

# **THE MODEL HEALTH SHOW**

**EPISODE 671**

## **Use These Physical & Mental Exercises To Improve Your Brain TODAY**

**With Guest Dr. Daniel Amen**

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

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Welcome to The Model Health Show, this is fitness and nutrition expert, Shawn Stevenson, and I'm so grateful for you tuning in to me today. On this episode, we're going to be diving deep into how to improve your brain and cognitive function. I think you're going to be shocked at just how quickly you can upgrade your brain. Now, one of the big apprehensions over the past couple of years with focusing on improving our health as a society including our brain health, which as we're going to discuss, your brain is a governing force over just about everything in your body. Your brain is helping to regulate your temperature, how many calories you're burning, your brain is regulating how your heart is beating there's a deep intimate connection there, the heart-brain connection.

As a matter of fact, researchers at HeartMath Institute have recently discovered just how many neurotransmitters are located in the human heart, effectively dubbing it the "heart-brain." But it's still garnering its attention in its overall regulatory force from the master controller upstairs in our brain. So, our brains affect every single aspect of our physical health but also mental health. And as I mentioned, we're going to unpack that today, but part of the apprehension of focusing on this the past couple of years when you're doing very superficial things to try to mitigate risk, very superficial things that are also largely unproven versus focusing on what's proven, focusing on what is our greatest risk factor.

If we're talking about our greatest risk factor for viral infections, in particular the viral infection that's been on everybody's mind in the past couple of years, the number one risk factor according to the CDC in a huge meta-analysis that they published in July of 2021, the number one risk factor looking at over 540,000 COVID-19 patients, the number one risk factor or death and hospitalization is obesity. And yet, when talking about helping to reduce our number one risk, we're poor outcomes. As we see, the rate of obesity skyrocketing in our society where right now, according to the NIH, over 42% of American adults are now clinically obese. Instead of addressing this, what we would say in the healthcare space in particular, healthcare practitioners who mean well, is that "You know, I know that that's true, but we just can't get people healthier overnight. We can't get people healthier overnight."

And so, this episode is actually going to provide some proof as to just how quickly we can start to trend the things in the direction of health, and actually make some remarkable changes literally overnight. So, we're talking about choices that we can make. And you know this. You might do something right now that is very disadvantageous for your health and direct you into the way of having detrimental things take place, but the same thing holds true with doing something that is health affirmative. And so, this episode is about putting the power into your

hands, or improving your brain which is determining so much of your reality, and also of course, your cognitive function, not just now, but for decades into the future.

And so, I'm really excited about this and the individual that we have on today's show changed my life many years ago. It was a random... Seemingly random event where I caught a glimpse of him on a PBS special at some really low budget... We'll call it vintage Hollywood motel that I was staying at it. I was traveling and speaking and things like this about maybe 10 years ago, and what he was saying transformed the way that I think. And to have him now in my life as a friend and a colleague, and actually, when you check out his new book, my endorsement of the book is inside of it. So, to have it immortalized in something that he's created is whoa, it's bananas and pajamas. So, I'm really excited about this because he's a wealth of information, he has the largest database of brain imaging scans in the world. So, if we're talking about looking at the brain itself and seeing what's going on and seeing where dysfunction can come from, and also most importantly, seeing what we can do to improve it, is something truly special.

Now, one of the things that him and I definitely see eye-to-eye on is this historic beverage that is incredibly brain-healthy. Green tea contains a unique amino acid called L-theanine that's able to essentially waltz its way across the blood-brain barrier and incite the activity of a neurotransmitter called GABA. This helps to reduce anxiety, and it makes us feel more centered and present, and really starts to teeter our mind and our body into a state of flow. Another way that L-theanine works is to improve focus, and this is noted in the peer-reviewed journal, Brain Topography. The researchers observed that L-theanine intake directly increases the frequency of our alpha brain waves. Alpha brain waves is when we are in flow, that's what we see, what we can actually measure and monitor when people feel that they're in a state of flow, they're in that alpha state. Now, alpha brain waves indicate reduced stress, wow! Enhanced focus at the same time, and even increases our creativity.

Now what's good for the brain is largely good for the rest of our bodies, whether it's beneficial for our heart or even the outermost part of our body, which is our skin. And there was a mountain of peer-reviewed data indicating just how amazing green tea is for our skin, including a 2016 study finding that one of the key components in green tea, EGCG, is a remarkable antioxidant and anti-inflammatory and directly leading to reduction in acne and excessively oily skin. While another study conducted by researchers at the Department of Dermatology at Emory University, and this was a double-blind placebo-controlled study including 80 women, and it showed by utilizing green tea, it helped to directly improve skin elasticity, and that is another hallmark of reducing the aging of our skin.

So really cool stuff there. Now what if you can combine the benefits from the very best green tea on earth that is more rich in L-theanine and these other regenerative things for our skin

and for our brain, combining that with another beverage that contains ceramides and hyaluronic acid to reduce fine lines and boost skin elasticity and peer-reviewed data, indicates that this can happen within two weeks. We're talking about this amazing combination of Sun Goddess matcha green tea from Pique teas, along with their delicious Pique tea fountain drink. Go to [piquelife.com/model](http://piquelife.com/model). That's P-I-Q-U-E-L-I-F-E.com/model, to get 15% off, plus free shipping for life with one of Pique's exclusive new subscriptions. And one of them actually includes their starter kit, that includes a frother. I love my hand frother that I use every single day, making teas and coffees and hot cocoas and things like that for my family.

Much more efficient than trying to use a spoon or a straw and stir really really fast or throwing into a blender. One of their subscriptions actually has this in the starter kit, and I think you're going to love it. And it's so wonderful for your skin and your brain health. Check them out. The very very best. Their matcha green tea is triple toxin screened for purity and developed by a Japanese tea master, which there are only about 15 of them on planet earth. So, we're talking about elite level stuff here. Head over there, check them out. [Piquelife.com/model](http://Piquelife.com/model) now let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

**ITUNES REVIEW:** Another five-star review titled, “changing Lives” by HTS Cope. “I am so grateful to Shawn and his excellent production research and expert guest he has on his show. When I found out that my father was diagnosed with Parkinson's, I wanted to learn more about the brain and how nutrition could play a role in his neurodegenerative disease. To be honest, I was a little intimidated to tackle this complex subject, but my fear quickly disappeared and the knowledge and understanding of how the brain works and how to support it were very easy to learn. Thanks to Shawn's approach to teaching and his plethora of expert guest between his amazing book, Eat Smarter and the Library of Episodes, I was able to gain the knowledge needed to help my dad and my mom as they manage this disease. I myself have changed my lifestyle to also help support a healthier brain. This podcast didn't only have a positive and life-changing effect on one person, but multiple generations.”

