

THE MODEL HEALTH SHOW

EPISODE 664

Break Dysfunctional Patterns & Build Better Family Connection

With Guest Dr. Shefali Tsabary

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SHAWN STEVENSON: Welcome to the Model Health Show. This is fitness and nutrition expert Shawn Stevenson, and I'm so grateful for you tuning in with me today. There are a few things in our reality that impact our health, our feeling of fulfillment and our livelihood in our relationships and there are a few relationships that impact us as deeply as our parent-child relationships. Right? Whether it's our experience of being the child or our experience of being a parent. It has such a huge impact on every single area of our lives. It has such a huge impact on how we perceive reality. It has such a huge impact on how we perceive ourselves. The problem is, today more than ever, we are so inundated with societal messages about how this relationship should be but yet we don't really get a manual or a step-by-step guide on how to create a healthy relationship. We see so much dysfunction and so much struggle and this is showing itself so explicitly in the health outcomes of our children. From psychological implications and also physiological, physical implications as well and really these two are married. We can't separate the mind and body as we've been taught to do in our society.

They truly are integrated and we're seeing epidemic rates of depression amongst children, ADHD, behavioral issues, suicide tendencies and suicide ideation. The list goes on and on and on. Anxiety and depression are at all-time highs and they're still trending up. Something is severely wrong. Not to mention the physical health of our children and now today seeing the rate of childhood obesity tripling just within the last few decades. Again, something is severely wrong. Type 2 diabetes was once called adult-onset diabetes because this was just something that was seen in adulthood whereas today, now, there's an epidemic happening with our children in increasing rates of childhood diabetes. So, with all of this being the case, what can we do to create a healthier relationship with our children, with ourselves, with our form of instruction, with our relationships but also most importantly helping our children to have a healthier relationship with themselves? And that's what this episode is all about today. And I'm telling you this is going to be a game changer.

This is one of my all-time favorite conversations because it has such a huge impact not just on our own lives but our society at large and us coming together as a community to help to create conditions to have healthier more well-adjusted more resilient children. And so again, I think this episode is going to be a game changer for you and I'm very, very excited to share this information. And by the way make sure to stay tuned after the interview is over for a special piece of vocal art to encapsulate what this episode is all about. And another huge part of this conversation, I'm actually going to sprinkle it in but it's a huge part of the conversation here with the Model Health Show, is the health and wellness and the nutrition of our children, the nutrition of our society. I grew up in a paradigm where no joke, my mother would, every single trip to the grocery store, we're going to come back with some packets of Kool-Aid and a lot of

times we weren't doing well financially. So, we got Flavor Aid. All right? So not only is this Kool-Aid packets like 20 cents, but that's too expensive so we get the Flavor Aid for like 10 cents.

And what we're doing when we have these little packets of flavor, we would add an immense amount of sugar, right? We get a nice 2-liter pitcher, add in the water, add in the Kool-Aid or Flavor Aid packets in a cup, cup and a half of sugar and stir that bad boy around, get it frosty. And that's the hood classic, you know? This is what I was raised on. And the reality is if you look at the packet, it says 0% fruit in this fruit punch, 0% fruit in this orange flavored drink. It has the color and appearance of a fruit. It even has some flavor notes that are similar to fruit but it's completely devoid of any fruit or any nutritional value. As a matter of fact, it's anti nutrition. How is this possible? Well, many years ago, there were some really remarkable inventions to be able to find out that hey these different flavors we're experiencing when we eat a strawberry or we eat a kiwi, those flavors, those sensations that we're getting with our interaction, these are all chemistry, right? There's a chemical construct to denote and to experience certain flavors.

And so, inventions like the gas chromatograph was able to isolate and identify certain flavors and for us to then take those flavor notes, that chemistry and to create synthetic versions of those flavors. So, if we want to have the flavor of a strawberry, we have that chemistry complex and now we can take that strawberry flavor and add it to other things. We can make a thing, cereal for example, or ice cream now tastes like another thing, a strawberry, right? These other things, this cereal and this ice cream, no strawberry is necessary to give it a strawberry familiarity. Now, of course, the flavors are not going to be spot-on exactly the same identical but it's enough to muddy up the biochemical waters of our bodies being able to recognize where this flavor is actually coming from. And so being that this is now the norm today where so many of our foods are now artificially flavored, it's creating this palette devolution where our palette is no longer able to identify the intelligence in real food versus synthetic flavors, and it's because we've been so inundated with these synthetic flavors.

Now for folks that grew up in different conditions, a lot of folks who come to America from another country, for example we had an absolute superstar dancer Jaja Vankova on the show, and she moved here to America from her Czech upbringing and one of the things she first noted when she ate food is that it just didn't taste like food, right? It tasted off, it tasted like something was missing, it tasted like there was some foolery going on, the trickery for the palette and it didn't taste good. And she had a meal with some friends early on and the friends were offended like she was just like this doesn't taste right, right? And what she was experiencing was going from a real food intelligent palette to being bombarded with these synthetic forms of these nutrients and synthetic chemistry. And we can rebel against it initially, but over time as we're doing that we're going to dull down and dumb down our ability to associate healthily with food. And so, but here's the thing. The momentum is moving in one

direction. We're all about convenience. We're all about ease and we would have a hard time trying to not involve ourselves in the societal direction. What we can do and what I urge people to do as a more intelligent inroads to healthy eating is to upgrade those conveniences, right?

So rather than this paradigm that I grew up with and having Kool-Aid or Flavor Aid, now we can have real superfood concentrates of fruit, 100% fruit derived with these flavor sensations, with this ease of just adding water to the thing, now infusing ourselves with an absolute plethora of phytonutrients. And for example, if you take something like Açaí. Açaí is one of the most nutrient dense foods ever discovered. It's ORAC value is nearly a 110,000, making it more rich in antioxidants than just about any fruit that you're going to find out there including dramatically more than what you're going to find in a conventional produce section. Now what if we take Açaí and we combine it with blueberries which researchers at the University of Michigan published data finding that blueberry intake can potentially affect genes that are related to burning stored body fat, all right? Now we're stacking conditions and then combine that for me and the red juice formula that I drink Açaí, blueberry, also beet juices in there as well. And a study published in the Journal of Applied Physiology found that drinking beet juice boost stamina up to 16% during our exercise.

And also experiencing less muscle damage and less fatigue. And so, this is what we have access to today; companies that are paying attention to where the paradigm is going in our ease and sense of convenience, but let's do this in the very best way possible. And the Red Juice formula from Organifi that my family has on a regular basis. My kids, this is what we were bringing into the household rather than Kool-Aid, it's really upgraded our family's nutrition and also the accessibility of getting these superfoods into our bodies. Head over to organifi.com/model and get 20% off their incredible Red Juice formula. It's sugar-free, cold processed, superfood concentrates. Just add to water. They also have these little travel packs, these little go packs that we utilize while on the road. They're easy to tuck into your computer bag or backpack or purse just for that added nutrition when you're out and about. And again, go to organifi.com/model, that's O-R-G-A-N-I-F-I.com/model for 20% off. And I'm telling you you're absolutely going to love it in adding this to your family's health and wellness repertoire. Without further ado, let's get to our Apple podcast review of the week.

ITUNES REVIEW: Another five-star review titled "Inspired" by Sac Midtown. "Aside from Shawn's calming voice, content is so educational and inspiring. After listening to an episode, I reflect and tell myself, 'I'm going to be the best version of myself.' Keep doing what you're doing. It is saving lives making people happy and informing the uninformed."

