

THE MODEL HEALTH SHOW

EPISODE 748

How to Have Boundless Energy, Health & Longevity

With Ben Greenfield

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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. One of the most recent longitudinal studies on human longevity found that it is not just our lifestyle practices, but it is our beliefs about aging that deeply impact our cellular expression all the way down to the level of our genes. Yes, our thoughts influence our gene expression. Every thought that we think has correlating chemistry that's released into our bodies, and it's a primary controller, an epigenetic controller of what our cells are doing. Now with this being said, there are certain cultures around the world that have automated conditions, cultural conditions that make their beliefs about aging healthy, that make their lifestyle practices correlated with healthy aging healthy, and also their relationships and how they relate with one another in these healthier cultures. That's really the secret that shouldn't be a secret. And on this episode, we're going to be talking about all of this because we're looking at first and foremost, what are some of these lifestyle factors and relationship ingredients?

SHAWN STEVENSON: What are some new things for us to take on as far as our beliefs about aging and how we're relating with the world around us that are going to help us to age more healthfully? Because aging is just going to happen. All right, it's a part of the package when we signed up for this earth experience. But right now, we have the opportunity to choose how we go through this process. And there are incredible demonstrations about what's possible. And also we have many, many demonstrations about the potential downsides and degradation that today more than ever, so much of it is largely unnecessary. There's so much unnecessary suffering, but we have to take our power into our hands and do the best that we can to stack conditions in our favor. And so when you hear about these places like these blue zones, where they have the most centenarians living over 100 years and looking at their lifestyle, it's not just the food. There are other components to this, but the food absolutely does matter. We're going to talk about that today. But there are other factors in this equation that need to be talked about because again, it's not just about living a long life, it's living a long, healthy life.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's not just increasing our lifespan, but increasing our health span. And in this episode, we've got one of the top nutrition and fitness experts in the world to help us to understand what's really going on in these blue zones. In addition, we're going to be

talking about why longevity starts at a young age. It doesn't just happen. Our focus on longevity once we get a little bit longer in the tooth or a little bit longer along that chronological age, it starts with the choices and the environment that we grow up in. And while getting kids involved with food and food preparation is so important right now, today, more than ever, which categories of nutrient dense foods have been overlooked and often cooked in unsavory ways and what you can do to add them in and to make them delicious. We're going to be talking about so many incredible things. So this one is definitely very special. Now, if you're really wanting to improve your health and fitness this year, I've got something really, really special for you. The folks at Organifi reached out to me and they bought a huge amount of the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook to give away. That's right. I couldn't believe it when they let me know about this. And they were putting this together as a bonus along with one of their most remarkable bundles with their superfoods that you're going to find.

SHAWN STEVENSON: They've called it the Eat Smarter Cookbook Companion Kit. And this includes their incredible gold formula, which is based on the powers of turmeric and this delicious turmeric latte. I talked about turmeric at length in the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook and different ways to utilize it. And part of the reason this was published in the European Journal of Nutrition and covered that compounds in turmeric can down-regulate inflammatory cytokines and upregulate the activity of adiponectin and other satiety related hormones, helping us to feel more satiated and helping us to burn fat more efficiently. In addition, turmeric has been found to improve insulin sensitivity, reduce blood fats, and directly act upon fat cells. Alright, and to top it off, there's so many different benefits here, but also it's one of the most remarkable foods that fits into this category of having anti angiogenic properties, meaning that it's been found to cut off the blood supply to cancer cells. It's special, truly it's a whole body nourishment, and that's the basis of the Organifi Gold Blend all organic.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And it also has these complimentary bio potentiators like cinnamon, like ginger, and also like reishi mushroom medicinal mushroom that is been found in multiple studies to improve our sleep quality and a lot more improve the health of our immune system. So they've got the gold blend in this kit. They've also got the red juice blend, and this

has these incredible super-fruits, these concentrates are all organic that have been found to improve the health of our microbiome, our metabolic health, and even improve things like our energy and stamina, all backed by science. And to top it off, the trifecta in this kit is Organifi's Collagen. It supports metabolic health, skin health to help to prevent fine lines and wrinkles. And unlike most collagen products, Organifi's Collagen utilizes multiple forms of collagen. So this incredible kit, when you purchase this kit at 20% off by the way, you're going to get a free copy of the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook sent directly to your door. Go to organifi.com/smarterkit right now and take advantage of this incredible Eat Smarter Cookbook Companion kit. You're going to get 20% off this incredible bundle of superfoods and also a free copy of the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is amazing. So very special head over there, check them out. It's organifi.com/smarterkit. That's O-R-G-A-N-I-F-I.com/smarterkit right now and take advantage of this incredible bundle just in time for the new year and the holidays and getting a fresh start of empowerment, good nutrition and education because as you know, there are over 250 scientific references in the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook, along with 100 delicious recipes, and it's a USA Today national bestseller. Very, very special book. And you're going to get that hookup for free. What a wonderful gift from the folks at Organifi. And on that note, let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

ITUNES REVIEW: Another five star review titled "A Must Listen" by M VELASCO 07. I recently discovered the Model Health Show and have been consistently impressed by the depth of insights and knowledge shared in each episode. I truly learn something new every time I tune in. Highly recommend giving it a listen.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome. Thank you so much for sharing your voice over on Apple Podcasts. I truly do appreciate that. And if you're so inclined, if you feel inspired, pop over to Apple Podcasts and leave a review for the Model Health Show. It truly does mean a lot. And without further ado, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day. Ben Greenfield is a New York Times bestselling author, health consultant and speaker, and he's been featured in a plethora of health and wellness publications. He has expertise in longevity, anti-aging, biohacking, fitness, nutrition, cognitive performance, positive psychology, and many other

aspects of health and wellness. Let's dive into this conversation with the one and only Ben Greenfield. Alright, my guy, Ben Greenfield.

