

# **THE MODEL HEALTH SHOW**

**EPISODE 610**

## **How Fear Can Control Your Mind, Body, & Behavior**

**With Guest Tony Blauer**

You are now listening to The Model Health Show with Shawn Stevenson. For more, visit [themodelhealthshow.com](http://themodelhealthshow.com).

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Welcome to The Model Health Show. This is fitness and nutrition expert Shawn Stevenson and I'm so grateful for you tuning in with me today. Every thought that we think releases correlating chemistry into our bodies. Every thought that we think releases chemistry into our bodies, whether it's a thought of love and joy, it's going to release chemicals associated with things like serotonin and dopamine and oxytocin, right? These kind of feel good-related neurotransmitters, dual hormones like serotonin, dual hormone, dual neurotransmitter. And what we're talking about here with the hormone, we're talking about cellular communication, sending data from cell to cell. These little chemical messengers, right? Neurotransmitter is doing something very similar with our nervous system.

These are all creating the feelings that we experience, that's what life is really about. It's about the feelings, because this isn't really a thinking universe, it's a feeling universe, and being able to tune in and understand what these feelings, these emotions are giving us is valuable feedback in being able to understand that feedback. That's a huge component of today's topic, because one of the most pervasive emotions that people are experiencing today is fear. And fear, as we just mentioned, it's going to release correlating chemistry in our bodies.

And fear, let's just put this caveat here, first and foremost, it is a critical, important, valuable aspect of our lives. Fear is not a bad thing, it's important biochemical and psychological data. It's not that fear is the problem, it's how fear is being propagated in our world, in our lives, and how we are managing said fear. Because fear running wild can literally create a spiral of events that can lead to heightened risk of all manner of chronic and infectious diseases, and this can show up in our lives in other ways, like damaging relationships, financial mistakes, the list goes on and on when we allow fear to control us. Again, not that fear is bad and not that fear isn't valuable, it's how we're managing that fear.

Now, obviously, over the last couple of years, fear has run rampant at levels that we haven't seen in recent human history, and what are some of the ramifications of this seen in peer review data? Well, the study that was conducted by the CDC that was looking at over 800 US hospitals and over 540,000 COVID-19 patients found that the number one risk factor for death from COVID-19 was obesity. This is something that we already knew. We knew very early on that this was going to be a huge risk factor, turned out to be the number one risk factor for death. But the number two risk factor for death from COVID-19, the number two risk factor is far less known and far less talked about, the number two risk factor in the CDC's own report for death from this infectious disease, the number two risk factor was anxiety and fear-related disorders.

Anxiety and fear being the second biggest comorbidity, the second biggest risk factor in death from this infectious disease that's really, again, taken over our lives, taken over headlines, changed the way that we associate with each other and ourselves. Our association with our own bodies and our own feeling of certainty within our own bodies, certainty of our body's ability to manage itself in the world. Right, all of these things have come up as questions and issues that we're all trying to manage today, and this is why this episode is so important because now we're really looking at what is going on in our inner worlds in relationship to fear, and how can we better associate with fear? How can we allow fear to be a vital helpful aspect of our lives and not debilitate us?

So again, really, really excited about this. And to address this, I have the person who's brought into the big organizations, who's brought in for military training, who's brought in for major sports teams and MMA and all these different organizations to keynote on understanding fear and being able to utilize and properly manage fear so that it's not controlling us. And he has a wealth of knowledge, and when you hear his voice and understand that this man is approaching his mid-60s and he's still out here getting it done, teaching. Even today, he drove in to see me, two hours, after teaching a class, training in martial arts and being able to manage one's mindset and mental construct in association with confrontational issues, right? Because you're going to be pretty surprised at his approach to this because we're not talking about... Even today, again, there's also another energy and propagation of this looming feeling of danger and violence, not just from things that we can't see, the invisible realm of viruses and bacteria and the like, but also in relationship to human contacts, right? There's a lot of tension that's been in the air.

And I believe that it's giving us an opportunity to grow, to connect to better associate with each other, to love each other more, to find ways to be able to heal, but also, of course, we need to be able to manage ourselves in the world, we need to be able to protect ourselves, yes, absolutely. But what you're going to learn today is that oftentimes, those situations are not even necessary. We don't need to get to a place where those tools are going to be necessary. And so, what is the mindset coming into it, how do we better manage fear, how do we feel more empowered in a world that at times can seem like it's trying to dis-empower us as citizens, as family members and as sovereign individuals? So again, really, really excited about this episode. Now understanding that our thoughts are creating chemistry in our bodies, also, we put things into our bodies that create chemistry, or that brain chemistry into our bodies and create correlating chemistry that our body is trying to match up with.

This is why certain foods; certain nutritional sources for thousands of years have had a great resonance with the human body. And our ancestors figured out a lot of this stuff for us, and then today we're just like, ah, forget all that. Forget all of this hunting and foraging. Give me the Twinkie. Alright? Give me the chocolate. Let me get that two for 99 cents Apple Pie, alright?

We've kind of de-evolved in the sense of our nutritional inputs and understanding that this is creating chemistry in our body and there's a correlation, there is an interaction with our human chemistry and these food substrates. But we also know we still have access to the very best of the time-honored things, and one of the things, specifically in addressing stress and our nervous system and helping to modulate anxiety, one of the most remarkable things found in the Peer-Reviewed data is a medicinal mushroom called Lion's Mane.

A study published in biomedical research had test subjects with a variety of health complaints, including anxiety and poor sleep quality, they were given Lion's Mane or a placebo for four weeks. At the end of the study, the participants who utilized the Lion's Mane significantly reduced their levels of irritation and anxiety versus those in the placebo group. And also, researchers at the University of Malaya have found that Lion's Mane has the capacity to help to regenerate the nervous system, specifically even after traumatic brain injuries is what they're working on right now, and it's pretty fascinating stuff. So, take that, combine that with something that people are already doing. People are out here dabbling in their cup of Joe every day. What if we can upgrade that, get coffee that isn't littered with pesticides and rodenticides, number one. And coffee that's organic and infused with Lion's Mane medicinal mushroom, something really special is going to come of it. By the way, researchers at Stanford University recently deduced that coffee, caffeine and coffee has the ability to defend our bodies against age-related inflammation. The research revealed that light to moderate coffee drinkers live longer and more healthily, thanks in part to the protection that caffeine provides by suppressing genes related to inflammation.

So again, marrying these two together, Lion's Mane, organic coffee, Chaga medicinal mushroom, one of the most dense sources of antioxidants ever discovered. That's what I have every day. I'm starting my day with the Lion's Mane Chaga infused coffee from Four Sigmatic. Go to [foursigmatic.com/model](https://foursigmatic.com/model), you get 10% off all their incredible coffee blends, their organic hot cacao, which is infused with Rishi, medicinal mushroom and also their mushroom elixirs. That's [F-O-U-R-S-I-G M-A-T-I-C.com/model](https://foursigmatic.com/model), 10% off everything they carry. Take advantage. This is beyond the good stuff, this is the very, very best. Go to [foursigmatic.com/model](https://foursigmatic.com/model) for 10% off, now let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

**ITUNES REVIEW:** Another five-star review titled of “Mr. Shawn Stevenson speaks it” by So Charming. “Shawn is easy to follow and understand, as he educates and shares from a genuine space of concern for humanity. Listen to this podcast if you want good knowledge and a refreshing perspective. Keep it coming, Shawn.”

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Thank you so much for leaving that review over on Apple Podcast. I appreciate it so much. Keep it coming. Head over to Apple Podcasts and leave a review for The Model Health Show if you get to do so. And on that note, let's get to our special guest and topic

of the day. Our guest today is Coach Tony Blauer, and he has over four decades of experience in martial arts, self-defense, and human psychology training. His research on physiology and mindset as it relates to confrontation management and fear has influenced over three decades of reality-based martial arts and enhanced the survivability of several sectors of military, emergency services, the list goes on and on. And most importantly, everyday folks like you and me. Again, we're diving in and being able to dissect the anatomy of fear and being able to manage fear in a healthful way with these incredible insights from Coach Tony Blauer.

You're one of those guys where you've touched the lives of so many people, and it is spread... It's so far spread; you have no idea. And especially today, you really don't know who's listening or who's watching, but man, I'm sure that's happened a lot of times, but also you don't seem like you get jaded by it.

**TONY BLAUER:** I've had a crazy, crazy roller coaster ride with the Internet, with trolls, with lovers and haters, and I just do what I do. I still... I was thinking about... I was coming over the hill from Ventura, and I had a flashback, man, of 1980 when I flew in to do my first article with Black Belt Magazine. And I'm coming over the hill, I'm 20 years old, and I realized I'm driving to...

I think they were in Burbank or Valencia at the time. I can't remember. But it's this, this, I think it was Burbank and I was so nauseous and nervous, I had to pull over and dry heave on the side of the road. Oh my god. I'm going to be in Black Belt Magazine. This is where Bruce Lee started. And this is like my whole just dream as a kid. Right? And I had those, again, goosebumps that flashback driving over the hill and coming down there and it's been crazy, but the mission hasn't changed. It's what I do every day I get up and I just, I try to make people safer.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. I mean, obviously this is the thing that I don't think people realize is that so much of this really starts in our minds. We're oftentimes trying to micromanage these things, in the moment, these kind of surface things, but it's our psychology coming into it, and also our psychology that we've created through practice. And that's why I'm so grateful to have you here because we get to really analyze and deconstruct and put together a resilience in the face of fear, because we're, as you know this, we're just inundated with fear. It's like a big lever that is getting pulled constantly to control people's thoughts, their activities and the like. But once we can, is one of your terms, to make friends with fear and to really be able to understand and know fear then it's kind of opening up a new world to us. So, I want to ask you about this, like, go back in your story, which you were an athlete, you were a high-level skier. I had no idea, first of all, about that, but in, of course people are acknowledging you for this talent, but when it came to competition, fear would overtake you, talk about that.

