

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

**EPISODE 745**

## **The Ultimate Guide to Nutrition - From Your Plate to the World Around You.**

**With Ed Mylett**

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**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Welcome To the Model Health Show. This is nutritionist and bestselling author, Shawn Stevenson. On this episode, we are gonna be talking about the power of food. Our food impacts every single facet of our lives. It makes up the tissues of every single cell in our bodies. It enables our cells to run processes and to communicate. It is the very fuel of our lives. But oftentimes we're not educated about how much food is impacting us. But it's not just the food itself, it's how we do food. It's our interactions with food and our interactions with each other and our environment that influence how food is impacting our lives. And so on this episode, we're gonna be doing an absolute masterclass on the power of food. And I think this is going to blow your mind. I recently went to SiriusXM Radio and did an interview on one of the most amazing shows in the world.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And this episode was so powerful that I wanted to be able to share this with you here. We're gonna be diving into the social dynamics of food and how food is influenced by our relationships. We're gonna be talking about some of the most concerning food contagions that every single person should be aware of right now. We're gonna be talking about synthetic versus naturally occurring ingredients, naturally occurring nutrients. What's the difference? What does the science really say how food is impacting our genetic expression and so much more. Again, I think this is really going to blow you away. So be ready for some real empowerment. Now before we get into this, it's a really good time right now to be aware of supporting our immune system. In particular, looking at nutritive inputs known as immunomodulators. So these are nutrients and nutrient sources that can help our immune system to adapt.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Not going too high or too low, but being able to adapt and mount an appropriate response to any pathogen we might be faced with. Now research published in the Journal of Pharmacological Sciences found that the polysaccharides in reishi, this renowned medicinal mushroom, have extensive immunomodulating effects, including supporting the function of humoral immunity and cellular immunity as well. Another study published in the journal, Mediators of Inflammation showed that these polysaccharides in reishi were found to enhance the proliferation of our B-cells and T-cells. Alright, so directly improving the function of our immune system. This is really special. But also an important ingredient for supporting our immune system is our sleep quality. That's one of the things that if that is disturbed, especially consistently disturbed, it can suppress our immune system and make us more susceptible to things like colds and flus. But this is another powerful place for reishi because a study published in the Journal of Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior found that the renowned medicinal mushroom reishi was able to significantly decrease sleep latency.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Meaning that it helped study participants to fall asleep faster, it increased overall sleep time and increased non-REM deep sleep time and REM sleep time as well. That's really, really special. It is a whole body supportive source of nutrition. But the quality, this is the key, the quality matters so very much. I don't want you to run out and just get any random reishi because this is a recent study reported this, the majority of medicinal mushroom products on the market have a little, if any, medicinal mushroom, the viable parts of the medicinal mushroom in it. One company that you can trust that goes above and beyond that does a dual extraction of these medicinal mushrooms to give you the real nutrition that you're looking for is Four Sigmatic. Go to [foursigmatic.com/model](https://foursigmatic.com/model). That's F-O-U-R-S-I-G-M-A-T-I-C.com/model. You're going to get 10% off their incredible reishi elixir.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And they also have a delicious reishi hot cocoa as well that I actually just made for my son today. This is one of his favorite things to sip on. And so these are really cool ways that we can get these powerful nutrients into our bodies. And they've got incredible, again, this is all organic. They've got the reishi hot cocoa, the reishi elixir, and also lion's mane. They've got organic mushroom coffee blends as well. So many different ways to get these incredible inputs. Go to [foursigmatic.com/model](https://foursigmatic.com/model). You're gonna get 10% off store wide. And now let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

**ITUNES REVIEW:** Another five star review titled, "It's Working by Kelly McCausland". I'm 63 years old and Shawn and his guests have totally inspired me to be the maker of my own health. Using science-backed and cutting edge techniques, Shawn has delivered a healthier and happier way to live. Just got your cookbook and can't wait to try some delicious recipes. Can't thank you enough for cutting through the confusing nutritional landscape and delivering real information for aging with health and a much better quality of life. Many blessings to you and your family.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Wow. Thank you so much, Kelly, that was amazing. Thank you so much for sharing your heart over on Apple Podcasts. Thank you. That's all I can say. Thank you, thank you, thank you. And if you have to do so, please pop over to Apple Podcast and leave a review for the Model Health Show, it truly does mean so much. And without further ado, let's get into this incredible interview that I did at SiriusXM on the Ed Mylett Show. Now, Ed Mylett is an absolute icon in the world of personal development. He's also a bestselling author and he's one of those people that truly spending time with him, he lights up the room and he's full of insight and energy and also he cares. He cares a lot about empowerment. He cares a lot about education and being of service. And that really shines through in this interview and it's a really special conversation. But most importantly, this is about education for all of us to be enlightened about the connection to food and some of these key insights that every single person should have the right to know, and it was highlighted deeply on this powerful

conversation. So without further ado, let's get into this conversation that I had on the Ed Mylett Show with the one and only Ed Mylett.

[music]

**ED MYLETT:** Alright, welcome back to the show everybody. I have a good friend here this week, he's in the three time club. There's only been three people as far as I know to ever be on the show three times. So Dr. Joe Dispenza, Tony Robbins, and Shawn Stevenson, who's my guest today. And he is one of the world's experts on health. In fact, I will just tell you this behind the scenes, a lot of these experts you follow online that are expert experts and they're all wonderful, they consult with this dude and a lot of them copy his stuff, to be honest with you too. He is the expert of the experts and that's why he's been on here three times. Every time he's on, the show blows up. And he's got a new cookbook too. Last time I was on, we talked about eating smarter. Now he's got the Eat Smarter Family cookbook right here, everybody, which is rare that someone with this type of health background will talk to you about food and then show you how to cook it. And then also delicious recipes for all three different meals as well, and snack stuff as well. So we got a lot to cover today. There's gonna be heavy note taking for so many of you. Shawn Stevenson, welcome back to the show, brother.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Man. I'm in esteemed category.

**ED MYLETT:** You are.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's amazing.

**ED MYLETT:** It is.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. I'm so grateful. Truly.

**ED MYLETT:** I'm grateful you're here 'cause I learn every single time. So let's start, we're gonna talk a lot of food stuff today. And by the way today, everyone, when we're talking about food, and this isn't your average stuff, we're gonna talk about preparation, the right microbiome stuff, fat burning, all kinds of different stuff. Cognitive function, emotional function, mood. We're going deep today. I prepare when this dude comes on 'cause you have to pack a lunch. No pun intended when you interview this man. I wanna start with something basic though and that is families eating together.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**ED MYLETT:** Little research. It says 30% of families eat together. I find even that hard to believe. Like I don't think 30% of my friends eat together every single day with their families. But talk about that a little bit about families eating together, why that matters, what the data really says about whether it happens or not, et cetera.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. It's on the endangered species list for sure. It's kind of been something devolving out of our culture. This was something that we evolved doing. It wasn't just the family unit, we evolved in tribes and it was a part of the process. We hunted together, we gathered together, prepared food together, we ate together, we celebrated together. We can see a dramatization of this in something like a luau, we watch and entertainment. But really that's how it was throughout human evolution, we did this together. And so my question was, is there something protective about eating together that we're missing out on? And the data blew my mind. So I've got a bunch of colleagues at Harvard and one team compiled a huge data set looking at eating behaviors of families and food intake. Like what happens if families eat together frequently?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And they found that families that eat together on a regular basis consume significantly more whole foods, so fruits and vegetables, which by nature included a lot more essential nutrients that helped them to prevent diseases. So they saw lower disease incidents in these families and significantly less ultra-processed food consumption. Now to tie this all together, like what's the minimum effective dose? That was my question too because I'm always asking why and also like, how little can we do to get away with something? Because that's how we think as a culture today.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so two studies, I'll combine these together. I'll smush them together for you.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So one was published in pediatrics, and one was published in JAMA, which is the Journal of the American Medical Association. And these researchers found that three meals a week, that's the bare minimum, if you eat three or more meals per week, your children will have far less incidents of developing obesity and eating disorders.