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely. Thank you so much for leaving that review over on Apple podcast. It really hit my heart and I truly, truly do appreciate that and if you have to do so pop over to Apple podcast, leave a review for the Model Health Show. Make sure that you're

subscribed. Whatever platform that you're listening on, hit the subscribe button. You don't want to miss a thing. And on that note, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day. Our guest today is Dr. Shefali Tsabary, and she is a New York Times best-selling author, and she received her doctorate degree in clinical psychology from Columbia University. She specializes in the integration of Western psychology and Eastern philosophy, bringing together the best of both worlds for her clients. And she's an expert in family dynamics and personal development and teaches courses around the globe. And she's impacted the lives of countless people including Oprah Winfrey, has sat down with her many times to extract her wisdom and now she's here on the Model Health Show to share some powerful insights about one of our most important relationships. Let's jump into this conversation with the one and only Dr. Shefali, welcome to the Model Health Show.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: I'm so excited to be here.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome our team has been excited to have you here. We've got so many questions. And congratulations on your new book coming out. One of the things that you teach is that we need to destroy our fantasies about parenting. What do you mean by that?

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Well, I think we enter the parenting journey with these grand mighty expectations and fantasies that we're going to have these little mini me creatures who are going to follow what we say and we're going to create this picture-perfect family of success and bliss. And those fantasies really then, when they don't come true, which is on day two and they come crashing, we begin to feel like we are failures like there's something wrong with us, you know? So many mothers have told me how they couldn't breastfeed right away, or their baby wouldn't latch, or their baby was crying all the time, and the guilt sets in right away or if you have postpartum depression, you know? Or if you and your partner are not getting along on day three, you begin to have this panic attack because you had this vision. And whenever we preemptively have visions for anything, we set ourselves up for possible disaster instead of living in the moment, right? Having a child is such an incredible journey, a constant adventure in the unknown.

But if we are not ready to embrace the moment-by-moment utter unpredictability of this journey, especially till they are 16, 17, you just have no way of knowing how it's going to go the next day. And if you don't embrace and surrender to that utter unpredictability, you will suffer. You will suffer and then when you suffer you get triggered and then your children suffer and then the relationship suffers. So instead of setting ourselves up for these expectations, I teach parents to surrender preemptively to the fact that now their life is no longer in their control. Any idea or delusion of control that they think they're going to have over this other human

being needs to be destroyed so that you can truly enter the present moment and connect with your children as they need you to connect to them, which is a moment-by-moment connection.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Mm-hmm. Yeah. And today more than ever, I would imagine this vision that we have of how parenting is supposed to be our relationships, now there's so much comparison.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's accessible as well, so.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Oh, my goodness just the other day I was with a mother, and she said, "Why can't I have five children like she does and have a career like she does and look so good like she does." So, we're sitting here in our homes. Our toddlers have created a mess around us. There's vomit and bile on our beautiful hair and we're feeling just completely like failures, hopeless. We're watching mothers going to the gym on their third week after giving birth, but we don't realize that that life that we're watching on social media are these little bits and pieces of a curated produced life. It's not real life, but we get swept away and we begin to feel bad about ourselves.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. So, this new book is titled *The Parenting Map: Step-by-Step Solutions to Consciously Create the Ultimate Parent-Child Relationship*, and it's profound. What I've read so far is just mind-blowing. Now, I love the fact that you poke the bear, you know?

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: I do.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Like to go in there and you challenge our beliefs about things, and you're not shy about it. And we need that because, again, we're kind of living in this false perception of what life is in general, but also of course in the context of parenting. And if we're honest about it, just look at the results, right? Just look at the results of how things have unfolded. But in the book, you go through 20 steps, and you actually show us how to change our thinking to employ some of these things and I would love to go through some of these steps. But first I want to ask you conscious parenting itself, what does that actually mean?

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Well, I stumbled upon it in my own parenting journey when I observed how unconscious I was being, and I realized why I was being unconscious. And I was being unconscious because of this monster called the parental ego. And the parental ego comes because of the traditional parenting paradigm which trains us parents to think that we are the almighty. We have supreme control. Our children should be seen not heard. And we get to

dictate our children's lives. So, when we come from that mindset, every time our children then disobey us or what we think is disobeying us, it could just be that the child is expressing themselves, but you know how we parents are. We're like, "You disrespected us," and the child is like, "No, I just expressed myself." We are set up to believe that that is defiance and that needs to be punished, that needs to be shamed. And then we go ahead and shame and punish our children which then causes dysfunctional relationships and dysfunctional well-being in our children. So, when I saw myself doing exactly that, getting upset with my three-year-old and my two-year-old when she was two when she was three, I realized I'm doing this because I am coming from the wrong paradigm.

So, I came across, within my own awareness, a new paradigm. So conscious parenting is a revolutionary new paradigm of parenting where it's not about producing or curating or creating this perfect child, this model but instead raising one's own self, the parents own self, to a higher level of consciousness. So, what does that mean in real life? That every moment with our children is a reflection for how we need to grow up. So, if my toddler says, "No, I'm not going to have the scrambled eggs," and I see my ego rising and wanting to say, "hell yes, you will. I made the eggs, and you will eat the eggs because I'm the parent and I'm the boss and I know better." Instead of that I get to surrender the ego, I get to enter into the present moment and ask myself, "Why am I in this control mode? How can I watch what's coming up for me?" And instead of feeling like it's personal I can now drop that and relate to my child with empathy. So maybe the child does eat the scrambled eggs, but I don't have to yell at her, or she can eat it in 15 minutes, or. So, you create this flow with your child instead of creating this hierarchical rigidity with your child.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, yeah. Because I would imagine we're telling ourselves a certain story about why we're doing it.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We want to make sure that our kid is not hungry at school and all the things, but really, and you point this out repeatedly, it has something to do with our own ego about things...

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And the story we tell ourselves like, they're disrespecting me, right?

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Right. That's where things go awry. The story we tell ourselves when our children's expressions are not matching our fantasy. So, it all comes with our expectations. When that clash occurs, that's where we get to see how wounded we really are, because we

will lose our sh*t. I've lost my sh*t on nonsense. One time my daughter asked me to make some food. It's all... We're talking about food examples now, but it could be grades, it could be an activity they enroll in and then they decide not to be part of. But I remember my daughter asked me to make her this Açaí bowl. So I went to the store, I bought the things, I made it for her. I was thinking I'm going to get an A plus, best mom award, and instead she was... She looked at it, she just fiddled with it with her fork, and then she was like, no, this is not what I want. And she was just expressing herself. But I took it as, "Oh, you don't value me, I'm not worthy, I'm not important, you can just discard me." I took it like some big relationship malfunction, instead of, okay, you don't like it. Well, here are your choices. Or now you need to eat it or you can eat it later or... I just lost my flow because I got into ego.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is bringing up something really profound, which is these little people...

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Have so much power over us, more so than a lot of adults, even, in our lives. And I think a part of it is because they're closer to honesty.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes. I like that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, if a child says something to you, it's just like, What?

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: It just hits you different.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Well, if your child is empowered like my daughter was to just speak their mind, they're not trying to take care of your ego, they're not trying to take care of your wounded little child. They're just going to say, no, or, yes, and they're not here to coddle you. But because we have been trained by the traditional paradigm that children should coddle us, actually, the traditional parenting paradigm says, Children are here, basically, to take care of your ego, parent. So, by that traditional paradigm, when a child doesn't care to take care of our ego, we take that to mean they are disrespectful, they are bratty, they are defiant, and we need to hunker down on them really with strong force and put them back in their place. What does that mean? That means our children are not allowed to be in that pure essence. They're not allowed to say what they feel if it's going to hurt mom or dad. And that's really dysfunctional. That's why we grow up to not know who we truly are and to suppress our feelings in relationships and get into dysfunctional relationships one after the other.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Suppress our feelings, suppress our voice...