BEN GREENFIELD: Hey, hey.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I'm so happy to see you, man.

BEN GREENFIELD: It's been a little bit.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. So I'm truly, truly happy that you're here. It's been a while because you're up in...

BEN GREENFIELD: In Spokane and I'm happy that I'm here too and not in Spokane, Washington. Not that I don't love it, but I was telling you before we started recording, I've literally got cold blisters on my fingers and my toes right now because I've been out hunting for the past couple of days and it's less than 20 degrees out there. And you can't wear your gloves some of the time because you're holding your arrows and your bow and your feet don't get to move. So it was nice to go for a walk in the sunshine today in a balmy, what? 50 degrees?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, we were dressed very differently right now because of your pre-exposure.

BEN GREENFIELD: Exactly.

SHAWN STEVENSON: For people that can't see us, I'm in a hoodie...

BEN GREENFIELD: This is baking hot to me.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And some pants. He's in shore shorts.

BEN GREENFIELD: And you're dressed up like you're going to Eskimo country. Yeah. [laughter]

SHAWN STEVENSON: Shore shorts and the tea. And yeah, man, I'm happy that you're here and you've created something remarkable, even with your new cookbook, and it's focused around something bigger than just food, funny enough. And you actually, the way that you put it together, you said that it's biohacking meats, molecular gastronomy.

BEN GREENFIELD: That. Sounds good to me. I just like to use big multisyllabic words. So yeah, boundless Kitchen, it's just the bastardization of cooking, basically.

[chuckle]

SHAWN STEVENSON: Part of gastronomy. There's many facets of it, but part of it has to do with culture, and that's the part that really spoke to me because I have a project that's focused on the same thing, food and culture and blending those together, but through your lens and your expertise with biohacking, and it is something really special. And if you could, I want to talk a little bit about the inspiration behind creating that, because it's a lot of work to put a cookbook together as you know, but why did you create it in the way that you did?

BEN GREENFIELD: What fun work. This is my second cookbook and I love it because in the whole promotional launch, you're cooking all sorts of things that you usually have to eat. There's a ton of new spices and ingredients and cooking methods and tools. I think of cooking the same way I think of language and music, neurogenesis and neuroplasticity and satisfying curiosity and marrying like hedonism to education. And for me as a foodie, writing a cookbook is... It's not a low lift but it is an enjoyable lift. Everything from getting the so-called food porn photos back from the test kitchen to hearing that they made the baked donut recipe better with a half teaspoon extra baking powder to then seeing all the photos and it come to life. And like you, I've read your cookbook, the Family Cookbook, and like you, I don't just like to give someone a recipe. I like to teach you why are you eating organ meats or why are you choosing grass fed, grass finished, or what are the properties of these different mineral rich nutrients or why would we pay attention to the gel-like hydrating water, consistency of produce that's rich in structured water or compounds like sea moss gel or shirataki noodles or whatever.

BEN GREENFIELD: So I think it's super fun, and the inspiration for it was literally just to take what I like to do anyways and kind of like Kevin Kelly's 1000 True Fans concepts. It's like, well, if I like to do these crazy things in the kitchen, there's got to be 1,000 other people who might enjoy taking out Sous vide and trying out a 72 hour brisket recipe to see what happens when you do something other than the barbecue grill. You know?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Oh man. And also your family's a part of this as well, your kids, and why is it important, especially today, it's on the endangered species list, a little bit of kids being in the kitchen and being involved in food preparation, and it's a skillset. So why is it important from your perspective to teach our kids about food preparation?

BEN GREENFIELD: It is a skillset, and it's something that mom and I have really emphasized from an early age, very early age here, when they could barely even stand, take this pinch of sugar and put it into the pancake recipe, or dad's going to hold your arm and hold this whisk in your hand and you're going to stir the gravy, and just giving them a real, real intimate relationship with food from an early age, culminating in, I believe it was when Tim Ferris published his book on learning The 4-Hour Chef, which some people think is a cookbook. It's a book about learning. It's a great book, but there is a spread in that book with something like 32 different variations of scrambled eggs, right? Moroccan scrambled eggs with cumin and coriander and Greek scrambled eggs with feta cheese and tomatoes and Japanese scrambled eggs with Nori and Kombu and Dulse. And so I brought my sons through the process of making a good scrambled egg and then spicing it accordingly, and they began to make themselves scrambled eggs every morning for breakfast. Now they're way beyond that. They have scones and biscotti and Dutch babies and things that I'm not much of a baker, but they bake and make these highly complex recipes from scratch.

BEN GREENFIELD: But it began with just making them a little part of each recipe and then starting with a simple protein with the right spices and herbs to make it unique. Scrambled eggs. I think that's a great place to start a kid, something like scrambled eggs and the benefit of it for a kid, I think most importantly is they don't fear food. How many adults do you know who fear food, who just don't even know what to look for? How many clients have you

worked with the nutrition who go to a restaurant? They're just like, 'Well, I don't quite know. I read the list, but I'm not sure. Do I order the Greek salad or the Asian coleslaw with the chicken, or do I do the burger and do I leave the bun off or do I do the sourdough bun?' So it's very confusing as we age if we haven't developed an understanding of the ingredients and the components of food from an early age. That's part of it is just a real healthy relationship with an understanding of food ingredients and nutrients so that a child knows how to feed themselves in an intelligent manner.

