you shared in the book, and by the way, you are an excellent writer.

EBEN BRITTON: Thanks, bro.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Excellent storyteller and I want to come back to this and how that was even a part of your life as well, but you shared some of this in your experience, and it didn't just affect your body and trying to deal with the pain, a lot of stuff, by the way, it doesn't even work in the first place.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But it didn't, so it had that aspect, but it also changed your personality.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Talk about that.

EBEN BRITTON: Oh! Absolutely. It was interesting, one of my gifts is I am a highly sensitive person, and it's taken me a while to recognize that as a gift. But what that meant during my football career, in particular, was, I'd recognize so quickly that any time I took these pills, whether it was the prescription anti-inflammatories, like Cataflam, Indocin, Celebrex, these things I just felt toxic, I felt my stomach was in knots. It felt like I had a knife, I had just eaten acid or something, not acid the psychedelic but literal acid like it was burning my gut. And then with the pain killers, I remember taking these things and just being thrown into complete

chaos mentally, emotionally, physically, where I would have this low hum of rage right below the surface, just so irritable, I could barely be around anybody, and here I am coming out of surgeries, shoulder surgery, back surgery at different stages in my career, and every time I would take these pills, and I'm in the super vulnerable state where I literally need help putting socks on, getting dressed, and I'm surrounded by people who love me, who are taking care of me, and I'm like lashing out at them, and I'm just like, I can barely to be around them. And I remember seeing this...

I'm going to speak in general, but there were very specific moments where I had taken the pill and I was being helped, and I remember lashing out at my mother, and I thought to myself, "Who was that? That's not me. What's going on here?" And it was this pressure. And then not only that, but experiencing severe withdrawal symptoms after two or three days of prescribed dosages of Vicodin or Percocet, OxyContin, waking up at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning with knifing sensation in my gut, cold sweats, chills, aching all through my body, and it's that void, that void, your body is desperate for relief, that this... The void that these pills create. And so, I was gifted with this sensitivity and through that, that experience, cannabis really became my preferred source of pain management, because it was the one thing, I could come back to that helped me decompress the stress in my body and mind, I could connect with loved ones, I could get a good night's sleep and wake up the next day feeling recovered and rejuvenated. Whereas juxtaposing that to my experience with the pills where it would just devastate me even further and throw me into further chaos.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The crazy part though, is that the pills are normalized culturally...

EBEN BRITTON: Exactly.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And then the cannabis is villainized, and of course, I've talked about this a little bit, but you know the state of affairs with these opiates... It's the number one cause of death in the United States for people between the age of 18 and 45. It's not COVID, it's not heart disease. Both of those combined, you add those two numbers together it didn't equal... And we'll just use 2020 and 2021, for example, it didn't equal the number of people who died from Fentanyl. So synthetic opioid, not to mention the more original stuff, you add on top of that, the numbers get so skewed, but this isn't even talked about... And we'll put it up for folks that are watching the video to see some of the statistics, but... You know.

EBEN BRITTON: Oh yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And the crazy thing, of course, is like it's not talked about because those platforms that would... Well quotes, "supposed to be talking about it, our major news networks,

they're funded by many of the pharmaceutical companies that put this sh*t out there on the streets in the first place." You know what I mean?

EBEN BRITTON: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, in the book, you actually said, "You believe you were able to erase the use of opiates from your life due to your experience with cannabis." And over the years, of course, I've been keeping my finger on the pulse a little bit because I'm always looking at the detrimental side, and also the positive side.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And just to share this with everybody. So, this is published in the peer-reviewed journal, Nature Medicine. The study was titled, "A chronic low dose of THC restores cognitive function", and this was looking at... And this was a study on mice, and I'm going to mention a human study as well, that younger mice experienced a performance drop under the influence of THC, the psychoactive chemical that was then given to older mice and gave them a considerable performance boost, even putting them on par with younger mice who'd abstained. And so there's actually a notable amount of data on cannabis being therapeutic for traumatic brain injuries, for example.

EBEN BRITTON: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: There's so much data on this. I was actually surprised. You encouraged me to check into it more, just reading your book, and so this is one of the new ones that I reviewed today, and it was like, I couldn't... I couldn't believe... A part of my mind couldn't believe how much data this was. So, this was published in the Journal of Clinical Investigation. The study was titled, "Cannabinoids promote embryonic and adult hippocampus neurogenesis and produce antianxiety and antidepressant-like effects." So, we're talking about the memory center of the brain, producing new brain cells, where we look at...

There's some other data showing that it can reduce activity in prefrontal cortex, but what I'm wanting to do, by the way, is just to highlight that we don't want to put a black and white on anything, even with opiates, they have their place. This is something that, you know, opium has been utilized for thousands of years. Of course, it's been turned into this cash crop, and this commodity, where everything from a migraine to somebody has toe surgery, they're given these very strong drugs. Right?