**TONY BLAUER:** Yeah. So, I grew up on skis, you know, I make this joke 'cause originally, I'm from Canada and you're either a ski or a skater. I grew up on skis. My family was in the Ski Patrol. I

think my mother and father, they were like president and vice president at some point of the National Ski Patrol. And so, we're a ski family. I started skiing when I was three years old, and I got really good. Competed in downhill, freestyle, all, all the stuff. But I noticed, I was very introspective, and I noticed that I had a lot of fear, which I now recognize as anticipation of this challenge, this excitement. But as a kid, I was like, "Why do I have butterflies in my stomach? Why do I, why am I breathing shallowly? What's going on?" And no one ever talked about that, and they still don't talk about it properly, to my liking. I think we could do; we could all do a better job of communicating the connection between physiology and psychology.

But anytime I competed, I was always like top of my class, but I'd always catch a tip or wipe out I was going, always going too fast. And if you follow any of Kotler's research or any of the research on flow state and the neuroscience of flow and all that, I never hit that because I was overthinking the negative and that was just it. I was worried, "Am I this good? I don't want to let down my team. Am I good enough for this course? Do I deserve to be..." It wasn't imposter syndrome. It was just all this chatter, and you can't hit flow state with chatter. But in one of the lines, I always tell people is it occurred to me, I was thinking, and I didn't articulate this as a 12-year-old or as a 15-year-old, but "If I'm so good, why am I so scared?"

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right.

**TONY BLAUER:** And it's a heavy line. I've said that line to people in our workshops. And I mean, I've had people start to tear up where they realize that was them. That if I'm so good, why am I so scared? And it's interesting, and I love the word that you used, deconstruct that psychology. And this is, not to be nerdy and pedantic, meaning use big words. And I did that on purpose.

But we do that. We overthink stuff, and a lot of times when you talk to an expert, they complicate things by saying, "Well, you know, your amygdala is overreactive." So, you're like, "Okay, doctor, do I need medicine?" As opposed to like, just simplify this. And no one did that for me. I realized that my ski coach was a ski trainer, and I make that distinction 'cause I work with a lot of high-level coaches, whether it's in professional fighting, MMA boxing or fitness or anything is just, you've got to make it so that people understand. And I'm, I screw that up a lot where, because I'm so nerdy and I'm the guy doing the research, I'm like, "Oh my god, check this out. This modernization of the neuron that improves the signal speed here, it's brain bases is interleaving." This is what we do, and the students are going, "What did you just say?" So, you know, but anyways, all that to say is I failed as a competitive skier, but it produced all this. You know, so I was very, very introspective about it. And, but I was afraid of everything. I was a good wrestler, but never got on the podium. I was good at gymnastics, but never got on the podium. I was really good at tennis, never, you know. Like really good at this stuff. But there was always something that tripped me up. I realize now it was how I was talking to myself.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. You already just touched base on which these, all these things that you just mentioned were outside of the paradigm of what I know you for and having all these skills and all these different types of martial arts, for example. But you have this, you're like a patchwork quilt of amazing study skill application but being able to package it up in things that are actually effective in the real world. And there's this quote that you have you share that, "Fear is natural. Fear is normal. Fear is part of our psychological and physiological systems. But the issue is that when this fear overrides our lives, that's when things tend to break down."

So, I wanted to really have you here to have this discussion because there's a fear that's just looming over our lives yet in the lives that we live today, ironically, we're safer than we've ever been. You know, there was a time throughout human evolution where everything was incredibly volatile, right? So, whether it's, are you being hunted, are you the hunter? You know, and then just even that piece of like, am I going to be able to procure family for my family, for my tribe. We don't really have that as a concern today. Safety, rival tribes invading, pillaging, all the whole things. Like we have a lot more comfort and safety and security, and yet fear is at epidemic levels. So, for you, how do we actually navigate fear? How do we start to approach this so that we can take back control of our minds?

**TONY BLAUER:** I think what's important is... What you described was the threats and its impact on our physiology, where... So, if we could go back in time, and if cavemen didn't speak in caveman speak, and they could just speak perfect English. They go, "Yeah, I didn't catch anything today. No fish, no squirrel, no bison, no whatever. My family's starving, I'm really worried and I'm only going to live to 30, right. 'Cause there's no doctors yet, and we're rubbing aloe on our sun burn, but we don't know what..." I'm making fun here. But the psychology... I think there was probably so many threats and life was so short back then that you didn't have time to have this psychological fear of worry. And a lot of that, because we've eliminated a lot of like nobody's hunting us, and there's no Saber-tooth tiger... I'm on my way to school and I've got to watch out for sab... Right? I think now the psychological fear is filling that void 10x. But fear has also been weaponized, particularly in the last couple of years, but it always has been, the news is always bad. There's no popular station with good news, there should be, of people just doing good sh\*t all the time. We don't get that, 'cause that would inspire us.

And the people who figured out how to hack humans, Silicon Valley, mainstream media, they know that we react... And all of us do, including myself. And I'm... In many ways, you, and I, not to put us on a pedestal, we're so introspective, and we think about this stuff that you would think we are above that. But you could read a headline and you would immediately turn to your wife or call up a friend and go, "Holy sh\*t, did you see this? And you would have an emotional fear-based response, but it's differentiating between the physiology and psychological fears that is critical.

Listen, I don't have a magic wand for you, but I will tell you this, that the superpower for all of us is to improve our self-awareness. When you improve your self-awareness, you improve your critical thinking skills, something sorely lacking, right? Today especially. If we improve self-awareness and critical thinking skills, we also improve our situational awareness, our ability to see stuff coming from a distance. Oh, I see what they're doing here, they've started this, and this is the propaganda, and this is that. Or maybe you see it, and it's the way I teach... You, not a joke, but you said, "Hey, I knew you for other things, I didn't realize you were into this whole side of it." This is the foundation, if you think back to Maslow's and the Hierarchy of needs, survival was the bottom tier. And if we can't survive the top tier self-actualization...

When I'm teaching somebody self-defense, what I realized in the 80s, which were my incubator period. What I realized in the 80s was this, that only the people who manage their fear managed to fight. It didn't guarantee that they won, but it guaranteed they were in the fight, which is the only way you could have a chance to win. And then there was an interesting statistic that all victims of violence, if they fought back, even if they lost, the people that were in the fight experienced the least amount of PTSD or trauma from it, because their dignity and their self-worth is like, at least I was fighting. And so, there was something to be said about that. But I discovered that organically and naturally, and that evolved into the whole Know Fear Program over several decades. In the 80s, we called it cerebral self-defense, the mental edge. This whole idea that the mind navigates the body, and if I couldn't make that adjustment here, it really didn't matter how good I could throw a kick, or block, or punch, or wrestle or what have you.

So, it became this whole thing that the first and most dangerous attack was our judgment of ourselves, that was the mistake I made as a skier. I'm nervous, I must suck. Now, imagine if my ski coach or my parents had said to me, 'cause I competed for years, if... And I make this joke when I do the full story. I go, imagine if my coach had come to me 15 minutes before this last big race and said, "How do you feel kid?" And I remember this true story, 15 years old, standing at the top of Mont Tremblant, above the tree line, freezing, but I'm soaking wet inside 'cause I'm sweating, but it's freezing. There's no trees, it's above the tree line. And I've already gone to the bathroom five times, so I feel like projectile vomiting. I'm so scared. And he goes, "How do You Feel kid?" And I just turned him and lied, "Great, Coach." And he goes, "Okay, man. Remember, course is getting icy, watch out for this gate here, then na na na na. Got it?" And I took off, and I wiped out three gates from the bottom. And just to give you some perspective on that particular race, they had different timers, 'cause it was a big, big giant slalom race.

One of the guys comes up to me after one of the timers, he said, "Man, it's too bad you're wiped out 'cause your run was faster than the guy that won. When you passed me, you were almost a second ahead of the guy that won the race." So, a second in a giant slalom race is like... I don't



know, a mile in a car race. I was that good, but I wasn't that good, right? There was something missing, and... But imagine if my coach had put his arm around me 15 minutes early, when I lied to him and said, "Hey, what's going on, man? You always wipe out; you always ski off the course. I'd have said, "Nothing's going on, coach." And he'd say, "Come on." And I go, "I'm scared, man." If I had just had the vulnerability to say that I don't know... Obviously, this is a made-up story in terms of my relationship there, I don't know that he would have known what to say. I've had people in the professional education tactical training community call me and go, "Hey, I had a student start to cry in class today, I didn't know what to do." And I'm like, "Wow, we..." And I think this is, if I come full circle to what I think you're maybe asking...

We're not teaching people how to think about their thoughts. We're teaching them how to conform in society and do this move, get this grade, do these defensive tactics move, do this self-defense move, do this math equation, do this... Memorize this English statement. And you can have writers block or mentally, you should know that more than anybody, right? Since you write so much. Where when you've got procrastination and you're fixating on something, it's very, very quickly, it becomes a fear movie in your mind. "Oh my god, I got this deadline, I'm not going to return... Like, why can't I write? Why can't I come up..." And now it's really about the void and the fear and not about the skill or the talent or the message. And if you can't... That's where I say self-awareness improves critical thinking, critical thinking improves situational awareness. And suddenly I've got a greater grasp on what's going on in my universe and my world. I have no idea what I just said there. So, you're just like, you're just...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** He's tapped in.

