

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

**EPISODE 696**

## **How Metabolism Works & The Truth About Inflammation**

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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. Our nutrition impacts so much more than our outer appearance. What we eat deeply influences the function of our heart and our cardiovascular system, the function of our brain and our nervous system, the function of all of our hormones, our mitochondria that are making energy, the list goes on and on and on, because all of those things that I just mentioned are literally made from food.

Your body is built from the food that you eat. We're not merely breatharians that are absorbing our body and our nutrients from the world around us. Truly, it is a tangible interaction, we're taking things from the external environment and putting it into our vessel and building tissues from there.

And so, this is something that we need to take more seriously, and we need to gain a level of insight so that we can do this in a healthful way. We want to build the best building possible, alright? We don't want to build a rickety, three little pigs' version, huff and puff and blow your house down type thing. We want to build something that's truly sustainable.

And so, to help us to do this, I thought it would be a great gift to have the tables turned on me, to really pick my brain about how do we go about demystifying this entire field, the reality of metabolism. How does that whole thing work? How does the process of fat loss work? And also, how do we better tune into the most sustainable materials to build the healthiest, most resilient bodies?

And I couldn't think of anyone better to turn the tables on me and ask me these questions than my friend Jay Shetty. Jay Shetty is a New York Times bestselling author and the host of one of the top podcasts in the world.

And in a recent conversation, I sat down with Jay at his studio, and he asked me some powerful questions that can really help us to tune in to really mastering our metabolism and understanding that food is so much more than again, what we're seeing when we look in the mirror.

So, we're going to be talking about how our food impacts our cognitive function, yes, how food impacts our metabolism, yes, but also how food influences our mood and our emotional health, how our food influences how we relate to other people. So, this is going to be packed, jam packed with so many insights, tips, and tools for you to pack into your superhero utility belt, to share with your friends and family and to use for a lifetime.

Now, before we get to that, I want to address one of the things that can easily become a bias, especially for someone like myself who's a nutritionist and who really feels that food is a primary bridge to all of these different results that we want in our lives.

But eventually, in my own clinical practice, working with people from all over the world for many years, I had to really understand and embrace how much our sleep quality impacts our health outcomes as well.

And it was so profound when I dug into the research, and this was about 10 years ago now, that eventually I wrote a book about this subject, it's called Sleep Smarter, it's an international bestseller, and it's translated, I believe, in 21 or maybe 22 different countries, right? So, these are all different foreign publications, foreign book deals.

Because this book was a big deal, it shifted the tide on health and wellness and really alter the conversation around sleep wellness and why that matters so much for everything ranging from our metabolic health to cancer prevention, to decreasing our risk of heart disease and so much more. And so, our sleep quality is truly one of the fundamental pieces of any kind of real health and wellness regimen.

Now, just like our food and nutrition impacts our cognitive function and also our mood and how we relate to other people, so does our sleep quality or lack thereof. Researchers at UC Berkeley did some really fascinating brain imaging and they looked at the human brain under rested conditions and under sleep deprived conditions.

In a well-rested human brain, there's plenty of activity going on in the prefrontal cortex, this is the part of our brain responsible for distinguishing between right and wrong, for social control, for complex problem solving, and what we refer to as these executive functions. And there's moderate to low activity taking place in the amygdala.

Now, when folks were sleep deprived for just 24 hours, the same human brain, that executive function, that prefrontal cortex that was highly active when people were well rested, now that part of the brain, that activity starts to dramatically go down. The researchers would term it "going cold," and there was heightened activity in the amygdala.

Now, our amygdala is really more of a primitive part of the human brain. We kind of evolved different parts of our brain on top of one another through our evolution.

And the amygdala, it's not a bad guy, but we don't want the amygdala running the show. And the researchers will refer to this as an amygdala hijack taking place when we're sleep deprived.

And the amygdala is very emotional, it's very much more concerned with survival and specifically survival of self, alright?

So, we're going to have a tendency to be more irritable when we're sleep deprived. We see this with kids, right? "Oh, you just need to take a nap. They're getting cranky."

Same thing happens with us. We're just big adult babies in many ways and we start to become more agitated. And we don't even realize it, we think we're just normal. "No, I don't want to go to sleep." These little kids don't ever want to go to sleep, they don't want to miss out on nothing. They think they're fine. But they're being a little bit of a miniature... Okay? They're acting up. Same thing happens with us.

And so, this is what we're seeing again, literally looking at the human brain, but understanding functionally, this is where we're going to make poor choices in our food as well. Because our ability to have executive control to say again, "I understand that this is a tasty, salty, crunchy, sweet, delicious, treat. But I don't want to make that decision, because I don't want to deal with the results."

You have more forethought when your executive function is running the show. It's kind of like the adult is in the room. And so again, when we're sleep deprived, we're stacking conditions against ourselves and so obviously our sleep quality is of the utmost importance. And I'm a huge proponent of creating a sleep sanctuary, somewhere that is your environment for deep rest and recovery.

Because researchers from Cornell University actually did a fascinating study where they had a test subject to sleep in an otherwise dark room and they hooked up all these different monitors. And they put a small light the size of about a quarter behind their knee, and that was enough to alter their sleep cycles, just that tiny bit of light coming in through their skin. So powerful because our skin also has photoreceptors.

So, this speaks to the necessity for sleeping in a darker environment to help to really fortify our production of melatonin and decrease our production of cortisol.

Because that's what happens when we have abnormal light coming in, is that our cortisol levels are going to be elevated. Because our body, that's always trying to sync up the Circadian timing system in our bodies with the diurnal and nocturnal patterns of life itself. We're wired up to the 24-hour solar day, and our cells are always trying to sync up because that's how we are designed. We are part of all of this, even though we act like we're not.

And so, when we have this artificial light hitting our bodies, our cells... Because that's sending information to our liver, to our brain, to our heart, trying to figure out, "What time is it? I thought it was this time, but we got this light in us."

And so, to help to synchronize things when it's dark outside in particular, let's create a dark environment in our bedroom, so we don't have a lot of light pollution from the outside and also in our bedroom.

Now, I'm talking about streetlights, your neighbor's porch light, that kind of stuff. Moonlight, starlight, all that stuff, that's normal, that's natural. We've evolved with those things.

And though it might seem bright, for example, if it's a full moon and it's shining, but the lux, how we're measuring the actual power of that light source and how it's interacting with our human cells. The lux of the moonlight and starlight is dramatically different from fluorescent lights, from sunlight as well, and so it's sending different messages to our cells.

And with that being said, also our beds, our bedding, also matters a lot, we want to make sure that we're sleeping in a cooler environment, if at all possible. And we want to make sure if we can, to use bedding that's not overheating our bodies, because we know as well, and this is something I talked about in depth in Sleep Smarter, is that having a higher core body temperature in the evening, not allowing our body temperature to drop as it naturally does, can disrupt our sleep quality as well.

And so, if you're not investing in a fancy pants mattress, which is more expensive to help to regulate your thermal regulation, one of the things that we could do, sleep in a little bit less, use heavier covers only when totally necessary. And one of my favorite things to do, and one of the things that makes my sleep so juicy, so luxurious, is I sleep on organic bamboo lyocell sheets from Ettitude.

And a recent randomized controlled trial found that mental alertness the following day improved by upwards of 25% after sleeping on Ettitude's sheets and 94% of people prefer sleeping on these organic bamboo lyocell sheets. They're antimicrobial, self-deodorizing, breathable, moisture-wicking, they support thermoregulation.

And I'm telling you right now, when you sleep on them, you will truly understand, this is very difficult to describe. This is one of the reasons... We just went to an event where I spoke in Mexico, incredible resort, but those sheets, I missed my Ettitude sheets. Sliding into these sheets, even at this fancy resort, it was like slipping into some paper. It was like a little bit of sharp on my body. And so, I had to get used to that.

Because my body is so well adjusted to these Ettitude sheets that I really don't want to sleep on anything else, and once you have this experience, you will truly understand. So, here's the coolest thing about it, number one, you get 15% off of your sheets at Ettitude, and you get a 30-night sleep trial. Sleep on them, dream on them. If you don't absolutely love them, you could send them back for a full refund.