BEN GREENFIELD: Then there's a learning process, which I already alluded to, just the fact that it's a great place to learn. My kids are homeschooled, so it can count as math when they're putting together a baking recipe and learning metrics and measurements and volumes. It can count as social studies when they're learning to cook pasta. When we get back from Italy, having taken cooking classes and it could also count as language, there is problem resolution. There's the need to find substitutions. There is lifestyle based education by needing to go to the grocery store and shop around for ingredients in aisles on your own while mom's in a different section of the grocery store. There's so many components of it that involve a learning process. And then I think finally, a big part of it's just independence. My sons can wander into the kitchen. They don't need DoorDash and they don't need Uber Eats and they don't need a Hot Pocket, and they can go in there and craft a meal all the way down to cooking fine French dinners For mom and I on our anniversary.

BEN GREENFIELD: They select a different room of the house each year for our anniversary. We've been married 21 years. They've been doing this for about 11 years, and they put together a recipe list and a menu and get a special room of the house ready with a table and photos and candles and a multi-course dinner. That's a pretty extreme example of independence, but they can do that for themselves. They don't have to be fed. They know how to go harvest plants from the backyard. They know how to bow hunt. They know how to go out in the chest freezer and choose what they want to have for dinner that night. If mom and dad are out on a date, they have friends over and they teach their friends how to cook and make desserts and scones and baked goodies and pies and cakes and cookies, and they do have a little bit of a sweet tooth, I have to admit they take after their mother. But those would be a few examples would be the comfort with food and the intimate relationship with

it, the learning process, and then the independence that's fostered.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Yeah. Let's talk a little bit about the alternative when our kids don't have that skill set and what we're seeing today, and I shared that study in my recent book as well. This was published in JAMA in 2018, 20 year analysis of ultra processed food consumption by US kids. Nearly 70% of the average kid's diet in the United States is ultra processed food. And of course, there's going to be people on different ends of the spectrum, but it's a serious issue. And I want to talk a little bit about that with you in particular because you have such an incredible insight into the world of food and nutrition. Why are these, I struggle to even call them foods being such a big part of our kid's diet. Why is that detrimental?

BEN GREENFIELD: Well, again, it's multifactorial, but I would say some of the main things that come to mind is, first of all, when you look at the field of neuromuscular dentistry and you look at books like Jaws or the work of the Weston A. Price Foundation, you see that consumption of soft processed, easily chewable or swallowable foods result in a detriment to the formation of the teeth and the jaw structure from early on in age, all the way down to kids who aren't breastfed properly or for long enough period of time, not having the proper jaw strength, experiencing teeth crowding eventually later on in life, having to deal with the downfalls of mouth breathing, including most notably and concerningly sleep apnea. So as far as the way that a child's face is built, you essentially have a high risk of a child becoming a mouth breather, who needs more dental work, who struggles more with crowding of the teeth, who may not even have as much as I think this might be considered a shallow observation, the type of beauty and symmetry that's often valued in human societies.

BEN GREENFIELD: There's a lot that you're sacrificing by giving a child these hyperpalatable foods that might be easier for you to spoon feed to them, but that ultimately don't help them develop the proper teeth, mouth, and jaw structure. It's not as though you cannot, through dental work, through mouth guards, through proper alignment working with a holistic or biological dentist using mouth strengthening or jaw strengthening devices, chewing gum like Mastic Gum et cetera, redevelop a lot of those muscles later on in life. You would also want to ensure that you're getting a high amount of fat soluble vitamins like A, D, E, and K, which is

primarily based on a lot of the work by the Weston A. Price Foundation that's critical for teeth formation and for a healthy jaw and bone structure. And you don't find a lot of those in ultra processed foods. You find a lot more sugars and in many cases, seed oils or high amounts of carbohydrates.

BEN GREENFIELD: So I think that the first concern would be the jaw and the mouth and the teeth and the mouth breathing and the sleep apnea and the things that occur later on in life. I don't think it's any secret. You look at work of somebody like Vani Hari, the food babe. She recently wrote a book about this, all of the things that you find in the Gerber snack bites, which are basically like baby Cheetos or the Gerber baby food, which is essentially almost like liquid soda with seed oils added in. And there's a lot of problems with these companies that are using cheap ingredients, artificial flavors, preservatives, et cetera, that will either result in nutrient deficiencies, some type of toxin buildup or seed oil buildup in the body or both. And there are ways around this. Like there is a concept. My wife did this with our sons. You take organic fruits and vegetables from farmers market and local produce and you mash them together and you puree them and you blend them and you pour them into freezer bites and you make your own kind of like flash frozen baby food that you can then add fish oils to or olive oil or avocado oil or avocados and some of the recipes.

BEN GREENFIELD: There are companies like Serenity Baby Foods, for example, they have baby food pouches and little snack bites that are actually healthy. They use a higher amount of Omega-3 fatty acids, a higher amount of protein, less sugar, less seed oils, no seed oils. And so there are done for your options out there besides Gerber. But I think that the next thing you got to be aware of is nutrient deficiencies combined with a lot of artificial compounds that might not serve a child. And then I think the last thing that comes to mind is, again, back to the intimate relationship a child develops with food and the lack of fear of food that they get when engaged with cooking at an early age. You can also see a little bit of a psychological, dopaminergic ally driven addiction to hyper palatable foods with colors, with cartoon characters where the eyes are specifically designed to look at the child from the grocery store shelf as they walk by. So they want to put it in their cart to the fun of opening a crinkly, shiny package to biting into a pop tart or pouring a colorful box of cereal.

