

THE MODEL HEALTH SHOW

EPISODE 635

Why Improving Mental Health Is The Key To Solving Our World's Biggest Conflicts

With Guest Zachary Levi

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SHAWN STEVENSON: Welcome to the Model Health Show. This is fitness and nutrition expert, Shawn Stevenson and I'm so grateful for you tuning in with today. What's said is that we are a product of our environment, and that's absolutely true. We are going to assimilate the environmental inputs around us, and today we know that these are epigenetic controllers, these are even determining our health outcomes, they're determining our cognitive ability, our personality, so much more, they're truly influencing what our genes are doing, so these epigenetic inputs from our environment. So, when we say that we're a product of our environment, it's absolutely true, and we're also creators of our environment, and that's what makes us so unique as a species. We're not just products of our environment, we're also creators of our environment, but until we become aware of that, until we can consciously create environments that are conducive to our health, that are conducive to our optimal performance, our joy, our ability to process through our stressors, all these things, we can actually create an environment that makes these things normal.

Now, today, you know that our society is anything but normal, the CDC recently released their newest data showing that, and of course we just covered this on a recent episode, but their new data is showing that 60% of American adults have at least one chronic disease. Currently, right now in our society, six out of 10 of our citizens have at least one chronic disease, and about 40% of our citizens have two or more chronic diseases, and most of these chronic diseases were extremely rare just a couple of decades ago. Something has happened, something has changed dramatically that's leading to these poor outcomes. And what's often looked over in these conversations is that these health outcomes are influencing how we relate to each other, they're influencing how we relate to ourselves, it's very difficult to have compassion for ourselves and for others, if we're not doing well physically and mentally, it takes a lot of energy to be able to perspective take, to be able to have patience. We see the outcomes on the surface, we don't realize that these are about energy inputs, and these are about capacities, these are about skill sets that we have to be able to develop.

Yes, but we also need to have the energy to be able to implement them. You've probably noticed this in your life before, when you are stressed out, when you're tired, this is when you tend to be more irritable, this is when you tend to have less patience. This is when you tend to also go for things that might not be as "good for you", leaning into more time on social media on our devices, we tend to do these things, it's just like brain candy, when we are lacking energy, when we're tired, when we're frustrated, when we're stressed out, we turn to these things and also we expel from our own biology expressions of lack of patience, expressions of lack of empathy, lack of our ability to put ourselves in someone else's shoes.

And today also, you know that we are experiencing a lot of turbulence, there's a lot of divisiveness in our world today, very black and white thinking, very, this team or that team, and what's going to result is not just a stalemate but a trickle-down effect of poor outcomes with our citizens, and that's what we're witnessing right now. Now, today we're going to talk about what's at the core of this issue, and we oftentimes don't think about this because we see our problems is our problems, and we don't think about the things that were planted, sometimes before we even get here, that are leading to the environment that we find ourselves in and the way that we express ourselves within this environment. And this is highlighted in this study, and this was published in the Journal Neuro-Psychopharmacology, and the title of the paper is 'Potential of environmental enrichment to prevent trans-generational effects of parental trauma.'

The paper is articulating that trauma from our parents, trauma from our grandparents can be passed down to us, can be handed off, not just genetically but through mediums that we don't quite understand yet, but we see the replication of behaviors and new generations based on the exposures of past generations. There's no reason for the behavior to manifest, but it is because of what the people, and of course in these animal models, have come before, and we don't really think about this. Again, we might talk about generational trauma, but we don't really understand that this is real hard-core science that when we have in, having these conversations. Now, here's what the study also affirmed.

And this is the beautiful part about all of this. Though we might feel handcuffed or though we might feel trapped by what has happened with generations before us, what the researchers uncovered is that exposure to enriched environments, exposure to positive experiences helps to change and transform our own expression, it helps to neutralize those parental traumas. It helps to create a fresh template moving forward. So enriching environments, enriching experiences, positive experiences help to transform our psychology, our behaviors and it gives us the power to change moving forward so that we're not trapped by things that we don't even understand that came before we even got here at.

So, we have the ability right now in our lives to change the story for our children, for our grandchildren and for generations to come.

But we also have to take a look at the situation that we're dealing with right now. Oftentimes, we're trying to fight against things that we don't really understand, and this is why we find so much randomness or chaos. So today we're going to talk about getting to the heart of some of our biggest issues as a society. And we have on today a true super hero in every sense of the word, to talk about this issue and to have this conversation to get this out in the open so that we can then be able to process these things and invoke tools so that we can create enriching experiences and we can be able to better relate to each other, we can better

perspective take and we can start to solve some of the biggest problems that are facing our world today.

Now, into conversation about stressful inputs, you know we have to have a nutritional intervention as well, and if there's one thing that I know, and this is actually something I utilize today and pretty much every day, it is something with centuries of documented use, but we have new purview data as to its efficacy with helping our nervous system and our ability to have resilience in the face of stress. This study was published in the Journal Of Bio-medical Research, and they found that these test subjects who had a variety of health complaints, including anxiety, poor sleep quality, they were given Lion's Mane medicinal mushroom or placebos, so this is a placebo controlled study, Lion's Mane or placebos for four weeks. At the end of the study to participants who utilized the Lion's Mane had significant reductions in levels of anxiety and in levels of irritation.

And again, if we're talking about being able to have more patience to better relate to other people, irritation is one of those factors that immediately creates dissonance between two people, and so being able to help to support our nervous system with time-honored nutrient sources like Lion's Mane is something really special. And I had it today actually combined in this infusion with organic coffee, it's a Lion's Mane blend from Four Sigmatic. Go a foursigmatic.com/model, that's F-O-U-R-S-I-G-M-A-T-I-C.com/model, get 10% off their incredible Lion's Mane coffee, and also it has chaga in there as well, and I'm really into their cordyceps coffee recently as well.

But also, if you're not a fan of coffee, you can just get the elixir themselves, they have Lion's Mane Elixir, which is basically like a really high-quality tea, all organic, and also there's cordyceps, there's Reishi. They do things better than anybody because they're doing a dual extraction of the mushrooms, and this is a hot water and alcohol extract, to make sure they're actually getting all these bioactive components that we're looking for when we hear about the benefits in these studies. Go to foursigmatic.com/model for 10% off, and now let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

ITUNES REVIEW: Another five-star review titled "Life-Changing" by R.M Jackson 24. "Every episode offers information that is life-changing. I wish I would have had this in my life 20 years ago."

SHAWN STEVENSON: Amazing. Well, you've got it now and I'm so grateful to be a part of your life. Thank you so much for hanging out with me, I truly do appreciate it. And if you haven't, do so, pop over to Apple Podcast, leave a review for the Model Health Show, and on that note, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day. Our guest today is Zachary Levi and he's proven himself as a triple threat, as an accomplished actor, singer, dancer, and now Best-

Selling Author. Zach is most recently noted for his iconic performance in the hit superhero DC movie, Shazam, as the starring character, and one of my favorite movies to watch with my family with my son, and so being able to have him here today and to unpack all that we're going to go through is pretty remarkable, but also one of my favorite movies recently, he starred in as the iconic Kurt Warner, who was a Super Bowl champion with the St. Louis Rams. And I lived in St. Louis there, born and raised, and so when this moment happened, I was there front and center. And so our guest today played Kurt in this incredible biopic, which you could check out, it's called American Underdog and it's available on all movie platforms.

Just an incredible human being, incredible passion, incredible insight and is really working right now to help to bring us together as a society by making sure that we're getting ourselves physically and mentally well so we can actually address some of our biggest challenges. Let's jump into this conversation with the amazing Zachary Levi. My guy, Zachary Levi, welcome to The Model Health Show.

ZACHARY LEVI: Thank you, Shawn. Thank you so much. Very, very honored to be here. I appreciate all that you're trying to put out into the world and helping people live healthier, better lives.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And that's what you're about to, man. And I was just so pleasantly surprised to see you're using your platform to talk about some of the biggest issues that we have right now, and you have a core understanding of part of the reason we're experiencing so much divisiveness right now. Can you talk a little bit about that?

ZACHARY LEVI: Yeah. Well, first of all, I think it's our responsibility, whatever platform you're given, and look, your platform might just be with your closest friends and family, it might be that type of a platform, sometimes you're given something that's more than that, regardless of the size of the platform, I think that truth still has to be at the front of what you're trying to put out into the world, truth and wisdom and kindness and joy and love and those high-vibrational things. And I've been very, very blessed, man, I've been so, so blessed and I'm so grateful that I, A, you get to be living my literal dreams ever since I was a little kid, I've dreamt of living this life and I'm living this life and I'm living it at a really high level and it's so f*cking cool. But I don't take... I guess similar to Spider Man, with a great power comes great a responsibility. And gifts, power as a gift, and all these gifts that I've been given with this platform, I've been given, comes with responsibility, and I don't take that lightly, and so I've always tried to use it for, you know, trying to bring good into the world.

