

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

EPISODE 589

Overcoming Traumatic Experiences & Transforming Obstacles Into Opportunities

With Guest Cynthia Garcia

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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. How do you respond when obstacles show up in your life? When challenges present themselves, how do you respond? Now, there's this really great tenet that says, "You don't rise to the level of your expectations, you fall to the level of your training." We're going to revert to the things that we've habituated. We're going to revert to the mindset and the strategies, and the actions that we generally have that we've cultivated in our lives when problems show up. So, if we've cultivated a habit of sticking our head in the sand, we get that ostrich vibe going. If we've cultivated a strategy where we are pointing fingers and blaming others. If we cultivated and habituated a practice of finding the gift in things and the opportunity, that's what's going to be expressed. And here's the good news, is that we get to choose how we respond just in our day-to-day lives, and also when obstacles show up, which they inherently will.

That's part and parcel of being here on planet earth. If we are living life stuff is going to happen, and right now, there's a lot of stuff happening, there is so much going on in the world that can create a sense of disempowerment. There is a lot of divisiveness. There's a lot of struggle and strife and problems and health issues, mental health issues and things that we need to address. And the crazy thing is, and one of the things that we want to articulate more and more as we possibly can as time goes on, and one of the most important things that we need to infuse into our culture, into our cultural knowledge base is the ability to actually look at the results. Right now, here in the United States, we're dealing with an epidemic of mental health issues. The rates of suicide, but not just suicide, but also by means of overdose, and that's related to alcohol consumption, the list goes on and on, have skyrocketed, as are the rates of depression and anxiety and ADHD and schizophrenia, and the list goes on and on. And these are considered in this camp of mental health issues, but these are still biochemical, these are still related to our bodies and our health.

Part of the problem is that we separate these things like this is mental health, this is physical health. These are all existing in the same person. You can't separate you into parts, but this is just a means of communication. We talk about physical health, now we're talking about the skyrocketing rates of heart disease and cancer and obesity, the United States, I've shared this many times, and it's because I want you to know this number so that we can change it, because most people don't know the number. We are now approaching 250 million Americans being overweight or obese. We didn't get here overnight. This has been steadily building. Right now, we're at 42% of the United States population being clinically obese. This is not okay, and this is something that we can do something about. If this is just about vanity, no worries. We can have all kinds of shapes and sizes of humanity. That's okay. We're talking about the health

outcomes. We're talking about the impact this has on our communities, that it has on our families, that it has on our country, in the world, because this isn't just uniquely an American phenomenon, this shift to where more people today are dying from the over-consumption of food, than from the lack of food. It's a new thing. This is why requires new ways of looking at things and new actions, new insights to be able to tackle these new issues in our society.

And this is why I am so excited about this episode today, because we're talking to somebody who's stepped up to make a solution and a place for all of us, not to just take the solutions that we pick up from her experience, but we can integrate these things into our families, into our lives, but also in service to other people and making that our life's purpose of coaching and supporting others. And so, I'm so excited about this. It's very timely. And one of the... She brought me a gift. You know when she came today, and were always giving each other gifts, but she brought... She brought a robe. Which is actually, it's a gift for my wife, alright? This little fancy, nice little robe, and I'm not a robe type of a guy. I just... When I think of a robe, I think of like Hugh Hefner vibes, I don't know. What am I supposed to do with this? Shout out to everybody who loves a good robe, but I know that my wife, she's definitely a fan of robes. And so, she brought her this really amazing robe, but it's also from the amazing school that she runs. And my wife, fun fact, she actually... She was so impressed and inspired and empowered by what she learned from today's guest, and my wife joined the school as well. And my wife doesn't mess with a lot of stuff. She's just like, my wife is... Okay, with the sidebar, my wife is absolutely perfect. Alright?

Just if this gets back to her in any form... Perfect. No, but real talk, my wife, she just, she doesn't want to be bothered with a lot of stuff. Like she loves who she loves. She loves having fun and sharing and talking and service, helping people like my wife, if she's got your back, man, she's got your back 1000%. But as far as like getting involved in an institute or school, like my wife graduated magna cum laude, and so when she graduated, she was like... She even said it with her own mom. She was like, "I'm done. No more books, keep 'em away. None of that, done." Alright? So, for her to enroll and to be a part of... It's just blows me away. And she's always sharing these little insights and nuggets that she's learned from her coursework. So, when I'm saying that today's guest has an impact and a superpower in connecting and helping people to be able to help themselves and help others, I'm not exaggerating. But anyways, a gift that I'm sending her and I'm sending before this even comes out. So, she's going to already receive the gift, is one of my favorite things for upgrading our sleep sanctuary, right? Our sleep environment. It is so important. It's a room that we spend a huge chunk of our lives in, in our bedrooms.

And so, optimizing it for high quality sleep, like it's one of the best things that we can do for our health and for our wellbeing. And one of the simple things that we can do to upgrade our sleep environment, our bed environment is to pay attention to thermal regulation. If our core

body temperature is getting too hot and even our skin temperature as well, this can kick us out of our natural, normal, healthy stages of sleep. In fact, a study that was published in the peer reviewed journal Brain, the scientists had participants wear thermo suits that lowered their skin temperature less than one degree Celsius to measure its impact on their sleep quality. The study results showed that the participants didn't wake up as much during the night. So, this was wake after sleep onset was reduced. And the amount of time they spent in stages three and four deep sleeps had increased simply by getting their body cooled down by one degree Celsius. Their skin temperature.

Alright? So thermal regulation. The materials that are often used for our bedsheets can insulate and create even more heat. And I don't know if you're somebody's waking up sweaty, you know, it tends to happen even with the best sheets that can happen. You know, our bodies can, you know, heat we're detoxifying that kind of thing, but it can definitely be an issue that people aren't aware of. And also, the microbial aspect of what happens with our bedsheets can get to be a little bit nasty. So, the sheets that I'm sending my special guests and that I sleep on, that I'm always giving as a gift to friends and family they're antimicrobial, self-deodorizing, and they inhibit bacterial growth as one of the tenets to help to create a healthy sleep environment. But also, here's the key, they're moisture wicking, they're breathable, thermal regulating, and they're actually made from this really wonderful organic bamboo lisle that can help to maintain healthy thermal regulation to improve our sleep quality.

They're actually doing a sleep study right now on these sheets. So, we're talking about a real clinical trial. And what I'm talking about is the sheets from Ettitude. Go to Ettitude.com/model that's E-T-T-I-T-U-D-E.com/model and get yourself some of these wonderful Ettitude sheets. I promise you; you will thank me for it. And also, they have a 30-night sleep trial. You can try the sheets, sleep on the sheets, dream on the sheets. And if you don't absolutely love them, you get a full refund. No questions asked. So, head over there and check 'em out. It's Ettitude.com/model. Again, that's E-T-T-I-T-U-D-E.com/model. And guess what? You're going to get 15% off, exclusive Ettitude.com/model. Now let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

ITUNES REVIEW: Another five-star review titled “Our Personal Vibe Check” by Henzel. “This podcast has truly reshaped my mindset and my daily habits. Shawn not only has wonderful lessons and reminders for all of us, but he also acts as a personal vibe check when you listen to each episode. Recommended this podcast to so many, and I won't stop till everyone hears all the knowledge that Shawn drops in each and every episode. Thank you, Shawn, for spreading magic and hope in our lives.”

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome. Thank you so much for leaving me that review over on Apple Podcast. I appreciate you so much. If you get to do so, please pop over the Apple Podcast, 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 Cynthia Garcia. Not only is she a bestselling author, not only is she the founder and CEO of the top health coaching institute in the world, she's also my really good friend, and somebody that I spent a lot of time with and somebody who's helped me so much, inspired me, has had my back and I've had her back as well. And just being able to find ways to help, to empower our communities, to empower our family. And this episode again is so important because we're really looking at the current terrain of things and what we can do to start to shift our perception and to become more empowered and insightful, and to be able to access the gifts that are already inherent within us. Let's jump into this conversation with the one and only Cynthia Garcia. The reason that you are here today...

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Tell me.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Is we need you. We need you. We need that beautiful mind of yours. And when I talk to you, so often, I get reinvigorated in what's possible. Because, of course, your story, but also just what you inspire in other people. And so, when you say everything is possible, like you really mean that.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You mean it. So, let's talk about that.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah. I know it. I know it. I feel... I mean, I feel it. When you look at many of us but will take me as an example and where I came from. You know, I grew up, you know, my story in a very traumatic situation, had a little four room shack in the Appalachian Mountains. We didn't have running water in the house. We'd have to go outside to use the bathroom. We couldn't do laundry. If we wanted to take a bath, we caught water in a big rain barrel and heated it on a wood stove and then poured it in like a metal tub. So, like I, but I always knew there was a bigger world out there. And I used to read books. I'd find a warm place in the sun, and I'd have a book that I'd got from the library.

And I learned what was possible. I learned about the other lives that people lived and how things could be different for me. And so, looking at where I came from and where I am now, there's no reason I should be sitting here having this conversation with you. There's absolutely nothing that lined up for me to be here. And I've been able to do some really cool stuff, like I've been on a lot of TV shows, I've worked with top celebrities and A-list actors and had a couple of books that have sold over a million copies. Like, what is that? And I don't say that to brag or to impress anyone, but rather to impress upon you that if I can do it, anyone can do it. Right? So, I think it's just important also to always look at what's possible in terms of our constant evolution. I mean, if we didn't think that anything better was possible, that'd be pretty sh*tty

life to show up for every day. Wouldn't it? Like, don't you think if you had to get out of bed every day and be like, "Guess I'm going to Groundhog Day this mother...," like, how far is that going to get you? You know? So, part of it is what keeps me going, but part of it is just what I know to be true.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I think that we often... We don't know this, but we feel like our past is going to equal our future.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, like you said, that groundhog's day type vibe.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Right? Well, for a lot of people, it does. For a lot of people, your past does equal your future. Because most of us are stuck in these old mindsets, these old stories. And I told you the story about my eighth birthday? Did I tell that on the show? I can't remember. I did. Yeah. So, at that moment, you know, I believed, and for the Reader Digest version for people who haven't seen that episode, but you should go back and watch it is...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Put it on show notes.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: On my eighth birthday, my mom forgot. And she didn't remember, and I'm eight years old and I'm excited. And I kept waiting, thinking, and hoping and praying that I'd be acknowledged. And it was getting late. And I just blurted out to her 'cause I was eight years old. I said, "Did you have a present?" It was like the only thing that, you know, I'm eight... And she looked at me and said, "Why would you have a present?" And I said, "Oh, well, because it's my birthday." And she looked at me just dead pan, a little smirk started. And she said, "So?" And so, in that moment I wrote this story that I wasn't special, and I didn't deserve anything. And it's not like I just have completely rewritten that. And I'm like, "I'm capable of everything. Come on let's get..." Every day I rewrite that story, every single day. I mean, getting up this morning, being excited to come hang out with you, I still had this little niggling, this little poke, you know, that was like, "Yeah, but... Yeah, but..." You know, and I'm like, "No." And so, I rewrite that story, but most of us don't do that. Most of us have gone through a lot of trauma and drama, those twins that follow us around for the rest of our lives, right?