Go to [ettitude.com/model](http://ettitude.com/model), that's E-T-T-I-T-U-D-E.com/model, use the code "Model 15" at check out for 15% off. Alright? Again, [ettitude.com/model](http://ettitude.com/model), and now let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

**ITUNES REVIEW:** Another five-star review titled, "This show is effing awesome, enough said," by Mali O. "Shawn knows his stuff and is a huge influence in my life for the better."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Awesome. Thank you so much for leaving that review over on Apple Podcast, I truly, truly do appreciate that. And on that note, let's get to this very special episode where the tables are being turned on me, and we're going to be diving into all things metabolic health and also how our nutrition is impacting a variety of domains in our lives that we don't often think about.

Again, this is with my friend, New York Times best-selling author, Jay Shetty, where he interviewed me for his incredible show, On Purpose. So, in this first segment, I'm going to be sharing with you the truth about what metabolism actually is.

We're going to cover the basics about how fat loss actually works, that everyone should know about, how inflammation and excess weight gain are intimately connected. And also, a simple science-backed food swap that you can make to reduce inflammation and aid in weight loss. You'll discover this and so much more from my conversation, On Purpose.

**JAY SHETTY:** Why is it important, as you talk about in the book, to use power of food to reboot your metabolism? What are the benefits of rebooting your metabolism and what are methods through diet and nutrition that boost our metabolism?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** For everyone listening it should always be, what is the thing? Right? So, when we hear these terms like "metabolism", we often have a certain association with it. Right?

**JAY SHETTY:** That's my point. Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so, it's usually going to be tied to weight loss. And it's a huge mistake. Because metabolism is really everything. There's a whole field of immunometabolism. Your immune system has its own metabolism, where it's building new immune cells, where it's

functioning at a certain level, where there's cellular waste products, and the list goes on and on. All these things are metabolism. So, life itself is driven by metabolism.

But this is a huge mistake even in the weight loss domain when we are just thinking about food and nutrition and diet in terms of changing our metabolism. And this is why with the book, I gave people what they want, which again, that's the on-ramp, right?

But food controls so much more than just our metabolism. It also controls our cognitive function. Our emotional intelligence is highly influenced by our nutrition. And that's one of the main things I wanted to talk with you about as well. And also, it affects our relationships and how we relate to other people. The list goes on and on.

Food isn't just food, it's information. And so as far as the metabolism side is concerned, what I wanted to do was break down how the process of metabolism actually works. How does weight loss work? How does fat loss work? Where does fat go? When I "lose weight" where the hell does the weight go? You know what I mean? So, I'm taking people through that process.

And I use analogies to make it make sense. Because one of the things I learned from Tony was one of the fastest ways of learning, which I was doing this, but I didn't realize it, is take something that you don't know and connect it to something that you do know. Right?

And so, I use this analogy of going to the movies and using it as a cellular movie theater and how the process of fat loss actually works. And so, we've got these key ushers that are making things happen. You come into the movie theater, and you've got these specific enzymes.

So, we've got hormone-sensitive lipase, for example. And hormone-sensitive lipase is the enzyme required to actually open up your cell so that it releases stored energy, triglycerides, stored fat, to be used for fuel. Nothing's happening without this usher. Alright? So that's required.

Then we've got another usher who's putting fat in the seats, right? Lipoprotein lipase. And so, but then we've got the managers of the ushers, which are insulin and glucagon, which there's so much more, but I'm just giving a little snapshot.

**JAY SHETTY:** No, this is great. I love this analogy. It's a brilliant analogy.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So...

**JAY SHETTY:** It's making it make sense to me. So that's a good thing. I'm the dummy in the room, so this is great.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oh no.

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, insulin and glucagon, they're actually brothers, right? And they're both from their loving mother, Ms. Pancreas. Alright? So, insulin is really about management and always looking for the worst possible scenario. So, they're all about saving up for a rainy day. Get storing as much as possible so we're all safe and we're all good.

Glucagon is more of a free thinker, more of a go with the flow type of vibe and is cool with letting go of some of this stored energy. And so, glucagon, and to make a summation of these, so insulin is the biggest hormonal driver of us storing fat in our cells or storing energy in our cells.

When people hear the word "insulin" we often think about diabetes, right? Because it's a lack. Type I diabetes is a lack of producing insulin. The mother pancreas, the beta cells are not producing insulin, which is absolutely horrendous. This means your cells can't get energy and you'll literally just wither away. It's a terrible way to die.

Type II diabetes, which is the most prevalent here in the United States right now. In the United States, about 130 million citizens here in the US have type II diabetes or pre-diabetes.

**JAY SHETTY:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's insane. But this is not a condition where you're no longer producing insulin. This is a condition where your insulin sensitivity, the ability of that cell to get the signal has been tampered down. Because insulin has been so abundant. Because the blood sugar has been so abundant, right? And so, it's a...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But here's the thing, and it's a really beautiful thing, that even a condition like that, it's the body adapting to keep you alive. So, type II diabetes, and we get this label that you have this chronic disease and you're no good, or you're tainted, or you're broken.

It's actually this really intelligent adaptation by the human body because it's adapting the way that your metabolism works under unideal circumstances. So, it's beautiful, it's amazing.

The problem, however, is that we've been led to believe that that is the end story. That your body is stupid, and it can't shift and create another expression. And so now it's common



knowledge. Back in the day, I've been in this field almost 20 years, I'm about to hit my 20-year anniversary, and we couldn't publicly say, even another friend Mark Hyman...

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah. I love Mark.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Like, you got to be very careful saying, "Cure diabetes." Right? Today it's common knowledge that you can reverse this condition.

So, you got insulin driving people into the seats, right? Keeping the theater full. And we got glucagon open up the doors to allow people to go out and kick it at a after party. Right?

So, these are two big hormonal drivers of metabolism. We've got some enzymatic ones I hit a little bit, but then we've got the internal cashier as well, which is your liver in many ways.

So, people don't think about these things and this beautiful dance that's taking place. We just want to get that fat off. Right? And often times we associate that with really working hard. Restricting, cutting things away. You can't have. Deprivation. Right? All those things, those terms don't feel good. It's very against human nature.

And on the other side, you have to abuse yourself. You have to exercise your face off. You've got to just, this tenant that I was taught in my... I paid for this education, Jay.

At a private university, the first day of school in this big auditorium, nutritional science class, the teacher told us that if you want to manage your metabolism, if you want to manage your body weight, just manage your calories. That's all you have to do is control the calories. Right? He was overweight as well, by the way. Alright? And now it, again, it's not that he is trying to be nefarious. This is what he learned. And at the time we were in the food pyramid.

So, this is when I went to school back in, this was '97. It's changed a little bit. Like we went from the food pyramid to my plate, but still really the same principles. But to say that calories control everything about you, or your metabolism or your ability to lose weight, is very myopic. It's tunnel vision.

And people don't really realize, and that's what I spent the nice segment of the book, really diving into the beautiful history behind calories and like how is that a thing that people plant this flag?

And I know this, I was one of them, right? Being a nutritional scientist and also somebody who's working as a strength and conditioning coach at the university. These, I was just replicating and regurgitating what I was taught. And it worked for some people, not for others.

And so, what I did was I brought to bear this new term and it's called "epicaloric". Right? So, and this was a pivot from my friend Bruce Lipton, Dr. Bruce Lipton. I don't know if you've talked to him before.

**JAY SHETTY:** I haven't. I know who he is, but I haven't spoken to him.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Ah, The Biology of Belief, right? So, epigenetics.

**JAY SHETTY:** Yes.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right? So, this is, he's the person more than anybody who pushing into popular culture. That means above genetic control, right? But epicaloric control, it's above caloric control. There are certain principles that control what your body does with the calories you consume.

And this would be so logical if we think about it. And so just a couple of those. One of those is the quality of food itself. Alright? So, we hear this, that not all calories are created equal, but we have really sound science on this now.

I share one of the studies in the book, and again, this was a peer-reviewed study, and what they did was they took test subjects and they wanted to see what would happen with their metabolism when they eat a meal of processed foods versus a meal of whole foods. Right?

And so, the processed food, they're both sandwiches, by the way, alright? So, it's not like super glorified processed versus whole. But the whole food sandwich was whole grain bread and cheddar cheese. The processed food sandwich was white bread and cheese product. And cheese product is what most people are eating. That's like Kraft. They can't legally call it cheese. It's called Kraft Singles. There's not enough cheese in the cheese. Which is really messed up.