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And this was supposed to be, in our society, reserved for extreme circumstances, and so everything having its place and us being able to hold a space for it... And

it's the same thing with food, to understand that everybody's unique, and also, we want to make sure that we have things available for people who are suffering that are putting them in a place for you, it's like, this helped me to avoid dying from opiates by utilizing this substance and so to appreciate your experience and your story and also know there's some pretty solid science on it too.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah, yeah, I love that you're bringing that up 'cause it's been interesting to me seeing some of the stuff come out about cannabis in particular, that I've seen Dr. Amen, talk about. You had him on the show, I think, and he was talking about this a little bit, and I saw this brain scan he did of someone who had used cannabis and it really shut the brain activity down. Turned it down really low. And I was thinking about that in context to my experience with it. And what's really interesting is in my life after football and going on this journey of truth-seeking and understanding the underlying reality of my experience and how things actually work, and looking at, how do we get back to balance? I think that's the most important thing, because we're in such a state of chaos, you know?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

EBEN BRITTON: And it was interesting because one of my brothers, my football brothers, Ricky Williams, he pointed me to this thing of... I talk about the federal government's patent on cannabinoids as neuroprotectants and antioxidants, which blew my mind coming out of my football career and legitimizing or validating my experience of this back-alley drug, healing me and helping me rejuvenate through a very traumatized state.

Ricky Williams said to me once, he said, in Ayurveda, in ancient Ayurveda, cannabis is viewed as a trauma reducer. And so when you take that into account of, say even the younger mice versus the older mice, and THC having this inhibitory effect on a younger mind and a boosting effect on an older mind, and for me, when cannabis was super therapeutic for me, during my football career where I was enduring massive amounts of trauma, physical, mental, emotional, to now where I can't really use cannabis anymore, 'cause if I have a smudge too much THC, I'm blasted into panic and anxiety and darkness in places I don't need to spend any time these days, you know?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

EBEN BRITTON: And I believe that it's absolutely that, it's a trauma reducer. And once again, in the modern era where cannabis is now being legalized after it's been stigmatized and demonized for so many years, and now it's becoming recreational, it's like once again, we've missed the mark of... Because in no way throughout my cannabis advocacy talking about the importance of cannabis as medicine for football players or athletes enduring trauma, has it

been part of my thought that we should just be smoking weed all day long, which plenty of people are doing thinking, "Oh, this is helping." But part of the sensitivity and this allowing your Inner Guide to show you the way, it's always keeping your finger on the pulse of what is working for me? What is serving me? You can ask yourself that question. It's a really simple question, what is serving me in my highest good? So that when I wake up every day and whatever I do throughout my day, I am the most available, the most present, serving the highest good that I possibly can be in every moment.

And so, for me, it got to a point where... 'Cause I relied heavily on cannabis coming out of my football career, I was in a totally traumatized state, I was in a state of chaos. I had just left this thing that I'd been doing forever, and here I was feeling as though I'd been dropped out in the middle of the ocean without a life preserver. And everybody's like, "Yeah, you're in life now." "I don't know where to go."

SHAWN STEVENSON: Good luck.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah. "Enjoy." And I relied heavily on cannabis and it just slowly but surely it revealed itself. I'd smoke a little bit and I'd be like, "Oh, oh no, this isn't what I want. This isn't working for me anymore." So now I just use CBD, honestly.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And that the science on CBD is just obviously exploded as well.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And especially... In particular in the treatment of pain, you've got so many great stories as well in the book about people dealing with extreme conditions and finding relief through this means. But you said something that... This ties back to the very first thing I asked you about keeping your finger on the pulse of what's working for you. In order to be able to do that intelligently and ethically, you have to be able to listen to your body.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And that's the big issue. And I think that part of that opening, one of the most wonderful tools to access that is through a practice of meditation.

EBEN BRITTON: Absolutely.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, let's talk about that a little bit, what can we do to tune in more to our inner guidance system at a time when people are doing anything but.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah, that's the best question. So, I want to say one thing that's really interesting, and I'm going to tie it all of that, that I said about my football career, that was getting me to how I came to meditation. I do a lot of coaching one-on-ones in these corporate wellness programming, and I work with a lot of people, people just like... That's my passion, is to connect with people, whether it's teaching yoga or meditation, or life coaching, greatness coaching, whatever it is. And something that's really interesting about what you just said, and one of my mentors said this to me, because I have asked the question... Because for me to get to meditation, I had to hit complete rock bottom. For years, my brother had been saying me, "Eb, you should try meditation." And I'd be like "F*ck that. I don't have time for that dude, no way." And finally, around 2016, my entire life was crashing over me in a tidal wave. Every... My shame, my guilt, my childhood trauma, all the mistakes I had made throughout my football career, in my relationships was just overwhelming me, and I was flattened by the universe.

And it culminated, I talk about it in the book, that this phone call, I've watched myself screaming into the phone at my wife, "I'm going to kill myself, or I'm going to kill somebody", as I'm driving to go to this job. And a couple hours later, I got a call from my mom. She invited me to dinner. In tears, I'm just like, "Yeah, I'll come." And that led me into 12-step programs, Al-Anon, which was super beneficial for me, especially this men's group that I found, and my brother brought me into. And that started to loosen the grip of all the darkness, and the shame and the guilt and all the stuff that I had been dealing with and trying to hold on to myself. That led me into therapy, and the 12-step program also, it opened the door for me to see prayer and meditation as tools for my salvation.

And so finally, I'm sitting there, after my first meeting in Al-Anon, I find myself a therapist, I go to this therapist's office, I'm sitting there, we have a good session. At the end of the session, she says, "Eb, have you ever tried meditation?" And I'm just like, "Here we are, back at the answer that I've been resisting for so long", and I just was so... I didn't know where else to go. But I thought, "Okay, yeah, I'll try it." And she turned me on to this app that actually doesn't exist anymore, and I just started listening to this app, this guided meditation. So, I would go for long walks, and I'd just put this app on. And I just started feeling more and more relief, and it started to develop this craving for meditation, for going inside, for feeling this infinite stillness that's just deep inside the heart that I hadn't really ever... I had felt... We all feel glimpses of it when we're out in nature or with our best friends, our family, our loved ones, we've all had that glimpse of God, of infinity, of love.