And we do this when we're children and that's how we learn about how to navigate the world. So little Shawn gets in trouble for doing something and he feels bad about it. He tells himself

the story, "I shouldn't do this. I'm not good enough." Or what have you. Or "I'm not worthy," you know, or all of these core stories. And if we never go back and revisit those and question like, "Really?" Like really Shawn, you're really not worthy of having the things that you want?" Then we'll continue to live out those old stories. And our past will create our present as well as our future. It's not until we decide to consciously change the stories that we tell ourselves on an everyday basis that things really will get better, that they will be different, that they will change. Our mutual friend, Tom Bilyeu who I adore so much.

There's very few people I look up to, you're one of them, total transparency. And so is Tom. And he says, "The story you tell yourself about yourself is the most important thing you'll ever do." And it's so true. Henry Ford said, "Whether you believe you can or you can't, you're right." And so, it's really up to you to choose what's possible for you. And it's my job, what I think my job and my personal mission is, the reason I'm here is to be an example of what's possible. I want to inspire other people to rewrite their stories by being an example of what was possible when I rewrote my own.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Yeah. I think, listen, I'm just going to say it.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Say it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: As a culture we've been lied to.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, we think that we're so weak. We think that we're so fragile. We think that we're so incapable.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And we actually... This is a fact; our growth potential is literally limitless.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The human mind itself...

CYNTHIA GARCIA: One hundred.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Is so expansive, there is no cap on how much you can grow and develop and evolve to the day that you die. But we put an invisible cap on ourselves because of our conditioning. And two people can grow up in the same household as I did...

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Same.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And witness the same thing, but it's the meaning that you attach to the things, and now the question is, can you become aware of the meaning that you're putting on stuff? Because I will see my mother and father fighting, I will see my mother waking up in the morning, I come down and she's got a black eye.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Sure.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I see the drug use. And I see... Also, I see the love. I also saw the connection. I also saw us looking out for each other against the rest of the world. The little Stevenson clan.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Sure.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But in those moments, when I see the behavior, the outcomes from the alcohol abuse when my stepfather's drunk, when he is intoxicated, I see that, and I remember distinctly knowing I would never be that. I would never do that. I don't even want; I don't even want to drink whatever that is that is helping to have this human who's got a good heart transform into something so dark. I don't even want to, I don't even want to smell it.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right? Whereas my siblings see it and they say, "Can I have a sip?" Like, this is something that we do, right? For me to maybe earn the respect of this person or to traverse all of my trauma. Right?

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, my meaning is just slightly... Not slightly, it can be dramatically different or even slightly different, but the outcomes, and this is the thing, this is the point that I want to make is, you said something earlier. When we're passing this stuff on, we're talking about our past doesn't have to equal our future. Our past will equal our future.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This study, this was publishing Neuropsychopharmacology. And the title of the study is, "Potential of Environmental Enrichment to Prevent Transgenerational Effects

of Paternal Trauma." We literally pass on our trauma, our psychological trauma to our offspring.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is well noted in the data now, but here's the thing that the study covered; positive enriching environment and experiences can nullify or heal that generational trauma. So that doesn't have to get passed on to the next generation.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, yeah. A hundred percent. So, I wonder, like, I look at your situation and let's take your brother, for example, you guys ended up going in different directions or any other family members. Was there something that you had that maybe they didn't? Like you said, they would look at the drinking and think "This is just, this is who we are. This is what we do. This is who we be." But you looked at it and saw something like, "This is absolutely not who I'm going to become. And I'm going to act accordingly." Was there a difference in the environment, a difference in the environment for you that maybe they didn't experience?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. You know, there's two things. Number one, when my brother... I'm about five years older than my brother and seven years old than my sister. So, I was by myself.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: With these people, my family for a significant amount of time. And I had the experience of being put in a situation, you know, this fight, that I've shared before in the show, but you know, this kid next door, we got into some little scuffles but my mom and his caretaker, I believe it was his mother, made us fight each other. I was four years old. He was like five or six. And my head got split open. I got this scar on the back of my head to this day. And my identity at the time, because I'm in this environment, I understand my mom wants me to be tough.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Sure.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, the way she went about teaching that lesson was definitely not parental, you know, parenting 101 great material. But I understand why she did it today because I can look back on it and shift my meaning. At the time I hated her for it.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, I start to create this distance of feeling not safe around this person and this behavior and these people, but all the while still I'm picking up some of the stuff in the environment, because you just can't help it. So that's one thing. There was some psychological distance created because of a trauma that I experienced and the meaning that I gave it.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: That's right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And the second thing was... I haven't talked about this before, it was because of that incident, it's one of the reasons that I stayed with my grandmother for a couple of years, and in this environment, now I have certainty, I have patterns and consistency, there's a feeling of magic that my grandmother created this aura, and it was when I was living there, and it was an assembly at school, and McGruff the Crime Dog came, and there was this campaign, "Say No To Drugs," right? And I'm just like, "I'm with that."

I don't think hardly any of those kids, if any, really had that at-home experience of what this looks like. I'm like, "Oh, just say no. I get it. So, I'm not going to participate." And so... But here's another part of the story that I don't talk about, is that after second grade, my grandmother, grandfather moved. After my grandfather's opened heart surgery, they're going to move back to the country where he grew up. Not literally like leave the country, but the "country" here in the United States in the woods, dirt, road, the whole thing. And so now there's a decision that I had nothing to do with, "Am I going to go with them to Piedmont, Missouri where I would literally be a needle in a haystack as far as how I look and where I've come from or move back to my mom in the inner city," and I ended up living with my mom again, and now, I'm going from a place where I had this wonderful, magical experience for these three years, and safety, and certainty, and love, and I'm made to feel that I'm significant to all of that overnight resolving to this lack of certainty, this fear. Now, we don't have much at all. I'm going from like... I'm getting all the Thundercat toys on Christmas to literally, we're getting Christmas toys from a charity, and they kept giving us the same sh*t every year. "How many times are you going to give me Yahtzee?" And I still to this day not played Yahtzee.

But there's this issue psychologically with the rest of my family because they believe that that gave me an advantage, right?

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now, this is the thing, getting put into the... I had to go through something really terrible to be even considered to be put into that situation, number one. Number two, I'm in this situation, now I'm thrust back. I have a glimpse of life can be good, and it's all taken away. I can dissolve, I can fall into depression, I can give up, because I know that

things can be better and now it's anything but, or you can just live in that... You're in that environment, like my brother and sister, they don't really know the difference. They can't distinguish what this beautiful, consistent safety life, a feeling of safety really is, and if I had a choice, I would rather that because I can keep looking up. I can keep moving forward, I can keep trying to find a way, versus having something good and then being taken away from me. But again, even that, it depends on how you look at it.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: It does. When I said, "Did you have something they didn't?" You did. And it's funny, I don't know if everyone knows this, but we're the same person.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So many things.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Or very closely related because I had that too. As you know, I lived with my grandmother, and it was not... It was through a very unfortunate series of events that I ended up with her. So, I had a younger brother who obviously lived with my mom and dad, this was before I was even born, and they brought him home one day, he was two years old, and my dad was out in the yard cleaning a little space for him to play. Now, they were dirt poor, like no many government assistance, it was really tough, and my mom was inside, she got him to sleep, she got up and went out to help my dad after the baby went to sleep, kind of create a little space for him to play, and they came back in and found him upside down in a five-gallon bucket of water, and so he died. And my grandmother obviously was very hurt as anyone would be and lashed out and said, "I knew this would happen," and essentially, the reason I went to live with my grandmother for a lot of the time when I was growing up is because she's... My grandmother said, "I won't let you do this to her." She was very afraid for my safety. And so, again, very unfortunate series of events, but much like you, shocking.