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Even in... And it's in those moments. And again, we're doing this through the lens of like, we're trying to help our child to fit into society and all these things. And now... And also, just a heads-up for everybody, it's not that there isn't a context for all of this stuff, but this actually leads right into step one.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And this is, Focus on the right problem.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes. So, the traditional parenting paradigm has told us that the problem, if you have any problem in your parenting, it's the child's fault. So, look for the fault and fix that problem. So, I'm a therapist, and parents will come with their little child, little Sarah or little Becky or little Johnny, and they'll drop him or her in my office, and I will literally have to say to them, where are you going, mom, or, where are you going, dad? And they often say, oh, I'm going to go take a call in the car, or, I'm going to go get a Starbucks, or I'm going to go get a mani-pedi. And I say to them, No, you're not. You need to be in my office, and little Johnny or Sarah need to sit outside. And the parents are often flummoxed. They are just aghast by this because they think it's the kid who's the problem. Like, Fix my kid. And my approach is, no, I cannot fix your kid until and unless I can quote-unquote "fix" you. You are the one who holds the solution. And you are the one who has probably the problem, because you're not seeing your children as they need to be seen. And this approach is not about coddling your children or indulging your children. It's about understanding what they need from you. Some children need a different kind of parent than the parent you can be. So, you need to adapt to who your kid is, not the other way around.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. That's so remarkable. It seems so obvious when you say it that... Because we come into things with our certain template.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And, really, nothing can prepare you for the spirit or the personality of that child when they arrive.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes. Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Because each child is also very different.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Right. But we don't want them to be different. We say it in lip service, but we really want them to be exactly like who we need them to be, a better version of ourselves. They can either be exactly like us or better than us, but they cannot be like our imperfect parts. If we see our imperfection in them because we haven't accepted it in ourselves, we cannot accept it in our children. Just the other day, I was with a parent who really struggled in school and felt really inadequate all through his school years and felt like a failure and never really accepted that they were limited. We cannot be good at everything. And parents somehow think that our children need to be perfected everything. A little bit of Julia Roberts, a little bit of Michael Phelps, a little bit of Yo-Yo Ma, a little bit of Einstein, a little bit of Obama, a little rockstar, a little Mother Teresa. [chuckle]

We have these idealistic impressions of who our children need to be, which is absolutely delusional. But it comes from our own idealized fantasies for who we should be. We don't accept that we are limited. I'll be the first person to tell you I'm limited in this, in that and the other. I don't need to be a perfect superhuman. Therefore, I don't need my child to be a super perfect human. So that father who had not yet accepted that he was not a good student couldn't accept his child was also not really academic. Not every kid can be academic, athletic, dramatic in every field. What are we expecting from our children? And the reason we expect superhuman products in our children is because we have not yet accepted our own limitations. So, whatever we have shoved aside in our own shadow and suppressed, we now cannot tolerate it if it shows up in our children. Full force, we're going to push them to be anything other than who we denied in ourselves.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But isn't it our job to make sure that they are the best that they can possibly be?

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yeah, but who is the... Everyone is being the best they can be. This illusion, this saying, I just want my kid to live up to their potential, or I just want them to be the best they can be. Aren't we always doing the best we can do, in that moment? Are we purposely trying to not be the best? Right now, I think I'm doing the best I can do. But 10 years later, I could look at this interview and go, what a dumb thing you said, Shefali. Why didn't you say it this way? Of course, because we're always growing. But in this moment, I am doing the best I can. And every parent is doing the best they can, and every kid is doing the best they can. Even if the parent is kind of maybe high on pot. Okay? Say, in that moment, that's the best they could do. We can only do the best we can with the consciousness we have in that moment. So, there's no regret, no point looking back and going, oh my goodness, I was so awful five years ago or five hours ago, because we are right here, right now. So, we have to always presume that people are doing their best. I always presume that our children are doing their best in the moment. So, when we say, "Oh, our kid did not do their best." according to whom? According

to us, right? According to our standard. And that's not fair for our kid. I always presume my kid is doing the best they can.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. According to our standards and our imperfection.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes, exactly.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Wow. That's so, so powerful, so true. So, the question is... Well, I think one of the insights would be to honor what is, to see them as they are and to appreciate that.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes. Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And from that place, I think we can have a more healthful...

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Vision or articulation of what can... What we can move to next.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Correct. So, once you accept who it is your kid is in that moment, now without resistance, with embrace, with celebration, with honor, you can create choices. You're not just being triggered. The thing the parent needs to ask when they are triggered is, why am I being triggered right now? Most likely, whatever failure has occurred has already occurred. The bad grade, already done. The drug issue, already in the body. Whatever we're getting angry with right now has already happened. So now what do we do? Do we keep admonishing our kid with shame, or do we simply illuminate what they could do better and then move on? Let's move on. The bad thing has already happened. In every life, whatever we are afraid of has already happened. Otherwise, we wouldn't be afraid of it. So now what do we do? So, do we want to teach our children the resilience of creating change, or do we want to give them the shame of things that they cannot change? Is it shame for things they already have done and cannot change, or is it resilience for things they now can change within themselves, right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Oh man. This is hitting. This is hitting. It's so powerful. So, we're going to jump around a little bit with these steps.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Sure.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You're already actually dabbling into...

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Some of these steps. But I want to ask you about this one in particular, because our society is structured in such a way that we hold up on a platform people who are successful...

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Or people who have the appearance of happiness, by the way...

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Which is often, very often not true, or not consistent. But one of the steps is to end the chase for happiness and success.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yeah. I think that's the biggest one in our parenting mind and psyche that we need to raise successful and happy children. At least bloody be happy. Like, I'm doing all this for you. I'm sacrificing all this. Can you at least be happy? So, we get really tripped up on both these. So, I'll just address each one separately. So, the success one is exactly what you said. We have this defined fantasy around success. And it's really to be rich. Whenever I ask parents, I go, okay, what is success? Really, what is it? I go, is it being a monk in the Philippines or being an artist who's finding themselves on the streets of Bali? And they're like, No, that's not success. So, when we really distill it down, it is just, just be rich. Please, take care of yourself, be wealthy, live in the right ZIP code, hang out with the right people, have status, and belong. And that's how society defines success. You and I know that. There's a traditional idea of success.

And the illusion or delusion there is that that success means something, and it has value. And parents will immediately then say, Yeah, the value of that success is happiness. So, we have somehow combined happiness with that very limited notion of success. And it is a lie. I am quote-unquote "successful." You're successful. Really, the value in it doesn't come... Happiness doesn't come from that. The minute we reach one mountain, we're trying to get to the next mountain. And we don't want to pigeonhole our children into this narrow idea of success. And if we do, which we do, we will constantly butt heads against them. My daughter is not going to be traditionally successful. She is going to be successful in other ways. So, if I as a parent keep trying to put her round hole into a, whatever, square peg or whatever, into the whatever, into... I'm going to be constantly butting heads against her. So, I made a decision early on to expand my idea of success. And in conscious parenting, I teach that success should be one thing only. Does the child on their authentic essence, their idea of who it is they are and flourish and make choices from that foundation? Not my idea of what success is, not what society's idea of what success is, but their idea.

So, my child, for example, if I saw that she wasn't very academic, I didn't push her in academics. I said to her, well, if this is not your strong suit, or if not, all academics are your strong suit, but you like English or you like history, focus on that. The rest, just pass. Just get through it. But focus on what you love. So, from a young age, I engendered in her this understanding that she must tap into what comes naturally to her, what is authentic to her, what is something she naturally leans toward. So, from a young age, she's honing that, versus so many parents who take their kids down medicine or accounting or engineering, and then the kid at 45 realizes, oh, you know what? This is not why I am. So, we want to match who the kid is with what they do, versus telling them to match who they are into what they do.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But that takes work. That takes work.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Everything takes work. Yes, but...