**ED MYLETT:** Really?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Yeah. There's something remarkable. I'm gonna talk about the why, why it's happening, but also I wanna reference this. What about us as parents? Because

sometimes getting all that stuff together could be stressful. And we'll talk about taking the stress out of that as well today.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But one of these studies, this was conducted with office workers at IBM. They found... And you know, of course working in tech, it could be stressful, all the things. But when folks were able to make it home and have dinner with their families, their stress levels stayed low, work productivity stayed high and work morale stayed high, which is very important. But as soon as work started cutting into family meals, their productivity dropped, their morale dropped and stress levels were exceedingly high.

**ED MYLETT:** I believe.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Why does this matter at the end of the day, and for all the experts that you talk with, and I want this to be the underpinning moving forward for everybody to understand this. This was published in JAMA. They found that about 80% of all physician visits today are for stress-related illnesses. Stress is that seed of so many of the outer expression or symptoms that we see with diseases. And so there's something protective, stress reducing about eating with the people that we love. And if we wanna dig into the why, I could tell you exactly why.

**ED MYLETT:** Please. You see me leaning. [laughter] Yeah. Why?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So let's talk about a couple of these factors. So number one, being around people that we love instantly right now, our oxytocin has gone up.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah. You and I get together. Yeah, for sure. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** [laughter] And this is oftentimes called the love hormone. All right. It's something that it creates bonding in humans. And humans do this really well, especially women are really good at oxytocin when they get around other women. But also their family as well, especially in close proximity. Hugs get an extra boost of oxytocin, but just being around people that you love. And what the research indicates is that oxytocin is one of the few hormones that really counteracts cortisol. So this kind of glorified stress hormone.

**ED MYLETT:** No way.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so when we are eating with people that we care about, we are switching over from this fight or flight...

**ED MYLETT:** Bro, that's brilliant right there.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Stress, and it's called the sympathetic nervous system. And it's a switch over, it's binary. It's switching over to the parasympathetic rest and digest. So we're literally changing the station on our nervous system when we get around people that we love.

**ED MYLETT:** So, you theoretically could actually eat the same meal alone or at work or in your car and have a different metabolic influence in your body than eating around people that you love because this oxytocin is being produced.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** How Profound is that?

**ED MYLETT:** Holy cr\*p. That's huge.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This is real. And also, I shared one of these studies, this was from Nutrition Journal, and by the way, all this stuff we're talking about is in the book.

**ED MYLETT:** It's in the book. And with this dude, everything is scientifically backed with some kind of a study.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**ED MYLETT:** And his ability to recite and regurgitate these studies is some type of savant cr\*p this man has, just FYI. You're gonna hear it through the whole interview. Anytime I'm on the phone with this dude, hey, I gotta tell about this new study out, blah, blah, blah. I'm like, okay, here we go. Okay. Keep going though.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Thank you man. It is something unique. There's over 250 scientific references in a cookbook. It's never been done before.

**ED MYLETT:** It's awesome.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But also in a way that's entertaining, that's engaging, that makes sense.

**ED MYLETT:** It is.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And also just laying it out in a beautiful way.

**ED MYLETT:** Bam.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so this study was published in Nutrition Journal, and they found that people who frequently eat in isolation, who frequently eat alone, do in fact have an overall poorer diet quality and substantially less intake of vital nutrients that help to prevent diseases.

**ED MYLETT:** Fascinating.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And now in particular, when I mentioned how we evolved, it's only been in the last couple of decades that it's got to this extreme where we went from eating face to face with people in our tribe, or at least people in our nuclear family, to now oftentimes eating in isolation in front of a screen.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's changed so dramatically in just the last couple of decades. And the question is, and we already know this, there's probably some things that are gonna happen as a result because we're not getting these epigenetic inputs. And so this is another part of this proximity thing. This is one of the biggest studies that's ever been done. This was a huge meta-analysis. And this was from researchers at Brigham Young University. This was 148 studies. So it's not one study, it's looking at 148 studies, about 300,000 people. And they found that being in close proximity to people that you care about on a consistent basis, or what they regarded as healthy social bonds, resulted in a 50% reduction in all cause mortality. This means a 50% reduction in your risk of dying from everything prematurely when you have healthy social connections.

**ED MYLETT:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Now, where do we connect most often? How are we connecting? Food is involved in so much of our culture.

**ED MYLETT:** It's true.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Whether it's after the baseball game, whether it's the first date, whether it's date night, whether it's... The list goes on. On holidays.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Our lives revolve around food.



**ED MYLETT:** It's true.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And now what if we can intentionally put this into our culture again? Because right now, the larger culture as you stated, about 30% according to research at Harvard, and this was a couple of years ago, by the way, it's devolved more, only about 30% of families eat together on a regular basis now.

**ED MYLETT:** You know what I wonder Shawn? This isn't been studied. Not only are there the nutritional benefits, all of the stuff you're describing about switching from cortisol, and you've got more of this oxytocin. I wonder though, man, I wonder if you made a study of families that eat together and you looked at even teenage pregnancy rates. If you looked at alcohol and drug addiction, my bet is that it is lower with families that eat together. I bet there's a lower teenage pregnancy rate. I'll bet you there's a lower drug and alcohol use rate in teenagers when they eat with their families together. Just anecdotally, I think I'm probably right about that, don't you?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Absolutely.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Absolutely.

**ED MYLETT:** There's all these other benefits.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Part of this is, and let's just be very practical. When we are sitting down with our children, we're able to see them. What a concept.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Especially today when everybody's kinda moving a hundred miles a minute to slow down because the dinner table is a unifier in many ways.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And to see most of our communication is nonverbal as well. Especially when it comes to children, they can tell you so much beyond the words that they're saying by how they're carrying themselves. And you can pick up subtleties if there is something that's brewing or maybe something that needs to be offloaded that they're sharing or even for you. Because one of the things that I've been able to demonstrate, which a lot of men don't get exposed to, which is like being able to demonstrate a softness and compassion. And also, of

course demonstrating strength, but also for my sons to know that this is not easy for me. Because they would think, and I know my oldest son shared that with me, which he's a big part of the book too, that I make it look easy. So he never really thinks about me struggling or dealing with anything.

**ED MYLETT:** Interesting.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Dad's like Superman.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so one of the things that we created as one of our family rituals, we occasionally do this now, but we had done this for quite some time, is we go around the table before we eat and we'd share one thing that we failed at that day.

**ED MYLETT:** Failed at. Interesting.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. One thing that we failed at/struggled with. And it's not about advocating failure per se, but it's more so opening up the conversation of our struggle points and also to start to talk about potential solutions and being able to...

