

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

EPISODE 633

How Better Health Can Boost Creativity & Reduce Anxiety

With Guest Brett Eldredge

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

SHAWN STEVENSON: Welcome to the Model Health Show. This is fitness and nutrition expert Shawn Stevenson, and I'm so grateful for you tuning with me today. In a society where we have so many different things that can be stealing our attention, how do we take authority of our minds? How do we process all of these things and show up as our best self? How do we find our voice amongst all of these other voices that are coming at us? These are some of the things we're going to be talking about today. I'm going to talk about increasing our stress resilience as well, and just being able to have a powerful conversation about being able to process things and utilizing our minds for our own collective good, where sometimes it can seem like our own mind can be working against us. We've got an incredible guest, I'm talking about a superstar in every sense of the word, to help us to unpack these things, and I think that you're really going to love this conversation.

Right now, we're moving into the holiday season, so this episode is such a vibe. I can't even put it into words. And during the holiday season, obviously food is a big deal. And one of the greatest food experiences that I've ever had was hanging out with my friend, Laila Ali. Yes, I'm talking about multi-time boxing champion, undefeated, undisputed boxing champion, Laila Ali, who's also, and a lot of people don't realize this, she's been on the superstar cooking show Chopped twice and won twice. I can't even believe I get to say this, but had the opportunity to hang out with her, to have her food. Amazing. All right. I love Laila's cooking, it's such a joy. But prior to us even meeting or us knowing about each other, this is a little crazy fun fact, my family has been utilizing some of her holiday recipes for years.

And so, to have her as a friend and be able to share these experiences and to be able to share her holiday cookbook with you, which you can actually get for free with this special offer is such a joy. She has some of the most incredible spice blends that she's put together herself, and they're all 100% organic, non-GMO, no crazy sugars, no chemicals, additives, preservatives, fillers, none of that crazy stuff that simply shouldn't be in our spice cabinet. Just the real deal. We're talking about high quality spices and spice blends that just make our food taste fantastic. Right now, if you head over to lailaali.com/model, you get 10% off all of her incredible spice blends.

That's at lailaali.com/model. That's L-A-I-L-A-A-L-I.com/model. You get 10% off her spice blends. And here's the kicker, right now, and this is for a limited time only, if you get the six-pack bundle of her spices, you get a free digital copy of her holiday cookbook. All right, again, this is a limited time only, pop overtake advantage of this like yesterday. Go to lailaali.com/model for 10% off everything, plus free access to her cookbook when you get the six-pack bundle of

her spices. And I'm telling you're going to love them so much. Head over there, check it out ASAP, lailaali.com/model. Now let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

ITUNES REVIEW: Another five-star review titled “Such a Great Listen” by Meg, “The Universe of Health, mental, physical, and everything in between is a better place because of this podcast. I absolutely love Shawn's energy and dedication to educating his audience.”

SHAWN STEVENSON: Amazing. Thank you so much. I received that and I appreciate you so much for sharing that. And if you're yet to do so, please pop over to Apple Podcast and leave a review for The Model Health Show. And on that note, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day. Our guest today is Country Music superstar, Brett Eldredge. He's a singer, songwriter, record producer. He's had multiple number one singles in the country, number one on billboard charts. And he's also a passionate human being when it comes to health and wellness. You're going to find out why. Oftentimes you'll find that there's a method behind the beautiful madness of creatives like Brett. And part of his story is optimizing his health to optimize his performance and to optimize his creativity. And so, it's something really special. If you're wondering, Shawn, how do you get connected with country music?

I grew up in two very distinct households. One household was teaming with Hip Hop and R&B, another household being with my grandmother, country music was the only thing that you were going to hear on the radio. So, I grew up listening to Reba McEntire and The Judds, and Randy Travis and Conway Twitty. And the list goes on and on. And it's created this wonderful melding, a melting pot, really, of not just my background, but also my personality. Things that I used to fight against when I was a kid. I'm so grateful for those experiences because they also create a bridge to connection for people from diverse backgrounds as well. And so that's one of these things we sync up with because Brett's musical palette, as we're going to talk about, is incredibly diverse as well. So, let's jump into this conversation with the amazing music superstar, Brett Eldredge. Oh man. Legend in the building. Brett Eldredge, my guy. What's up, man?

BRETT ELDREDGE: It's been a long time coming to get to hang with you. I've been checking out your show for a long time. You've been on a lot of hikes with me since 2020, walking through mountains, climbing mountains. It's your soothing voice that got me through my friend.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh, man. Come on, you saying that is a big deal.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Hey, man, you have a good delivery voice of, as a singer, I can respect that. I want you to read my biography one day or something like that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Read by Shawn Stevenson.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Some people say that they want Morgan Freeman to read, you know that... It's Shawn Stevenson for me, so...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Let's go. Hey man, I'll hold you to it.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Let's go.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But man, it's just... Thank you, first of all, thank you for taking me along with you on these adventures. You're about that hike life, man. And obviously you're one of the greatest performers, singers in the world today. We're going to get into all that goodness. But I want to talk about health and fitness.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Let's do it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, what got you interested in health and fitness?

BRETT ELDREDGE: Man, when I first got a record deal, I moved to Nashville, I had no idea what I was doing. There's thousands of people a week moving there at that point and now it's insane. So for me it was, I got a record deal and then the next thing you know I'm on the road 150 days of the year, or 200, actually more now, it was like 200 some days of the year, trying to figure all this stuff out, just having fun, playing shows, people are bringing you drinks, people know your name for the first time and you're like, all these different things, which is so exciting. But also, I didn't really pay attention to my health as much. I thought I did, but I didn't.

And it started to catch up to me a little bit, I was kind of out of shape and not mentally great and all these different things, where it finally hit me and I was like, "Man, I got to get my sh*t together. I got to get..." You know what I mean? And I think for me taking little steps and starting to work out and stuff. And I started to feel better, and I started to creatively think better, 'cause I was taking care of myself. I was trying to pick up on my sleep. And I was sleeping like an hour a night sometimes, 'cause I was trying to sleep on a bus, which was a nightmare to try to figure out 'cause you're bouncing on the road and all these different things. So, I had to really change my lifestyle. And I think once I changed my lifestyle, it really helped me kind of just get my head right and be able to handle that strenuous life of being on the road and making music and everything and make me enjoy it more. And I'm still learning to this day. It's not like it's a perfect thing, but it helps me to keep moving and pay attention and to all that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's powerful. And you just mentioned how it kind of feeds into itself. Once you focus on getting yourself healthier it starts to feed into other areas of your life, your performance, your creativity, all these things. And so obviously being on the road is going to

be complex. I want to ask you about that a little bit later. But just when you have kind of more control, spending some time at home, what is your routine look like? What are the things that you do for your health and fitness?

BRETT ELDREDGE: So, it's always changing for me. I'm always trying to tweak it. I'm big on tools and that's why I listen to your show and different shows, it's like, and read and try to study up, 'cause I can get obsessive about it where I have to pull back and be like, "Okay, let's keep it simple." But I think for me to have certain tools, try different things out. I used to get up for a while for songwriting, I would get up and I'd take a bath first thing in the morning. Somehow, I would stay away from my phone, I wouldn't touch my phone or take a bath, and I was writing a song like every day in the tub which I don't think I've ever told you that. But that's kind of how I was getting ideas 'cause it was quiet, I could kind of... So, I've kind of switched it up but now...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Well, the question is, were there bubbles in the bath?