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is... Our society is so... It doesn't value that.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's structured in a way that doesn't value the uniqueness of that person.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes. Yes, yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And as you said, success... I think it's, again, under the guise of something positive, which is...

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We want our child to be successful so that they're not homeless.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So still driven by fear.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: It's all driven by fear, and it's extreme fear. It's either or. It's either or. The C grade means, oh my goodness, my kid is going to be a drug dealer. We go straight to crime, we go to prison, we go to homelessness, we go to early pregnancy. We go... Because I think that our underlying fear is for all the things that we were afraid that we would end up as. It's so ingrained in us that we... Those are the shadow elements of society. And I often tell my parents, okay, what if your kid does end up as a drug dealer or in jail? Can you completely control that outcome? You can't. So why are you living in fear of that ultimate outcome? If that

happens, they'll learn from it. I mean, are those people bad people? No. They're unfortunate people or they got caught up in circumstance. You cannot control every human your child encounters in college. At the end of the day, after 16, 17, our control over our children incredibly diminishes. Exponentially. So, we cannot control every relationship with our children. All we can control is our relationship with them. That is the goal. And if we keep pounding into our children that they need to be something other than who it is they are, our children will soon not only lose respect for us, they will disconnect from us, and they will not come to us. We will not be their safe harbor.

I always tell parents, why do you want to ruin your relationship for something that could happen but may not happen in the future? Live in the present with your children and connect with them right now, and let's talk about happiness, because our obsession with making our children happy has really not only over-coddled our children and over-indulged our children, but we've also driven them crazy. They're not allowed to express their authentic feelings because we want them to be happy. Guess what? Humans are not designed to be happy with a smile on our face all the time. That's unrealistic. Life is not about giving us pleasurable experiences all the time. In fact, we... You and I know, we only grow through pain.

So, by robbing our children of their natural authentic pain, you don't want to give them artificial pain, but if a child, for example, comes home crying, they weren't invited to the popular kid's birthday party, that's an authentic real-life experience. You cannot rob them from that. So, if they're crying, it's okay for them to cry. It's authentic. But you spanking them is not authentic. That's you out of control. Now, that's artificial pain that you're giving them. But when a child goes through authentic life experiences, such as breaking up or not liking their cellulite, okay. You don't have to go and rob them of that and suck the cellulite out of their body. Let them cry about it. It's okay. We're not meant to love every part of our body. We're not meant to not get broken up with. Every one of us has kind of experienced a break-up. It's part of normal life.

So, when we panic, it's because we feel like it's our responsibility to manage our children's moods, their feelings, their life experiences, their life outcomes. We cannot. We cannot take on that burden, because through that burden, then we feel the pressure to make it happen, then we lose our sh*t, and then our kid feels really bad. So, we end up actually making our kid feel bad in our desire for them to be happy.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. That's a vicious circle.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It sounds like. And even you just said it we learn, especially this species that we are right now, we learn so well through pain. And to try to rob our children of that or to avoid it... It's obvious... Again, it's creating a society where our children are less resilient. And again, the data shows that just look at our society right now, and in our pursuit of trying to make our children chronically happy, they're more depressed than ever. More anxiety, higher rates of suicide, all the things, everything is going up. Something is severely wrong.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes. Well, our generation, I will say my generation created all these apps and all these luxuries for the children that now we tell... We say are lazy. Now we say that they are indulged, but our generation created the Uber Eats and the Ubers and the... All these luxury tap on the screen and the genie will appear. And then we're yelling at our kids for being unmotivated and lazy. And without ambition, well, we took away pain. We took away the opportunity for them to learn, to wait at a bus stop, to wait for the car, to go to the restaurant, to have the restaurant be a special thing and not come into your house. Right now, our children like are getting upset because the Uber Eats order is not correct or the Uber Eats driver is taking too long. And I look at my daughter and I go, "Are you serious?" And she goes, "I know, I know, I know, I didn't grow up in your time and I didn't grow up in India." Because I just want to like scream because our children have become so indulged, but they are responding to things that we gave them.

We are giving them the cell phone. Then we're yelling at them for having the phone. We are on the phone all the time. So, our generation needs to take responsibility. We parents need to take accountability for how we show up with our kids. Are we distracted? Are we suppressing our feelings? Are we eating too much and drinking too much and smoking too much and checking out too much? You know, all we have power over as parents is ourselves and we need to take that seriously and then exempt ourselves from controlling our children's outcomes. We cannot control the outcomes of their life. We can only control how we show up with them. It is through our modeling that we can be present, that we can teach them, that we can show resilience, that we can really teach them about not to be dependent on external validation. You know, how will they learn not to be dependent on the likes they get on Instagram or TikTok if we ourselves are driven by external validation, right? Our children are watching how we dress up, how we get surgery, how we get... How we treat our own bodies. They're watching us all the time.

So, it's one thing to talk about don't be dependent on your Instagram following or don't be dependent on what people say to you. Don't be bullied by the bully. But if we don't live that day by day, then how will our children model that?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. You just said model.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is the Model Health Show and so that's a big, for me, just being able to see examples of things has been the greatest teaching for me, rather than somebody telling me what to do. And so, creating a platform where behavior can be modeled and encouraging that in the person, not us trying to force feed or distribute it to other people. You know, my son, Jordan, is here in the studio with us. I never told him to work in fitness. You know, he's just in the environment. He's seen something modeled and he found a love for it in his own perspective, his own way of it. And I can't force feed him to do things the way that I want to do things and also allowing him the space and opportunity to experiment, to make mistakes.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Or to leave if that doesn't work out for him in a decade, he can leave. Right. So, we have... We only have influence and influence only comes from connection. Now, the traditional parenting paradigm says we have control, and that's what I debunk in conscious parenting. We do not have control. We barely have control over our own lives. Right? So, the only thing we can choose to have over these beautiful people we call our children is influence, but they will only be influenced by us if we choose to honor them, to connect with them. Right? We cannot ramrod into them. We cannot walk all over them. We cannot shove things into them because eventually that will backfire. It doesn't have sustainability. Controlling another human being only works when they're very helpless, very young, very, very in your power, but it's not sustainable. Eventually it'll backfire.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. There's this interesting thing about humans. We don't like to be told what to do, you know?

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes. And that's a good thing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And we're going to eventually rebel.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes. Or in very repressive cultures, people may not rebel outwardly, but they will rebel inwardly. So, they will withdraw, they will get depressed, they will turn that anger and rage inward. They will eat too much; they will drink too much. They will suppress that rage in some way. And that is so unhealthy.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Got a quick break coming up. We'll be right back. When people see you, the first thing that they see is your skin. We truly do wear so much of what's happening internally on the surface of our skin. And it just makes sense because our skin is a protection around what's happening internally, but also our skin is a huge component of our nervous system. When we are fertilized at the very beginning of our lives, the egg meets the sperm, one of the first things that develops is our nervous system and the outermost expression, the

seeds of our skin being developed. And again, that makes sense because our skin helps us to sense and to modulate what's happening in the world around us, right? We don't all have to have spidey senses to understand that our skin is picking up information from our environment and distributing that information to our brain and nervous system. But what's happening with our brain and nervous system moves outward to our skin as well. It's a deeply intimate connection and this speaks to how stress can impact our skin health, but also how we're building our skin from the inside out.

