



EPISODE 764

Burn Fat, Build Muscle, & Get Real

With Guest Mike Dolce

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SHAWN STEVENSON: There's a big difference between weight loss and actual fat loss. And this is one of the primary reasons conventional diets don't appear to work very well. According to a meta-analysis conducted by researchers at UCLA, only a small percentage of folks using a conventional, calorie-restricted diet are able to lose weight and keep it off. In fact, the researchers said, "Several studies indicate that dieting is actually a consistent predictor of future weight gain." Dieting is a great predictor that you're gonna gain weight later, according to these researchers. And again, this is a meta-analysis of multiple studies. In fact, one study found that both men and women who participated in a formal calorie-restricted weight loss program, gained significantly more weight over a two-year period than those who had not participated in the calorie-restricted diet to begin with. Now, is calorie restriction the problem? Now, if you dig a little deeper, the calorie restriction is not the problem. It's the fact that if we're not paying attention to where the weight that we're losing is coming from, that's going to lead to long-term struggles.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And with conventional dieting and weight loss programs, there's a huge emphasis on weight loss, and not looking at the fact that we're also losing muscle. The ideal scenario would be to lose actual body fat and to protect our muscle at all costs. Our muscles are really our body's fat-burning machinery. Our muscle is utilizing a lot of the glucose that we're consuming, and it's allowing for movement, it's allowing for performance, and also it looks pretty good. But unfortunately, there is this belief in health and fitness, and exercise and training and all these different domains that gaining valuable muscle, which is inherently going to increase your metabolic rate, while losing fat at the same time, is not really possible. It's either or, it's this or that. You can get with this or you can get with that, right? It's not really believed to be something that you can do efficiently at the same time. But our special guest is really going to help us to understand, number one, is this possible to effectively gain muscle and lose fat at the same time?

SHAWN STEVENSON: So that we're losing actual body fat, and again, maintaining our valuable Lean muscle. He's gonna share some profound insights about this process. And also look at what's really causing the biggest challenge behind the scene when it comes to our conventional diets. Because I'm telling you, this individual is one of my favorite people because of what he stands for, the man that he is. And also when you hear his bio and understand his experience, his credibility, but also where his heart is coming from, it's truly special. And it was such an honor to sit with him and to have this conversation today. And we talked for so long before and after the show as well. He's just one of my favorite people. And actually, it got me thinking about when I first met our special guest. And I thought it was

maybe like seven years ago, maybe eight. But I looked it up. It was 10 years ago. 10 years ago we first met.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And it was at an event in Austin at Onnit Academy actually. This incredible gym, incredible human nutrition and performance company. And they were doing a Grand opening of their gym. And that's when we first met and connected. And we've been friends ever since. And actually, how I found it out, I went and looked it up. Like, when was their grand opening? And it said, "2004." I was like, "Wait a minute, this is bananas." And there was a bunch of pictures actually up of the event. And I saw myself on one of the photos. I was just like, "Oh, my goodness, it was such a cool time." And at this time, this was right around the beginning of the Model Health Show. We'd been maybe doing the show for about a year. And it had already become the number one health podcast in the country, which is crazy. Coming from where I come from, this was all done from St. Louis, Missouri. And being able to make such an impact and to the degree that it had me flying out to Austin. I'd never been to Austin. All right? But I knew a guy named Austin, but I'd never been to Austin, the city. And shout out to everybody in Austin as well. There's the big mantra of keeping Austin weird, but I'll tell you what, Austin also has a lot of incredible access to healthy food.

SHAWN STEVENSON: There's such a big health and wellness community there and Onnit is kind of one of the jewels there that you'll find in Austin. And by the way, if you're not utilizing Onnit's fitness equipment, their steel clubs, their primal kettlebells, their steel maces. These are quintessential items in my fitness regimen, allows for so much creativity and functional movement. They're really the company that brought these tools to the larger market and I'm so grateful for them. But also they are really about that life when it comes to human health and performance nutrition. They've actually put several of their supplements through randomized double-blind placebo controlled trials to affirm whether or not that they're effective. And they're all based on earth grown nutrients. They're also where my family gets our protein supplements. There are several types of protein supplements available on the market today, from plant source to animal source, but the vast majority of clinical evidence supporting the benefits of using a protein supplement. So we're talking about that post workout protein, but the benefits of using a protein supplement are studies that are done on whey protein.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now, a randomized double-blind study published in the Journal of Nutrition found that overweight test subjects who were instructed to consume whey protein daily for 23 weeks lost more actual body fat, had greater loss in waist circumference, and had a greater reduction in circulating ghrelin levels, our body's primary hunger hormone, compared to test subjects who were utilizing soy protein or an isogenic carbohydrate drink. What's really interesting about this study is that the test subjects were not instructed to make any other dietary or lifestyle changes. Just adding in more protein, utilizing this protein

supplement, they lost body fat. They had a reduction in their waist size. And again, that reduction in their primary hunger hormone that would drive them to eat more. Pretty remarkable stuff. And Onnit has this incredible grass-fed whey protein processed in a way that is highly digestible. And for some of my family members, they might not necessarily jive very well with dairy. And so being able to digest this very well and to feel good and also to get this protein in and these other benefits.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Food first is the mantra. Absolutely. But if you're looking for a high quality, the very best protein supplement in the world, they also have plant-based protein as well. Don't get me wrong. Head over to onnit.com/model. And you're gonna get hooked up. They're gonna give you 10% off everything store-wide, including on their fitness equipment. That's onnit.com/model. O-N-N-I-T.com/model. Absolutely incredible people. They created a vessel. They created an opportunity for my special guest and I, for our universes to collide. And we've been friends ever since. And he's just such an incredible force for good. And without further ado, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day. Now, this is what our special guests wanted everyone to know first and foremost. He's a father of two daughters and a husband of 23 years. That's the first thing that he wanted to share. And Mike Dolce is the most successful weight management coach in the history of combat sports, boasting a 100% success rate in preparing world-class athletes for weight class oriented competition for over 30 years.

SHAWN STEVENSON: According to Sports Illustrated, Mike is the most sought after coach in all of professional sports. He's a four-time world MMA trainer of the year, martial arts hall of fame inductee, creator of UFC Fit, the only diet and exercise program ever endorsed by the UFC, bestselling author of *Three Weeks to Shred It* and *Living Lean*, and founder of the Dolce Diet. Let's dive into this conversation with my friend, Mike Dolce. All right, I've got my guy here, Mike Dolce.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I'm not gonna say that I'm not excited for shows, okay? I love this. But sometimes you have somebody come in, like I was really... I was excited all day. I couldn't wait to hang out with you. And we've already been... Hey, I don't know, maybe it's been an hour.

MIKE DOLCE: Yeah, we've been going.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And maybe I need to start like a... Some kind of a bonus thing to have all that stuff to share with people. But having you here is such a blessing because you are the most accomplished weight management coach in the history of combat sports. I don't wanna say this in a way that people take this lightly. That is a huge deal. Like this is something that's been... People have been training for trying to figure it out for a long time. And you've helped so many people. But more than that, you've helped countless other everyday folks who just

wanna feel good, who wanna be healthier, who want to prevent, reverse chronic illnesses, to lose the weight they've been battling to lose for years and years and years. And so it's such a blessing to have you here. And I'm gonna start off by asking you this long debated question. You didn't know I was gonna ask you this.

MIKE DOLCE: Bring it. Bring it. I'm here.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right now we have, thankfully, a muscle-centric movement. There's a movement towards building and maintaining our muscle mass. Is it possible to build muscle and burn fat at the same time?