BEN GREENFIELD: And again, I'm not saying that there aren't some healthy alternatives of packaged foods because there are like you hear about, I don't know, magic spoon cereal or there's different pop tart companies out there that are kind of decent. But when you step back and look at it, ideally, a child should be educated from an early age on eating food as close to nature as possible, not food that you open out of packages. It's one thing that drives me crazy. I know you do a lot of work in the nutrition industry is how much of a focus there is on food labels and interpreting food labels when my take on it is you shouldn't actually be eating a lot of food that has food labels on it in the first place. Our pantry is mason glass jars full of seeds and nuts and oatmeal and grains and dirt cheap food from the dry bin at the grocery store that you cook, but it doesn't have a food label on it. And when you shop around the perimeter of the grocery store, like a lot of times when it's in your refrigerator, the produce and the crisper doesn't have the exact calories and carbs and protein ratios. Like I make water kefir and I make yogurt and I make all these little ferments at home and there's not a lot of scannable food labels in the refrigerator in the pantry in the first place. And I think it's important that a kid develop a relationship with food that doesn't look like it just came off the shelf of the grocery store.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, a huge insight is that the ingredient, if you're going to see some labels, the ingredient list is far more important than the so-called nutrition facts.

BEN GREENFIELD: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: To pay attention to what's actually in this.

BEN GREENFIELD: This is 12% fat. But where's the fat from?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Exactly.

BEN GREENFIELD: Like, is it canola oil or avocado oil or is this, I can't believe it's not butter or ghee or whatever.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Exactly. Exactly. And again, with gastronomy and being tied to culture, I

want to ask you about this because there's a lot of conversation going on now about these Blue Zones. Fortunately, the work has been out for quite some time. And even prior to the advent of the Blue Zones, researchers had identified certain spots around the world where people tend to live longer and healthier lives. And now it's kind of zeroed in on the food and the food quality, but it's getting expanded and we're looking at the culture around it. You've got an important perspective about it that goes beyond what people are being fed about Blue Zones. Let's talk about that a little bit.

BEN GREENFIELD: Yeah. So there's a lot that you can learn from the Blue Zones data. The thing I like about it is that because you're spreading the observations around the planet from Loma Linda to Sardinia, to Nicoya, to Okinawa, you're seeing a less myopic focus on low carb high fat, high carb low fat, vegan, paleo, carnivore, whatever even though it does seem to be skewed a little bit towards plant based diets as far as being the champion of a lot of these Blue Zones, which is interesting because if you look at the actual data, there is a pretty high consumption of everything from meat particularly fermented meat products, fish, eggs, grass fed, grass finished meat. Fermented dairy is huge in a lot of these cultures. And so I'm not sure if it's politically driven or what, but I think that there is sometimes a little bit of an impression that people get that you got to eat vegan or plant-based to be one of the Blue Zones, and the fact is they are eating meat and dairy-based products but they're far different than a Beyond Burger or a Big Mac. We're talking about fermentation and dry aging and wet aging and dairy from naturally raised animals and even the consumption of a high amount of organ meats rich in life-extending glycine versus the potentially age-accelerating amino acid methionine.

BEN GREENFIELD: And so there's a lot there, but when you step back and look at common characteristics of the Blue Zones, you do see things that no matter what diet you eat are going to pop up over and over again. For example, a high intake of a wide variety of herbs and spices and even plants. Not a strict plant-based diet, but eating sometimes over 100 different varieties so the amount of polyphenols and flavonoids and even so-called plant defense mechanisms that you're getting exposed to in small amounts on a regular basis to induce cellular resilience, you see that. You see in many cases, I know this confuses a lot of people, but microdosing with some type of alcohol. Bitters and digestifs and different

liqueurs like the wild plant-extracted Croatian, Polankovitch or Italian IboLibo or these type of liqueurs that are nearly medicinal or even just organic biodynamic wine that's grown using old world methods with less pesticides and herbicides and a higher concentration of antioxidants, lower concentration of sugars.

BEN GREENFIELD: You see some semblance often of fasting, either religious fasting or detoxification-based fasting or community-based fasting. You look at like the Mediterranean diet. A lot of people think that's unlimited breadsticks and giant refills of salad bowls from Olive Garden, but my dad, he practices the Eastern Orthodox religion and like half the year he's on some kind of a protein-restricted, oil-restricted fast, which I guarantee is definitely correlated with limited activation of mTOR, some amount of lifespan extension and there's obviously a sweet spot with protein and excess protein restriction can result in frailty or sarcopenia, but taking a break from food and having that systematically woven into a society, I think that's smart as well. Perhaps most importantly from a food standpoint, you see a relationship with food that involves eating it in a relaxed, grateful, parasympathetic state, often surrounded by people, with family, with friends.

