

# **THE MODEL HEALTH SHOW**

**EPISODE 733**

## **How To Keep Your Family Healthy & More Connected**

**With Guest Cynthia Garcia**

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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. How do we create a culture of wellness in our own households with all of the responsibilities, obstacles and complications going on in our world today? Creating a healthy culture makes it easy to make healthy food choices, makes it easy to make choices, to move our bodies in certain ways, makes it easy to have certain rituals when it comes to our sleep quality. The list goes on and on and on. It is our culture that is determining our choices and now more than ever with all of these things vying for our attention and all the things going on in the larger culture scapes that are encouraging us to not take care of ourselves, to eat ultra processed foods, to be more and more sedentary. We are now here in the United States the most sedentary population in the history of humanity. We have all of these really remarkable innovations, yes, that have made our lives easier in many ways.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But it is with that ease that has come at the cost of our movement. More and more movement has been taken out of our life equation. And so we're trying to find creative ways to put movement back into our lives. And again that has a lot to do with our culture. And so the greatest power that we have is to create a powerful intentional micro-culture in our own households. We wanna improve the health outcomes for ourselves and especially for our kids, for our newer generations who are then going to be passing on that culture to their kids. And that's really what culture is. It's defined as the shared values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of a group of people that is then passed on from one generation to the next. And so we are inherently going to be passing on our culture. And the question is what kind of culture are we passing on? And so our mission here right now is to provide parents and to provide people who want to intentionally create a healthy culture with the insights, the resources and the practicality to make this happen now. And that's why I'm so very excited to share this conversation with you today.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This conversation is part of the Family Health and Fitness Summit. This is a powerful compilation of 12 leading experts in a wide range of different fields, whether

that is personal development, whether that is fitness, whether that is nutrition, whether that is mental health. We've got experts from all these different domains that also have kids. They have families and they found ways to create a culture of wellness within their own households, despite all of the craziness that might be going on outside of our doors. And what that's doing is by focusing on our microculture, we are a representation of our culture and we can go out our doors and be an example of what's possible.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We can be more progressive, more resilient, more supportive, more compassionate. We have these skill sets built up because we've cultivated them within our own doors and we need resilience more than ever. We need empowerment more than ever. And so I wanted to share this conversation with you to give you a glimpse into what you're going to experience in the Family Health and Fitness Summit. Now, what you're going to experience in the 2023 Family Health and Fitness Summit. Now, as of this release date, you still have time to catch the Family Health and Fitness Summit live.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This summit is part of the unprecedented bonus for the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook. And so if you've got a copy of the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook, or if you still need to get one, go to [eatsmartercookbook.com](https://eatsmartercookbook.com) and then you're going to get access to the 2023 Family Health and Fitness Summit for free. Now, this summit would be \$297 to access, but all you need to do is make sure that you've purchased a copy of the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook. Get that valuable resource into your family's hands and your kitchen's. And by the way, I've been seeing all of the social media posts and families posting these incredible pictures while making the recipes and their kids making the recipes and enjoying the food.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And it is truly, it is truly fueling me at an entirely different level. I'm so grateful for this because that's what it was all about, is about our families and about our kids and really creating a new, healthier way forward. So thank you so much for sharing all of the great pictures out on social media, but we're just getting started. This resource is remarkable in of itself, the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook. But to add on top of that, all of this collective wisdom from these incredible experts is just going to help us to take this to another level, because this needs to be about community.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This needs to be about support of one another, learning from one another. And so I wanted to share this powerful conversation because this just struck me as we were having this conversation. I'm like, no, I got to share this with the Model Health Show audience to let them know what's in store for them in the 2023 Family Health and Fitness Summit. So you're going to learn some game changing insights during this episode in this powerful conversation. So you're going to learn some game changing insights about improving your health and the health of your entire family in this conversation.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, get ready. Now, our special guest is a bonafide Queen Bee. She's actually one of my really good friends. I hang out with her quite a bit. And if you were to see us just walking down the street, you'd be like, how are these two even friends? We couldn't be more different on the surface. But truly, we have so many similarities, so many things in common, so many different places where our lives intersect. But also, most importantly, our shared values, in particular when it comes to family, when it comes to love, when it comes to support and also when it comes to education and empowerment for our wider family, for our wider communities, because we both know that it is truly up to us to help to change the direction of our future generations and to create a healthier, happier life.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That starts now. And so being that she's a Queen Bee, I had to share this recent data with you. A study that was published in Advanced Biomedical Research found that royal jelly. This is what the Queen Bee exclusively eats, and has a potential to improve our spatial learning, attention and memory. So in the hive life and that construct of the lives of bees, it is royal jelly that is that true superfood. In addition, the researchers indicated antimicrobial, anti-tumor and anti-inflammatory properties. And royal jelly has also been found to facilitate the differentiation of all types of brain cells.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And to top it off, researchers in Japan discovered that royal jelly has the power to stimulate neurogenesis in the memory center of the brain, the hippocampus. That's out of this world amazing. And as with everything else with our nutrition, we want to make sure that it is sourced from companies with integrity that are dedicated to regenerative bee keeping, to increase the population of bees and also doing third party testing to make sure that there are no common contaminants in our bee products.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's why the royal jelly based product called brain fuel from beekeepers naturals is in a league of its own. In addition to the royal jelly, beekeepers' brain fuel also has Bacopa. A randomized double blind placebo controlled human trial published in 2016 found that after just six weeks of use, Bacopa significantly improved speed of visual information processing, learning rate, memory consolidation and even decreased anxiety in study participants. So we're talking about top tier nootropics, top tier true brain fuel and thus the incredible product again at beekeepers naturals.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Go to [beekeepersnaturals.com/model](https://beekeepersnaturals.com/model) and you get 15% off store wide. That's B-E-E-K-E-E-P-E-R-Snaturals.com/model. 15% off their incredible brain fuel product based on royal jelly, their propolis immune system support and also their superfood honey, just to name a few of their wonderful products. Now again, beekeepers naturals truly does go above and beyond to ensure the highest level of quality with their bee products and do yourself a favor truly and check them out. [Beekeepersnaturals.com/model](https://Beekeepersnaturals.com/model). And now let's get to the apple podcast review of the week.