**JAY SHETTY:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. And so, they consume each of these sandwiches and they track their caloric expenditure. Right? And this is something... So, to get to just the end part of where does the weight go, we breathe most of the weight that we lose out, we expel it through our lungs. Our lungs are... And also, excretion organ as well. We don't really think about that, but they are.

And so anyways, so they're tracking the out go of energy after eating these two sandwiches. And what they found was the people eating, when they ate the processed food sandwich, there was a 50% reduction in their body's expenditure of calories. Something happened by eating that food that made their body hold onto more of the energy they just consumed.

And what it really was, was a hormonal clog, to put it in a simple term. It changed the hormonal cascade, neurotransmitter cascade organ function in a way that made the body more stingy at holding onto this very abnormal energy that was coming in.

And so again, 50% reduction is massive. And how often are people trying to lose weight, counting calories, but eating processed foods? Counting the point system and all these things. Which can be wonderful, but we have to address the food quality. So, this was published in Food and Nutrition Research, by the way, if anybody wants to check it out.

**JAY SHETTY:** Wow. Yeah. That's fascinating. I'm so glad you shared that with me. Because yeah, it's easy to be like, "This is healthy food, this is unhealthy food," but it's even deeper than that. And I think the gold standard, which I think you set, which I really identify with, is I just know I want to be healthier. Like what I've been saying is I want to be healthier. I want to be more informed.

Because if something happens to me, I don't want it to be something that I can and will continue to monitor. Because I want to be as healthy so I can continue to do my service in the world. That's where my personal intention goes. I know one of the things that people are struggling with a lot right now is inflammation, right? And you talk about the microbiome in the book as well and the connection. But walk me through where inflammation is created from and how it connects to the microbiome in the book?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. The term, again, what is it? What...

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Inflammation. The term itself is derived from the word essentially, meaning it's set on fire, right? So, there's this fire taking place in the human body. And just to lean and connect inflammation to metabolism, let's do that. One of the studies that I referred to as well was looking at, and this was published in the Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, they were looking at what was happening with inflammation in the brain leading to accelerated weight gain. Alright?

**JAY SHETTY:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Now this is another thing. When people are trying to lose weight, nobody's telling them, we need to deal with the inflammation in your brain. And so, what the researchers uncovered was that essentially inflammation in the brain was leading to more belly fat accumulation and more disruption to their metabolism.

But the key was more belly fat accumulation and obesity. Once people were venturing into obesity, it was leading to more brain inflammation. So, this becomes this vicious circle, right? And again, we're not looking at, we need to address the inflammation in your brain. Why is this happening when your brain is controlling your body far more than anything else, and there's an internal thermostat that's even controlling your metabolic rate, which is based in your hypothalamus, which is kind of considered the master gland of the body.

And the hypothalamus not only is kind of like a thermostat for your metabolism, but also, it's a thermostat for your body temperature, for your sleep cycles. And the list goes on and on. It's like a circadian controller, right? Circadian medicine is popping right now too. And so, paying attention. And so, specifically the researchers were denoting hypothalamic inflammation leading to all these problems.

**JAY SHETTY:** So, what's causing that brain inflammation?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Obesity in and of itself is increasing the rate of inflammation. So right now, in the United States, we are knocking on the door of 250 million of our citizens being overweight or obese. It's beyond epidemic. It's insane. Rest assured, if we're venturing into obesity, your brain is suffering because of it. And I also noted in another study where we're seeing this correlation. I talked to Daniel Amen, who wrote the...

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah, I love Daniel Amen. He's been on the podcast twice. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. I love him so much.

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah, he's awesome.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But he's accumulated so much data and... But there's also peer-reviewed studies as well, looking at, once our waist size is increasing, it's correlated with the decrease in our brain size. So as our waist circumference goes up, our brain size goes down, the volume of our brain, which is not good at all. And so, there's this huge connection with these two.

But also, what's driving this inflammation is the foods that we're eating, obviously, as well. And obesity itself... But just to give a little snapshot, how does that work? How's obesity creating

more inflammation? Our fat cells are pretty, they're pretty damn amazing. Without our fat cells being as intelligent as they are, we wouldn't have made it as humanity. It enabled us to go through times of famine and still survive.

But here's the thing, we live in a very different time now where more people are dying from excess than from deprivation. And so, during this time of excess, our fat cells can actually grow 1000 times their size. Right? It gets crazy. They're...

**JAY SHETTY:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I don't want to disrespect them by calling them little trash cans, but they're kind of these internal trash cans that can...

**JAY SHETTY:** They keep collecting.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. It's like these hefty, hefty cinch sacks. Really good trash bags that are filling up. And as that happens, it's sending out a distress signal because the fat cells were never made to contain that much stored energy. And so, it's sending out kind of a false distress signal to your immune system thinking that you're infected, your fat cells are chronically infected.

This is why we see epidemic levels of inflammation measured by things like C-reactive protein in folks as we venture into obesity. So, the fat cells themselves are a big contributor to inflammation.

But to lean into food a little bit, one of the biggest culprits that's being highlighted today, and there's, with any of this stuff I talk about, Jay, there's always conflicting information.

**JAY SHETTY:** Of course, of course. Yeah. I get that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And the average person doesn't though. It's just like this is the end all, be all. What I do is, I'm a research scientist primarily. I'll go and proactively look for things that rebuke what I believe, that prove what I'm saying otherwise or other than. And it takes a lot of courage to go and look for things to prove you wrong.

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But what I'll do is I'll look at the variety of information and what does the majority of data that we have say. That's a better place for us to stand on and educate from.

Right? But one of the biggest culprits, and this is the, what the majority of data says is these highly refined oxidized seed oils that have become so prevalent in our food system.

And again, I get to work with the best people in the world in these subjects like Dr. Cate Shanahan. She really a pioneering voice in this field. And she worked with the Lakers and helped with Kobe Bryant, got him on these protocols, extending his career, all these great things. And so, she has that fame and credibility there. But she's also a brilliant scientist and somebody who's very versed in metabolism.

But one of the things that she shared with me was that this particular study, which was crazy, they looked at biopsies, right? So you can actually go and look inside of what a fat cell contains, back in the earlier part of the 1900s, and saw what is the makeup of the average person's fat cell. And about 2% of our fat cells back then were made of these polyunsaturated fatty acids or PUFAs, right?

Today, the amount of polyunsaturated fatty acids that make up the average person's fat cell is up to 25 or even 30%. So, it's went from 2% to 25%. So literally the ingredients that make us as a species has changed dramatically.

And what is it about these particular fats? How is so much of it making up the ingredients that make us up? And it's because they're in everything. They're very cheap, they're rancid, oxidized oil. They have no choice but to be those things.

Like getting the oil from corn. There's so little, and if people saw the process, which I highly encourage people to do, there's lots of videos. You could see the processing of canola oil or, "vegetable oil".

I remember when my mom started using vegetable oil, trying to get healthy. Because my family, again, I was the skinny kid in the family. Everybody... Pretty much everybody else in my family, at least about 80% of folks were obese. And so, she started using vegetable oil. Sounds healthy, but it's not asparagus oil or broccoli oil. These are highly refined seed oils. Corn oil, soy oil, canola oil.

And to extract those oils there... It kind of looks like just mud. It just looks disgusting. It looks like this kind of almost gasoline type vibe to it. And it has to use bleaching agents and deodorizers. And I cited a study in my book, and this was published in the journal, Inhalation Toxicology, and they found that just smelling those oils while cooking can damage your DNA.

**JAY SHETTY:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Crazy stuff, right?

**JAY SHETTY:** Just smelling?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Just inhaling the fumes from it.

**JAY SHETTY:** Let alone actually putting it in your body.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yes, yes. So, it's crazy. It's so crazy. And so, for me, it's just looking like this specific component. Your body has to go into this kind of pro-inflammatory state to try to manage any insult. Inflammation is one of the most important things for our survival. It's kind of been given a bad name right now because we're dealing with chronic inflammation, but we need inflammation in order to just heal for stuff you don't even know is going on.

There are cells right now in your body that are dying off and recycling. There's always an inflammatory component, catabolic component, and that's okay. But once we venture into chronic inflammation where these things are getting out of hand, that's where we start to see all manner things go wrong.