BEN GREENFIELD: Meaning that you and I know this, like when you're talking and playing games and with family at the dinner table, you're chewing your food, you are spending more time eating it, you're giving your digestive system a chance to break it down in terms of the enzymes and the hormones produced, you feel fuller, faster when you're playing an hour-long game of Monopoly at the dinner table. You'd think you'd go back for seconds or thirds, but for me I'd take a half hour to eat that first course because I'm too busy building up my properties and I'm full by the time I'd normally be going back for seconds. Because I'm eating too quickly. And so there's that element of the body being ready to receive food because you're eating it in a glad, grateful state, surrounded by people not sucking down a superfood smoothie while driving 60 miles an hour down the highway on your way to work. Your body receives that food far differently. When you throw some of those variables in with things like sunlight exposure, nature exposure, walking your, whatever, pack of goats to the top of a mountain in the morning, natural water intake, low intake of processed packaged foods like we talked about earlier, low intake of seed oils, and generally more natural lifestyle.

BEN GREENFIELD: I think that you create a scenario where you can have a really long-lived person. And granted, there are exceptions to that, like the gin-chugging cigarette smoking grandma in Sardinia is like 110 years old, but then again, even that person is getting a lot of physical activity in the sunshine with family, with friends. You and I were talking a little bit about cancer before we started recording, and I even read this whole new book. Actually I don't know if it's new, but it's a book called the Anti-Cancer Living, and it goes into the fact that the top variable related to lower risk of getting cancer or better odds of beating cancer is human connectivity, meaning being around people. And so I don't know if there are any studies about this, but I would love to see like a measurement of, let's say like inflammatory cytokines, gut inflammation, and rise in cholesterol or blood sugar when you're eating, I don't know, supersized Big Mac meal with your friends and your family sitting around the dinner table laughing and enjoying a game versus just like hovering it over lunch while you're checking emails. And I would imagine there's even a little bit of a protective effect of human connectivity when it comes to eating junk food.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, yeah. We know this to be true. And now of course, we're using new scientific method to affirm these very logical things. And one of the things that you said several times already is you've said the F word, you said ferment.

BEN GREENFIELD: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right.

BEN GREENFIELD: Love fermentation.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And you also said another potentially dirty word. You said bread earlier, you said sourdough. Now let's talk about the difference because in the blue zones, for example, a couple of them, they're eating bread they're eating grains, but these particular foods have been, for some folks, categorized as totally off limits and even dangerous. Let's talk about sourdough. And also this is in your book as well.

BEN GREENFIELD: My wife's world famous sourdough fermentation bread recipe. Yeah. There

are some people who think that many of these populations live long despite their grain intake, not because of it. When you step back and look at the polyphenol content, even some of the hormetic compounds some of the nutrient density in properly prepared grains, I do think they offer an advantage. And there are some super grains out there. For example, Dr. Jeffrey Bland, the father of functional medicine, now raises a grain called Himalayan Tartary Buckwheat. It's one of the only flowers that we now cook with because it's so nutrient dense. It's naturally gluten-free, and has less of the plant defense mechanisms in it. And it's a fantastic grain. We use a lot of Palouse red wheat too, which is kind of like an ancient grain, like Einkorn.

BEN GREENFIELD: And when I use terms like ancient grains, that means many of them have not been bred for high yield crop or genetically modified, meaning they're less capable of irritating the gut and they're less concentrated in lectins like gluten, for example. So the source of the grain that you're fermenting is important, but fermentation in general is, it's an old school method of preparing food in a manner that predigests the food, that unlocks nutrients, and that even in some cases concentrates bacteria that are beneficial to the gut. So I've been making yogurt for the past three years on my counter. You can use a yogurt maker. You can use a food dehydrator in a pinch. You can use an oven on a very low setting. And it simply involves, and in my case, I like coconut milk. I don't do that well with dairy. We have goats. I do okay having some of the goat milk and goat yogurt every once in a while, but I do better with coconut milk.

BEN GREENFIELD: So I use coconut milk. I use these little tablets from Amazon called BioGaia. It's a lactobacillus reuteri. And I crush those up and I put it into the milk. And then I add a little bit of sugar and I put that in a food dehydrator or yogurt maker for about 36 hours. When it finishes, I stir in gelatin to make it really thick like Jell-O. And I always have a batch of yogurt. And you go to Irwan, you pay like 30 bucks for a mason glass jar of really high end coconut yogurt or goat's milk yogurt, whatever. I'm making this for less than a buck for an equivalent batch at home. So I constantly have a batch of yogurt going and amazing studies on this L reuteri strain. For example, a real culprit for gas and bloating in a lot of people is small intestinal bacterial overgrowth, SIBO. Dr. William Davis, who introduced me to this recipe, has seen the eradication of SIBO by consuming a cup of this yogurt over a four-week period of

time. Helps you sleep better, helps produce oxytocin.

BEN GREENFIELD: That's one example. I also make water kefir, which gives you nice beautiful slippery poops every morning. And it's fantastic for the gut. And it can be used as a cocktail alternative in the evening. I got dirt cheap water kefir grains from a company called Cultures for Health. Only have to buy them once because as long as you don't let them die, you can just keep your batch going over and over again and they grow like chia pets. You can give them away to friends. All I do for my water kefir is I have a really big mason glass jar on the counter and I put my water kefir grains into it. And then I pour, I like to use coconut water. Some recipes call for water and sugar but I find the composition of coconut water, not only does it have a good enough amount of sugar to feed the water kefir, but I like the flavor. It's like a richer, creamier flavor.