**ITUNES REVIEW:** Another five star review titled eat smarter by checka. I love your book so much. I'm buying one for every person on my Christmas list. It's the only thing worth sharing with my loved ones. You truly inspire.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Amazing. Amazing. What an incredible gift to give. And thank you for sharing the gift of your voice over on Apple podcast. It truly does mean a lot. And you're alluding to this great gift. Eat Smarter Family Cookbook, sharing this for a healthier holiday season. And also this being a catalyst for this particular episode in this conversation, because as a bonus, when you go to [eat-smarter-cookbook.com](https://eat-smarter-cookbook.com), you're going to get access to the 2023 Family Health and Fitness Summit. As of this release of this episode, you still have time to join us live for the summit. So pop over there, grab your copy if you've not done so.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** If you already have a copy, pop over there and fill out the form so you can get access to this incredible summit. Now in this special episode, we've got the best selling author, founder of the Institute of Transformational Nutrition, who's dedicated to

educating the next generation. Of health coaches, truly the Ivy league, the top tier of health coaching. And she goes above and beyond every way. She's one of the most supportive, most insightful, most loving and helpful people that I've ever met. And she's such a bright light in my life. And I'm very grateful to share this conversation with the incredible Cynthia Garcia. Welcome to the 2023 Family Health and Fitness Summit. We've got a very, very special interview today. We've got somebody who is personally somebody that I sit down and eat a lot of meals with as families collectively. And she's the founder of the Institute of Transformational Nutrition and Modern Life Coach School. Cynthia Garcia, welcome to the 2023 Family Health and Fitness Summit. What it do?

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Hi, I am so happy to be here. You have no idea. This is probably so we've sat down to chat a few times before on your show. This is my favorite. I got to tell you, it's true because you know me and like you said, yeah, our families play together, work together, eat together, more importantly. And it just is so special. One of my core values is family. It's everything. So I love the cookbook. I love that you're putting this together to help folks. And yeah, so this I'm super excited about.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Thank you. Thank you. And the thing is, also, I know that you're really about that life when it comes to your family and wellness. But if you could, can you share why? Why is family health and wellness so important to you?

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** That's a great question. For a multitude of reasons, starting with the way I grew up. So we grew up kind of similar, right? We may share a mother. I don't know yet. I think our mother kind of spawned into two.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We've never seen them in the same place at the same time before.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** No, you just got the skin a little darker. But no, it was interesting growing up. I've heard you talk about your upbringing many times. And, we didn't have a lot of food. We didn't have a lot of money to buy food. We relied on a lot of government assistance, food stamps, government cheese, which I know you write about in the book. If you've never had government cheese before, it just hits a little different. So it was tough, getting good, healthy