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah, reframing too. Reframing what it means. I gotta tell you one of my regrets, my kids are gone now and I try to talk to them somehow every single day at some length. Here's what's weird, man. I actually have a deeper connection with them, I think now that they're out of my house. And it didn't need to be that way. And one of the reasons was, although we did eat together, this is just a small thing, TV was on in the background most of the time. I'm embarrassed to say that, but like sports center's playing behind my son's head. I say, oh, Brady did this, or there's some political thing on TV just getting quiet together. Everybody put their phones down, turn the TV off, and just be together for an hour. I gotta think that number's even lower than 30%. Just my opinion. Let's talk about the food part for a minute. You say the food piece of it. And by the way, that's what's wonderful about the book because there's all this different stuff on food, which we're going to cover in a minute, the preparation of the food, different ways to do it. But let me ask you about this, food is information. Something that you say, food is information. What the heck does that mean? How is food information?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** First and foremost, where we are with science right now, everything is really even more so than just information, it's energy.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And food isn't just food, it's information.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And there's like a data transfer that takes place. And let me talk about this from a very practical place, and then we can get a little bit deeper.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** From a practical place, the microbiome is having a minute right now. It's having a moment in the sun. A lot of people are talking about this. But I like to point out the obvious that's overlooked. And if we're talking about the influence on our microbiome, whenever you eat a food, you're eating that food's microbiome. So whenever you eat a blueberry, you're eating that blueberry's microbiome. Whenever you eat an avocado, you're eating that avocado's microbiome. You're taking on that data. So in this context, it's a file transfer of microbial data. All right? Now, to go deeper, being that food is information, one of the things I've been working to get into popular culture is this growing field of nutrigenomics. So there's nutrigenomics and nutrigenetics. And essentially we've uncovered that every bite of food that you eat changes your genetic expression, it alters how your genes are being expressed. All right? And so for years in particular, when I was in my university classes, we were really taught that genes were our destiny.

**ED MYLETT:** By the way, that's a huge statement you just made. You're saying food alters the genetic expression in our bodies. Just pause on that, everybody. I didn't wanna jump in and interrupt you, but that's a pretty profound, somewhat revolutionary statement. You're saying I can turn on and off particular genes based on the information I'm giving my body through food.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Absolutely. So Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, has this quote that gets passed around on social media that let food be thy medicine, medicine be thy food. Sometimes that can get lost in translation because we become kind of tunnel-vision and especially medicine, where medicine is medicine. Medicine is medicine, food is food.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But if we look at the sheer amount of pounds of food that we're eating compared to oftentimes micrograms of a drug.

**ED MYLETT:** Great point.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And understanding that this food is literally changing your genes, which then downstream are determining which proteins are getting built. Downstream is determining what your DNA is doing, what kinda copies are getting made of you.

**ED MYLETT:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Where's the real power at?

**ED MYLETT:** Wow. Food.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Exactly. And so, again, it's complementary with medicine, conventional medicine today. But if we don't understand the food portion, we're really, really missing the mark. And this is one of the other big insights that I wanna impress upon everyone and you know a lot... Dr. Gabriel Lyon, good friend. We know so many wonderful people who have worked in conventional medicine. I went to a traditional university. I went to a conventional nutritional science class and was largely mis-educated, full caveat. But my friend, who's a cardiologist and award winning, matter of fact, let me talk about my friend Dr. Will Bulsiewicz, who's an award winning, top tier gastroenterologist. He studies the gut.

**ED MYLETT:** Yep.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** All right? And his training and his practice is revolving around the organ responsible for digestion, assimilation and elimination of food. Guess how much he learned about food in his 12-year education?

**ED MYLETT:** [laughter] How much?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** A couple of months.

**ED MYLETT:** That's crazy, man. That is absolutely crazy.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** 12 years, a couple of months. And it wasn't this particular food can cause this, it was like, this is what happens when you have a rare B12 deficiency in your patient.

**ED MYLETT:** Man.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So it's literally missing the mark because it's not just about what's traveling through there, it's what's making the tissues themselves. It's all made from food.

Your intestinal tract is made from food. Your heart is made from food, your brain. Top tier cardiologists, top tier neuroscientists and neurologists, if you don't understand that you're looking at food when you see your patient, we're really missing the point.

**ED MYLETT:** I don't know if a lot of people know this about you, by the way, we covered it on the first show, but I'm making the assumption everybody knows this about you and they may not. How does this man have such a passion for what he's doing and a depth of knowledge that's so diverse and by the way, on the cutting edge? I have a funny feeling five, eight, 10 years from now, food will become central to all these conversations. For right now, you're one of the very few people who's describing it in this way. People talk about, hey, make sure you get so much protein and your carbs should be this and you're approaching it a much different way. I don't know if most people know how the heck you even ended up here. Let's digress just one minute and let them know about you. You're 20 years old. You've got this muscle, massive problem going on with your spine that they believe is deteriorating. You're headed for like a wheelchair basically, and then what?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So at 20, I was diagnosed with a severe disc degeneration. So my intervertebral disc, L4, L5, S1, were severely degenerated to the degree when you looked at them through the MRI, they look black. They look like thin burnt pieces of bologna in my... I come from that. And so the light is supposed to be shining through it. And they were from my other disc, but those two were so severely degenerated that it was causing dysfunction with my leg, and I couldn't get it to fire correctly. It's constant pain, but it was more like a nuisance of a pain. And after getting this MRI done, I went in to see my physician, and I asked him, what do we do to fix this? Because being an athlete, I'd actually broke my hip a couple of years earlier at track practice, as I shared with you before. And this was doing a time trial. I didn't fall, this was not trauma.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It didn't happen on the football field, I was just running a 200 meters sprint and my hip broke because my bones were so brittle, my bone density was so low, and my spine was deteriorating. I basically had an extremely advanced arthritic condition. And he told me, when I asked him, what do we do to fix this? He said, I'm sorry, son, but you have the spine of an 80-year-old man and this is something that you're just gonna have to learn to live with. And my young brain at the time, solution-oriented, analytical, which I muted, by the way, after this conversation, didn't really get it, didn't register.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So I asked again, I was like, well, does this have anything to do with what I'm eating? Should I change the way I'm exercising? That was just an intuitive thing. I had no grounds to talk to him about that. And he looked at me like I was from another planet. He cocked his head. He was like, this has nothing to do with what you're eating. Mind you, he's over 300 pounds himself. And not, again, not any judgment, but this individual who is well

meaning, he's in a position where he can deeply influence me about my health outcomes, and he's struggling as well. And that's been another one of my missions, is to help our healers to heal themselves. But we have a system that just even when I was working at the university gym for a while, for several years, actually, while I was in college, a lot of the people I was working with were pre-med students and nurses and people doing clinicals. Man, they were some of the most messed up population as far as they're struggling with their weight. They're young, we're talking early 20s, struggling with their weight, struggling to be able to sleep, having manifestation of different disease symptoms, whether it's like psoriasis or anxiety. All this stuff, it just turned on once they started medical school. And it's kind of like a badge of honor as well.

**ED MYLETT:** Really?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And I felt that. I went to a private university in St. Charles, tried to stay close to home in St. Louis. And I went there to do the pre-med program based on television because I had never... I didn't know anybody who let alone went to college, but let alone was successful in life, I didn't grow up around that. So I was the first in my family to go to college. And I did that based off The Cosby Show because he was a doctor and a lawyer. It's like they look happy. They got jokes and Theo and whatever.

**ED MYLETT:** The Huxtables.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** The Huxtables. Yeah. So I'm just like, I'm gonna do that. But at the time, ironically, and this is crazy to say this, but I hated science. I hated it.

**ED MYLETT:** That blows my mind with you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I hated it. I would have nightmare, this recurring nightmare about this biology class. And fate had other plans for me, or should I say that God doesn't call the qualified, God qualifies the call.

**ED MYLETT:** Amen.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so life was qualifying me to revisit science from a new perspective. And I'm so grateful for that. I got chills.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I'm so grateful for that because it wasn't the fact that I hated science, it was how I was being taught. And this is why I do what I do to teach this in a way that makes

sense, that empowers people, that provides some of this connective tissue. Because as we were studying the cell in my university biology class, my teacher is not telling me that your mitochondria are made from your menu, that your nucleus in your cell is made from the nutrients you eat, that your membranes of your cell are made from your meals. That was a disconnect. I didn't have any power in this. And so fast forward that story after getting this diagnosis and being sent on my way. Got a new prescription for Celebrex, was hot at the time. So right around the time of Vioxx as well, which I was a prescription pad away from potentially dying.