MIKE DOLCE: 100%. Absolutely. It's not just possible. That is the best and most efficient way to do it. Now, most people don't know how to do it. So the default answer is no, that's not possible. And they'll default to calories in versus calories out, which they will on almost every conversation. Well, that is a way to stop the conversation and hide their lack of skills, knowledge, ability, and even it, it highlights their ego issues. And there's a lot of people in the industry that I could point to that are guilty of this. And they're acclaimed. They have the little letters after their name and you know, they build these testaments to themselves, right? To how important they are. But they can't answer that very simple question, right? And so simply, how do you do it?

MIKE DOLCE: Well, the easiest way to do it is we'll build more muscle, right? If I'm 200 pounds and I can add one more pound of muscle tissue, well, what just happened? I just reduced my body fat percentage, right? So I've actually gotten bigger by adding more lean tissue. And proportionately, I add more muscle than body fat. My body fat percentage just went down. That is what we do. That's what we focus on. And to kind of preface what I'm saying is I spent the majority of my professional career working with weight class oriented athletes. Every gram of tissue matters because we have to go out there. And this is in combat sports. So our athletes would have to go out there and fight at world class levels for 25 minutes against the best opposition the planet had to offer, right?

MIKE DOLCE: So the stakes are very high. Every gram of muscle tissue matters. Every pound on the scale has to contribute to victory. So my team and I ... we have spent over 20 years focused on this exact question. And what we've been able to establish is anytime we enter into an acute weight loss phase, the first question I have with my team is, how do we build more muscle? Not how do we lose weight? How do we build more muscle while losing weight? That's always the first question. Now, a lot of times we can look at just general intake. The entire show can be on this topic, but protein sufficiency, are you eating enough protein? Let's say you're eating enough calories, and this is calories in versus calories out. And the common simplistic thought is, as long as I drop calories, I lose weight.

MIKE DOLCE: Okay, maybe. But what if you increase protein and drop carbohydrates and your calories don't change at all? Well, now we're adding muscle tissue, or we're fortifying current muscle tissue, possibly adding muscle tissue, if we have the right stimuli, training stimuli and recovery protocols in place. And quite possibly now we are eliminating stored body fat, which is just simply an energy substrate. So that simple tilt of the equation, we didn't drop a single calorie, we just changed the blend. We completely changed the composition. And the last piece of this, knowing the more muscle tissue we have, the more calories the body's actually burning. Therefore, it is much easier and if you know what you're doing it's guaranteed that you will actually lose body fat as a part of the process, without having to overly manage total calorie intake.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love this already. I love this already. And just to even add on that, you checked every box there. And to add on one additional piece, which you know very well, that protein, the thermogenic effect of the protein itself. And if we look at, because it costs our body calories to process and digest the calories we consume. The digestion of food is one of the most energy intensive processes that we do. We're turning food into human tissue. We're turning food into usable human energy. It's like a miraculous process.

MIKE DOLCE: I agree.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But it costs your system to do it. And with dietary fats, according to the data that we have, we're using zero to upwards of maybe 5% of that caloric energy to digest those fats. Human body is very good at digesting fats. Carbohydrates, we're looking somewhere in the ballpark of maybe 10% of that energy. We're very good at quickly digesting carbohydrates. With protein, now we're jumping up to 20% of the calories that consuming from protein is getting used to digest the protein. And this is my hypothesis because again, the answer's not on the table. Why is that? I think it's because, well, one of the big reasons is that your body values protein more than any other source, because it's used for so many things. And so, yes, for our tissues, yes, our muscle, that kind of stuff, but even our hormones, they're made from proteins, right? Our neurotransmitters, there are so many different factors for energy creation, but also like the structure of our bodies. It is such a valuable resource versus carbohydrates. We can stop those up, use them for energy store some, but it's not really used to build tissue in the same way. And so I just think that because it's so valuable, the body puts a heightened degree of emphasis on, let me break this down and get everything that I can from this protein that this human gave me.

MIKE DOLCE: And I agree 100%, excellent point. And that highlights the protein sufficiency conversation. Most people undereat their protein requirements. They look at the very outdated recommendations of 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight, or one

gram of protein per kilogram of body weight. We know that we need double that, at least right? For you, for me, just as active healthy individuals. And if we drill down into the specific, then we can get more granular in how many grams you need. But in general, the average person needs at least a gram of protein per pound of relatively lean body weight. And that will scale upwards based upon their level of activity, but also their level of leanness. So the leaner you are, the more protein you actually need. The more muscle tissue you have, the more protein you actually need.

MIKE DOLCE: Many people, they glance right past that. And one other point I wanted to mention is that you mentioned digestion. And, it is a miracle. Again I might go hard into the whole calories in calories out conversation because a lot of the misinformation is based upon that. If you speak only about calories in calories out, you're completely disregarding the digestive system. So it's not what you consume that matters, it's what you actually digest and absorb that matters. And when we talk about digestion, and I want to use this cup as an example. Let's say this cup is an apple, or it's a piece of steak. It is perfectly visible here in this reality. We can all see it, we can hold it, we can touch it, we can feel it. Now, through the miracle of digestion, I will ingest this.

MIKE DOLCE: And through mechanical digestion, I'll start to break it down. And maybe chemical digestion, if it's carbohydrate and salivary amylase, I'm gonna start to break this down in my mouth. And then propulsion through the esophagus, and then chemical digestion into the stomach, right? And then a bit of mechanicals, it starts to like massage its way around. And it starts to push this again, this real world hard object. We can touch, feel, and hold through the miracle of digestion. Our body's actually gonna take this object and poof, it's going to make it completely disappear to the human eye, while still being here in this realm. Right? And it's gonna break it down so small and into its atomic parts. So small in fact, that this can actually then, while intact in the sum of its pieces, it can then enter into the cells of our body, which are imperceptible by like the most powerful microscope in your school.

MIKE DOLCE: You would not be able to see any of this happening, but it's still happening in the real world through the miracle of digestion. So when people discuss calories in calories out, and they pop their 100 calorie snack packs, and they eat their Pop-Tarts and their Oreos and their whatever protein pancakes, they're completely neglecting the digestive efficiency and the digestive process that is necessary in order to yield the sum of the parts of the food we're ingesting. And those are the nutrients which are then responsible to synthesize hormones, to create muscle tissue, to provide energy. All of the things that we aspire when we go to the gym and we lift weights and we run on the treadmill. All the things when we look in the mirror and we don't like this little part of our body, but then people are being told, again, by credible sources, that calories in calories out.

MIKE DOLCE: It's all that matters. As long as you're eating in a calorie deficit, you're gonna be fine. You're gonna lose weight. But again, that is wrong because they do not consider the importance of digestion, which is predicated upon the quality of the nutrients you are actually ingesting. And the body's ability to break that down, absorb that, and then partition that, send that throughout the body to where it needs to go. And the last piece of that is, if you're building a structure, building a mansion, and you have inferior parts laying on the job site, well, the mansion itself will be inferior. And if you don't have all the parts, because now they're rotting or they never actually made it to the job site because they were not able to be delivered there in the first place. What then happens to the physical specimen. It all starts to decay and fall apart. And I think that's one of the things hopefully that people understand when they make a decision to grab a piece of food or when they plan their meal, they're actually thinking about the quality of the nutrition. And years ago, I said, don't count calories, make calories count. That was this exact concept of eventually calories matter, like calories in calories out, eventually that matters, but never before the quality of those calories are first managed. I am gonna stop there.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love that, I love that you just even that last point of adding it, yes, this is the thing, and it matters, but we have all these prerequisites because the calorie itself is not a perfect measurement when we're talking about reality and how we're using it in the real world.