BRETT ELDREDGE: No bubbles. Just straight up.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Straight, straight water.

BRETT ELDREDGE: It's all classic. The hard stuff. But now it's, I get up, I stay away from my phone, I keep a lock on my phone so I can't get on there in the morning. I journal, I meditate, I hang out with my dog for a little while. Get out in the natural light outside as quick as I can. And now I've added... I know you're a cold plunge guy. I like to plunge and that's been a really... It's tough to get your mind to go there. But when I really got going with it, it's really got me to be like, if I can do this first thing, do something hard to start the day, that's been a big help for me. 'Cause I've dealt with anxiety a lot of my life. And having that structure has really changed the game for me to at least be able to keep the reins pretty tight on that. And when it starts to veer off, it's like, I know if I change my physiology, if I keep moving, first part of the day, if I do all these different things to just stay in a structure, then I'm pretty good. If I'm sitting around watching Netflix all day, those are the days where I'm a mess. You know what I mean?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Yeah.

BRETT ELDREDGE: And so, I think that structure's helped me a lot.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, man. Now on the tactical side. So, obviously, again, you're about that hike life. Matter of fact, you're just in LA for a couple of days and you're going for a hike.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah. If I took up the... The car is loaded up right now with some hiking clothes right now. I brought it here. I might even change in the studio and go.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Man, for me being from the Midwest, but also growing up in the kind of concrete jungle, hiking wasn't a thing to me.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Not at all for me either.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I knew about hiking shoes from LA Gears. Do you remember LA Gear shoes?

BRETT ELDREDGE: No. What was that?

SHAWN STEVENSON: They were some street hikers.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Really?

SHAWN STEVENSON: It is like for, it's this crazy thing, is this like movement that happened, with these shoes that came... That were here today, gone today, LA Gears, and they were like hiking boots. We didn't... I never went on a hike in my life. But you wear these hiking boots to school, you got the bibs with the one bib on tuck, that kind of stuffs. But coming out here... And actually, I've been on some hikes prior, like I'll travel and go somewhere with friends. And so, it's a really wonderful... It's like it's this thing that stacks. So obviously you're out in nature, the fresh air, the sunlight, and also just that practice of putting one foot in front of the other.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah, the momentum of the climb of it is addicting, and it kind of gets you in the present, which my mind can tend to wander a lot. I'm always thinking, so a little bit paralysis of analysis kind of guy where sometimes I'm thinking overthinking things. So, if I can get out there in nature, get out on a hike, and just look at... Look at the trees, feel the air on my skin. It might be a little cold when I start, and I get the blood pumping and I start moving. Like all those things kind of start stacking up. And the next thing I know, when I was really uptight or anxious going when I started, I'm flowing through the hike and I just feel, I feel alive. And then melody start popping in my head and I start thinking about these different songs. And that kind of stuff 'cause I'm just being, I'm just there.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, man. So powerful. So, what about are you getting some lifts in, too?

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah, man. For me, if I do maybe three days to four days a week of lifts and I'm not crazy powerlifting, but even though I'd like to get there, I might have to keep up with

you, I see your videos sometimes you're out there doing it. I need to train with you one day. But I try to get some weight stuff in too and kind of just switch it up. And also just not be too hard on myself and not try to perfect it too much, I was saying that, and I've heard you play it that way of like, keep it simple, keep it to the basics of it and if I can really slow myself down and do that and be like, and not try to chase perfection on the... 'Cause I do that, if I really just slow it down and be like, all right, I'm going to try to move, I'm going to try to go on a hike, three miles a day, I'm going to try to hit the waist tomorrow and maybe go for a walk with the dog and with the family, whatever, those kind of things. And finding that balance has been key.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, yeah. I love it, man. So, you mentioned earlier that, which I think a lot of people would be surprised to hear that somebody who's on some of these huge stages and performing and creating magic would be dealing with anxiety. And I know that you shared before about some of your experiences prior to shows and of course there's one thing to have some nervous butterflies, but there's another thing to have full blown panic attacks. So can you talk about that, some of your experience and let's even if you can share where that came from and what you did about it.

BRETT ELDREDGE: This is a great... And I don't know, it's helped me to talk about it too 'cause... And we all have anxieties, it's the most human thing, it's like I think in a... It started... And people are starting to talk about it more now, but growing up in a small town where I grew up, I didn't know what therapy was, I didn't know... I might've saw like in a movie where somebody's laying on a couch and they start floating, somebody does a tick tock clock in front of their eyes and they... Whatever that was, that's what I thought therapy was. And so, the pressures and the self, I guess, inflicted pressures of the music and of life kind of got to me at times. And it really hit me in a spot in my life where in my... With touring and with music where I was at the top of my game and I was like I want to quit, I was like, "I don't want to... It's too much pressure, it's too much. I just want to do normal stuff." And it's, I just, "I think I'm out. I might be out." 'Cause I was getting panic. I was hardly sleeping. I was just in a really tough spot. And I had to really take a step back and be like, "How can I... I don't want to retire when I'm 30 years old. But it sounds the lot easier thing to do right now, and I could just step out and I could write songs at home and live a normal life."

And there's parts of that I still like and I'm trying to find that, but I'm getting that balance now. But I was really in a place where I was putting so much pressure on myself, and I still do, this is a... And that's what I think I want to focus on now, is, I can get all these tools and I can get all these things, but it's going to be very human that you're never going to cure it, but you can show up and show up for yourself. It's like I had a panic attack in Scotland, it was in an interview in Scotland, and I think I had probably three coffees, I'm like jet lagged, I'm drinking a bunch of coffee and there was artists going before me, so I'm feeling comparison. I had a heavy jacket on, I'm sweating, so then I'm paying attention to my sweat and I'm in front of this audience

doing an interview. So, I have to be really vulnerable in that situation, I'm already feeling really vulnerable, and I never had a panic attack before like that. I've had 'em where I used to go to the ER, I'd wake up in the middle of the night, think there's something wrong with me. I got over that. And this was a new thing for me. And it was really tough to go through that interview. It felt like a car crash in my mind. It was a very traumatic experience, 'cause to me this guy is asking me a question, this amazing Scottish accent that I couldn't even try to do right now.

But he's asking me some simple question that I've probably answered many times for whatever reason it hit me. And then heart starts racing, my mind is like, everything gets blurry. I'm nauseous, all these different things and I'm just trying to make it through this interview. Nobody even knows. I could watch the video back now. I don't know if it's out there, I'm sure it probably is, and you probably wouldn't be able to tell. But at that moment, every time I'd go in an interview, I would feel it. And I was on this day show, and I felt it round there. It was Good Morning America, actually, got on there and I started talking about, "Oh, I'm actually nervous right now." This was not that long ago.

So, I still have it. I have it right now, even a little bit. I'm very comfortable talking to you. It's the thing, the memory of I'm not trying to think of that thing, but I could feel it. But if I show up and I'm here for it and I can just get into the conversation a little bit and know that none of those feelings are going to kill me. And the exposure, I guess they call it exposure therapy, but for me just showing up and not running from it. 'Cause I used to just avoid the interviews. Now it's like I've gotten better every time I've gone in them. And so, finding those different kind of tools by going to therapy, by reading about it, by realizing that's a very normal thing to feel that and experience that.