**ED MYLETT:** Killing. Yeah. Killing you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. About 40,000 people are confirmed have died from Vioxx, non steroidal anti inflammatory. And I was just want to feel better, so I would have done whatever he said. And taking Celebrex, though, I did have a side effect that wasn't diagnosed yet or put in the data, which was restless leg syndrome. So I struggled to sleep at night. And if you're not sleeping, you're not healing. So it felt like my... I'd go to bed, it felt like my legs were trying to get up and leave me.

**ED MYLETT:** Oh my God.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's like some Adams Family type of vibe. [laughter] But from that process, from that moment, I struggled for the next two years. Definitely was struggling with depression and increasing loss of function. Because every physician that I saw, because I did have the wherewithal to get a second and third opinion, but they gave me the same, it's really standard of care. And basically telling me that this is something I'm just gonna have to live with. We're gonna help you manage it. Here's a new prescription. So now I'm leaving with another drug and another note for bed rest, so I don't got to work. And so not only is my spine atrophying, now everything is.

**ED MYLETT:** My gosh.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And I'm gaining all this weight because I'm eating my drive through diet that I grew up eating. And now I at least had that low hanging fruit of movement prior. But here's the bottom line. After two years, I had an incredible revelation, really. And it was through my grandmother, who's a big inspiration for this book and for this project. She saw something in me, and I didn't see it in myself. And living in that environment with her... I lived in two very different environments, which we'll talk about because we got to circle back to something that you mentioned earlier. In that environment, we lived in a pretty safe neighborhood. And I walked one block to go to school, to elementary school. This is when my mother was sometimes didn't have a place to stay, my mother and my stepfather. And

whenever I go to visit them, I'd sleep on the floor. And there were mousetraps. And this is real. That was my life. But living with my grandmother to go to school for those couple of years, she made me feel like I mattered. I felt seen.

**ED MYLETT:** Your face just changed. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I also experienced a lot of certainty, which is important as well for your psyche. So we had our routines, and she showed me love, as many grandmothers do through food. And now this is also the beginning of the golden age of ultra-processed foods in the '80s, so this is like... And I wanna eat what my friends are eating. My friend Jeff, who lived across the street, who is my friend to this day, he runs this fantastic gym in St. Louis now, both him and I were messed up, though. And Jeff was eating like he had Capri Suns. When they hit the scenes, I didn't have Capri Suns, so I wanted what Jeff had. And so to kind of fit in, I would ask my grandmother to give me these foods. And she did because she loved me. And so it's kind of setting the template for my eating behaviors. But in this instance, my grandmother would call and check on me, and honestly was annoying at the time. Just like, I'm fine, grandma. Like, why do you keep calling me? But she knew I wasn't fine. And I realized that all the investment that she made in me and all the moments that she gave me of feeling like I mattered and feeling like I was special, that I was gonna do something remarkable, I was just letting it die.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And it was my choice. I was letting it die. But I was blaming my physicians. I was blaming the environment. I was blaming my family. Why won't somebody help me? And I realized that I was letting my dream die. And so in that moment, I decided to get well. It sounds so simple, but I decided. And we've talked about this before, but it's not like I instantly healed, but that change in my perspective, I changed my filter.

**ED MYLETT:** That decision changed your destiny.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Absolutely.

**ED MYLETT:** Yes.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Absolutely. And we see what we filter for. And so now I'm looking for wellness.

**ED MYLETT:** Yep.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Prior to that, I'm looking for disease. I'm looking and affirming constantly, that question, why me? Why won't anybody help me? Why am I in so much pain? Why do I have to suffer? I'm looking for data to affirm, why me?

**ED MYLETT:** That's right. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so now my lens has changed, and now I'm starting to see opportunity. And crazy thing is, my path to wellness was there the whole time, I just couldn't see it. And so I had a friend who was in chiropractic school, and I've been seeing her off and on for like two or three years, and it's just like that thing over there. That's weird. You guys are weird. And after about a week, maybe a week and a half after this revelation, she took me to Wild Oats, which has since been bought up by Whole Foods. And I didn't know that existed. I've drove past there a hundred times. It wasn't near my neighborhood in Ferguson, Missouri, by the way, but this was like 40 minutes away. And by the way, St. Louis is a big city.

**ED MYLETT:** I know.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** There's only one Whole Foods at this time, all right? In LA, you could throw a rock any direction and hit one.

**ED MYLETT:** You also don't put Whole Foods in impoverished neighborhoods either. And that's one of the other challenges we have in this country, is folks that don't have the financial resources to get access to this food. What's great about this podcast and yours is that it takes no resource to get access to the information now.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**ED MYLETT:** Thank God. So times are changing, but still it's still an issue in our country. One of the reasons that people with money live longer is they get access to better health care. Yeah, and A, and B, they are eating better foods most of the time. They actually can have eggs for breakfast instead of eating processed foods like cereals and things like that. And so there's a big difference in this country financially between food as well, but that's a whole other topic.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, but it's important. It's important for us to know because there's both. There's the personal accountability and there's the environment.

**ED MYLETT:** That's right. But in your case, you took responsibility for your environment and it changed.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That part. Exactly. Because we're not just products of our environment, we're creators of our environment.

**ED MYLETT:** That's right. 100%. And you were perpetuating it, and that pattern was reinforcing it over and over again. So you make this decision, this chiropractic friend, and then what? Did you just change the way you were eating? Is that what happened once you start going there?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** The first thing I did, I was just operating on logic. I was just like, now I'm significantly overweight and I'm just like to ease some of this pain, maybe if I get some of this weight off my frame. And also I was going off of commercials for what I was... The first thing I did prior to hanging out with her, I did Slim Fast. This is true story based on the commercial. What is it? A shake for breakfast, a shake for lunch, and then a sensible dinner. [laughter] So I got that nasty ass Slim Fast.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah. I had those too.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And unfortunately, I tried it not cold the first time. And yeah, it was terrible, which I lost a couple of pounds, but then...

**ED MYLETT:** From throwing up. [laughter]

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But that's the power of marketing, too. It's just like if I don't know, I'm just doing, as you mentioned, part of the transformation for impoverished communities like I come from is awareness.

**ED MYLETT:** That's right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I just didn't know.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I didn't know that it existed. And so in that environment, so I did that then I connected with her. And I go there and I'm a researcher, I'm in school, and I'm just kinda known for that, helping friends and stuff like that. And I went directly to the books, and I was looking at my condition. There was like this kind of nutrition prescription is this thick book. And I went to the reference section because what they were saying was like, is this backed by science? And I went and looked at the reference. I'm like, oh my God. This is a published study on Omega-3s and bone density. Nobody ever told me that. And examining my diet, and this is

not an exaggeration. I might not get a valuable source of DHA and EPA Omega-3s in years. I was eating ultra-processed foods, fast food, every single day.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** If I didn't have, like, \$2 to go to Jack in the Box and get two tacos, I would eat like a family can of SpaghettiOs or something like that. That's how I was living.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And it was cheap, it was accessible. And really, again, living in that environment, that's all that I knew.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so the first thing that I did was I found out about these nutrients that I needed to regenerate my tissues, my bone, my spine. That was not giving my body to do, then to provide the raw materials for the intelligence to do what it does.

**ED MYLETT:** For your body to heal itself.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And now I go to natural pill-popping. So I'm like getting all these supplements, which was hard on my college diet and...

**ED MYLETT:** Can you stay on that for a second? 'Cause you talk about this often. A lot of people listen and go, all right, yeah, I got it, food. Okay, I probably get some omegas. I better get some vitamin E. I'm gonna get a little vitamin C. But you know what? I can just get all this stuff in pills. But you make the case and talk. This is important right here, you guys. This is an interjection. The difference between synthetically receiving these vitamins and getting them naturally from food. So you think you may be getting all that stuff 'cause, by the way, I take supplements as well, but there's a difference in your body from getting it synthetically as compared to getting it from food, correct?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Absolutely. And I'm sharing the data. I'm not just... It's not a hypothesis. I shared several studies in the book identifying this. Even because, again, I don't care if it's true or not, I'm just going on what the data says and also bringing in some logic as well.