food growing up. And just getting any food growing up. And then when I got older and I moved to Los Angeles, I'd also gone through a pretty traumatic childhood and upbringing.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** And so dealt with a lot of adversity there. And so when I came to Los Angeles, I was trying to really escape the way I grew up. And so I got out here and I started learning some things about some things. I started making some money and I started eating everything because I didn't have that luxury before. And I fell into some unfortunate situations. I was eating really shitty food, had horrible relationships, ended up getting really sick, and had my own health journey. I was diagnosed with chronic fatigue. My hair was breaking and falling out. I gained 25 pounds overweight, like all of these crazy things started happening. I couldn't work. I was so sick and got to the point where I thought suicide was the only way out. I just could not live that way. I thought, why is just my whole life been like this? And through a lot of research and studying and just initiative, turned things around and created a model for other people to help other people. But then the real kicker came when I gave birth to my daughter, Rain.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Shawn I remember seeing this little tiny baby in this crib. And realizing that somehow my heart had come out of my body and was just laying there. And I'm kind of a nerd, right? And I'd gone through my own health journey and was at the point where I was coaching other people on their health. And so I was reading studies while she slept, because again, big nerd, kind of like you would like studies. And so I was reading this study that said. It said, for the first time ever, we're raising a generation of children that may not outlive their parents. And I saw my heart laying in this crib. Like, I still get emotional over this.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** And I thought, no no, absolutely not. And so it was shortly after that that I founded ITN, the Institute of Transformational Nutrition, because I thought, we've got to do better. We've got to do better for ourselves. We've got to do better for our families, for our children, for this next generation. They deserve that. And so it's kind of a long history from all the way from my childhood to my daughter's childhood. So it's a very long answer to your question. But that's why I'm so passionate about this work. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That was so, so powerful. And certain elements of this, like I can't even I

can't imagine you not being healthy. And also, this is part of our story. And to also know the catalyst behind this, because truly you got something bigger than a lot of people get, like this kind of download that I can't do this by myself.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** No way. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so really, like advocating and creating an army of wellness warriors, essentially, and really creating. And this is why transformation is in the name itself, really creating this model for that. And it's so special. And also being able to, through it all, find a way to grow your own healthy new culture that you've created, essentially. And that's really what I want to direct things to, is to talk about how you've gone about this, because coming from where you come from and being able to basically you have a clean slate in front of you now in this crib. What are some of the things that you did kind of proactively to create a family culture of wellness, to create a culture of connection?

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Yeah. Well, I think that's what I did. I tried to create a culture of health and wellness in my family. I was very intentional about how I did this. And I'm sure I know you were as well. But one of the things that I did from the time Rane was a little tiny thing was I would educate her on food. I would take her to a garden and I would teach her the smell of different herbs. And then we would use those herbs in food. And she got to be a part of that.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** I've cooked with her since she I mean, she couldn't even walk. And I would sit on the counter and cook, you know. And then when she got a little bit older and I wanted to start teaching her about nutrition, I remember I would feed her broccoli and broccoli looks like little trees. Looks like little baby trees. And so I knew that in order to educate her, I had to talk to her in a way that she could understand it, right? And so I would say, these are little baby trees and they're really good for you. This is just a little baby tree. But look at that big tree. If you want to grow big like that big tree, you eat the little trees.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Now, of course, she knew it wasn't really a little tree. She knew it was broccoli. But you have to phrase things in a way that makes sense to them on their level, right? So from a very young age, we've cooked together. We've gardened together. We shop



together. And I think that's where it starts, right? As in your own home. That being said, it's not the only place it can start. If you've not done that with your kids, you could start doing it at any time. Like at any time, we can just choose to do something different. And there's lots of ways you can do that. But I think developing those habits from a really young age, she doesn't know anything any different. Do you know what I mean? So she doesn't know, like, fast food because she's never had that. Like I had to unlearn all of these things. I had to break these toxic patterns. I had the chemicals that were poisoning my brain. And that's all I was craving was fast food or Taco Bell or whatever. And luckily she didn't because it's just how she was raised, essentially. So.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** As soon as you said Taco Bell, I heard that bell, boom.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** The commercial man was the worst.

[laughter]

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Do you remember... I was talking about this the other day with Zach, my husband Zach. Do you remember those boxes?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Of course, 10 pack! You get the six pack or the 10 pack, guess what?

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** And you can do hard shell or soft shell.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Guess what, I ate a 10 pack.

[laughter]

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, yeah, it's true.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** By yourself?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yes, by myself.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** I love that, I love it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, it's a bit of a problem, to be honest, but yeah, absolutely, I remember that. As soon as, again, that's the power of food, like it's tied to these memories.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** It is, yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so it's like one of your tips right off the bat is being intentional, being intentional, because understanding how food is so deeply tied to memory, now we can intentionally create this kind of atmosphere of wellness in relationship to food. And I also love you talking about education by participation with your kid, and getting them involved in that process, being able to see a little bit more of where their food comes from, to smell the smells, to have this kind of deeper level of interaction. And also this really powerful tip that a lot of parents do, but sometimes we do the opposite, which is to speak their language, speak their language. That goes so far, because communication is fundamental in connection, right? I remember when you shared that, I was like, oh, I remember the threats, you know what I'm saying? Eat it all, or eat it.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Yes.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Or you're gonna sit there, it was that was kind of the atmosphere, and sometimes, again, it's not that it's like our parents are necessarily trying to be mean or a bad parent.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Of course not.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's just like, they want you to eat the food so that you can survive, but also, of course, that doesn't mean that it's right, and that doesn't mean that things couldn't have been done differently. But it's just also for me to take that perspective and like, okay, this is what I'm gonna do instead, and so framing it in a way, like the little trees, right? And just being able to get to the level of language level.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Right?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Of your child, and when you shared that, this is the huge revelation was, that's how we learn, we learn connecting things that we already know to things that we don't know. They don't know this food, potentially, connecting it to something that they do know is like, that's the bridge for learning.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Yeah, and remembering that you set the example, if it's important to you, it's important to them, if it's how you be, it's how they be, right? Because they parrot, our children parrot us, and so, and a lot of people do in our lives, people see you as the model of health and they think, "I want that too." Right? And so then they follow you, and they see what you're doing, and they learn through you, our children are doing that from the time they're born, there's no more important role model, there's no one important, more important than their parents to see this from, and I think that that's just really important. One of my favorite humans on the planet is a guy named Ron Finley. Do you follow his work? Do you know his work?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Is that the urban gardener?