Most people would rather be in the casket than read the eulogy, is what I've heard. Like most people don't want to have that pressure of being in front of things. So, it's like a lot of people are scared of that. It's okay to be scared of that. It's okay to have that fear. And I just, I think my mission became to be courageous and to help other people see that it's okay if they feel those things. It's okay that they're struggling through those things, and that you can still live a great life despite of all of that and grow from it. And so here I am sitting with you today, feel a little bit of that feeling and I'm still enjoying myself and that it starts to dissipate it even as I'm talking about it right now.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Man, that's powerful. Again, by somebody seeing somebody like yourself and they can identify, it makes you more human. Because sometimes of course these people see you as other than, right? He's got all these things. He's this, he's that. So talented. There's no way he would fill in the blank.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But you just said a key word. You just said normal. It's normal to feel this.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And one of the big issues, obviously, and something that we talk about is medicalizing normal. You're coming into it. What I love about you is, you gave the setup, like three cups of coffee, jacket, sweating, foreign country, jet lag, what do you think is going to happen? You're going to feel off, at least.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah, this is totally out of your norm.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And, at worse, car wreck in your mind.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And people are doing... We do this to ourselves. We put these... It's a condition, it's a conditional response. And it's normal and that's okay, but it's not saying that there's something wrong with you or that you're broken. And that's the thing. We're all human and we're all complex and beautiful and messy and all the things.

BRETT ELDREDGE: And that makes you creative and that makes you be able to be great how you are. And that's...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely. Yeah.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah. Well, I enjoy being on the journey. It's tough, scary.

SHAWN STEVENSON: No one said it would be easy.

BRETT ELDREDGE: That's right. [laughter] Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's the caveat. And also leaning into this issue as well, because obviously it's at epidemic proportions; anxiety, depression, and also comparison.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Oh my God.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Comparison.

BRETT ELDREDGE: It's brutal.

SHAWN STEVENSON: When we're growing up, we can maybe compare ourselves to 5 to 10 kids in the neighborhood.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah. The kids at homecoming king or something or the popular kids or whatever. Like there's a small list. Now the list is multiplied by millions.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Exactly.

BRETT ELDREDGE: All I got to do is get that little thing that...

SHAWN STEVENSON: And we're just... Our brains are not evolved to be able to handle that. Again, we evolved in groups, in tribes, small villages and just kept expanding, expanding. But even when we had these highly developed futuristic George Jetson cities, we still didn't get this peak into everybody's life unless they were on TV. And so maybe you might see Robin Leach on Lifestyles of Rich and Famous, it's like, "Oh wow." Or MTV Cribs.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Oh wow.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Like, "Oh my God, you didn't get to do Cribs!"

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah. My son. No.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We're going to have to...

BRETT ELDREDGE: Don't bring it back.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We'll do a special episode of the Model Health Show, Cribs edition. We're going to come to your house.

BRETT ELDREDGE: I will gladly do that. We can go through the fridge, see all the stuff.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely.

BRETT ELDREDGE: The fridge was probably always my favorite part. When they go through the fridge, I'm like, "What's that person eating?" And somebody that was like a newer artist have a ketchup, bottle of ketchup.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. Ketchup and a water, maybe a water. Yeah. But just with this tool being what it is, which in a way it's neutral in a sense, because it's really what you do with it when we're talking about social media. However, that nudges a little bit more away from neutral to invasive is the fact that we've got these brilliant scientists and engineers and technicians who are creating apps to keep you on it, to keep you addicted. And so, with that said, you shared with me yesterday when we were hanging out that you created this great gift that you were giving everybody, by getting up in the morning and sharing a song. And you created this thing in your mind that you had to do it. And eventually it got a little bit out of hand. So, let's talk about that.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah. So, I used to do this thing called BedHead Jams. And you wake up, you got BedHead, your hair's all over the place, and I'd be like... Instead of starting my day by 4:00, 7:00, 8:00 breathing and journaling and staying away from my phone, the first thing I was going to was my phone, and I was singing to it. I was singing or to my fans like reverse mirror, basically staring at yourself, singing, your hair's all over the place, and you're... I'm trying to think of a new song today. And today am I doing a certain cover or one of my songs. And I got to try to think of a song. And then I'm sitting there in 45 minutes later instead of starting my day. I was making these cool videos. And it was such a huge thing for me. And that was when Snapchat was really exploding and then social media. So, I had a huge following on there. But yeah, then I built this pressure of like, "Okay, I got to do it again tomorrow. If I don't do it tomorrow, then my fans will get upset. And then I don't want to let them down. And then I'm letting myself down. Then I'm telling myself I'm not enough 'cause I screwed that up or whatever."

Subconsciously in the back of my head that's what I'm thinking. And so, I created these unnecessary pressures that don't even really have to be there. And then it gets in your head. And then I was all messed up from it. And I had a dog. I have a dog I'm very close with it. And more than ever he was, once I got him, he was in every single video. We were doing everything. And then I would bring him on stage every once in a while, and then if I didn't bring him on stage, so, I'm on the other side of the world and someone might get upset that I didn't bring him on stage, and then I created a whole another pressure of that and my dog.

SHAWN STEVENSON: 'Cause he was famous on social media, too.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah. He had hundreds of thousands of followers as a dog. And I was like, "This dog, this is... My best friend in the world, my most human thing is like, just have a connection with your animal." It's not for everybody else, It's for you and your animal. And I realized that a certain part, I was like, I'm like he's going to retire. I'm going to take care of him, he's going to retire. Some people thought he was not alive anymore. I was like, "No, I just want, I want to have that bit of normalcy."

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

BRETT ELDREDGE: So, I was creating all these things with the social media and it wore me out so much 'cause I was constantly on there. It's all I was doing. And I just felt like I could feel myself, and I'm sure most people feel this, if you stay on your phone for 20 to 30 minutes scrolling, you'll notice I get the tight band around my chest, I get shorter breath, I start to feel anxious from all the comparison, all the things, even if I'm not thinking comparison or I'm not thinking, "Oh, I should be in Thailand right now on a boat, on some crazy excursion that this person's on. And that I'm just sitting at home living a boring life," or whatever it is that it's telling you, that makes me so anxious. And so, I was like, "I'm going to get a flip phone. I'm going to get a Polaroid camera and I'm going to step away from all this, and kind of change my relationship with what social media is."

'Cause it can be a great tool. That's how I found you or whatever, and there's a lot of people that are putting great stuff out there that actually helps you and adds to your life. But I think there's gotta be a balance, and that balance is hard to find. And so, I kind of went... I have a really good willpower, but I think some of the ways these are built are built in a way that it's supposed to... It's almost impossible to fight sometimes to get that little bit of extra dopamine. It's like, "Oh, if I just pick up my phone in the morning just for a little bit, I can just pick it up and just look for five minutes, I'll be fine," and then you're down the rabbit hole watching some five different videos that make you laugh, but... Or, and then you see one bad video about war or something, and then I'm now thinking about that.

So, I put a lock on my phone. I just have a friend or someone in my family set the passcode. I can't get on there until 9 o'clock. I'm doing my schedule. I can only be on social media apps for a little over an hour a day, so I'm not mindlessly scrolling. I'm putting what is meaningful to my life right there, I'm seeing my couple people that I value and what they're saying and then I got to step off of them. And if I run out of time, I run out of time. I can't get that code 'cause I don't have it. And I tell the people that set it for me, "No matter what, don't let me have it. Don't let me have that code." So, just find a different relationship with that, and I think it went from the very extreme of being on it to now I've got a lot better balance. And there are still days where I'm like, "I need..." It's not like I have it perfected, I still go down the rabbit hole sometimes and it makes me not feel great, but it's gotten better with that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. You just said something really brilliant too, well, several brilliant things, but if it's left to our own devices, literally, if we have the passcode, we know let me have just five more minutes, or it might give you the warning or shut off whatever you could just whatever...