And five years ago, I had a massive, massive breakdown, I mean, legitimate didn't want to live anymore, and thank God, I found this really incredible treatment, and I for three weeks straight was in this super intensive lifesaving, life-changing, life-saving treatment, and learned a lot of

things there that I couldn't just keep under my hat, this wasn't just for me, this is... If you learn something that's real and that's true and that can be helpful to other people, you then spread it as much as you possibly can. So, I was really grateful that doing podcast similar to this, Harper Collins heard me talking about this journey, they're like, you need to write a book about it that'll help a lot more people. I'm like, cool, let's go do that. And so, I've gotten to write 'Radical Love' now, which has been tremendous.

But listen, I could be wrong, although I'm rarely wrong, but I think I genuinely believe that health overall, mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, that is what we need to be putting far more time and energy into, because that is really what's hopefully really underpinning all of, where we're either going in a positive direction or not, but mental health particularly I think is really kind of the most important thing we need to be talking about, because really even at the root of poor physical health is poor mental health, at the root emotional health is poor mental health. If you don't understand your own traumas, your own past, which by the way does not make, it's...

I think that trauma in and of itself kind of has this weird stigma about it, and we're getting through it, but look, we're all traumatized. There's all little trauma, there's a little... And it's a spectrum, there's little traumas, there's big traumas and it's all... It's just neuroplasticity in your mind, we're learning so much right now, but mental health is really... I think if you go upstream and you look at any problem, whatever it is, murderers, warmongers, greedy people, whatever, anything where we as human beings are not acting on our highest level and we are acting at very low levels and taking advantage of other people or whatever that is, you follow that upstream, it always comes back to somebody's broken heart or broken mind, that's what it is, that's where it all starts. You can go and try and clean up beaches that have oil spills or garbage or whatever...

Yeah, you can go do that forever or you can go up the stream and go take care of the things that are polluting the beaches to begin with so then you don't have to keep cleaning those beaches, and the same is true with mental health. We got to go upstream, we got to go find out what's going on and we got to help ourselves, first and foremost, to use the airplane analogy, you got to put your own mask on before trying to help other people with their mask, says that, I've done plenty of that in my life, and just end up suffocating on the cabin floor, it's not a good move. But I was so grateful and blessed again that I had the resources and the time and the people around me, but not everybody does have, in order to go and really try to understand myself and love myself on a much deeper level.

When I, at 37 five years ago when I went into this therapy, I had no real idea what self-love was, I didn't know... I thought I did. I think we all kind of... 'Cause we all think we have an idea of what love is, which we can dive into that too, 'cause I think that love as a concept is so

misunderstood, whether that's romantic love or love, love, really the core of it, but I think that's part of it, we don't really understand what that is, so therefore we don't know how to really truly apply it to ourselves. And a lot of us, maybe most of us, grew up in households where our parents didn't understand this, so of course, we're not going to understand it. And our parents don't understand because their parents didn't understand and their parents didn't understand, this is only really now, we are living in this really amazing, terrifying in some ways, but also really beautiful and hopeful time where mental, emotional, physical, spiritual well-being are really being talked about in powerful, beautiful ways like a podcast like yours. So yeah, that's what I just feel very compelled to do and that's where ultimately God kind of led me.

You know, what could have been the end of my life turned into this incredible metamorphosis, I got to come out of that, literally booked the biggest job of my life in Shazam while I was still at therapy, I talk about it in the book as well. All of that was this incredible moment of going and working on myself and then the blessings that came from that, and I really, truly believe that every single one of us has that ability, has that opportunity to do the real work. To do this work. And then once we can do that, then we are stronger and more capable of receiving the blessings that I think are very much out there and waiting for us.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Wow, man, you even mentioned receiving being a problem too. And so just to tune into one particular part of that, which is going upstream and seeing where all this is coming from, because a lot of the divisiveness or the lot of, the inability to perspective take, to have patience, to communicate with other people has a lot to do with what's going on with ourselves, our state of mental health or physical health. And it's not that you can't have compassion when you're not well, it's just harder, and it's more complex and it also takes more to be able to do it. What if we focus on getting well first as a person, as you mentioned, self-love, and I want to talk about that because we think we know what that is. There was one statement that you made that was, essentially in our culture today, if I don't have enough, then I'm not enough. Let's talk about that a little bit.

ZACHARY LEVI: Well, yeah, that's been the problem ever since, I don't know, the Agricultural Revolution. Prior to that, we were hunter, gatherers and enough was enough, we weren't worrying about collecting or gathering or hoarding more. Then once we figured out as human beings... By the way, I'm a total layman when it comes to all this stuff, so these are my opinions that I've based on lots of other very intelligent people that I've listened to talk about these things. But essentially 10,000 years ago, whenever that was, we start to now create a system by which we are creating more than we actually need so that we can share with or sell to other people and barter and now... And then we... shells start becoming this monetary thing that we can now monetize with and count with, and which all is, in a vacuum as a little tool, wonderful, but our humans have these twisted little things that and really ultimately go all the way back

to the ego, like why do we all hoard... Why do we feel like the more we have, the more we're worth?

Well, a lot of that is, almost all of it is societally kind of programmed into us and now worse than ever, because we have things like Instagram that are telling you constantly comparative study of like, oh, you don't have all that, you don't live there, you're not vacationing there, your wife isn't this person, but the lie has been around for a long time, if you... I mean a long time, I don't know how long, but the lie is essentially, if you have the right job and you make the right amount of money and you're married to the right person who also makes the right amount of money and you drive the right cars and you live in the right neighborhood with the right and the right kind of home and you have the right amount of kids and they go to the right schools and the right everything, then guess what, you're going to be so happy, but all the people that get there are inevitably unhappy because that's ultimately not where that is, it's all here.

If you're not happy in here, it doesn't matter how much you get, which is why insanely wealthy people can't stop getting more. I mean the, I don't want to name names because some of them could potentially be my bosses, but you know who I'm talking about. The wealthiest people in the world are still chasing, they're chasing and they're chasing and they're chasing and more than that, actually going back to how the ego has driven this, if you think about it, the ego is really there as a survival mechanism, as a tool.

I'm glad that we're getting... The ego for a while, we were vilifying and being like death, ego death, ego death, ego death, and I understand that on some level. But really, it's more like ego acceptance, it's ego relinquishing, it's looking at this thing that really served us beautifully, just particularly is children, if you go through really toxic traumatic childhoods, your ego saved your life, my ego saved my life. Kids that go through like hardcore sexual abuse, dissociative type of things that the ego allows for, it saves their life.

So, I think we have to be able to really appreciate it for what it's been but recognize that it creates all of these not necessary habits once we become more healthy, or hopefully more healthy versions of ourselves as adults, and if we keep going back to it, we're going back to behaviors that are not serving us anymore. And so, thank God, I feel like I got to a place where I was able to recognize that, and I have been in the last five years, done a tremendous amount of work getting there. But what's really terrifying is that the ego, way back in the day, the ego was tapping into our sympathetic nervous system and telling us, here's all the things you need to survive, you need shelter, you need food, you need water, some form of clothing, and the rest of your tribe.

That's pretty much all we needed. And the ego would really only kick on to get those things, that's actually a pretty wonderful simple life if you think about it, right? Of course, obviously...

And all those things, yes, you need all those things and then constantly being aware of, whatever, sabretooth tigers, the things that were going to come and get you. But once we created money, money, and this is why I think we have such an issue and problem with this. Money in and of itself if treated in a healthy way, I don't think there's an issue with it, but the problem is that money represents all of these things. You don't need to go find food, you don't need to hunt, you don't need to make your own clothes, you don't need to make your own little house, you don't need to do any of these things, you can buy it all.