And I started to tap into it, and I was just like, "This is what it is, this is what I've needed." And so... You know, I say that... I say that about hitting rock bottom, because we can either grow through insight or pain, and right now it feels like we're in a paradigm where insight isn't really a possibility. 'Cause I work with people who are clearly a problem for their entire work environment, like everyone I talk to, it's always about this person, you know? And then I go and

talk to the person, and they just have no understanding, they have no awareness, they have no willingness, they don't even know that something's wrong. And in that case, what do we do? Well, I can point you in the direction of where to go, of where to start, like, "Hey, you need to start a daily meditation practice, maybe five minutes just to loosen the grip so that you can get some space so that you can start to see."

Maybe it is that you just need to get some exercise three or four days a week, make sure to get that in, 'cause you can't just be going non-stop every day. But right now, where we are, it takes that suffering, like you talked about it in Eat Smarter. Your suffering, your pain was your gift. Your challenges to overcome that, that's same with me. And when we are able to... And it's so hard. It's the hardest thing. That's why not many people are able to do it, or it takes a long time. I know people in their 50s, 60s who are still trapped because they're unwilling to just look at the reality of their life, and that's where the magic comes, man, when we get real with what is. What is. Can I take accountability for my life, because every time you point the finger, there's three pointing right back at you, you know?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

EBEN BRITTON: It's real.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's facts. Yeah. Man, you said something so powerful, if you just get this one thing, like life becomes magical, and you just said that you can learn through either insight or through pain, and... You and I both know pain is a wonderful teacher.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It doesn't sound good.

EBEN BRITTON: No.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, it's just like, "Pain is that you?" You know, it's just like, "Stay the f*ck away from me." But in reality, pain is a wonderful teacher, and often times we face that pain when we're not learning through insight, when we're not paying attention to our inner and outer guidance system. That outer guidance system is, you can also live through the lives of others in a strange way, because we are connected. And so, there's so much great feedback and lessons to be learned from those who've taken the steps before us, but now we're just like, "We don't give a sh*t about that either." We're just like, "Give me the pain." And so... But here's the thing, as you mentioned, people can get trapped in that cycle of pain and not learn the lesson, and I've heard you say this before, which is a universal truth, that the universe will test you. And so, oftentimes that pain is showing up as a bridge, in a sense, to get you to

where you believe you want to be or where you should be, right? It's just like, I want this. Well, here's your qualifiers.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. And sometimes we get so trapped in the qualifiers, we don't understand like, "Oh wow, this is trying... There's a gift in this." And so, when that pain set into my life, that same rock bottom, it was a great place for me to stand on because I got to see, wow, there's actually... I want to be this person; I saw myself as being the first... The first in my family to... Fill in the blank. To be successful, to make it out of poverty, whatever the case might be. And for me to be that person, I had to become something else. Or more of myself, in a sense. But I had...

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah. That's an interesting paradox too.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, yeah. I had these qualities, and we all do, this is the great thing, and I want to express this too. We all have the full smorgasbord of capacities and qualities in us already. Compassion, insight, intelligence. You name it, you've got it in you. Also anger, resentment, all of that stuff is there, but it's understanding that we get to activate those things, and oftentimes that pain is there as like activator gel. You know what I mean?

EBEN BRITTON: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I just thought of Soul Glo, by the way, shout out to Coming To America. Alright.

EBEN BRITTON: I love that. Absolutely. It's interesting you say that because, a guy that I work with, he was saying to me, a couple of weeks ago, he said, "Eb, I want to be like you." He's like, "I see you come in here, you're the medicine man, dude, you're the healer, you take us through breath work and yoga, and you just have all this insight, knowledge and love and." [chuckle] And he's like, "How do I do that? How do I do that?" And I said... Said to him, "Well, one day at a time, and you can't be like me, you have to be you." If you told me, seven, eight years ago when I was in the NFL that this is where I'd be right here right now, I wouldn't have... I wouldn't even have known what you were talking about. And I said, "This thing just happens one step at a time. We don't just become... I didn't just become this guy." If I tried to make this happen, I never would have done it, I would have messed it up, it wouldn't have happened. And, so fast forward, a week and this kid's doing so much good work, he's really working his ass off, like he's doing such good work.

And he calls me up and he's just like, "Eb, I can barely breathe. These things that I thought I healed long ago, man, I just... I feel the universe is just breaking me." And I said, "Remember when you told me, Eb, I want to be like you?" I said, "You don't see the other 16 hours of the day, where I'm in that." I'm in the darkness, dancing with my demons, making friends with my pain, and I'm just in a choke hold with depression and anxiety and this sense of not being enough and constantly just... " I don't want to use the word wrestling, it's more dancing. Because at the end of the day, it's about coming to terms with ourselves. And I said this thing, this thing occurred to me the other day, time goes in a circle, if time is even real, whatever it is, life, it moves in a circle. And it moves in a circle, until we start to... And as we start to grow and evolve and heal and transcend old selves and old behaviors and old paradigms, then it starts to move in a spiral, because you're constantly being confronted. We're constantly being confronted by the same things over and over again, but the difference is where are we at?