MIKE DOLCE: No.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's not like regardless of where we are, I can measure out a foot length, it's not like a distance, this is using a bomb calorimeter back in the day, because nobody's doing this, by the way, for the food products that you're buying on store shelves, they're not putting this into this device and incinerating it and seeing how much it can heat up water, your body is not this device, your body is incredibly complex. And I would encourage people just to think about, can your metabolic rate change how many calories you're burning? Can that change from day to day, from week to week? Year to year? And just when you answer that question, you realize that this calories in the calories out equation matters at a point, but what's determining how my body is processing those calories? That's what matters most. Let's focus on that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I love this, man, you kicked this off by sharing what is in vogue now, this focus on muscle, you've been doing this when the stakes are highest with the highest performing athletes in the world, years for years focusing on, okay, let's build muscle. Let's focus on building muscle and understanding in real world application, the importance of protein, and this brings me to the point of... I gotta ask you, you're my guy, you're here.

MIKE DOLCE: Let's go.

SHAWN STEVENSON: There's this assumption that we're already eating too much protein in America, we're eating too much protein, it's killing us. Talk about that.

MIKE DOLCE: We're not eating enough protein by and large, because when we look at the average... Look at the average American, the average American is either overweight or obese, where are we at, 70 plus percent of the American adult population is either overweight or obese. And that is worse every year. We have seen our lifespan go down the last three, four, five, six years. I think since Obama's term, life span started going down in a meaningful manner, regardless of what's, pre and post world events, let's say it's been going down. When we look at the childhood population, childhood obesity is at the highest recorded rate it's ever been today right now. So, it's not a protein issue, it's a over-consumption of total calories, and worse than that, it's the over-consumption of highly processed synthetic toxic chemicals, which make up the large majority of the average American food supply, and I use that term very specifically, it is the synthetic toxic chemicals that are creating food-like substances, but they are not food.

MIKE DOLCE: So when you have these microwaved boxed, canned, packaged, vacuum-sealed meals, these are not meals. These are synthetically crafted food-like substances that provide very low total nutrients. And what we had said earlier about digestion and nutrient quality, so now you're eating a maximum of calories with a minimum of nutrients, the vital nutrients your body actually needs to not thrive, to just survive, which is directly correlated to all-cause mortality in basically every field that we can look, whether it's heart disease, whether it's stroke, whether it's diabetes, whether it's cancers. All of that is directly food-related, and you speak with any doctor, you look at any piece of data, you're gonna see food and lifestyle is directly correlated to all-cause mortality. Again, the biggest issue is not that people are eating too much wild-caught salmon, I mean think how silly that sounds. You're eating too much wild-caught salmon. No, well, they're eating too much burgers...

MIKE DOLCE: Well, no, they're actually eating too much, highly processed synthetic toxic chemicals in the bread, like substance that is not real bread, and the fake American cheese, which is actually not real cheese, and the high fructose corn syrup and the red dye that is supposed to be ketchup because that's not actually ketchup, and then these potato-like substances that actually aren't real potatoes, they're just preserved with these synthetic toxic chemicals, and then they're slurping down a soda or a shake, and then they're having a little apple pie on the side. So, it's not the flimsy little four-ounce piece of meat, which is even that is low quality, it's not that. It's the vast majority of the other food-like items that they're consuming, and I will say that I've never known anyone that has a bias towards single ingredient whole food products that over-eats. And let me rephrase that. When you are

eating an apple, most people will not eat three. When you eat a donut or a cookie, which are similar in calories, one apple is about 100 calories, most people will eat a sleeve of cookies, hundreds to thousands of calories and still be hungry.

MIKE DOLCE: Most people will eat one, two, three donuts, a bagel with cream cheese, a chocolate croissant, something else, hundreds of thousands of calories. If you eat an apple, let me just keep saying an apple or a piece of salmon or whatever else it might be, your body naturally recognizes that and there's a whole cascade of biochemical signals that are being sent, there is a symphony of communication happening inside your body at all times, and as I sit here right now, my senses are receiving every piece of information and every harm and every movement and sound, but internally, there's so much more happening. When we consume the right food in the right proportion, your body is sending real-time signals, and most people don't understand that because they don't experience that, because they don't eat single ingredient whole foods, and I very clearly say, single ingredient. What is a single ingredient? Well, the only ingredient in my Apple is apple. That's it. Or when I get a potato, so there's dirt on it, well that's potato, it's not potato flakes in canola oil and whatever else might be in there.

MIKE DOLCE: So if now we're just eating these single ingredient whole foods, your body will naturally send these signals of satiety that it's fine, it's full. It had what it needs, and there's no need for anymore, but we know, and this is interesting, they've done studies on hyper-palatable food, that the ingestion of hyper-palatable foods leads to 160% increase of total calories consumed in a single sitting, that was based upon one taste. You know if you can't just can't pop, or you just can't stop or can't have just one or the crunch of the Cheeto or the Frito or whatever else it might be, billions of dollars are spent to ensure if you eat one chip, you will eat the bag of chips and you will crave more chips, so there's a whole other biochemical symphony happening that is working against you also, if you send the wrong signal. So, again, if we're eating the right foods, the high quality foods, you will naturally eat less foods and you'll be more nourished and the goal is to eat the maximum amount of nutrition at the lowest total caloric ceiling, 'cause as we said earlier, calories eventually count, but again, if you're eating the right foods.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love this, that you use the S word. You said signal. Signal, it's sudden communication that's happening from that food, which is a inorganic organism, and are how ourselves are interacting with it, it's sending data, and whether we're looking at this from nutrigenomics and nutrigenetics and how that data is impacting our gene expression, or just more superficially, how our cells are interacting with this, so as you mentioned, some of our satiety-related things that we've discovered is, even as I'm saying this right now, I'm struggling because there's so much we don't know, but.

MIKE DOLCE: And knowing that matters.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Exactly, knowing is half the battle.

MIKE DOLCE: GI Joe.

SHAWN STEVENSON: GI Joe, but we've got adiponectin, we've got GLP-1, we've got ghrelin, we've got leptin, all these different satiety, hunger-related hormones that we've recently discovered very recently. There's so much more to unpack here and for us to learn. But as we're eating a real food, our biology has an experience thousands upon thousands of years, generations upon generations of interacting with, as you mentioned, one ingredient, single-ingredient foods, and our bodies have developed this proclivity towards not, or an aversion towards having something that is one particular flavor for very long, we'll reach a satiety point relatively quickly. As you mentioned, eating three apples is just weird, like I've never done that, I've never eaten two apples. You know what I mean? If you eat an apple you eat an Apple. But I have definitely, when you mentioned the sleeve of Oreos, definitely done that, definitely done that. Four donuts? Absolutely. Whole pizza, yeah.

MIKE DOLCE: Yes of course.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Of course I've done that. We had the Papa John's special, at my first university I went to, a \$5 one topping large pizza. I might save a slice for tomorrow, you know what I mean?

MIKE DOLCE: Breakfast.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And it's just like, how am I able to eat so much of something that is so calorically dense, and it's really because brilliant food scientists crafted these foods to not have one notable flavor input. So it's really fiddling with our biology in that way, but not to mention the other newly-invented chemicals that create this desire, literally just driving us to eat more of them. And the list goes on and on. These are brilliant people. Their goal is to get you to eat more. Buy more of their product. And that is respectable. We live in a society that's structured around the ability to sell your products to the public, but where's the ethics? If you're tricking my biology and making me addicted to your food, there's a lack of integrity here.

MIKE DOLCE: 100%

SHAWN STEVENSON: But most people have no idea that that's going on. That meal that you mentioned with the burger and the fries and the apple pie, that sounds like my daily go-to,

and not to mention also, what are those potatoes cooked in? And yeah, I remember getting my mom... Before we were talking about the Stanley Cup, not the Stanley Cup, shout out to hockey, shout out to those St. Louis blues. And also those New Jersey Devils, of course, shoutout to your squad as well, but my mom, she used to get the super big gulps, but then they came out for a brief time with a double big gulp.