So why worry about those five things when you only have to worry about the one thing, get the one thing, go after the one thing, I'm going to get more of this one thing and then not only are all of my survival items taken care of, now I've also got, look at all the surplus, I can go buy more things, I'll be more than surviving, I'll be thriving. Well, that just becomes an unhealthy addiction to getting more and more and more of this, so you can be more and more and more of this, which is really just an unhealthy projection of who you are insecurely inside of who you are because you haven't done the actual work. And so that's why I think it's not just about healing ourselves but recognizing that this thing is actually tapping into a very primal part of who we are, really recognizing that, because if we don't, then it's just blaming Instagram and just... But no, there's something really genuinely inside of us on that regard, I think.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Man, oh my God, that's... Making that connection even with how we're hardwired is so profound, and to be able to make that connection within ourselves and to see how the very simple things that we're wired up for have become overloaded essentially, you just listed all the things that equate a successful life today, and it's just a new this was just made up recently and would check these boxes. And here's the thing, a lot of those boxes that are checked, they're created by marketers, they're created in an effort again to make more of that thing, every American, it's the American dream, own your own home. Made up by the banks.

ZACHARY LEVI: Made up by the... Well, by the way, a perfect example of that is this right here, how many guys and girls... What I mean, specifically women, and globally too, not in every culture, thank God, but let's just use the US as an example. I mean, getting a wedding ring, a big ass rock on your finger as well, 'cause it's what we do, it's what... I have to do it, people will judge me if I don't do it, it's what people judge you by. Oh my gosh, let me see the ring. How can I see it, blah, blah, blah. That's all literally manufactured by De Beers like 120 years ago or whenever they started this crazy, basically propaganda type campaign to brainwash the world into saying, if you really love someone, you get them a diamond, and then slowly but surely it starts with the elite, starts with those who can afford this crazy luxury thing, whatever, I mean jewelry always was and then, but then people who are of lower means are looking at that, wanting to emulate that, because again, why would I want to live in poverty when I can live like that?

And the more you can emulate it, the more you can somehow mentally step into it or whatever, that was all completely manufactured and continue, we continue to be brainwashed by all of these things, through our media, but brainwashed to believe that this is good for us or brainwashed to believe that this is good for us or necessary or whatever, but again, we have not evolved physically, physiologically, we're still hunter gatherers. Technology is going way faster than our brain's ability to keep up with it, our body's abilities to keep up with this, which is why we would be a hell of a lot happier if our lives were always simpler. And it's also why I think a lot of people, I'm sure you know a lot of these people, I'm one of them, who really believe that we've, in searching for our own happiness, going, and chasing this lie, this dream, this lie, what it's done is, well, we all have to have our own big home.

Well, I guess that just tears us farther apart, it just tears us farther apart. And everyone's doing this and realizing, I don't have community anymore, why? I'm longing for tribe; I'm longing for a community. Yes, because it's built into you, because that's one of the only things that the money can't really buy you. I mean, it can buy you memberships to clubs or things like that but...

SHAWN STEVENSON: You can get some companions out here, man.

ZACHARY LEVI: Well, and you can get some hangers on, you can get a lot of leaches, you can get a lot of, all those types of people, but it doesn't actually get you real true tribal community connection, and people are starving for it now. It's a real thing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Prior to the world shutting down, the team for the former US Surgeon General reached out to me to have him on the show because his book was about, and what he deemed to be, and I of course went and reviewed his data, that loneliness was the number one health issue facing our society, and he was showing all these stats on increasing the risk of heart disease, of suicide, of anxiety, of everything that you can name, really, that's suppressing our culture, and it all is rooted in loneliness, and because this goes back to that wiring that we have, and we're just out picturing chemistry in our bodies because we're not getting the inputs that we're really wired for, which primarily is connection.

ZACHARY LEVI: Yeah. And again, it's a part of that, your top five of survival, it's literally programmed into you, and it's no wonder that... You know, look, 'cause there's a difference between being alone and being lonely. Some people are... I'm an extrovert's extrovert, like I need to be around people in order to feel charged and going and I love it, I love it. Going to New York for me is like, give me all of that, I want all of it, but I also have very dear friends that are hardcore introverts, and they need to be alone, they need to be alone for long periods of time, and they're never lonely.

They're good. They're good with them, well, hopefully, if they've done the work on themselves that they need to do, they're good just losing themselves in a book or whatever, spend time with their dog, they're fine, but even they, if not connected to other energy life force, you get to a place where you, I think you really start to question, well, what... If you're connected to other people, to a community, you're not questioning your purpose as much because you feel an inherent purpose just in commune with other people, you're having conversations, you're unpacking ideas, you're loving on each other in that time with one another. You're sharing your fears, you're sharing your successes, you're commuting in that way, and I think therefore associating a lot of what our brain likes the manufacturer, which is, who am I, why am I here, what's the purpose, all that jazz. If you are alone all the time and not good alone, but lonely alone, you don't... You quite literally don't now have that just inherent purpose of being a part of a community, which then starts going down really crazy roads of, oh then, what am I contributing to society? Who am I? What am I at all? And nobody wants to be with me.

And our brains, man, one of my favorite quotes I've ever heard from the book, 'The Untethered Soul', you are not... And by the way, I'm butchering, and I'm sure I'm butchering the quote, but it's basically, you are not the voice of your mind, you were the one who hears it, and if you can't recognize that, your mind's going to tell you all kinds of stuff like it did to me, you're not worth anything, nobody cares, you f*cked up your life, you're a failure, you're all of these things, and when you just sit in your own thoughts all the time because you don't have other people to bounce that off of or tell you that you have worth even by just existing, yeah, that's going to lead to a myriad of problems in the rest of your life.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Just really thank you, man, thank you for sharing this, for sharing your story because people, again, they'll see you and they'll see the success and they're like, he just has this, he has that. I can't connect with this person because I have, fill in the blank, issues, and for you to share your voice on your experience, that voice in your mind that you've had to go to war with on many occasions, it just really creates such a sense of hope that I don't think that we often get today, because literally, like literally the manifestation of that superhero and to be and to have that resonance to truly like, I can be a hero too.

ZACHARY LEVI: Yeah. Well thank you, man, I appreciate that. But I tell you, man, I just, I've... Ever since I was a kid, I loved people. I've always felt called to love people, to bring as much joy into this world as I can, to bring as much healing into this world as I can, to be a leader within that, and I love that we can go through really gnarly sh*t in our life, and if we can trust that to God, the universe, however somebody wants to kind of acknowledge that power, that presence, there's redemption in that, and it's not just redemption for you. I went through this gnarly stuff that I almost didn't survive, I'm so grateful that I did, but being able to talk about it, people have said, is that really hard, is it scary being vulnerable?

I'm like, to be perfectly honest, it's not, it's really not. That was the least difficult thing about writing this book, because every time I've ever been vulnerable, and I try to be vulnerable quite often to be... 'Cause I try to be as transparent and authentic person as I can, and in doing so you end up making yourself vulnerable, but it's only ever brought good to my life, only positive, I don't... There's not like... you know some person, some Yahoo out there who's like, I can't believe that person did that, I can't believe they would say that, but that's just 'cause they're dealing with whatever they're dealing with in their own heart, and that's part of what we talk about in the book, it's like recognizing that everyone is on their journey, everyone is doing their best. And so, anybody out there who's listening to this right now, like, give yourself a f*cking break, you're doing the best that you can, you are.

It might not feel like it, but you are. And then in that, through that grace, have a little more grace and patience and empathy with yourself and then go and love on yourself by reading a book that might help you, talking to a therapist. Biggest thing ever, just go and talk to somebody. Talk to a professional. It's the most important stuff.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Man, when you talked about the ring scenario earlier, not... Even when I say the ring now, 'The Lord Of The Rings' pops into my mind, "One ring to rule them all."

ZACHARY LEVI: Or some wacky girl that died in a well and is going to come get you after seven days...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Both of those simultaneously popped up in my mental rolodex. But you talked about this constructed idea of The Ring shows how much I love you, right? And this is the thing that I admire about you and also because you're living this incredible life, is that it's not the thing that's bad, it's when we attach our ego to the thing and it defines us, and every time when I get into conversations about, and I'm just sharing this with you since I'm talking about what comes up in my head, whenever I hear the word ego, I think of Eckhart Tolle in his hand, he has his hand, the pain body. When he starts talking about the pain body, yeah, let's go. I love it. But just being able to identify that, you mentioned how we have that voice in our head, but we are the witness, we are the presence that's witnessing that thing, and if you can make that distinction, and not to say that our ego is bad, but now our ego doesn't become the person in the, well, the figure in the driver's seat. And we can utilize our ego and understand the value of our ego and also understand we're not that, we're not just that, we're something so much more.

ZACHARY LEVI: 100%. We're so much more. It's really unfortunate just how shallow a life that we all accept nowadays. And I will say that, again part of that, I think the first problem was that that wealth became, monetization, money, wealth, that, 10,000 years ago started becoming

what our survival mechanisms, our ego, our sympathetic nervous system started to really tap into, but almost even more nefarious, and it's directly tied to the money, but I think it's probably even more nefarious and it's happened really, I think it's a thing that's only kind of...