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Wow, that's what it's all about, that's all it's all about. Thank you so much for sharing your story and sharing your heart and if you have to do so, please pop over to Apple Podcast and leave a review for the Model Health Show, it truly means so much, I really really do, thank you. And now let's get to our special guest and topic of the day. Our guest today is 12-time New York Times bestselling author and the founder of Amen Clinics. Dr. Daniel Amen is a physician and adult and child psychiatrist who's accumulated over 200,000 SPECT imaging scans on his patients from over 155 countries. Dr. Amen has been featured on every single media outlet that you can name, and he's also the founder of BrainMD, a fast growing, science-based, brain healthy nutraceutical company, as well as Amen University, which has trained thousands of medical and mental health professionals. And now he's back here on the Model Health Show to share his amazing insights. Let's jump into this conversation with the one and

only Dr. Daniel Amen. My friend, my mentor, inspiration, it's good to have you here at my new studio. I just saw you last time we were at your place, so thank you for coming to hang out with me.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** I'm so grateful to you for our friendship, for you helping me spread the word, we have the same mission.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, Absolutely, absolutely. So, your new project is phenomenal and we're going to get into it and why you constructed it, the way that you did. But I want to ask you right out of the gate, because you have accumulated over 200,000 SPECT brain scans from your clinics and from people from 155 countries plus at this point. If anybody knows about how quickly the brain can change, it's you. How quickly can we actually make improvements to our brain and cognitive health?

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** So, I actually did the big NFL study, when the NFL was lying, they had a problem. And I saw that within two months, 80% of my players showed improvement on their scans. And then I was in my clinic, and I was doing a lecture, and a number of patients showed up. And one of the kids, he was 25 years old, raised his hand and he goes, "I just love you so much, but you're not going to love what I do." And I'm like, "Well, what's that?" And he said, "I am a mixed martial artist." And I'm like, "Well, I can love you, but that's bad for your brain," and then so, I looked at his brain with him and it was bad. And I got this idea of I know these supplements work to enhance brain function, but I don't know how fast they work.

So, this was at night. I said, "Why don't you come back the next morning at eight o'clock, I am going to give you these supplements, with brain and body Power Max and Focus and Energy," two supplements I used in my NFL work. And I said, "And I am going to scan you two and a half hours later." And he's like "Oh, that's cool." His brain was dramatically better two and a half hours after he took the supplements. Now, it didn't mean it was, fixed it, right? It meant his brain could respond almost immediately and if you keep doing the right thing, your brain can be better. An hour from now, your brain can be better tomorrow, your brain can be dramatically better. I do a show, you've been on it, scan my brain, right? I have your brain, I have Troy Glaus' Brain. He's the 2002 World Series MVP, third baseman for the Angels and 16 months ago his brain was awful 'cause he was drinking too much and had four concussions and he was a mess.

Two months later, he's much better. Well, I just did his 16 month follow up and his brain's radically better. And I know in three or four years his brain will flat out be normal. How exciting is that? Nobody knows that you are not stuck with the brain you have, you can make it better, but you can also make it worse like next hour. If you smoke pot and probably should talk about

that or if you drink alcohol or if you sleep deprived yourself. So, every day your brain is getting better or it's getting worse.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I just wrote down Mary Jane to circle back and talk about, but when we're talking about brain health, we're talking about everything about us. Because as I've learned from you, our brain impacts every cell in our bodies, essentially everything about our a governor of what's happening with our heart, with our... Without this gut brain connection, so much can go wrong if we're not taking care of our brain. And also, of course, our mental health, which we'll talk about too. And so those kind of improvements for me, that means systemic improvements. And what you saw in those scans, you saw an indication of better blood flow within, again, a couple of hours and some of the things that you actually mentioned that were in that supplement combination were things like Omega-3 fatty acids, Phosphatidylserine, and I think ginkgo was one of those as well.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Ginkgo.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Ginkgo biloba, right? Both lobes of the brain. And these are all simple things that have a ton of peer-reviewed data to back them up. And that's what you use... And I remember talking with you about this. It's just when people say the supplements don't work or especially in the healthcare space, it's just like, "Do you read because the data's existing. [laughter] It's right there at your fingertips." And so, the reason I want to ask you this right out of the gate is, obviously we've experienced a lot of bad things for our brains in the past couple of years. And one of the best things we can do to get our citizens healthier and more resilient, is to improve our brain health. And one of the biggest barriers to taking action to improve our health was the statement, "We can't get people healthier overnight." And so, we do superficial stuff instead of what's proven. And so, for me, this is a huge stamp of evidence that we can start getting better today. And with that said, this leads me to your new book and you're mapping it out over 365 days, step by step, little bit at a time, in a miraculous shift can take place over the course of a year. Why did you create a book that's spreading things out over the course of the year?

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Brain and mental health are daily practices. So, you've been a trainer. Physical health, it's not a once-a-week thing, right? If you want to be healthy and strong, it's an everyday process. Spiritual health is not just on Saturday or Sunday. It's every day. If you want to keep your brain healthy or rescue it, you have to do it every day. These are the daily habits. But there's nowhere in school, they teach you. I spoke at a big California education conference and the director of curriculum was there and she heard me lecture and she loved it. And I asked her, I said, "How many brain health courses does the state of California have for their students?" And then she looked down at her shoes and when she looked back up, she said, "None."

And I'm like, "Well, that's insane because your brain controls everything you do, including learning. And if we don't teach people how to love and care for their brains, they're going to be thrown around by the negative forces in society that are damning us, that are ruining us from processed foods to the messages about alcohol and marijuana, to digital gadgets that steal our dopamine. It's a sh\*t show, our current society, the epidemic of adolescent depression, especially in girls, is skyrocketing. It's like 30% one in three teenage girls has significantly thought of suicide." I'm like, "No, that is not okay." And it's different than in any other time during my lifetime.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, and you've got... You've been here for a while kicking ass and taking names. And so, for you to see it firsthand, this isn't just like better diagnostic technology, this is like, no, there's a serious problem, things have really skyrocketed and you mapping it out, can you talk about the way that you've constructed the book for us to use it?

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** So, I thought about this. Brain and mental health are daily practices and never was that more true than during the pandemic? And yes, the pandemic hurt a lot of people, but a lot of people got seriously well during the pandemic 'cause they didn't have to go... They didn't have to drive to work. So, they had an extra hour and a half or two hours a day. 'Cause they were doing everything from home. And a whole group of people that I know, their brain and mental health skyrocketed. How did they do that? It's a daily practice. So, they put in the daily habits, and I thought if you could spend a year on my psychiatrist's couch, what would I teach you. If I just had five minutes a day to plant these big ideas into your head? And I love this book so much, change your brain every day because it's the most important things I've learned over 40 years of helping people and helping myself. And so, it starts with loving your brain and I start the book with, you're not stuck with the brain you have, you can make it better and I can prove it. But you have to start by loving yourself, which means you have to start by loving the organ that makes you, you.