But what my grandmother did and what your grandmother did, and my grandmother by no means had wealth or money. No one did in that area, to be clear, but they showed us something else was possible. And even just for a brief moment, that made an impact on us. That environment. It was enough. And so again, just ties back to like why I do what I do. I think if you can show people what's possible, then it inspires them and makes them think, "Oh, I can do this too," right? Now, my situation living with my grandmother ended when she passed away. She passed away very early from heart issues, that diet lifestyle, ton of stress. So, like you, I went back into my old family home full of domestic violence, my dad shooting my mom, me having to wrestle guns out of his hands more times than I care to remember.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And getting shot.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: And getting shot. Yeah, yeah. And we've had this conversation. Yeah, my dad was... He was trying to kill my mother, who was asleep, literally asleep in the next room, and I

happened to wake up in the middle of the night 'cause she was sleeping in my room, and she's a snore, and so she woke me up. And I just felt like something was off. I think when you grow up the way you and I did, which I want to come back to because there is a survivor mentality that we adopt as children. You did, I did. Many of us did, right? You just had to. And so, when I was kind of awakened in the middle of the night, I just knew something was wrong. People talk about over the hair sit up on the back of my neck or... You can sense it, right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: When you live in that environment where things just pop off. So, I got up and I heard my dad muttering to himself in the bedroom next door, and I knew he was drunk because that's what he did when he got drunk. And I went in, and he was very clumsily loading his gun, and I started trying to talk and reason with him, and he just wasn't having it, and he said, "I'm going to kill her. This is it. I'm done with this b*tch, this whore, this..." I mean, that's the way we grew up, right? Anger was our default emotion. It was constant. And so, I said, "No, you can't do that. Please don't do that." Reasoning wasn't working. Now I'm pleading. And he says, "No." And so, he takes the gun, he starts to get up off the bed and I just lunge for the gun. And my dad was... I was... Gosh, I was like 15 years old, maybe, at the time, I guess. Maybe 16. I don't think I was though. And I'm trying to wrestle him. My dad's strong. He's stronger than I am, and so he fires. He fires the gun, and it goes right over... My knee has still have a scar from the bullet. And he said, "I'll kill you too." And it's the first time I was ever afraid of my dad. There had been numerous times he shot my mother in front of me. He tried to shoot her multiple... It was an ongoing thing in my home. I was afraid to leave 'cause I wasn't sure what I would come back to. Not one time did I ever have a sleepover, not one time.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh, my God.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: I never had a sleepover, 'cause could you imagine...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh, I got to sleepover story. Oh my gosh.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Well, we got some up stories. No, but that was the first time I thought he... I never was worried that he would hurt me until that moment, so... Anyways, it was very intense, and that was what I was thrown back into. But what I think it's important to recognize is that as children, we don't always logically say, "Oh, here's someone that's drunk. I don't want to ever be like that," because we don't know. We just know what we're taught, what we see it, right? And we go into survivor mode. We don't look at the meanings of stories, 'cause you said like, "Can we change the meaning? How do we actually go back and look at the meaning we're giving things?" Sometimes you can't, when you're eight and under is what we know just through the study of neuroscience when these big things, these big stories, these big beliefs,

these limiting beliefs are really ingrained in us, so you have to think about... I mean, your prefrontal cortex isn't even online. You can't reason. You can't tell yourself another story, like that doesn't make sense. You don't have the ability. But the environmental impact is huge. It continues to be huge.

If you want to see how successful someone's going to be, look at their environment. You know, how you do one thing is how you do everything, we could talk about that all day, but the important thing to remember is, even if you couldn't do it as a child, you can do it now. You can do it now, because you're right, there is nothing more important than the meaning we get, like Tom says, stories we tell ourselves about ourselves. You might say, "I'm just a messy person. I'm not a morning person." Maybe you try to say to people, "Hey, I've got this morning routine." You get up, you get on your sh*t. "I'm not a morning person." Well, that's a story, right? It's just a story. All that's happening is you set the alarm and then you press snooze. Now, you make it mean that you're not a morning person, but all that happened was the alarm went off and you hit snooze. Maybe you could give a different story, "I was tired. Maybe tonight I'll go to bed earlier," right? Or just tell yourself, "I'm a morning person." People say, "Well, Cynthia, you're delusional." Well, we all are.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: We're all delusional. We all walk around in a state of delusion every day, right? It's like you go out... I love this example 'cause it happens to all of us. You go out, you see your friend, and you're like, "Hey," and then they just ignore you, and then you start to think, "Oh, what I say. Did I do something?" And you're remembering the last time you saw them. Did you not respond to their text on time, did you not respond to their email? They're just not your friend anymore. How do you even have friend, you're not even worthy, you're a bad friend to start with, and it just spirals, right? None of those things are true. Now, when you finally get the courage to go up to your friend and you say, "Hey, Shawn, I saw you last week at that park. I waved. What's up? You didn't..." And Shawn goes, "I didn't even see you," right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: But in the meantime, between the time of that happening and then me actually asking you, I have told myself the craziest stories about how I'm not a good friend, I don't even deserve friends, it's wild that you would even be friends with me in the first place. You're probably just doing that to be nice, and then you saw your way out and you took it. So, nothing... Things just happen. It's a story we tell about them that creates our reality in any given moment, so to tell one that serves you, just tell one that gets you closer to who you want to be and what you want to do with your life. We're all delusional. You got to get over that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. You said that that was so funny because, again, we don't even realize the things that we trust. For example, we're in this building right here. We have so much trust that everything is going to go right, right? Even when we step on our door, we have trust that the earth is going to keep spinning at the magnitude it's spinning, whatever, 700, 800 miles an hour and it's just going to keep on doing what it does. But if it decides to even drop down 100 miles per hour less, we're all going to die. It's just like to think that we've got this figured out is delusional. But here's the cool thing, you get to engage in this story-writing, in this game of life in a sense, and write the story that you want, create the meaning that you want.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: When you said the sleepover, oh my goodness, I was...

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Tell me everything.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I was the guy. I would always did stay in my friend's houses, right? Always, of course.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All good. Got to see different things, different environments, cool relationships, food, all that stuff. One time, my friend Damon is like, "Why don't we stay at your house?" I'm like, "No, that's cool."

He was, I'm sure wanted to get... His house was kind of crowded, but I stayed at his house all the time. And so, I was like, "Cool." So, he comes over, he stays over for the sleepover, and I'm sitting in the kitchen with him and my little brother, and I think I'm maybe 16. So, my little brother is like 11, and so Damon is probably like 17. And so, we're in high school, and my stepfather was drinking per usual, and we were just in the kitchen just chopping it up, we were laughing, having a good time, and for whatever reason, he thought that my little brother was laughing at him. "Oh, you think I'm a joke, right?" He left and we're just like, "What is this?" We just got back to laughing and chopping it up. My brother was sitting in the corner of the room across the room. If you walk in the doorway, he's at the other end of the room in front of a plastic trash can, like one of those big multi gallon.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: The heavy duty? Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, heavy duty trash cans. And my stepfather came in out of nowhere with a bat, and he swung at my brother so hard. He split this plastic trash can in half, like the front of it just opened.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: What?

SHAWN STEVENSON: And Damon was gone. My friend was... He was gone, you know?

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, he was.

SHAWN STEVENSON: He was literally out the house down the street. And I'm just, of course, trying to get... My stepfather, trying to wrestle him down, get him away from my brother, and he's like, "No, no." He's making fun of me. He's laughing at me.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Wow.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And these events were normalized to me in a sense, which is not anything but normal. For my friend who had no exposure to this, you... Of course, he never came back again. We remained friends, but he's like, "Bro, your family." You know what I mean?

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But in that moment, I could have lost my little brother, and he would have... My stepfather would have been heartbroken had he known what he did when he was drinking. He was always remorseful. But that's the thing. Are we going to learn from that? Because even those... The point I want to make too, is that these emotions, like you mentioned earlier, if we're feeling some shame or guilt around things, it could be a guiding like for a positive change, or we can get trapped in those feelings.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely. And those feelings, those deep-seated feelings of shame or guilt or whatever it is, that points to a story that you need to rewrite. That is a great way that you know. So, if you're like, "I don't know. What story?" Well, whatever the story is you're telling yourself that makes you feel that way... You see, people say like, you probably have heard this, "Your thoughts create your reality." We've all heard that, right? That's bullsh*t. Doesn't happen. We have over 60000 thoughts a day. If our thoughts really created our reality, we'd be some interesting motherf*ck*rs out here. Let's just tell the truth.

But what does create your reality is your stories, your beliefs, those deep-seated rules that you have learned to navigate your life by, the ones that you told yourself before the age of eight,

that kept you safe. "I'm not good enough. I'm not smart enough. It's too late for me. That's for other people, but not for me," all of those stories, those are the ones now that we have an opportunity to rewrite, but those are the beliefs, like we said earlier, that created your past, will create your present and your future if you let them. So that's a really great way to hone in, is those deep feelings that you have, and then go back to the origin of where that was actually formed so that you can look at what was the event that happened? What was the explanation? Three Es, what was the event that happened? What was the explanation I gave it? And then what was the emotion that I felt, right? I saw my friend Shawn, that was the event, and I waved at him, okay? The explanation I gave was he didn't sway back, so I'm just not worthy of people liking me, and the emotion I felt was shame, right? Just kind of sh*tty. I felt really a lot of shame.

When I go back and I look at that event, "What happened?" "I saw my friend Shawn. I waved at him. He didn't wave back." That's just what happened. It doesn't mean anything. That's just what happened. And I give it the new explanation, "I guess he didn't see me." Now, what's the emotion? Well, now my emotion is, "Man, I'm so glad to have a friend like Shawn. I'm so glad I get to see him, and it makes me happy when I go out, and that's good, man. I'm so lucky to have a friend like Shawn." It completely changes your story. It changes how you navigate the world, right? Like, "I'm worthy. I'm someone who's worthy of having a friend like Shawn." You know what I mean? So that story is like, it's so powerful, but it all comes down to how you explain it, which it ends up in whatever emotion that you feel, and it's the emotions. So, a thought plus an emotion, that's your belief, and that's what determines our reality, not just your thoughts alone. They're not strong enough for that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes. So good. Thank you for that.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: When you said you're worthy, that really... That got me, because like a big reason why I'm sitting here right now is because of you, and that's real talk. Obviously came out to see you and do some things, like I was in town, you invited me to stay at your place while I was out here, not knowing anything about LA. I'm just here to speak and get the hell out, you know?

But you spoke it into existence. You were just like, "Well, when you guys move here... "

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You'd just be talking, like, "When you move here... " And I had never thought about it. I didn't think that was for me, because again, there's this invisible barrier that

I put on my thinking when I admire my wife and we're at the beach and we're just like, "Man, this is so amazing, like what if?" Right?

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But the what if wasn't like when we, right? That changed. It was because of the language that you were using. I was like, "She keeps saying this like, Wait a minute." And then the what if became so much stronger.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I love this because it's not that I'm so glad that you said this, that our thoughts create our reality, I often say it's our perception, which includes all those pieces, right?

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Stories. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: At the meaning are... Obviously, our thoughts are an ingredient in there, but also, our experiences, all these things kind of color our perception and how we see things, how we see reality, because our perception of things is how it is for us.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah. Well, we don't see things the way they are. We see things the way we are.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, that's it.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's it.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: And back to that conversation, I just showed you a possibility, you know? Speaking it into existence, yes, sure, I do those things, but it wasn't a possibility for you, and I just made it one, right? Now, we all do this, you've done this for me numerous times. I remember... I remember the first time I came to Los Angeles, and it was the first time I had ever gone into a house that had heated floors, and I was like, "What is this Devil's work? What is going on?"