Well, I don't know, actually maybe something like this has existed for a while but in a very different way, but in modern society, I think, and specifically right now with social media, with all the things that are going on, the real cancer is being cool. Cool is cancer. And to expound a little bit, look the funs, that kind of cool... The truth was cool used to mean unfazed, cool as a cucumber. I'm not going to... Actually, cool used to be a, if it was genuine, a truly good mental health practice, because you're not allowing whatever is going on out here to freak you out, to make you act out of your emotions, act out of these things. Cool used to be cool. But what cool is now is all flex, all these kids thinking that they need to have this kind of phone or these kind of clothes or hang out with these types of people or do these types of things. I have to go do these drugs, I have to go have sex, I have to... When I was coming up in high school in the '90s, the amount of time and energy that I wasted trying to be liked by the cool kids because it...

And now, the way in which it's all set out, the way in which people shade each other and like slay, everything is like slay girl, slay, like that's all just cool sh*t, that's all nonsense, as opposed to people seeing other people as another human being that's going through something in their life. The ways in which kids are bullied today is unbelievable, and it's all tied to some form of some kid or adult bullies who are all trying to fit into what is the now, and which by the way is constantly changing, definition of what's cool in the moment, like one of the cool... I mean, slang changes now at light speed. The things that kids say now that are like, what a cool terminology, a year from now you'll use those same terms and they're like, that's not... And I guess that kind of stuff has been going on for a while.

But again, that, just, because kids, literally their egos, their survival is attached to being cool, it's not just even a matter... It's not survival on the most elemental level and it's not even just survival, 'cause you have enough money, it's, but are you cool? And if you're not cool, you're dying and... Look at the suicide rates. And that has nothing to do with whether or not the kid has enough money to have lunch or anything like that. Look at all these kids, primarily young boys, young white boys who are going and shooting up schools.

That is... And that's a big thing to unpack, but regardless of things that we should definitely have conversations when it comes to being able to have background checks and all that, absolutely, but at the root of that it doesn't matter what instruments somebody wants to use, people get in their cars and mow down entire groups of people, they'll use a car to kill people if they have to and if they want to and at the root of all that is a really, really f*cked up, broken person, like really broken. And most, every single one of these boys who goes into these

schools and does what they do, they were constant targets of bullying, constant targets of, you're not worth anything, 'cause you're not cool. That's really at the root of this sh*t, dude, and it is terrifying. It's terrifying. So, we got to be able to acknowledge that, we got to be able to tell kids like, let it go, let it go. What's cool now won't be cool tomorrow, it's... You're chasing it always and it's going to define who you are. You think you're defined because you have Jordans as opposed to non-Jordans? It's terrifying and it's heart breaking, the long-term effects of it all.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, absolutely. This is a societal issue, it's not... We tend to think that it's the person, it's the same thing, that's a symptom, but we're not going upstream to see what the thing is, because we don't want to look at that, we don't want to do the work, we don't want to take accountability for our part in this, and one of the big solutions, obviously, is creating better community, raising better humans and loving each other, but you're talking about what's radical love, loving ourselves, which oftentimes is the most difficult thing, and of course, there's this statement that you can't give what you don't have.

ZACHARY LEVI: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Let's...

ZACHARY LEVI: And you can't give what you don't have. You can't... Yeah, it's all true. All of that's true. And it's not even true of just love but love adjacency. You were talking about empathy. How could you possibly think that you're going to be empathetic with other completely different human beings if you don't understand how to have empathy with yourself first? If you don't have patience with yourself first, you won't understand what it truly means to have patience with other people. If you don't have kindness with yourself first, you won't understand what it truly means to be kind. We have ideas, we have proxy ideas of what love and empathy and kindness and grace, and patience and all these things are, but I'm telling you, man, I don't think most people really, really, really... I didn't, and I considered myself a pretty loving, kind, patient, empathetic person prior to going to all of these therapy, but I didn't realize that I was still talking to myself the way that my parents, who again, were doing their best, who were very toxic, critical, judgmental people, I talk to myself, and chances are you do and you do and you do it and everybody else does.

We talk to ourselves the way our parents talk to us. If you had an incredibly kind, patient, loving, empathetic, still gave you good boundaries, but was always a soft place to land, if you f*cked up, it was like, "Hey, hey, hey, hey, it's okay. What happened is... That shouldn't have happened, you are nothing but loved," you will be able to walk yourself through as an adult almost any situation because you will not be destroying yourself in the process, but a lot of us came from

households that had really critical parents 'cause they had a critical parents who had really critical parents and so and so forth, generational trauma.

And so, what do you do? You destroy yourself for the rest of your life in the way that you talk to yourself, and yet you still are figuring out how to "love" and "be kind" and patient and all that stuff and you think, I'm doing it right, we're all doing it, I feel like I'm pretty... Maybe on the road I'm still a little bit like, Get out of... By the way, man, I love people so much and I really do think I'm very patient with people, but damn it if bad drivers are just not like the end, they're the end of me. They're the end of my patience, I'm still working on it. But at the end of the day, truly, we are not going to be able to be all of these things. And I think, honestly, that's why if you want to...

I mean, look, it's the perfect indicator. If you want to know how well a society or a group of people actually loves themselves, first and foremost, just look at the way they're loving their, not just their neighbor but their enemy. How much they are truly seeing the human being across from them, regardless of who and what that person is and might be doing with their life. Because what's really, really crazy to me is that as, if an individual goes into therapy, and therapists across the world would acknowledge this, it's that what was done to you was not personal, your parents were doing their best, these people, as crazy as it is, as it sounds, they were doing the best they could with the tools they had available to them at the time.

They didn't realize how traumatized they were, they didn't... So, it's not personal. It was wrong, absolutely wrong, but you can radically accept what happened to you in your life, radically forgive those people on the other side, which does not mean you have to like them, it doesn't. You can still say, "I do not like this." 'Cause they might not have changed at all, they might still be doing those same things, but to radically forgive simply means to radically accept and then realize that all of this garbage I am holding on to, these toxins, this hate, the fears, the... Whatever it is that I hold toward this person, this unforgiveness... And this is a very famous quote, "Unforgiveness is like drinking poison hoping the other person will die." That's what it is.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, Nelson Mandela.

ZACHARY LEVI: So that's what we... It doesn't matter, it's not about letting them off the hook, it's a matter of letting go. It's, I've radically accepted this happened to me, now I'm radically forgiving the situation and this person because I'm not going to allow them to have that kind of pull over me or power over me. And then if you can get to there, then the next step is to then radically love and radically loving still doesn't mean you have to like them. Because love and like are two entirely different things.

We all grow up believing that somehow love is amplified like, it's like times 100, it's liking something more than like, I like it, but now I really love it. That's not what it is. At least that's not what I believe it is. In fact, recently I've heard... I heard this great quote, I think it was on Rich Rolls, he had somebody on, I can't remember the person, but they said... The definition they brought, they said, "Love is to will the good of the other." Which has nothing to do with like, has nothing to do with even allowing that person into your life, it is to see someone and just want their good. You're seeing people who have wronged you and being able to see the five-year-old child in them, that's the practice that I try to do.

You try to just take them back, recognize they were five-year-olds who had all the promise and possibility in the world, but they got programmed to go a certain way, whatever that way is. So go back to when they were... That's still their soul and try to will the good of that child in them, and I think that we try to do that with people. There are murderers on death row and there are people that go into prisons and say, "Hey, I still see the human in you, I'm not going to dehumanize you, what you did was wrong. You need to pay for that." There's responsibility that we don't have this... We don't have a get out of jail free cards or free passes and say, "Well, it was my trauma that did it." So, it's like, no, no, no, no. Yes, I'm not going to level a whole bunch of shame on you, 'cause you are a product of your environment, but you're still responsible for what you've done. That still has to happen, but we can radically love them by...

I think it was Thomas Aquinas who kind of quoted that to, "Love is to will the good of the other." That goes all the way back to Aristotle and all that stuff. I mean, it's real, true, deep wisdom, and it's something that we've completely forgotten because of... By the way, because of the De Beers of the world, because of our rom coms for the last, however, 100 years of... All of these things that program us into believing that "Well, love is this, all many splendored things and I feel this love and I love this person, I like them so much, I love them." That's not love, that might be the feeling of in love, it might be liking something so much, but to genuinely, genuinely... Like that deep, real, the kind of love that Jesus talked about, to love your enemy and pray for your persecutor kind of stuff, which it's crazy, it's so hard, but that's why it was hard then and that's why it's hard now. And if more people, more adults taught this love, this type of love to their kids and these kids understood that love for themselves, they wouldn't go to these schools and treat these outcasts as outcasts.