**ED MYLETT:** What's the data say?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So one of the studies, we just use vitamin E, for example.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Which is critical for helping your body to manage inflammation, for cognitive function. It's a really remarkable antioxidant. There's a bunch of benefits to it. And one of the studies that I cite in the book found that synthetic... Well, let's just clarify what synthetic is. Okay. How do I best put this? So a naturally occurring nutrient or a whole food concentrate of a nutrient, which something like camu camu berry, which is a very dense source of vitamin C. That food-based vitamin C and a concentrate of that camu camu berry is surrounded by thousands of other micronutrients, many that we don't even know yet, that we haven't identified. All these co-factors have this kind of synergy that enables our body to use it better. And I'm gonna come back and talk about vitamin C in a moment. But synthetic versions of this is a highly refined. But even when we talk about synthetic, by the way, it's still coming from the planet somewhere, but it's going to become from a very artificial constructed, man-made version of it. And so what the researchers found was that food-based vitamin E was twice as bioavailable. Twice as usable by your cells than synthetic vitamin E. All right? There's something about food. And the thing is, really simple explanation, we evolved eating food. We evolved. Our genes have this interaction with food.

**ED MYLETT:** Food.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Not to say that synthetic things cannot be helpful in some instances...

**ED MYLETT:** Well, what they are is supplements, they're not... And it means that word. At least based on reading your work, you can supplement your vitamin E. But it ought to not be your primary source of it. Now, you're gonna say something about vitamin C as well. I know what's in the book, but we'll give them this little flavor. I want to also get the book, but tell them about the vitamin C piece, too.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Sure. This is gonna be a newsflash, maybe a little heartbreaking for a lot of people, but most of the vitamin C out there and vitamin C supplements, and even the little energy packs that are at the checkout counter, the vast majority of it, we're talking over 90% is made from genetically modified corn syrup and genetically modified corn starch. So like some of the worst, cheapest, crappiest stuff. And because they can isolate this nutrient, it gets put into all these fancy pants supplements. And so one of the studies that I mentioned looked at people who are exposing themselves because vitamin C, we hear about that for their immune system. It does so much more. It is a master antioxidant in the human body. Your skin health is dependent upon vitamin C, helping to reduce the risk of cardiovascular events. And so specifically, they were looking at individuals who are doing high-risk behaviors,

being smoking in this study. And to see if taking vitamin C would have an impact on their cardiovascular and inflammation risk factors.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so this is a placebo-controlled study. All right? So part of the study, the smokers are getting camu camu berry, which is very likely the most dense source of vitamin C of any food ever discovered. And in another part of the study, they're getting synthetic vitamin C like you would find in these different supplements. And so at the end of the study, they found that when the individuals were taking the whole food-based vitamin C in the form of camu camu berry, they had significant reductions in their inflammatory biomarkers like C-reactive protein. So it's just showing this lowering of risk for pretty much everything.

**ED MYLETT:** Everything.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Especially a cardiovascular event. And there was no change in the people taking The synthetic version of vitamin C.

**ED MYLETT:** That's bananas.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Got a quick break coming up. We'll be right back. As I'm sharing with Ed in this conversation, vitamin C isn't just crucial for your immune system, it's also critical in helping our bodies to manage stress. According to data published in the Journal of Nutrition and Food Sciences, both emotional and physical stress can affect a person's vitamin C status. It can actually increase the requirement for vitamin C to maintain normal blood levels, and when stress depletes vitamin C levels in the body, it reduces the person's resistance to infections and disease and increases the likelihood of further stress. When vitamin C intake is increased, according to these researchers, the negative effects of excessive stress hormones are reduced and the body's ability to cope with stress improves. Being able to manage stress is a key to staying healthy and resilient. And as I shared with Ed, one of my favorite sources for high quality food-based vitamin C is from camu camu berry. For years I've been utilizing a concentrate of camu camu berry, amla berry and acerola cherry.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** These are all vitamin C dense super fruits with no synthetic ingredients, no binders, no fillers. And I'm talking about the Essential C Complex from Paleovalley. Go to [paleovalley.com/model](https://paleovalley.com/model) and you're going to get 15% off their incredible Essential C Complex. This is all organic plus it has a 60-day, 100% money back guarantee. So if you're not absolutely thrilled about it, you can receive a full refund, no questions asked. They're really standing behind their product because it is that good. And again, it is the

Essential C Complex from Paleo Valley. Go to [paleovalley.com/model](https://paleovalley.com/model) right now. And again, you're going to get 15% off from your order automatically at check out plus 15% off store wide. Go to [paleovalley.com/model](https://paleovalley.com/model). And now back to this incredible conversation with Ed Mylett. Alright?

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so again, this isn't just hearsay, this is the real deal. And hearing this from me is a little bit different because I paid good money at a university, two universities actually to get miseducated. Because we were not taught about a distinction with vitamin C. The professor would say, if you work with patients, and for yourself as well, just make sure you're getting all your vitamins and minerals. Take a multivitamin.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That was it.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We weren't taught that there's multiple versions of vitamin C, that there's multiple versions of B12, that there's multiple versions of you name it. It's not just this... So if you're taking it in this synthetic form, are you getting the magnesium that your body is really looking for? And so this food picture is so much bigger, but you can trust you're gonna get a variety of these things if you're eating food.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay. This is crazy to me. The other thing that you did, and then we're gonna talk about how to prepare food too 'cause that's a big part of the book. So then there's this idea of all this ultra-processed foods. Like if you're wondering whether this is real or not, I didn't realize this till I started prepping for the interview. You're saying now that they've actually studied fat cells from like 1900. See, I prepare brother. So they studied these fat cells over time from like 1900 to now. And the difference in the makeup and the composition of these fat cells based on what we're now doing to ourselves and our diet is just stark to me. So if you're wondering whether or not this stuff really matters, it's affecting you at a cellular level and it's been proven. So go ahead.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oh wow. I love you man. [laughter] All right. So one of the studies that I cite in the book, which it should be shocking for people. And everybody should know this. So this was published in the BMJ, which is this is top tier. The British Medical Journal, top tier of all time. We're talking top three.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And this was published in BMJ Open, and looking at specifically heart health. And the researchers determined that our large consumption now of highly refined vegetable oil, canola oil, soy oil, corn oil, is one of the leading dietary factors of heart attacks, strokes, and other cardiovascular events. You don't hear that every day.

**ED MYLETT:** You don't.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And as a matter of fact, the marketing was the opposite of that.

**ED MYLETT:** That's right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And another study, I'll just throw this out there really quickly, this was published in Inhalation Toxicology. Just the smells of stuff, all right? They're looking at how smells can affect you. And they found that just smelling vegetable oil during cooking, the fumes of it can damage your DNA.

**ED MYLETT:** [laughter] Oh my gosh. It's crazy.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's crazy. And it's the... The vast majority of these ultra-processed foods, which, what is ultra-processed food? Let's clarify that just for everybody. Because humans have been processing food forever. All right? Just cooking a food is processing the food. Whether it's cooking a steak, it's changing the protein availability, it's changing the chemistry of the food in many ways. In many instances, real food is making many things more bioavailable. This is one of the advantages that humans had when we started to cook our food that really helped with the development of our prefrontal cortex. That makes us who we are. And so it's basically in some instances helping to unlock certain capacities. Now there's an extreme of that too, of course, but just in general, cooking is processing. Taking olives and pressing the oil out, that's a processing. All right? It's minimally processed and it's got a finesse this in here. If they're just like what oils to have, olive oil. Auburn University researchers found olive oil is one of the few foods ever discovered that can reduce inflammation in your brain and repair your blood brain barrier, which that's one of the leading risk factors for insulin resistance, is actually brain inflammation. This is from researchers at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. But anyways, let's...