Where are we at on the journey so that now, that thing that I was in the midst of, that was right here, it was so real and so heavy, now on my head is a little bit above it, and I can see, oh wow, look at that. That same thing that keeps coming up throughout my life, maybe it's every year, maybe it's every few years, maybe it's every few months, the same paradigm experience comes up that's a trigger for me, but now my head's a little bit above it, and I can see it, and now I have an option, because I don't have to be a slave to it, I don't have to react to it, I don't have to be in that, but I can make a different decision.

And then one day you keep doing the work and all of a sudden that thing is so far down, it's like a pin prick, in the sky, it's like looking up at the night sky and it's just a star, it's so far away, it's just barely a memory and you go, "Man, remember how far back I was?" It's a whisper, when it was once a scream. And I was thinking in today's day and age with social media culture, and this branding of enlightenment, that's so bizarre, because spirituality is so beyond putting it in a box or any kind of container, 'cause everyone wants to say, "This is the way. This is the answer, I've got it." [laughter] And the truth of the matter is, you are the way.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Come on. Yeah.

EBEN BRITTON: You are the way. And we have this misconception, especially in the plant medicine community, and this new age spirituality, which is great, I think it means well, but there are people doing ayahuasca every weekend who can't find their car keys.

It's like what good does it do, if we're not becoming more whole better people, in our daily lives, in the mundane? 'Cause that's what it's about dude. Your interactions with everyone you meet at the grocery store, at the gas station, everyone can be the starry-eyed Buddha at the Ayahuasca ceremony or the wellness event. Can you be that clear present being, when you're pumping your gas, or getting your coffee, when you're sitting with your family? That's when it

matters, that's when the rubber meets the road. And there's this misconception of, "Oh, I healed that thing." It's like, no, we don't heal things, we don't ever heal it and it just goes away, it never goes anywhere. It's still there, 'cause that's part of you, that's your life, that's who you are, that puts you here, that thing, that trauma, that pain, that's part of how you're here man. It's about coming to terms with it, and loving it, loving it. Can we love every aspect of ourselves?

That's it, and that's the task, because then that's how you get to the point where you're looking... It's so far away, and you come up against it again and you go, "Man, remember when that was so triggering that I could barely function? Now I can just breathe and watch it", and it's like, "Oh my god, look how far we've come, look how far I've come."

SHAWN STEVENSON: The language we use would be, "we've grown ourselves", that's just one way of articulating it. And the thing is, if we don't do that, that lesson, that thing that shows up is going to inflict that same amount of pain or more. But as you grow yourself when these things present themselves asking, "What is this trying to teach me, what gift is this bringing into my life, what quality is needing to emerge from me right now", whatever it takes, and doing the work, like you said, you start to distance yourself or to grow from it. But I love that you said this, again, nobody's ever said this, articulated it like this, but you're able to see above it in a sense, and so no longer are you in the thing, which even as I'm saying this, talking to you is just like, you still are in it because it's a part of you, but you're able to kind of rise above it and to see all the other pieces, you're no longer... Because the first time... My mother-in-law is the person who taught me meditation, and the first time I employed... I closed my eyes, I followed the steps that she said, boom, I woke up. For the first time, when I say that, it doesn't mean that, "Oh, now I'm enlightened and I'm walking around and floating on a cloud."

It's more like I realized that I hadn't had a conscious thought in my entire life, I was just in it, I was just happening, and I was never aware that there was this thinking happening, I was so attached to the thoughts. And so now suddenly there was this separation in a sense, and this opening, and it sounds kind of cool, but it took years of learning how to live again in a sense, and that's where that work was as well, just because I think I had such a big mission on my heart that I had to go through these qualifiers. And so, your guy who was asking you like, "I want to be just like you." Well, first of all, do you want to be a straight up murderer in the NFL first? You got to be a killer first, and then just... But your story is different, and everybody's story has value and is magnificent, but it's just tapping into that.

But the beautiful part is he can take lessons from you throughout your journey, that's where the insight comes in at, it was very powerful. And the last thing too, you mentioned, I love this term is dancing with it, because there's another huge misconception, we've been talking about misconceptions today, that once you work on yourself or you reach a state of enlightenment

or whatever it is, then you're just in this eternal peace. And I know for a fact, I know some of the guys and they still have real world problems, of course they do address them differently, it doesn't destroy them. They still deal with life stuff, whatever guru you're listening to, and I'm talking about the robes and everything, they're still dealing with life stuff.

The only certainty in life is that you're going to continue to face challenges, it's just what is. And so, "dancing with it" is a great term because it's just going to happen. I love that you pivoted from saying, "wrestle with it", because we can, we can get in and down and dirty with it, but also dancing with it, but sometimes it's a dirty dance, it's a Patrick Swayze, sometimes it's a tango, sometimes it's a Nino Pop, there's different dances that you do with the problems, but that's just a part. So, I think one of the big take aways from today is learning how to dance.