MIKE DOLCE: I remember.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We had to fold up the container in the store because it was so big, it did not fit on the shelf. And every day she would send me across the street. I was like eight, nine years old, I shouldn't have been crossing that crazy busy street four lane jump off and you know, going to get her the soda and just seeing my mom's weight progressively going up every year. And the onset of diabetes and eventually other chronic conditions, and this was the norm in my family, we just didn't know. And this is why your work is so important because you're bringing us back to very simple pieces of nutrition, but we just don't get it. We don't get it as a society. Now, just to add another layer of context in regards to, again, the generally accepted belief that we're eating too much protein here in the United States, research conducted by the US military and cited in the peer reviewed Journal of Nutrition uncovered that, again, looking at protein intake above the RDA, which is generally like for you not having a deficiency, it's not optimal, what the research has found is that higher protein diets were associated with number one, lower BMI, lower levels of visceral fat and improved cholesterol profile compared to protein intakes at RDA levels.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So the generally programmed thing from different documentaries and things like that that are slanted towards a certain bias are saying, people are eating too much protein is causing and all these cardio-metabolic problems. But the reality is very different. And I wanna ask you about this because you mentioned the study leaving people the opportunity to eat foods that they want based on whether or not there's ultra-processed foods involved, and that was conducted by the NIH actually, and finding, again, when ultra-processed foods are brought into the mix, we're gonna have a tendency to eat more. And I'm leading all this in even adding a couple of studies in here, because you and I both know that right now, science, even the word science is in a very strange place, and we need to be very cautious of the science that we're paying attention to, or most importantly, propping up pieces of science as the end all be all, talk a little bit about that.

MIKE DOLCE: Science has become weaponized in many facets of life, but let's just stick to nutrition and forget about other big picture concepts. I see so many acclaimed members of the scientific community cherry-picking science to push an agenda, and that agenda is self-fulfilling and it usually puts money in their pocket. So, they're using bullet points taken out of context from other people's studies, woven into a narrative and pushed back on to the

unsuspecting consumer. They use their charisma, they use their production value to sleight of hand trick the average person into believing what they're saying is true, but also that they are a trustworthy source of information. And when we look at the population well, clearly we see that's not true, and I'm not gonna sit here and name names because I'd rather talk about ideas than individuals, take the Lady Bird Johnson route in this one.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I know that quote.

MIKE DOLCE: And when we look at this, we realize that science is simply a tool used as a part of a debate, and when people debate, they are not debating to vet out what is true, they are debating to prove that they are right. And the more ingrained someone is in their position, the more personally invested they are in their position through monetary gain or just ego glorification, the more they will bend the science. And for myself, I have zero vested interest in bending science because I simply get paid to produce results. I don't care if it's keto or carnivore, or zone or vegan. For me, does it work? That's all I care about because my athletes pay me for results, not for my opinion or for a narrative. I cannot monetize that. So hopefully that kind of excludes me from... And people can feel free to dig around my background, dig around what I say, dig around in the points that I create or the points that I put out there and I'd say, do your due diligence.

MIKE DOLCE: Everything I say, please stress-test what I say. Okay, and once you do that, you will realize, I got a point. Now, with that, there's a lot of other individuals that they don't have results, all they have is other people's science, and then they cherry-pick that science and one of which... Maybe, and then guide me back if we are off topic here, but one of which is the fasted versus fed cardio conversation. And it's very important because many in the academic world say that there is no significant difference between fasted or fed cardio, but when you look at the real world of athletes, you find an overwhelming bias towards fasted cardio, especially amongst those who are leanest and fastest and on the winners podium. That's interesting. Now, again, for me, it doesn't matter. What is gonna get my athletes leanest, healthiest, able to perform at the highest possible levels, hopefully the fastest. We found an overwhelming success with fasted cardio. Now, the mechanism gets a little muddy, how specifically can fasted cardio be more efficient than fed cardio? That conversation is a fun one to have, but now let's talk about the science, because when you actually delve down deeper into the science...

MIKE DOLCE: There's a few studies that show... They've come to the conclusion by the authors, that there is no significant difference between fasted or fed cardio. But when you actually look at the numbers, you realize that each time the fasted groups lost more body fat. But within the realm of scientific opinion, they say, well, but it wasn't significantly different. Well, first place and last place is often not significant.

MIKE DOLCE: When you look at the 40-yard dash or the hundred, we're talking about multiples of a second, right? When you look at let's say the Mr. Olympia stage, when you look at the UFC, and when you look at someone who wins a world title and someone who loses the world title. Someone who goes home with a seven or an eight figure check and someone who goes home with a six figure check. Oftentimes the difference is a split second. That split second is very significant.

MIKE DOLCE: So, when we look at fasted versus fed and we look at the weaponization of science, oftentimes by the academic community to point to that for a reason I don't understand. It's like they all circle the wagons for a reason I don't understand. Because they don't say the fasted group lost more body fat than the fed group. Time and time again, they lump it in that there's no significant difference. That is one of the ways I believe, and that's just one example that was easy, 'cause it's some... I've been having some conversations on this and I've done a little bit of work on this, and I've gone down deeper even into a lot of the science and I'm realizing, more often than not, the fasted group has lost more body fat, has lowered their BMI, has improved insulin sensitivity, has just overall had a much healthier experience. Again, we can discuss the mechanism.

MIKE DOLCE: So I'm not saying, claiming to know the exact mechanism. I have some theories on that. But I'm saying the data clearly indicates fasted is more efficient. But the scientific community, and there's some names out there who really wanna rattle their sabers on this one, that say it's not. Well, who suffers? It's the person at home who's relying on the experts, the academics, right? Or those kind of that maybe just have a large following, 'cause that all of a sudden that infers some sort of credibility. So the person at home, they identify with one of the melons which is the whole another story that they see on their little tube, right? Just that person, right? And all of a sudden, you're a melon. You put a melon on TV long enough, it becomes famous, and people take pictures with the famous melon from TV, right? Although every single time it's on TV, it's a different melon. They just throw it out at the end of the day.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I'm picturing a melon with the Mr. Potato Head features that you could put on there.

MIKE DOLCE: Perfect. Briefly, if you have that same melon, when they opened the Mall of America, the buildup to the Mall of America local TV news station, they would have, hey, this melon is gonna be at the Mall of America on the grand opening. And they'd throw it out at the end of the night. Hey, melon's back to announce. So they threw out 30 different melons. And then the longest line at the opening of the Mall of America was the photo line to take a picture with the famous melon from the TV station. Well, it wasn't the same melon. It was just a melon that just happened to be on the boob tube, which now is our little three inch, six inch

screen. So if you're on that screen long enough, all of a sudden you become a melon, you become famous, somehow you become credible. And that's a lot of what's happening out there. So there's a lot of people posing as credible because they have charisma. And then they're using that charisma to project some sort of expertise by cherry picking out of context, bullet points from other people's science, creating this narrative and then pushing it into an audience and then selling the audience some wolf ticket.

MIKE DOLCE: Now, there's many different instances of that, right? Again, which one? So I'll just go back to the fasted versus fed cardio, or maybe we can go back to the protein studies and we could say that, the people who eat more protein, switch back there, I eat more protein than the average person. My blood work is impeccable, right? I probably eat a gram and a half to two grams of protein per pound. I'm about 200 pounds. I eat about 300, 350 grams of protein per day.

MIKE DOLCE: I eat zero processed foods. I eat low saturated fats relative to the proteins that I actually do eat. So, I'm the end of one in this specific case. But I would also say someone like you, the more fit people, we tend to bias our food choices to more protein dense foods. So, then the more fit people tend to eat more higher protein foods, and then we tend to do more fit things. Therefore, we have better health outcomes. We likely have lower blood lipid issues and maybe the manifestation of other types of chronic conditions and illnesses.