**ED MYLETT:** Insulin resistance and brain inflammation.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yes. Yes.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay. Okay. But in the book though, you have extra virgin olive oil as a sufficient choice for oil to use, but you actually talk actually about organic avocado oil, you talk about... I'm gonna read the book, but are there even better oils than olive oil?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** For cooking purposes, yes.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Because those oils are sensitive. And that's exactly the point. I love you man. That I was going to get to was, olive oil for centuries have been bottled in dark glass.

**ED MYLETT:** Yes.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Our ancestors knew that this oil is sensitive. All right? It's like it's the the boy band. It's the journey. It's the love ballad of oils. All right? It's still powerful, but it's a little more sensitive.

**ED MYLETT:** But you're saying when you cook with it, there's a deterioration in its benefits. Is that what you're saying?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Because these oils are volatile, they're very sensitive, they can be damaged very easily.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And you can cook with olive oil, don't get me wrong. Absolutely.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah. You say it's a sufficient choice in the book.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Ideally, however, we would be cooking with oils that are more stable under high heats because you're not micromanaging the heat of your food off...

**ED MYLETT:** Shawn, this is a big deal. This isn't stuff anyone's talking about right here. So keep going. This is very, very good stuff right here.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So what would we deem to be something more stable? This would be something that's higher in saturated fat. So this would be grass-fed butter, ghee, tallow, coconut oil.

**ED MYLETT:** Coconut oil.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so humans have been using these for thousands of years. Canola oil was just invented a few decades ago. By the way, it's very different. And if you see the process of making coconut oil, if you see the process Of making olive oil, extra virgin olive oil, it is very simple, they're pressing out the oil. When you see how canola oil is made, it looks like gasoline. It looks like garbage. It looks like mud.

**ED MYLETT:** It's terrible. So canola, corn, soybean, vegetable oils in general, no bueno.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's marketing.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah, but no bueno.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Vegetable oil, it implies it's health washing.

**ED MYLETT:** It sure. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It implies that it's healthy. My mother switched over from Crisco to vegetable oil to be healthier. All right? It's like it's nefarious.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay, guys, this is huge right here. Now by the way, I diverted us. But it leads down the road about how processed foods working in our lives. So I took us off track there, but I just feel like one of the secrets in the book to me was this because like I've always thought... By the way, and you say coconut oil, butter, avocado oil, those are sufficient choices. But I've always thought, man, the healthiest thing you can cook with is extra virgin olive oil. And you're like, nah. Once you've destabilized it to some extent, there's stuff that's better, which is what you've already told us about here. So let's go back a little bit. Let's stay on there. So we're back now to ultra-processed foods. We kind of understand what that is. And then what did they find in these cells 'cause I wanna make sure that they they get that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Precisely.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And the closing point with that is ultra-processed foods, on the other hand of the minimally processed foods humans have been eating forever, ultra-processed foods is when you see a field of wheat and somehow it becomes a bowl of frosted flakes.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Or you see a field of wheat and it somehow becomes some twisted version of some Cheez-Its.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** There's no longer any connection to anything real.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** All right?

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so same thing with corn. That's one of my favorite snacks growing up in the inner city was Funyuns.

**ED MYLETT:** Oh, Funyuns.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Funyuns. Funyuns. We've got puffs, cereal, Smacks, the Honey smacks, the list goes on and on. But if you were coming from an indigenous culture like a hunter gatherer tribe and you saw a bowl of Fruity Pebbles, you had no idea where it comes from, not to mention all of these chemical additives. So the food dies and the pesticides used and the growing process, the list goes on and on. It's so denatured, it's no longer real food. That's ultra-processed food.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so here's what they found in those fat cells. As you mentioned, doing biopsies to look what makes up humans and our fat cells back closer to the 1900s, only about 2% of our fat cells consisted of polyunsaturated fatty acids or PUFAs. All right? Which is the primary fatty acids that you're getting in these vegetable oils, by the way.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** More recently, biopsies taken of multiple humans find about 25% of fat cells are now made of polyunsaturated fatty acids are PUFAs. These are far more inflammatory fatty acids that our fat cells are just getting packed up with. And what I'm saying with this Ed, is that we're literally changing the ingredients that make humans. Our recipe has changed.

**ED MYLETT:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This is why we're seeing all of these epidemics of disease and dysfunction. We're changing what we're made of.

**ED MYLETT:** You say in the book, 11 million people a year basically die, at least that we know of just from eating wrong.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That was a massive study that was published in the Lancet, another top tier medical journal. They looked at all these different countries, over a hundred countries. They found that poor diet is the number one cause of death in the world. In the world.

**ED MYLETT:** You all hearing this? He just said a minute ago on top of that, that what it is to be human is being changed by this stuff. The composition of a human is being changed. This is crazy. And yet someone heard and actually go, oh, he's got a cookbook out. That's great. No, no, no, no. Even when we were talking about this interview like, brother, just get me there. Trust me. And then I started reading this and I'm like, my gosh, this is unbelievable how much people need to know this? And here's another little thing that I didn't know. I didn't really understand this stuff. You're saying there's a connection between food and mood, but food and cognitive function. I never thought about... Man, I just ate a Jack in the Box. I had two of those tacos, which by the way, there's still a dollar there, so you can still get access to this cr\*p food. But if I'm eating that regularly, that cognitively I can cause myself to function at a lower level as opposed to eating what? And then there's a real connection between? 'Cause I always thought, heart disease, cancer, I got all that. Okay. I can definitely see the connection between pounding my body with fat, creating inflammation in my body. It's the breeding ground for disease, no question. But cognitive function and mood is altered by food as well?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oh man. This makes complete sense once you have that revelation that your brain itself is made from the food that you eat.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah. You said that earlier.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Number one, but it's even deeper than that. The energy exchange, how all your cells are talking, the fuel that all the processes are running on is made from the food that you're eating. And so it's kind of even with your car, if you're getting the premium stuff versus you putting vegetable oil in your tank, you're gonna have very different outcomes in your car's performance. All right? And so what I really wanted to do was also to bring this back to simplicity because we live in emoji culture, alright?

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So we don't even like to use words anymore, which is cool because emojis can reflect a lot of qualities and we can have a conversation with emojis. But because we have an emoji culture, what I wanted to do was put the top tier 40 plus foods, science back foods for improving metabolic health, supporting fat loss, improving cognitive function, improving mood and mental health, heart health, sleep, wellness, what are the best foods? Here's the science. But each of those foods have a little emoji by it. If it's targeting metabolic health, you're gonna see the little muscle emoji. If it's backing your cardiovascular fitness, it's gonna see a heart emoji, et cetera, et cetera. And so taking that food and now, okay, cool, I know all this cool stuff, Shawn, about sweet potatoes and one of the benefits, they have these really remarkable anthocyanins that can improve your cognitive function. Now what do I do with it? Just bake a sweet potato every day? That can be boring after a while. Now guess what? I got you. We're gonna make some sweet potato pancakes.

**ED MYLETT:** Yep.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We're gonna take that amazing food and those benefits and we're gonna have a really good time.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay. Do you know what I had for breakfast this morning?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** What did you have?

**ED MYLETT:** I'm not kidding you. I swear to you, sweet potato pancakes. [laughter] No, I'm dead serious.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Amazing. See, we're linked up.

**ED MYLETT:** No, I got his book a week ago. I think it was a week ago. That's no joke. My wife's gonna hear this and laugh really hard. That's what we actually had this morning. I actually had that this morning. I take this stuff really seriously. Like, I don't know about all of you listening to this, but I wanna know this stuff. I wanna perform at my optimum rate for as long as I freaking can. And I wanna know how to cook my food, I wanna know how to prepare it, I want it to still taste great. At the same time, I wanna understand. I don't need just the emoji thing 'cause the book is that. It's simple on that, but it's also detailed. Obviously you can listen to this man and understand this, I wanna understand the mechanism at work in my body.