Which is your brain. And every day there's a quote from me. One of the most important things I've said, a little essay that takes like two or three minutes to read and then an exercise and my favorite exercise of all of them is whenever you go to make a decision, just ask yourself, is this good for my brain or bad for it? And I talk about a game I played with Chloe; Chloe is who you met. She's 19, but when she was two, we played this game called Chloe's Game. And I'd go, is this good for your brain or bad for it? And if I said blueberries, she'd go, "Are they organic?" [laughter] she goes, "Non-organic blueberries hold more pesticides than almost any fruit." I'm like, "Of course, they're organic," she goes, "Two thumbs up, God's candy." Or if I said, "Avocados," she would go, "Two thumbs up, God's butter." If I said, "Talking back to your redheaded mother," she'd go, "Oh, very bad for your brain."



But so just planting the idea and the brain is lazy. Your brain is going to do what you've allowed it to do and so change is hard, so it needs to be incremental, simple, and persistent.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, and I love this format because we could take one nugget a day. You just mentioned planting seeds and obviously there's so much within a seed, for example. You know, there's an entire oak tree within that acorn. Matter of fact, if we carry that out, it's a forest, of all the generations that are potential in that one thing. But it doesn't matter if it's not planted on fertile ground. And you're helping to keep the ground fertile by having this daily tilling practice, this daily watering practice that you just said, it could be five minutes or less, just literally reading one page because you have it mapped out day one, day two, day three, there's the lessons, there's insights, there's stories. And especially if we might find ourselves, because we might have a target on how many books we're going to read in a year, for example and maybe we struggle and we have more shelf help than self-help, right? Just so many books we buy and they're just sitting on the shelf gathering dust.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** I love that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This is providing such an easy on-ramp for us to feel accomplished each day by reading one page and taking that today two, day three, day four. And I want to go through some of these days that jumped out to me, 'cause I got the chance obviously to read the book in advance, and I'm so grateful for that. And one of the things, one of the nuggets that you shared was earlier on in the book, you talked about brain reserve. And I think it's such an important, not just concept, but it's a reality. And especially when we're dealing with stress and being able to build that reserve is important. Can we talk about the concept or the idea of brain reserve and how we can improve it?

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** So, brain reserve is the extra tissue and function you have, brain tissue, brain function, to deal with whatever stress comes your way. I was an army psychiatrist for seven years, and I realized, put two soldiers in a tank, expose them to the same blast, the same force, the same angle. One of them walks away unharmed, another person is permanently disabled. Why? It depended on the brain reserve or the brain health they brought into the accident. And brain reserve is happening throughout our whole life. And even before we're born, it's the health of the mother, it's the health of the father. So, parents who smoked as teenagers, their children have less reserve, parents who are under great stress, when they're mothers, when they're pregnant with a child, that child is born with less reserve. Parents who smoking pot, in Durango, Colorado, the incidence of babies born with marijuana is up 1700%. It's horrifying that baby's going to have less reserve.

And then it depends on what happens throughout your life. Those of us that played football, they're stealing our reserve. I had no clue, but stealing our reserve, those of us that grew up



on fast food, less reserve. Those of us that grew up in houses of high adverse childhood experiences, stealing our reserve. Those of us that grew up with parents who cared, parents who paid attention, parents who read with us every night, more reserve. And so, every day, and it happens throughout your whole life. Every day you're building reserve, money in the bank for brain health, or you're stealing reserve. And if you go to bed a half an hour early, you're building reserve. If you decide to stay up and well, I'm just going to finish this series on Netflix, and you go to bed at one o'clock and you have to be up at five, you just stole a whole bunch of reserve because you know this, when you don't sleep properly, it turns off 700 health promoting genes, which means trash begins to build up in your brain and it steals reserve.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You know, one of the many things that I love about you, is that you don't pull any punches. You tell people the truth and you also direct us to empowerment. So, for example, as soon as I read this, and of course hearing you say it right now, if a mother smoked when you were in the womb, it's like, That's my mom, and so I feel like I've had something stolen from me in a sense, and it's just like, I'm already messed up. But then I realized again, there's so much that you could do now here to nourish your brain and to build that reserve. And it's kind of that concept of like, the cards that you're dealt, it's how you play them. And I think back to my brother and sister, it wasn't just the smoking in the womb, it's like now secondhand smoke in the environment. And this is the early '80s. And so, my little brother and sister, there was this gap where I'm five years older than my little brother and there was a time when I went to live with my grandmother in a very nourishing environment, right? Where there wasn't this toxicity in the air, literally and also just this kind of focus on magic.

Not like she's like David Copperfield or some sh\*t like that, but like, just creating magical moments, celebrations, creating an atmosphere of safety and joy and also education. So, I'm getting all of this, these inputs, and then you can see me excel in school, like at an incredible degree that nobody else in my family had ever achieved before, right? And it actually became kind of second nature and then I think about my brother and sister on the other hand, and the comparison there, and them not being in that nourishing environment and also at the same time, because number one, then my heart would break for them. But then it goes back to this thing, your empowerment, which is you can do so much right now, we don't have to be tied to those stories of the past.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** You know, I love my wife so much and she often talks about responsibility. She had cancer when she was in her 20s and then got depressed and went to a seminar taught by her heroin addict uncle. So, he scared her a lot when she was a child, but he got clean and started teaching seminars. And he asked her, "How much responsibility do you want to take for the cancer and depression?" And she got angry. And she's like, "It's not my fault." And he didn't say... He said, "I didn't ask you if it's your fault." He said, "Responsibility is your ability to respond to the situation." And that was the moment the light went on in her. And I wrote one

of my first books in 1986, it's called *The Sabotage Factor*. All the ways we mess ourselves up from getting what we want and as a young psychiatrist, I knew if you blamed other people for how your life was turning out, you weren't getting better. Because you're a victim and victims are powerless but if you just think of responsibility, how much do I want for my ability to respond? So, for example, if I'm having trouble with her, it's easy to blame her, I mean, we're sort of living in a blame, shame-filled society, which is so toxic.