**TONY BLAUER:** What was the question?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But, by the way, even when we say know fear, you're talking about K-N-O-W fear.

**TONY BLAUER:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Know fear.

**TONY BLAUER:** Yeah. People who can't see this. And that's a funny, you remember the No Fear company, the adrenaline company back from the 80s and 90s. So, I had so much fear with all the sports. I bought all their shirts and I used to make this joke. I'd go, "These shirts are defective, guys, 'cause I bought the shirt and I still have fear."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Didn't work.

**TONY BLAUER:** Yeah. And one day in a seminar, we were just talking about this idea that if you actually believe there's a state of no fear and a place of no fear, what happens when you step outside that metaphor, comfort zone, and you're about to do something different? And now you suddenly have a moment of self-doubt. If you really believe that you would evolve to the point where you were beyond fear, how hard does that crash when you realize, "Oh my god, I am afraid." And that's where stage fright, performance anxiety, I drew a blank. You know, you go to school, teachers set a surprise test, you draw... Like, you know the information. I always make this joke with people who hire me to help over, let's say overcome a fear of public speaking and they'll go, they'll go, "Hey, I'm afraid of public speaking." And I look at them and they go, "Can you help me?" I go, "Yes, I can." And they go, "Okay, what do we do?" I said, "Well, tell me a little bit about it." They go, "Well, I'm just afraid of public speaking. I can't..." I go, "Stop. You're doing fine. What do you mean you're afraid of public speaking? You're speaking in public now to me."

And they go, "Ha ha. I don't mean with you." I go, "Well, it's public and it's speaking. Do you understand words and language and sentences and thoughts?" They go, "Yeah." I said, "Then what's the problem?" And I'm making fun to show them how they've created an obstacle in their mind by just associating me as a skier, you're getting ready for a race. Like when I'm training fighters, "I'm a little bit nervous here." "You're supposed to be nervous. Someone's going to try and knock you out." Right? Like, I'd be nervous too. If you'd, something wrong with you, if you're not nervous. But I'm joking. I go, "Do you have a family?" They go, "Yeah." "Like how do you communicate at dinner? You're texting? Are you writing notes, pass the salt? Or do you say, hey, are there seconds..." "You're communicating in your family, that's public speaking. And they go, "Ha ha ha. Mr. Blauer, I'm talking about in front of an audience."

I go, "Well, at work, do you talk at a meeting at work?" They go, "Yeah. I'm not talking about that." What I'm showing them is this competency they've created, but in their mind, now that they're on stage, and when you peel the onion, you find out you're not afraid of public speaking. What you're afraid of is one person in the audience that can make or break your career, and you've assigned some sort of like intimidation button to them. And I always ask this question, or, of course, Shawn, I go, "How many of you been intimidated in your life?" And everyone puts their hand up. I go, "Consider this; only you can intimidate yourself. When you are intimidated it's because you're visualizing what a person, or a situation can do to you and your life instead of what you must do in this situation or to that person." It originated out of my self-defense program, which is, I'd like to brag a little bit and say my team and I, we teach the most morally, ethically, legally reasonable system because it's all based on physiology, kinesiology, psychology. So, it doesn't matter gender occupation or experience.

But out of that, people were scared to do scenarios and do stuff, and I go, "When are you scared of a scenario? And it could be your book launch. It could be you got to get up on stage and they

told you there was 50 people and you were cool with that, but it was 500 people and you went, holy sh\*t." We're scared before the event, not after the event. And if you hit a bit of rhythm and flow, you're not ever afraid during the event. It's always before. So, we're intimidating ourself. And if you can, when you lean into that and if you understand the whole Know Fear Program, it's about as soon as you get the fear spike, to try to figure out what exactly it is. When you figure out what it is, it doesn't mean that the fear goes away. But fear of the known is manageable, fear of the unknown is pretty tricky. Because you just got like nothing to hold onto.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**TONY BLAUER:** There's no life preserver.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. It's very logical. Very logical. That's again, what I love about what you do, you said that critical thinking improves situational awareness?

**TONY BLAUER:** Mm-hmm.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, even when you said that it was, it just kind of opened up a new door in my mind because being able to assess whether or not you should even invest that fear into that moment, because of critical thinking being able to really identify, is this situation worth this emotional input? Right? Versus again, we're being we're in a situation today we're often like put... We are put... We have things put in front of us that we're conditioned to be afraid of instantly and not critical think about those situations, so we have that aspect, but then we have real situations where fear is appropriate.

**TONY BLAUER:** Yes.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And this is where your work really comes in at. And I want to actually dig in here and talk about this a bit more, because you've, of course, trained and taught in so many different types of martial arts, self-defense, but your strategy is different because it's based on... And every time when I'm watching one of your videos or hearing you talk about it, I'm just amazed at the fact that you have this pillar in it of de-escalation versus all of these trainings, again, people are getting taught these different things, which are wonderful, everything has its place. But how about we just avoid the unnecessary.

**TONY BLAUER:** Yeah, so it's an interesting observation. If you Google a definition, like Miriam Webster, the generic definition for self-defense, you'll get variations of the physical act of protecting your property or your life, so even a universal definition that inspires and influences all practice doesn't include de-escalation. It doesn't include avoidance. So many, many years

ago, many years ago, literally in the 80s, like decades ago, we created the 3Ds detect, defuse, defend, detect, and avoid, defuse D-E-F-U-S-E, to take the fuse out, that means to disempower and then defend as a last resort, moral ethical legal sound force to always parallels danger what's your scenario? And we would teach people almost to look at violence like an architect, and this is the blueprint, and we'd say, "This is the blueprint of violence, this isn't Star Trek where the bad guy beams down." And if you think about this, have you ever done any self-defense training in high school? A little bit.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Yeah.

**TONY BLAUER:** How do you get... So, you were taught how to get out of a head lock... That's a classic. Where did that drill start? With you in a headlock.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yes.

**TONY BLAUER:** Think about about that. If you're taught about... But think about that just...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**TONY BLAUER:** You got that. It's like you would someone go, hey, give me your head and you'd bend over, put your ear against their stomach, they'd put their arm around you, "Oh, hey, let me show you how to get to a strangle." You'd turn around, give them your neck, oh stick a gun in my face, let me just practice a gun disarm. I'm not saying that we shouldn't include those phases, but the more important phases of... There's something wrong here. Listen, I'm going to blend a whole bunch of streams of consciousness here for you and your audience. Every victim of violence, I've been studying violence, fear, and aggression for decades, 43 years, and I've interviewed people who've been in gunfights, people who've been raped, people who've been survivors, tier one military all the way down to the teenager that got attacked.

Any time I met somebody and found out, Oh, I'm a pro-fighter, I'm this... I'm a sexual assault survivor would... If I could create the trust, I would have the conversation. And my intuition was looking for threads that connect them all, and this is the most powerful thing I could tell everybody. Every single victim of violence who lived to tell the tale, said they had a bad feeling before the attack. Not 50%, which would get you MVP in professional sports, if you are successful, 50% of the time you run play to thread the free throw line or whatever, you'd be an All Star on Wall Street at 50%. Not 50, 60, 70, 80, 100% of the people I talked to said they had a bad feeling.

Nobody had ever told them, or us, or you and me, when you get a bad feeling, act on that. We call this the choose safety model, what is the safest thing you could do? And this applies

actually to relationships, health, finances, but most importantly, to self-defense. Why self-defense? In a violent encounter, you don't have time to dial 911. What we identify as first responders, law enforcement are actually second responders. The first responder in your violent encounter is yourself. And if you don't have the skill, the wherewithal, and the most important thing is self-awareness and situational awareness. 'Cause that... If you think back to what I just said, which is so potent, every single one of them said I had a bad feeling. The bad feeling is an energetic pulse, your gut saying man there's, and I... And it's funny, I make this joke about intuition, 'cause intuition whispers in our ear, and then our arrogance or our fear or our cognitive dissonance, our cognitive bias shuts it down. Have you ever been screwed over in a business deal? You personally?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oh sure.

**TONY BLAUER:** Right after it was done, have you ever been screwed over in a relationship like friendship... Everyone has, right?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Absolutely.

**TONY BLAUER:** And after that dust settled, didn't you say to somebody close to you... You know what, can I swear on this show?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You already have. Keep it going.

**TONY BLAUER:** Okay, after it's done and you just... This deal was blown. You lost this money. This person betrayed you. Didn't you... When your embarrassment and anger and frustration dissipated, didn't you turn to somebody and went, "I knew that was going to screw us or do this." Yes, no, agree.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Wow.

**TONY BLAUER:** Think about that. So, your intuition knew, but our ego or arrogance our... Let's go fast. That's why the Choose Safety Model is so potent because it says, it teaches us, "I just got a bad feeling about this, what is the safest thing I do?" The safest thing I do is a little research right now, and that could be on my toothache, it could be on a bad feeling walking in an underground parking lot, it could be on that something's bothering my knee, but I don't take it... I don't take care of it, and then I blow my knee out or something. There's always a pre-contact cue, just like in violence. The problem is, if we go back to the definition where we practice how to get out of a headlock, we don't practice identifying how someone puts a head lock on us, that's the interception point. We don't practice the courage, practice courage to avoid and leave a situation.

And it's amazing., so we created a whole thing called the timeline of violence, where we break down all of the skills and drills you could do for improving situational awareness, then the skills and drills for improving de-escalation and then the skills and drills for, learning how to protect ourselves if it's a situation we can't avoid. But it's almost like we look at confrontation management, like an architect looks at a problem where when you only know how to get out of a head lock as an example, you're really just a handy man, and maybe if you get really good, you're a carpenter but you're not an architect. You don't understand how to read a blueprint.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. This makes so much sense. When you said, "Starting from headlock," this is negating... The most intelligent aspect is not finding yourself in that headlock to begin with.