**JAY SHETTY:** Wow. You know what, I find it so useful to be having this conversation with you because, and I hope everyone who's listening and watching, I'm trying to ask the questions that I think we skip. What does this actually mean? How does it actually affect us?

Because right now we hear all these buzzwords, and we look for the quick fix. "Oh, I've got inflammation, or I do this to alkalize it. I've got this, do this." And we are always looking at that quick fix, that quick win, the quick solve.

And actually, when I'm sitting here listening to you, I'm going, wow, there is just... Of course, naturally there's so much more to it, but we have to be so much more alert and vigilant, which is where we struggle. Because it's almost there is no convenience now because there's all this information. Like you said, there's conflicting information.

So if I'm listening to this show right now and I want to create more energy in my life, I want to create more vibrancy in how I feel, what are some of the things that we're likely missing or that we're likely struggling with in our diet or nutritionally that we could add to help start that process of at least feeling a bit more positive like we have a bit more control?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We could stay right in the same lane and just swap out the oils that we're using with some intention. Researchers at Auburn found that olive oil, oleocanthal-rich extra

virgin olive oil is one of the few things that's been found to be highly effective in reducing inflammation of the brain, and also being able to help to heal the blood-brain barrier.

So, what does this mean? The blood-brain barrier is kind of like Michio Kaku, it's kind of like a modern-day Einstein. He was like, "The human brain is the most complicated object in the known universe." That's big. For him to say something like that, that's really remarkable.

**JAY SHETTY:** Repeat that for us?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** The human brain is the most complicated object in the known universe. And the cool thing is we all have one. We're not very good at using it, you know? But we all have this really miraculous organ. And your body is very protective of it. Because again, it's controlling everything about you, it's controlling your metabolism. For example, it's the only major organ that's fully encased in hard bone. So, we've got this built-in helmet to try to protect it. We've got the blood-brain barrier.

Because everything that we eat, the last place to actually allow nutrients in, it's going to be your brain, because it has a blood-brain barrier. It's kind of like an internal security system. Or I like to think about it like a toll booth, right? So certain nutrients...

**JAY SHETTY:** I like these analogies. I like 'em.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Certain nutrients get express pass. If anybody has lived with... They have tolls and you get an express pass, they can go right into the brain. Most other things, they're going to meet the toll booth and they're not going to be able to get through because the guard there is like Dwayne the Rock Johnson.

It's like clones of him and Vin Diesel or whatever. So, it's just highly unlikely that you can get into the brain. It's like an exclusive club, it's very exclusive. And so, to make it into the brain, only specific things are able to do that.

One of the big issues today leading to more inflammation is the degradation, we're breaking down our own blood-brain barrier, this internal security system, by eating all these abnormal foods. And the blood-brain barrier, a big aspect of its regulation is through the fats that we consume, right? And so again, eating these really low-quality oils and making ourselves out of these things, we're degrading how our body functions.

And so, what the researchers found again was that extra-virgin oleocanthal-rich olive oil is one of those foods that's really healing and anti-inflammatory, and also can help to heal the blood-



brain barrier. That's crazy, because for me again, I don't have a dog in the fight, I don't care if olive oil is cool or not, if it's great or not.

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah, yeah. You don't own olive oil.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I don't care. But the data, it's so miraculous. But then you just look at, what have humans been doing the longest? And how do you make olive oil? You crush olives. That's it. It's not like the process that these other oils, these seed oils have to go through, again, with the deodorizers and the bleaching agents and the high heat. As a matter of fact, extra virgin olive oil, that means that it's not heat-processed.

**JAY SHETTY:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Alright? So, it's even paying attention to the very volatile nature of those fats. And it's stored in dark glass bottles because it's even photo-sensitive, it's light-sensitive, can break down and degrade those oils. So, in humans, we have documentation for thousands of years have been consuming olive oil, right? And so that's one of the great principles to lean back into which is like, what have humans been doing the longest? Let's do that. What got us here? Because what we're doing now is not working.

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So that's one of the great foods that can help to reduce inflammation. So, swapping out those oils, being intentional about it. The best way to consume these oils is going to be through finishing dishes, like adding some olive oil on top or using it to make salads. Cooking with it, you can. Moderate heat is okay, but for cooking, we need things that have more saturation, that are more stable, so they're not giving off all of these kinds of pro-inflammatory oxidative compounds, right?

So that would be like coconut oil or ghee, or grass-fed butter. Avocado oil is also rising in popularity now as well. But just to throw a couple more for reducing inflammation, the cruciferous family of vegetables have been found to reduce inflammation specifically in the brain.

Broccoli. Again, I put peer-reviewed data to show that this food that's just super common can help to reduce brain inflammation. So yeah, I can go on and on, but those are just a couple of things.

**JAY SHETTY:** No, no, this is fantastic, and I want everyone who's listening and watching to know that all these reviews, the research is in the book, Eat Smarter, which is what Shawn's

referencing. If you are listening and you don't see me holding the cover and holding the book, you can order it right now.

And I deeply recommend that because the level of detail of insight that Shawn has is so powerful, it should not be underestimated. This isn't a new diet book or a fad book on like, "Here's what you need to do, three things you need to do tomorrow." It's not like that. There is deep research, reflection, introspection that Shawn's done and study he's done. And so, I'm going in and allowing him to share depth on certain parts, but the book is full of these insights.

Shawn, I want to talk a bit about stress and the brain, and then diet. Because you also talk about the impact of food on the brain, brain on food, but also our emotional states.

We all know what emotional eating is. We've all picked up a tub of ice cream or picked up sugars when we're low in energy, or... We've been there. We may even get drawn in that direction still today. One thing I find intriguing that I'd love to learn from you is how much is stress in the brain causing some of these challenges within the body and can food be used to work backwards almost? Or does stress need to be dealt with in different ways?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, that's such a great question. Again, what is stress? We have to look at that. And we tend to put stress in this one box cognitively. Most times people associate it with like life stress, like work stress, work is stressing me out, my relationship is stressing me out. But those are just a couple of factors that go into your overall stress load as a human being.

So, all of these inputs are stressors. And for example, exercise is a stressor, and it's known as hormetic stressor, which that means that if you're able to recover from said exercise, you get benefit. Right? The kind of like, "what doesn't kill me makes me stronger" principle.

But if you put on intense exercise on top of relationship stress, work stress, spiritual stress, right? Feeling not on purpose or cut adrift or disconnected, you add that onto diet stress, the stress coming from the abnormal foods you may be consuming. The environmental stress, right?

Right now, this is dope. Like we can record, we got all this technology, but all of these energies are just running in and out of ourselves at paces and degrees that we just don't understand yet. So, we're all intermingling with these energies that we've never been exposed to, again, as humans. So, the environment itself is going to be adding an additional stress.

Gravity. Gravity's trying to kill you. Like literally is trying to weigh us down, in a sense, if you want to look at it like that. But we are resilient. We've adapted to it. But John Carter, I don't

know if you know about that book and that movie, the Disney, it didn't do very well, but I think it's on Disney Plus.

**JAY SHETTY:** What's it called?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** John Carter.

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, this guy teleports accidentally, like from Civil War vibes to being on Mars. And on Mars he's like superhuman because gravity's different. So, he is like jumping around. It's really cool to think about. Gravity has conditioned us in a certain way, and we are resilient against it. So environmental stress goes on there. And I can go on and on. All of these stress inputs create your overall stress load as a human being.

Now, the issue is that, man, I've had the opportunity to work with so many people in a one-on-one context, but groups and the books and all the stuff, but the most overlooked thing that I've seen when people are wanting to get off of their blood pressure medication, the lisinoprials or the statins or metformin for diabetes or the antidepressants, whatever it might be, the nutrition and the exercise can only go so far. The number one thing that I've seen that people overlook is the impact of stress.

Because you can overeat your way into disease. You can under-move your way into disease. You can under-sleep your way into disease, and you can also overstress your way into disease.

The problem is that stress is invisible, in a sense. Exercise, we know what that is. It's physical, we're interacting with it. Food is like you're putting stuff in, like it's visceral. It's something you could touch.

Because stress doesn't have that aspect, we negate it. But truly, and just to kind of loop back to the story with that physician and the nocebo effect, wow. So, everybody's heard at this point of the placebo effect, to some degree.