But if I'm having trouble, it's like, "Okay, what is it that I can do today that makes this better?" So whatever hand I was dealt, what is it that I can do today to make it better? And one of the exercises in the book, one of my favorite exercises, is the one-page miracle. On one piece of paper, write down what you want. Relationships, work, money, physical, emotional, spiritual health, write it down. It's got to fit on one piece of paper and then ask yourself, this is the exercise. Write it down, does it fit? Does my behavior fit the goals I have for my life? And blame isn't on that list at all, it's what do I want? So, with Tana, I want a kind, caring, loving, supportive, passionate relationship, always want that, don't always feel like that, I get these rude thoughts in my head, but I mostly don't say them. 'Cause it doesn't fit, right? So, this isn't about what I should want, what somebody else wants from me. What do I want? You have to tell your brain what you want because your brain makes happen what it sees. And if you see disaster, you're going to feel awful, if you see hope, you're going to feel hopeful.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, I love this, it's so simple, it's giving the brain a directive. My youngest son, Braden, the other day, I was getting some water and he came by to get something, he was just like, I wrote it down actually. He said, "You can't achieve your goals if you don't have any." And I was like, "Oh, shit, that's profound." Like, "Where'd you get that?" And it's so true, it is giving us a directive like so often we want stuff, but we want to feel better, what does that look like and getting clarity. And you just said something really profound. I want to dig into more because it's one of the daily lessons. You said that our brains are really sneaky, right? So, you just said you have those crazy thoughts occasionally. And the thing is, we all do, we all think some crazy stuff. And if somebody was a peek inside of our brains, they would lock us up easily, all of us, every single one of the billions of people on the planet. But you share that the brain is sneaky, and we also have this prefrontal cortex to kind of keep things in check.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** I love the movie with Mel Gibson and Helen Hunt, *What Women Want*. And it just gives you a look at sort of the nutty thoughts that when Mel Gibson's hearing what women think, it's driving him crazy. And I think it was Jerry Seinfeld who said, the brain is a sneaky organ. We all have weird, crazy, stupid, sexual, violent thought that nobody should ever hear and when you have a good prefrontal cortex, it inhibits it. But most people don't know that's normal. And it's not the thoughts you have that make you suffer, it's the thoughts you attach to. And I was 28 years old in my psychiatric residency at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington DC, that's where I did my psychiatric residency.

I was 28 and one of our professors said, "You have to teach your patients not to believe every stupid thing they think." And it was a light bulb moment because in my head I'm like, "Well, I believe every stupid thing I think." And that had caused me so much suffering and so now that I, now if I have a crazy thought, it's not me, thoughts come from all sorts of places. They actually come from our ancestors; they're written into our genetic code. So, we know, for example, people have parents, grandparents, great-grandparents that grew up in trauma. So, they've particularly studied children, grandchildren of the Holocaust, that they're born with more anxiety, they're born with a greater propensity to have post-traumatic stress disorder and...

So, no, some of your thoughts are not yours. I don't know if you've ever interviewed Mark Wolynn, but he's got this fascinating book called, "It Didn't Start With You." And the generational trauma is common in a lot of people, and they have no idea and it's not something to drug. Right, I mean, that's what's happening in our society now. It's like, "Oh, you are anxious, you have panic attacks, let me give you Xanax and Ambien to sleep and Lexapro, so you don't worry so much." No, it's something to explore. And I often will do generational histories with my patients. And when I learned about it, I actually went and talked to my dad who told me. And they don't tell you unless you ask them. It's like, "Did grandpa or grandma have any significant trauma?" And my grandfather, when he was 19, his brother just moved to LA, was not a good driver. His car stalled on a railroad track, and he got killed in a collision of the train with his car. And my grandfather had grief and was furious at his sister for letting her brother drive the car. And just think what that shock did to his genes. And so, it changed the epigenetics in his sperm before he made my dad, which means I'm going to be more likely to be anxious. And how would you know? And just that knowledge goes, "Oh, it's not mine. Oh, I can put that down because it belongs to a different generation."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, oh my goodness. Now if this was discussed a few decades ago, this would sound more like a soft science. But today we know that these changes are very, very real and it just makes logical sense because of adaptation evolution. Our offspring are going to be encoded in a way that they can survive in an environment that is ripe with threats. It's just helping to make an adaptation for survival. And a friend of mine, she's a neuroscientist out of NYU, Wendy Suzuki, and she shared with me how... And also, your wife and I talked about this as well, but there was this really wonderful experiment done with mice and exposed to stressors and having their offspring creating essentially these mutations that created mental health disorders in the mice. But you can change it for future generations by exposing those mice to enriching environments. So, moving them out of that threatful scenario and now they have what she described as Disney World for mice that they got to live in with access to healthy food and movement practices and healthy relationships essentially, with access to other mice.

And the genes that they passed on or the genetic kind of template to future generations was now changed. And it wasn't kind of coded for stress and anxiety and all those things. So, we have, you talk about this in the book too, which is so wonderful. We have the ability; our choices right now are affecting our children and our grandchildren. We need to take them more seriously.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** We need to take them more seriously because it's not about us. It's not just about us. It's about generations of us. And every day at home, you are modeling hell or your modeling illness. And some people go, "Oh, that's harsh." Now it's the truth. John 8:32 "Know the truth and the truth will set you free." It's a sh\*t show by what's being modeled for us in society. The Super Bowl had 30 alcohol commercials, the World Series had 30 in one game, 30 alcohol commercials. It's nuts what is happening and what we're allowing our children to see. So even during the presidential debate, I'm still irritated by this. I was watching and one of the news anchors asked then Vice President Biden, if he was going to federally legalize marijuana.

And he said, "The science is not in, I am not in favor of that." And then Cory Booker shamed him on a national television. He said, "Man, are you high?" And I was furious because Biden was actually right. The science more and more is pointing to big trouble, especially for teenagers and young adults who use marijuana and... But it's this notion that we can belittle people, we can put them down, we can shame them. And it's like, "Booker, do you have no shame?" It's like seriously, on national television. And I'm just very concerned in Change Your Brain Every Day. There's 30 days where I have... Where I imagine if I was an evil ruler and I wanted to create mental illness, what would I do? And I'd basically create American society. And my favorite little story is about a girl, and my wife hates when I pick on the Girl Scouts. When the a Girl Scout sets up a Girl Scout cookie stand outside a pot dispensary in San Diego.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oh, it's a brilliant move.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** 300 boxes of cookies. And I'm like, evil ruler genius. It's got little girls to sell toxic food to potheads. And I'm like, "No."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Wow. Yeah. You just said it. And so, this actually opens the door to this conversation, which is obviously there's a movement taking place looking at some of the beneficial compounds within that particular plant. And there's some really riveting things, but what we tend to do in our culture is like we swing the pendulum. And we forget about the other stuff. And one of the things I really appreciate about you is, again, it's coming from a place of balance. And you're actually looking at the brain and whether people want to hear it or not, you're sharing the results of utilizing this substance in particular in the developing brain. And I want to circle this back to connect it to when we talked about the prefrontal cortex and a healthy prefrontal cortex and healthy activity, being able to stop us from doing dumb

sh\*t or acting on or thinking thoughts that are hurting us or acting upon thoughts that are hurting us because we have that regulatory force. Is marijuana something that can disrupt that connectivity?