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah. You used to do it to ignore for... You used to be able to, and you still can, you can hit ignore for 15 minutes, you're like, "Oh yeah, 15 minutes, it's no big deal." And then that 15 minutes goes up and if you don't have the passcode, here is another 15 minutes. Then I'm an hour later.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Little Scooby snacks.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But you gave the... Let somebody else do it. They have the password, so you don't have any access.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And we've actually experienced this together because...

BRETT ELDREDGE: That's right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We were messaging on Instagram and then your time shut off. You sent me a message on Signal to just be like, "Sorry, man, I ran out of time." I didn't get that message like two weeks later I was like, "Oh sh*t, what happened to Brett?" And you had sent me a message on that platform because it kicked you out. So yeah, again, it's one thing to kind of theorize about this stuff and also to leave it to your own devices to do the right thing per se, but really this is about just taking control of your time, taking control of your mind. As soon as we pick it up, we're going to start outsourcing our attention, and we leave the room, we leave reality. And especially if you have family, if you have kids, it is one of the most invasive things. And I see it, like, I could see it firsthand. I'm very cognizant of it and I can see... And I know many people, and this is not to say again that we are bad parents or anything like that, I've done it before where I'm just like, "Just a minute, bud," 'cause I'm doing something on this.

BRETT ELDREDGE: I'm doing something.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I leave the room. And so, I don't want him to be like that. And so now I've really worked to train myself, and nine out of 10 times I'm great about like, "Let me put this thing down, be present." Some of the ways that I do it is like in that moment when I am... Because it pulls so much of your... There's so much neurochemistry going on in this thing, I need something to bring me back. So, it's just like listen to the sound of his voice, really listen to the sound of his voice.

BRETT ELDREDGE: That's cool.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Look into his eyes. Look at his mannerisms. Try to tune back into reality.

BRETT ELDREDGE: That's brilliant.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And even if nobody's around as well, because like you said, it can... 20, 30 minutes, you start to just feel off. It's hardly... And I'd challenge anybody to say they've been on one of these apps for like an hour on Instagram, you get off, you're like, "I feel amazing." That doesn't really happen.

BRETT ELDREDGE: That's not one per... There's no one's going to say that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, getting off of it, I go outside, I look into the horizon, I walk, get some fresh air. We have to counterbalance this stuff because the screens aren't going anywhere.

BRETT ELDREDGE: No, they're going to get...

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's part of our life.

BRETT ELDREDGE: They're going to be like... They're going to be like...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Double tapping the side of your head.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah. There's going to be an element of, "What were you saying now?"

SHAWN STEVENSON: Minority report, man.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But with that said, when things like this emerge, I believe there are solutions that emerge with them. And one of them is that, and you've seen this too, there's like a resurgence of spending time in nature and being outside and doing things to challenge ourselves physically to build up that stress resilience. So, when you do that cold plunge, you're building up your resilience in stressful situations.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yes. And that's helped me a lot in that way. I had a... I think it's so important nowadays 'cause I was in Chicago, and I was going through the Shedd Aquarium there, it's a great aquarium, and I was walking and there's these baby penguins are in the tank, I was like, "This is the coolest thing ever." If I was a kid... I'm already... Think it's cool. And I walk in there

and there's this five-year-old kid, and he's kind of sitting back away from the window, and these beautiful penguins are right here and he's playing a game on his phone.

And at that one point that was... This is the real thing, but it's not that thing. So, finding those... And I can imagine, 'cause it's easier to... I understand and how hard parenting is to get the phone. It's just it's a new challenge that we're all kind of finding. And you might get more dopamine from the thing that's not real on your phone than the thing that's... Little penguins jumping around a little fake igloo thing at the zoo. So, it's interesting.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's a great observation. And like you said, especially today where we can go and... You go into Target, which my wife apparently, she hasn't been in a couple months, and she was supposed to just go pick something up on the way home, and then cut to two hours later I see my wife like, "What happened to you." She was like, "I'm a woman. I haven't been to Target in months. What did you think was going to happen? I'm going to... Target is my target." You know what I'm saying? And you got a kid and they're fussy, whatever, it's very easy to pacify them. 'Cause that's what it is. Even for us, we're big adult babies in many ways, just pacifying us, getting us away from our frustrations, our to-do list, our anxiety, whatever the case is, but the thing is it doesn't resolve it. Just like a pacifier, that binky, you're not really getting the real thing, it's just like its kind of psyching you out a little bit, and the hunger's still there. You know what I mean? That's some deep stuff right there.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Man.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Instagram is a binky.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So shoutout to... Is it baby Maggie on The Simpsons? Was she the one with the binky?

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah, she was. Yeah, the baby was. Yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Got a quick break coming up. We'll be right back. When I was in high school, in college, our big sports performance game day meal was mostaccioli. Mostaccioli consciousness. Mostaccioli performance. And wondering why we're over on the sidelines yawning and waiting for the next play and cycle back in again. Of course, you get hopped up, you get the adrenaline going, you do your performance. But what if there was something better? Not just for game day, but for practice days as well. Because how you practice is how you perform. And so, if you're dedicated to True Sports performance, your nutrition really does matter. And now, we have things that have clinical evidence, peer review-controlled trials that

show the efficacy of things that have been utilized for centuries. And a study published in medicine and science and sports and exercise tested 30 healthy athletes for six weeks to record the effects of cordyceps medicinal mushroom on their performance.

The group that added cordyceps to their daily regimen had twice the oxygen uptake of the control group. This oxygen is essential in supplying nutrients to your muscles, preventing fatigue, and preventing the build-up of lactic acid. Another study done by the same group also showed a 9% increase in aerobic activity from utilizing cordyceps. For myself personally, my pre-workout go to is Shroom TECH Sport from Onnit. And just because it was the subject of a double-blind placebo controlled 12-week clinical trial performed by researchers at Florida State University. And they found that utilizing Shroom TECH Sport as a pre-workout showed a direct increase in bench press reps by 12%. They also found an increase in combined bench press and back squat reps by 7% for the supersets. And also, were found to parallel the earlier study with a cardio performance increase by 8.8%, almost 9% that was seen in the earlier clinical trial. If you're not utilizing Shroom TECH Sport, definitely check it out. Go to onnit.com/model. That's O-N-N-I-T.com/model for 10% off. It's a world-class pre-workout and pre-life supplement to use. Onnit.com/model. Now, back to the show.

I want to ask you about this. When you talked about that BedHead songs, getting up and creating that, it was amazing. That expanded your reach, that provided so much joy and value. And you also, again, you shared if you miss a day, you got fans who are like, "Hey, what happened? I noticed that you weren't there." And that can turn into agitation. So, this is going back to doing something today that we feel traditionally, which was we can expect our favorite thing to be on at this time. So, for me, it was Monday, 7:00 PM, Alf was coming on, when I was a kid, living with my grandmother. And so, creating that in the mind of our community so they can expect something great to show up for them. Right?

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now, when you created that, you were also putting yourself into this box. And humans, we need boxes to operate within, 'cause we're just like we want freedom. When we don't have structure and boundaries, we tend to be all over the place, literally. And so, you created that and it creates success, but it also can imprison us.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, I want... The reason I'm bringing this up is, the... I want to talk about the successful part of it, which you being a creative, you being, in many ways, an entrepreneur, we can... We don't really understand when we're going to a job... What was your first job, by the way?