They don't have to be best friends, but they're not going to be constantly bullying them and making them feel inferior and literally telling them, "You should just kill yourself." Literally, kids say this to each other, what do you expect a young mind to do with that? Either they go kill themselves or they snap so hard that they go, "My life is worth nothing so I'm going to kill a whole bunch of people with me." I mean, this is the root ultimately of what's going on and it's all rooted in not really understanding how to love ourselves and others. That's the key, man.

And it's not easy, I'm not saying it's easy, but I think that's where the solutions and the answers ultimately lay.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. We clearly see that there is something that's awry, there's something that's not working right now. My oldest son, he just turned 22 last month, and this kid, he's lost so many of his friends to suicide.

ZACHARY LEVI: Isn't it insane?

SHAWN STEVENSON: When we lived in Ferguson-Florissant, Missouri, his best friend took his life...

ZACHARY LEVI: At what age?

SHAWN STEVENSON: And it was after we moved here, so this was during the time everything was shut down.

ZACHARY LEVI: Oh, okay. Oh, you guys moved here during the pandemic?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right before. Literally right before. We came just in time. Front row seat...

ZACHARY LEVI: Wow.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Get your popcorn. Yeah. But I'm also grateful because, as you know, being here is one of those ground zero places where I get to see the full spectrum of human response, human consciousness and also to see the extreme divisiveness right in front of me and how people started to choose a side and that is just... It's one of the fundamental most ridiculous things about our programming, is to think that it's this or that, because that's what's even manifested with these political parties, you get the kit, and a lot of times folks don't believe in all the things in the kit, but they make themselves believe the thing so they can be a part of this affiliation and everybody else is wrong, it's got to be the polar opposite of these asshats over here, even though we're asshats ourselves because we're believing these things that are so polarizing and oftentimes, you know this, the truth is going to exist somewhere in the middle. And so, one of my hopes with all of this craziness that's happened is for us to kind of look at how we've allowed this system take place where by its very nature it's choose a side, and it's humanity against humanity, it's American versus American. This is supposed to be the United States.

ZACHARY LEVI: Yeah, it's one of the saddest things that's going on in this country, I would even argue that in the world, look at places like even the UK, they're a pretty divided people, Brexit and non-Brexit, and their various conservative and liberal parties but I mean... Man, I've got so many thoughts on all that. First and foremost, I think that we all as human beings need to recognize that we are being constantly manipulated, and it's not just to buy rings, guys, it's not just to buy rings, it's to buy into entire ideals and ideologies that are not healthy for any of us and it's so that people above us want us to be... And again, these are my thoughts, but I really believe it's because it only does them a favor. If we're all arguing with each other, guess what we're not doing? Holding them accountable. We're not looking at them...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Facts.

ZACHARY LEVI: If we're all looking at each other and go, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah" instead of going, wait, wait, wait, wait. Let's just take a second, should we just look at the people above us really quickly? Yeah. Let's do it. Holy. What the f*ck is going on? What is going on? I mean, insider trading, term limits, all of these things that clearly we the people should be saying, this is so un... Collectively. I don't care where you fall on the spectrum of politics, everyone should be saying, "Can we at least make sure that these things aren't going on?" Because guess what, if you're a regular person and you get caught with insider trading, you go to prison, and yet if you're a Nancy Pelosi...

And by the way, it's not just a Nancy Pelosi, there's conservatives that are guilty of this and democrats and whatever, but all of them should be under, at the very least, should be under the scrutiny that a regular human being, a regular citizen should be under, and then some. If you want to be a leader in a country, guess what, you're held too high of f*cking standards not less. And yet they have almost no standards, they have almost no oversight, and we the people are arguing all the time, so of course we're not going to collectively make that a priority, which is so sad. But more than that, the way they've built the system, they know the system works in a way that's going to continue to perpetuate this and part of what does it is, there is at least...

There are one, two, three, people could argue more, but all you need is one, one hot button topic that splits... Abortion actually is probably the most, I would imagine abortion is probably the most hot button thing, right? You got these people over here that are hardcore pro-life and these people over here, hard core pro-choice. Now, you could have a conservative who's hardcore a pro-life but actually agrees with, or would be willing to agree with a lot of more, let's say left-leaning type of ideals, and you could have a liberal who is hard core a pro-choice, but let's say fiscally is more conservative or whatever, but they don't have a choice in who to vote for, because if the most important thing is this life or death thing, this freedom or nothing, then it's kind of like, "Well, it doesn't matter."

All the other things are trumped by this one hot button and they know this, the politicians know this, and we don't recognize that they're basically just holding us hostage by these one or two hot button things that don't allow us to come together in the middle to work out all the other things, and the more we are refusing to sit down peer-to-peer, two ends of a spectrum, and just try to have a respectful conversation, and I think both sides are very guilty of this, I see people who are really brilliant on both sides of these arguments and yet they talk with such disdain.

They speak of the other frame of mind, the other ideology, whatever it is, and anyone who subscribes to it with such disdain... Well, of course, you're never going to get together, of course, you're never going to have a meaningful conversation because you're starting the conversation with, clearly, I am entirely right and you're a f*cking moron, that is the air that they hold and that they carry, and it's hubris, it's arrogance, it's not love, it's not seeing somebody else and saying, listen, I think you're entirely wrong, but I understand that you came from a completely different life and a completely different path and I'm willing to sit with you and understand why, and maybe I'll learn something along the way, maybe I'll not change my position, but I'll have a deeper empathy for why someone might have a different position than me.

But they refuse to do it because we have now, the way we've been programmed from our news, it's not people just telling us the facts, it's people opining and saying, "Let me tell you about these idiots over here", whether it's Fox News on the right or CNN and all the rest of the left or whatever, they're all just telling us, these f*cking morons, it's all that, literally that's how they carry themselves, and it's disgusting, it's disgusting. It's making us all look at each other that way, as opposed to leading by example and saying, "Hey guys, we fully believe in these as being the truth, and we think that those guys are wrong, but we're not going to do humanize them in the process." We are going to see the five-year-olds in them, we're going to recognize that they are human beings, and we are not going to... Regardless of what's said of us, we're not going to look at anyone and say that they are some basket of deplorables or that these human, these waste of human beings. Even the way that COVID went down and the polarization of all that, and literally people on one side saying that the other side should die, should literally die.

And you go, whoa, wow. That is a bridge too far, guys, that's a bit of a bridge too far, don't you think? Don't you think that that, the way that you even think that right now is because you think of life like that, and we should never be thinking of life, of anything that's alive, and this is part of, again, taking care of our planet, taking care of each other. The only thing that's actually of any f*cking value, real, magical, miraculous value in this world is life, plant, animal, human life, everything else is something we can make and we can re-make and we can re-make again, and we'll re-make literally six months from now another version of it, we can make

another iPhone, we're going to make another one, and then we're going to all be addicted to them, even though they're not becoming any better. But the fact that we can all come together and really genuinely value all that is alive, whether you agree with it or not, whether it's doing something you want it to be doing in the world or not. The only life I think we should all agree shouldn't be around is mosquitoes.

I can do without. I can do without. I know they're a part of some kind of ecosystem food chain, I feel like we could figure that out. But by and large, that, if we can really... But we don't value, we've lost this, we've lost the ease of the shelter, clothing, food, water, tribe, protection, whatever that, we've lost sight of that and we are into all of this other stuff, and so therefore our egos, our survival instincts are being hijacked by people that are so happy to do it because it keeps them in power and it keeps them rich, which again, a bit of a tangent from loving yourself and all that, but I think it's all part and parcel.

And by the way, and I think that this is, going back to what's so sad, is that we can all agree on individual levels, listen, what's happened to you has happened to you, you have to radically accept it... I mean, you don't have to, but if you want to move on in life, you do, you have to radically accept and you really should then have to radically forgive otherwise you're going to be holding on to this stuff, and then to radically love, which doesn't mean to like it all, you can have all the boundaries in the world, you can tell this person, I never want to see you again but I will your good. I hope that if I ever do see you again down the road 10 years from now, you've had miraculous changes in your life, I want that for everyone in my life. You know what I mean? I wish my mom was still alive so that she had that opportunity to have done that, but if my mom was still alive and still toxic right now, guess what? I would still not have a relationship with her, I would will the good for her. I would do everything I could to give her an opportunity to get there but... Whatever.