**TONY BLAUER:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But the question is, again, this is getting back to awareness. So, you've said this word, and it's something so important. We're very... This is the thing about you as well, critical thinker, and still honoring the things that we can't exactly explain, like intuition. So, for me, this is kind of that blend of where I live as well. There's so much that we don't know. And so, I can even use my critical thinking to try to break down and understand it better. So, if I think about intuition and maybe a technical term, which is... We still can't put it in this box, I would think it's advanced pattern recognition, being able to recognize scenario situations. We've got this mental rolodex of things we've seen, been through, where we can recognize some things. But intuition, we can't put that in that box, because it's so much bigger than that.

**TONY BLAUER:** I've tried to come up with a good definition or find one. I stumbled on something that I'm happy with that I've been using the last year or so, and it's, "I know something to be true, but I don't have the evidence to prove it first." It's like, that's true, that really resonates, that's uncommon sense, but I don't have any facts yet, I don't...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We have this term in our culture. We say animal instincts. And we see this also... We acknowledge it more in other species. And we suppress it or push it to the side in our culture. And we're even, again, I think part of it is that we're kind of indoctrinated to do that. Our intuition will tell us a thing, but then our logical mind will start to use our higher order intelligence to rationalize why our intuition is wrong.

**TONY BLAUER:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right? So...

**TONY BLAUER:** And that's what gets us in trouble in self-defense, is we don't want to accept the danger or to believe... Most violence isn't committed by some random stranger. Statistically, it's somebody you know, somebody who understands your routine. So, they're in that circle of trust. So, you don't want to believe it's the postman or the gardener or your uncle or a spouse or a friend or what have you. And it's interesting, in the system, and obviously, the critical thinking has produced this very elaborate but simple and functional formula, we talk about the three Is, instincts, intuition, intelligence, that if you listen to your instincts and you listen to your intuition, your intelligence should help you. Again, I think you alluded to it earlier, it's like that's that critical thinking piece, you can now explore and dive into that. And I think that's what's missing. But the magic, the black box element is the connection to fear management and being able to differentiate between the physiology of fear and the psychology of fear. The physiology of fear is, "I'm nervous for Shawn's podcast. It's like it's a big show. I hope I don't screw this up." And that's the physiology. The self... The critical thinking and situational awareness piece is, "Dude, you're a subject matter expert. You love this stuff. Get out of your head. Just have a conversation. Listen and share."

So, it's a neat thing. When the... I started telling this story recently, and it's very powerful, so I'm going to just insert it here, and you have no choice 'cause you can't stop me. But the... And not because of violence, just because I'm talking. And here we go. We could edit out...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's looming.

**TONY BLAUER:** Jump me, jump me. The two weeks to flatten the curve. All of my business, we've got all of my business, law enforcement, military training, martial arts and self-defense instructors, all of it is live, in-person, every single course and every contract. We have another vertical in my company where we design scenario training gear. All live training has stopped; therefore, all high gear orders have stopped. All live training has stopped; therefore, all training contracts have stopped. We're a boutique company, we've got a dozen on my cadre, but they're adjunct trainers, and there's four people at HQ. So, two weeks to flatten the curve. Okay, cool. This is cool. Get to see my family, not travel so much. Two weeks becomes three weeks, becomes three months. And we've got 35 courses get cancelled. I'm suddenly... I do the math one day, and I go, "Okay, I'm going to lose everything I've ever built in 40 years. I'm going to lose my home; I won't be able to feed my family." And all of a sudden it was like someone stuck a vacuum up my ass and started sucking out my insides. I'm leaning over in my chair and freaking out, thinking, "Man, I wish I knew a fear management expert right now."

But I gave myself 24 hours to wallow, to consider that I wish I had prepared for a pandemic before the pandemic. And I called my team and I said, "Guys, I'm not going to sugar coat this, but here's the scenario. We got to come up with something." Fortunately, our system is very cerebral. There's a lot of neurosciences. It's really about... If I was going to be nerdy, it's

understanding how to make biology work for us by studying the neurobiology of survival, and then reverse engineering that into, how do we weaponize the Startle Flinch, and then how do we train our psychological system. So, stimulus gets introduced too quickly. It could then... And that stimulus doesn't have to be physical. It could be a bad feeling. The stimulus gets introduced too quickly. Your executive function is hijacked. Therefore, you can't access the cognitive brain, and now your emotional, psychological, reactive brain kicks in.

And that's just the logical flow of, why did I panic? Why couldn't I draw my weapon? Why didn't I, why couldn't I step on the gas? Why couldn't I, you know, put that tourniquet on the person. I was like, ah, like executive function gets hijacked, 'cause the stimulus gets introduced too quickly. If I said to you, "Hey, in five minutes from now, the person over at that table is going to choke on some food, get ready to do the Heimlich." You go, "Really? Oh, sh\*t!" You might get an adrenaline dump, but you start like gaming it in your mind what you're going to do. So, we've identified all that stuff. And for that reason, I've got relationships around the world. We had within three months, three new websites, and I've already started calling. We had an online course, which is crazy. And you learn self-defense online.

People didn't understand that, but because we said, we're going to teach you how to avoid it. We're going to teach you to improve your situational awareness. We're going to teach you how to de-escalate. You don't need to be in person. Yep. In person is more chemistry. We could have done this on Zoom, but it's way cooler and more energetic, more chemistry in person. And so, I'm starting to get nibbles, but it's really early, like in the pandemic, and then I'm talking to a buddy of mine. Do you know Steve Weatherford?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, I know Steve he's been on.

**TONY BLAUER:** Okay, cool.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**TONY BLAUER:** So, I'm talking to Steve...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Super Bowl champion. Shout out to Steve.

**TONY BLAUER:** Yeah. I go... Shout out Steve. And I go, I go, "Dude. Hey." And there's like, right. I go, "Do you have any ideas like..." I'm like, "This has just happened. I realize I got nothing." And he goes, "Like, aren't you a famous self-defense guy?" And I went, "Well, that's the rumor." He goes, "I got 150 people who watch me workout on Zoom and do workouts with me." He says, "I don't charge them because they're part of our community. They're already into what we do. But why don't you think about something like that." And I was like, "Oh my God, Eureka!" I





they talk to me, or they try to understand it, that it goes away. My nervousness didn't go away that day. I knew what I was nervous with, so I could lean into what my message was and how I had to perform. And that's the big thing is that there are lots of things in life that we still need to do scared, but we will avoid them if we don't come to that realization.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Man, this is amazing. And I remember Mike Tyson of all people, the scariest man on the planet sharing a couple years ago that he was terrified before every fight.

**TONY BLAUER:** Crying, throwing up sometimes.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And again, people would have no idea. They just see this guy, baddest man on the planet, all the things, not understanding what's going on in the inner world. It's not that we don't have fear. Fear is intelligent. You said, you said it earlier and it just changed my life. If you're not afraid in that situation, when some... You have imminent danger in front of you, that somebody else is trying to knock your head off. You would be crazy to not have fear. And plus, this is how we're wired up as a species, but being able to better relate with that fear. And also, again, that situational awareness. And I want to ask you about this too, because you've mentioned being able to improve our situational awareness. I know this is a complex topic, obviously, but are there a couple of things that we could look to for ourselves to help to kind of improve that for ourselves?

**TONY BLAUER:** Yeah. So, it really depends on what situation that we're talking about. So, if in terms of personal safety, there's a couple of simple things. One is, recognizing that, these are little extras that I tell people it's a little weird. The question is how would you attack you?

'Cause you know your routine best, right? And it's when you're not situationally aware that of course, you're most vulnerable. So is it a long day here and you're tired and you're catching up on text and oh, sh\*t! And you're on your phone, but you're parked in an underground parking lot, and you don't realize there's somebody in the shadows because you haven't... It's almost like you've decided to drive home without your head lamps on the car and you went, "Why would you do that?" So situational awareness is like that. You're shining a light on things that you need to look at.

But you go, "What should I look for?" Well, one is, like if we're literally talking about physical self-defense, it's follow yourself home. As weird as that sounds. Watch your routine and go, "When would I jump Shawn? When and where would I jump Tony?" And then identify those moments of vulnerability and then be more alert there. Remembering, the coolest thing is, if I was a conventional self-defense instructor, I'd say, "Shawn, let me... Let me teach you how to protect yourself at an ATM." So, a guy comes up to you and he's got a knife or a gun, as opposed to like if you watch... I've got, I recorded a couple of ATM videos. They're online. And so, I make

this joke. I go, "There are ATMS that are located in places that clearly the people that designated this spot for an ATM was a robber." Someone said, "Hey, stick one on the side of this building where there's no lighting over here." I make this joke. Some of them are in the most dangerous areas. And so, on this one particular ATM video, I said... I started to go, "See this ATM, do you really need to go here? Did you really need to stop here?" That's where it starts.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Go to another one.

**TONY BLAUER:** Go to another one, or why do you need money right now. Are you meeting a friend for a movie, and you go... Call your friend and say, "Hey, man, you're going to have to cover it tonight. I couldn't stop to get any money. The two places I looked at looked like they were serial killer traps." Like whatever. It's just like, that silly. And that's our true safety model. What is the safest thing I could do right now? Is it to get out of the car, park here? I was doing a gig in Dallas somewhere, and I was trying to find this restaurant. So, I left the hotel and I've got my phone on Apple Maps and I'm walking, and the neighborhood suddenly turned really weird, 'cause the walking distance... The walking direction's very different than the driving. And I'm like walking and it's going from dust to dark and then suddenly I do this. Here I am Mr. Self-Defence expert, I'm walking with my phone, I pause because my intuition's going, "Tony, what are you doing? Tony!"