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Yeah, the gangster gardener, and he's just an amazing human being and he tells it like it is, which you know I like. But he talks a lot about children, how you get kids to eat healthy, 'cause a lot of times, parents will say, "Well, my kids won't eat that." And he says, "It's because your kids don't know this. They don't have any experience with this. Why would they eat it?" But he says this really important thing, and for people who don't know, Ron Finley is this guy who lives in South Los Angeles and woke up one morning, wanted a tomato, had to drive 45 minutes to a store to find a tomato, and when he got there, there was a sign on the tomato you can listen to interviews with him, that said the tomato is covered in shellac, which is what you cover furniture with, right? Like wood, and he was just like something, somebody has to do something, and so he noticed as he went home that we have these things, most cities do, that you have a sidewalk, right? You have a little patch of land and then the sidewalk, and then the yard, and he started noticing that there was just dirt

there, and he thought, "I'm gonna plant gardens." Because obviously, South Los Angeles is a food desert, much like Chicago, Detroit, Atlanta.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** A lot of major cities have them, right? And there's just not healthy food available, so he decided he would plant gardens here, 'cause he thought that'd be great for his community. And unfortunately, the city of Los Angeles didn't agree, the city of Los Angeles put out a warrant for his arrest, I am not playing with you and he was just like, "What the fuck?" So long story short he ended up getting that law reversed, and now it's completely okay to plant gardens in those little areas, because technically you own it, but the city regulates it, so now it's completely okay to do that. And he has completely transformed his community, his neighborhood, the way they eat, and again, if kids grow kale, kids eat kale, that's what he says, right? So I think it's just being that example, and bringing kids along for the journey and educating them. They're naturally curious, they want to learn, they want to understand why you eat that thing, what it is that thing, where does it come from, what does it taste like? They're naturally curious, and so involving them in that process is really critical, whether that's from birth, or 10, 12, whatever the age is, 30, it doesn't matter, right?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, we're just big adult babies, really.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** We really are, we really are.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And like you just said, and that's so empowering for us to remember too, wherever your kids are on that age spectrum, there is still so much opportunity, because cravings are cultural, right?

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's the things that we're getting exposed to, and being able to introduce things that, I've had this experience so many times, where somebody, they haven't had whatever, fill in the blank before, and then they have it with me! It's like it transforms them, like they keep... Oh, I'm eating that forever, I'm thinking about it. He's a pretty popular guy out there, Lewis Howes, he had never eaten guacamole before, and he just had this thing.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Stop talking.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, and he's big, like he loves salsa dancing.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** There's no way that's true.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** He's a big guy, he's out here in the salsa clubs, in Bangladesh or wherever, like some random exotic place he'll be in the salsa club.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Oh my God, that's so funny.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But he's never had what goes next to the salsa, the guacamole, and so he's like, "I tried it before, but it's just I just don't like it." Made him some of the... Actually the superfood guacamole, in the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook, true story, made it for him, and he got to going and he finished it, and so now he's a guacamole fan.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** That's so cool.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's the exposure, it's the environment.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Thank you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's the connective tissue, right? There's so many elements, there is a way, right? And also, of course, it's paying attention to people's preferences, but I know Lewis grew up like we did and he's just like, been about that Pop Tart life for many years, you know what I mean? And so he had to train and introduce new things to his palate along the way, and just finding a bridge to opening that up, that's really half the battle, as GI Joe would say. So are there any other things that you've done, because you led this off, like being intentional is like that first domino, like I was just that part. If you could even speak to that, because I think a lot of parents, we question so much of what we do because we wanna do it right.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And just the fact that somebody's wanting to do good, or to be a good parent, or to create a healthy culture, let's speak to that. Just the fact that we're even asking that question speaks to the quality of parent that you are.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Yeah, absolutely, it does. And listen, as a parent I definitely don't get it right all the time, I mean you might, I do not, I have the best intentions, but I don't know that any parent really knows what they're doing, I think most of us are just making it up as we go, and hoping it turns out alright. Essentially what we're all trying to do is just take the information that we have, the best information that we have in that moment, and make the best decision that we can for our children. And I look back with Rane, and there are things that I'm like, I can't believe I did that. But at the time, I thought it was the right thing to do. So, I think it all starts, again, with the intention, and then you let that guide you. The other thing that I think is important to remember is as parents, when your child cries, you don't just hear them, you feel them, right? Like you feel that cry, you're just like, "Ugh, make the baby stop, I gotta hit my baby." That's so true in everything, that intuition as a parent I think is often overlooked, because we go to so-called experts, and we listen to their advice on, you name it, I won't get into all the topics, but you already know. And unfortunately we listen to that, like I remember one incident in my life and I thought if you let my daughter be okay through this, I will never doubt my own inner knowing about what's best for my child ever again.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** And I haven't since that day. And so I think that's the other part, is just really connecting to, you know your child, you know your child better than anyone, connecting to them, talking to them in a way that they can understand it, creating a culture where they're a part of it, right? Like meal times at my house are a family activity, right? Like we do a lot of really fun things around food, Rane gets involved, she helps us meal plan, she has a say so in what we eat, how we eat, she sets the table, like we make dinner an experience. And then we have fun with it, like every Friday as you know is pizza and a movie night, right? So we make this really healthy pizza and we make it from scratch and it's a whole thing and it's great. And we spend that time connecting as a family, which is something else I