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Absolutely. It is absolutely correct. And I published two studies, one on a thousand marijuana users. Every area of their brain compared to healthy was lower in blood flow every area. Then I published the world's largest imaging study on 62,454 scans. And I looked at how the brain aged, and little kids have really busy brains, and as they go through adolescence in their early '20s, there's a process called pruning. So, use it or lose it, and myelination where each nerve cell gets wrapped with a white fatty substance called myelin. And our brain starts to myelinate, starts in the back when we're about two months old. And that's why when you smile at a baby about two months, they smiled back and then it slowly marches, but doesn't fully myelinate our prefrontal cortex until we're in our mid '20s.

And marijuana decreases that process. Damages that process. It also damages the connections in the brain. And you don't want to do that. And it's common knowledge among those of us that treat addicts that if you start smoking pot around 15 and you stop around 30, emotionally, you're sort of 15. And that's not a really great thing. And we're not teaching teenagers to love and care for their brain. I mean, they sort of think... And when I was 15, I thought I knew everything, even though my brain should have had a sign under construction. And why would you, if you're constructing this incredible building, would you really just pour sh\*t in it? Would you just damage it? Of course not. That's stupidity. And what I often ask my patients, I said, "If you had a 10 million racehorse, would you ever feed it junk food? And would you ever get it high?" And they're like, "No, that would be stupid." And I'm like, "Well, why would that be stupid?" "Well, because that's an incredible investment." "Well, you're worth way more than that animal."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's perspective. That would that, getting the horse drunken high reminds me of cocaine bear. I don't know if you're looking forward to seeing that.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Cocaine bear.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's coming soon.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** I want to see it. I saw the preview for... But teenagers who smoke marijuana or use marijuana in any form, have a higher risk of anxiety, depression, suicide in their '20s. Teenagers who use marijuana, and this is a replicated study from Norway, have a 450% increased risk of becoming psychotic. And I'm the one over the last 40 years that I get to deal with marijuana triggered a psychotic episode and they're still not well. And psilocybin can do the same thing. And as we are coming into this era of marijuana is innocuous, psilocybin is

good medicine, and there may in fact be times when it is good medicine. As the perception of a dangerousness of a drug goes down, use goes up. And I've been to this party before in the '80s, Benzos were considered innocuous. And like when Xanax first came on the market, I used a lot of it. And then I started doing scans on them and I stop using them altogether. Mommy's little helper is addictive, and now we know increases the risk of dementia.

In the '90s, you were sort of ashamed if you didn't give people opiates that my wife, again, who's a nurse, she would say, "Oh, pain is the fifth vital sign is every visit we had to ask them about their pain. And if they had pain, we needed to relay that to the doctor so they could increase their opiate prescription." Well, everybody knows that did not turn out well. And people go but marijuana's natural. You have cannabinoid receptors in the brain. We also have benzo receptors in the brain, and you have opiate receptors in the brain, and none of that turned out well. So why not? If you're anxious, let me teach you how to do diaphragmatic breathing. And there in the book, there's the 15 second breath. If you just do four of them, you won't need a Xanax. Or how about meditating? We found that increases blood flow to the brain but calms down the emotional centers. Or why not exercise... Head-to-head against antidepressants, exercise equally effective. Omega-3 fatty acids equally effective, learning how to not believe every stupid thing you think equally... I mean, why are we not focusing on diet, on exercise, on building skills rather than, "Hey, doc, what do you think about psilocybin?" I was like, marijuana and psilocybin, the most common questions, and the haters often go, "Dr. Amen needs to get high." Like I am, "I'm high on life."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We have got a quick break coming up we'll be right back. Hippocrates is often considered to be the father of modern medicine. Have you ever wondered what was in his treatment protocols? Well, one of his storied favorite treatment protocols involves something that the ancient Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians were all well aware of, and it was the healing properties of propolis. Today, our modern technology is proving the efficacy of this miraculous super food. A study published in a peer-reviewed journal, Antiviral Chemistry and Chemotherapy, revealed that propolis has significant antiviral effects, specifically reducing viral lung infections. Propolis is one of the few substances ever discovered, to be effective in the treatment of a variety of viruses, including herpes viruses.

A recent study published in Phytotherapy Research found that topical Propolis applied three times a day accelerated the healing of cold sores faster than known treatment. The researchers found that the topical propolis not only reduced the amount of herpes virus present in a person's body, but it also protected body against future cold sore outbreaks. That is absolutely miraculous. Now, this leans into what Hippocrates was noted to use it for, which was the healing of wounds, accelerated healing, the healing of sores, and whether it's a viral lung infection or an infection that is interacting with our nervous system, like herpes virus. There's something really remarkable about Propolis.



And this is one of the storied compounds that are coming from the world of bees. And humans for thousands of years, have had a deep relationship with bees. That is today, this relationship has been fractured and the populations of bees are dropping rapidly. A big reason behind this is the use of pesticides. And this is why sustainable beekeeping is so important to invest in to help to lift up these populations of bees, because our livelihood truly does depend on bees in many ways. The propolis immune spray that I utilize multiple times a week is from Beekeeper's Naturals, and they're committed to third party testing for 70 plus pesticide residues to ensure that we're doing truly sustainable bee keeping and creating a wonderful environment for bees to thrive in.

Also, they're making sure that pervasive offenders like DDT are not in your bee products, heavy metals like arsenic and lead, bacteria like E. Coli, all of these things are commonly found in bee products, these are definitely things you don't want coming along with your super foods in your medicine cabinet. Go to [beekeepersnaturals.com/model](http://beekeepersnaturals.com/model), you're going to get 20% off your incredible propolis immune spray, your superfood honey, and their nootropic that I absolutely love, called Brain Fuel that utilizes raw jelly. Again, make sure to check them out. They're making propolis incredibly accessible and affordable. Head over there, check them out, [beekeepersnaturals.com/model](http://beekeepersnaturals.com/model). That's [B-E-E-K-E-E-P-E-R-S-naturals.com/model](http://B-E-E-K-E-E-P-E-R-S-naturals.com/model) for 20% off. Now, back to the show.

Alright, so you mentioned something that I don't want to miss, and you said, "Mommy's little helper," and that was their advertisement back in the day, that was how it was framed. Just like you just mentioned, 30 alcohol commercials during the Super Bowl, like how many commercials do we see for f\*cking strawberries or whatever. We didn't see any kind of health affirming commercials. It's just inundating us with this, and so this dates back. Now we've gotten a little bit more... Well, advertisers are more clever in what they're packaging up, and alcohol being the most socially acceptable psychoactive substance, which what it is. It kills more people than any other psychoactive substance, and it's been going at it for a long time.