And I stopped, and I did this, and I went, "Oh, my God! This is like a neon sign, attack me. I'm lost and I'm out of town." I'm walking, looking at my phone. So, I looked at the map, memorized the next two things, put my phone in my pocket, got my hands out of my pocket, and again, head on a swivel and then change my cadence. 'Cause I didn't like the neighborhood I was in. It's doing little things like that. That's situational awareness that you would apply to yourself. Also, looking at things that happen in the news, and then going, doing your own after action, like if this is you.

So, when all those mostly peaceful protests were kicking off and families and good people were getting caught, people would call me all the time, "What should I do? What should I do?" I go, "Well, you shouldn't drive into a riot. You shouldn't use, shouldn't go through the riot to get home." Like, "What are you doing there?" And it was like, they were like, "Oh, yeah." But the question was always, "How do you get out of a headlock?" I mean, "What do I do if my car's surrounded?" "Where were you, like you fell sleep in your car and when you opened your eyes, your car was surrounded?" How did you get there? 'Cause that's really... And this sounds like it's so Ernie and Bert, Sesame Street simple, is, "What are you doing there? Did you need to be there?" And start with that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We've got a quick break coming up. We'll be right back.

No lifts, no gifts. Here are just a few benefits of building muscles, seen in Peer Review studies. Building some muscle mass can significantly improve your insulin sensitivity, improve your overall hormone health, improve your cognitive performance, improve your immune system, protect you against injuries and speed recovery, and defend your body against age related degradation. This is just a small slice of what a little bit more muscle can do. Now, the barrier of entry to building more healthy muscle and reaching a state of physical fitness is easier than ever. Having a few key pieces of equipment at your house can absolutely change the game for you. Kettlebells, steel clubs, maces, battle robes, all of these phenomenal, multi-faceted pieces of equipment are readily available to ship directly to your door. Go to [Onnit.com/model](http://Onnit.com/model). You're going to receive 10% off some of the most premier training equipment in the world. A simple piece of equipment that you can do dozens if not hundreds of different exercises with. Plus, they've got incredible programs as well. They teach you different techniques for unconventional training to truly create more functionality in your health and fitness.

On top of all that, Onnit is also one of the world leaders in human performance nutrition. They've got the most remarkable pre-workout supplements and post-workout protein that you're going to find. All sourced from earth-grown ingredients, nothing synthetic. They also have put their own products into real world clinical trials to affirm their efficacy. Again, go to [Onnit.com/model](http://Onnit.com/model). That's O-N-N-I-T.com/model for 10% off everything they carry. Now, back to the show.

Like you said in the beginning, we're in this age today, where we have so much psychological opening. So much more time to be worried about things than thousands of years ago when we had a lot of more of the, that bottom rung to worry about survival. And so, with that opening of all manner of things we can construct with our imagination. It's, I don't think people realize this, but it's been filled with a lot of distraction as well. Right? So just the very nature of us being so distracted, so outside of our bodies, that intuition, because we're alive and in this life, in this moment, it's still there. It's always there. But the ability to hear it gets quieter when we're distracted. Like you said, with phones, social media, all this stuff, but also training our minds to be so distractible period. Right?

So, you, in that moment were able to, because of your experience and your, the far less time of being distracted, were able to catch yourself like, "Hey, let me do this." And boom. The average person though, is not even remotely going to tune into that moment. They're just going to keep their face glued into that phone and keep marching again. The probability of a situation, who knows, but it's still being able to be situationally aware. I think another component to add to the mix here is practice listening. You know?

**TONY BLAUER:** Yeah. You've got to explore it and a lot of people, they go, "Oh wow, this is so good. How do I practice the fear management? How do I... " And I say, you got to practice courage, but it starts with identifying if you can't use your word, listen to your second brain say, "Hey, something's up here." And even if it's the most seemingly irrelevant thing, it's a rep, do the rep on, what does this mean? What, and it could be researching a definition. Someone says something to you, and you pretend like you understand what they're talking about, but your intuition goes, "Man, I don't know what that is. I think I know what it is." Pin that. And then go study that, you become a better version of yourself. Right? That's really simple, silly example. There's no, there's no event more dramatic than sudden violence to create a realization that you're ill-equipped to handle the situation. So, practice that resiliency before, so if I say, "Hey, Shawn, you got to get out in nature. I want you to start climbing hills," and you go, "Okay," "Are you going to do that?" "Yeah. Googling here, Everest expeditions." I go, "No, don't start with Everest." Right. So, I always tell people like you don't, I want to learn self-defense, like, okay, go to the most dangerous part of your town and hang out there and get beaten up a couple hundred, like that's silly, right?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**TONY BLAUER:** Plus, if you're a good human, you don't want to be near this at all. So, we learn from the news. We take events, we go using the detect, defuse, defend model, what did this family, or this person fail to act on? What did they do wrong here? Because you can learn from that experience without having the experience. But the gateway to improving this situational awareness and the critical thinking and the self-awareness is to look into fear because it's fear of expressing yourself or fear of, "I think there's danger over there, but I don't want to turn and face it." So, I avoid it. And I put metaphoric blinders on, that ensures that you don't have any skill to handle it. Right? No awareness, no chance. If I choose not to look at something, I guarantee that if it ever happens, I don't have a remedy for it. So, it's a scary thing, but that's the conundrum and paradox of fear management. I always make this joke, fear management needs new management because everyone's afraid of fear, especially type A personality guys, they don't want to talk about fear.

And this isn't about manipulating the term, vulnerability, and stuff like that. It's just like, I'm afraid that this could happen if, and I go, "Well, how would you solve that? What would you do?" And it's really a, it's a Socratic relationship with yourself and maybe Google, YouTubes, colleagues, like, how do I research this? But it's the critical thinking part. And this is the neat thing. And it's such a Pandora's box or a black box element because it's that intuition word that we love. You hear something and you, like, we just saw in the news, did you see the thing from the New Zealand prime minister? "Don't believe anything you read; we will be your complete source of news." Like two days ago. "If you see something that's contradictory to what we're telling you, take it with a grain of salt." Like, but millions of people will go, "Oh, okay."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**TONY BLAUER:** Right? And now suddenly it's like, you need to watch V for Vendetta. Right? You need to like... But there's no critical thinking there. It's just, even though, what is its mass formation psychosis. We don't need to talk about that, but it doesn't exist. You're getting sleepy, Shawn. It doesn't exist. It's crazy. We need to look at something. And if you could understand fear management, you would say, "Somebody's weaponizing fear 'cause they're making me scared. Maybe this danger is real, but I'm going to, my intuition says something's off here. So, what do I need to do to research." And if you do your own research, you realize something's up.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Yeah. Wow. That was a pretty consistent thing. You know, just asking people to, whatever their beliefs are about how things have unfolded the last couple of years, you feel like something's just off, does something not feel right? And that was 100% of the time, 100% of the people that I asked, and I asked a lot of people, and but again, what we do is based on our position on things we justify, and we use our, again, higher order faculties to justify sometimes things that can really debilitate us, again, like fear. Now, again, going back to this point, that fear is valuable. It's a healthy human attribute. It's a healthy attribute of all species and...

**TONY BLAUER:** Which keeps us alive.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Exactly, exactly. And so, in that moment, when we, again, we're able to improve our situational awareness, but let's just say that that portion has, you know, there's things have escalated beyond that, and now we're in a situation where there's a threat present and we're faced with that threat. Your brilliant approach is again, what can we do to move away from that threat versus running towards the threat or engaging with the threat in a way that is heightening the degree of potential violent outcomes. So, let's talk about de-escalation.

**TONY BLAUER:** Yeah. So, we always, I mean, I've thrown around a couple times already, morally, ethically, legally, we should avoid violence at all costs. And so, if you only are training in physical elements of self-defense, you don't get any practice, reps or knowledge on what it is to avoid and de-escalate. So, we have a whole system on what we call choice, speech, understanding, conscience, accountability, understanding how to shift psychological gears in yourself. It's a neat thing, 'cause detective use defend when we talk about the timeline of violence, we go look, every victim of violence will lead to jealous hail that a bad feeling. So that's detect. What are you doing in the detect stage? 'Cause if you get that blip like a radar blip and you identify it, you don't keep walking towards it. I like to joke. I go, your intuitions like an organic biological GPS.

You plug GPS into your phone. You miss your turn. What does your phone tell you? "Shawn, you're going the wrong way. Make a legal U-turn." Your GPS, your intuition goes, there's something off here is saying to you, "You're going the wrong way, pull over, check the route, make a legal U-turn go away." But we go no, no, this is okay, I'm okay. That wouldn't happen to me." And a lot of times we just shift into denial, or we try to, like you said, correct it and go this... Just ignore what our intuition's trying to tell us. Then you run to the de-escalation phase, which is D, to defuse and de-escalate. Defuse, but it's spelled D-E-F-U-S-E. Metaphorically, how do I disempower the threat? What type of language? So, we created a program of nonviolent postures understanding, I call it a Trojan horse strategy where I'm not... Like a lot of people will get into a violent stance,

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** They'll square up.