BRETT ELDREDGE: My first job was probably a YMCA camp counselor.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Okay. I could see that. I could see that.

BRETT ELDREDGE: I was like a human... I'm like 6'4". I'm like a human jungle gym. It was just like all these... I'm just trying to make the kids have fun. It was fun, but it was a good first job for sure. And then I was a DJ, wedding DJ/singer.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Aw, come on.

BRETT ELDREDGE: So, I'd be playing every kind of wedding song, Brick House to We Are Family to whatever, and then I'm singing Sinatra and I'm singing... And so, I just kind of bounce all over the place and that was a... Those were my first two jobs. So, I never had a really... I had very random first jobs.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I can't wait to talk about this in your autobiography.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah, you're ready to go, you're warmed up.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But you coming from that paradigm, like so many of us where we have a 9:00 to 5:00, we have a job, we're showing up and essentially most of the time we're exchanging our time for money, but when you want to create something that isn't within the typical bounds of society, which is you going and working for somebody, it's a switch you flip in your mind going from value extraction to value creation. And to create value consistently, you have to create structure, you have to create something where you're showing up and doing this thing on a consistent basis, but you found how it can help you tremendously, but also the point at which it can hinder you. So how important is it for you to have structure and kind of routine in your process?

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah, it's so huge and honestly this is still a struggle for me, and I'm very interested in talking about it. 'Cause I am so structured that I can... I'm still finding the balance, 'cause I like to go to bed at the same time every night, which you and I both know it's a great thing to do, but if I go an hour later, I'm beating myself up. So, perfection... There's a middle ground there between chasing perfection and sit on the couch all day and watching Netflix. You know what I'm saying? You got to find somewhere in between there, which is kind of where I'm starting... I've, in the last year really found, okay, I've got a great structure, I'm probably one of the most disciplined people I know, and it can be a detriment sometimes. So right now, it's like if I have that structure, I think the most purpose I find... Putting out music

for 10 years now, a purpose for me, okay, is, okay, I get to get in front of people and literally have the opportunity to sing these songs that can change somebody's life.

And maybe I've had people say hearing this record literally pulled me out of the toughest place in my life and saved my life or whatever. I'm not thinking about that a lot of time when I'm making music. But when I get to get up on stage and I see somebody crying and everything, I'm like, "Okay, that's a reminder of why I do this." Sometimes you lose touch with that 'cause you're in the grind, and I've been in places where... And I heard a really interesting comparison this other day where somebody... This kid ran into their favorite... Their mother's favorite composer at the airport, and he said, "Well, my mom went and saw you at the Hollywood Bowl or whatever it is, and the crowd gave you a standing ovation. And what are you thinking about up there when everybody's giving you a standing ovation?" And the person said, "You know, I'm... You want to know the truth. I was thinking about where I messed up in the second song." And the kids are crying, he's like, "It's supposed to be. It's such a beautiful thing that you're doing."

And so I've had to really find that, 'cause chasing that perfection and that structure has built me in a great way, but also there was a point in my life where I was at a number one party for one of my songs, I think it was my third number one or something, and I am so caught up in the rest of what's next, what's the next thing in my structure, and I got to get the next one. I'm at the party holding the award. You know what I mean? And I think it's... There's part of that that helps you chase the next thing, but if you're not enjoying the moment, it is hard to appreciate. And I think I got to a point where I was having several years where I felt like I don't remember a lot of it, because I was always looking to the next. And so, my goal right now, and it has been over the last several years, and I think I'm getting there of a lot better place, but I get frustrated sometimes as I really beat myself up.

Like on the road, I get... There's not as much structure as when I'm home, but when I'm home, it's like, okay, I can wake up today, I can write a song, I got this, I'm writing with my favorite writer today. Especially if I'm writing towards a record, like, when I was writing for songs about you record and my new record out there right now, I was getting up every morning, I was doing the bath, I was singing in the bath, I was getting these ideas, I was getting excited. I would record on... I had a little recorder device or record in my phone, and I would get excited. And I go, I'm like, okay, I got this whole picture to paint when I was in... I had this whole idea called Songs About You, and I show up to these songwriters and say, "I had this idea called Songs About You. This is what I think about the verse here." And then we all start kicking it around, and then by the end of that, in an hour and a half later, we've got an incredible song. And so, I'm striving for something. And I think when I have that purpose, when I have that chase, it's when I do best.

When I'm away from that, it's where it starts to... I start to lose my purpose, a little bit of my touch. And so, I've really had to really zoom in on that lately, and I'm actually in the middle of that right now. And I want to be completely honest about that 'cause... But I really... It's helped me to really step back and look at it that way. It's like, okay, I just put my record out, now it's... I'm on a break from tour. I'm about to go into this big Christmas tour, I want to enjoy that instead of waking up in the morning. I don't get to play till 9 o'clock tonight, I got to figure out what to do from 7:00 AM to 9:00. And so, you got this whole time to think about what to do. I got to play at a show tonight and I got to be perfect, I got to hit every note, I got to make everybody feel something, and when I get up... So, I'm a kind of a mess sometimes during the day because I'm wanting to be great for everybody else.

And then when I get up on stage and that kind of going down stage sometimes on the road, once I get up there, I'm like, "Why did I ever doubt myself?" I'm feeling this connection with this person in the crowd, this person's crying, this person's laughing, this... Somebody might be having the best time in their life, and I'm also having a great time up here because I'm just doing what I love. And so, I've really started to hone in on that and zoom in on that a little bit, and really, the structure of, Okay, when I'm on the road getting out and not just sitting on the bus... There was a point where I'd sit on the back of the bus, I would be in... There was a closet in the back of the bus, and I used to sit in the back there and just white knuckling till I'm going on stage, and it was just so pressure, pressure, pressure, pressure. And I still have some of that. But now if I get out and I get up, I do my journaling, I go on a hike. I take the focus off myself a little bit and have a conversation with the band and stuff. I'm still learning all this, instead of just trying to be perfect with it.

So, I'm finding the balance, but I think structure is so important as a creator, but also stepping back and being like, "Let the thing that you do be the thing that you do." And so that's kind of all over answer I know, but it's kind of where I'm... I just hope it humanizes the thought that we're all kind of trying to go for something and you can't always exactly have it pinpointed. But I think the fact that you're willing to go down that journey and willing to take a look at it and say, "I don't really have this figured out, but I know exactly what I want and where I want it to go. And I need to be a little more gentle on myself in my heart and my soul, and realize that what I do is a beautiful thing. And a lot of people support that. I got to be there for myself so I can be there for everybody else." And I'm finding that dance right now.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. That dance, it's the dance between accomplishment and fulfillment.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. So, we have these personality tendencies, it could be a nature versus nurture thing where we're really driven towards accomplishment again, what's the next thing? And then there are other folks who are more content with life and with how things are, and they're more fulfilled just in the day to day. Maybe it's just, again, spending time with their kid or whatever the case might be. Just fulfillment is more on tap. And so, to be able to marry those things, because when you talk to people who are later on in life, rarely do they say, "I wish I worked more," it's more on, "I wish that I paid more attention to fill in the blank. I wish I spent more time." And being able to keep kicking the ball forward, moving the ball down the field. And at the same time, for me, I'm very similar. So, as you're saying this is just like, yeah. But what changed was just literally I had to make myself pay attention and have a gratitude practice. Because I'm onto the next thing. I just created another number one podcast episode. And I used to post those all the time.