SHAWN STEVENSON: This black magic.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: I'm like, "Black magic. People hit floors. How do you do that?" But then I knew what was possible. It's just increasing the thermostat a little bit, your possibility thermostat, you just keep increasing that. But I will say, I think that choosing something that you want is very important. I think a lot of us go through life and we say, "God, I'd be nice. Wouldn't that be good?" And I'd be, "I'd like to have that car. I'd like to live... To be able to live in that kind of house one day." My Mom, all she ever talked about when I was young, she wanted a big house, a two-story house. That was as detailed as it got, a big two-story house. And that's true for a lot of us, but we don't ever choose it. We see things. We know they're possible 'cause you have it, I have it, they have it, but we don't choose it. I very deliberately choose things in my life, right? You do too. I've seen you do this. And once you lock in on it, I don't know how it's going to happen, I just know that it is. How? Because I decided that it was, right? So, you put your energy behind it.

And here's the thing about making a decision, I always tell people, "Just make the decision. What is it that you want? Just decide." We throw around that word decision so flippantly. Nobody takes it serious, right? A decision, the root of that word, it literally means to cut off. To cut off any other option, right? So, I am choosing this, I am making that decision. There's no other option now. There's just no other option, right?

I was at a party, this was, oh my gosh, so many years ago, and I saw this Nicole Kidman, and the talent is stupid. So, I love to know where people came from and how they got to where they are, I'm fascinated with it, and so I knew a little bit about her story and her mom's health, and she worked as a nurse and was really... Went through it. And so, I said like, "What would you have done if you hadn't been an actress?" And she said, "What do you mean?"

Like that was just the silliest question ever, like, "What do you mean?" And I got it. But you know me, I'm like, "Well, if you hadn't have been... " She was like, "There was never another option." So, when you have... When you make that kind of decision and you decide that this is what you're claiming, you show up in a very different way. You talked about identity earlier. I think that's one of the most overlooked things that we have, that everyone has access to, that very few people use. We've seen this, we just don't always know it. We saw this in Kobe, the Black Mamba, right? Muhammad Ali wasn't a boxer. He was the greatest in the world, you know?

We have these, essentially alter egos that we can create for ourselves, and so once we decide that we want something, we become the person who has it. Here's a basic example. Would you rather be a person...? Let me just say this, there is a difference in someone who wants to lose weight, then that's their identity, someone who's wanting to lose weight, and a person who has the identity of, I'm already there. I'm already there. Those two people act very differently, the person wanting to lose weight, they struggle, they're like, "Oh no, I've read Shawn's book,

I know I'm supposed to eat smarter, but Pizza, Pizza, it's been a long week," they're going to struggle with every single decision, the person who is already about that life, they already see themselves, they own this identity of being the way they want to be at, it's not a an issue. Shawn says, "Eat this. To eat smarter." Got it. You don't wrestle with those things. You just show up for the person that you've already chosen to become... Does that make sense?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, absolutely.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: It's critical. Here's the thing that gets in people's way, and people say, "Choose a new identity, just choose... Adopt an alter ego." It's not quite that simple. The part that is missing is going back and rewriting the old stories because your brain... Right, you know this, your amygdala, your hippocampus, something goes down. And they're like, "Wait, wait, wait, we've seen this before. Here's what you do," it's pulling on those old stories that have been in there since again, before the age of eight, so you can't just choose a new identity and decide to be that you have to also go back and revisit the beliefs on why you think you can't be that person, because if you don't. Every time you are like, "No, I'm this person that's already lost that weight." Your old stories can be like... "No, you're not. No, you're not. Eat that pizza who are you playing right now?" You know, so you have to go back and rewrite those old stories first and then create the identity, because what's going to happen is that identity is going to be like... "No, you ain't that person." And you're going to say, "I wasn't, but I am now, because before I didn't think I was worthy, but I am now, oh look, that's me, telling myself that old story, but I know better, so now I'm going to do better." Does that make sense.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely, yes, yes. So, this goes back, however, there's a piece here that we have to fill in.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Say more.

SHAWN STEVENSON: When we make that decision, or even when you're like... Most people don't decide. What's going to come up if we're resistant to that truth is that... Well, it's easy for you to say, I've got all these different things that I'm dealing with, I can't just decide. And the truth is, the decision is just instantaneous when the decision happens, it's done, but what usually takes time is getting ourselves to the place where we actually make the decision. Right, and so, but one of the things that keeps us from making that a decision, because I started by saying, we've been lied to, as you're hearing my voice right now, you are so powerful, you are so powerful, you have no idea how infinite you are potential is. It's just the barriers we put on ourselves, the story, the things that we've been through, the things we're going through, but your past does not have to equal your future unless you decide it is.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: That's right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so that gap can be the things that we've gone through, especially traumatic experiences. So can we talk about that a little bit and what we can do to start to address the trauma in our lives for us to maybe start to work on overcoming the trauma that's holding us back from making the decisions we want to make.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, for sure. And that's the truth. We all have some sort of trauma. I think we talk about trauma and sometimes we envision it as like this big thing. Right. Something massive like 911, or you were in a war, or you were in a car accident, or you got shot, whatever, and those are our very traumatic events, but there's a lot of different types of traumas, if you were born, you have trauma... Birth is a very traumatic experience. Let's tell the truth. And so, anything that you go through, like I remember... And this is the silliest example to a lot of people who will hear this, but I remember one time I had called my girlfriend, I was in high school, and I said, "Hey, let's hang out." And I had this one friend. Right. And she said, "I can't, I'm busy." And I was like, "What are you doing?" And she's like, I can't, I'm busy. And I was like, "Okay." Now the guy I was dating at that time... You see where this is going?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Had already said, he's busy, he's got something to do, so I'm like, "Well, I'm not going to sit at home, I'm going to go out." So, I took myself out to the big city and went to the mall 'cause I was balling right and had like \$10 to get some food and buy some gas anyways, I start to go up the stairs to get to the second level of the mall. And guess who starts coming down the stairs.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh wow.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Like what? Are they, is it? And she's like, "Well, you... " Like it was my fault. Right, and that might be a silly story to a lot of people, but for me, that was very traumatic, because in that moment, the story I told was, I can't trust people, people can't be trusted. This was not the first time I had run up against this story in my life, right. But this was the one person who I had been able to confide in for years, I said I literally had that one friend, I'm not joking, but... And still to this day, I have trust issues. You know this about me, I don't trust anyone, right? And so that story was absolutely written for me, but that was trauma, so it could be the girlfriend that broke up with you, that broke your heart in ninth grade, it could be that you had high expectations for a test, there's lots of different versions of trauma is my point, and we don't compare trauma, my trauma isn't any worse than yours isn't any worse than Sally Sue.

We don't compare it because we all have different levels of resilience, right. Like you're resilient as a mother because you've been through some stuff, right. So, whatever I throw at you, you could handle it. You're going to be good. We know that, we know that people who have grown up in extreme trauma, they handle stress way better, it's why a lot of people who grow up with really tough backgrounds end up being very successful, and when you go on the list and name them Oprah of course is at the top right, because they can withstand higher levels of pressure and stress, your physiology is designed from a very young age because it's had to respond that way. Right, it's fascinating. So, the point of all of this is, we don't compare traumas, we're all at different levels, but the first step is to acknowledge that you've experienced trauma, it's not a weakness, it doesn't make you less than... Right. In fact, it's one of the strongest things that you can do to have the courage to be vulnerable enough to say, "This happened to me, and it really affected me in a traumatic way."

SHAWN STEVENSON: Even that can be very tough.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah. It's very hard.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Because I know that even some of these stories that I'm sharing, I know a time when there's still discomfort there in it, but I remember a time when I was embarrassed to ever even speak a word of any of these things.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Same. Are you kidding me? I would never... 'cause I thought if they found out, they won't like me, if they found out this crazy sh*t... They would think I was crazy. Like a lunatic, right. But you got to be really careful who you trust your stories with, got to be really careful who you share things with, 'cause that can be used against you, people have to earn the privilege of my stories, I've told you stories that I still haven't told in a public way, because... And maybe one day I will, but I'm not at that place. I still haven't worked through it in my own way to be able to share it. So be careful about who you share those things with, but find someone, and if you don't have the people around you... And that's another big thing, by the way, the people that you surround yourself with will hugely determine what you do in your life, who you'll be in your life, what you have in your life. It's huge, and we can get into that if you want, but if you don't have that trusted source start with a coach, start with a the therapist, start with a neutral party who isn't going to judge you.

Right. Or isn't going to bring it up when you've had too many drinks at a friend's house, but when you start to tell those stories, no matter how small, it liberates you, and then you tell a little more, and then you tell a little more, and then you tell a little bit more. Does that make sense? So, the first tip is talking about it acknowledging that it's happened. Getting help if you need it. I'm a coach, I'm great at what I do, I'm trained in trauma, I'm a trauma specialist, but I'm not a therapist. And so, if you've gone through really heavy, intense moments of trauma,

get the right help that you need and don't be ashamed to do that, whatever that looks like for you, but the other thing is realizing that what happened then isn't happening now, and you get to rewrite the story, right? So yes, this happened to you, and yes, it might have led to you being self-destructive, it might have led to you developing really negative habits, like numbing all the pain through drinking, sex, gambling, shopping, fill in the blank. Overeating is another one that a lot of us do.

And I think it's okay, all of those things are okay, when you get to a point where you're like, "Oh, this is... This is why I did those things." So, it's just about becoming self-aware and accepting it... Is this making sense? Yeah, so sharing what happened, even if it's just to yourself, just admitting it to yourself, and then realizing like, "Oh, I've done these things, but now I can choose to do some things differently," it's all about self-awareness is at least where you start.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is the rub today.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Tell me.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Is that self-awareness is becoming more distant in a sense...