BEN GREENFIELD: So I usually use this once upon a coconut company because their cans are lower in BPA and they also do these, they have larger plastic containers as well. And I do about five cans of that in the glass jar over the water kefir grains. Keep that on the kitchen counter for 48 hours until when I stir with a spatula and put my ear to it, it's nice and fizzy. If I leave it out longer for that, it'll get a little alcoholic. So you have a fun time with your kefir if you leave it out for too long, but I like about 48 hours. And then I strain the kefir grains out and I put them in a little sugar water in the fridge to save them for the next batch. And I put the water kefir in the fridge and that's the equivalent of about four of the \$6.99 bottles of water kefir you get at Whole Foods or whatever. But I'm making, that's like a quarter for me to make all of that. Maybe a little bit more if you're using coconut water, but it's not that expensive.

BEN GREENFIELD: So that's another example. And then you can also use milk kefir. You're doing exactly what I just described, but you use milk kefir grains and like goat milk or cow milk instead of water or coconut water. I like to use that as a meat marinade. It also really makes eating Oregon meats taste fantastic. If you want to make like crispy, like some of the best like Southern style fried chicken you've ever had, you actually soak the chicken in kefir for 24 hours and then take it out and shake it up in the paper bag with the egg and the flour and everything. And it just makes the chicken taste amazing because the kefir enzymatically

degrade some of the chicken, draws some of the gamey flavor out, makes the inside moist, the outside crispy. And then finally there's the sourdough bread, which is the process of sourdough fermentation. Actually pre digesting a lot of the gluten breaks down a lot of the phytic acids and enzyme inhibitors that are in a grain.

BEN GREENFIELD: And you get this nice, crispy, chewy, gut-friendly bread that a lot of people who have gluten issues tend to digest a lot better. If you have celiac disease, you just still can't eat grains. It's just how you're genetically hardwired. But the sourdough process of fermentation makes bread way healthier. And oh, my gosh, when my wife makes a new batch of sourdough bread twice a week and I just slather that thing like bone marrow and honey and sea salt and use it as like a delivery portal for olive oil and squash and soups. And it's just it's some of the best stuff ever. I will literally have like sourdough bread with a bunch of honey and peanut butter and salt on it for dessert. I mean, it's just amazing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That is amazing.

BEN GREENFIELD: Yeah, Holy moly.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Got a quick break coming up. We'll be right back.

SHAWN STEVENSON: No lifts, no gifts. Here are just a few benefits of building muscle seen in peer review studies. Building some muscle mass can significantly improve your insulin sensitivity, improve your overall hormone health, improve your cognitive performance, improve your immune system, protect you against injuries and speed recovery and defend your body against age related degradation. This is just a small slice of what a little bit more muscle can do. Now the barrier of entry to building more healthy muscle and reaching a state of physical fitness is easier than ever. Having a few key pieces of equipment at your house can absolutely change the game for you. Kettlebells, steel clubs, maces, battle ropes, all of these phenomenal multifaceted pieces of equipment are readily available to ship directly to your door.

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the most premier training equipment in the world. Simple piece of equipment that you can do dozens, if not hundreds of different exercises with. Plus they've got incredible programs as well to teach you different techniques or unconventional training to truly create more functionality in your health and fitness. On top of all that, Onnit is also one of the world leaders in human performance nutrition. It got the most remarkable pre-workout supplements and post-workout protein that you're going to find all sourced from earth-grown ingredients, nothing synthetic. And they also have put their own products into real world clinical trials to affirm their efficacy. Again, go to onnit.com/model, that's O-N-N-I-T.com/model for 10% off everything they carry. Now, back to the show.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now you mentioned, for example, utilizing ancient grains versus what the f*ck is Wonder Bread? What is that?

BEN GREENFIELD: I don't know if Wonder Bread is actually food or if it comes from space. I don't know. It's a highly, highly refined grain that they've basically stripped out a lot of the nutritional components of, I believe, the brand and the jam. And the result is a hyperpalatable, super-chewy, readily processed food. If you put a piece of Wonder Bread in your mouth, you can almost taste it dissolve into sugar. People don't even know this about a lot of whole wheat bread you buy from the grocery store. The sugar raising glycemic index of that...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Is higher.

BEN GREENFIELD: It's higher than candy bar. It's nuts. And sometimes higher than the white bread. So yeah, bread, it can be candy more or less in terms of the way that your body interprets it. And just imagine you take two pieces of White Wonder Bread and you put a little jam in the middle and...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh man, you're a giant.

BEN GREENFIELD: You're just basically like a Yeah, like a diabetic sandwich.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh man. Now is Wonder Bread coming from an ancient grain?

BEN GREENFIELD: I doubt that would fit within their margins. Highly doubt that it would come from a super grain.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. We both talked with William Davis and he shared with me years ago. It's essentially there's this like, it's kind of like a genetically altered dwarf wheat. Just making the process so much easier to churn out this Wonder Bread. And Bunny Bread, that was our jam as well.

BEN GREENFIELD: Yep. I remember Bunny bread. I used to play a lot of tennis in Lewiston, Idaho where I grew up. And between the tennis center and my house was the little Hostess Twinkies Bakery that had all the old school, like they were like Debbie's cupcakes and the Twinkies and the Red Twinkies and this chocolate with the white filling...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Chocolate bars?