BRETT ELDREDGE: How about the next one? Or whatever is what you would just...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes, I got to do...

BRETT ELDREDGE: I got to keep... I got to hold that up or whatever.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The next creation. And I'm excited about it. I love doing it. But what about the joy of appreciating that moment? And the thing and you've experienced this as well, is like it brings about so much more connection to when I'm doing the thing. I remember why I'm doing it. And it just like it creates another level of resonance, and creativity, all the things. It's just like, "Why don't I do that more often?" And I think that's why a lot of folks, of course, get burned out. Especially in the entertainment field too. It's just like always trying to... The next thing, the next thing. Not really...

BRETT ELDREDGE: It's never going to give you... Getting that next number one, like I had a streak where I was like, okay, I've got like six or seven number ones in a row, the moment that eighth one didn't come or whatever, did the world end? No, not at all. Did I have to change my perspective? Okay, what am I doing? That actually helped me, but at that moment in time I was like, okay, you're just trying to chase that next one, and all of a sudden, you're going to have that one thing that doesn't work. It's part of being a creator. It's part of being human. The failures and the mistakes, or it's not even a failure, it's a learning moment. It's a teacher. And I think also how you define success is so important. And I think that that for me is something that I'm still learning. But when I was going into 2020, 2020 I was out of this big tour coming and everything, and then obviously we all got hit with what we got hit with and didn't get to play shows for a long time. The purpose of everything in my mind that I do, and I had this record that I had already been off the grid before we all had to go off the grid.

So, this is when I got that flip phone and did all that. And I made this very profound record called Sunday Drive, and still one of my... This is my most vulnerable things I've ever put out. Had to put it out at a time where I couldn't promote it, I couldn't do anything with it, you have to tour this kind of record. It's not chasing... I'm like, I'm not just putting out songs that I'm chasing to go number one. I'm putting my whole heart and soul and really a reflective record. And it came out. And so of course it didn't get the opportunity to blow up massively, but the way it connected with my fans was deeper than anything I've ever put out. So, I had to switch my way of looking at it. Like, okay, maybe I didn't have a bunch of number ones off this record like I had in the last four records, but the level of connection and the process I had going into that was something that was so powerful. And you can feel it every time I play those songs and when people listen to 'em.

And I think so defining success has been a dance I've been really, really zoning in on the last couple of years, and it's really helped me even going into this new record, Songs About You, that I just put out and like, okay, I'm doubling down on my heart and soul on what I did. I'm going to get even more vulnerable in that last record. And if I get number ones from it, that's great. But more importantly, am I loving the music I'm making? Not that I wasn't loving what I was before, it's just I've grown up. We're all going to change how we do things. And we kind of zoom in the lens a little bit of what we do and sometimes some of it works and sometimes you listen to your heart, sometimes you listen to, okay, maybe I need to change this type of song a little bit. But I think finding the heart of it, finding the success for me has been, how do people feel when I play this music when I'm out there? And how do... And I know that somebody... I get all these messages, "This song saved my life."

"I was going through a breakup when I heard Songs About You, or I heard that song Hideaway, and I was just not doing nothing but working, working, working then I heard the song Hideaway, and I needed to remind myself to go on a drive this weekend just for me, and to take time for myself, and that gave me a perspective on life that I needed so bad. That has changed the way I view the world," and I've seen that kind of stuff. And I'm like, "Oh yeah, that's what it's about." And that's what success is. And so, I really had to have some hard schooling on that, but I'm glad I get to learn it that way and still learn it every day.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Just like music is the soundtrack of our lives. You're doing that for people. That's so profound, man. It's a very, very special gift.

BRETT ELDREDGE: It is.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I wanted to ask you about this. There was actually... In Sunday Drive, in that story, which I didn't know that part of it, but I know when it came out during the time, it just seemed like it was a resonant thing in that moment because there's a lyric in there where

you talk about essentially looking out the window as you're driving, just like... I kind of felt like a child, a child experience of just looking out the window as my mom is driving and that was our screen, like that was my... But it didn't have any detraction from it, it's not like staring into this little space, it's the world out here, this is the screen I'm looking through is on this drive and just like everything is so grand and so diverse and so everything, and it's just all there. And that's what I picked up. And also, it coming out at the time when we might have got pulled away from that, and just kind of... I think it touched a lot of people because it got us to turn back within and be like... And that's what it's really about. And I'm not going to take that for granted like I was before.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah, those little moments in Sunday Drive, that song, it talks about the speed of life and all the way to your parents taking you on a ride as a kid, and then one day if you're lucky, you're taking them for a ride and they're in the back seat watching the world through an open window as the trees lined up like dominoes, and those little moments that you think don't mean anything mean everything. And I'm really trying to zoom in on those with my life. And I think the fact that you can, as an artist, as a songwriter, be able to transport someone to a place where they were free and they were vulnerable, and they were real at a time where they might be as far from themselves as they possibly are, and they've ever been, and the fact that you can go and you could take them to that place and make them feel that, that's man... And that's...

I'm just clicking right now; I'm trying to not get emotional from it 'cause that is the beauty of it. That is the beauty, is I can show somebody that still exists, that that part of your heart is still there, you're not any different than that person, you might have... Different things have happened in life, and have taken you down different roads, but you're still that kid, you're still that person with that sense of wonder, you're just... The world is tough, but you still have that, and I think to be able to remind people that and remind myself that, that's where success is. That's where freedom is.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, man. You, for so many people, you're... They hear one of your songs it transports them to a certain moment, and I know that you got a lot of that growing up too. I know that I did. And I want to talk about how music happened. When did you fall in love with music? And when did you know that this is what you were going to do?

BRETT ELDREDGE: Man, I was... So, I was part of the kid that gets nervous in these interviews or whatever, 'cause I was just talking about how we're still... There's still a huge part of us that is that kid, we just lose a lot of it. I started to learn that when I was a kid, I would sing, I would be outside that door over there, and everybody knew I had a cool voice, but I was so nervous to stand in front of people. I'd stand on the other side of that door, and I would sing, but I'd be like.

That voice, I was like five years old, and I wasn't 6'5" at that point, I was really tiny. And I had this huge voice, and people would just be blown away that I had this big voice like this, and so they'd pay me like \$5 and I'd sing the national anthem or Take Me Out to The Ball Game, those were my two hits that time.

And I'd hit them with that, sing those two songs, they'd throw me \$5, and then I would run in the backyard and play and get out of that like nervous. And so, I started out, I was probably five doing that, singing in church, and I slowly started... As I was singing in church, I would start to get the feeling that the crowd actually wants me to succeed, they don't want me to screw up. And I still have to remind myself that to this day. Like I'm really nervous up here, but everybody who's watching me is feeling something when I'm singing, they're here for me if I screw up too or whatever, they're not going to be judging me the way I'm judging myself. And I do this all the time still. But as I slowly started to learn that the next thing you know I would sing, and I would look up a little bit more instead of staring at my feet.

And then I started to get into this groove, and then my mom brought home a CD one day of a song by Bobby Darin called Mack The Knife. It's like a big band song. And she started bringing me these like... My grandfathers both listened to a lot of Sinatra growing up. And I would ride around in the car with my grandpa, and he'd be playing this old music. And so, then it was like old people music, whatever, but it was like cool because my grandpa listened to it. So, my mom brought that home, and I was like, "I don't know, mom, my friends are all listening to Backstreet Boys and Boyz II Men and Garth Brooks and that kind of stuff, not what grandpa's listen to, but okay, I'll give it a shot." And I learned some of the Sinatra kind of stuff, and I'd go to sing it at a talent show, and I have a top hat kind of thing and well... Like, uh-huh, this is going to come back to haunt me one day, but I'm totally fine, I'd post it right now, but anyways.