But things like again, Xanax being framed as this is... If you're going to handle life, you've got a lot on your plate, Mommy's little helper, turn to us. And you mentioned also the fact that we have receptors for these things, and what I would point to potentially is, yes, we do have receptors, but what about the concentration of the things that people are consuming today. For example, having the opiate receptor, maybe this goes back thousands of years, where Poppy was used in spot cases when somebody was in serious pain versus a synthetic opioid, like Fentanyl. It's a completely different ball game. The same thing with marijuana today, when thousands of years, maybe they had some kind of rite of passage or smoke ceremony, and today, the concentration of things and the fact that people are doing it so consistently, it's just tearing our brains apart really from the inside out.



**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Just reminds me of another Bible verse, "The beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord." And the beginning of wisdom is to be very afraid of the substances. To have reverence for them, because sometimes they can be incredibly helpful. We use Benzos when someone's having a seizure that won't go away, and obviously pain meds after surgery or during cancer are absolutely essential, but we don't fear them, I think we should. And that would lead me to talk about anxiety, that in the book, I talk about... You don't want to have a low level of anxiety that, don't worry be happy, people die the earliest from accidents and preventable illnesses. So, if you think of anxiety on a scale of zero to 100, I think a healthy level, sort of 25, where you see the trouble coming for you. And you avoid it.

So, the goal is never no anxiety, because that goes with going to jail, and early death. The goal is the right dose of anxiety. We're not really suffering, but you're directing your life and you're seeing the obstacles that are in front of you. I used to love Rocky Road Ice cream or what's the other flavor? Pistachio Almond Fudge at Baskin-Robbins, love it. But it didn't love me. And so now I see that. So, I walk by Baskin-Robbins and I'm like, "Oh, that's death."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Death.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** That's obesity. That's diabetes. That's heart disease. That's my grandfather who I love that died early because he was a candy maker. And I'm like, "No." And I love him. And he just didn't know. But it's like, "No, I love my life. I love my wife, I love my children, I love my mission, I... No, no." And it's that idea of when you love someone or something that loves you back.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I don't know if you've ever been in a bad relationship.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Of course. Look at me. I'm a man. I'm a person. Yes.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Absolutely.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** But I have. And I'm married now to my best friend. I am not going to be in a bad relationship with a substance or with food. I am going to be in control of me. And I've made that decision and I want people who are watching this make the decision to only love things that love you back.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And here's another little side note. This doesn't mean it's going to be easy. It's going to take growth. And you talk about that in the book as well.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** It took, it takes time. One of my favorite stories early in the book is Nancy from Oxford, England, who was obese, a couch potato in chronic pain and depressed. And she's 80 years old. And she finds change your brain, change your life for 50 cents in a used bookstore in Oxford and she buys it, lays around the house for a year. And when she's like, "I feel so bad, maybe this will help." She read it cover to cover outlined it, said she was riveted, and she was like, "okay, too much to do, so I'm just going to do one thing at a time." And she started drinking more water because the brain is 80% water. And I say, "Drink half your weight in ounces a day, just 200 pounds." So, she's drinking 100 ounces of water. She said, "It got me off the couch because I had to pee."

But she said, "I felt better." And she's like, "I'm going to take supplements," and took multiple vitamin omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin D. Brand new study out on vitamin D, people who take vitamin D supplements have a 40% decreased risk of Alzheimer's disease, that's prospective study. She goes, "Oh, I'm better still." And she goes, because of the omega-3 fatty acids she's in less pain. She's like, "I'm going to walk," and then she took dancing lessons and then she started to play table tennis, my favorite brain game. And she's better still and then she decides to change her diet and she's like, "I ate everything I wanted, I just ate the good things first, so there was no room for the bad things and felt better." And then she started new learning. She started to learn French and then play the guitar. And when I met her, she was learning three languages.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oh, my goodness.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** And then she changed her family, and she came for her 83rd birthday. She came to California to get scanned and I wasn't the one supposed to see her. She was supposed to be seeing one of my other doctors but Crystal, my clinic director said, "You have to meet Nancy." And as I went and talked to her like five minutes into the story, I started crying.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Wow.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Because she's the reason why I do what I do. And she said, "I lost five stones. Now I have no idea what this means. I'm like, "She collects rocks," but stone in England is 14 pounds, she lost 70 pounds. She said, "I used to be like this and blew out her cheeks," she said, "And now I'm not," and she said, "I never imagined in my age, that life could be this rewarding, that life could be this good."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Wow.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** And so, for her 83rd birthday, she bought herself a scan at the clinic. And I've seen lots of 70, 89-year-old, 90-year-old brains and it's bad news. It's just bad news and she

had a stunningly beautiful brain and she cried 'cause she knew... And so, the point of this story is you don't have to do everything at once. Start by drinking more water or start the first thing, is this good for my brain or bad for it? Just sort of do an inventory as you make decisions throughout the day. Is this good for my brain or is it bad for it? And if you can answer that with information and love of yourself, love of your spouse, love of your children, love of your mission while you're on the planet, just tend to make better decisions. It's not that you should do this yuck, who wants to do that? It's love. And when I heard Drew Carey say eating crappy food isn't a reward, it's a punishment, he lost a lot of weight. I knew he would stay healthy 'cause you got to first get your mind right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, yeah and this behavior change, and you anchored this in the book in several ways too. It's much easier to guide this behavior change with affirmative things, and so you talk about collecting penguins, talk about that.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Well, the book is really formatted around these four big circles. I always think about it, so what's the biology? And we've talked a lot so far about brain. What's the psychology? And I call them ANTS, the automatic negative thoughts that steal your happiness. What's the social circle? Like how are you getting along with people and what's the spiritual circle? Why the heck do you care? And on the social circle, I have things I collect for each of the circles. Like for the brain, it's seahorses for the hippocampus and it's anteater to get rid of the ants for psychological circle and butterflies for the spiritual circle 'cause it's all about change, but it's penguins for the social circle why? 'Cause it reminds me to notice what I like about other people more than what I don't. So, my son just turned 46 yesterday and I adopted him when he was three.

So, of our six kids, three of them are adopted and he was hard for me 'cause when you adopt a little boy, you're like so excited. I was so excited to be a dad and I was so excited to have influence to spend time and he just argued with absolutely everything I said. And I'm not feeling bonded. And when he's seven, I'm in my child's psychiatry fellowship in Hawaii and I go to talk to my supervisor and I'm like, "I'm having real trouble with my son and I don't like him that much, and it just seems like we're always fighting, and I don't like it." And my dad was not a good dad mostly 'cause he was gone, and I wanted to be a good dad, so I was sad. She said, "I want you to spend more time with him, like actual physical time."

And so, I'm like, alright. And the whole Saturday we went to a place called Sea Life Park, which is like Sea Worlds in Hawaii, it's on O'ahu and we went to the whale show and that was fun. And then we went to the seal show and that was cool. But at the end of the day, he grabs my shirt and he said, "I want to see Fat Freddy". I'm like, "Who's that?" He's like, "It's the penguin dad, don't you know anything" And that's the kind of relationship we had. And so, we see the Fat Freddy show and Freddy is this chubby, penguin who's just fricking amazing. He climbs this

high dive ladder, goes to the end of the board, bounces, jumps in the water, gets out, bolts with his nose, counts with his flippers, jumps through a hoop of fire and I'm like blown away by this little bird.