BEN GREENFIELD: Yeah. I would always drop in there. Yeah. I'd always drop in there and get a baked goodie. And then the way back or two would always drop in a McDonald's and get the, some kind of a big old supersized meal from there. So I grew up on this stuff. It wasn't until I was probably, I mean, I started taking nutrition classes in college. It really probably wasn't until I was like 24. I've been married to my wife for three years at that point. She had really bad acne and eczema, and she came home from the library at University of Idaho one day with this book called The Dietary Cure for Acne by this guy named Loren Cordain, who I later found out was like the father of the Paleo movement. And she just kind of cleaned up our house, right. All of a sudden, like the milk got replaced with natural milk from a local farmer, and there was less bread in the house and there was more olive oil and a lot more good meat. And it kind of got a little paleo-ish. And I started to feel fantastic and her acne cleared up nearly overnight.

BEN GREENFIELD: And that was when I really started to think beyond just the macronutrient back to the food label type of thing. That's the education that you get in a typical secular

universities and public universities as far as the what you learn about nutrition. It was then that I really began to tap into, "Oh, how did our ancestors eat? And how have we strayed from that? And what does food processing do? And what does seed oils do? And how can we eat closer to the earth?" But yeah, for me it was like 23, 24 years old.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Yeah. It's about the same for me as well. And I had taken a nutritional science class at that point, and again, we're kind of, I wouldn't even say that we're lacking in education, we're kind of miseducated in a lot of different pieces. But it was that outside of the classroom education and consuming all these books, and this is the cool thing about today, and learning from people like you like you get to learn from true experts, like the top people in their respective fields about this stuff. And not to downplay the role of my professor in my nutritional science class, but little did I know General Mills had contributed to our funding for the education, for the class, for the program. And they're one of the primary producers of ultra-processed foods. And the same thing too.

BEN GREENFIELD: Are you saying that lobbying can influence the educational process?

SHAWN STEVENSON: I mean, it...

BEN GREENFIELD: Never heard of such a thing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: If it looks like a duck. If it looks like a duck then...

BEN GREENFIELD: Never seen a coffee cup with a pharmaceutical company label on my doctor's desk. Never seen that.

[laughter]

SHAWN STEVENSON: But we had a hostess, basically a thrift store, right by my friend's house. And so the same thing, we go there because honey buns were like maybe 99 cents, but you can get like two for 99 cents or four for 99 cents and just rack up on all these different things, all these grain products.

BEN GREENFIELD: I gotta ask you though, is there still one that either based on childhood experiences and palatability and that dopaminergic response or comfort food response that you still go back to? Like, is there something if it winds up in your house, you're like, "I have no resistance, I'm gonna eat it."

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know what, man? I think maybe a part of it is that I don't see it, I don't see this stuff. But there are certain things that I think about that I can taste and it's just like, damn. Which is like, one of those is like Froot Loops, Apple jacks.

BEN GREENFIELD: Yep.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Those cereals is just like, oh man, that's a vibe...

BEN GREENFIELD: The milk from peanut butter Captain Crunch.

SHAWN STEVENSON: There's this guy Tony Baker, this comedian. He's like, he believes that cereal is the true soul food. Because of it's so diverse. It's always there for you. It never ruins a meal. It's like, it's always an appropriate time for cereal. And a lot of my cereal eating was actually in the evening, you know?

BEN GREENFIELD: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It wasn't this breakfast cereal thing. But man, that is some of the, you mentioned it earlier, just the marketing towards our kids and how addictive it is. Like, I'm literally right now as we're talking about this, like I know that. Like I was addicted.

BEN GREENFIELD: Oh yeah. Big time. And like not that this podcast I don't believe is sponsored by them or anything, but there are some companies, like, I forget the name of one company that recently sent me some really good, like chocolate fruit loopy cereals. Another one was Magic Spoon. My son literally like pours a bowl of magic spoon cereal and puts a bunch of goat milk in there and it's still processed food. They've still got some cold expeller

press sunflower oil in there. But I mean by all measures it's pretty healthy stuff. And so they're still getting that comfort food type of flavor, that nostalgic flavor that we all grew up with, but in a little bit healthier way.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. That's the cool thing about today too, is that just upgrading things, you know?

BEN GREENFIELD: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Taking something that is a big part of our culture and let's just do it. Let's do it a little bit better, but still recognize what it is. But we can do this a lot better without all the side effects. Is there anything...

BEN GREENFIELD: But for me, it's carrot cake, by the way.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Carrot Cake woah... Bugs bunny.

BEN GREENFIELD: I will eat carrot cake. Like it could be full on like gluten balm, canola oil. 'Cause if somebody leaves a slice of that in the fridge, it's gone.

SHAWN STEVENSON: What's up with that?

BEN GREENFIELD: And my family makes me carrot cake on my birthday, which is coming up on December 20th. So at the time, we're recording this for about 23 days or so. And I will literally like to eat that carrot cake that they make, man, it's beautiful. It's like a goat milk, colostrum cream cheese frosting. And they use the ancient grains and the carrots, which technically makes it a vegetable and maple syrup and cinnamon and nutmeg. And it's like a really great carrot cake. I will have that for breakfast, lunch and dinner until it's gone. And it's usually gone within about 24 hours.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's crazy fast.

BEN GREENFIELD: It's an amazing day.

[laughter]

SHAWN STEVENSON: Well, by the time folks are hearing this around, then you're gonna be full of cake. And also by that time, a lot of folks are gonna get their hands on this amazing book. Is there anything else you wanna share for people that they can look forward to in Boundless Kitchen?

BEN GREENFIELD: Well besides the carrot cake Acai Bowl that's in there.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Come on now.