Now, if we want healthier skin, our obsession as a society has been about topical treatments, trying to move things from the outside in. But the reality is to really make big changes with our skin health, we need to work from the inside out. And this starts with things that are nutritive and nourishing to our skin, but also nourishing to our nervous system. A randomized, double-blind placebo-controlled trial published in the journal *Complementary Therapies in Medicine* utilized green tea extracts for four weeks. And at the conclusion of the study, participants showed a significant reduction in acne precursors and skin irritation versus the placebo group. Again, this is a randomized, double-blind placebo-controlled trial demonstrating something remarkable about green tea. Another study, and this was a meta-analysis of 20 studies demonstrating that compounds in green tea have been shown to be effective in treating and reducing acne, dermatitis, keloids, and rosacea, among other skin issues. There's something really interesting about green tea.

Part of it is the phytonutrient concentration found in green tea, and another part of it is the impact that it has on calming and supporting our nervous system. Green tea is incredibly rich in L-theanine, research published in the journal *Brain Topography* found that L-theanine intake increases the frequency of our alpha brain waves, indicating reduced stress, enhanced focus, and even increased creativity. Now, the very best form of green tea that is most concentrated in L-theanine is Sun Goddess Matcha Green Tea from Pique Teas. It's shaded 35% longer for extra L-theanine and is crafted by a Japanese tea master. And there are less than 15 in the entire world. It is the first quadruple toxin-screened matcha for ensuring its purity and efficacy. There's nothing added; no preservatives, sugar, artificial sweeteners, and any of that other nonsense. And you combine that with the BT fountain formula from Pique that contains proven ceramides and hyaluronic acid that reduces fine lines and wrinkles that boost skin elasticity and provides deep hydration. You can see visible results within two weeks.

Go to pikelife.com/model, that's P-I-Q-U-E-L-I-F-E.com/model. You're going to get 15% off plus free shipping for life with one of their new exclusive subscriptions. Plus, some of their packages actually come with a frother and a beaker so you can actually make your tea with ease. I love my hand frother. I use it every single day to make my drinks for myself and my family. I highly encourage you to check this out for better skin health and better health overall. Go to pikelife.com/model. Now, back to the show.

You said this term earlier and I think it's one of the most important takeaways from today. And to see how everybody, every single human being who's ever existed or whoever will exist is completely unique. It's a completely unique phenomenon that's unfolding and it's always in a process. You said this earlier. You said the essence of the child. How can we start to cultivate an awareness or how can we see the essence in our child?

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Well, if we're paying attention, every child comes with such a unique temperament. You see it with your children, one from the other, right? Each one comes with such a unique blueprint, but we have to pay attention. We have to really, our philosophy and our mission should be, I am not going to tamper with this essence. Sure, this essence needs to be guided and needs to grow and flourish. And we do live in this world with laws and rules. But for the most part, if my kid, for example, is a shy, dreamy, reclusive kid, I'm going to let them be that. I'm going to see the superpower in that. Or if I have a kid who's really like super, super boisterous and super hyperactive and super exploding all over the place, I'm going to see the superpower in that. I'm going to try to keep my kid as close to that essence as possible. You know, when my daughter was young, she wouldn't smile much, you know? And I think I smile like 24/7. So, I thought my kid would be like me, a cheerful, optimistic, easy breezy kind of kid. And she was like kind of tough.

And I remember at her two-year-old birthday party, the photographer came to me and said, "I'm so sorry. You know, I couldn't get her to smile." And I was offended. I was like, no, you go and try to make her smile. You stand on your head; you go get your clown suit. No, I didn't say all this. But in my mind, I was like, you go do your job. But I was mortified, right? Because I wanted the smiling kid who was happy all the time, because then I felt good about myself. I was successful. So, I remember a whole dialogue in my head. And that's why I really had to change my whole paradigm. Because I realized in my kid's early years that she wasn't the kid who was going to be a mini me. And F it, if she doesn't smile, she doesn't smile. But I had to talk myself out of my ego and really ask myself, do you want to accept who this kid is? It's her birthday party. It's her face. And it's her mouth. She can choose to smile or not. But I had to really tame my ego, because my ego said, children should smile. She should be grateful. She should be cheerful. We've all made an effort to be here for her. How dare she not smile in a picture, right? So, my ego was going crazy.

But that's how I began to cultivate this awareness that who it is they are, is who they need to be naturally. You don't want to abduct your child from their spirit. So, my child's spirit was a not smiling spirit. I'm like, okay, I got to accept. I got to celebrate. I got to honor who she is. And even today her emoji on my phone is a porcupine, because... But I love her for that, right. She's taught me so much. She tells me I'm the biggest pushover, right? She's a porcupine. We all have our essences, but there's a superpower in her being a porcupine. You know, she is who

she is, and she doesn't back down. And I now see the value of that. And I teach parents, pay attention to who your child authentically, organically is, because the more you see the beauty of that, the less your kid has to wear masks to please you or to please the world. The fewer masks your kid wears, the more in their body they are, which means they're connected to their own self, which means they will not use food to find connection.

They will not use alcohol or drugs or dysfunctional relationships to find connection, because they are already home. They are in their home. They're in their body. It may not look like the body you wanted, but it's their body. It's their temperament. They won't have to act out to get attention or praise or validation because they're getting it in their natural state. So, you will save yourself a lot of years of therapy, a lot of dysfunction, if you simply tap in and tune in to who you are, right, it all comes from your honoring yourself and who your child's essence is. And in this book, I describe the main different types of essences. Is your kid like this or is your kid like that so you can identify. We don't want to typecast anyone, but every kid kind of comes with a template. You know, this kid is like this and, oh, this kid was easy breezy right from the start. Oh, this kid, this kid was a firebrand right from the start. Parents will talk like that, but we can't use it as judgments. We need to use it as portals for celebration. You don't judge your kid. You celebrate who your kid is and find the superpower.

And that's the parent's obligation because the kid is ready to be who they are. They are happy. They didn't need to have a birthday party where you had a photographer that was on you. So, they want to be themselves. But unfortunately, we pigeonhole them to be who society has trained us they should be.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is so good. And the truth is, and you bring about this so clearly in the book, is that our children really are phenomenal teachers. And a lot of times they're teaching us through that timeless method, which is through pain and giving us an opportunity to grow and to evolve and to be creative. There's so much like juiciness and joy in it, but we unconsciously, I think we don't want to do the work. And I just got the example when you were sharing that that my oldest son, Jordan, we find a lot of the same stuff funny, right? And so, him and I will be cracking up about something. We'll look at my youngest son. So, Jordan's 22, my youngest son is 11, and he'll be sitting there straight-faced. He's like, what's wrong with this kid? What's wrong with you? And so having this kind of difference in our sense of humor, for example, with my youngest son, what it's done is it allowed me to be creative in how to connect with him through humor and to analyze and understand what makes, what's funny to him. Right? And it's brought in my palette.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Exactly. So, you had to expand. See, your first initial reaction was, hey, you better come on our team. But then you did it the other way. You're like, no, I need to go to his team. I need to go and understand who he is and find a way to connect. And through that,

you grew, right? You had to learn other ways to find humor palatable or funny or you went to his team. And that's the mistake we make as parents. We want the kids to fit our model instead of crossing over the bridge to their model. And let me tell you that when you cross over the bridge and find beauty in who they are and connect with them and allow them to feel seen as they are, not so they please you, then that kid grows up feeling like they are worthy. You know, the number one plague of all eating disorders, all substance abuse addictions, is a sense of unworthiness. So where does that unworthiness begin to bear root in the earliest relationships?