really want to speak to, because what I know and believe about nutrition is, it's not just the food that you put in your mouth, right? Health isn't just eating healthy food and working out, even though those things are important, right? Like let's not misspeak, but there's other pillars involved as well. And this is really, this was part of my own health journey and this is the model of transformational nutrition. So yes, there's physical health, sleeping well, eating smarter, right?

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** All of those great things, supplements, water, all the things that you already know, movement, but then there's also mental nutrition, right? So what are you feeding yourself mentally? Like transformational nutrition is the study of health on multiple levels, the three pillars are physical nutrition, mental nutrition, and spiritual nutrition, it's the study of what feeds us as human beings, right? We're not computers, it's not calories in and calories out, I wish it were that simple, we're very complex. And so we have to look at what are we feeding ourselves mentally? What are our children's emotions? What are the stories they're telling themselves? What are they feeding themselves from screens every day, right? What is coming into their mental environment? And then spirituality is all about connections, so relationships that they form and relationships with themselves most importantly, relationships with other people, their friends, their community, maybe their church if they attend one, the connection with the planet and where their food comes from in the first place. Like these are all ways that we are fed, right? And so I would be remiss to not talk about those other two pillars because of my experience now, what? 18 years of doing this work, crazy, shows that, yes, the physical pillar is important.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** But oftentimes, the mental nutrition, the spiritual nutrition is just as important, if not more so. And they all three impact each other, right? It's like a three-legged stool, if one of them is shorter or missing, gets a little wobbly, might just fall over, right? No one wants that. So I think that's the other part and that's where you can start the education process, that's where you can create these rituals like pizza and a movie night, right? One of the things that we always do at dinner is gratitude. So we have this little token that we pass around and it's kind of like a talking stick, tubular talking stick. [chuckle] So whoever has the talking stick gets to talk and everybody else listens and respects, and so we just go around the table and we say what we're grateful for, right? And so gratitude, as you know there's so

many studies around gratitude that just shows it's a way of being fed, it's a way of just... It's a mental exercise, it's very spiritual and it's a great time for us to connect as a family and that's part of the culture, going back to where we started, right? If you create this culture around food and family and connection.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** And so another ritual that we do sometimes at dinner, and sometimes we have talk night Tuesdays, we do this at talk night Tuesdays, we have talk night Tuesdays every week, which is where we connect as a family. And we just talk about what's going on in our lives, but sometimes at dinner, we'll do this thing called Rose Bud Thorn. Do you know this exercise?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** No, I'm curious.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Super fun, okay. So Rose is, you talk about something that's really blooming in your life, right? So what's really going well, what's great. A bud is something that you're just sort of working on, you're just playing around the edges with it, it's something new that you're trying. Could be a new food, could be a new experience, could be a new friend, could be a new thought or idea that you've had, a new hobby. And then a thorn is what's poking you right now, right? Like what are you having a hard time with? And we just share, no one problem solves, right? No one caretakes, it's just everyone's opportunity to connect and to share on that communal level. So it's what we really do is make dinner, make our meals an experience, and you'll appreciate this 'cause I know you're a science nerd like I am, but studies show that when you make your meals an experience, so you set the table, right? You don't use the paper plates, you use real ones and you light some candles maybe, you turn on some music, we listen to music while we eat. I know you guys do as well. And you make it an experience where you're connecting, studies show you eat less, but you're more satisfied when you're finished. Isn't that amazing? And you're not hungry because you've been fed, you've been fed physically, mentally and spiritually, right? So you've got the whole package. So yeah, there's so many things, I could go on and on about just ideas and how you turn this into a lifestyle and a culture that you're building for your family. And the great thing is your children pass it on to their children.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Right? Like we talk so much about changing the world, I wanna change the world, I wanna change the world and we have these big old ideas, right? We have AI and we have Neuralink and we have... And nothing's wrong with that, that's a beautiful thing, but when you change who you be, we can talk about the difference in being and doing if you want. When you change who you be, and that's how your children be as a by-product, then their children will be too. Like I had to change, right? So did you because we grew up in very different circumstances, we grew up with a culture that wasn't about that healthy lifestyle and eating baby trees. And so you and I had to change and we did, but now this is who we be and so by default, our children it's just that they don't know any different, right? And neither will their children and that's how you change the world. It just takes one solid generation willing to step up and accept the challenge and then we're off and running. Feel me?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Man, there's obviously so many different things for us to extract from that. And one of the things just to kind of encapsulate this whole process, and I love that part about what we're feeding ourselves, really because it's so much more than the food. And also one of the things that we've been talking about recently is like how eating together affects our health outcomes. Obviously, a big part of the book was that, but this is another layer, what you just shared in we end up eating less yet feeling more satisfied. And this even supersedes the food quality, by the way.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Yes, it does.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** There's something special about doing these things together with people that you care about. Now, to encapsulate these different pieces, a fundamental ingredient is being present.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You said something so powerful I don't want to miss, which is we know our kids better than anybody, right? And are we paying attention, right? There's so many