And yet we agree on all these things for an individual, but when a group of people is acting out of their trauma, when there's an entire group of people that are saying... It might even have some valid arguments...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Trauma bonding.

ZACHARY LEVI: Trauma bonding. When they say, "Hey, this other group of people has wronged this group of people historically," whatever, and there's trauma there, rock and roll, let's figure that out. But if we're not radically accepting, radically forgiving and radically then loving this, then that group of people will be trapped in their trauma forever, and yet the leaders, the politicians, even the scientists and the doctors don't weigh in and say, hey, as a group of people, we need to be able to heal from this, instead those fires are stoked and stoked. Don't...

Let's not work through these issues collectively, let's not come together and heal, be mad, keep being mad, keep being angry, keep being... Keep that venom and that in you, and that is hugely sad and detrimental, and again, one of the most insane things that I can think of, because once you break it down to an individual level, that's what every single therapist will tell you, anyone that's worth their weight anyway.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, yeah. We've got a quick break coming up, we'll be right back. Neuroplasticity, the ability of the human brain to grow and adapt and evolve and really to unlock our superhuman capacity is driven by our experiences, our practices, our activities, but also our nutrition. Fascinating new research published in the journal Neuron found that magnesium, this key electrolyte is able to restore critical brain plasticity and improve overall cognitive function. Again, neuroplasticity is the ability of our brain to change and adapt. Now, this is one key electrolyte, but it works in tandem with other electrolytes like sodium. Sodium is critical for maintaining proper hydration of the human brain. If you didn't know this, the human brain is primarily made of water. We're talking somewhere in the ballpark of 75%, that was of 80% water. It's so important because just a small decrease in our body's optimal hydration level, what's known in the data, just a 2% decrease in our baseline hydration level can lead to dramatic cognitive decline.

Helping to sustain and maintain proper hydration levels of the brain, sodium is critical in that. And also, researchers at McGill University found that sodium functions as a "off/on" switch for specific neurotransmitters that support our cognitive function and protect our brains from numerous degenerative diseases. Right now, the number one electrolyte company in the world is delivering a gift for new and returning customers with each purchase of LMNT, L-M-N-T, the number one electrolyte in the market, no binders, no fillers, no artificial ingredients, no crazy sugar and sweeteners. My friend's son was just over at our house and my son, my oldest son, Jordan, was training them, taking his teammates through some workouts, and we opened the freezer and there's a bottle of Gatorade, there's a bottle of Gatorade in our freezer and my wife was like, "Whose is this?" 'Cause we know we don't roll like that. We don't mess with the Gators, alright. We don't mess with the Gatorades.

And we knew who it was, it was one of his friends and he's like "Well, at least this is the no sugar kind." And then I go through some of the ingredients with them and I find those curve balls of like, "Here's where they're sneaking in these artificial ingredients and things that the human body has no association with." But he's taking a step in the right direction by being in our environment. So, you know what I did. I put the LMNT in his hand, alright, make sure that he's got the good stuff, the very best stuff. And also, this is backed by peer-reviewed data and a huge body of evidence, and we're talking about the folks at LMNT, that's L-M-N-T. Go to drinklmnt.com/model and you're going to get a special gift pack with every purchase, whether you're a new or a previous customer for LMNT.

So again, this is a brand-new opportunity, free gift pack with every purchase over at LMNT. Go to drinklmnt.com/model. And now back to the show.

So, this is really magnifying for me, the kind of carnival situation that we're at now. We're at an extreme at this point. When you mentioned earlier, you said whether the news network is on the right or on the left. The fact that there is an entire news network dedicated to one side of political views, this is like some stuff straight out of science fiction but it's real. And here's the thing, and we're not going to dig into this too much, but it's understanding there are people who are making massive amounts of money behind the scenes. All of these networks, even though they seem like, again, they have these different political views, they're all primarily funded by the same organizations, Vanguard being one of them, but also, they're all also funded by pharmaceutical companies, Pfizer, it's brought to you by Pfizer. And so again, they're not going to have a narrative-disrupting story, because they don't want to offend their audience. It's not about informing people, it's about... In essence, it's propaganda.

ZACHARY LEVI: It's just programming people. Yeah, that's programming.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And also, I want to share this too, because when mentioning even the political sphere as well, and I just shared this on a recent episode, two-thirds of US Congress members got a check from a pharmaceutical company in 2020, right? Two-thirds.

ZACHARY LEVI: On both sides.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now, this is the thing too, and you said this amongst what you were saying, there are good people within these systems who are trying to do the right thing, but when we're coming into this and we haven't done the work, we are extremely susceptible to that environment and easily corruptible because it's just the nature of... You want to get something done, I'm trying to start this foundation over here, let me get this check from Eli Lilly or from Merck, and it's just, it's part of doing business. I'm not thinking about the favor they're going to ask from me when the drug prices are continuing to go up and I can create a policy to stop that, but they're lobbying to make sure that they can keep drug prices as high as they can.

ZACHARY LEVI: Yeah. And look, unfortunately, there is this really bad tendency within human beings to rationalize, we have this incredible ability to rationalize, and the ends can always justify the means. And so, if you are this person who's trying to do good in the world and then some corporation, be they farmer or whomever else, says... Who has their own agenda, but they say, "We'll help you make this good thing a reality" and not ask for anything other than just but your... "Support us when we need your support," nothing specific right now. Well, of

course, if you're somebody who's trying to make that good thing and you go, "I don't want to do. Nobody else is giving me \$500,000, a million dollars to go start this..." "

Okay. And you're selling off, if your Congress person, a representative, you're selling off just a little bit of your integrity and your soul in that moment. And the next time you're selling off a little bit more and a little bit more and a little bit more, and by the time you become someone who is of significant value and power in the DC, Washington DC kind of world, you're so sold out. You are so bought by special interest and lobbyists that now you rationalize yourself, "Well, I'm so far down this road, there's no way I'm going to pull myself out, so I might as well just go whole hard and I'm just going to keep..." "

It's terrifying. And look, here's the thing, just 'cause I think it's important for the record, I don't... There's not one industry, that I can think of anyway, that I think in and of itself is a bad industry, meaning... Look, I take Wellbutrin, I want to eventually wean off of it, but it definitely helped me, as I've come to find out my own mental health journey and realizing that, "Oh my God, I've had massive dopamine crashes throughout my life because of the way I've come up in my life and needing to have these addictions in order to bring me happiness 'cause I was in a messed up home." So, we started with video games and went to cigarettes and all that stuff we can unpack, but the point is, there have been antibiotics, whatever.

There are clearly wonderful things that pharmaceutical companies have brought into the world. There are clearly wonderful things that agricultural companies or even let's say energy companies, like oil companies, whatever, there are excellent things that have come into this world and have helped human beings on high, high, high, high, high levels. However, if left unchecked, which is what's going on right now, and more than unchecked, like supported, it's not like we're... We're not here just turning a blind eye anymore, we're now like, "Yeah, go do that thing, make me more money," whatever it is, then that, that is where we got to be really careful, and that is in fact what's going on.

I think it was John R. Abramson. I think I learned from on him, I think it was him, talking about that there are only two countries in the entirety of the world that allow for pharmaceutical companies to advertise, and it's us and New Zealand, and New Zealand has such strict rules about how they can even advertise, and we are Carte blanche, do whatever you want, do the imagery of the guy and a girl on a date having a... Throw that football through that tyre, be in that tub, whatever it is, you know, and barely talk about the side effects. Talk about them, but talk about them really, really fast in kind of an under-voice...

Put 'em in real small print along the bottom of the screen, and it's fine, it's fine. And also, when it comes to your peer review studies, give them whatever information you want to give them. You don't have to give them all the information, just give them the stuff that you know you

want to get them and then let the peers review those studies which are half-baked and only in your favor, and let's allow the CEOs of these pharmaceutical companies to also end up being the heads of the FDA on a regular basis, and then go from being the head of the FDA back into being a CEO of the same company. And we're telling ourselves that we're not being manipulated on some level? That, that is some real f*cking ostrich head in the same sh*t guys. That is not okay.

Everyone on every side of the political spectrum should be very worried, and by the way, not just one example of one industry, that's not even including agriculture, energy, all the other ones that are already being very manipulated and we are the guinea pigs. We're the hamsters, we are the rats. If we can't recognize that we are just stuck in these perpetual loops of making them more money at whatever cost, doesn't... 'Cause again, they can go... A lawsuit can be filed. I mean, how many Erin Brockovich's need to be made for all of us to recognize that they have so much money that even when they pay out the lawsuits they still come out on top, and they know this and we all just go, well, it's capitalism, it's like... Listen, I'm a fan of capitalism but conscientious capitalism, capitalism that isn't taking advantage of everyone and the planet along the way. It's totally doable, guys. It's totally doable.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You said earlier, when insider trading happens, somebody goes to jail, same scenario here, we have the drug company, Merck and Vioxx killing.