I went up there and just slate it, and I would start... I was sweeping the talent shows across Central Illinois. And I went to all these contests 'cause I could sound like this old soul singing this music. And it really made me, the next thing I know, instead of being that kid staring at the floor, I'm riding on the back of golf carts singing as they're driving me around. I'm like, "This is my expression. This is me." And so, one thing led to another, and I was a small town hero. I was that I was the kid that could sing in my town. Then I had to go show it to the world, move to Chicago for a little bit, sang with big bands up there. So, I'd be singing the Commodores, then I'd be singing John Mayer, then I'd be singing Garth Brooks or Brooks and Dunn.

And I would be at all these different parties, I would be singing at with this band. But I was like, "Man, I heard Brooks and Dunn for the first time, freshman year of high school and Brooks and Dunn and I loved, And Ronnie Dunn sings his soulful voice, he has such a soulful voice and he

sings like he's influenced by Ray Charles, but he is also singing about this small town life where he was and the things that I was kind of grown up around. And so like, he had this soulful voice, and he is mixing all this together. And I was like, "Oh, I could do, I can do that thing. I can do all these different influences that I like." I can just go and be me.

So, I moved to Nashville, started knocking on people's doors, and this is like, I can't believe I did it, like knock on people's doors and be like, "Hey, I'm a singer. Here's a CD of me" that we record in a little barn in Illinois in some guy's house with karaoke tracks and a picture, a headshot that my mom took under the railroad tracks in Paris. My hair is like... I look like a surfer from the 70s or something, highlighted hair, and of like bringing this to people's doors in Nashville. And there were a couple people that took that CD and I interned and finished college down there, Middle Tennessee State University. I would drive back and forth to Nashville, write songs. The songs were really bad in the beginning. And I stayed at to the craft. I stayed and I got up every day and I had something to, I had something, that purpose. I had that thing of like, "I'm going to figure this out regardless." Kept writing, kept writing. My voice started getting better.

I started to find out more who I was. Then I signed a publishing deal, was writing songs for a living, maybe making a very small amount of money, but I was making like... But I was the happiest... I still think to this day, I was at some of the happiest moments of my life for having nothing and going after everything with no fear. And then I got a record deal, after writing some other artists were cutting my songs, recording my songs. I got a record deal, which is why I moved to town. I didn't even realize that I had this knack for being a songwriter. But I started going to these songwriter nights people be playing at the holiday Inn Lobby bar, it's called The Commodore Lounge.

And I got signed up to go play there one night and I saw these people playing. This lady would be smoke, chain-smoking cigarettes. She'd check you in, she'd chain smoke cigarettes. And she'd be like, "All right, honey, you're in the next round." And there'd be like two people in the crowd, and she would sing harmonies to your song from the podium as she smoked cigarettes in the back, which was incredible. It was still to this day I have great memories of... She didn't really know that song, but she would pick it up enough to sing harmonies whether you wanted her to or not. And there'd be two people in the crowd and you're just, "Well, I don't care. I'm just playing this music," I'm just, "I want somebody to hear these songs." And so, I started to figure it out. This songwriting thing worked too. And then the vocal things of course is why I got there, it all meshed together. And 15 years later from when I first went to Nashville, here I am talking with you, my brother.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Man, it's so amazing. So amazing. And to have the courage, especially coming from, we're from the Midwest, man, to go outside of those bounds, for you to move to

Nashville, moving out here to LA, it's very different, very different. And so, to hear that you were knocking on doors to boot, that's incredible.

BRETT ELDREDGE: And you got to do it. I get this question a lot. I'm sure you did too. It's like, "I'm thinking about moving to Nashville to become a songwriter. Do you think I should do it? How should I do it?" Whatever. And sometimes I'm like, "Would I recommend anybody trying to go down this route?" 'Cause it's hard. It's really hard. It's stuff that's gave me a lot of joys and a lot of heartbreak. That's the classic thing about being, anything that you're going after as a career though. That's your passion. But I'd say you have to have that willingness to go above and beyond and knock on those doors and play those little songwriter nights and be really scared to go right in the room with this person that has a song that was recorded by... It was a big hit for some artist and you're like, "I'm so nervous and they're probably going to think I'm a terrible songwriter, whatever." And you go anyways, and you show up and you write a really great song with them, or you don't write a great song with them, but at least you showed up. And taking those steps. You got to be willing to not sleep. You got to be willing to just chase it as hard as you can because that's what you love. If not, maybe just stay back at home.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, man.

BRETT ELDREDGE: 'Cause... You know what I mean?

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is... No. You're sharing the thing that nobody talks about, because it sounds very romantic to follow your passion and... But nobody really talks about how hard it is. And I'm so glad that you're bringing that up because it takes more from you than you even realize that you have. And if you're willing to invest that. Okay, yes, have the vision, understand your gift and your potential, all those things are great, but you have to be willing to extract more from yourself than you even know that you have and to be able to... Because most of the work, when you're standing on stage in front of thousands of people, all of the things that put you in that spot happen behind the scenes when nobody's watching and you're not getting any accolades, nobody's clapping for you, nobody's cheering you on, you're fighting with yourself, a death match. And that's the part that people don't understand. If you are willing to invest into yourself, into your craft, all of those hours behind the scenes and not look for somebody to come and give you a stamp of approval, despite that, and matter of fact, people giving you the opposite of that, and to keep working and to keep focused on why you're doing it, that's what it's really about. And so, giving people that like, give them that prerequisite, like, "Hey, listen, this is way harder than you think it's going to be."

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah. And it's not a guarantee at all. But, if you're willing to grind it above and beyond and go through a lot of discomfort, that's why I like, of getting that cold plunges in the morning. That's another thing for me to do. It's like, you got to be ready for that major

discomfort and a lot of rejection. And when you get success, still going to get that. You know what I mean?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Let me ask you about your influences, right? So, you mentioned Frank Sinatra, you mentioned Backstreet Boys, and Boyz II Men. Your palette is so diverse, and that's one of the reasons we really connect too, and us being from the Midwest, when I saw you yesterday, you was like, "Nelly," 'cause I'm from St. Louis.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah. My first concert was Nelly.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Your first concert was a Nelly concert? I didn't know that. You asked me what my first concert was. Your first concert was Nelly.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Nelly and Champaign Illinois at Assembly Hall. When I saw Nelly and so yeah, I grew up listening to what was ever on the radio for... Well, actually what I started listening to was The Eagles, Aerosmith, like REO Speed Wagon, CCR, these different bands that my mom and dad were listening to. And then, I got into Ray Charles, and I got into... Boyz II Men was one of the first CDs I ever had. I had a... Or Green Day was one of the first CDs I had. So, MC Hammer. I remember I had the MC Hammer album, like it's kind of all over the board, which is a beautiful thing, like just hearing all these different records. And then at once I heard, like I said, once I heard Brooks & Dunn, and that's when I got into country music, and it all kind of locked in of where I was going to go after.