EBEN BRITTON: That's it, that's it. And it's all your perception, that shift from the "wrestling with it", 'cause if you're wrestling that denotes some sort of struggle, and it can be a struggle. This life is f*cking hard, it's not easy, like you said, this is a constant challenge, if you're doing it right. Now we know in this day and age, a lot of people are addicted to comfort, and they want to just play it safe, but we don't get anywhere when we play it safe, we don't change.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We've got a quick break coming up, we'll be right back. Few people know that regularly drinking coffee has been shown to help prevent cognitive decline and reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. This attribute referenced in the journal Practical Neurology is yet another reason why intelligent coffee consumption makes the list of best neuro-nutritious beverages. Another study featured in the journal Psychopharmacology uncovered that drinking coffee has some remarkable benefits on mental performance. The research has found that intelligent coffee intake leads to improvements in alertness, improved reaction times and enhanced performance on cognitive vigilance tasks, and tasks that involve deep concentration.

Now, why am I stressing intelligent coffee intake? This means acknowledging the true U-shaped curve benefits and not going ham on caffeine. The data clearly shows that some coffee, cup or two a day, and the accompanied caffeine is a great adjunct for improved mental performance but going too far starts to lead to diminishing returns. So, we want to make sure that we're getting an optimal intake of coffee, and again, not going overboard. But also, coffee is best when it's not coming along with pesticides, herbicides, rodenticides, fungicides. These chemical elements are clinically proven to destroy our microbiome terrain, so destroying the very microbiome that helps to regulate our metabolism, regulate our immune system, the list goes on and on. Obviously, you want to make sure that those things are not coming along with the high-quality coffee they we're trying to get these benefits from, and also what if we can up level the longevity and neurological benefits of the coffee by combining it with another clinically proven nutrient source?

Well, that's what I do every day when I have the organic coffee combined with the dual extracted medicinal mushrooms from Four Sigmatic. And if we're talking about optimal cognitive performance and the health of our brain, the protection of our brain, there are few nutrient sources, like Lion's Mane medicinal mushroom that pack these kinds of benefits. Researchers at the university of Malaya found that Lion's Mane has neuroprotective effects, literally being able to help to defend the brain against even traumatic brain injuries, it just makes the brain more healthy and robust. So again, this combination of medicinal mushrooms plus organic high-quality coffee is a match made in nutrient heaven. Go to foursigmatic.com/model. That's F-O-U-R-S-I-G-M-A-T-I-C.com/model to get 10% off their incredible mushroom elixirs, mushroom hot cocoas, and mushroom coffees. Again, that's Foursigmatic.com/model. And now, back to the show.

You got to talk about this because I heard you say that ironically, our society has developed so many comforts that on the other side, we've actually become far more sensitive and far more divisive, ironically, right.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, you said that as we've gotten more comfort as a species, we've gotten more sensitive and extreme in our views, talk about that.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah. It's an interesting paradox, isn't it? Because the more comfortable we become, the more sensitive and... I don't know if I like that word, and I know what you're talking about, 'cause I asked Tony Robbins about that. That was where that was from, on Hotboxin'. Because sensitivity is a superpower, if you're sensitive, you're highly in tune with what's going on, and that's a good thing, but the sensitivity in the context I was using it there was this disdain for discomfort. It becomes you're so comfortable that you can't possibly imagine anything contrary to that experience. And so, we've seen that, and we can't have a hard conversation. If you're sitting across from somebody who has a different view than you, God forbid, we're going to try to eat dinner together. You know?

I mean, I posted this thing the other day about soy. Because I think, as you know, and you articulate so beautifully, and I love how you talk about food as this entity in our universe. I love that. 'Cause food is so magical. On that note, I wanted to say to you, I had this thought weirdly occur to me the other day, if we had a magical camera that could follow the food from when it goes into our mouth, down our throat, into our stomach, it would be so interesting because our body just... It's like a magic trick that our body takes this food, digests it, and it vanishes, and it comes into our cells in our body, and it creates this thing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

EBEN BRITTON: It's a trip. But so, I posted this thing about soy and just how destructive it is, in my opinion, to just throwing our bodies into hormonal chaos, and I imagine that organic soy, which is probably very rare, I know it's been eaten in Asia for a long time, it's probably okay but the soy that as we know it today...

SHAWN STEVENSON: And the amounts that we're consuming.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah, with the soy being oil, it's dangerous, and I think it's affecting our society in ways that are far beyond what we could have ever imagined. That's happening right in front of our eyes. It's another podcast. When I posted this thing about soy and someone, commented, they said, "Man, I really loved everything you were saying until you posted this about soy." [laughter] I was just like, "Man, how sad is that?" How sad is that? That you liked everything I was saying until I said this thing about soy, and that's it right there, isn't it?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

EBEN BRITTON: That's this problem, and it's created all of these insane issues. And it was interesting, I've been... I've talked about this a lot, and it's because it's something that if you're watching culture is just... It's completely obvious of we are so comfortable that we are creating problems. We're creating problems for ourselves in our extremism because you can't say anything that is critical, you can't say anything that is honest, you can't say anything that perhaps challenges some cultural ideology. Talk about masks and vaccines and all of that and... It's just insane that because we're so comfortable and we want it to be just... Let's just get on with it. You know, and it creates this extremism of, it's not allowed to be anything but this, and I don't know if it's...

I don't know if it's intentional. I know a lot of people would probably say it is. I like to look at it as humans are fallible creatures, and everyone I believe, to some extent, is doing the best they can. Even the f*cking villains, man. That's the trip. So, if we can function on that understanding, then I don't understand... There's this weird thing of utilitarianism of trying to make everyone think the same and be the same and you look out into nature, and nothing is the same.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Not even close.

EBEN BRITTON: Nothing is the same.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We got f*cking sea turtles and then birds. You know what I mean?