MIKE DOLCE: So, anytime I see these studies come out, I always have to pull back and I want to ask like, well, as compared to what is an important question? Keto is the best thing ever. Well, as compared to what? As compared to the standard American diet? That's probably true. As compared to a single ingredient, whole food, multi-meal, omnivorous meal plan? Not even close. Keto is not even on the list of being a good meal plan when you compare it to this type of program.

MIKE DOLCE: So again, I'll kind of pull out, I'm getting a little long in the tooth on this but, I want to just give that overall context of like science, it's so weaponized and it's unfortunate because the data's there, it's very clear. And it's the charlatans out there, and I'll use that term intentionally, the charlatans out there that weaponize it to take advantage of the average person. And I think that's what you and I, we care most about. It seems like these days is telling the truth and helping people. At the expense of our own income.

MIKE DOLCE: 'Cause imagine if you came out with a keto fasting program, right? Or if I did and we were selling all the fit teas and all the garbage out there. Pull the yacht around. Come on, let's go. Your jet or mine? Where are we going?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh, man. Again, I started this episode off saying I was so excited to talk to you today because there's so much familiarity when I hear you speak and spend time with you and just being a real person who cares about people. And just understanding, really, this is hard. This is really, really difficult work because there's so much nonsense. There's so much noise right now. And sometimes it's well-intentioned noise. But the difference and why I love talking with you and I'll tell you like this is in the top five reasons.

MIKE DOLCE: Okay.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Is that you've worked with real people in the real world? Before I even started the show, I worked as a clinician for 10 years, I worked with real people. I worked with people working at a university, in the university gym for years, I worked with people as a nutritionist for years being able to look another person in the eyes and to tell them, I'm going to help you, we're gonna figure this out, and we're gonna do whatever it takes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And knowing that I have to be accountable to that, I have to put my biases aside because coming into it, especially if you're "trained" in a conventional context, you have your things that you go to. And even if the person isn't responding as they're supposed to, which a nice chunk of people were not. Me coming in with the food pyramid paradigm, for example. It wasn't quite what I was doing at the time, but whatever diet framework it was, I have to be honest that it's not appropriate for this person right now. And finding out what that is.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And that might be contrary to what this study says over here. And so what that did was that gave me the catalyst to start to look at both sides of the equation, right? Because a lot of times some of these nutritional camps are at one end of the spectrum and then they're at the other end of the spectrum. And the truth is usually somewhere in the middle. And you've talked a lot about this. We've got one end of the spectrum, which we've got wonderful people who are doing well with the vegan protocol. We've got people who are doing well with the carnivore protocol. But we evolved as omnivores.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Our ancestors got us here with this particular brain and the genes that we have, eating a wide variety of different foods. And to ignore that is kind of silly. I think we should start there.

MIKE DOLCE: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And then refine it to what works best for you right now. And also give yourself permission. And also what this does is it opens up dialogue between the different camps so we can have healthy conversations. And so also a big driving force for me is making

sure that we don't imprison ourselves in a certain belief or diet framework where we're missing out on something that can really help us. Or we're having symptoms or disease onset because we're abiding by certain things that might've worked at one point and now we're hurting ourselves.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so we need to open ourselves up, have more healthy conversations. And also, I don't know if you saw this yet. Did you see the Oreo study with the Harvard guys that just came out?

MIKE DOLCE: I saw the headlines. I didn't find the need to drill down deep into it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, here's the thing. All right, so this was conducted by some researchers at Harvard. And this is a great example of this, exactly what you're talking about. And what they found was that folks, and it was interesting to me because I just had a really close friend of mine who got their blood work done and their LDL was a little high, but everything else looked amazing. But he was worried about that LDL being high because he does do a lower carbohydrate, not no carbohydrate.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But it's one of the things that you might see, but I was what are your triglycerides look like? What about VLDL? Are they looking at the particle size? All this other stuff, your hemoglobin A1C. It's a story that your blood work's gonna tell. We can't just identify you as an unhealthy person by this one thing. And so, what these researchers found was that being on a low carbohydrate diet specifically, led to LDL being a little bit higher. And this is really an N of 1 situation. Even in the study, people take a look at it. It's not just this broad statement, but that can be pulled from it if we want to take this and use this unethically.

MIKE DOLCE: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, what they found was that either statin therapy was one option or 12 Oreo cookies per day. This is real, all right, and eating the 12 Oreo cookies per day lowered the LDL cholesterol by 71% as compared to only a 32.5% drop within six weeks of intense statin therapy. So, the oreos worked better to lower the person's cholesterol. This is a perfect example again of not having context about what happens in the real world. We're looking for one isolated result. We're trying to manipulate this LDL number without paying attention to the quality of the diet, the health of the person overall. And some of this stuff can just get really silly.

MIKE DOLCE: Did they get into the mechanism of how can an Oreo cookie or how many Oreo cookies, how does that have any positive impact on lowering LDL? Was there any other

dietary habits that were changed at the same time? Was there any lifestyle intervention? Was there any other medicine that might have been changed? Like were they retested to make sure that there wasn't a flaw in the original test?

MIKE DOLCE: I would be very curious. It might be in the study or it might not be 'cause it's a great headline, right? I'm sure it got a huge click count. So I'm seeing it all over my social media. Right now I'm just realizing what the study, what they basically were trying to say.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Just the superficial view is, okay, this person's eating too low carb. That's why their cholesterol is high because they're probably eating the foods that we're advocating. And they're just missing out on these carbohydrates from these cookies. They just need to add in more carbs. And it doesn't matter the quality of the carbs, but again, having all of these things without context is a disservice.

MIKE DOLCE: Agreed. And that's the, as compared to what? Like in context, does an Oreo cookie diet actually improve overall health? Well, I don't know. I can't imagine any study that would support that, factually, right? They can rule out any credible study, I should say.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right, okay. Now, we started this conversation off with the big debate of can we build muscle and lose fat at the same time? And we have us another domain of people who've done things a certain way, but it's not always the case where if they're wanting to manipulate their body, put on more muscle, they do the bulk. And the dirty bulk in particular has been the fashionable thing for a lot of people. But we've already kind of put that to bed. You can build high quality muscle tissue and stay lean at the same time. But what is the ingredient here? Is it just patience? Is it time?

MIKE DOLCE: Right. You just nailed it. It's time and patience. With all things, you want to build a successful business. You want to build a level of financial freedom. You want to build a healthy relationship. It's time and patience and applied effort. So if we're trying to clean bulk, as they say, and I dirty bulked in my formative years. Back in the '90s, early 2000s. I'd just eat a massive caloric surplus and I dieted it all down. I'd be the same way I was beforehand with less skin quality from stretching my skin out and then having it to shrink back down again, So, it's like I looked worse over time as a result of that.

MIKE DOLCE: The clean bulk works a lot better in that we can simply eat at 300, as little as 300 extra calories per day. And especially if those are protein rich calories or 500 calories a day. You don't need to get up to a thousand calories per day if you're actually diligent. And you're taking the time and you are stimulating the desired response of enhanced muscle replication, muscle growth.

MIKE DOLCE: So if you're in the gym, you're applying progressive overload and intensity multipliers, you're giving your body ample rest. As far as training frequency goes, you're ensuring deep restful sleep, seven and a half to nine hours per night. You're eating the right foods at the right times. Typically, we say three to five meals, protein-rich meals per day to enhance muscle protein synthesis. If you're doing that and you're in that very small caloric surplus, you're growing muscle tissue.

MIKE DOLCE: You don't have any metabolic issues and kind of that would be rather rare. You're growing tissue and how much tissue can you grow? Well, we all have a genetic cap. I haven't put on any real muscle tissue, a pound a year. If I'm lucky now, if I can put on one pound of tissue, two pounds of tissue in a year it will probably be a great year for me at 47 years old in life. I've been training since I was eight years old. I pretty much hit my genetic limit unless I wanted to kind of go crazy, which I don't want to.