So, it starts with the parent seeing the kid as worthy as they are, not putting on a mask, not being an achiever or a clown or a comedian or a pleaser. No, I see you. You are my teacher. Imagine if every kid grew up with a parent telling them, you're my teacher. I see you. And then also I am your teacher. You know, we both are each other's teachers. What an amazing sense of inner worthiness that child will have versus how we are raising them, which is go to school, get straight A's, please me, do as I say, don't talk back, don't have an opinion. But then when you grow up, be a rebel, be a leader, be a corporate superpower. But at home, do as I say. You know it's ridiculous. We cannot raise children one way, but then expect them to grow up another way.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely. And I think that our job, what we think this kind of societal programming is that we are here to protect our child, save our child. And you talk about this is one of the steps as well to dump the savior complex.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes, we cannot save our children from the world and their life experiences. We can barely... I have parents coming to me crying, oh, my kid rolled off the bed or my kid hurt themselves and I was right there or at the jungle gym in the park. And I always tell parents, well, this is life. What are we going to do? Now I help parents through their guilt because they feel so bad, but we have this misplaced fantasy that we can save them from life's life's life, lifehood...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Life be life.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Life be lively, and life be life. We cannot. It's there's no immunity out there in this world. So, if you bring this kid into the world think hard before you bring the kid. But once the kid is here, they will meet the class bully. They probably will be called stupid, fat, or ugly at some point or in some version. They will not be invited to some party. They will have their heart broken. They will be fired from a job or not taken for a job. They may put on weight. They may have a problem with drugs. This is life. So, you're not here to save them. And why is this important for parents to hear? Because in our fantasy of being the savior, we actually yell at them too much, scream at them too much and over protect them too much versus

connecting with them, teaching them and guiding them, right? If this happens, then you could do this. But we cannot imagine every foreseeable future situation with our children. We need to go through life with them. The best thing we can tell them is no matter what, you have your own back.

And as a backup to that, I got your back. That's the only thing we need to tell them is that no matter what, I got your back. But I cannot protect you from that situation occurring. You may get pulled over by the police. You may be racially discriminated against. But if that happens, and that may happen, I will have your back. But I cannot take away all racist people. I cannot take away all horrible relationships from your life. I cannot take away the nasty teacher who yells at you. I cannot, right? It is going to happen.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love it. You started this off by saying immunity, right? And actually, how we build up immunity is exposure.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Exactly, exactly.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But we don't think about that psychologically. We just think about that in a very tangible way. But it's even more true psychologically. And our minds are so powerful in being able to process and to essentially defend us, rather than trying to kind of handicap our child or to be their savior, equipping them with a sense of self, a sense of self-worth and ability to process things and to understand other perspectives, I think that would be more valuable.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Absolutely. And we do it unconsciously. We don't mean to protect our children to the point of coddling them. But that's where awareness comes in. We need to be aware of how life is teaching our children how to be resilient. So, when the teacher bullies your kid, instead of going, how did this happen? How dare it happen? My child is traumatized. Teach your kid, wow, and you're standing here alive and you're okay. And we're talking about it. And we can go together and talk to the teacher. We show them that they are surviving. Every moment we show them, look, and nothing happened to you. You're fine. Mom still loves you or dad still loves you. You're still okay. You love yourself. And we teach them moment by moment, not that things should not happen, but that when they happen, we're okay. So, every opportunity can be transformed into gold, right? We're like alchemists. We need to teach our children to be alchemists with their lives, right?

So, for example, when our kids are 15, 16, many parents have curfew, right? And I have a different opinion. I say don't have curfew; you know? Let other parents have curfew with their children and then your kid will come home when their... The kids go home. Why not to have curfew? Because let the kid figure it out himself or herself that this is not good for me. I have

a headache the next day because they're going to go to college. And when they're in college, you don't have curfew, right? So, by 15, 16, you want your kid to actually begin to experiment living on their own. But that's when parents become the most strict, you know? Instead of preparing them and creating the leeway for your kid to mess up, to fail a grade or two, to wake up late or two, to see how it feels hungover or exhausted because that's going to happen in college. Like it's coming around the bend, but when do we prepare them for that, right? Right? So, I never had curfew for my kid. Number one, we never fought because there was no curfew. Number two, she learned, right? And whether she learned it well or not, that was up to her body to metabolize and learn. By giving artificial control over our children, we actually, as you said, don't build their resilience or immunity to figure things out on their own, right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right. So, this is... There's a resistance bubbling up in me because I would see this for... I'm just thinking through the eyes of other parents as well. It's such a culturally indoctrinated thing as for the safety of our children. And this is what's so remarkable about your book is that it's providing us to start to see things through a different lens and also that each child is unique. And how your parenting needs to be unique as well. And so, there's a context for all of this, but the most important thing is for us to be open to it. So even as I feel a resistance to a thing, just being open to seeing things differently.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: But here's the thing. So, let's just take the curfew resistance, right? Don't start out with a curfew. Start out with, let's see when they come home naturally. My kid never came home after midnight, ever with full freedom to come home anytime. Kids are not stupid, right? But we so over parent them that we actually begin to think that they cannot handle their lives. I'm talking 15, 16, right? If you have a really idiotic kid who will come home at 5:00, then we have a problem, right? But if you know your kid is wise, your kid's not an idiot. Your kid, by 15, 16, you've raised them, right? They're not suddenly going to become an idiot. And then if they are really testing the limits, then, like you said, okay, then we have a situation. But it's not a one size fits all. Oh, 15 years old, need to have a curfew. Wait and see if we need to have a curfew. Maybe your kid is amazing and comes home on their own. So don't create artificial rules simply because that's the cookie cutter way is what I'm saying.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But here comes the place where, again, this takes work. This takes awareness, this takes paying attention. And also, one of the things that I... I had to get to a place of true understanding about the world that we're existing in. And we can't create a bubble. Like there's a... Do you know about The Boy in the Plastic Bubble? Like John Travolta's old movie decades ago?

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Okay, I know, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, it's this, he's living inside of this bubble, right? But in reality, our children are going to be living in society. Whether we like it or not, whether we appreciate how society is constructed or not, it is what it is. And one of the things right now the majority of our diet as a species here in our society is ultra-processed foods. So, I know that this, this is the majority thing. So, to try to shelter my child from that and to pretend like he's not going to be exposed to those things is really ignorant on my part. And so, what I can do is we have a general culture within our family about what foods we're eating because it's just what we're doing. But also, I'm aware, and I've never told them, don't eat that. Right? If they're going to be at school and there's a birthday party. You know, versus because there are parents and I've seen it, I might have participated in it many years ago, but bringing their own cupcake. Right? You know, this one is the gluten free, flavor free, sugar free, every free, invisible cupcake and the other kids are having a regular cupcake. Now, of course, they're dietary things, yes. But just in general, just because of living through our fear lens and not wanting our kid to participate in what society's doing and getting that feedback. What if their diet is predominantly real food and they have that thing, they're going to feel that thing. They're going to feel different.

SHAWN STEVENSON: They might feel a way that they don't like, which is chances are this is going to happen. And I've seen my kids experience this and they self-adjust. Because they know what it's like to feel good. And having too much of this other stuff, they'll feel good.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Right. Right. So, we're not saying not to educate and not to keep enlightening our children. Every day I send my daughter, when I eat really healthy, a picture of what I'm eating. That's all I do. She knows why I'm sending it, right? Just to show her, like, look, I feel so energetic because this is what I eat every day. And this is how mom looks because she eats like this. So, I'm always subliminally trying to get her on the right path but knowing that she can only arrive there when she's ready. Right? Especially when they're growing up after their 15th year, you got to release your child to their own experimentation to what feels good for them and arrive at that on their own because that's sustainable. Right? So, we can expose, we can highlight, we can underscore, but we cannot force our children and we cannot guilt-trip them with our love, right? We cannot take away our love if children do not do what we say we want them to do.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, there's this additional step. And again, there's 20 steps in the book. One of them is discover your two I's.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Oh, that's deep. Now you're getting a little deep, so.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Let's get deep. I like it. I want to get deep.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: So that, so in the step... So, there are three stages. Stage one is all about changing mindset and we've been talking about that now. Stage two is about breaking your dysfunctional patterns. So, the two I's refer to your inner child and your imposter ego. Each one of us, if we're just talking about ourselves as psychological beings, right? There's no real inner child living inside us. It's a psychological entity. We developed an inner child which lives in fear, which needs love, which needs approval, worth. If the inner child could talk, it would say, am I worthy? Do you see me? Do you love me? Do I belong? That's the cry of the inner child. Most of us developed an inner child because we weren't seen enough by our parents. We didn't feel valid enough. We didn't feel approved enough. So, we have this hunger inside us. And in psychological terms, I call it the inner child. And because that inner child didn't get the love it needed or the worth it needed, it got it through a proxy, a surrogate self.