things going on in our lives, obviously. Are we paying attention to our most valued entity. Got a quick break coming up, we'll be right back.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** More than ever, because of our environmental stressors, we need key nutrients that help our bodies to modulate and manage and process stress. A lot of those have to do with micronutrients. Key minerals are essential in running processes to help to even modulate, like shifting our nervous system from the sympathetic fight or flight dominance over to parasympathetic rest and digest recovery. We need certain key micronutrients to do that. Historically, in the last few decades, unfortunately we turn to these shitty multi-vitamins that are coming from synthetic sources. That's what I was given, my grandma gave me Flintstone vitamins, alright? I'm biting off the head of Fred and Barney and Dino. And what that really is, it's sugar, synthetic micronutrients, artificial flavors, artificial colors, all of these things that are terrible for a growing, developing human brain and body. Because the emphasis here is on synthetic versions of these micronutrients, a synthetic nutrient, though it might be the same chemical makeup on paper, does not have the underlying intelligence and even more tangibly speaking, the supporting elements, the co-factors found in real food concentrations that magnify its resonance with our human cells. Let's take Vitamin E, for example, this nutrient is important for the healthy function of our cardiovascular system, cognitive performance and even the health of our skin.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Well, a study that was published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition determined that natural Vitamin E from food concentrates has nearly twice the bioavailability of synthetic Vitamin E. Alright, so again, synthetic versions of this, so these are artificially concocted versus the whole food form and also whole food concentrate, so food-based supplementations. Now, all of my family, my kids in particular, I make sure that they're getting in a concentration of whole food based micronutrients several times a week at minimum, most of the time every day. And for me, especially for my kids and in particular with my youngest, I love the formulation of red juice and these kind of red blended red and blue hued superfoods in the Organifi red juice because he loves the way that it tastes and it's just packed with real food nutrition. So in particular, we've got Acai that's in there in the Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry found that acai actually, not just theoretically, it actually raises participants antioxidant levels, demonstrating how effectively it's absorbed by

our gut, by the human digestive system.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We actually do absorb the antioxidants. It's not theoretical. There's a resonance here and Acai actually has an ORAC value of 103,000. This means that it's about 10 times the antioxidants of most fruits that you're going to see in your produce aisle. So it's again, getting our kids growing bodies, the antioxidants in a concentrated source, but it's kid tested, parent approved, tasty. Another ingredient in that red juice blend is actually blueberry and researchers at the University of Michigan published data finding that blueberry intake can potentially affect genes related to fat burning. Again, stacking conditions for healthy metabolism. Head over to [organifi.com/model](https://organifi.com/model) and you get 20% off their red juice blend and also their green juice blend, their incredible gold, everything that they carry actually. It's a really, really special thing that they have going on. Go to [organifi.com/model](https://organifi.com/model). That's O-R-G-A-N-I-F-I.com/model. You get 20% off. Again, kid tested, parent approved. Definitely for our kids, red juice is a huge winner. Now back to the show.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And for many years actually, and you've experienced this as well, working with people one-on-one, just asking people like, what is the most important thing in your life? Like what is driving you to want to make these changes? You know, and nine times out of 10, it's my family. You know, I wanna be there. I wanna be an example. And when I ask, is your life and the way you're living your life right now matching up to what you value most, there's usually a mismatch. And that's what this is really about is step one is to practice presence, right? Creating an environment where you can see your child. We could see your significant other, see yourself. So we could really start to unpack this.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** It's huge. It really is. Self-awareness is one of the most underrated skills out there. And we don't practice this ourselves enough. And we certainly don't teach our children this enough. And you know, guilty too, right? And I teach this stuff, I train coaches to do this with their clients. And it can be tough at times to be self-aware, like to constantly be aware of what you're feeling and what you're thinking and why, like being aware of the stories that we're telling ourselves, right? And also with our children, one of the things as parents, I know I'll speak for me, is it's really hard when my daughter is experiencing big emotions because I don't want her to. I want her to just be good. If it's happiness, that's