ZACHARY LEVI: They're really killing people.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Killing. Not one person. One person you kill, you go to jail. Killing upwards of 60,000 human beings here in America alone, 60,000 lives, and no one went to jail.

ZACHARY LEVI: No, no, because it was a corporation.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, if there's no meaningful consequences, they're going to just continue this behavior. Why would they change? Because they still... Again, you just said it, they still made money.

ZACHARY LEVI: Listen, listen, in the same way that we hold individuals accountable for their own actions within their own, taking control of their own emotions and going for healing in their healing journeys, a therapist would tell an individual to be responsible for themselves, but we don't somehow tell entire groups of people that they need to be responsible for themselves. In that weird paradox, we also now have this paradox of, you are totally responsible for yourself when it comes to going and breaking the law, insider trading, killing somebody, whatever, but collectively as a company, you are responsible but only kind of, and

nobody's really going to go to prison but... And you're going to pay out \$5 Billion, even though you made 20 on the deal, so you're still netting 15? Like this is insanity. It's all insanity.

And until everybody can collectively wake up enough, put down our swords just long enough where we're not killing and trying to kill each other and take care of these problems first, all these other problems are still on to be problems. We're never going to be able to get past this stuff until we can collectively just hold, just long enough to hold all those mother*ckers accountable. And by the way and doing it in a way where we can still look at them as their five-year-old self, not dehumanize them, but hold them hugely responsible for what they're doing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, absolutely. Man, this is so awesome because what I've been trying to do is, of course, I've been a big voice in articulating what's going...

ZACHARY LEVI: Oh, you've been preaching this stuff for a long time.

SHAWN STEVENSON: What's going on with pharmaceutical companies, but also, I understand there are good people that are working within these organizations who want to do good. And so, when we just make it so they're this dark villain and we are just trying to fight against this enemy, that's part of the problem. We have to understand the psychology of the people within it, and again, at some point, if we look, there are some dark sh*t though. We're not going to ignore that.

ZACHARY LEVI: No. It doesn't excuse any of it, but I think what it does is it helps at least to... Again, these are practices in empathy. For example, you're looking at, let's say a CEO of one of these companies, right? Now, why... Abramson talked about this. Up until the late '90s, or late '80s, pharmaceutical companies had far more of a conscience, far more integrity. They weren't doing a lot of the things that they're doing right now. In fact, a lot of industries didn't, and then all of a sudden, a lot of policies changed, I think even probably under Reagan, where corporations started to have a little bit more autonomy and power and protection.

And all of a sudden with... Again, now this is, societally, if you were raised in the place that's telling you, money, make money at all costs, make money at all cost, it's good, it's the bottom line, your responsibility as a CEO is to make as much money at all costs, and so what happens is your conscience starts to morph a little bit. You're not an evil person, you're just starting to, again ends justifying means, and being like, "Well, I've got a family, I got to take care of them, I got to make as much money as I can." All these things are going through your head. So, is it easy for us to point at one person and say evil, you were the decision maker, you did all the things? No, 'cause it's a massive group of people and therefore a shared responsibility.

So, no one's individual conscience is taking all of it, all of them, or whoever those decision makers might be, are taking a little bit of it and they are being able to rationalize it, because this is what we all agreed on, right? It's, we're corporations, we're... It's shareholders, it's all of the things, we have to do this. It doesn't excuse it. They're still doing a wrong f*cking thing, but we have to be able to see them as somebody who's actually caught up in the same bullsh*t, they're caught up in the same lie, and we all get caught up in lies.

Anyone who's sitting around and just kind of like, self, kind of righteousness of like, "I'd never do that," f*ck you. You were totally capable of doing anything and everything. I mean, this is one of the things I love about Carl Young, he was super into that, a shadow self. And what we don't like in other people is us knowing that we're totally capable of doing that sh*t, the darkness in ourselves. You could absolutely become a murderer if your life path took you on that place. You could absolutely be some greedy CEO taking advantage of everybody if your life path took you to that place. So, it's that balance, holding people accountable but not calling the monsters, and yet, by the way, some people do incredibly monstrous acts, some people do really evil acts. I think we have to be able to disassociate the act from the life force.

Recognizing that we are all capable of doing evil, but I think in our most core we are not evil. I mean, you can make the argument that like a sociopath or a psychopath is evil, but even they were... Clinically, they were born with a way... There's something in them that tweaked them, so... Am I going to blame... You're going to really blame someone because they were born a certain way? We can't actually do that, we could hold them accountable and put them in a strait jacket and put them in a room or whatever needs to happen, so they don't kill people, but to look at them as if they're like some animal... I mean, bro, this is, to me, one of the most insane things, and this is very western culture, very, very United States, but the fact that we can look at a dog that is mangy and dirty and maybe you just watched literally f*cking kill another dog or a rabbit or something like that and it's snarling and it's angry and it's in a corner and it's barking at you and yet almost every human being can look at that dog, step away from it, obviously, if you're smart, but look at the dog and see a dog in there, a really amazing dog that just got a f*cked up life, we have empathy for a f*cking dog, but you see a human in that same place, evil, dirty.

I don't want anything to do with them. Kill them, kill them, put them in prison. We don't even have empathy for each other and that... I mean, again, just indicative of how f*cked up we are, how divided we are, how out of tune with actual love we are.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Man, and again, when a problem arises, I believe a solution arises with it, because there's access to this information on some of the things we could do. So, I want to talk to you about that a little bit. You mentioned earlier about comparison and us just getting trapped in that and lost in that, and so we're not able to go within and to do the work

necessary to be able to see the humanity in the other person. And so, what can we... We're in a social media age today, so is there anything that we can do to supplant or just to turn down the volume on all this rampant comparison and start to see the value that we carry as a human being?

ZACHARY LEVI: Yeah. I mean, look, the dream scenario, not dream scenario, I don't know. There's these moments where I fantasize about, what if somebody exploded some kind of like electromagnetic pulse bomb that just took us all out of the digital age that brought us back to an analog world, and how... That would screw up a lot of stuff, but then I wonder but how also much richer would life become again, because we don't have these things that are doing the things that they're doing and distracting us on a regular basis? So, there's that weird idea. But no, that's not going to happen. And moreover, I don't know that it needs to happen. What we need to do is we need to take responsibility for how we interact with all that is available to us. And I think that, look, social media, the paradox of it, it is both the leading cause of mental health issues right now, I would imagine, and also the greatest platform we've ever had to talk about mental health, which is crazy to think about it, right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

ZACHARY LEVI: And I think that anybody out there who really feels that they are constantly comparing themselves with other people and that social media is a part of that, listen, if you are having a hard time getting off of social media, then just stop following accounts that make you feel that way and start following accounts that don't. Start...

That was something I did. There were a lot of people or things or whatever that I was like, "These are either just straight distractions or not making me feel great about where I'm at in life or whatever," but there's these other accounts... By the way, yours is one of them. Going to places that are helping me to learn more, going to places that are helping me to, inspiring me to want to be a better person. And there's a lot of philosophy accounts or podcasts, health podcasts, things of that nature, science, conversations around that, spirituality or just like some silly dad jokes, whatever it is. But if you're going to interact with social media, do it on terms that... And we all have the ability to make it on our terms, but that's just... Again, that's more of a symptom though. You got to go to the root. If you want to stop comparing yourself to other people, go to therapy, go talk to somebody about why you're even doing that to begin with, go work on the inner you so that as that is expressing itself in the outer you, and social media is just one of those ways, that you are looking at it in a very different way.

Anything that will help you to connect with your higher, deeper, more whole self, I think is where we all need to be going, I think that has to do with diet, I think that has to do with sleep, I think that has to do with meditation and prayer, I think that has to do with... I love where

plant medicine is going right now. I recently did this really amazing Ayahuasca retreat down in Toulon, and it was with wonderful people, beautiful souls, it was my first time ever doing it. It was something I'd wanted to do for a really long time, and it was an incredible experience.