EBEN BRITTON: Totally. And lions and salamanders and ladybugs and flowers, thousands of...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Mushrooms.

EBEN BRITTON: Mushrooms.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Where the hell they come from?

EBEN BRITTON: Exactly. Exactly. Nothing is the same. Why do we want everyone to be the same? The magic, the magnificence, the majesty of it all is in the diversity. Right? F*ck.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know why, you know why? It's fear.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Fear of what's different. Fear of uncertainty. Fear of being wrong. That's one of the biggest things right now, because folks, in order to look at something that is... For example, if we take on a belief that a particular protocol is safe and effective, and then we find out that that thing is other than safe and effective, and you've been a pioneering voice and a voice of influence and a voice of persistence and manipulation for that thing, and you find out that it's contrary to what you believed, man, it takes an incredible amount of work and humanity to be able to say, "I was wrong." And to apologize.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We've heard very few apologies. No, we haven't heard any apologies throughout this entire sh*t show, that is the last couple of years. And of course, many of the things that have unfolded, I mentioned at the very beginning, because I'm a scientist and I can see it coming. But at no point [laughter] instead of saying, "You know what, we messed up here. These things... We created a false sense of security by covering your face." Which seems a logical, right? I'm going to cover my face it's going to stop the spread. Didn't work. Just look at the... But instead of acknowledging, because...

EBEN BRITTON: I don't know if it's logical.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, I had very, very clear peer-reviewed data, and some of the most prestigious medical journals. We'll put some up for everybody to see. But one of them was in the BMJ, one of them was in the International Journal of nursing studies. And essentially, again and again and again, the biggest culprit was cloth mask being wildly ineffective. To some degree, in one of the studies, the scientists... And we'll put this highlighted portion. Said that

in a particular study, that the surgical masks were found to be ineffective and cloth masks less effective than ineffective. What does that mean? Less effective than ineffective. Right?

So, this means that there's something potentially nefarious going on with them. And then sure enough, today, even on CNN, we've got their health, "health expert" who's been on different boards and things like that, positions of power in government saying cloth masks are nothing more than a facial ornament. Right?

I said this sh*t in the beginning because it's what the data show. But instead of acknowledging that they just say, "Just wear two." Two or three, of course it's clearly going to work better.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah, definitely.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, in order for them to acknowledge, I even did put this in the mask facts documentary, I mentioned, I detail... I took a moment just to say, "Listen, people that are advocating this, it's going to be incredibly difficult for them to acknowledge that they were wrong."

Right? That was published. We released that in June of 2020. June, July 2020, and it took off like a rocket. The biggest thing I've ever done, but of course, censored as well. And nothing I just went through, peer-reviewed data and pointed people to the years and years of documented scientific proof that we have on things that actually work to make humans more resilient, to improve our immune systems, yadda yadda. Heaven forbid. Right? And these things, again, it's supposed to be a conversation piece, and for us to be able to talk about these things, but when we have people in positions of power that can suppress your voice, just like that, just turn your voice off because... And I want to ask you about this because a lot of folks will be like, "Well, that's their right, it's the platform. They can do whatever they want with that platform." What do you think about that?

EBEN BRITTON: That's a really dark view. Yeah, there's been a lot of really disturbing things, and we were talking about it a little bit at the beginning before we started about fear being weaponized and essentially, most government institutions, law enforcement, policy makers really not doing anything, enforcing any of these mandates or laws. But allowing the fear seeds to proliferate to such an extent that the civilians, the citizens of this country have been policing each other.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

EBEN BRITTON: And there's the big conversation right now, 'cause Elon Musk just bought the lion share of Twitter, and as far as I can tell, I've seen some guys who are like, "Oh, something's

weird is going on." I think that's also some dysfunctional programming to think that to never being able to see the light in the bigger... You know, big corporate scenarios that are taking place. But Elon has said, "I think censorship is a massive mistake and free speech is what this country was built on essentially."

SHAWN STEVENSON: First Amendment.

EBEN BRITTON: First Amendment.

SHAWN STEVENSON: First Amendment.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah, absolutely. What's more important?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Not the third.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: First. Why would they do that, you know?

EBEN BRITTON: Well, it goes back to this thing, man, taking accountability for your life. So many people don't want that. They don't want to take accountability, because then that means they're responsible for their own well-being.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Responsible for their own thinking.

EBEN BRITTON: Responsible for their own thinking, even before, yes, of course. And so, you know, thoughts are material, thoughts are energy. It's the first step, thoughts, words, actions that materializes, manifests into your life. That's what your life looks like. How you think is what your life is. You don't see the world as it is, you see the world as you are, as you perceive yourself to be and the world to be. And so, a lot of people want to blame everybody, they want to have... Someone else has the answer. Shawn's got it. Biden's got it. He's the answer, Build Back Better, baby. That'll be it. It's Trump's fault. It's this guy's fault. Fauci has the answer. He's an expert. He only sabotaged the AIDS pandemic treatments. You surely wouldn't do that for COVID.

So, we want to put the onus on somebody else to keep us safe from the microcosm and the macrocosm. And that is what, to me, fuels all of that. People going... 'Cause I posted something. I forget what it was. I was talking about censorship itself and talking about how we need people, the contrarians, to the mainstream narrative, and someone commented like, "Yeah, well, if they're saying something that isn't true, they shouldn't be allowed to say it." And I'm

like," Who decides what's true? The money?" 'Cause that's where we're at, honestly. Unfortunately, all the news you're watching, you're just absorbing into your consciousness from CNN and NBC and all the mainstream media players.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And how often have these so-called health officials said things that were untrue.