**ED MYLETT:** And that's what's great about your work. Like little things that aren't little. He talks about sweeteners in the book. I'm just gonna give you guys little taste, okay? But this is something like, you walk from the show today, you could live healthier right now. So you went

through, he does this thing in the book that's awesome. Scary choice, sufficient choice, smarter choice. So let's just talk about sweeteners. Right before you came in, this is my third podcast of the day, you know I've got somewhere pretty important after this and I wanted to be at my peak with my brother here. So Sasha asks me, can I get you a coffee? I'm not a big coffee drinker, and I'm never a coffee drinker in the middle of the day, but I wanna be on my A game. Turns out the coffee machine wasn't working. That doesn't matter. What did matter was I was gonna add a sweetener to my coffee and it's changed because I read the book. So I just want to have everybody hear this. Scary choices, artificial sweeteners, conventional sugar, corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, which most people have heard of that. Here's what surprised me. I won't say what the sufficient choices were. I was surprised that stevia is a smarter choice. I was surprised to hear that, you recommend raw honey, I got that monk fruit, but stevia is a good sweetener? Like that's cool with you?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Alright. There's a distinction here because I've been in this field for 21 years.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I've experimented more than any human should. And maybe 15 years ago, I first started utilizing stevia, but I got the real stevia leaf.

**ED MYLETT:** The real stevia. That's the... It would be raw stevia. Is that what it...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So it's like a dehydrated leaf.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And it provides a nice little sweetness. It's so interesting that nature has that.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But it has a little bit of a, maybe like a medicinal aftertaste.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so you have to know how to manage that.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And because of its concentration and it's so much sweeter than sugar, a tiny amount can make a big difference. So a couple of drops of liquid stevia can do you okay.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And we've got some data on being beneficial for the microbiome versus artificial sweeteners having some significant downsides. And by the way, I shared some of the latest data with artificial sweeteners. And by the way, even as I'm saying that, even if something's scary, that doesn't mean you don't watch the movie.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Alright?

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You could still have a tryst with things from time to time and also finding what works for you. But just work to stack conditions in your favor. Let's do more of the smarter choice as often as we can. And I cannot have this conversation right now without talking a little bit about honey because I'm very bullish on honey right now.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay. Talk about it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This is the sweetener we've been having as a species the longest. And they dig up tombs the pharaohs and find honey. And still good, not that you should probably eat it, but you can, it's still active, it's still enzymatically alive.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** What can live that long? That is absolutely crazy. What is in that stuff that makes it so special? And I shared this mind-blowing study on honey that found that this... By the way, to call it a sweetener is a disrespect. We're like in a radio station vibe here and it makes me think about, put some respect on my name because when that happened. But honey is not a mere sweetener. These researchers found that not only can honey reduce your fasting blood sugar, okay? It can help to reduce your fasting blood sugar, normalize your blood sugar.

**ED MYLETT:** Interesting.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** What sweetener can do that?

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah, it does the reverse.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But also reducing your blood lipids, so blood fats, and helping to reduce overall cardiovascular risk. So honey, to call it a sweetener, but raw honey, just to be clear, it's... And also we gotta put this full caveat in as well. Everybody's different.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Okay? Even with that study, they're still gonna be looking at the average, there can still be people that honey's not your vibe, you're not Winnie the Pooh, all right? But for other people, for the majority of people, honey is gonna be the ideal sweetener. But even with that, how do we use it? How do we actually use this as a sweetener when traditionally we use this other thing, which the other thing isn't off limits, but I don't want us to lie to ourselves. Because even with stevia, if you got that powdered stevia, that looks like sugar, it looks like an illicit drug.

**ED MYLETT:** Yes.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's a ultra-processed food and we gotta be mindful of that.

**ED MYLETT:** I'm so glad you made that distinction.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Because a lot of my colleagues are very well-meaning, and of course we can... There's degrees of this, but they're saying swap out your baking and use all of this, use all this xylitol powder or whatever the case might be. Yeah, we might have some improvement in health potentially versus them using conventional cane sugar, but is that an ultra-processed food? And absolutely at the definition of the word, it is an ultra-processed food as well.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay. What about preparation of food? We're gonna run outta time. I feel like I have Albert Einstein in front of me and I get to pepper him with like 11 questions and then we gotta go when I wanna ask you about 300 of them. But let's talk about the where food is being prepared as well. So there's no secret, there's these issues with plastics. So chemicals that make plastics, what about these phthalates like in food? So whether we're... How do you feel about that? Like that's... Should that be a worry about how we store our food? What we cook the food on? Not just what we cook it with, but how we actually cook it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We grew up in the age of non-stick cookware, it's glory days. And when that hit the scene, it's a game changer, like everything's easier. Non-Stick, it's a vibe. Teflon.

This was just about 10 years ago. One of the components of Teflon was outlawed. It's banned. Alright? So this is PFOA. So this is poly... This is perfluorooctanoic acid.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Perfluorooctanoic acid. Because also sometimes I can get them combined with these forever chemicals. This is a forever chemical. So PFOAs, it was taken outta Teflon. Why was it in there in the first place? But the reason it was taken out, and I shared this study, this was published in one of the top cancer journals.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It was found to be a strong renal cancer causative agent, kidney cancer. So this was a strong kidney carcinogen.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So it was pulled out, no harm, no foul. No, there's all these other chemicals that are just keep coming out. And what they're doing is just like, instead of them scrapping the thing and like, let's create something safer, they're just trying to keep skating by, let the data just pile up until we're forced to change it.

**ED MYLETT:** That's crazy.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Now here's... Again, we don't wanna villainize anything because if you have a couple of non-stick pans, that's okay. Alright? What we did over time was just add in a piece from time to time. And so what are some of the options? Well, number one, cast iron skillet. It's one of the most time-tested things.

**ED MYLETT:** [chuckle] That's interesting.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And a well-seasoned cast iron skillet for a while because of the industry with the non-stick, they start to go after the cast iron and saying, where are you gonna get all this iron? And it is negligible compared to the other chemicals that you're getting from these non-stick pans. All right? But again, we can create some alternatives like ceramic. Ceramic is great as well as a non-stick option.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It has some potential issues, but we know that Teflon is a problem. All right? Also, stainless steel has been used for centuries as well. But, of course, you've gotta be more creative. That might not be necessarily for like non-stick cooking purposes, but let's bring those things back into the kitchen.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** A well seasoned cast iron pan, some stainless steel, start swapping out pieces every now and then. But over time, as you see that non-stick pan and all those chips that are just getting scraped off, those are in your body.

**ED MYLETT:** Gosh.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And they don't go anywhere, these are forever chemicals. And so we're having a revolution where not just with our food, this is a big part of this mission with the new cookbook, is we're transforming the kitchen culture. And just providing some education, but also in this conversation it could be a little bit more harsh, but it's a soft place to land. It's very empowering, providing options, telling you like it is, but also like, okay, this is cool, let's do this, let's try this.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah. You guys, I could tell you the thing about the book too is like the recipes in there, the few that I have had are delicious. Like, you're not sacrificing flavor, you're actually not, I'm just telling you straight up. Like you're not, like it's really great stuff. Alright, I got time for one more question. We're actually already over, like this flew by brother. Let's say you eat between, depending on how you eat... And by the way, he covers intermittent fasting in there. You can go through, he'll give you the preferred windows. But just eating in general. Let's give everybody a break or maybe we won't, based on your answer. Seven days a week, if you have seven days in a week, that means the average persons is eating somewhere between let's say 20 and 40 meals a week, somewhere around there. Depending whether they eat three times a day or twice a day, or four or five times a day, depending on their deal. How many of them can be not good meals?