And the surrogate self is the false self, the mask we wear that I call the imposter ego. We're all walking around as imposter selves, not our authentic selves, because we're all trying to get the love and validation we need. But we think we can only get it through this imposter self. So, for example, my imposter ego is the good girl. I used to be the super good girl, super achiever. Many girls grew up like that and rescued everybody, fixed everybody's problems because I got a lot of validation for that. But now as an adult, it sabotages me. It messes me up. People have taken advantage of me. I've been stolen from. I've been lied to. And all because I wanted to be good versus be real. Like if I was in my real badass self, I would be like, no, I would catch the people lying and cheating. But because I was so in my pleasing self, I shot myself in the foot. So, our inner child creates these false selves that work in childhood. They get us to survive childhood. The teacher likes us. The parent likes us. Okay, or we become rebels, or we become comedians, or we become super achievers, some version of some false self. We're afraid to be our true selves.

But then when we grow up, it kind of burns us out. We get into trouble. It gets us into some sort of trouble. And that's our awakening, our opportunity to awaken. And then I talk about the third I in the book. It's called Activate Your Third I, like the third eye, which is your insightful self, your adult self. And that's really the journey of awakening, to realize you have an inner child, to see how you've compensated for the inner child by creating this imposter ego, and then awakening to your insightful self or your adult self. So, stage two of this book, The Parenting Map, is really every human's route and road to awakening.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. And this is so wonderful because we don't devalue that you're the good girl, right? That person doesn't just not have value, but without you going through those things to kind of recalibrate and to develop intelligence with it, because your ability to inspire others, to serve, to teach, all those things are valuable, but it's being intelligent and where you're putting it, versus just spraying it out to everybody.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Correct. You have to have the compassion like the good girl has or whatever our good part has, but we have to have wisdom too. We have to have discernment. We have to now have the masculine with the feminine, right? So, in all people, some people have the over masculine side developed in their ego mask, and then they have to develop the feminine. So, we're always becoming aware of how we overcompensate it. It's an overcompensation. Like I naturally am a pleasing person, but I overcompensate it by being this uber good girl to the point of self-sacrifice. So that's not healthy. So, it's the overcompensation, the thirst, the need to get validation. You know, a substance abuse addict has an overcompensated desire to get validation. They just do it by sabotaging themselves, by drowning themselves, because they're so afraid to be their real selves. So, we're all trying to be seen. We've just developed these really dysfunctional ways of being seen.

You know, I mean, if you look at social media, all these hyper-realized, hyper-sexualized images, everyone's in the image of themselves. And spiritual awakening is about burning, destroying the image version of ourselves and entering the absolute ordinary, authentic, natural self. No image. No image. Showing up without the image. How hard is that?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Today, especially, oh my goodness.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: But we're parenting our children from our image. So, we're making them into an image too. So, we're dissociating our children from their authentic self. So, our children have an image now. So, in this book, I talk about recognizing your ego self, but hell, now you have to recognize your kid's ego self. So, when your kid is banging the door and screaming at you, now they are in their fighter ego self. And the beauty of this book is when you recognize your own ego, then you see your kid in their ego. And instead of yelling at your kid when they are in ego, now you have compassion and you go, wow, I have done that, I've triggered my kid, now they're in ego. So how amazing that you then get to see your kid's ego and instead of yelling at your kid's ego or changing your kid's ego, you now begin to help your kid to heal what their inner child wanted in the first place. So, it's a transformational model of healing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You talk about this as well, breaking these dysfunctional loops, it is a part of the process, but by the way, have you seen a tendency of people swing, like the pendulum swinging to the other side, like going from good girl, going bad?

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yeah, because you're in reaction, not in healing. But I think every good girl needs to go bad for a little bit to then come back to center. That's our tendency, right, where we burn the house down. We're like, that's it, I'm done, and we want to destroy that. But here's the thing, that's never going to be the right way either, because the answer is not to burn the good girl, but to see the beauty of how the good girl was in pain, right? Or how the

bad boy or the bad girl was in pain, whatever version you are being, to recognize the pain beneath the ego, to heal the pain. Swinging in behavior is just superficial trying out a new mask. That's not going to work. You have to heal the pain. Like why do I feel the need to be seen as worthy by others? That's the pain we're walking around with. Please see me. Please tell me I'm worthy. That's what social media is all about. See me, see me, see me, like me, love me, right? If we don't heal that wound that's underneath, who cares if you're being the good girl or the bad boy or the bad girl? It's the wound that you have to heal, so that you release the need for the mask in the first place.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Again, I'll say this one more time. This is going to take work. It's going to take awareness. Part of the reason I think this is more difficult today is that we're so kind of inundated in condition to do less where you mentioned it early, the creation of these apps and things like, and so we all feel very tired and lazy. There's like this kind of, there's this mist of it in our society today, even having the energy to think. Right, right?

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Or to read. You and I were talking about how reading is a lost art. People are not watching long videos. They're not reading because they're not connected to themselves. They want to be in a world of distraction, so.

SHAWN STEVENSON: 'Cause it's easier.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: It's much easier to dissociate, to check out. So that inner connection is being lost. So yes, it takes work. But let me tell you the other part, the other alternative of this abyss of checking out, eventually is going to lead to more severe mental illness. And then it's going to be more work in the long run. So yes, you're sitting on your ass and scrolling on social media. You appear to not be doing work, but the toll that's taking on your mental health is so enormous that it's almost scary to think about. It is, but we are seeing the effects of suicide in teenagers and younger adults at an all-time high. We're seeing young girls as young as 12 and 13, doing a lot of self-loathing behaviors, self-harming behaviors. We're seeing boys isolating themselves, playing aggressive, violent video games more and more. In Japan, the phenomenon is called Hikikomori. Over a million, maybe 1.5 million young teenage boys are locked up, isolated, playing video games. You cannot get them off their video games. So, this is a rising trend. So, it's really important to know that you're not going to be. It looks like less work, oh wow, everyone's chilling. Oh no, there is a lot of destruction happening at the emotional and psychological level.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, because this, it is easier to go to those things, but it's not fulfilling, you know, it's different. It might be, again, like a temporary feeling of like, pleasure, but we start to dig such a deep hole and a gap in our actual fulfillment and sense of value and connection to reality.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: It's like food, you can go to the fast-food joint, pick up a burger for a dollar, you get the instant hit, the instant food, but... And chopping up a salad is a lot of work, right? But in the long run, what's going to be better for you? And for your mood, for your energy levels, what's going to be better, right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: I just want to talk a little bit about stage three. And again, everybody needs to pick up a copy of this book. Please get this book. It's so important. This is something that I'm very, very passionate about and I've been weaving it into the Model Health Show for years, because I think that part of our kind of healthful evolution as a people, as a society, is creating conditions where we have healthier, more well-adjusted, self-valuing children, you know? And it's really, it's such an opportunity that we have right now. We have such a gift in front of us that, again, you can displace it and that it is, you know, it's okay. But if we really want to see change, you know, and the visions that we carry, it's just about allowing people to be healthy and happy and well-adjusted within themselves.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Within themselves.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, in stage three, you kind of dig in more and you talk about learning kids' psych is one of the things that really jumped out at me and also mastering kids speak. Talk a little bit about that.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: So, kids' psych is related to what we talked about, understanding that every child comes with their own essence. And I talk about the different types of kids you could have. You could have a hyperactive exploder. You could have an explorer kind of kid. You could have a dreamer kid. You could have a recluse kid. What is your kid's natural temperament? And how can you, as a parent, allow them to feel okay? It's okay if you're shy. It's okay if you can't sit in a chair. I get you. I understand you. I see you. You don't have to feel bad about this. You don't have to feel ashamed about this. And in fact, this is the way your temperament is your superpower. Imagine being told that as a kid. Like, I'm shy. Like, I don't need to go to every party because my mom told me it's my superpower, right? A five-year-old saying, I don't need to be the extrovert. I'm the introvert. Imagine being told as an introvert that that's a superpower because the whole culture says, no, you have to be an extrovert. And the extrovert, great, that's a superpower too.