**JAY SHETTY:** I was going to come back to this. I'm glad you've gone there. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And this, it's amazing, right? It's amazing. So just on average, if we look at the breadth of peer-reviewed data that we have, on average, placebos are about 30% effective in clinical trials. So fake drugs, sham surgeries, fake treatments are about 30% effective on average. Some studies, much higher, like 80% effective in some studies on

antidepressants. People are not actually getting something that has a real treatment. They just believe that they're taking the drug.

Now, this is very important. It has to be coming... No, it doesn't have to. But in these trials, they're coming from an authority figure, right? And so, one of the things that I talk about in the book is the impact that your thoughts have on your body's metabolism.

And so, this was done by Dr. Alia Crum and her team at Stanford at the time, and it was the milkshake study. And so, they blended up these milkshakes and they labeled them different, different amounts of calories, even though they were all the same. So, some of them were the indulgent milkshakes with the, they labeled like 700 calories. Some were the smart shakes where they labeled it like 200 calories. But all of them were really like 450 calories or something like that.

And so, what they found was that people who believed they were having the indulgent milkshake, they had a much greater secretion or suppression of ghrelin, the hunger hormone.

**JAY SHETTY:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, they're more satiated because they believe they're consuming something that has a lot more caloric energy. And on the other side, the people who thought they were eating the sensashake, the sensible milkshake, their ghrelin levels didn't budge at all, which means they're going to be hungry again very soon after having that milkshake, right?

So that's the power of the mind to literally manipulate your metabolism, just in that one snapshot. And I've got so much more data on that.

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, your thoughts determine what's happening with your metabolism. So going back to the ' effect, so placebos being, again, we've got data... A great book is Mind Over Medicine, Dr. Lissa Rankin. So many studies in there. But we've got data on placebos being effective in cancer treatments, in surgeries for knees, like MCL repair.

We've got, there's so many crazy studies where they'll, because now you could even watch your surgery where they're, somebody will be watching their own surgery, but what they're doing is they're playing a different video.

So, they'll cut the person's knee open and just seal it back up without doing any actual therapeutic change and their knee problem will heal, right? Oftentimes better than the people who had the actual surgery, the surgical change and intervention.

So, I know this sounds crazy, and these are things for me, I'm a very analytical, logical person, so I wouldn't believe it unless I saw the data myself. So that's the power of the human mind, just a snapshot.

Now, here's the other thing. I don't want to call 'em evil, but there's a evil twin to the placebo effect, and it's called the nocebo effect. This is when you get a negative injunction that something bad is going to happen.

So, a placebo is saying, "You're going to get this therapeutic benefit. You're going to take this and your blood pressure's going to normalize, your depression's going to go away, your cancer is going to dissolve." And nocebo effect is saying, "This is incurable. You have six weeks to live. You'll never walk again." So, these injunctions from an authority figure.

And there was another study I cited from Alia Crum's team. They did a skin prick test where they used a histamine, a histamine stimulator to create a rash on people's skin, and then they had an inert cream, and they told the test subjects either, "This cream is going to make your rash worse," or "This cream is going to make your rash better." So different people were told different things.

Now what happened was, and this was true for like 90% of the test objects, when they received that inert cream that had no therapeutic benefit and they're told their rash will get worse, within 10 minutes, the rash got worse and spread. For other people within 10 minutes, the rash got better, and nearly went away for most people. Just within 10 minutes of them getting this cream that does nothing.

The biggest part of this was the benefit depended directly with how the person believed in the competence of the physician. Their rapport and belief in the person telling them about the thing impacted their physical response the most.

**JAY SHETTY:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So again, who are you listening to? And so, for me, I had that nocebo effect injunction. He told me this was incurable, I'll be in pain the rest of my life, I'll never walk normally again, all these things, and I believed him. But thankfully again, just sometimes going through these things and hitting rock bottom is a good place to stand up from. And being able to access...

This is why people are such a gift. My grandmother was like a guiding light, like a North Star for me. I didn't realize it at the time, I just thought she was being annoying, but just knowing that there's somebody who believes in me, man, it just made the process so much easier.

But the thing is you don't need anybody else to believe in you, you can believe in yourself. But it does take some revelation, it does take a lot of work to be able to do that.

Alright. I hope that you're enjoying this conversation with my friend Jay Shetty on his show, On Purpose. Make sure to subscribe and check him out. And being that Jay is a guy from the UK, he's no stranger to a good cup of tea.

Now, one of the teas that I've been putting a lot of my friends and family on to, and also when people come into the studio here, even my friends from the UK, I'm serving them oftentimes a tea called pu-erh. Now, according to a study published in the journal Phytonutrient Research, pu-erh is one of the rare nutrient sources that has a direct significant influence on an enzyme that unlocks fat from your fat cells. This hormone called hormone-sensitive lipase.

Now, pu-erh has also been shown to support fat loss while protecting our muscle mass at the same time. This is documented in a recent study featured in clinical interventions in aging. And also, this is a primary reason that I share this with my friends and family, is that it's great for the health of our microbiome.

A study published in the Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry found that pu-erh may be able to reverse gut dysbiosis by dramatically reducing ratios of potentially harmful bacteria and increasing ratios of beneficial bacteria.

Now, this tea is truly incredible obviously, but as with everything, the quality and sourcing matters a lot. The only pu-erh tea that I drink is from Pique teas, because Pique uses a patented cold extraction technology that extracts the bioactive compounds in their teas at cold to low temperatures for up to eight hours. They're doing that thing nice and slow.

This artisanal process gently extracts natural antioxidants and phytonutrients and preserves them in their whole form. Now, this is the purest way to extract these valuable phytonutrients that are showing up in these clinical trials to have all these benefits for our microbiome and our metabolic health.

You simply pour these easy-to-use tea crystals into water and enjoy the benefits. And also, I love that it's wild harvested, making it even more concentrated in polyphenols than any other

tea source. And to top it all off, it's triple toxin screened for one of the highest levels of purity, tested for pesticides, heavy metals and toxic molds that are common in other teas.

This is why your exclusive source for tea needs to be Pique Life. Got to [pikelife.com/model](http://pikelife.com/model), that's P-I-Q-U-E-L-I-F-E.com/model for up to 15% off plus free shipping on a variety of their award-winning teas and tea bundles. Again, that's [pikelife.com/model](http://pikelife.com/model) for up to 15% off plus free shipping. And on that note, let's get back to our conversation with Jay Shetty on his show, On Purpose.

In this next segment, you're going to discover how our nutrition influences our mood, and how we relate with other people. You're also going to learn how learning more about you, truly knowing yourself, your preferences, your tendencies, can actually help you to unlock the best approach to health and wellness, again, for you.

All of this and so much more. This next segment is going to be mind-blowing. Let's dive back in this conversation with Jay Shetty, On Purpose. I don't talk about this often, Jay, but the reason I wrote this book was to address how food is affecting how we communicate with each other. Because you probably have noticed, we're living at a very divisive time right now. There's so much divisiveness, there's so much agitation, there's so much in-fighting, when on paper we should be more connected than ever. We all have the same access to the same data, why is there so much arguing about it, right?

And also, people are becoming so polarized. They're going and planting their flag at one end or the other end, but truthfully most people are here in the middle, but they're listening to people at these outer ends.

But what's not being talked about is the fact that, for example, there was a study done at the Ohio State University and it was looking at couples. I love my wife, she's my best friend. But we also, you know what I'm saying? We have stuff.

**JAY SHETTY:** Like every couple.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And the thing is we know our stuff now. Because we often attribute it to the person. But what they did was they use glucose monitors, to see what happens when the person in the relationship, when they have abnormal blood sugar, how they respond to their partner.

**JAY SHETTY:** Yes.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so, what they found was when people had... When their blood sugar was abnormal, when they experienced a blood sugar crash, for example, which is normal. Because again, we're going hypoglycemic and then crashing because the way we eat today, the test subjects became much more aggressive towards their partner. Keyword "aggressive". Right?

And here's the biggest thing, because for me it's just like, okay, that's equality, but what's the end result? End result is they were far less likely to resolve their relationship conflicts. So that's the outcome, because your blood sugars messed up.