**TONY BLAUER:** Yeah, "I don't want to fight man, get back." But your body language is 60% of your communication. So, if you blade and one of your hands is cocked and you're pointing at somebody and you're going, "Come on man, stay back." That's enticing. And it's fanning flames on it. So, we have some classic non-violent postures, which are de-escalation postures. But when we're teaching people this, we remind them of the Trojan horse story. And we talk about, and this is very nuanced and hard to cover in a talk like this. But somebody who goes through our training, they're taught how to look at indignation. That's a very special type of anger. It's a, how dare you anger. And that's very, very powerful. We ask them when they go through some very deep psychological exercises on what would it cost you if you didn't fight back? If you just let this violence happen, what could it cost you? And that's a crazy conversation because you've got kids, correct?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**TONY BLAUER:** If I said to you, let's go back in time before you had kids and I meet you downstairs and we have an argument. You might take a swing. We might fight. But now flash forward, same situation happens, and you've got your kids with you. Your protective instinct is completely different and the way you mitigate and control your ego, or your pride is like, "Oh, I'm not going to do this. I've got a business; I've got a family. And more importantly, I've got my family with me. I'm not doing anything stupid. I'm not going to lose my cool here. Let's get out of here." So, leaning into de-escalation and avoidance is stronger, but you got to do that homework even if you don't have kids. What could this cost me? If I don't fight back, what could it cost me if I do just, randomly, or haphazardly engage? And so, it comes back to, are you truly in a credible threat?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**TONY BLAUER:** Do you truly need to defend yourself? You know the expression; the pen is mightier than the sword?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**TONY BLAUER:** You've heard that?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Of course.

**TONY BLAUER:** So, in our classes, we tell people the pen is mightier than the sword when you know how to use a sword. In other words, we teach people how to protect themselves with extreme prejudice to really, I don't want to say violently, 'cause it's got a negative connotation, but how else do you describe violence, right? It's lesser or greater violence. It's like lifting weights and the effort needs to be greater than the resistance, for things to happen. So, that's subtle. And I don't know if I got too nerdy there. But it's when I teach somebody at the end of the class, I say to them, "If you had to defend yourself for your family, would you do it?" And people can look at me and say, "I'd be scared, but I would." And I go, "That's fine. That's good." You know you would, now you can write the letter, meaning you can verbally de-escalate because in the back of your head, you go, "If this goes physical, I'm going to protect myself."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**TONY BLAUER:** It's an interesting thing because we've got, courses for instructors and long instructor development and professional development. We do this one course called Be Your Own Bodyguard. It's a one-day course. And the conventional martial art mind loses their sh\*t when they hear this, 'cause they go, "You can't learn martial arts in a day. You can't learn to defend yourself in a day." And I go, "You were right the first time you can't learn how to box in a day, you can't learn jujitsu in a day. You can't learn Krav Maga in a day, but I can teach you to detect and avoid in a day. I can teach you to diffuse and de-escalate in a day." 'Cause avoidance and de-escalation are using skills you're already really good at, locomotion, walking around the planet, driving, getting somewhere, talking. We're all good at that.

The physical portion we're weaponizing the startle-flinch and using primal gross motor movement. You already... It's hard-wired in you. So, it's almost like I can teach you how to use a fire extinguisher in five minutes, and then I can run you through scenarios in your house like, "I don't like how all those plugs are there, move that there, get a better power bar. Get one with a circuit breaker in it. Okay, why is your Christmas tree over there beside those... Move that over here. Oh look, you've got your fire extinguisher beside the oven." "Well, if the oven catches on fire, that might be a challenge" "Can't you put it inside..." " You kind of run through



some scenarios, but at the end of an hour, you're like safer. "Or are you a fireman" " No." "Did you go to the fire academy?" "No." So, we explain to people, learning to choose safety and apply self-defense principles to avoid, starts with just reframing.

So, I said earlier, connecting the story from 40 minutes ago, if you Google the definition for self-defense, it's the physical act of protecting property or your life, it ignores detect and avoid and defusing and de-escalate. And so, we rewrote the definition and one day, hopefully, all dictionaries will include our definition, and our definition goes like this. It's the decision to choose safety when danger is imminent. The decision to choose safety when danger is imminent. That means that the first intuition radar blip, I go, "I got a bad feeling, I'm choosing safety, I'm going this way." And if it turns out that it was a false read, you're still safe, but if you ignore it, like most victims of violence have done in the past, you allow the danger to come closer. So that's all part of that de-escalation umbrella. And it's neat. I feel like when I'm explaining it, it sounds more complicated than it is, but it's pretty simple.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** When you gave the example of myself prior to having my kids versus having my kids and how to handle that situation, it is very, a very clear scenario and how you would manage yourself and try to avoid conflict even more so. But also, I love the fact that you mentioned and put in the necessity of like, you still have it in your mind that if it comes down to it, I will defend them, I will defend myself. That being there and being present, absolutely. But let's do these things to not get to that point by de-escalating the situation, which that's what I would turn to today versus then because I was all about escalation, Tony. I didn't talk... If there's a threat, I go right to it. And I was actually, I don't know if you know about this system, I used the wish system. Wish a mother... would system. So that's what I grew up with. And so, when there's a threat, you just... You escalate the situation. I wish, I wish. I wish a mother...Versus really being able to understand...

I am so grateful you said this, no one... I haven't heard anyone say this, but it's been in my thought process is... My thought process, all these years later. I got kicked out of high school my entire junior year for fighting. I had to go through all these different hoops, and I ultimately got accepted into all the universities I applied to, but I had to get letters of recommendation, I had all these hurdles, and so once I get to college, you would think I've learned my lesson, I didn't. But now I'm a man, and so now a fight ends up in handcuffs, right. And so, you start to see...

**TONY BLAUER:** Or worse.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Or worse, right. You start to see how much bigger these things are for a momentary situation, that's just truly at the end of the day, 99.99999% of the time, it's not worth it. Not getting paid to fight. Right, so why would you run towards a fight? And that's

getting into a whole another part of the conversation, which is these are places where the skill set... And I want to reiterate this point because listening to you and tuning into your world, you continuously give credit and love and respect to all these wonderful martial arts, but understanding, even in that expression or that learning of the thing, if you're not using that to get paid as a fighter, there might be a tendency to try to, "I'm learning this thing, to use it." You want to learn it. So, you don't have to use it in a sense, and that's what you're teaching.

**TONY BLAUER:** So counterintuitive.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, and it's again, but the great teachers do employ that, employ that into their teaching, but it sounds more like a philosophy versus real life where you're just like you're learning these things, you have these... You're practicing arts of violence and looking for an avenue to use it, which you got to look at the bigger picture, like what could be sacrificed, what could be a stake...

**TONY BLAUER:** Correct.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** If in those moments you don't de-escalate the situation. So, if you could, can you talk a little bit more about de-escalation right. So, let's give a scenario where somebody is threatening you, maybe you are out with your significant other and they're maybe talking crazy or whatever the case might be. Can you give a scenario, what would you do to de-escalate a situation?

**TONY BLAUER:** So, there's multiple options and it depends on really what's going on and what the threat is and what the danger is. For example, if... This is something that's been used by a number of students in real life, and it's actually... My very first ATM video I did in 2007, where I walk up to the ATM, and I've got one of my students filming me. And if we start with the logic in the premise of, our intuition is going to warn us that something's off. And I'll tell two stories. Remind me to come back to the ATM, 'cause I always say every victim of violence who lived to tell the tale said they had a bad feeling. So, our... The escalation strategy is based on that premise, and that... It's just 100% is a good number. So, it's not like, "But maybe it won't work this time." It's always there. Something's off.

And I had this guy in a seminar, I go, "Any questions?" He puts up his hand, he goes, "Mr. Blauer, I'm not trying to be the contrarian. I love what you're saying. But once, I had a guy punch me in the back of the head at a bar. I didn't know him, so I had no chance, really. He was from behind. So how would my intuition have read that? And I'm not trying to stump the band and be a jerk 'cause I'm digging everything you're saying, but that happened to me." And I said, "Wow, how unfortunate for you. You might have been the anomaly event. But we can't train

around anomalies. We can... We need to train around probability, not possibility. It's possible anything can happen, but it's not probable. Let's focus on what's probably going to happen."

I said, "But let me ask you a question 'cause I am curious 'cause I've been doing this for a long time. You didn't know this guy at all?" He goes, "No. Never seen him before." He looks at me. "Never seen him before?" Looks down, and he goes, "I don't know him, but I did see him before." "Well, tell me more about this story from this apparition appeared out of nowhere behind you and, boom, punched you in the back of the head, and so my system doesn't work." And he goes, looks down, all the seminar people are looking, and he goes, "Well, the week before I was at this bar..." I go, "The same bar?" He goes, "Yeah." "Okay. You're at the same bar a week before. Go on." He goes, "And we had words." I go, "You had words? And then you went back to the same bar, and then he sucker punched you?" He goes, "Yeah."

I said, "Okay, so let me get this straight. Seven days before the sucker punch, you had words with this guy. Seven days later, you went back to the same bar, and you sat with your back exposed to a wall in the same bar, drinking in a place where you almost had a fight a week before." And he doesn't say anything, but his face says, yeah. I go, "Dude, you had seven days to prepare to block that punch." Just this idea that people want, "No, but it just happened out of nowhere, and I didn't know." And I'm like, "That's just not how life is. It just doesn't happen." And you've had this and studied this, people go, This... "Why does this always happen to me?" And I go, "Yeah, success leaves clues, but so does failure, and so does this repetitive stuff. It's a way bigger picture." But it's the same three Is. Instincts, intuition, detect... You can apply... I use the detect, defuse, defend in business. It's not just self-defense. It's, what are the pre-contact cues? How do I de-escalate this? How do I protect this investment or this project or whatever?"