BEN GREENFIELD: I think probably one thing that I mentioned earlier that seems to be difficult for a lot of people is what I would consider to be one of nature's most nutrient dense multivitamins. And that is organ meats. And I think that they can be delicious. You just have to know what to do with them. And they're inexpensive. A lot of butchers nearly give them away for free. 'cause nobody wants them in our day and age, even though years ago you hear stories about how the Native Americans would've given a lot of the muscle meat to the dogs and even the prized organ meats as the main nutrients for the warriors and the people who actually needed it to stay alive. And it's back to the part of it is the high amount of fat soluble vitamin content in organ meats.

BEN GREENFIELD: Part of it is the high amount of glycine. That amino acid that I mentioned is a little bit more life extending than the methionine that you find concentrated in muscle meat. But you just have to know what to do with it. 'Cause it's weird. I can tell you very simplistically to cut straight to the chase and there's more details in the cookbook, but the best way to do it is you get whatever organ that you're gonna cook, like, let's say liver or heart or kidney. Two perfect examples. Three good ones to start with. You take it out of the package and you rinse it, and then you take either buttermilk or Kefir and you soak it for 24 hours. And I like to soak it in either just a glass Pyrex container, or even better a bag that you can buy off of Amazon called a Stasher bags.

BEN GREENFIELD: It's a heat resistant plastic. And in a moment, I'll tell you why I like to use that. And after 24 hours, you rinse it and rinse the Kefir off. And then what I like to do is I'll take one of those Stasher bags and I put the organ meat into it, liver or kidney or heart or whatever, and I put whatever spices I want in there whether it's traditional like onion, garlic, thyme, rosemary. You could get crazy with paprika and black chili and lime and hot sauce whatever you want to do. It's like mix and match once you've got it into the bag with your spices. And I like to throw a little oil and vinegar in there as well, because I can take the liquids and put them aside after cooking it to make a nice little gravy or sauce, is drop it into a bucket of water.

BEN GREENFIELD: And I have this cheapo little tool that simulates what high-end kitchens use called a sous-vide wand. It's made by a company called Juul, and it holds the temperature of the water consistent over as long a period of time as I want. So let's say I want to have like melt in your mouth, a tender heart for dinner that night, heart super rich in protein and coenzyme Q10 and mitochondrial supporting compounds. It's fantastic. I'll put it in the bag and I'll put like, let's say some paprika, some cayenne, maybe a little cinnamon to spice it up a little bit of olive oil, a little bit of balsamic vinegar. And I'll seal up the bag, I'll put it in the water, walk away at 9:00 AM, come back 20 minutes before dinner, take it outta the bag, set aside the juices, and a little pot for a little gravy or sauce later on.

BEN GREENFIELD: And then I'll just get out like a serrated knife, cut it into slices, throw it for about two minutes per side and butter on a skillet. And I've got like fried buttered heart that's melt-in-your mouth tender that's spiced, that's ready. And it literally took me like all in about 15 minutes to make, put it in the Kefir bag, take it out of the the Kefir bag, put it in the other bag, drop the spices in, drop it in water, walk away two minutes per side. And I mean, it's, once you realize how flavorful and how much of a culinary adventure organ meats can be, and you start to realize, oh, I could just like soothe and spice and walk away and do a quick butter grill. It's amazing. Like, it's life changing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So these are all insights that you're sharing in the new cookbook. And along with how many recipes are in there?

BEN GREENFIELD: I don't know. That's good, I should know that. I think there's about 50 to 60 recipes in both of my cookbooks.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. And the photos are beautiful.

BEN GREENFIELD: And the new one's called Boundless Kitchen. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. The photos are beautiful. Then the food looks delicious. I can't wait to eat a meal with you. And can you let people know where they can pick up a copy?

BEN GREENFIELD: It should just be at boundlesskitchen.com, I believe. Unless something's broken, it should be there or on amazon.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Boundlesskitchen.com. And of course Amazon is a trusty retailer for books. That's how they started off. Now it's everything. You can get a Christmas tree or you can get coyote piss. And that's true story.

BEN GREENFIELD: Really?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes.

BEN GREENFIELD: Can I get coyote piss on my Christmas tree?

[laughter]

BEN GREENFIELD: So I'm in, I actually almost shot a coyote yesterday morning. I almost shot a coyote.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Well you see, this is what, when I say stuff to you, there's gonna be something that comes out of there.

BEN GREENFIELD: But I was waiting for a deer, but a coyote walked in front and we have chickens, so I was just about to just pull back my bow and shoot him. But I thought, "Eh you know what, if I do that, I'm not gonna be hunting a deer today." So.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh my gosh. Well, you can get it for fending off raccoons like they're scared of the pee, but that's a whole other thing. And that's in our next conversation.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright. My guy.

BEN GREENFIELD: Next time, you, me and some coyote piss.

[laughter]

SHAWN STEVENSON: Boundlesskitchen.com and Amazon pick up a copy today, the one and only Ben Greenfield.

BEN GREENFIELD: Thank you, sir.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thank you so much for tuning into the show today. I hope you got a lot of value out of this. This is another great cookbook to add to your collection. So many cool insights. And I love that a lot of the cookbooks right now that are coming from true experts in the field of health and wellness are centered around more community and family wellness. And so there's this great statement that there's nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come. And right now, this time is about true empowerment, family wellness, and getting our communities healthier. If you enjoy this episode, please share it out. You can take a screenshot of course and share it on social media. Tag me, I'm @shawnmodel on Instagram and tag Ben as well. I'm sure that he would appreciate the love. And of course you can send this directly from the podcast app that you're listening on to somebody that you care about. 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

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