**ED MYLETT:** How do you feel about a cheat meal? Or like, just eat whatever the hell you want. Go get a pizza, go get a hamburger, go blah, blah, blah. In your house, 'cause by the way, his beautiful family's on the cover of the cookbook. You can go on Instagram in a minute and you just see this man's... They walk the walk as a family. What percentage of my meals can I just not give a cr\*p and eat whatever the heck I want? Give me some permission here. And I wanna even know with you. As fit as you are, you gotta eat bad once in a while. And so what are we allowed to do within reason? I bet you haven't been asked that one this week.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** No, I haven't. Absolutely not. And where I start is I don't give morality to food. There isn't a bad food to me. There's even, again, scary, sufficient, smarter. It's still an option because if we were stranded on a deserted island and somebody left a box of honey buns, they're gonna help us survive. All right?

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** There's a context to where all these foods still have some kind of value. And I'm a big foodie.

**ED MYLETT:** I know. That's the irony about you. [laughter]

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We love food. And I grew up in a culture, household, my stepfather was an executive chef at Morton's of Chicago.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so he could cook. It was amazing, but a lot of times we didn't have much to eat ironically. And not being there and all the things, so we turned towards ultra-processed food, but we still had the skill set. So we're big foodies and also humans evolved chasing tasty things. Have you ever thought about why certain animals eat certain things? Did they get a book that said like, lambs eat this? [laughter] Why are they eating this today? The lambs are like going over to those bushes, we are driven to eat things that taste good. Food scientists have manipulated our desires for tasty things, absolutely. But there's nothing wrong with enjoying food. It's something special about humanity. And so with that being said, the context of ultra-processed foods, 60% of American adults diet is now made of ultra-processed food according to the BMJ.

**ED MYLETT:** That's horrible. I know you said don't make a judgment, but my gosh, that's crazy.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But it's worse for our children. And this is the first book that's publishing this data. I'm grateful for that. But this is a call to arms, the journal of the American Medical Association. They analyze US children's diet. For 20 years tracking this, they found that in 1999, the average child in the United States, their diet was made of 61% ultra-processed food. By 2018 it was almost 70%.

**ED MYLETT:** Oh gosh.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And it's continuing to climb. Most of our children's diet is not real food. And in that time span, by the way, we've seen about a doubling in childhood obesity.

**ED MYLETT:** Obesity. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Alright. Is that an accident? Did it just happen? And so with that, all that being said, so now we know the domain that we're dealing with. We know that ultra-processed foods are out there on the streets, but I encourage us to not give morality to the food. We don't have to have a cheat day, even putting the term on there can evoke some changes in our chemistry for some people that can cause them the struggle. Because there are not many things that you can cheat on in our society and still be okay.

**ED MYLETT:** You're right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Relationship, if you cheat, that could be a business, sports, we put that label on there, but with food it's cool. Maybe not. It depends on your psychology. So I would drop the labels and I'll tell you this, the very best time to have a food that might not be the best for you is when you feel well.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** When your parasympathetics nervous system is toned, when you're having a good time and you're enjoying life and you're feeling good, but we tend to do it when we feel bad.

**ED MYLETT:** Absolutely right. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And what we're doing is compounding the problem. Stress eating is a real thing. And simple things like what we're looking for even that little hit of carbohydrates boosts your serotonin production. And so maybe we can add some discernment in where we're getting those carbs. Like I'm a big fan of sweet potatoes, for example. But especially when there's joyous times, times of celebration, if you wanna dabble in some things, I'm a fan of that. We are here to experience and to taste. And I'm saying this from a person who's been in this field for 21 years and I've lived a time period where I was very dogmatic, as many people are when they find out about all these problems, it's hard to not be angry and wanting to revolt. But I found a place of balance and to really advocate for finding more joy.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Because here's the cool thing. Despite all the ultra-processed food out there, what we have access to when we change that ratio, which I'll give you a ratio right after I say this. When we change that ratio, what we're opening up is the door of abundance. There are thousands, tens of thousands of foods, let alone meals that we can create with all of these real foods that have been around forever. The most amazing meal experiences that

we have, if we think about it in our mental database, are often going to be incorporating real food.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah. True.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** When something is made from scratch, especially by somebody that you love, it's special, it's special. And so, okay, let's talk about a ratio. This is not the same for everybody. This is why I don't like to give this cookie cutter thing, but I'm a big fan of 80/20. 80% real food, 20% other stuff.

**ED MYLETT:** Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I think it's a good balance in our society.

**ED MYLETT:** That's fair.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I think it's a pretty good balance.

**ED MYLETT:** And doable.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And doable.

**ED MYLETT:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Exactly. And so we get a tremendous amount of these health benefits from the real food and also reducing the risk of all manner of problems if we're dabbling a little too much in the ultra process stuff. Again, keep in mind the average person in our society, it's almost 70/30, the ultra processed. And so just what if we switch? What if we flip that? The transformation that we could see in our families and our children can be remarkable.

**ED MYLETT:** You're remarkable. And I love you. Just so y'all know the behind the scenes, this is also one of the best people in public life. He's just a very good man. And he truly cares about his work. He's passionate about his work. I don't even feel like if... I don't even think it's worked for him, it's just a part of who he is now. It's his identity. And he's the best of the best. Today flew by, flew by. I promise him we are not going past this time and we blew past that time by about 15 minutes, just so you know, brother 'cause it went so quickly. Thank you for being here and thank you for the work you do. I'm grateful that you exist in the world, and I hope there's a fourth time we can break the record [chuckle] and we'll let Tony and and Joe know that you came on for the fourth time. Would you come back?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Absolutely. I love you man, and I really do appreciate you. Every time we get together, it's just, it's really special.

**ED MYLETT:** It's just not frequent enough. It's...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. And I live in LA now, so...

**ED MYLETT:** I know, well I'm leaving, but that's a whole other thing my audience doesn't know about yet, so I'm not gonna tell him yet. Okay, listen to me. You guys follow him by the way, on social, okay, at Shawn Model. He's got The Model Health Show as well that most of you already know about and go get Eat Smarter, the Family Cookbook. Trust me on this one thing, on this cookbook, the food, you're not gonna prepare every single thing in the book, but the three or four things that we've already prepared in our home were delicious. And it made me want to eat better. And I gotta tell you and eat smarter going forward. So there's no morality of the food, but at the same time, I like that 80/20, or at least that 70/30 that you shared with us. Alright, everybody, Max Out Your Life, share this with anybody who's alive, who you would like to live longer, healthier, and with more energy. So it's a pretty big demo to share this episode too. God bless you all, Max Out.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Thank you so much for tuning into this very, very special episode. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this and please keep this empowerment, keep this education, keep this conversation going. Share this out with somebody that you care about. This time of the year in particular, it's really good to support others, to share our voice, to give people some empowerment, to extend a little extra love. And also let's upgrade the gift giving this year, let's give the gift of good health by giving your family and friends a copy of the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook. You could pick it up anywhere books are sold, and of course your favorite online retailers as well, Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, all that good stuff. But this is one of those things that can be an investment into the people that you care about, into their health.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And this is all about love and about family and about empowerment. And I appreciate you so much for making me a part of your world. And I'm wishing you an absolutely amazing, amazing holiday season. And we've got some, I'm talking about incredible, incredible masterclasses and guests that are just gonna blow you away, all lined up for you coming very soon. So make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day and I'll talk with you soon. And for more after the show, make sure to head over to [themodelhealthshow.com](http://themodelhealthshow.com). That's where you can find all of the show notes, you can find transcriptions, videos for each episode. And if you've got a comment, you can leave me a comment there as well. And please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave us a rating to

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