Now, back to the ATM video. One of our biggest concepts that I think you'll dig is this, the art and science of devaluing yourself. Bad guys only want one of three things. Property, body or life. That's a short list. Property, body, or life. So, somebody... So how do you de-escalate and... Or how do you resolve... So, another way for de-escalation is to think of, "How do I resolve this without physical violence?" Right? You happy with that? So, someone comes up to you and they go, "Give me your briefcase." Guys got a gun, and you got your briefcase. You can give your briefcase. If he goes, "I want something more. Get in the trunk of the car." You go, "What's that list that Blauer said? Property, body..." Okay, I'm going to a secondary crime scene. This is getting much worse. It's a short list, and it scares people when I tell them that. I go, But the shorter the list, the easier it is to make decisions. 'Cause if I said, maybe it's one of like 3000 things, suddenly it's like, It could be this, it could be this, could be... Too long.

So, the devalue principle is, how do I make sure that the bad guy looking at me suddenly sees me of no value, and they move on? And as maybe harsh as this sounds, let them pick somebody else in the moment. As selfish as that sounds, let them pick somebody else. I don't want it to

happen to me or my family. And I think that selfishly, everyone would feel that way. I mean, some people would argue, but this is more just an emotional thing I'm sharing with students in the moment. You just want to get to safety at that moment.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, the devalue. And this is the ATM story. If you're standing at an ATM, looking around, going... You're standing in the shadows, what do you... If you're at an ATM, what are you waiting for? My money. Are you going to mug me before I get to the ATM or after? Always after. I got to withdraw the money. When does the bad feeling happen? Before or after? Before. Do you see how they dance? Yin and yang. So, I'm here like this, I'm at the ATM. I'll pretend it's you, sketchy guy over there and running the equipment back there. And I go like this. And I got a bad feeling. I look over, I go... He looks like he's waiting for money, but I got a bad feeling. So, what does the system say? The system says, Choose safety. Oh, then I remember, this isn't the only ATM in the world. Get the... Out of here. Now, if I leave and I go... And I leave in a way that is telegraphic, I might escalate the violence. Hey, where are you going? Give me your wallet, give me your keys, give me your... So, this is what I came up with. It's a fun one. You should watch it 'cause I can't do it the way here, 'cause of the equipment, but I'm standing in front of the machine, I look over my shoulder, I look back, and then I press cancel. I take a deep breath.

Stanislavski acting method, right? Take a deep breath and then I palm strike the machine. I smash it, and I scream, "You ... I don't believe this, and I'm screaming at this machine, I cannot believe she emptied my account, I cannot believe she emptied my account that ..." And I'm doing this whole thing, and I'm going to tell you a true story, 'cause we did this with 80 people at a training seminar where I had them walk up, I said, "If I'm standing behind you to mug you, I want a complacent victim who has money. You are now an enraged, irate hard target with no money. If I wanted your money, you don't have any, you just told me your account's empty, and you're yelling like the Incredible Hulk." Now, I did this with a bunch of people, with 80 people and they would bang on the wall, the store next door... We're like 20 minutes into the exercise and everyone's running through it. Now, here's the point of everyone listening to this, you all need to go and understand like I devalued myself, right? If you're a mugger, I devalue myself.

If let's say, I think I'm at a gas station and you come up to carjack me. This is a true story, I actually did a podcast with a person, I think it was four or five guys come out of the shadow, it's 2:00 in the morning, she's outside Reno, didn't fill up during the day, she gets the bad feeling. She stops pumping, she grabs her phone and pretends she's on the phone with the credit card company and screams, "I am out of gas. I've run out of gas. My car has no gas, and my credit card was declined. You better open my credit card up." But what she was doing is this was going to be a carjacking or a mugging, she said, "I have no money." She calls me screaming the next day, "I think you saved my life last night." She goes, "These guys were walking into the shadows, they heard me screaming a pretend call, "You ... I need to speak to

your manager. I can't get stuck here, my car won't turn on, I have no gas, I have no money." Devalued, they stop walking, and then they recede back into the shadows.

The other story I was telling you about. We got three cops show up like this... Come into the room. I go, "Officers." "Yeah, we had a complaint next door that there... Something was, what's going on here?" 'Cause everyone was screaming, like this scenario it was classic man. But it was this idea of how do you devalue yourself in a situation if bad guys only want body property, or life, suddenly... What we're trying to do in the system, listen, when you get scared 'cause something's happening, the psychological fear system triggers a movie in your mind, and you're visualizing yourself messing up. I use an acronym, false expectations, appearing real. I'm visualizing an event in the future where I'm getting ass my kicked, I'm losing, and it's debilitating me in the present, when I need to be creative, I need to be intelligent. I can be scared, but I still need to be intelligent. And so, what happens is, we're the producer, the director and the screenwriter of a violent movie in our mind, or a scary movie in our mind, where we've cast ourselves as the victim in our own movie and only self-awareness, Shawn, catches you. You go, "Dude why are you visualizing that?" How old are your kids now?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Wow, 26, 21 and 10.

**TONY BLAUER:** Okay. So that's a nice spread almost like mine, but I've got 30, 20, 31, 25, 20, if my kids are supposed to be home at a certain time, I can't help, "My daughter's supposed to be home. Has she been kidnapped into sex trafficking, is she getting raped, is she in a car accident?" Your brain just starts to think about these things, only self-awareness stops it, so I don't stay up all night going, "Where were you? Do you know what you did to me?" I go, "Wow," and I do... I literally do this. I go, "Dude don't even," it's like if you go to... You like movies?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**TONY BLAUER:** Okay, so I ask this in every... I just did this; I did a seminar in Connecticut last week. I had 100 people in the room, I said, "How many of you go to movies?" Everybody. "How many of you if the movie sucks, leave the movie?" Three hands put up. Most people will stay. I go, "You just wasted 90 minutes of your life. You could have been reading a book, walking outside, talking to a loved one, working out, but you stayed in a movie that wasn't going to get better. Why don't you have the psychological wherewithal to remove yourself from a movie? And the metaphor here is the movie in your mind, you got to walk out of that, and if you stay there, and this is such a heavy concept, some people..."

And it could be finances, health, pandemic, violence, threat, something happens on a walk, and now suddenly like a near close call, and now, "You going for a walk this week?" "No, no." Because you think you're going to get attacked almost attacked, so your whole routine changes

because of false expectations appearing real. And then what you suddenly realize is that I've been in the house for five days 'cause I'm afraid to go out. I didn't call this person back and apologize or clear things up because I'm visualizing that it's going to go in this direction. And if you get this and this is a massive epiphany, a big fancy word for light bulb moment. If you learn to manage fear, you learn to manage time, 'cause time is the only resource you can't get back, we can't regenerate it. The longer I stay in the fear loop, the longer I'm wasting time, and it's this huge profound moment where you go, "If I get a fear spike and I just let it be, it'll produce a psychological movie where I'm now... " Have you ever walked into a room and someone's like, you go, "Hey, are you okay?" And they look up and they go, "Yeah, why?" There's... They don't even have... Three days later, you find out what was bothering them or a week later.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**TONY BLAUER:** They didn't have the self-awareness and the fear management skill to say, "I'm scared, I just heard this. I don't know what to do." So, fear management actually is time management, which is massive. And if you lean into fear, you change how you think, and if you change how you think, you change your behavior and look at the algorithm that could change your life. It's pretty heavy.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Man, this is powerful, powerful. So, one of the things that's really been brought forward recently is the fact that fear is definitely contagious.

**TONY BLAUER:** Mm-hmm.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And emotions in general are contagious, and now we, you know we have scientific innovations to where we can look at the brain and see how our brains sync up when we're in conversations and they start to mirror each other. We're really, really interesting and phenomenal beings, and yet we're also very, very primitive, right. So again, with fear being contagious and easily transmitted from person to person, but also through mass media as well, very quickly, that can leave us in a place to where we might lose hope or just buy into it. So what you've really been sharing recently, and I mean, this is a thread through your career, I'm sure, but hearing this from you, is that courage is contagious as well.

**TONY BLAUER:** Mm-hmm.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, can you talk a little bit about that?

**TONY BLAUER:** Yeah, I mean, you said it, fears can be contagious, but so is courage. We're sitting here, we're scared, and we're trapped in this room, it would only take one of us to go, "I got a

plan," and all of us would go, "Oh, good," right. It's interesting 'cause I use this, this, this weird joking metaphor, we're trapped in an elevator, right, and one of us hasn't figured out that they're MacGyver and they're going to figure out how to get us out of the elevator. But we're in there and then somebody goes, "Oh my god, we're going to run out of oxygen." And then someone goes, "Can you do that? Can we run out of oxygen?" "I think so. Someone Google that." "Oh no, there's no reception in here, we're going to die." And then finally, someone smacks each person and goes, "Would you shut up?" Right, "We're going to get out of here. Lift me up, you stand over here, you..." And like it just takes that. So, I always tell people, Fear is contagious, and so is courage, you need to choose courage. And it's, it's nothing, it's nothing more elaborate than that, just choosing courage.

Here's a neat thing. I was doing a seminar in Florida that, that our friend Jay was at. It was great. And I knew there was a guy in the front row, there was his teenage son, he was a professional firefighter. And I said, I'm going to ask a question about a burning building after don't answer right away, 'cause you'll know the answer. He says, "Okay." So, I say to the group of 60-plus people, I go, "How many of you now that we've done this no fear program where you understand, you can't be brave if you're not afraid, if I looked at the primary ingredient in a bottle of courage it would be fear." If you do something, Shawn, that requires no courage to do, were you really brave? No, you just did that. So, if you're... If you have a death wish and you jump off buildings with a wing suit and you're an adrenaline junkie, and you're a Red Bull sponsored, and I go, "Man, that was so brave." And you go, "brave, I love doing..." "I'm like... No, I'm trying to get as close to the ground before I can like where... If you're scared and you, do it like my friend Andy Stump, I don't know if you know Andy, former seal, retired seal. And... But he, he base jumps.