But you know, we tend to pigeonhole our children, as we've talked about, and only celebrate and applaud things that society likes. Loud kids, achieving kids, competitive kids. You know, my kid hated competition. I had to learn to see that as a superpower. She doesn't need to go and show off. Wow, that's a superpower. She doesn't need the medals. That's a superpower. But my old self, my ego self said, no, you need to be a competitive kid. It's a competitive world.

That's a lie. So that's what mastering kids' psych is. And then kids speak. Children speak in completely unique ways. They don't have logical articulation like we do because their brain is not yet developed. So, if we don't understand what children are communicating to us, we will miss the point. Kids speak to us about their feelings through their behavior. So, behavior is a flag or a signal to their feelings. So, I often say that when you don't like a kid's behavior, take it like a sign. I use the acronym SIGN for something inside gone negative. So, if you don't like the behavior, don't pounce on the behavior. That's your kid's way of communicating that something inside has gone negative, right?

That something, their feeling has gone messed up. So, when they're slamming the door and saying, I hate you, mom, it's so easy to get triggered and take it personally, as if the kid really hates you. I remember once my kid said, I hate you. And I got emotional later and I said, you really hate me? She was like, when did I say that? I said, are you kidding me? You yelled at me; the door flew off its hinges. And you said, you hated me. She's like, mom, I was just tired. And I said, I hate it. I said, no, you said you. She said, no, I said it. But that taught me a big lesson that, oh, here I only care about my ego. Do you love me, right? We only want to know; do you love me? Am I doing well as a parent? But kids are not here to make you feel valid. Your kid is not here to do the work your parents did not do for you. Your kids are not here to re-parent you. You have to re-parent yourself. So, when your kid is having a messed-up mood, and they can be messed up, okay? Kids can be really obnoxious. If you can just remember that it's not about you, the last thing on your kid's mind is you. They are either protesting something you're saying because they hate it, like my kid said to me, or they're having a hard time with themselves and their own reality, and you are their safe space.

So, if you just allow them to dump in the safe space, but you just exit or you just take it not personally, you depersonalize it, you detach, you really then, when the storm is over, can come back and connect with them. So, behavior is a flag or a signal to their inner feelings. Don't take it personally. Master what that could mean. Ask them, or ask yourself, wow, what could that mean about how my kid is feeling about themselves? And don't get entangled in the web. So, these are some of the tips I give in this section of the book. So, the third section of the book is about creating conscious connection. And I give real serious strategies about how to empathize, how to validate, how to listen, how to attune. Attunement is a big part of conscious parenting, and I use the acronym WARM, W-A-R-M. I fill it up with acronyms just to make it easy. But W-A-R-M stands for witness, witness, observe. A stand for accept who your kid is or what they're doing right now. Respect that they are coming from an honest place. Trust your kid, and then mirror back. Oh, I see that you're going through a hard time, or what I see is that you're struggling, instead of all the other things we do through blind reaction.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, well, the final thing would be, there's obviously so many stages and places on the journey of parenthood, and a natural thing can come up when we find out

information like this and we start to see things through a different lens. It's too late. This phase has already happened. Things are a certain way. They're set in these certain patterns, these certain loops, dysfunctional loops. It's too late for me. My child is five now. I should have started when they were two. My child is 10 now. I should have started when they were... You also have this portion of the book, which is to start right now.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes, that is the most important principle of life, right? The most powerful way to live is here right now, right? With every diet that failed yesterday, you start again right now with this glass of water, with this moment in time, with this plate of food. The same with our children. Every kid, even if they're in their 50s, deserves a parent who sees them. And when my mother, and she's in her late 70s, when she doesn't see me now, it upsets me, right? So, every moment, no matter how old your kid is, our kids are always going to be our kids. So, every opportunity that you can use to arrive at a higher state of consciousness, isn't that amazing and powerful? There is no such thing as it's too late. It's right now if you're alive and you're breathing. This book, *The Parenting Map*, is a design for every human to clean up their emotional baggage from childhood and become conscious human beings. Really, this is a self-help book for every human who wants to be more conscious.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, and you've done such a wonderful job at this, and I appreciate it, truly. This has been just wonderful going through everything and kind of digging into my own biases and questioning things, but most importantly, getting tools, like how to actually put things into place. And I appreciate it so much. Can you let everybody know where to pick up the book and where they can get more information?

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Yes, so the book, it's called *The Parenting Map: Step-by-Step Solutions to Consciously Create the Ultimate Parent-Child Relationship*. And it's really, it's full of illustrations. Look at how many illustrations are here. Really to show it in clean, clear terms. I have practice exercises. So, they can go to my website, DR for doctor, just like this, drshefali.com. I'm also doing a free summit later this month with 30-plus experts so they can join that free parenting summit and learn because it's never too late to give our children the best of our consciousness.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely, this has been so phenomenal. Thank you so much for sharing your wisdom.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Thank you so much.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Dr. Shefali, everybody.

DR. SHEFALI TSABARY: Thank you, thank you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: What if we can create enlightened relationships with ourselves? What if we can create enlightened relationships with our children and with others? This is how we truly create change in our family, in our communities, and in our society at large. It starts with us. And of course, making that shift in our perception. And so, I really hope that you got a lot of value out of this episode, and it got you thinking. And it got you wanting to change some of the ways that you're perceiving things, start to approach things from a different perspective. And I wanted to share this wonderful poem from Dr. Shefali's new book because it really helps to encapsulate this episode today.

The poem reads, my child, I feel no pain greater than your heartache, no joy greater than your triumph, no agitation greater than your tumult, no despair greater than your desertion. There is no emotion compared to what you evoke, no experience that comes near parenting you, no journey I would rather take than by your side, no adventure I would rather choose than to watch you grow. You, my dear child, are my greatest teacher. Through you, I learn how to love without control, to caretake without possession, and to raise myself before I raise you. In the face of your astonishing radiance, I realize I am nothing. Yet, the fact that you exist suggests that I am everything. As expansive as your heart, and as limitless as your potential, there is nothing I can give you, for you already house the sun within, iridescent and prismatic, inexhaustible, and powerful beyond measure. I may give you birth and hearth, but without a doubt, it is you who have given me life. And in awakening, I could never have imagined on my own. And therefore, it is you who are my ultimate soul retriever.

Make sure to pick up a copy of Dr. Shefali's new book. It's available right now. And I appreciate you so much for tuning in to this episode. If you got a lot of value out of this, please share this out with your friends and family. Of course, tag me. I'm @shawnmodel on Instagram and tag Dr. Shefali as well. Blow up her inbox. Let her know how much you appreciated this episode. We've got some incredible master classes and world-class interviews coming your way very, very soon. So, make sure to stay tuned. Take care. Have an amazing day. I'll talk with you soon.

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