amazing, right? Let's play all day. But when she's sad or she's distraught or she's worried or she's anxious, oh, it's so hard to feel, right? Like, I know you know. And so oftentimes what we do is we say to our children, it's okay. Oh, that's no big deal. That's nothing. But it is to them, right? It's a big deal to them. I mean, imagine when you were their age and everything was a big deal, right? Like, yeah, we're older and wiser now, but to them, it's a big deal. And so when we teach our children to negate their feelings and that their feelings aren't a big deal, then they numb them.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** And the easiest way to do that, especially the most convenient way for children, is food, right? I mean, listen, it's that way for big children, for us. I mean, we get a lunch break, right? And you can numb it in a lot of different ways. Food is just the most convenient. You can numb with drugs and alcohol and meaningless sex and relationships and gambling and all of these different ways. But we have to eat, right? We have to eat. We don't have to do drugs. You know, you don't get a heroin break, but you do get a lunch break, right? We're required to eat food. And so it's low-hanging fruit. And a lot of us, I learned this from a really young age, we just numb. And I think that's unfortunate for our children. So instead, even when it's hard, especially when it's hard, we can just teach ourselves and our children to be okay with those emotions, right? What are you feeling right now? And then have them describe it. And when they're really little, like I remember what I would do with Rane is I would say, does it feel kind of, does it feel kind of icky? Does it feel kind of dark? Sort of like, because they know that feeling. They don't know, are you feeling anxiety? No, you know what that is, right?

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** But when you can explain it and relate to them and say, I feel that way too, or that's okay, they can learn and grow and they can accept that. And they teach themselves instead of numbing to feel what they feel and then choose a healthier, more productive outlet. Is this making sense?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Of course.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You've already provided so many, like these are game changing insights for real. And firsthand for me to be able to experience and to see the outcomes, I know that it's real.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And if you could, there's, again, you've already given so much, but I don't want to let you go without asking like some practicality of like, how do we do it? So for example, getting our kids involved in cooking, in meal preparation, like what are some tips that you could share to actually make that a part of our culture?

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Yeah. Well, I think the most important thing is to remember that it's over time, not overnight. You know, I have coached a lot of people in my career and I see everybody wanting to throw out the old and bring in the new on a random Monday. Like, I don't know why we pick Monday, it's the worst day to try to do anything. And then we get frustrated because it doesn't last and then we beat ourselves up and our children see us doing that and then they learn those habits. So it's over time, not overnight. I think that's the first thing. I think the second thing is to remember that you can choose. Everything is always available to us. We can choose to feel horrible. We can choose to feel good, right? We don't feel things by default and I won't go off on too much of a tangent here, but when things happen in our lives, there's no meaning attached to it by default, right? I was driving here and this car shot straight over in front of me, two lanes right in front of me. I had to slam on the brakes. I was like, I got to do an interview. I got to help the people.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Anyway is, in my head, you know, I probably said some choice words, but my story was this guy doesn't know how to drive. He's crazy. He's gonna kill us all out here in these streets, like whatever my story was, right? And then I felt a certain emotion. I could have just as easily told the story that his kid was in trouble and was in the car and he was trying to get him to the hospital, right? The stories we tell ourselves about ourselves or about other people create our environment. It creates our circumstances, right? So I think knowing that you always have a choice. You can always choose how you be, act, and do all of those things. I had a client just a couple of weeks ago say to me, I hope I can change this. I really

hope that as working together, I hope I can change this. And Ron Finley, just to come full circle, I heard him in interviews once people were talking about hope. Do you hope you can change this? And he said, f\*ck hope. Hope is just hope. F\*ck hope. But what about when you give people possibility?

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** I was like God, We're not out here trying to hope we can change things for ourselves or for our family. But what I know and what you know is that everything is possible. You can choose it, right? And so that's the second part is just actively choosing it and giving yourself permission to be human in the process. Cause you will mess it up. I have so many times, so many times I've messed it up, right? And you can give up. You always have a choice or you can just get back on track and learn from that thing. So I think that's it. And start small. Like what's one small thing that you can do, right? It could be just adding something in, sharing facts that you've learned about a food, cooking a new dish, inviting your kids to come in and cook with you, starting family traditions or rituals and pick a pillar of nutrition, right? Pick, pick one, pick physical, pick mental, pick spiritual. They're all connected. You change somebody's mindset.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** They're gonna change the way they eat. You change their relationships. They're gonna change the way they eat, right? And sleep and work out. Like you can't, it's all connected. So choose one, start small and then build on it. Give yourself permission to be human and mess it up and go from there.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Listen, you've already blew my mind. You blow my mind all the time. When we, when we hang out...