MIKE DOLCE: So now for me, it's a matter of maintaining the tissue I have as I get into the next phase of life, improving my athleticism, performance parameters, getting leaner, which is a really big focus for myself for the last two years or so. And then enhancing the quality of muscle that I have, rebalancing muscle tissue in some weaker areas. I can add a little more hamstring maybe or a little more rear delt, let's say, not much more quad. I don't think I can pack on 'cause I squatted heavily for two decades, right?

MIKE DOLCE: So you can kind of look at yourself and as you're a little more advanced maybe in training, you have to really nitpick where you can add new tissue, but if you're more in that novice to beginner, that that first six-month to four-year phase, you can pack on a lot more tissue a lot faster because you're farther from that genetic cap. And that's something that people need to understand. The average adult male, you can maybe put on 20 pounds of lean tissue above what your maintenance weight will be without performance enhancing drugs.

MIKE DOLCE: So, if you can add an extra 20 pounds to what your normal healthy athletic frame will be, you're gonna be capped out as a general conversation. Now, maybe it's 26 for one, maybe it's 18 for another, but it's gonna be about 20 pounds. But you can get infinitely more athletic. You can improve mobility. You can improve certain types of strength. You can improve your performance. You can improve agility, proprioception, and skill-specific training. So you can turn that 20 pounds into something that is vastly superior to almost every other human within a given skill set or against yourself.

MIKE DOLCE: So, for me, again, personally, my goal is every six to 12 months to kind of reinvent myself. I want to be training for something new so mentally I can stay engaged. I have purpose in my own training to get out of bed with a little that lion chasing me once again. But then it drives my body to a new level where I can focus my training on something

that's new that I can facilitate adaptation. And to circle back now to that lean gain, lean bulking, you only need 300, 500 extra calories per day in general.

MIKE DOLCE: But you have to be meticulous. This is where most people fail. Same thing with dramatic weight loss. Like you want to get shredded? You only need like a 300 calorie swing above or below maintenance. But most people are not diligent enough in those four to six meals per day that they're eating to be able to measure what 300 calories actually is because their breakfast day to day is three to 600 calories different if they have breakfast at all today, and they skip it tomorrow, and then they go out for a breakfast and they eat kind of the same thing. And they go to a restaurant, they have it at their house.

MIKE DOLCE: So, there's too many variables. And I think, again, maybe that swings back to the calories in calories out, which I always love to say. Well, if we're measuring, when we talk about calories in calories out, people only measure calories in. They don't measure calories out.

MIKE DOLCE: So, you're spending so much time measuring calories in, you're completely negating the second half of the equation, which is calories out. You just sat on your couch all day. You sat at your desk all day. Or yesterday, you're hanging out with the kids, walking around. You're so fixated on hitting your macros and your calorie targets Monday through Sunday, but your calorie outside is completely all over the place. So it kind of negates the whole conversation as far as the dogma goes. And it's like, you could have a leg workout that's just like a grueling 20 rep breathing squat, almost die on the platform. Or you can go and do some leg extension and leg curls and like, "Oh, I trained legs today." Like from a calorie out perspective, those are vastly different types of expenditures. And I just say this so for your audience listening, they understand if they're going to be so dogmatic and worrying about the calories in from a number perspective, then they have to be equally focused on the calories out from a number perspective. And I don't know anyone who can figure that out.

MIKE DOLCE: So, you can't. Therefore, what we do is we say, well, we didn't worry about that. The calories are going to take care of themselves focused upon, well, how about you just eat every two to four hours until you're satisfied based upon your activity level, eating till you're satisfied, not until you're full. And if you have a lower day, we'll eat a little bit less. If you have a higher day, we'll eat a little bit more. And then your calories will then match your expenditure much more than you backing your expenditure into a predetermined number that you set up or your coach set up or your app set up 30 days ago, because today is different than yesterday. So kind of putting that all together again, I probably slightly off topic, but part of that equation matters. It's not just the intake, it's the expenditure.

MIKE DOLCE: Nobody focuses on the expenditure, even considers it. They just look at the intake, but without the expenditure, it's two plus X. What does that equal? Nobody knows. So then they're just pontificating and they're just talking and talking and talking and talking and talking, but they don't actually have the real hard data to prove it.

MIKE DOLCE: Where if we wipe that away, it's like, well eat until you're satisfied, not until you're full, which enhances or it focuses on digestive efficacy and then eat based upon activity. So then you can self-regulate your intake in a more real time with a sensory approach. That will be the easiest way for the average person to make real decisions in real time and then get their body where they need to be. I mean, if you do that over a three day period, you pretty much know exactly what you should be eating forever.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Forever.

MIKE DOLCE: Forever.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We got a quick break coming up, we'll be right back. If you saw my circle of friends, I think you'd be surprised to see how many friends I have that are 20, 30, 40 years older than I am. I think it's one of the most valuable gifts that we can have in this lifetime is the access to wisdom and people who figure some things out. And one of the things that my 70 year old friend and mentor share with me is how vital it is to build and maintain muscle tissue as we age so that we can continue to do the things that we love to do. Obviously, long lived cultures, including those that have the highest ratio of people living over 100 years are avid tea drinkers. But there is one specific tea that is now clinically proven to support longevity by supporting fat loss and helping us to maintain our valuable muscle tissue. A randomized placebo controlled study published in the journal Clinical Intervention in Aging revealed that study participants utilizing the revered fermented tea called Pu'er lost significantly more weight, lost more body fat and had significant reductions in blood fats compared to those in the placebo group.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And if you dig even deeper into the data, you'll also find that they maintained more muscle mass than those in the placebo group as well. And that's what we really want. Tell me what you want, what you really, really want. Reduce excess body fat while maintaining our valuable muscle tissue. In addition to smart exercise and nutrition habits, drinking wild harvested Pu'er is one of my essential longevity practices. There's only one Pu'er that is wild harvested, triple toxin screened for purity and cold extracted to retain all of its superb nutrients. And that's the fermented Pu'er from Pique Life. And right now, Pique Life is providing us with up to 15% off free shipping. And for a limited time, you'll also get a free tea sample pack with 12 teas when you get their most popular bundle. Go to

piquelife.com/model. That's P-I-Q-U-E-L-I-F-E.com/model to take advantage of this incredible offer.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Again, this is a science backed tea that supports fat loss while maintaining our muscle mass. Head over to piquelife.com/model and get hooked up with up to 15% off free shipping and a free 12 pack sample of their award winning teas. That's piquelife.com/model. And now back to the show.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now this is, you just said it, and nobody's ever said this on the show before. We don't think about the calories out. We just don't. How many calories did you burn on that leg day versus this leg day? And just getting to a place of being more human is what I'm hearing. Just being more human is going to get you there. And also thank you for that piece of honesty about this is going to require consistency. You mentioned at this phase, being a highly trained human being, adding on one pound of muscle a year is substantial. Now we've got to look at where we are and to be honest about our potential. You just mentioned if somebody at their baseline, just kind of walking around, wait, if you weren't doing much of anything, being able to add on 20 pounds of muscle potentially, again, there's going to be a spectrum there.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That is remarkable. And you can be honest about, am I at that place where I still have 10 more pounds to go and I'm just not eating enough or I'm not eating enough protein or I'm not training a certain way. I'm not looking at those spots in my body where I could put on muscle that haven't been tapped into. So it's asking these questions, but when it boils down to it and this is the thing that sometimes we don't want to hear and you're the guy to say it. Are we being honest about, are we being consistent? Are we doing the thing? Because we have a society today. We have a culture that has programmed us. We've allowed ourselves to be programmed with this belief that stuff is supposed to be easy, supposed to come easy to us. When in and of itself, if we're talking about building muscle and developing our bodies, the requirement is work. The requirement is inputs, certain signals to reap those rewards. And it's not easy. Nobody said this was supposed to be easy.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We could find ease in it. We could find joy in it, all the things. But most often there's going to be some difficulties and you're going to bump up against the old you on that drive forward. And you have to decide in those moments. And I love this. You just shared a video over the Christmas holiday. Your family was at home, snuggled up watching, probably watching Christmas movies, watching Macaulay Culkin. And you were like, listen, you were in your car. Like, I don't want to be here at the gym today. I'm telling you, I don't want to be here, but I know what is required for me to be the man that I want to be, to have the health and the body that I want to have. I'm here right now. And yes, this is a sacrifice, but I'm redefining what the sacrifice is.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is to make sacred for myself and who I want to be. This is a sacred act. And I'm going to spend time with my family because you've also constructed your life in a way that is an abundant part of your life, too. But that doesn't mean in those moments, sometimes it's just like you know, and this leads me to the last thing I want to ask you about because the UFC and you've been four time MMA trainer of the year, and it just keeps on jumping to leaps and bounds as far as how lucrative it is and just the exposure, all the things.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But you walked away from that a few years ago. And a lot of people are just curious, why would you do that when you have so much going for you from the outside perspective? Why did you make that decision?