Now we think about this with kids, like they're hyper whatever, they're cranky. You're just a big adult baby. You get the same hard wiring. And so, when we tend to be in conflict is when we, when our biological needs are off, when we're tired, when we're hungry, these things we attribute to kids acting up like that. But we do that to each other.

**JAY SHETTY:** Yes, yes, yes.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so that was just one little glimpse into it. This is somebody that you love. And so, with the... Just a little sidebar, in the study, they use these dolls and poking pins in the doll, how aggressive you are or mad at your partner you are. So, it's just kind of creepy. Like some people put all these...

**JAY SHETTY:** That's very creepy, yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But now here's how we branch this out globally. Researchers at Oxford University, they wanted to see what would happen by improving the nutrition of prison inmates. So, we have a certain psychological view of people who are in these conditions.

**JAY SHETTY:** Absolutely. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But for me, I have an experience with this because of the environment that I come from. Many of my friends and family end up in that situation. I could have been in that situation. And so, what they did was, and this is a randomized placebo-controlled trial, gold standard. This isn't just guessing, this isn't, "Oh this thing." Gold standard of clinical trial.

They took a group of these prison inmates, and they improved their nutrition, just through giving them some omega-3 fatty acid supplements, which we've got to talk about that, by the way. And then just increasing their amount of vitamins and minerals that they're consuming. So very rudimentary stuff. And then they have the placebo group who gets nothing.



This is a four-and-a-half-month study. And after compiling all the data, the test subjects, the prison inmates who received the improved nutrition had a 35% drop in behavioral offenses versus the placebo group. And most notably, a 37% drop overall in violent offenses. Their proclivity towards hurting another person dropped by 37% by increasing their nutrition.

**JAY SHETTY:** What was in that nutrition? Do you know?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Basic vitamins, minerals, multi-vitamin type stuff. Omega-3s. But the omega-3s are critical. That's why I want to specifically talk about this. But that sounds so crazy because the very best programs in prison for rehabilitation come nowhere near those types of results. So, some other researchers saw it and they were just like, "That's an impossible." And they replicated the study and almost got the exact same numbers. This was published in the journal, Aggressive Behavior.

There's so many journals that cover these things and the data's available. By getting people healthier, by giving them the basic... The question should be, how? Just your cells, your brain cells specifically, being able to talk to each other, you require key nutrients. And so, one of those nutrients is omega-3 fatty acids. DHA and EPA specifically.

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah. I want to hear about this. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** The cool thing is that blood-brain barrier, they got an express pass, so they're able to cross the blood-brain barrier because it's one of those essentials for the brain. Now, this is so crazy, but without these specific omega-3s, your brain cells can't really efficiently talk to each other. It's something called... They enable something called signal transduction. So, your cells being able to talk. And also, they're a part of all of your cell membranes. So just the cell being sustainable itself.

If you're deficient in these things, again, your body will try to do what it has to do, but it just degrades the way that your body works so much. And so, a study, this was published in the journal Neurology, one of the top journals looking at the brain, and they found that test subjects who consume less than two grams of omega-3 s per day had the highest rate of brain shrinkage. Yeah.

**JAY SHETTY:** And where are we getting omega-3s from naturally if we are even getting those?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. This is so important because for years I made this mistake. Working in a clinical practice, seeing people every day, and wanting to invoke more plants into people's diets. I would tell people, "Make sure you're getting your chia seeds and your flax seeds." You got flax seed oil in the refrigerated section because it's volatile.

But I was missing the mark. Because that's ALA. It's a different form of omega 3. It's the plant version, and it's not what your brain uses. So, your brain uses EPA and DHA. These are only found in animal foods. And we do have an option for people doing a vegan protocol, which is algae oil. So, we'll come back to that in just a second.

But this is very important because your body can take the plant omega-3 ALA and convert it into DHA and EPA, but you're going to lose at least 75% in the conversion process.

**JAY SHETTY:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, this is going to depend on your microbiome, your other metabolic factors, on who's efficient in converting this. So, to say for somebody that is doing a vegan or vegetarian protocol to, "Just have chia seeds, you're cool." It's not. It's not cool. Literally, we're talking about your brain shrinking. This is not a joke. You need to make sure you're getting these DHA and EPA.

The whole food versions are sources that we've evolved having, is going to be coming from fatty fish. Again, humans have been eating these foods for thousands of years. I don't want to get into religiosity about our nutrition, what creates all this divisiveness. I just want to talk about principles.

And so fatty fish, grass fed beef, eggs. And then we've got the... As far as... What most of the peer-reviewed studies are done on, is done on fish oil. And it's just, it is what it is.

Now with that said, I believe that there are some other means for this. One of them, depending on where your ethics lie, could be krill oil. So, krill oil is one of the richest sources of astaxanthin, which is protective of those omega-3s, which is huge in of itself. But this is a microscopic, keyword "microscopic", shrimp. Alright?

You're probably, just even like if you lick the air, you're going to be killing more sentient beings than, you know what I mean? This microscopic shrimp. But it's a concentrated form of omega 3s DHA and EPA, if that's where you sit.

Then we have algae oil, which is a plant source. The caveat here is that we don't have much peer-reviewed data on its efficacy. We know the DHA and EPA is there, so I don't want everybody to wait. If you're doing a vegan protocol, please get yourself an algae oil today. Like today. Get a specific...

**JAY SHETTY:** What do you eat that with?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, algae oil is going to be encapsulated.

**JAY SHETTY:** Oh, caps. Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. So, which again, I would love people to do food first, but in this situation it's essential. It is absolutely essential. So, we can still do our chia and our flax and our hemp seeds, those are great for other things, but please don't mistake the fact that we need omega-3s for cognitive function.

And again, in this clinical trial, they're using fish oil. So, this is not a joke. Being able to reduce your proclivity towards violence, to improve your ability to perspective take, and to be able to have more compassion and patience. We know this, when we are nutrient deprived, when we're even just hungry, we tend to be more irritable and less patient. Towards people we love, let alone people we don't know.

So, the biggest issue, I believe, Jay, and this isn't because I'm a nutritionist, like I really examined this. I sat with this for a while. I was like, "Is this because my life has just been revolved around health?" Like truly, I feel that the biggest underlying issue for our epidemic levels of divisiveness and very illogical behavior and the ability to see another human being and to want to do them harm is because we are unhealthy.

And the data indicates this, but my real, my life indicates this. I grew up in an environment, man, like it was just, it's an environment it's so volatile, it's so much violence. Outside my door and in my own household. And to see how I've changed. Because I was a reflection of that environment. Something I didn't tell you about when I went to that private university, I got kicked out of that university for fighting.

**JAY SHETTY:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I got kicked out of high school for my entire junior year for fighting.

**JAY SHETTY:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And I was at, I was in student advisory. I was Teenage Health consultant, which was this little health program. I was in Inroads, which was, I was able to take college credit. It was the first year that it was popping off with St. Louis University. I was a scholar athlete. I was all these things. It didn't matter. I got in this situation where I felt threatened, and I resorted to that behavior.

And every day in the morning, going in and getting the cereal and getting the pasteurized orange juice, I'm eating pizza pretty much every day at lunch, with the presser with cheese. And just like, I'm making my body out of this really low-quality material. Right?

And so, the crazy thing was once I got physically healthier, I started to see people differently and I started to have so much more patience. Because I was replicating those behaviors.

My daughter's my oldest, I have three kids. And my mother, she would say something once and then five seconds later she's pissed off, right? She doesn't want to repeat herself. She's just ready on fire to be mad, to be irritated, to be aggressive towards you, and to have such a lack of patience. And so, I was being that with my daughter, you know?

For me, I wanted her to be... Of course, most people want their children to be better than them. And so, when she was in kindergarten, I was getting her like 2nd and 3rd grade work, and we would sit around a table and all this stuff, and just imagine like the lack of patience that I had. And she graduated with honors, all that stuff, but just what she had to deal with.

And I'm even then still, it wasn't like bad, but still just like the level of patience that I have now for my, like my youngest son is 10, is night and day. It is night and day. Because I'm physically healthier. And it's not a struggle. It's not a reach for me. Now here's the rub. It's not that we can't express compassion or to perspective take, or to express patience when we're unhealthy. It's just harder.