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Likewise.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You're a fountain of ideas and also support and love. And you've been such an imp... I mean, I can't even tell you how many times I even texted you, I think yesterday, just, just to thank you, you know, and I'm so grateful for you. Thank you so much for figuring some of these things out and also creating a soft space for us to land. And just again, keeping it real. I know that people listening to this are going to feel inspired to become

a part of this army of wellness warriors. So how can people do that? How can they begin to really understand and to practice and to create a new truly, like we're writing the future for generations to come, changing the culture with transformational nutrition. Can you share where people can get involved?

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Yeah, for sure. Can I say one other thing too.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Sure.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Before I share that. You mentioned the environment and I don't want to let that go because it's so important. And it also ties into the last thing you ask, which is what can people do? How can we get started? You know, Jim Rohn's quote, you're an average of the five people you spend the most time around, right? So I think it's important for people to realize that you don't have to figure this out on your own. You don't have to do it on your own. Surround yourself with other people, put yourself in environments where other people hang out and learn from those people, grow with those people, right? Immerse yourself in new cultures, in new environments where you can learn and then teach and share and grow. So for example, I never worry about what my daughter eats when she's at your house. Never crosses my mind. I never, I'm concerned about her and your son hanging out. They play, they do all their things, right? Because our values are the same. We share the same values, whether it's food, life, health, relationship, you name it, right?

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** And so surrounding yourself with other people, I mean, we're so isolated these days, Shawn, and you know this, the pandemic really highlighted that for us, but here we are still separate, right? But when we can create real communities, whether that's starting online by following the Model Health show and you and listening to the podcast, that's a community. You've got an amazing Facebook group, but also in person, where can you find your people and learning and growing together? First of all, it's a lot more fun. Second of all, it takes an army. And third, it's just easier to stay consistent when you've got your people around you, supporting you, giving you new ideas, right? Inviting you into these meals and these times and these experiences where your kids can be a part of it and you can all learn and grow together, right? You make it fun. You make it just who you be. You make it part of

your life. It's so much easier.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** So I just wanted to throw that in there. So as far as where you can find more about Transformational Nutrition, if you go to [transformationalnutrition.com/model](https://transformationalnutrition.com/model), there's a free course that we've put together for everyone because I want to give more practical tips. We have so many ways that you can incorporate this as a lifestyle in a way that's really simple, that's really fun, that the whole family can get involved in. And so if you go there, you can take a whole free course and we'll educate you on that. There's a great workbook that you can download if you wanna go deeper into coaching. You can, but it's a really great, solid resource to start changing your culture, your life, and that of your family.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's so amazing. That's so generous. Thank you so much.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** You're so welcome.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Free course, [transformationalnutrition.com/model](https://transformationalnutrition.com/model).

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** That's right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So awesome. You're so awesome. I just love hanging out with you. You know, it's just always the best.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Same.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And listen, this whole process is so special because as you know, our relationships influence so much about our livelihood, our mental well-being, our physical health, and really it's really the tip of the spear, because our relationships impact, exercise is great, but your relationships influence how you exercise, if you exercise...

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** That's right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** How much you exercise, it influences what types of food you're eating,



how often you're eating, all the things.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Everything.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Our relationships are like a driving force of all the other stuff. And so focusing on creating healthy relationships should be one of our priorities, but we're just not taught this stuff.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** That's right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And one of my favorite parts about this conversation is when you mentioned that we don't get an instruction manual on this, and we are bound to make mistakes, but the fact that everybody listening wants to be better, you're already so far ahead of the game and just keep taking those steps forward. And listen, again, I am so grateful for you. I'm grateful for the love that you've extended for my family, for looking out for my most precious resources and you know, my wife and my family is just the best. You're the best.

**CYNTHIA GARCIA:** Likewise.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We're gonna put everything, all the goodies from this episode in the show notes, but again, pop over to [transformationalnutrition.com/model free course](https://transformationalnutrition.com/model-free-course). So generous. And listen, we've got so much more in store for you in this summit. This is about not just generational wealth, which is a big topic of conversation, but generational health. So I appreciate you so much for hanging out with us. More good stuff to come. Stay tuned.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Thank you so much for tuning into the show today. I hope you got a lot of value out of this. Again, go to [eatsmartercookbook.com](https://eatsmartercookbook.com) to join the 2023 Family Health and Fitness Summit. This was just one of the incredible conversations with our experts and there's so much more to come. Let's stack conditions in our favor. Let's get all these great insights from these experts who figured out a thing or three about creating a healthy culture, add in things that work for us, discard what is not helpful and build that unique family culture that works for us and the people that we love. We've got some epic masterclasses and

world-class guests coming your way very, very soon. So make sure to stay tuned, take care, have an amazing day and I'll talk with you soon.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** 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 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.