MIKE DOLCE: I appreciate the question and it's been asked a lot. And of course, a lot of my critics have used that as their own platform to say, hey, Dolce fell off. And whatever reason that they could kind of weasel into the narrative. And the true reason was, well, first intellectually, I had achieved a level of success that no one had ever achieved inside that realm. I became the most awarded and acclaimed weight management coach in the history of combat sports. And I remain the most successful. I am the only coach with a 20 plus year career and working at elite weight management athletics with a 100% success ratio. That means no athlete under my care has ever missed weight or underperformed in over 20 years. Now there are some big names and there are academics and PhDs and medical doctors and DOs and RDS and CS CSs and every combination of the alphabet you can think of and some very well funded companies and entities trying to gain headway inside that space.

MIKE DOLCE: And they've all failed in bringing their athletes to the scale on weight on time every single time. And I believe it's because they never knew the job. The most important part of the job is to keep the athlete healthy. That was my job. Keep the athlete healthy. And my conversation with my athletes would be, "Listen, I don't care if you make weight. I don't care if you win your fight. I don't care if you win the world title. And I don't care if you make millions of dollars. I care about you being 80 years old, telling your great grandchildren about the time you made weight, won the fight, won the world title and changed their life by winning millions of dollars. As long as you understand what I do, why I'm here, you'll understand then how I'll be operating and working with you." And they appreciated that because that's my job is to walk the journey. And I never saw it as a eight week one-off. It was not a paycheck for me. I was being entrusted by these humans to take care of them in a sport that almost nobody does.

MIKE DOLCE: And it was my job to aggressively protect them, knowing how dangerous that sport is. And I did that for over 20 years at the highest level, which is an honor and it's a blessing. It was just such an amazing career trajectory. And it got to the point that it was no

longer fun for me because I had been there and I've gone to hundreds of fights, cage side, backstage, like private jets, the whole thing, which is again, honored this guy growing up the way I did in my little town to be this part and making my mark. It was very special, but I was past it. And my wife and I were at a stage in our lives that we wanted to start having children. And I grew up without a father and I understood how challenging that was. And I wanted to be and promised to be a present father in raising my children. So a year before, and you know, thank God this worked out you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans, right? Well, my wife and I, we had a plan and our plan was working up until this point and building the business and getting to the place and all this. And now we're going to make a plan to have kids start preparing for that. And I'm very analytical.

MIKE DOLCE: I'm a planner and I track everything. And I'm this health science guy. And I wanted to make sure I wanted six months of training camp to make myself as healthy as possible. And my wife also to be these vessels to procreate and create these children, right? So I wanted to make sure we were spot on. And that's my own level of insanity. But you know, I took the time and my wife, she was bored with that. But also at that time...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Trying to print out the super soldier serum.

MIKE DOLCE: That's the goal, right? That's what we were trying to do. And I had some relationships with athletes. Now I had always worked where I worked with some of the greatest athletes, the biggest names, the Ronda Rousey's of the world. Superstars. And as those athletes were retiring, I wasn't taking on more athletes because I was already emotionally spread. To work at that level, for me, it was very emotionally taxing.

MIKE DOLCE: It was not just templates and meal plans like a lot of the other teams do. And I said, they weren't in it for the right reason. They weren't on the journey with this human, right? And I was on the journey. I was fully vested. And as my athletes would retire, I didn't have the room in my soul to give that to anyone else. And I could have taken work on and commanded a high paycheck to do it, but I wouldn't have been at my best. And morally I wouldn't do that. So as my athletes would retire, I just wouldn't bring on any more athletes. And that then was a part of the plan was to give myself the space to no longer be obligated to be on the road. Three years before my first daughter was born, I was on the road 280 plus days per year in 2014, 2013, 2012. And that's what I could prove to my accountant through receipts. There's probably another 10 or 20 days in there also. I just... Quick trip here and there, right? I was a road warrior. I was grinding. So moving into 2015, I kind of shed my stable.

MIKE DOLCE: I had moved my business to be more of consulting. I didn't want to leave the athletes. I wanted to still be a voice in their world and help as much as I could. And I really

started consulting more. And then my wife was pregnant in February of 2015, we had Victoria, our first daughter was born, which was transformative for me as a dad. It's like the whole world changes. And I've been all in and I even more went all in on being a father, a present father. I will be there when my daughters wake up and when they go to bed for the first seven years of their life. That was my commitment. And I don't know that all but a day or two here or there I've ever missed that. My oldest now is turning nine. My youngest is already seven. I'm now, I'm here, in California with you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It makes sense. I've been trying to see you for a couple of years. It makes sense. So amazing.

MIKE DOLCE: And that's a part of the reason why I kind of, I don't want to say I went MIA, but a lot of the travel, it was to me, it was ego glorification. And I didn't need... And I was aware of the draw because I was the man. I was the most famous weight management coach in the history of combat sports. And I was working with all the superstars and I got Hollywood celebrities calling me and I'm doing TV shows with Dwayne The Rock Johnson and MTV special, like all this stuff that was coming to me. And I was aware of that. And I didn't want that to make me someone I did not want to become. I wanted to be a dad and I wanted to be home with my kids and raise my kids in that type of world in that life and to experience that with them. But I also used that as a new father to focus on other families because I became so through my wife's pregnancy and me, I was like her corner man during her pregnancy.

MIKE DOLCE: She's the athlete, I'm in her corner. During that, I learned so much about it and I saw so many other parents and we were older. We were in our late thirties. So we were considered high risk just because of her age. She was over 35 at the birth of her first, which was great because we had all this extra testing and extra appointments. I love the data. So I'm the most annoying dad ever asking every doctors all these great questions. And they loved us because we were the healthiest people in their waiting rooms. And we're looking around and we just see so many families unhealthy. We see pregnant ladies sipping on Big Ups and Happy Meals and they're just physically not healthy. And they have one or two other kids that are equally unhealthy. And that was very startling for my wife and I. And then we'd speak to the doctor and the doctors were very kind and gracious and they would share a little bit about what their pain points are in running their practices and what's happening in the world. So that kind of started me moving more towards helping families and regular, what I call regular folks or everyday athletes. I went from elite athletes, pro athletes to like everyday athletes, which is just parents, regular people.