And I asked him, and I said, "Dude, talk to me about fear, you're like jumping in a wing suit." He goes, "Yeah, lots of fear. That's why my preparation is meticulous, that's why my fitness preparation is meticulous." I said, "Oh, that's the difference between fear management, and no fear, N O fear versus getting to know fear." But... So, here I am in Florida, and I go say to the group, how many of you now that you know you can't be brave, if you're not afraid, you see a burning building and somebody screaming, "Oh my god, my kids inside or my dog's inside." How many of you know you would run in there?" And everyone's like, whoa, and this woman puts her hand up like halfway, and she goes, "I'd like to hope that we could be the courageous bystander now that we have your program." I said, "Fair enough, I mean, that's all you can... That's the Socratic conversation." I said, "There's nobody in the room here, anybody" and I look over at the firefighter, nobody knows he's a firefighter. And I go, "Is there anyone here that knows for a fact that they would run into a burning building?" The guy puts his hand up.

I go, "You do, you know that? It's pretty cocky of you." I go, "How's it you know that?" He goes, "'Cause I'm a firefighter." I said, "Oh," and everyone starts laughing. And so, the idea is that,

that the difference between the two people was he has done reps, he understands what he has to do. So that's the... That's that missing joke, but the mind navigates the body. If, if your relationship with fear doesn't even allow you to show up, that's the bigger problem. So, it's, it's, it's a neat... It's a neat thing, but man I got, I got so many, so many stories about that and we started off with trying to pin me down on de-escalation. What I do to help people de-escalate is I don't give them things to memorize, that doesn't work, I give them principles and concepts, I tell them, "You're a human weapon, you know how to fight, you just don't know you know how to fight, 'cause you've been domesticated. If we went back 200 years ago, you'd know how to use a black powder rifle, you'd know those mushrooms get you high, those mushrooms kill you. 'Cause we were hunters and gatherers, right." So, we've all been domesticated, but all of us are human weapons, we all know how to move, and we've also been through osmosis led to believe that a real fight scene looks like a John Wick fight or Bruce Lee fight, or a... But if you look at... If you truly study violence, you don't see technical martial arts, you see fear management and movement.

So, what we do is we demystify the whole thing, and then we just give people principles that they start in the... The most important principles are avoid at all costs, don't let ego or pride dictate your next strategy. Catch yourself visualizing your failure and ask yourself "Why am I arguing to be right about failure? Oh my God, I can't fight this guy, I can't do..." As opposed to, "What do I need to do to get out of this situation?" And then commit to that. And a big reframe I said it... I said it before, you can't be brave if you're not afraid, that blows people's minds, 'cause for some reason, they think that to be a public speaker, to be a great athlete, or to be a great parent, or to be an entrepreneur, or to defend yourself, that you're fearless. And it needs to be spelled with a hyphen, fear-less, but the fear will be there, and you need to use it as fuel.

One last metaphor, if I can. Your body is your car in the metaphor, and your mind is your NAV system, and your fear is the fuel, don't be a contrarian and say I drive electric, right. For the metaphor, we're using fossil fuel and a lot of people... The fear, meaning, I'm going outside my comfort zone, I'm going a little too fast. So, I hit the gas. A lot of people that metaphor is, fear is in the back seat, back seat driver going, "You're not going to make it, you're going to miss your turn, you're going to show up late, you're going to screw this up." And it's a little whisper that nobody hears, "You, okay, you ready?" "Yeah, yes, Coach, I'm ready." As opposed to, "No, I'm scared sh\*tless." We need fear to be a co-pilot that I look over and I go, "Hey, I'm about to go fast, you better put your seat belt on because we're doing this together." And these simple little visuals really, they really help. We don't make it hard to understand, but it's tricky, it's like, "Hey, describe the taste of sugar without saying Sweet.

At some point you do your best and you go "Here, put this in your mouth." And you go, "Oh my god, it's sweet." "Yes, see I told you. You got to taste this stuff and try this stuff." So, for anyone listening, how do you do this? Practice courage by identifying anything in your life, no matter



how small it is, sending back food, asserting yourself. Like I ask people, you know you go to a restaurant, "Do you always send food back that's not cooked to your liking?" Most people say no. And I go, "Why?" And they go well, I go... "Cause you don't want it to come back with special sauce?" And they're like, "Yeah." Well, first of all, why are you eating at a restaurant where you might get special sauce? Second of all, why do you think that is? Like you saw it in a movie, or somebody said it, and that became our conditioning. And as silly as that is, that's practicing courage, how you say, hey, of course, how you asked the waiter, or tell the waiter, you might get special sauce, right? Like you got to be polite. And you got to be nice...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** He's talking about spit in your food.

**TONY BLAUER:** Right, right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** For something you were like... Is he talking about McDonald specials, right?

**TONY BLAUER:** No, not that special sauce. But if you remember the old Roadhouse line, be nice until it's time to not be nice...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**TONY BLAUER:** But avoid it all anyways. And just like a Gatling gun of info hopefully it's fine.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And then you're going to end it with Roadhouse. This is a true story. I just watched it may be like six months ago, shout out to Patrick Swayze.

**TONY BLAUER:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, and you know what's so interesting about that film, looking back on it, is the fact that he was doing your protocol de-escalation and that was his main thing, it's not that I can't... But there's no need. We don't have to get to that place in responding, even in kindness in some instances, but it's your... Man, Tony, you are a pioneer and a great thinker and necessary. You've helped so many people. You shared just a couple of those moments of like, you never know who's listening. And just getting back to you, the impact that you're having on all these different dimensions of public service, whether it's military, and the like... And your... Thing is about you too, it's just like you got so much more in store for us, and I could just see that in your eyes, and man, I just appreciate you coming through and hanging out with us, can you share where people can get access to some of this training?

**TONY BLAUER:** Sure, probably the best thing to do is go to my main website HQ, and it's blauertrainingsystems.com. My last name, B-L-A-U-E-R systems training, that sounded awkward blauertrainingsystems.com, that's my main website. Of course, I'm on Instagram if you can find me. Might have to type in the whole name to find it, Facebook, LinkedIn, stuff like that, but... Yeah, it depends what you're looking for. We have four divisions in our company, so if you're interested in the physical training or our scenario equipment or our Know fear program or the coaching, I will tell you this. If I had been taught as a kid how to look at fear differently, I'd have been more efficient in my life, I would've worried less. I'd have more hair, less gray hair. I would hope that I would still be, I love what I do and doing what I'm doing. But in terms of efficiency and effectiveness, way more successful, because you would sit around metaphorically, or literally biting your nails and worrying about the future and worrying about Should I do this or not? And it's all... No one, even to this day, still talks about the difference between the physiology of fear and the psychology of fear, there's a simple way to embrace this, so that whether you're a parent or an entrepreneur, or just a good human, but get your kids thinking about this stuff.

Again, I got... My brain is flooded with success stories where we're off on a mini tangent for a second. My first passion was teaching people how to protect themselves. But I would teach them, but I would teach them fear management as a way to access the physical skills, 'cause we're doing all these really intense scenarios. And then I started having parents and people say, "Hey, I used your cycle of behavior to help my daughter get off her anti-depressants, and I'm like, "What?" And then I get another mom say, "Hey, I loved your self-defense class, but one of my kids is afraid of swimming and I used your cycle of behavior to help them overcome their fear of swimming." And then I had a Krav Maga expert who did one of our trainer courses call me up two years after and he said, verbatim, he said, "Your cycle of behavior and your approach to managing fear is more effective than anything I've learned in 20 years of psychology, and I'm using it to help vets overcome their PTSD."

And I was like... I'm like, "What?" And so, I'm working with him now to develop a program for therapy for mental health. It's amazing where this is going because it just works, but it works 'cause it's not based on someone else's research, it's based on me getting feedback from real victims of violence and what they did to navigate that. And I just happen to be the vehicle and have the opportunity to go, and it's just an insight, like I could create the formula from their story where they couldn't, and that's just my role and my goal, share that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Man, well, thank you for sharing it, thank you for putting yourself in the position to be able to absorb this and also to have the courage to teach this for as long and for as well as you have, and just looking forward to seeing what you do next man, I appreciate you.

**TONY BLAUER:** Thank you, buddy. I appreciate it, I'm very excited to be here. I've been a fan of yours for many, many years, and this show, and I was like... I'm on a lot of shows where it's cops, it's military, its fighters, but that's a captive audience. To get on to your show is a big honor and I hope it inspires people.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, man, thank you so much. And again, man, I'm really just blown away. Know Fear everybody. K-N-O-W fear, Tony Blauer, the legend.

**TONY BLAUER:** Thank you, buddy. Let's go.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Thank you so very 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, this is an important conversation for us to have and looking at this really important dynamic of the human experience. Remember, you can send this directly from the podcast app that you're listening on or take a screenshot and share this on social media. You can tag me, I'm @shawnmodel on Instagram and tag Tony as well. And of course, you could share this on Facebook, I'm @themodelhealthshow on Facebook, and I pop in on Twitter from time, too, I'm @shawnmodel. So, share it up, sharing is caring. We're going to keep this empowerment going, we've got some incredible master classes and Epic guests coming for you very soon, so make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day and I'll talk with you soon.

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