But really, it's never been like, "I just want to be a country artist" or whatever. 'Cause I'm about to embark on the Glow tour right now. And it's all big band. It's big band music. It's jazz. It's nothing to do with country. It's just another part of my soul. That's what I grew up, that's what I started singing. And such a huge part of who I am. And when I went and made the record, I was like, "If I'm going to do this, I'm doing it exactly how I want to do it. I'm not going to try to put a little steel guitar in there or whatever." This is a big band record. And as long as I could go do it the way that I knew I could when I was a kid, people are going to... It's who I am.

So, no one's going to guess like, "Oh, this is just some... This guy trying to be like a karaoke singer doing it." And when I put it out, it exploded in a way that I couldn't imagine because it was just real. And so, it's like, I think for me, it's been not being genre-specific or like you can only do this thing. I want to do a lot of things. I want to show a lot of parts of who I am. And they all are, just like the countryside is a part of who I am, this big band's a side of who I am, I've got so much I still want to give from all that. And so, it's a lot of fun. I'll be up there in a Velvet Tux in about, here pretty soon, and singing with the horns blazing behind me and snapping my fingers and feeling that big band energy. And then next year, I'll be doing some

stuff that's acoustic driven and that kind of thing. And that's a beautiful thing to be able to do all that. And so, all that kind of came from a lot of different influence.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Man, that's the tweetable for today: big band energy.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Big band energy. Yeah, you got that right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We got that BBE in here today, boy.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah, get ready for the Big Band Energy coming at you on the Glow tour.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, this is so cool because with you doing this, you're bridging so many people into other experiences of music that they might not even realize that they love. And it's because it's you, right? It's just like, it's all there in your voice, in the texture, in the experience, all those things. And you could look at, just throughout history, those people that have bridged over different genres of music, the person who that jumps to mind like Shania Twain. Right? Like, I grew up with my grandmother. Like I grew up hiphop, just hiphop and R&B in one household, in another household, nothing but country music. But then I kind of rebelled against the country music because it was forced upon me on three-hour car rides to the country, Piedmont Missouri.

But then with Shania Twain hitting the scene and being able to blend these big epic love ballads and these, you know what I mean? There's like this pop feel to it. And then I actually worked at the hockey arena in St. Louis, and so they would play like some of her songs. Especially like, kind of getting things going. I think it was giving your best shot or hit me with your best shot. Right? And so, it just like, it's these vibes like, it became pretty epic. And I worked there during the time we had Brett Hall; Wayne Gretzky was on the team for a moment.

BRETT ELDREDGE: What a gig!

SHAWN STEVENSON: It was nuts. It was nuts. I was in high school, man. But having that experience that brought me back to like, wait a minute, I actually like country music. And then, so I started to remember those feelings and those songs like, "Wait a minute, the jazz were pretty epic." Like that's a great song. Reba McEntire, that's a great song. And so, I'm excited for you and I can't wait to experience it more myself, but this is leading to one of my most important questions I want to ask you about today. And this is for everybody because through all of this experience you mentioned basically finding your voice, how important is it for us, especially today, to find our own voice?

BRETT ELDREDGE: Oh man, it's everything. My favorite artists have been people that are unapologetically themselves. No matter what you do, it's like when I listen to Shawn Stevenson on The Model Health Show, it's like you have your own beat, you have your own style, you have your own thing that's different than anybody that's doing what you're doing, just like my favorite songwriters or singers, they do something a little bit different that really makes 'em stick out. It's like, like Springsteen, he didn't even have a number one. And he's one of the biggest artists out there. He's so unique. And he is not like a... He's a different kind of singer. He is like... He's got his own thing that nobody has. And I think finding your thing that makes you, you is so important and sticking to it. And it's not always the popular thing. It's really easy to jump on and follow. And all of us have been guilty of parts of that in our lives are like, "Oh man, well this is working for that person. Am I supposed to do that?" No. Do your thing because, and it will keep you up at night sometimes.

And you'll be like, and it's easier way out to go the other way, but you're going to be a lot more happy with yourself and your purpose and who you are if you stay who you are. And those little voices in the back of your head will show up and they will hunt you, they will come after you. But I think to be able to stand strong and kind of just be there for yourself and say, "No, this is who I am. This is what I'm going for. This is the music I make. This, I know, and I believe in it," and getting the right people around you that believe in you for the right reasons, is that other part of it. But you got to believe it before everybody else. And I think that that's where the win is and that's where you get your voice.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That was a bar from Common, which we both love.

BRETT ELDREDGE: I love Common.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Common said, "Nobody believes until I believe me"

BRETT ELDREDGE: Ah, yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Come on, come on. I was actually listening to him on the way over here.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Really?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

BRETT ELDREDGE: I'm going to listen to him on the way home then. I love Common.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The People I was listening to The People. Because again, I was just getting in tune with you man. And man, I appreciate you so much. So, you mentioned the Christmas

tour's coming up. So, when this comes out, this coming out right before the holidays season's kicking in full gear.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah, let's get everybody...

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, where can people get information about the tour?

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah, the tour bretteldredge.com, and it's almost sold out now, so it's the whole tour, which is really cool 'cause I started the Glow Tour in a basement in Nashville with like 200 people. And now we're doing like multiple nights at Chicago Theater. That's like 3500 people a night. And all these like really rich like velvety seat theaters that are just like classic and just fit big band music. And so, you can get those tickets on bretteldredge.com. You can find me when I'm present on social media at [@bretteldredge](https://twitter.com/bretteldredge). I'm on there trying to share the real parts of my life, get honest on there and yeah, come see a show either this year or next year. I'll be back on tour next year. But yeah, this tour I'm really excited and I'm really kind of zoning in on my purpose of why I'm going on it, and I could bring a lot of joy to a lot of people for the holiday season when we all need a little bit of a reminder that we can still be kids and still feel that the magic in our heart. And so that's what I'm searching for, is that magic in my heart, so I can bring it out in everybody else.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely, man. And thank you so much for, you sent me Mr. Christmas, The Christmas album?

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Pick it up. Go to... Of course. It's so weird to say this now 'cause you can go to your phone, just download the album but you sent me a record, record.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah, yeah, the vinyl.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I didn't mention this. Did you see the record player by the pool table?

BRETT ELDREDGE: No, I meant to ask, I meant to ask to see it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I got it because of you. I went in and straight got a record player to listen to the record with the crisp and the hisses and the pops like...

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah, the imperfection of it is the perfection of it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Like nature intended. So good.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Yeah. So imperfection of records. I got a record player on my bus now. As long as you don't drive down the road and try to play it. But I love records. So yeah, you can go out there and just put out Mr. Christmas last year and I just put out my new album...

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's incredible.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Songs About You, too.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So good.

BRETT ELDREDGE: We're rolling.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, absolutely. Man, my guy, I appreciate you so much. Thank you for coming to hang out with us.

BRETT ELDREDGE: Hell, yeah, man. I'll come back any time.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome. The one and only Brett Eldredge. Thank you so much for tuning into the show today. I hope you got a lot of value out of this. This is one to share up with your friends and family. Send this straight from the podcast app that you're listening on. You're going to have some country music fans out there that are going to go nuts, like, "Oh my God, Brett is on." Yes. Send this to your country music fans and also just send it to somebody that you love. It's a powerful story, powerful insights, incredible human being.

We've got much more of this in store for you, I'm telling you. Buckle your seatbelt. We've got some world class guests, powerful masterclasses coming very, very soon. Don't miss a thing. Make sure that you're subscribed to The Model Health Show on all platforms and be prepared because we're going to keep blowing you away.

We're just getting warmed up. So be prepared for what's in store. 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. That's where you can find all of the show notes, you can 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 this show is awesome. And I'll 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.