EBEN BRITTON: Absolutely. Throughout, we can look at it all. We can look at it. We have evidence because of film and recordings.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's literally record... This isn't like a thousand years ago where there was this guy writing on a scroll.

EBEN BRITTON: It's not hearsay.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The scroll's set, we have video. Like, you said this thing and it was so wrong. You're the head of the CDC. It's so wrong.

EBEN BRITTON: From a legal standpoint. It's not hearsay. It's not somebody said, "Oh, he said that." It's no, a recording of them saying X, Y, or Z. And so, I think one of the beauties, I believe, of the internet is that it has careened us into this paradigm of nothing can be hidden, and Pandora's box has been opened. And so, it's a very slippery slope. I mean, how many more dystopian tales do we have to have? 1984, the detriment of censorship and what that causes. We can't slip into a place of, "Oh people can't be exposed to anything that's not true," because then the only things that are deemed true are by the people in power, the governing bodies, which are really the people who have the money. Big pharma has pumped how many billions, billions of dollars into advertising or media.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Not to mention into the FDA.

EBEN BRITTON: FDA? The CDC?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

EBEN BRITTON: The WHO?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, it's crazy.

EBEN BRITTON: So that information is corrupted, as far as I can tell. You think it's not corrupted? That's what blows my mind. And it's just... And here's the answer, man, here's the

solution, because I always get... I get really... It's hard for me to look at social media anymore. Honestly, I've hired a guy who just handles it all for me. And I don't want to look at it 'cause every time I look at it, it's really dark. But I want to stay in the solutions. I made that decision, 'cause COVID was like a war for me on the inside. And I realized that I can't really spend my time arguing with people about what's real or what's true, because that is totally subjective in the eyes of the beholder, based on their belief system, their conditioning, their life practices, all of that. So, what can I do? How can I be part of the solution?

I can talk about meditation. I could talk about breathwork. I could talk about going within through various practices and principles so that you can reveal your inner truth because that's the only truth that matters, the inner truth, and only when you have that established can you then start to decipher what's real and what's not real on this outside.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's powerful. That is so powerful, man. And thank you for doing that because what you're saying... This is a foundational truth about being able to operate in our world because what it is that it's kind of like... It's framed as this is for your protection. When we are saying this is misinformation what's true or not is that you are incapable of understanding what's true, you are a... Even though you might be an adult, you are a child to us, and we will spoon-feed you what we deem to be the truth because you're not able to decipher that. Basically, you're... You're stupid, okay?

You're a dummy. And so, we're going to tell you what's true because you don't have that capacity, right? And so, when we are... When somebody's posting, "The alien just landed in my backyard and we're making barbecue, whatever," and you're just so stupid that you're like, "Oh, my god, this guy's got aliens in his backyard, and you're..." You know what I mean?

EBEN BRITTON: Exactly.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, what... Here's the truth. The solution has never been, and this is why it's the First Amendment, freedom of speech... It's not to take what could be considered bad information, even though it might be true, it was never to have bad information suppressed and censored, and you can't say that. The solution for bad information is better information, that's it. The solution for what we deem to be misinformation is just cultivating better information and allowing people, giving people the tools to be able to decipher between the two. Because once we get into this place of, "This is right and this is wrong," there are very few things in our reality that have a right and wrong, they're just very distinct. Most things, there's a huge spectrum of gray, right, and so within that gray is where science lives actually. Because once we have a scientific tenant that is infallible and unquestionable, it's no longer science, that's dogma. That doesn't even exist in a scientific paradigm because science is questions. It's a language, but there is...

And science is also just one thread of something much bigger, it's us trying to use our language and what we know, which we talked about this before the show, but we were just talking a little bit about how little we know as a species, we know next to nothing, we're just all utilizing tools to give us some sense of certainty so that we get up in the morning. You know what I mean? To try to make sense of this very strange phenomenon, we're spinning around in this third rock from the sun, you know what I mean, in the middle of this galaxy. And if you even want to even just entertain the fact that there are billions of galaxies in the, quote, 'observable universe,' there's sh*t that's not even observable, by the way, well, a lot more, billions of galaxies, right? And within that, billions of galaxies, how many planets are there? And so, we get into that conversation, and you think your problems are so big, you think this is misinformation?

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You can't even handle that on your Instagram feed, we are f*cking up, we have the capacity. This is the beauty, it is... Again, I want to thank you for this, and I see you and you're doing it at such a level of grace, I said that the grace was lacking earlier in communication, you're doing it with such a grace because of who you are and where you come from. Your trial as a warrior and being able to imbue that with such spirit and compassion, it's such a... It shows the spectrum of potential, and I love the quote that... Especially right now.

And I went with my youngest son, Braden. There's this trail by our house, and we went... It's kind of tough, but I was just like... Sometimes we'll go, it'll be the four of us, both of my sons and my wife, and we kind of go at a family pace. I was like, "We're about to dart through this bad boy, alright?" And so, we did, and of course, it was challenging, and I'm like, "I challenge you because I want you to be strong in a world that is... You're going to be faced with challenges."