It was beautiful and it was something that really helped me to tap into more... Somebody asked me, do you feel like a new person or like... Yeah, do you feel like a new person? And I said, "No, I don't feel like a new person, I just feel like a slightly more whole person, someone who needs these other things a little less to make me feel whole." 'Cause the more we all are feeling whole outside, away from these things, then when it comes up again, you're like, "Oh, I'm good, I don't need to pick up my phone right now, I don't need to go hang out doing that right now or whatever. I feel... "

I'm good, I'm not constantly criticizing and judging. And that's why I think therapy is madly important, because if people really want to stop comparing themselves to other people, then they really have to start loving themselves, and that, sometimes you really need somebody professional to help you walk you through the steps of what that means, 'cause it's important.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, absolutely. And of course, your book is a wonderful resource and also, I want to ask you this now that I have you here, is it intentional with you putting yourself in position to bring about even empowering entertainment like, I got to ask you about this, you played Kurt Warner in a biopic about his story. I'm from St. Louis, this was during the time when... Even when my oldest son was born, I had a Rams jersey on, alright? I was at the hospital with the Rams jersey on. It's a true story. And so, I saw the come up...

ZACHARY LEVI: Handing out Rams logo'ed cigars to everybody.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I saw when Trent Green got injured and Kurt came into the game, I was watching it, and of course, I'm like, "What the f*ck is this? God." And then to see the ride that we went on, it was like the city was buzzing. It changed the city, it changed the culture of St. Louis, and then they proceeded to leave. But I followed them out here.

ZACHARY LEVI: Of course.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, for you, was that an intentional choice for you to play a role like that?

ZACHARY LEVI: I mean, you know, I really feel like, at least in my own experience, I don't know if this is true for everybody else, but... And maybe it's just me connecting dots that aren't really there, 'cause we're good at assigning meaning to things that might not have meaning, but I don't know, I think most things have some form of meaning. I have... Roles keep finding me in

a place in my life where I'm often dealing with or moving through something that's very similar to whatever my character that I'm playing is also kind of moving through or looking at, and so I find that my roles are more like... They're attracting or...

They're finding me. My roles find me more than I find them, I think. And, you know, that movie I wasn't even opposed to do. Pre-pandemic, I had a whole bunch of other work I was already lined up to do, and that was conflicting with American Underdog, so I wasn't even available for it, and then the pandemic happened, which really messed me up but also taught me a lot more about my own situation, my own mental health, mental and emotional health, and then I applied that to the book, 'cause it was all a pertinent. And then coming out of that, all of a sudden, I was now available to play this role. And again, Kurt was somebody that I idolized as a kid, I was like, he was so impressive.

The story was so amazing, and even like... I kind of came up in a Christian household and all that kind of stuff, so there was that faith connection and all that stuff, I was like, "Oh my God, this guy..." And so to all of a sudden, then now that this is coming full circle, and now I'm playing this guy who I already had so much respect for, and then getting to know him and his wife, then I had far more respect for, and for it to be, you know... Actually, he and I had very similar paths in that we both wanted to get into entertainment, sports is ultimately entertainment, and we both believed that from a very, very, very, very, very young age that that is my destiny. That is my destiny, and I'm going to do whatever I can between now and then, but I'm not going to give up and I'm going to keep going, come hell or high water. And so, there was a lot of that I was able to draw on. But ultimately, I think that one of the things that ultimately... That was really powerful in that story, and something that I keep wanting to... Reminding myself and reminding other people of, which is that what ultimately broke for Kurt wasn't... There was all these really incredible things, you look back and him going to the arena league, for example, this thing he didn't want to do.

Well, that made him five times faster as a regular NFL quarterback, because the offense and defense moves five times faster, which means you got to read your receivers and get the ball out to them that much faster. Well, little did he know then that that was going to work perfectly with Mike Martz's offense when he got to St. Louis and he was going to blow doors on everybody because nobody was used to that, right? But in the moment, you don't know this thing. So trusting that you are learning and growing, even when you don't think that you are, you are learning and you are growing and becoming a better version of yourself to then be ready and prepared for what is around the corner, and not only that, but this myopic focus that Kurt had the whole time, which you kind of have to have, but is like, "I'm doing this, I'm doing this, I'm doing this, I'm doing this. This is where my value is. This is where my value is. This is where my value is."

Until he finally was like, "You know, if it never happens, it's okay, because where my value is is really in loving this woman and loving her kids and being that guy," and then, all of a sudden, boom, doors blow open, he's now been training, unbeknownst to him, to be a better quarterback in this arena league, and his priorities got straight, and he was valuing the deeper, real things and then boom, blessings arrive on his doorstep, totally unbeknownst to him and in the craziest ways. Nobody wishes that the person ahead of them breaks their leg in some weird way in pre-season and on, that's a weird way to get your blessing answered, and yet that's how it went down, you know? So, all of that stuff I was really kind of... A lot of that was hitting me while I was doing it because I obviously wanted to make it as authentic as possible, but also me recognizing that that was so much of my own life, and going and prioritizing what was real, going to therapy, and loving...

Figuring out that I needed to love myself, something I never had done before, figuring out the ways in which I had yet to really radically accept and forgive my parents, to radically accept and forgive all the people in my life that hurt me knowing that they didn't mean to do it, it wasn't like, "We're going to go get Zach," my mom, my step-dad, my dad, they're all surviving, they were all just doing the best they could with the tools they had at the time. We are all products of our environment, all of that stuff... And again, that's even kind of laid into Kurt's story as well, but you know, I think those are some of the bigger things I took from that, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome, awesome. American Underdog, a great movie to watch with the family. Watch it tonight, Amazon Prime... I watched it with my son.

ZACHARY LEVI: Yeah. Is it on Amazon Prime?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, it is. That's where I saw it.

ZACHARY LEVI: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I got it early, as soon as it hit the scene, now, 'cause it's the resonance, you know?

ZACHARY LEVI: Oh, of course. Oh, man...

SHAWN STEVENSON: And then cut to two weeks later or so, you're sitting here with me. Powerful man.

ZACHARY LEVI: Thanks, man.

SHAWN STEVENSON: How? How? How did this happen?

ZACHARY LEVI: Yeah. Well...

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's the magic.

ZACHARY LEVI: That is. That's... Again, some people will say God, some people say the universe, some people say source energy. I don't like to define it, much to the chagrin of a lot of my Christian friends, I don't like to define it in that particular way because I know I'm just trying to apply the same concept to however other people might want to categorize it or define it, but I think it's all that same thing. I think that there is real, real power in our ability to tap into that energy and how that stuff manifests, and I don't know if you're familiar with Dr. Joe Dispenza, but I think there's a lot of...

SHAWN STEVENSON: He's been on, of course.

ZACHARY LEVI: Yeah. Oh, he's been on here? So yeah. It's real. If our negative thoughts affect our bodies negatively, which even physicians can agree that that is a part of it, then why isn't the opposite true? And it is true, it is true. And when you get enough people altogether focusing positively on the same thing, you can manifest really big things. Guess what people? That's called f*cking prayer, it's what we've been doing it for thousands of years. Prayer, manifestation, whatever you want to call it. That's what that is. And it's real, and I think that if we can tap into that together communally as people, we could change all this, we could change it tomorrow, but we have to... But again, getting to that point means really getting to a point where you can love yourself. Love yourself so that you can love others, so you don't have to go bully those other kids in school, so you don't have to go treat other people like sh*t, so you can really genuinely be a part of making this world a better place.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Zachary Levi. Radical love, pick it up yesterday. And also, of course, Shazam, the new one is coming out in March.

ZACHARY LEVI: Coming out March 17, so around St. Patrick's Day of next year, yeah. Also, Radical Love is also on Audible if you're kind of a more of an audio book type of person, but... Yeah, thank you. Thank you so much for having me.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Of course.

ZACHARY LEVI: Thank you for letting me... I love... I mean, I can talk about this stuff all day long, as you can probably tell, so I love being able to sit down with excellent people like yourself and unpack these ideas. It's great.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, thank you. I'm looking forward to continuing the conversation. I appreciate you for who you are and what you stand for. And again, pick up Radical Love, check out American Underdog. Shazam 2 is coming in March. Let's make this a movement. A Family movement.

ZACHARY LEVI: And if you want to follow me on social media, it's @zacharylevi on Twitter and Instagram. Those are really the only things I'm on.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Go find this guy. Alright, Zachary Levi everybody. Thank you so much for tuning into the show today, I hope you got a lot of value out of this. Make sure to share this out with your friends and family, and please go and show Zachary Levi some love on Instagram, take a screen shot of this episode and just flood his inbox with love. It's such a great opportunity to be able to share these perspectives, these voices, people who have incredible platforms, who are using it to make change, to provide education and to do some real good.

We've got some incredible shows coming your way very, very soon, epic world class guests and powerful master classes, so make sure to stay tuned. Take care. Have an amazing day and I'll talk with you so. 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 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.