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yes, I agree, a hundred percent. You talked about this recently. We live in echo chambers. And that's a problem. You said this, we regurgitate. So, I was like, "Oh, that's a cool idea. I think I'll say that." And then somebody else is like, "Oh, that's cool. I think I'll say that too," and then we have your thoughts create your reality... And I'm just picking on your thoughts creating your reality. I don't know who said that. They're really good people, but we do... We parrot, as you said, the things that we hear around us and we don't think for ourselves, we are so afraid still of being kicked out of the tribe, we're so afraid of what people will think if we express an independent opinion that... And quite honestly, we don't even sit still with ourselves long enough to figure out what we do think about a situation. Do you know what I mean?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: We just see somebody say something, we're like, "Yeah, no, what he said." And we don't even sit and question like, "How do I really feel?" Like we just were in on the phone all the time. Right. Like I've made it a point... Do you do this? I have ever asked you this, I have a thinking time thinking time, there was a book written called The Road Less stupid.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I'm writing that down.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: It's a great book. You got to read it, and in it, he talks about like this having time for independent thought, and just so I have... I have thinking time, and it might range from 10 minutes to an hour to two hours if I'm just zoned down one on the weekend by the pool and I have that white space lonely, and I just think. I don't listen to music; I don't have my phone. I just be. Now, sometimes if there's something poking me that I'm trying to work through, I'll have a notebook and a pen, and I'll write down the question and then I put it aside. Now something comes up and I feel like I need a journal to write that down, I'll grab the pen and the notebook, but otherwise I just sit, and I be, and I think and I process it. You ever hear people say, "I get the best ideas in the shower."

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's 'cause you're not on a damn phone.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Thank you. Right, it's 'cause you're actually taking time to think for yourself in that moment, do you do this, do you have time, or you just think you just be.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's exactly, I literally said that on that segment that you mentioned, when is the last time you actually just thought if you just sat there... Because when we were growing up, we didn't have all of this stuff, all of this stimulation, so we just had time to be bored, but even that boredom, that's a label that we put on time that we can have essentially in all these different self-reflection and assessment of our lives and the environment, and the things that we want to do and the things that we don't want to do, and all this stuff, we get to actually sit with it, and so we put these labels on it, now we got a cold culture that is constantly trying to look for stimulation, so we're not "bored"

CYNTHIA GARCIA: That's right. That's right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But for me, it's this time pretty much every day, I'll just go for a walk by myself without anything, no headphones, and I'm walking in this path where there isn't a lot of new stimulation from the outside, it's just this little block that I walk and I'm just there, just with my thoughts and considering things and just allowing... Because the thing is, there's so much that happens. We kind of get this spiritual constipation, all of this, consuming all this consumption of all this outside stuff without processing.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: That's right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And assimilating what we need to and eliminating what we don't. So it's like time for that filter to kick on when I'm not looking for this outside stimulation, and also that can come from talking to somebody as well, and that's what I see so much, we just us hanging out, and it makes me even more comfortable again, to even share certain things about my life as well that we again share with each other, the thing is neither of us trusts anybody.

You know what I mean? Even for me, I've evolved to a place where I trust people to be who they are, and I'm open for people to demonstrate that, so it creates this place where trust is more possible.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Absolutely.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Versus, I'm coming from this environment where it's... Everything around me is telling me do not to trust, do not open yourself up to be a victim, but that mindset held me back from getting out of the things that were imprisoning me from, whether it was my health or my success or whatever it is. The thing that changed everything for me was when I realized that I can't save the world by myself, because that was just stupid to think that, but I really felt like I can. Right, and I'll show you. Yeah, and that's going to kick my own ass. Like that, seeing seen Liar, liar when Jim Carrey beats himself in the bathroom anyways, but I realized that if I'm really going to make an impact on this world and leave things far better than when I got here, it's going to be with and through other good people, so I have to open myself up for to those good people, and that in of itself, that intention. Right, so I set the intention and I made the decision to make it. To make it happen. And again, the decision was possible for the 10 years that I was working in this field.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Sure.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But the next 10 years was dramatically different because I decided to invite people like you, and it wasn't like, Cynthia, I'm going to find Cynthia.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: No, I found you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Sure enough. Sure enough. We got to share that story of when we met.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Let's totally share it. No, but what you're saying is a lot and it... You open this door that we might not want to walk through, 'cause it makes people mad and I am just going to call it out, and here's what it is, and let me frame it my way, right? So, for me, I have decided that everything is my fault, and you can see why this makes people angry, right. They're like, "Wait, what?" Now, that is my extreme way of looking at the fact that I take personal responsibility for everything in my life, so if something goes sideways in one of my companies, I don't pass the buck, I don't say, "Oh, my team, I'll talk to..." No, that was me. Ultimately, even if somebody... That's ultimately my responsibility. It's my responsibility to run the company, to manage the people in it, to oversee what we're putting out into the world to ensure that it's good and in alignment, and if that doesn't happen that's on me. If an employee is having a performance issue, I don't say, "What is their problem, what is going on, what am I not giving

them to enable them to operate or function or perform at the level that this role expects, what role am I playing in this?

So, I assume that everything that happens is my fault, now, most of us don't do that, and let me just tell the truth, I didn't come out of the womb like this. I mean, for so long in my life, I was like, "Whose fault is this?" You know, I could be at home and drop a glass and look around for someone to blame. I live by myself, and I'm like, "Who did this? Who...?"

SHAWN STEVENSON: I was thinking about you.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's your fault.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Exactly. It's their fault. So, I would pass the buck at any chance I got, but it just didn't serve me blaming other people for your results, or who you are, what you have or be or whatever. It's just not productive. And I quickly saw that I could be miserable and blame other people, or I could say, "What's my role in this?" And so, the point here is, we have to start taking personal responsibility for things, and that's... Continues this conversation. Sure, you look at what it is that you want, get out of the echo chamber, sit with yourself, figure out what you want, make the choice, and then make the decision, but then take responsibility for it, that person didn't hire me. Well, no, you didn't show up in a way that made them want to hire you.

Now I get that, like... Yeah, I get it, I get that that poke. But ultimately, if you don't take responsibility, then who? Right. You're not serving yourself. I always look at like if we did this interview today, I'll ask... People will say, "Oh, that was great. I loved when you..." Great, but what could I have said better? What did I say that you didn't understand? What could I have been more clear on? Right. I take personal responsibility for that. If this interview tanks and people are like, "Well..." I'm not going to be like, "Well, Shawn had very bad question..." or whatever, I'd be like, "Damn, what did I not do?" But we need to do that right. Now, it gets tricky.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: It gets tricky. Let's just call it out because... Bad things happen to really good people. And it's really hard to swallow. How is that my fault? That isn't... No, that's not my fault. So that's where I bring it up lightly and gently and perhaps fault, like I use that for me, that's for me, it's not for everyone, but by taking responsibility for what has happened, take fault out of the equation. Fine. Taking responsibility for what has happened, you get to now be in control of your response to it, things can happen to you, or they can happen for you... This isn't

anything new, we've all heard this a million times, right. But for most of us, even though we know it, things still happen to us. We're still the victim. But how can you take that, twist it, own it, and make the choice to do something about it in a way that impacts you in a positive way, you see what I'm saying?

SHAWN STEVENSON: This insight affects our day-to-day lives, but also healing trauma. This is another thing like a tool. Because...

CYNTHIA GARCIA: A hundred percent.

SHAWN STEVENSON: For me, again use... Fault is strong, and I use responsibility, taking one hundred percent responsibility for your life.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: No wiggle room, but the thing is, we're coming into it super whammy, even when we decide like... Here's the cool thing, is that, for example, something might happen with my wife and I, and maybe some outside event takes place that really throws us off, that really creates stress and a negative experience, but how quickly can I get to that place of like, "What is it about us that help to create that situation?" Right, and it's not to put us into a place... Because you said it's tricky.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: It is.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love this because we can put ourselves into a place where we are taking responsibility for things to the degree that it incapacitates us.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, we have to have grace in it too.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Which part of that is allowing things to process and not making everything... Creating more trauma, by thinking that it's bad for me to be upset or to be... Whatever the case might be.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: One hundred. And yes. Oh my God, can I just... Yes, yes, yes, yes. So, here's the other thing I want to throw in here, right? Getting into a fight like somebody on my team. Those are all great examples. Here's one that hits a little differently, trauma that something

that has happened to you that isn't truly your fault, and it's hard to take responsibility for. I'll give you an example. I was sexually abused at the age of 5, that is not my fault, and taking responsibility for that blows my mind. What are you talking about? What do you mean take responsibility...? So, I'm playing devil's advocate here, so I think it's important, and this is why I say it's tricky. Right, but here's what I'm talking about, I'm not talking about the event that happened, the incident that happened, and you're not either, we're talking about taking responsibility for what happens next.

So, I can take this thing that happened to me, and I can let... I can give it whatever meaning I want, and I can let that run the rest of my life. And it could take on a negative meaning for me, and I could let that tell the rest of the story for the rest of my life. I can let it hold me back, I could let it help keep me stuck, all of those things, I could justify my drinking, my drug problems, my addiction to online gambling, whatever, eating, because this thing happened, or I can also take responsibility for what happens next. Sure, this thing happened. Absolutely. It wasn't your fault. No, it was not your responsibility to prevent it, but it is your responsibility for the next. Now, what do you do with that? What do you make it mean? What comes of that? Is this making sense? So, I want to be really clear on this, 'cause sometimes I say these things and people are like, "Wait, wait, wait. I was raped and that's my fault, or I'm supposed to take responsibility." No, it's for what happens next. It's what you do with that that we're talking about.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We've got a quick break coming up, we'll be right back. The importance of Vitamin C cannot be overstated. The big issue today is its simplicity. Something so simple cannot be so effective, can it? Well, Vitamin C is obviously a major part of our immune system function and how it does its work, and this is the key, is that it helps to reduce infection-oriented inflammation. A recent study cited in the journal, PharmaNutrition, investigated the impact of vitamin C in relation to the cytokine activity associated with COVID-19 and found that vitamin C is effective by inhibiting the production the cytokine storm. Several clinical studies are now affirming that timely administration of vitamin C can dramatically influence the outcome of COVID-19 infections, and this simply has not been talked out but we're going to change that. Now, it's important to also know that all vitamin C is not created equal, we've got synthetic forms of vitamin C and we've got botanical, real food-based vitamin C.