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Exactly. And I think we've all experienced that, right? I think we all know that, that when you're hungry, you react differently to everything. And I think we've all experienced the irritability. When you feel like your body's like exhausted or malnutrition, you are going to be more irritable, you're going to be more agitated. I think we know that. Most people would say, "Yeah, I know exactly what that feels like."

And this is why I like the connection you're making, and I agree with you even more is I've spent so long with people where they keep trying to solve the issue in their head. They're wondering why their energy's not right. They're wondering why they don't feel positive. They're wondering why they don't feel clear. And so much of it is diet related.

There's, of course there's meditation and there's mindfulness and there's beautiful practices, but if you're doing all of those, but you're not solving your gut, you are making life harder. You're working harder without using all the resources.

And that's why at the beginning when you said it's your diet, your sleep and your movement, and then you have your mindset and your meditation and your mindfulness, we've got to use all four.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yes.

**JAY SHETTY:** You can't just use one. You can't just work out and say, "Oh, it doesn't matter what I eat." And you can't just eat right and say, "Oh, it doesn't matter if I don't work out." And you can't just sleep right. And you've... Right? It's not about choosing either or, it's all of them. And that's what you present in this book about the connection between them.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**JAY SHETTY:** Shawn, you're such a wise, insightful, 20 years studied. I mean, when you mentioned them, like I can tell. It's phenomenal. And you can tell what a passion you have for this. If someone's listening today and you could simplify for them three things that they should try and learn more about, and three things they should be very aware of that they may need to put aside, what would you say for each of those? For someone who's today going, "Wow, I need to read this book, Eat Smarter, so I'm going to order that." But it's like, what are three things that I need to add and think about and research and learn more about, and what are three things that I maybe need to avoid and set aside?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This is a tenet throughout history. The number one thing for me is to know thyself. Really do a self-assessment. Because oftentimes, working as somebody who's, I'm sitting across a table from a person and they've got 12 medications that they're on, and they're wanting to make a change, and I have to be there and to look them in the eyes and say, "I got you. We're going to figure this out." And actually, know with every fiber of my being that we're going to figure it out.

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** To be able to do that, I have to evoke within that person and find what is a leverage point and help them to get honest about what landed them in this place that they're in to begin with. Right?

So, what I would find is that, and this is a great secret for all the coaches out there, many people already probably know this, who are doing this type of work. If you allow a person to speak, just ask them questions. They will often tell you the cause and the cure of what is ailing them. They're being, they know it already. It's already within their mental and cellular records. They know better than anybody. Right? But you have to give people space to be able to speak.

And so, but oftentimes coaches, we want to help people and so we just want to give them our thing. Right? But just actually be there, listen, be a space for this person. It's probably, nobody's ever really listened to them. Like, just actually shut everything down and listen to them, be that person and they'll tell you the cause and cure.

So, know thyself is the tenet, self-assess. And there's different personality types that we can put people in, but we're infinite, we really are. But there are people who tend to be, people who start things and stop things very quickly. They meet a little bit of resistance and, "Ah, that's okay."

Then there are people who swing for the fences. They go and they do so much, like they go, they get all the things, they get all the equipment, they go so hard, and they run themselves into the ground. Right? And there are people who are just more balanced. There's different personality types.

And so really honing in on what your personality types are. And I talked about this a little bit in the book as well. So, know thyself, so you know what to shore up and I don't like to talk, talk in terms of strength and strength and weaknesses. You have strengths and then you often have things that are foreign to you. Right? And that's okay because like, my strength is I know a lot about the human body. I don't know about cars.

You know what I mean? I know Danica Patrick, like I feel disrespected even saying "car" around her. You know what I'm saying? And so, it's just like being able to understand like that's not my domain of excellence, or...

**JAY SHETTY:** Yes.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But I could learn. I might, because of my experience come into the car game and like I could start seeing stuff other people aren't seeing. But that's not for me. So, I understand my strengths and also where I don't have any credibility or experience. Right?

Number one is just the principle to know yourself, and to know what things tend to hinder you. And I'll just share one little quick one, because I saw it as a big consistent in my clinical practice. [chuckle] One of the biggest things that hinders people in getting in the progress that they want is blaming others. Alright? I was literally, I was right there listening to them and I'm like, "I can see," after a while I could see it coming out. Here it comes. "You know, if my kids would just..."

**JAY SHETTY:** That bitterness.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right? "If my husband would just, if my wife would just, if my mom would just," like everybody else in their life is making it harder, right? So, they have this story and they're going to live and die by it. Right?

And so, but the thing is, it's just a story. And it doesn't mean that it's not true. It doesn't mean that you don't experience more conflict or curve balls in your life because of your life experience. But listen, it's all about perspective. I've been through some crazy stuff in my life. And to be here where I am, like, the number one thing besides that moment of decision, is taking responsibility for my life. 100% responsibility.

Again, this is one of those things that you might, you don't really do that. And so that's without any wiggle room. I had to stop pointing the fingers. I had to stop blaming. And catch myself whenever I do it.

And understand, even in a relationship conflict, it's not 50/50, it's a 100/100. Because if there's a miscommunication taking place, instead of me being like, "Why don't you understand this?" I can think about how am I communicating this? Because there is a way to get through, right?

But that's me taking responsibility. But sometimes we don't feel like it. But also, again if you're physically unwell, it's harder, right? So being able to help people with that piece of like, you've got to take responsibility here. Stop blaming other people. There's a way.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And what we do is, and this is where I can answer more of the question, is start stacking conditions in your favor to make it easier, make it automatic. So, the biggest issue today with people being able to go from where they are with their health, where we are a severely sick society. I mentioned 250 million Americans, overweight or obese. 130 million Americans, diabetic or pre-diabetic, 60% of Americans have some degree of heart disease right now.

115 million Americans are regularly sleep deprived. Upwards of 50 million Americans are experiencing autoimmune condition. I can go on and on and on. These are things that have never happened before, but they've skyrocketed. Depression, all time high. ADHD. The list goes on and on. Everything is worse.

And here we are, again on paper we're supposed to be more evolved and intelligent than we've ever been. And people were like, "Well, we're living longer though." No, no. We are the first generation in recorded human history that is not going to outlive the generation before us. It is now reversed. Which doesn't make sense. It should be continuing to increase. But we've hit a threshold.

Our quality of life is suffering. Because by treating symptoms, we can keep people alive. And what's happening is we're not really living longer, we're dying longer. We're extending the suffering.

So how do we get into this state and the solution here? The number one thing is we live in a severely sick culture. And so, we are automatically going to pick up what's happening in our environment. To be healthy in a severely sick society is very... It's weird.

**JAY SHETTY:** It's rare.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Jay, you and your wife are weird as hell. You guys are super weird. And shoutout to everybody else that's... You're weird. And that's okay. It's abnormal because normal right now is being unwell. And so, a solution here is, and this is my goal, and this is what I do, this is what I dedicate my life to, this is what gets me up in the morning, is to help to make a shift to where health is normalized. It's to where it's easy to have access to the things that make you healthy.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right now, we have ease of access to things that make you sick, that degrade your health, that degrade your mental health. These are all closely accessible. And so, one of those things, again, being from Ferguson, Missouri, I was surrounded by fast food. Absolutely. You name the place within a mile radius, all of them are just, I'm surrounded by it. And the question is, why is this so cheap? Because that's why I bought it.

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** The accessibility.

**JAY SHETTY:** Access. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** The price and the taste of course.

**JAY SHETTY:** Of course. Of course, yeah, yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** They got food scientists who are brilliant at making you addicted to the foods. But the cost, the economies of scale here. And so how is it that I can go to McDonald's and get three cheeseburgers for the same amount that would cost me to buy one avocado?

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This avocado falls off the tree. Literally. These cheeseburgers are so cost-intensive to make, it makes no sense. The bread and the processing, the meat, the cheese, the condiments. Not to mention even if we use avocado versus a happy meal, there's even a toy.

**JAY SHETTY:** The packaging.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** The packaging. All of these things are so cost-intensive.

**JAY SHETTY:** The branding.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right. The market, all of that. There's... We don't have like Beyonce doing a thing for avocados, if you could imagine that, but you know what I'm saying.

**JAY SHETTY:** That's a really good point.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But here's the thing.

**JAY SHETTY:** It's a really good point.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** If you think about this, how is this possible? And I answered this question because I had to, like I... Not only did I answer the question, but I looked at what is the outcome. So, a big driver of this is government subsidies. So, from the year 1995 to 2010 alone, the United States government doled out almost \$200 billion in government subsidies to farmers who are growing these commodity crops that largely show up through the drive-through window and in processed foods.