And at the end of the show, the trainer asked Freddy to go get something. And Freddy went and got it, and he brought it right back. And in my mind the world stopped, I'm like, "Damn, I asked this child to get something from me and he wants to have a discussion." And I knew Anthony was smarter than the penguin. So I'm like, "I'm missing something here." And so, I go to the trainer afterwards and I'm like, "How'd you get Freddy to do all these really cool things." No lie, she looks at my son and then she looked at me and she said, "Unlike parents, whenever Freddy does anything like what I want him to do, I notice him, I give him a hug and I give him a fish." And the light went on in my head that even though my son didn't like raw fish, my daughter totally would've worked with her 'cause she had started with sushi when she was two.

But I realized I was like my dad. Whenever he did something good, I wasn't paying enough attention to him but when he didn't do the things, I wanted him to do, I gave him a ton of attention 'cause I didn't want to raise bad children. So, I was inadvertently teaching him to be troubled to get my attention. So, I collect penguins as a way to remind myself to notice the good things about the people in my life more than the bad. I mean, think what would've happened if Freddy would've had a bad day and the trainer would've gotten a big stick and beaten the penguin or withheld love and affection from him. He'd never perform for her again 'cause he wouldn't have trusted her. But people think, "Oh, I need to force my will on this child". Without a relationship, it doesn't work very well. So, notice what you like more than what you don't. It's miraculous in how it will, if you're struggling in your relationship with your spouse, with your kids, the research shows, if you have five times more positive comments than negative ones, you're less likely to get divorced, business teams make more money and you'll be able to shape the important people in your life in a positive way.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This book is so rich, it's so rich with this kind of information, it's amazing. So, I want to go into, we've talked a lot about various perception shifts for things. And I know that when the average person thinks about improving their brain health or thinking about things they can do like exercises, and you also addressed that as well. Earlier you mentioned table tennis being your favorite brain game. Can we talk about that a little bit more? So, table tennis, what about pickleball? Pickleball is popping right now.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** So, people who play racket sports live longer than everybody else. Isn't that interesting? Because there's a part of the brain, I call it the Rodney Dangerfield part of the brain, and I'm horrified that so many people don't know who he was, he's a very famous comedian who said, I get no respect and, I just...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I quoted him in my last book.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Thank you, thank you for that 'cause it makes me feel old. It's like people don't know who Neil Diamond is, it's like, really? Anyways, the cerebellum back bottom part of the brain is 10% of the brain's volume, but it has more than half of the brain's neurons, it's critically important and one of its main functions is coordination, physical coordination, but also thought coordination and how quickly you can process information. And table tennis and the reason I like it better than pickleball is it's faster. And there's a lot of spin and a lot of thinking that when you play at a high level, it's a strategy game.

So, reflex, fast reflex, very aerobic and it's strategic. So, it's working out your cerebellum, it's working out your parietal lobes in the top back part of your brain, they see where the ball is in space and it's working out your frontal lobes because you are always creating strategy and so, it's this great whole brain exercise. Now, it's not beer pong. I mean, let's just be really clear, it's not beer pong and it's not just hitting the ball back and forth. It's thinking about it. So, I teach my patients, go get a coach, get good, this will help rehabilitate your brain.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So awesome, I love that. This is like, it's happening because at this moment right now, I've been wanting to get a ping pong table in my basement for the longest and so I'm going to make that happen within the next week because of this conversation.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Send me a picture.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oh done, done. I get to go at my kids. And also, but you mentioned racket sports overall, so I would imagine again tennis, there's badminton plus you've got a shuttlecock with that, which is the most gangster of all names of sports pieces and then again, pickleball is rising in popularity. So, and it just makes sense, there's the coordination piece, there's looking at, it's kind of like you said something about it being related to chess.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** It's aerobic chess.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Aerobic chess, yeah you said that.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Yes.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I was like, oh, that's amazing it's a great way to think about it.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** And a funny story, my grandson, I have five grandkids and adore them all. The oldest one, he, when we play, he wants to beat me and I'm like way better than he is. And

I'm like, "You need to stop that and pay attention 'cause I'm going to teach you how to beat all of your friends and every time you make a mistake... " 'cause he tended to be hard on himself. It's like, no, no, no, we celebrate mistakes because then we learn. So, we win, or we learn, we win, or we learn, and I think that mindset is so important as you take bad days and you turn them into good data. So, win or you learn, win or you learn and it's public knowledge.

Alysha Newman's one of my patients, she's Canadian pole vaulter and she was in the last Olympics and had a head injury and didn't do well. She ended up with something called Irlen Syndrome, which I talk about in the book. It's a visual processing problem. And she's really negative and hard on herself. And we do this mantra of win or learn and then visualize, we don't visualize any negativity, we visualize a lot, but we do it on what she does right. And it just came out I think two weeks ago, she won the world indoor pole-vaulting championships for women. And I'm just so proud of her and we win, or we learn.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So awesome, so awesome. So, we've got, and also, I just want to mention this other point, which is with table tennis and with tennis, we have something that is great for our brains in a variety of ways. Plus, we're avoiding things that are not great for our brains, which is the contact. You mentioned the NFL study that you participated in and really, I mean, you were such a guiding force of it and also MMA fighting and whatnot, and you mentioned to me in another conversation about what the actual worst sport for your brain is. I think you said soccer can you reference that?

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Soccer is not good for the brain, but if you look at all of them, what's worse? Probably boxing.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oh, yeah, yeah.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** And I'm last to have Muhammad Ali's brain and Mike Tyson's brain and F4 World Heavyweight championship and they're hurt. I mean, just think.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yes, of course.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** And people don't get it, they think, the headgear protects them, or the helmet protects them and it's a lie.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Or the cushy glove that's punching you with in the face.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Because your brain is not anchored in your skull. Your brain floats in water and so even if you have a helmet on and you get whacked, your brain shakes just like shaken baby syndrome and we know if you shake a baby, it can cause long-term learning problems

and cause damage, it's clearly an abusive act. Well, if your helmet is hitting somebody else's helmet inside, your brain is shaking. And Joe Lewis, the famous boxer, said, "It's not the big hits that cause dementia, it's the thousands of little hits." The sub-concussive blows and would I let my children play football? Absolutely not. If I love this child, why would I increase the risk of him having multiple concussions? I mean, on average, people who play football have a concussion every year. And it's like you're not taking the long-term view that when you are older and your children might need to care for you, you want their brains to be okay. So, I always take the long term view.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** One of the things that you've really been, even popularizing this as a treatment to help with issues like that is hyperbaric oxygen. And being here in LA, there are businesses that just have hyperbaric oxygen chambers. There are, it's so interesting where back in the day, meditation was kind of a French thing. Now there's straight whole meditation studios just for that one thing. We saw the rise in popularity with yoga now it's like light therapy beds and hyperbaric oxygen. Can you talk about what hyperbaric oxygen is and also what kind of benefits does it have for our brain?