EBEN BRITTON: I love that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I said this to him. I love the statement that it's better to be a warrior in a garden than a gardener in a war. And so, it's creating that capacity to be ready for whatever might happen rather than you finding yourself in the middle of a war and you don't have the skills and the mindset and the capacity to be able to handle the situation. You are that warrior in a garden, and that's one of the things that I see in you, and so I just want to thank you for that because it's really amazing to see.

EBEN BRITTON: Thanks, brother. Bursting into tears here, man. Love that. It's powerful, though, teaching that to your son, it's super powerful. Well, I'm going through some things

right now, and you talked about it in your book, you were... The universe gave you a test that you weren't prepared for, and I'm thinking about all the great men I've been around in my life. I've been so blessed to be around great men. I'm going through some sh*t now, and it's just so real.

You know, my wife and I are getting a divorce, and it's the most painful, challenging thing I've ever been through in my life. But somehow, all the work I've done throughout my life... The willingness to jump into the fire over and over again... The willingness to do the hard things always and pushing myself, I've never been more prepared. And my wife and I are in this position where we're going through this thing that, for me, when my parents got divorced when I was seven, it was chaos and death. It was hell. And now, going through it myself, we're going through it with so much love and compassion and gratitude, and I don't have to transfer that trauma to my daughter, and she can see what's possible, what love is.

Life is a miracle, man. But we have to be willing to live it, 'cause it's not going to happen. It doesn't just happen. It happens all around you, and it's up to you whether you're going to live it or not. And will you be prepared when the real tests come? Because all you've got is this, all you've got is this, your heart, and your intuition and your guide, and sometimes that says things that are far beyond your rationale, your logical mind, your ego identity. What you think is supposed to happen means nothing. We make plans and God laughs. And are you willing, when the time comes, will you be willing, will you have the strength, will you have the courage to do what's necessary to live your life to the highest, greatest extent? And you're passing that along to your son, man? And how I hope to do that for my daughter.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, you are, you are.

EBEN BRITTON: Thanks man.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I've got to ask you about this, because we had a conversation when you were working on your book, and this is when I was just like, "Man, I really like this guy". But you saw yourself as NFL and "I'm going to write... Writing is going to be a part of my future". And you even went to the extent of the university that you chose, them having a creative writing program, one of the tops in the country, if not tops in the country, and so, you really took that seriously to invest in that, and I want to ask you about this because it's a really... We'll get to the out-picturing of it, but what is it about writing... What inspired you to want to write? Why did you see yourself, even to the extent of choosing that at the university, what is it about writing for you?

EBEN BRITTON: I love the craft of taking thoughts and alchemizing it onto paper and telling stories, and... My dad's a painter, he's an artist, and I grew up surrounded by artists and

athletes, it was such a blessing, this dichotomy of art and sports. But writing, for whatever reason was always just the medium I loved, 'cause I felt like I could paint a picture with words, and I loved doing that. And when I was in, I think it was my sophomore, sophomore or junior year of high school, I found out that you could major in creative writing. And so, when I started getting scholarship offers, I would ask all the schools, "Do you have creative writing as a major?", and Arizona was pretty much the only school, 'cause I had offers to CAL... CAL has probably the number one English program in the country. Oklahoma has a really good English program. Iowa was the only other school that has a great creative writing program. I didn't get an offer from Iowa.

Arizona... The moment I sat in the chair at this, it was like a student, or like a future student seminar or something, where they brought in all... It was a junior day, and I came in, met all the coaches and everybody in the program, and the trainers and some of the academic people, and this woman came in and one of the things she said, she said, "We have the best creative writing program in the country", and I was just like, "Boom, this is where I'm at. This is it."

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, people seeing you on the football field would have never thought that. Just seeing you like this guy, it was creative writing that was the deal breaker for him as far as where he's going to go.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's a pretty incredible man, and then to see that you put that into creating your book, and again, it was a joy to read. I'm three-fourths of the way through, and I just, like... In one sitting, I read half of the book and I just got swept up in... I got swept up into the stories and I was really surprised by that because I thought it would be a little bit more technical, because you're providing all these great insights along the way, but just the flow of it... And it's even called Eben Flow, of course. And your ability to paint pictures with words, it was really prominent.

EBEN BRITTON: I love that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, man. Can you let people know where to pick up a copy?

EBEN BRITTON: Absolutely, yeah. It's available on Amazon, The Eben Flow: Basic Tools To Transform Your Life. That's pretty much it. It's on Amazon.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome.

EBEN BRITTON: Yeah man.

SHAWN STEVENSON: My guy, thank you so much for coming to hang out with us. It's been a joy.

EBEN BRITTON: Absolutely. Thank you for having me, Shawn.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. We got to do this again.

EBEN BRITTON: Definitely.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thanks, alright. Everybody, Eben Britton. Thank you so much for tuning in to the show today, I hope you got a lot of value out of this. Make sure to check out Eben's book, *The Eben Flow: Basic Tools To Transform Your Life*. And again, it's a wonderful read and a wonderful resource to have in your collection, so pop over there, grab the book, show him some love, show yourself some love, and check out *The Eben Flow*.

We've got some incredible guests and master classes coming your way very soon, so make sure to stay tuned. I appreciate you so much for tuning in. Take care, have an amazing day. I'll talk to you soon. And for more after this show, make sure to head over to theModelHealthShow.com. That's where you can find all of the show notes, you can find transcriptions, videos for each episode, and if you've got a comment, you can leave me a comment there as well. And please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave us a rating to let everybody know that the show is awesome, and I appreciate that so much, and take care. I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.