A study published in the Journal of Cardiology had 20 male smokers consume the number one source, the highest botanical source of vitamin C found in camu camu berry over the course of a one-week study, and it led to significantly lowered oxidative stress and inflammatory

biomarkers, and they were measuring this by utilizing C-reactive protein. Now, here's the rub, the camu camu berry was not just put up against a placebo, it wasn't put up against nothing, it was put up against synthetic versions of vitamin C, just an ordinary vitamin C tablet that you might find as you're checking out at the cash register or at a gas station, or something of the like, and here's what they found. The researchers saw no change in these biomarkers, reducing inflammation, oxidative stress in the placebo group. The placebo group again, was a synthetic version of vitamin C.

For the researchers, this indicated that the combination of other antioxidants from the camu camu berries had a more powerful antioxidant effect than standard Vitamin C products alone. This is why I utilize camu camu berry combined with Amla berry, combined acerola cherry, the three highest botanical sources of Vitamin C ever discovered, and my favorite vitamin C supplement of all time, the Essential C Complex from Paleovalley. Go to paleovalley.com/model, you're going to get 15% off the incredible Essential C formula. Go to P-A-L-E-O-V-A-L-L-E-Y.com/model for a special 15% off right now. Vitamin C is of the utmost importance, our sourcing matters more than ever. Get the very best, not the third best, not the fifth best, not the 100th best, get the very best vitamin C possible. That's going to be in the Essential C Complex from Paleovalley. Go to paleovalley.com/model. Now, back to the show.

This is the great thing about having a coach or a mentor or just people there to guide us, because also we tend to isolate so many of these traumatic experiences, and one of the great gifts that I was given... And it just goes back to me opening myself up, which was with Michael Beckwith, and he really add added in another layer so much so that I went into the science on it, he knows all this stuff, he doesn't have to know the signs, he just knows it, right? But just the power of questions, right?

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, this is one of the gifts that you really give to your students and when you're working with folks, because we already have the answers within us, right?

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Oh, hundred percent.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But there is this... For me, I had to find out what is this mechanism? And it's called instinctive elaboration. So, the human brain, it is obsessed... It has to find answers to the things that we're posing it.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: That's right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, we tend to have these automatic or habitual questions or dominant questions usually, for me when I was struggling with my health and my life is just why me, on automatic, why me, why me? And... There's even a positive way to even look at that, I changed the meaning. Now I look... As I've worked through all these years, now I look back and I was going through that situation where I was diagnosed with this so-called incurable condition, I was by myself, my own mother, she asked for a loan for some money from my refund check from my university and disappeared, I had to pay my rent and then she disappeared, she wouldn't answer the phone when I called, the whole thing. My own mother at that time, and I just felt like I was so alone. And I wasn't doing well in school. The whole thing. I went from a full credit load to now I got one class, I got three credits, I'm barely hanging on by a thread. Now, looking back and asking that why me, why me, because I am strong enough because I was qualifying... I was getting qualified for the life that was to come. I was given the opportunity, why me because I have the ability to change the meaning of these things...

CYNTHIA GARCIA: That's right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And to start to write a new story, it really just depends on your perception, and especially looking back on again, these traumatic experiences, like you said, it's what do you do next? So, a question that folks can start to ask when these things happen is like... What is this trying to teach me?

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right? Or I love this one, which this one is a kind of tough though, but what is the good in this situation?

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Oh yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Where is the good? Where's the gift?

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Specifically, that's the one I used with my wife the other... Last time we had this thing happen in our lives...

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Oh gosh. That's so hard.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Where... What is the gift in this situation? What is the gift that life is trying to give us?

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yes, I do that in a similar way, I'll say. I'm so happy this is happening because... Which is even... Maybe be even harder for people, I don't know if that's easier or harder for people, but just in the midst of a total sh*t show, I'm just like, "Oh, I'm so happy this is happening. Because..." because it forces you to see, again, what's possible, and I know by the way, I drive people sometimes crazy when I say everything is possible. I had this client one time, and we were in a coaching session, and I said, "Well, listen. Everything is possible." And she's like, yeah. She was just annoyed with me, and that's okay. And I said, "No, it is. You know that, right?" Because that's part of what coaches do, we ask questions, we dive deeper. And she was, "Yeah, I know. I know, but if I didn't have any legs, I couldn't play basketball. So not everything is possible." A few years later, I didn't have this information at the time, I do now, I wish I had a coach three years later, because what I now know is, in fact, there is a woman, her name is Jen Bricker, who plays basketball, volleyball. She also is a New York Times best-selling author. She is an aerialist, award-winning. Oh, and she was born without legs.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Come on.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: It turns out, you can play basketball if you don't have legs. Everything is possible. There's another great story. I know you've heard it. We've all heard it. We've all told it, this fella by the name of Roger Bannister. We've heard about this guy. For years and years and years, no one could run a mile under four minutes, the experts said it couldn't be done. And so, one day, Roger goes to work, he had an early shift, he works the full shift, he takes the train, he goes have... And he has lunch with some friends, and then he stops by the track and its blustery weather, cloudy, it is not ideal conditions for trying to run, let alone, trying to run a mile in less than four minutes. And the people that were there said, "Oh, you're wasting your time. It's not possible, no one can do it. We know it's just not possible." And he said, "I think I'll try; I think I'll just give it a shot." And we know what happens. He breaks the record and blows people's minds, but here's what I find interesting, and maybe you know this 'cause you're usually smarter than I am about these things, but he wasn't an athlete, it wasn't like he gruelled, he trained, he would run with his friends, they had this amateur running league that he was part of, he was a doctor of neurology, and therein lies the secret.

You see, Roger Bannister knew that the limitation wasn't in the body, but in the mind, and so he set the example of what was possible, and of course we proceeded to break it under times since then. But it really begs the question of, what is possible for you? And again, I think it's everything, but this, to go back to your point of coaching, its why coaches are so important, I still have coaches, I'll use coaches for everything, 'cause I can't see my own stuff all the time... Right. And just to be clear, a coach's job isn't to tell you what to do, I don't tell my clients what to do or how to live their lives, I don't know how they should live their lives. I'm not going to tell you how to live... Hell, what do I know about your life? But what I do know is I have a method that I use to coach you through rewriting your stories, I have a process for walking you through

how you see what's possible, so you know the decisions and the choices that you want to make, and the cool thing about that, Shawn, is, it's your decision.

It's your choice, right? People say... You know, I wrote this weight loss book many years ago, and focused on weight loss for the early part of my career, and people, even to this day, will still say... I'll get interviews and they'll say, "Why don't diets work?" And first of all, I can't believe we're still talking about this, but the answer to that is, I don't know that diets don't work. I think there's some great "diets", ways of eating out there... Now, there's some not-so-great ones too, let's acknowledge the good and the bad, but it's sometimes that we don't work the diets, we're back to personal responsibility, because here's... And here's why that is. As humans, we need to be in control. When you were little, you needed to be in control, to this day, control freak. If I can control it, I'm safe because when I grew up in a house where again, things would just pop off at any minute, I could control... If I could control them, things were safe. Many of us have that experience. So, humans don't like to not be in control, it doesn't matter if it is that you're in a traumatic environment or you're just following a weight loss plan, any form of control where it takes away your free will makes us feel like we're unsafe.

Now that's just this old brain, that's the way we're built. It's perfectly normal. We all do it, right? The trick is like, how do we stop doing that? And that again is where coaches come into play, it's like... But that's the whole point about diets, just to kind of wrap it back to that. People will follow a diet, they'll start on Monday, and by Wednesday they're done, right, and they justify it by saying, "Well, it's the time, I didn't have the time, I didn't have the grocery, I'm tired... I deserve this, I deserve this pizza tonight, right?" But the real reason is because they're not in control. So, when you work with a coach, they're not telling you what to do, right, and that's where the magic comes in. You're choosing. Now, they'll ask questions to get to the heart of what's going on. We'll ask these great questions to help you come up with options on what you could do to get out of the situation that you're in, but then we let you choose 'cause you're in control. So we go from a place of taking away your power and just do what I say to giving you back your power and letting you stand on your own two feet and supporting you through the process as you do, and then also saying, "Hey Shawn, you said you were going to do this thing, 'cause I know what you want is this thing, but I noticed you did this thing. Help me understand." So, it just holds you accountable in a loving, supportive way where you're always in control.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Just imagine if we all had access to this and we do, this is the thing, we do, and phenomenal things have taken place. We've got really sound data on people being able to utilize coaches, life coaches, and literally transform the outcomes of communities, and the reason I'm bringing this up is that today... And another one of the big reasons I want wanted to have you here today is we're in a state of crisis. I'm even hesitant to say it because the word isn't strong enough, we've really devolved in such a way with our mental health and the outcomes in our society, the rates of suicide and drug abuse...

CYNTHIA GARCIA: That's right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And overdose deaths and the deaths from alcohol skyrocketing as well over this... The time of this pandemic, it's just... It's really startling. One of the craziest statistics, and this was published by the CDC, and they found that United States... In the US deaths from drug overdoses have nearly doubled in 2021 versus just a few years ago. For example, in 2015, there were 50,000 drug overdose deaths, and in 2021, it hit a record of about 100,000 people, doubling. And that's just... That's overall, not to mention Fentanyl specifically being the leading cause of death in people in their quote "prime of life years between 18 and 45."

But we're not talking about... We tend to put that again, it's another one of those taboo things we put in a the box, oh the drug abusers, we're talking about why do people utilize drugs like we're conditioned when we get here as babies, this is wrong, you should take something for that, it's a cultural implementation of an idea, of a belief system on taking something to deal with our pain...