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** So, I first learned about it, oh goodness, it's almost 30 years ago. Mike Ucler, who was a nuclear medicine doctor at UCLA, I do scans, he did SPECT scans and he said, "Dan, you have to look at these images." This is before and after people who go in hyperbaric chambers. And I hadn't heard about it. I'm like, "Oh my God, that's so interesting." so I started following the medical literature and they're really good for people who have low blood flow to the brain. So, whatever is causing that and then when I was doing my NFL work, I'm like, they all have low blood flow to their brain. So, I would send them and I have many before and after scans.

And then I did a study with Paul Hart on soldiers who had been involved in blast injuries. And we saw significant improvements, cognitive function, emotional status, blood flow to the brain. So hyperbaric oxygen is you go in a chamber, and they pressurize the chamber anywhere from 1.3 atmospheres to 2.5 atmospheres. So, like go under deeper and deeper pressures of water and often at a 100% oxygen and it causes this nice repairing effect in the brain. Increases vasculature, increases stem cell production and it doesn't work for everyone. But one of my favorite stories is my dad, as he got to be 88, he started having funny moments. And this is a guy that didn't have funny moments. But he started seeing little men running around the ceiling and I'm like, "Oh my God." And I scanned him, and I could see the aging brain had low blood flow, put him in the hyperbaric chamber for 30 sessions and the little people went away and he says, "Wow, I just got better energy, a better concentration, and the people aren't there."



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Now this goes back to the fact that we all have these little people in our heads. We do, we see things that are not there all the time.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Well, not at night where we're actually seeing them on the wall.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Being able to discern the difference. I want to ask you about this because we talked about more of a physical activity that's great for our brain being racket sports. But you also have one of the days as we go in this kind of successive order, the best mental exercises for the brain, you talk about that. So, one of them was to spend 15 minutes a day learning something new, why is that so good for the brain?

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** And that's the most important exercise because when you learn something new, the brain makes new connections. And when you stop learning, the brain starts to disconnect itself. And so, this is why retirement, like I'll never retire and do what? I don't play golf for at least when I do, I swear way too much. It's bad for my eternal soul.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** What are you saying out there, Daniel?

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** New learning is just essential. And for me, I read scans, I can't just do that 'cause my brain already knows how to do it. And once you know how to do something, your brain uses less and less energy. I look at a scan and I immediately know what it means. So, whether it's piano or a language or new imaging modalities, I need to constantly be learning. And I think it was Einstein who said, "If you just spend 15 minutes a day learning something new in a year, you'll be an expert." In five years, you'll be a national expert. I was like, "Hey, that's cool and that's not much time." So, as you do physical exercise, it's critical to do mental exercises. And people often come up to me and go, "I do crossword puzzles." And I'm like, "Well, what else you do?" And they go, "No, that's all I'm doing for my brain." And I'm like, "Oh, that's sort of going to the gym, doing right Bicep curls and then leaving." It's like you want to work out your whole brain, which is why I like table tennis.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oh man, one other one I want to ask you about, which it seems kind of strange because you just mentioned how repetition our brain can kind of go on autopilot with certain things, we're laying down more myelin. You talk about stepping out of our routines as well as something of kind of like a mental exercise, talk about that.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Yes, if you do something new, you do something different, if you get out of your comfort zone, you're stressing your brain and a little bit of stress is good. It's called eustress. If you don't have enough stress, so for example, if children are raised in a wealthy family and everything's done for them, they actually end up suffering because of that, because they've not stressed their brains enough to help them be hardy. And so, some stress is

essential. Obviously, it's like some anxieties is essential. It's sort of a dose response, you want to push your brain. And so, whether it's brushing your teeth with the opposite hand that you usually do, or practicing table tennis with the opposite hand, or if you really want to be good at a sport, well, practice using both hands to do it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So awesome. When you're doing that, brushing your teeth with the opposite hand, make sure you do a good job, so you're not out here with stank breath.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Well, and make sure you floss because people who have gum disease have brain disease, very important. In the book, there's this mnemonic, BRIGHT MINDS. You want to keep your brain healthy or rescue it, you have to prevent or treat the 11 major risk factors. And the first I in BRIGHT MINDS is inflammation. And gum disease is a major cause of inflammation.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So many nuggets like this and you map it out for us so we can take a little bit each day. A daily dose, can you let folks know where they can pick up this new book and also just follow you, get into your universe more and get more information?

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** They can get the book anywhere Great Books are sold and if they want to learn about our clinical work? They can go to Amenclinics.com. We now have 11 clinics around the country. They can follow me on TikTok, docamen, D-O-C-A-M-E-N or on Instagram @doc\_amen. And there they can see our episode of Scan My Brain.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Absolutely, Change Your Brain Every Day, pick it up today, add this to your library but this is one of those books. It's sitting on the side of the arm of my couch. And so, I am literally taking this bite by bite now. I did read through it earlier because I got that early access. But I'm going back now and taking a moment each day and one day at a time and thinking about things and actually what I'm doing is, I'm taking that nugget that you're providing and I'm sitting with it. Just taking it into a little bit of a meditation, thinking about whether it's a story or an activity and how I can apply it. And one of the greatest benefits of doing this show is that I continue learning for myself. Being able to sit across from somebody like yourself is absolutely priceless and people get that access as well when they click play on episodes like this. And so, it's something really special and you're really special, and I appreciate you so much.

**DR. DANIEL AMEN:** Well, just much love and gratitude to you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Thank you. Thank you. Dr. Daniel Amen everybody. Thank you so much for tuning in to the show today. I hope you got a lot of value out of this. Taking care of your brain is a top priority because our brain affects every single aspect of our physical and mental health. Definitely pick up a copy of Dr. Daniel Amen's new book, Change Your Brain Every Day

and please share this episode out with people that you care about You can send this directly from the podcast app that you are listening on, of course and if you like, you can take a screenshot of this episode and I'm going to be on the lookout for this today alright, so take a screenshot of the episode, tag me, I'm @shawnmodel and tag Dr. Amen as well on Instagram and just let folks know what you thought about this episode. Let Dr. Amen know what you thought about this episode, it really does mean a lot. We've got some epic master classes and wonderful guests coming your way very, very soon, so make sure to stay tuned, take care, have an amazing day and I'll talk to you soon.

And for more after the show, make sure to head over to [themodelhealthshow.com](http://themodelhealthshow.com). That's where you can find all of the show notes, you can find transcriptions, videos for each episode and if you've 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.