MIKE DOLCE: We should all be athletic, right? So I'm a businessman and an entrepreneur, and I run a fitness business, right? And that's kind of how I'm wired. And it was a way that I could still be competitive in the fitness space, but not in the athlete space anymore. And then it was

a matter of, well, how do I help? Like, there's, that's a segment in this population now. I understand completely what it is like to be a dad and a husband, and a growing young family, and then all the other issues of other families out there right now. So I kind of started to fill my time and my focus more in that side of it. And now here I am, 7, 8, 9 years, almost a decade later, which is crazy. It went like that.

MIKE DOLCE: And now it's like the UFC stuff was just, I look back at it fondly, but I'm not that guy anymore. And I still consult, and some of the athletes call me and some of the promotions, they call me. And I give my advice and I'd still like to be a formative voice in those conversations, but now, I think you and I, and there's a very small group of us, I think these like-minded coaches with... We all have these platforms and these voices, and we're trying to push back against the narrative, and hopefully the people that hear your voice and whatever little sounds that I can make over here, they can at least hear us and then they can stress test what we say, against all the other nonsense that's out there and all the big flash and all the charisma, and all the misinformation that they're being fed at their own expense.

MIKE DOLCE: So it's like, now that I'm here in this phase of life, I'm again, I'm at a bit of a new existential crisis in that like, all right, now what do I do from here? And I'm still kind of figuring out like, I'm still daddy. Like that's 100%, that's who I am. I'm always daddy first. But now it's like, how do I use my time, my essence, my purpose to give back to the greater community and hopefully help make the world better for my daughters and your kids to grow up in? 'Cause I don't want them to grow up in the world that I'm seeing right now. And I can do what I can do on the health side. There's a lot of other things that I'm aware of, but I can't, and I don't think I have the aptitude or the patience, but I think on the health side, there's a little bit more we can do.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Man, I love you, man.

MIKE DOLCE: I love you, brother. Likewise.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is awesome. You just even shared that I wasn't even expecting that part of sharing the season that you're in right now, and the questions that you're asking, because so many of us feel that we don't talk about it. And you shared earlier, even having your six month kind of transformation in giving yourself something to aspire towards for your fitness because you are human and yes, you're kind of superhuman. Let's be honest a little bit.

MIKE DOLCE: I try, I fake it, man. I really fake it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But it's not just on your sheer willpower. You're giving yourself something to motivate you. And so we need to ask ourselves that and understand it's not just gonna be a one-time thing. We're constantly evolving. And if we're doing this right, we are. And it's okay to have those moments, those kinds of transitions and finding grace in those moments. And also, what I got most from that story is honoring what means the most to you. So often, we say that our, and I'm just working with people as a clinician for so many years. When I ask people why do you want to lose these 50 pounds or... They come in there wanting to get off their blood pressure medication, they have diabetes. Why do you want to make this condition a thing of the past? Nine times out of 10, they would say for their family. I wanna be a good example for my kids. I wanna have kids and I wanna be healthy, whatever the case might be, nine times out of 10, it'd be something about their family. But then when I look at their lives, and how their lives are constructed, there's a mismatch.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Because so often, we have this belief that we need to get out here and do all this stuff and make money and all this stuff, and our family is sacrificed. Our relationship, and then eventually, we'll have that someday. And I remember, I think it might've been Jim Rowan. Someday I'll this magical place called Someday I'll have this great relationship with my family. If that's the most important thing, we have to stop with the excuses because immediately, stuff comes up in our minds, well, I have to do this, I have to do that. We are powerful and we can construct our lives in such a way. You did that. You made a hard decision.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You can construct your life in such a way that your family can be more of a priority. And I'm grateful for you to share your story, to share your experience, your insights, being a voice of reason in this sea of craziness especially the last couple of years. And I want more people to be able to follow you, to stay up to date with you always sharing great insights. Where can people connect with you and get more information and hang out in your world?

MIKE DOLCE: I think the easiest is Instagram. That's one of the platforms I seem to maybe understand and engage with better. So I'm a little older, right? It feels like, and what's going on out there. I don't have a team, it's only me, right? So Instagram, I think I just engage better on that. So I think that's the best way for people to kind of reach out, see what we got going on. And it's not highly produced. I wish that it were in many ways, but it's very transparent, it's organic, it's very real and it's always value added. It's just, I'm usually given stuff on Instagram that's trying to help someone out there.

MIKE DOLCE: I do a lot of Instagram lives for free that I'll do, and then I'll just kind of delete it afterwards. So I don't just clog up the timeline per se. But that's always a Q&A and I try there to give a lot of free information. We have our own little podcast, just The Mike Dolce Show, so

and you've been a guest and graciously thank you so much for that, which is an awesome honor. And then just our website, thedolcediet.com, which is just more general information, health and fitness and blogs and things like that. Very simple.

SHAWN STEVENSON: What's the IG handle?

MIKE DOLCE: It's thedolcediet. Everything is the Dolce diet. That's one of the branding things we've done rather well is type in the Dolce diet wherever you go, that will be the brand, the type, the avatar, the URL, just...

SHAWN STEVENSON: Bro, I just was about to say, I see you from Avatar. I was just about to say that, and you said the word. This is freaking me out now.

MIKE DOLCE: Okay.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright. Because that's one of your things. I see you. Right? And I was gonna say that in closing, I see you and I appreciate you and I respect you, and you're the man. I appreciate you, bro. Thank you.

MIKE DOLCE: I appreciate you, man. Thank you, Shawn.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The one and only Mike Dolce. I've said it before and I'll say it again, this is the year of muscle. Let's do what we can to fortify, to grow, to protect this valuable commodity. And as Mike talked about, really tapping into our genetic potential. And for many of us, there's so much more for us to access to be our best selves. And it depends on where we are. If we're just getting started, the upside is tremendous. We have so many quick benefits that are gonna come our way once we start lifting some weights, doing some, as Mike shared fasted cardio. So this would be just going for a walk in the morning, 20 minute walk. Our body's going to be grabbing onto our fatty acids, utilizing stored body fat for energy. And again, this isn't the end all be all. We don't have to do fasted cardio, but according to the science and most importantly, real world results that Mike is seeing over and over again.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This guy is called in. He's been doing this work when literally millions of dollars are on the line for somebody to make weight. But you heard it in his story, in his voice. The primary job here is to make sure that the person is healthy. Alright? Getting these tools, these insights to be a healthy individual for a lifetime, and make it that the foundation is really something special. And so let's honor our bodies, let's honor our incredible ability to build muscle and to burn fat. This is the year to do it, and just take one step at a time. Every day, keep moving forward, keep challenging ourselves. We're gonna come up against

resistance. Life is gonna present us with some resistance. And along that way, just again, finding creative ways to keep pressing forward. For Mike, one pound of muscle a year would be epic because he's walking around heavy on the muscle. He's muscled, alright? He's carrying, he's packing, right? He's walking around here, muscled up.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so for him, his goal is gonna be different. But no matter where we are on that spectrum, we've gotta keep challenging ourselves and staying tapped into information that keeps us in power, that motivates us to strength-train, to tap into our genetic potential. And this is why I'm so grateful for you being a part of this incredible community. And to keep this community growing, make sure to share this out with your friends and family.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You could share this on social media. This will be amazing. Tag Mike @thedolcediet on Instagram and tag me as well. Show him some love, right? Please share this out on your IG story. You could share this on other platforms as well, but that would absolutely make his day, I know it. And he's one of the real ones and deserves so much love and admiration for the work that he's doing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so please take a screenshot of this episode. Tag me, tag Mike. I'm @shawnmodel, by the way, on Instagram. Share some love. Food him with some love today. And we've got some incredible masterclasses with world class guests coming your way very, very soon. So make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day and I'll talk with you soon.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And for more after the show, make sure to head over to themodelhealthshow.com. That's where you can find all of the show notes. You can find transcriptions, videos for each episode. And if you've got a comment, you can leave me a comment there as well. And please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave us a rating to let everybody know that the show is awesome, and I appreciate that so much. And take care. I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.