CYNTHIA GARCIA: That's right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Physically and mentally. And we can have an entire field built to where we can have medications to change how you feel, but hey, I'm a professional and I can change how you feel with this pill versus you have the ability to do it yourself, just go to... Fill in the blank place, and you get access to these things. But here's the crazy thing, even about fentanyl, and it's very strange because there isn't a lot of unrest about it, there isn't a war on drugs with fentanyl that you're hearing about, because where is does it primarily come from, is this come from the pharmaceutical industry, they were the agency of birthing this and making it such a popular phenomenon, so much so that Johnson & Johnson was ordered to pay part of a \$26 billion settlement because of their contribution to the opioid epidemic that has now killed over half a million Americans. But again, you don't see this on the headlines, people are all into the next thing, they're not actually paying attention to the thing that matters most, like what is actually hurting us the most? And it's our mental health.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, absolutely, a hundred percent. And it's... And that's what again, it's... I think... This is a big statement. I think coaches are the solution, I think coaches can change the world, I think coaches can save the world. As a matter of fact, I know that that is true. We have to return to our own inner knowing, our own inner being, because you're right, by using these prescriptions that your doctor says, we just need to be on this, they are implying that you can't handle it any other way. That there's... You can't get through this on your own. And so, we start to believe that. That's a story, right? But we then adopt it and we're like, "Yeah, I can't do it without this. I need this, I can't go through the evening without that glass of wine, or two

glasses of wine, or four glasses of wine." Right. And listen, I'm not judging anyone, I've drank my fair share, and then some. Let's tell the truth. It's just when it becomes our only outlet, our only way of being, that it becomes a problem, and that's what we have to get back to taking control of, but Shawn, the thing is, I told you this starts with self-awareness. Right? I'll tell you... Gosh, there's so much I want to say right now.

I went to a therapist back in the day, I was going through a lot of mental health struggles, I've dealt with depression since birth, I think, I was diagnosed being clinically depressive in my early 20s because I had never had an outlet to be diagnosed before, and I was going to a therapist 'cause I was really, really struggling. Feeling suicidal. I had been feeling suicidal, it wasn't the first time. This was not new to me. I still deal with it, I just have new tools and ways to deal with it, I call, and we talk, it's good stuff, but I sat down with this therapist and she was saying the prescriptions, the drug, and I said, "Listen, I know there's a time and a place. That's okay, but I need to figure this out and I need to have another way to deal with it because for me, the medicine made me numb. Sure, I didn't feel depressed, I didn't feel anything. I didn't feel love, I didn't feel joy, I was just kind of floating through life and I said, "You got to give me something else", and she said, "Okay, here's the thing that will just fix all of your problems", and I was like, "Oh, sweet, baby Jesus in a manger tell me everything."

And she said to me, "You just have to love yourself." It was all I could do to stay in my chair. [chuckle] I am hanging on to life here, I am struggling so hard, and you're telling me I got to love myself. Needless to say, I didn't go back to that therapist and then... And I wish her well, and I hope she got more training, but I see that a lot. Love yourself, just love yourself. You got to have self-love. Well, what happens when you've grown up thinking that you're worthless, you're hopeless, you'll never amount to anything, when your mother forgets your birthday, where your mother takes your rent and then won't return your phone calls and you don't love yourself because there is inherently something wrong with you, at least that's what we believe. Right. For your own mother to forget your birthday, it must not be a lot you've got to offer, so it's not... Like you don't flip a switch one day and be like, "Okay, I love myself now, I'm good. Thank you. Next." It's about becoming aware of who you are in the first place, and why you would even deserve love and why you think you don't, like, I have this game I play, because it's just easier than going straight to the heart of the matter, it's...

I call it the "I wonder game", so when I'm in it and I'm struggling, I'll just say to myself in a really gentle way, "Gosh, you're in it right now. I wonder what... I wonder what's going on. I wonder what those big feelings are. I feel anger. Okay, okay, I wonder where that is in your body, my chest... It's in my chest, I feel it. I wonder... I wonder what color it is. Oh, it's f*cking red, it's real red right now. I wonder if has a shape." And I get to the point where I'm like, I wonder if I could just... I wonder if you could take that outside of yourself and just look at it separate from you, I wonder if you could just see that, and that the point in doing all of this is not... 'cause before,

what people tend to do is like, "Just get it together. Cynthia, just get your sh*t together. What are you doing? Why are you freaking out? Just, come on, what is wrong with you?" We beat ourselves up. Right. And so, I use the opposite approach, just like... 'cause I know, Shawn, that most of these things that I am triggered by are from inadequacies I felt as a child, I know that.

And so, I wouldn't go up to a child and just be like, "Hey kid, get your sh*t together. What is wrong with you? Why are you crying?" And so, I don't do that to me. Now I'll just say, "I wonder, I wonder what's going on." Like a child. "I wonder what color that the anger is, because it allows me to let my guard down, to not beat myself up and to get to the real heart of what's going on, I get to know myself, and then I'll be like, "Oh, oh, that's you feeling that thing?" Now, this is a process. Right, but anyone could do it. Start to wonder today. Do something, feel something. Next time you start to feel a strong emotion, just sit back and wonder, I wonder... I wonder why I'm feeling this way. We're tempted to lash out at the other person who caused it right? Back to blaming somebody else and not taking responsibility, but just to... Just try to wonder. The more you do it, the better you'll get at it. The whole point is, start to wonder, "I wonder why I have to control everything. I wonder why I need to fluff the pillows on my couch when somebody gets up and leaves."

What does that give me? I wonder, right? When you get to know yourself, then you can move to the next phase, which is accepting yourself. So now we go from self-knowing to self-acceptance. Listen, I have some really weird habits, I just do. I'm kind of a weirdo. You know this, you've heard me say, just sh*t that like so absurd, that you're like, "How did you even think of that? How did that even come out of your mouth?" But I accept that about me, right. I don't know why I'm weird, I just am. I don't know why I say and do weird... I just do. But that's alright. That's me, I'm just being me. You do you. I'm going to do me. But I accept those things. I know that I get stuck on loops, if I got an open loop, I'll just sit all day, all day until I find a way to close that loop. I get fixated on things, I get obsessed with things, I have to have a way to close the loop, or I will not... I mean days, weeks, months, I won't let it go. I accept that about myself. That curiosity serves me, so I accept it.

Once you can accept the good, the bad, and the weirdo part of you, then you move on to self-love. Right? And if that's too hard, start liking. Do a self like.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Appreciation.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: "I like that I'm weird," right? You're just accepting. You're appreciating. I kind of like this. It makes me different. Keeps people on their toes. Let's me know who my real friends are, when I say some sh*t and they're like, "Wait, what..." And I don't see them again. I'm like, "Okay, thank you. Next."

SHAWN STEVENSON: They were thrown off by my obsession of true crime and serial killer.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, big cult fan over here, a big serial killer fan. Yeah, but there's a process is the point to getting to self-love, I'm not denying that that helps, but that's the key. But you have to have a process for getting there, especially in this day and age.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, that's the thing too, is the process and being gifted with that, because I think one of the biggest things that... It's another lie that we've been told. Not... Again, somebody doesn't have to vocally say these things to you, but just the belief that we pick up is that we make it someday, some day we arrive, we're there. That is not how this works.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: No.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's a continuous process, and you've even shared the things that you are still in process. This isn't to say, here's the thing, if yourself back in that, the conditions that you were living in, and if you could fast forward and see your life today, you would not... You wouldn't even believe that that is your life, like it's such a... You're in a different galaxy, and you would be like, that you made it. Cynthia, you made it. And it's one of the lies that we buy into that once we achieve, fill in the blank, once we get to such and such, and we'll be happy, we'll be peaceful, we have all the things. It's a continuous process. If you're alive, part of the... One of the ingredients in the recipe of life itself is that you are going to be faced with challenges and problems, it's just...

And I'm a very optimistic person, so even me saying this is just like, I'm not saying it to rain on your parade, but stuff's going to happen. And the only difference is, number one, you being aware that it's a continuous process, and the stuff you've been through that you are processing is a continuous process, because you might heal from something, it doesn't mean that it disappears. A certain angle or a flavor of something might pick at that thing that healed, the scar may be is there, and you might have something come out from that, but still it's another opportunity, and one of the things that you said when we were talking about having you in today, it's just like, what's different about us is that we just picked up some tools along the way to be able to deal with these things.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: That's right, I wondered if this is where you were going, 'cause I was like, yes, we just have different tools, I just know a little more than I knew back then. I shared with you before we started today that for our kiddos, the second leading cause of death right now for their age group is suicide, it's nauseating, it's heart breaking.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, we're talking about pre-teens.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Ten to 14. I can't, Shawn, what is happening. But here's the thing, and I can speak to this because I have been through suicidal moments, moments where I thought, "This is it; I'm done now." And what I can tell you is that I never wanted to die, I just wanted to stop hurting and I didn't have the way to do that, and I think that that's what we're seeing with people. Suicides have skyrocketed as you talked about through the pandemic, because we don't have the tools, we don't have the answers. We don't have that education... We don't have a way to deal with it. There is no other way. And so, we think that the only way is the way out, right? I know that's true for me, it's been true for many clients, many people that I've talked to who have been suicidal or experienced that themselves, so it really just comes back to what are the tools that you have... And this is what, I made it a point to study, you make it a point to study. I think education is so key.

Listen, I didn't know how to do the things that I do today. And no idea. I've started now two coaching schools, the second one, I knew what I was in for 'cause I've done it once, but the first one, when I tell you, had I known everything it took to get this school to where it is now, I mean it's a state licensed school, it's like the best of the best. I would never have done it. Never would have done it, 'cause I wouldn't have even known where to start. Even when I was doing it, I was like, "Oh, oh, I got to do that? How do I do that?" I have no idea, but I just figured it out. We research, we learned skills. And so, I think the thing that's made the biggest difference in my life, I wonder if you feel the same, is education, and that doesn't necessarily mean a traditional university or anything like that, but just Google a certification program, a training program, a course online, a book, reading, eat smarter, sleep smarter, to go back to the book. The education has given me the tools and the skills to create the life that I only once believed was possible but had no idea how I would get there. Does that make sense? Do you do that? Is education, would you say that's one of your...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, if that's not the top, in a way. Because... No, that's what this, I think that this experience of life is it is, it's self-education? And you get to choose whether or not we learn that shit. The education is being presented to us constantly, we can't turn it off. The decision that we make is whether or not we choose to learn from said thing. So, for me, it's not just... As you mentioned, it's not just the conventional education, I remember that line, I believe it's Mark Twain, never to let your... Never to let schooling get in the way of your education. So not that conventional structure, but also the things that you do to educate yourself proactively outside of that, the books that you read, the podcasts you listen to, the Masterminds you go to, whatever, all those things, but more so for me, and I love this, I'm so grateful that, I'm so grateful to the past Shawn who decided to take on this belief that every single person I meet is my teacher. So, I'm constantly... And I think people pick that up from me too, I'm a fan of people, I'm learning and all these things.