So, corn, soy, various forms of... Where sugar... We can extract some sugar. Wheat of course, is big. And by the way, like if you could look at a grocery store, most of the foods are made of those ingredients, some forms, or versions of those things. So, what happened was, by... In giving this investment, almost nothing went to the farmers who were growing fruits and fruits and vegetables.

**JAY SHETTY:** Crazy.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Now, here's the bottom line. I came across a study and I dug, I had to find what is the outcome from this. There's got to be somebody asking this question because I'm asking it. And I found it in the Journal of the American Medical Association, one of the most prestigious journals in the world, and they looked at the consumption of government subsidized food and the outcomes of health in humans. So, the people who are consuming the most government subsidized foods had almost a 40% greater incidence of being obese.

They had far higher waist circumference, so belly fat, and higher levels of blood sugar. And also, degradations to their inflammation. So, measure, they use c-reactive protein to measure, they had high rates of inflammation. So, all of these terrible things, but key thing, almost a 40% greater incidence of being obese by consuming the food that our government is literally paying for to put into our society. We're literally feeding the problem. And it's not okay.

And when I say, "the government", I mean us. Because that money's coming from us. But we don't understand our authority, we've outsourced it to other people who don't have our best interests at heart. And so, I'm in an environment where 60% greater incidence of my aunts, the... My family members, Black women, 60% greater incidence of being obese than a Caucasian woman. That's the society that we're living in. And it's the environment.

It's not that any of us are just by nature more likely to be unhealthy. And so, we can help to stack conditions, to unify each other, unify our communities, but we've got to stand up for each other and not allow this insanity to happen. Because what's happening when we're feeding this problem is the higher rates of mental issues, of poverty, it's driving more crime. It's driving more divisiveness.

It's not our fault. I didn't want to be a "bad person", I'm in an environment where it is a bigger risk for me to go outside and play than for another kid. Because I literally might die. A bullet might hit me. And that's...

Again, it's not like this is a daily thing, but that stuff did happen. And people don't understand that. So, you look at people and they're like, "Just work harder." My mother worked overnight at a convenience store just to try again, try to make ends meet, and she was stabbed eight times by somebody trying to rob the convenience store.

These are things people often, again, they don't... They're not subjected to. And she, my mother's a really tough human being. It's crazy if you hear so many stories about my mom. But when she... She subdued the guy, the police came. She's just, man, she's kind of a badass. But when she...

**JAY SHETTY:** She survived and subdued the...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oh, yeah, yeah. So, when she got to the hospital and got the stitches, the physician told her that, "If you weren't overweight, you would've died. Your body fat saved you." What do you think she's going to do? That cognitive association. "My fat is my savior. It's protecting me." You think she's going to do anything to lose this weight? She's going to be more acclimated to having more of it. It's my protection, it's my safety. Right?

She sold her blood to put food on the table, all these different things. But it's a perpetual, it's the environment, it's the culture. And there is a way to transition out of that. But I'm really the exception, not the rule. It took so many minor miracles for this to happen, but, and I look back at my life, it's just like, is there something remarkable about me? How did all of this happen?

And the thing is, we're all remarkable. I just realized that I have some power. I realized that I have the ability to decide to think what I want to think and to respond the way that I want to respond and to make choices in the world, when I had just been outsourcing all of my choices to the environment around me. And I had this story about like, "I can't do it."

So, to drive that point home, a big solution here is for us to create conditions. And we can do that, we can start with our own culture, in our own household. If people see my son, for example, my son Jordan, 21 years old, right now he just launched a new fitness program yesterday. And I never told him to work in this field, but he's just in the environment, right? And so, he's been personal training and serving.

I get messages from people who their kids have bought his program, in tears. Just like, "Your son helped my..." I didn't sign up for that. I had no idea. But it's, we created a culture of fitness, of health, of connection. Intentionally.

And it doesn't matter where you start, because my son Jordan was there with me in Ferguson sleeping on a air mattress. He knows what it's like. He was there with me through all of it. And so, he has that perspective. No matter where you are right now, where no matter where your kids are at, we can create conditions. And nobody said it was going to be easy though. You're going to, there's going to be resistance, especially if you've been just on the iPad all the time or watching TV all the time. But a solution is, this is to add to a solution, we need to fill that space with something of greater or equal value.

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's the trick.

**JAY SHETTY:** That's it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right? If you can find a way to supplant the need to, for them to watch another show, with something that is, involves movement. Maybe again, and you can recruit other people. You probably got friends in your network, like maybe there's a dance class or maybe there's, fill in the blank. You would...

The greatest gift that I have in my life today is the resources and the people that I have, right? And I'm a self-professed lone wolf for sure. I definitely have that lone wolf energy. But now every day in my meditation practice, I have a little segment where I do a gratitude and I run through all the people I'm grateful for. And it's just, it blows my mind. Oftentimes I go into tears thinking about it, all the wonderful people.

But that, even that happens by you becoming the type of person that can invite in that kind of energy, right? And so, one of the big tricks that I've learned over the years too [chuckle], for people who are wanting, who've blaming other people and wanting them to change, is very difficult. There's a statement that, "You can't be a prophet in your own land."

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Invite in, find other voices to do the thing. I just came back on Sunday from speaking at an event in Mexico every year, it's called Phenomenal Life, and it's Eric Thomas, often considered top motivational speaker in the world. So, it's him, myself, CJ, this guy named Jamal, who's just a brilliant guy as well. We do this event. I'm not just going to go to the event, I'm going to bring my family so they can hear from them rather than from me.

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah, yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right?

**JAY SHETTY:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's one of the things I realized is just like, if I have the opportunity, let me get the kids in this place. Even with fitness, what tends to happen is if somebody's working on their fitness, they leave their kids, they never really see them. Mom goes to this mystical place called the gym, and she comes back happier and sweaty. Even that is kind of freaky actually, to think like, "Where are you going, Mom?"

But anyways, give your kids some of these inputs. Let them see you work out. Invite them in, do some stuff with them, right? As soon as my oldest son was old enough to go to Golds back in St. Louis, he was 12 years old, and they let 12-year-olds in. I brought him to the gym with me. And now this, he's a beast.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's crazy. He just...

**JAY SHETTY:** I love that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Start with your own household, create a culture intentionally. It doesn't have to be perfect, it's just about progress. I know you asked for three things, but there's so much there.

**JAY SHETTY:** No, that was beautiful, man.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**JAY SHETTY:** Shawn, you could drop the mic. That was so beautiful on so many levels, because what I really appreciate about you is you are able to put the emphasis on taking responsibility and designing your own destiny in and amongst all of the chaos, all of the divisiveness, all of the pain and challenges that you've experienced personally, that you see around you.

And you're saying, "Well, I've taken my own learning into my own hands." And I think that's empowering, it's encouraging and it's enlivening for everyone who's been listening and watching because we can hear your heart.

And I love today how you've connected the gut to the heart, to the brain, to see that 360-degree approach to life through your truth is truly powerful to experience, to just sit in the presence of that. And that just flies off of you. It just exudes from who you are, your eyes, your face, your body, your mind, your whole entire presence, I've just been feeling it.

So, I want you to know that I see that, I feel that. And I want everyone who's listening and watching, if you haven't been able to see it because you're not in the room, I'm sure you can hear it.

And I want everyone to go subscribe to Shawn's show, grab the book, Eat Smarter, follow Shawn on social media. Because he's talking about the gut, but it's a way through to the heart and the soul as well. Shawn, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for joining us as a guest on On Purpose, for putting your heart into this book and the work that you continue to do. And I know this will be the first of many more conversations.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Thank you, Jay.

**JAY SHETTY:** Just want to thank you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's been an honor. Thank you, man.

**JAY SHETTY:** Thank you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I receive that.

**JAY SHETTY:** Thank you so much.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Thank you so very much for tuning into the show today. I hope you got a lot of value out of this. This is packed with powerful, empowering information. Please share this out with your friends and family. Keep this conversation going.

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We got some epic masterclasses and world-class guests coming your way very soon, so make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day and I'll talk with you soon.

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