A gentleman, I remember his name was Ron, he came up to Anne and I, we were sitting outside, we just worked out, we went and got some acai bowls in his place. And all of this stuff is super new to me, so we're just sitting outside and we're eating acai bowls, talking about stuff, and Ron walked by, and he had on his scrubs because he was working in healthcare, and he's like, "Excuse me, brother, I don't mean to interrupt. I follow you, I listen to the show," all these great things. And so, for somebody to do that, first of all, it's a grown man, it's grown man, grown man vibes. We might be like "Oh," but so I understand immediately like, man, this is a special moment, there's a connection here for him to take a stop, because people are worried of like how is this person going to be in real life, is he the truth? Does Shawn showing as a truth?

CYNTHIA GARCIA: What's he eating?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. For me, it's just like in that moment, he's my teacher, I get to learn and there's so much going through my heart while finding a way to still be present, and that's the thing that I had to work on and kind of re-acclimate myself. After I realized this internal world existed, and it was about integrating back into the life again, enjoying the magic that's happening, but also seeing like, oh, this thing, there's this thing, there's this message, and so... And even taking a moment for me to even remember his name, all of these things, and then I think about Jim Kwik, and you know what I'm saying? It's just like, it's such a beautiful thing, but I decided that everybody is my teacher.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yes, I love that. So Ramdas said, just assume or imagine that everyone you meet is your guru in drag. Isn't that great? 'Cause you never just blow off your guru, you'd never... Guru, teacher, whoever you respect or look up to, just insert what works for you there. But it's so true. And I think we've lost that. Ramdas also said, "You're in the earth school, you might as well try taking the courses, like you're here, you might as well learn from the experience." But I think we don't learn because so many of us are like, "I know already." Like, my daughter is so cute, she's, you know... Braden does this maybe, I don't know, I think I've heard him do this maybe one or two times, but she'll ask me something and I'll tell her, and she'll say, "I know," and I'm like, "'Cause I just told you."

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, Braden does that same thing.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Okay.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I knew that.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: "I know," like what? Okay, cool. But that's the mentality that a lot of people have adopted these days. And listen, I'm guilty of it too. I'm like, "I already... I know more than that person does," I fall into my traps too, but I think a lot of us are like, "Oh, I already know,"

and then we don't open our minds to any new possibility that might come in, a new way of understanding. And so, I think that's one of the things, not to turn this into a political conversation, we won't. But that, I think, one of the reasons we're so divided these days is because we echo chamber, we live in echo chamber, somebody says something, we get behind it, we don't have that free thought and we just latch on to it and we just know it, we just know it, and we're not open to listening to anyone else's... "I already know, I already know," to use the words of Rain "I already know."

So, I think that's an opportunity... Is the way I want to phrase that. I think it's an opportunity. I want to just rag on and talk about, "Oh, this is wrong," let's talk about what we can control here, let's take personal responsibility and let's just get to know each other again. Maybe you have different views on wearing a mask, maybe you have different views on anything, whatever, diet, sleep, political part, whatever that is. I think there's magic to be made in the middle of all of these conversations, so I think that's so important. I think you're right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Once we stretch things out too far, it's going to snap back like a mother and it might sting a bit, I don't know if you've seen any of those little clips or memes of people doing the resistance bands, the exercise bands, and accidentally snapping their nuts or something like that. You got to be careful about going out to these polar ends because really the magic is in the middle, for sure. Again this is a time more than ever that we need this, we need this education and these tools, and you have the ability; if you feel a calling in your spirit, that you're here to help others, to serve humanity, to empower people, then you are the person that I'm sitting here looking at right now that can help people to go from where they are to being in that position and having a life that again their childhood self is looking forward like "I cannot... You made it; I can't believe that that's your life." And also, for people that might not be your path where you were wanting to work with people as a life coach, or... Again, you're an IT and founder as well, as a life coach specifically, is what we're talking about now, just to pick up these tools, you're also just providing people for them to use it in their own life.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: That's right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, I want folks to go to themodernlifecoachschool.com/model, that's themodernlifecoachschool.com/model. And you've got a special three-day challenge available for people. Can you talk about it?

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, I'd love to. And thank you for your kind words. Yes, so this is a three-day challenge that will give you the three must-haves if you want to become a successful, confident life coach or just live your life as if you have those tools because you will... Of being a life coach. And so, once you go there, we teach you some really valuable things, it's just three

days, just maybe not even 30 minutes a day, and we'll teach you some really powerful tools. I have a really powerful tool that will help you rewrite your story in the moment, it works in under two minutes flat. So, any time you find yourself telling yourself that story "Oh gosh, I'm about to go into this party, I don't want to. I'm not good enough. Who do I think I am?"

You can rewrite those stories in two minutes, I'll teach you that. I'll also teach you what's been considered and called by many people, the most powerful question in coaching. And I use it all the time, it will allow you to go deeper into your relationships with your partners, your children, your employees or your co-workers, as well as with yourself, and if you decide to become a coach or you are already a coach, you can use this with your client to dive deeper into their wants, needs and desires. So, there's so much great information there that people will pick up, it's again, it's back to the tools, the only thing that makes you and I any different is we just have these tools and I want to give them to everybody who wants them.

SHAWN STEVENSON: [Themodernlifecoachschool.com/model](http://themodernlifecoachschool.com/model). Do people have to give a pint of blood? Or... What is the entry? Like, how do people get it?

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Yeah, no pint of blood necessary, you can send me some dark chocolate if you want. No, you just go, you tell us your name, you tell us what email you want us to send it over to, and we'll send you everything that you need just in your email, it's all free, there's no charge for it. As a matter of fact, there's bonus videos I created for it, so I went live on Instagram every day of the challenge, and we have those recordings up to go deeper into the material and answer questions, like I riff on how you can use these things, and yeah, no, it's all free. I just really want to build a community of people who are taking control of their lives and their mental health and rewriting their stories and seeing what is possible.

As a matter of fact, we have a rule at The Modern Life Coach School, and it's called modern, by the way, because I firmly believe that the world of life coaching was perfectly created for a world that no longer exist. We have very different challenges when we have 10–14-year-olds dealing with suicide as the leading cause of death. When we still have racial tensions, that's a mild way of putting it, we need a different curriculum for people, we are not talking about asking open-ended questions and setting goals for your clients, like... Sure, that's important, but we have to talk about and educate people on how to truly coach everyone, how to deal with the real issues that people are facing in the world that we live in today.

So that's why we call it The Modern Life Coach School. We take on these things, we bring in instructors who are trained in these things, and it's very powerful, we're having much bigger conversations than other schools across the board. So anyways, all of that to say the other rule that we have is, first you, then your client, so you go through your own transformation first, you look at what's possible for you. We have you write your eulogy, which I know sounds dark

and people are like "Whoa, whoa, whoa," but I once heard the definition of hell and it shook me and I made it a point when I created this new school, to build this in. And the definition of hell is on your last day on earth, the you that you became meets the you could have become.

I want those people to be twins, I want those two Cynthia's to be like, "I know you; I know you. We're the same. Look at us, we're the same. That's so cool." I don't want, one day, my last day to be like "Damn girl, you could have done so much more." No one wants that, right? So first you then your client. Anyways, head over to the challenge, there's a lot of great tools, information, it's all free, we're building a really strong community of people coming together to support each other during this interesting time.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's needed. Like you just said, a very interesting time. [Themodernlifecoachschool.com/model](http://themodernlifecoachschool.com/model). And I know this viscerally that all of the craziness that we're seeing right now, these are just symptoms of real issues that have to do with being human, and we have all these different expressions, and the antiquated ways that we're going about treating these things clearly is not working. And so part of this, again, being modern, is addressing the real circumstances that we're dealing with right now, and it's very different than 10 years ago, 20 years ago, 30 years ago, when the space was created of life coaching, we've got to get updated like yesterday, and that's the thing I really admire about you is like, you go to work keeping things consistent with the times. And you're a little bit obsessive with updating things and making things, it's just... But I love it, that's why you are who you are and what you've created is so remarkable. And so... Again, go to Themodernlifecoachschool.com/model. It's free, no pint of blood.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: No pint of blood needed. No bodily fluids.

SHAWN STEVENSON: No cashier's check required, just take advantage of the resource. And you're one of my favorite people. Clearly, this is the thing, when people see us, they would know that we are the same person, you know our stories are so crazy, crazy similar. And I just love you and I appreciate you.

CYNTHIA GARCIA: Thank you. Well, thanks for all you do too, seriously, I never... We're friends, we hang out that I have such respect for you and for your audience and for what you've built, talk about everything being possible, are you kidding me? Look at you, look at you. So, thank you for having me. It's always such a pleasure. And truly an honor. I don't say that lightly. So, thanks for being you, Shawn. Thanks for being my friend.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I appreciate you. Everybody, Cynthia Garcia. Thank you so much for tuning in to the show today, I hope you got a lot of value out of this. Please share this out with your friends and family on social media. You can tag me on @shawnmodel, and you can tag

Cynthia as well. She is @iamcynthiagarcia on Instagram. And listen, this is a time for us to really step up and to step into our power, take advantage of this amazing resource again, just go to themodernlifecoachschool.com/model and participate in the three-day challenge. I know that you're going to gain so much from it, and again, this is a time for us to really step up and to do something, but again, it starts with us acknowledging and accessing the power that's within us, and of course we don't have to wait to inspire that in other people. So, we've got so much in store for you coming up, and I'm telling you now, world class interviews, masterclasses that are going to blow your mind, so make sure to stay tuned, take care, have an amazing day, I'll talk to 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 could find transcriptions, videos for each episode, and if you got a comment, you can leave me a comment there as well, and please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave us a rating to let everybody know that the show is awesome, and I appreciate that so much, and take care, I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.