

EPISODE 766

The 3 Biggest Reasons People Struggle to Lose Weight

With Guest Jason Phillips

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SHAWN STEVENSON: According to the peer-reviewed journal Science, the worldwide rate of obesity has tripled in the last 50 years. Right now we're experiencing a paradox. We have access to so much information regarding things like diet and exercise, but yet our weight continues to go up and our health continues to go down. The question is, why is weight loss so challenging today? Many of us know the basics, very, very rudimentary stuff about food and exercise, but as you'll discover today, there's some missing components to what we know and what we actually do in our society today. I'm very, very excited to share this with you, and it's a really interesting story, and I just found this out from my special guest that they actually found out about me years ago when I did a talk at Google. All right? So speaking of these platforms that's putting out all this information, this sea of information, I spoke there.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Of course, I'm trying to do my work, trying to get the good guys, the good information under the door and get into these different places but they were speaking at Google actually shortly after me, maybe a couple of weeks later, and they heard the buzz in the building about me. And I was actually there speaking to the folks at Google about sleep wellness. My international bestselling book, Sleep Smarter, had come out, and it was really making a big impact. And so I was there sharing some of the science. And you know what's so cool about it is that so many incredible things have come as a result of that book. Many different companies have been impacted, different companies have been started as a result of some of that information and people being more passionate about sleep wellness. And it's something that over time I've been crafting for myself.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Because here's the thing, just like we're gonna be talking about today, when it comes to nutrition and exercise and things like that, there are different seasons for different things and we all continue to grow and to evolve. And one of my favorite things that I've added to my sleep wellness repertoire has been something focused on my bedding. There are phases of our life when it doesn't matter at all what we're sleeping on, we could sleep on a pallet on the floor, we could sleep in the crevices of a friend's couch, it doesn't matter, all right? We're just sleeping however, wherever, it doesn't matter. But as time goes on, most



folks realize that there's a certain environment that is supportive of higher quality sleep. Because even thinking back on some of those circumstances I'd be sleeping in, I didn't necessarily wake up feeling the best. And so being able to optimize our sleep environment, to have the opportunity to do that is such a blessing today.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And one of the things that I absolutely love is my thermo regulating supportive sheets from Ettitude. These sheets are antimicrobial, self deodorizing, and they're also breathable, moisture wicking, free from harmful chemicals, irritants, allergens, they're hypoallergenic, they're also supportive of thermal regulation. And these are made from top tier organic bamboo lyocell, and a 300 thread count with organic bamboo lyocell feels as fine and luxurious as 1000 count Egyptian cotton. But in the production of these incredible sheets, it's consuming less than one third of that amount of water for the cotton plus no harmful chemicals. So it's kind to your skin and to the planet. And in a recent clinical trial, folks who were sleeping on Ettitude sheets had an improvement in their actual sleep efficiency of 1.5%, which equates to almost eight minutes more of restorative sleep per night. And if you add that up, that is going to equal out to be about 43 extra hours of sleep per year.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This doesn't mean that you're spending more time in the bed, you're just getting more actual restorative sleep from the time that you're in bed, which you might actually wanna spend a little bit more time in the bed in these incredible sheets. And by the way, 94% of folks preferred sleeping on Ettitude sheets than the conventional stuff that folks are sleeping on. Oh, and I gotta mention this, there was also a 25% improvement in mental alertness the following day after sleeping on Ettitude sheets. Go to ettitude.com/model and use the code MODEL15 at checkout, and you're going to get 15% off. That's E-T-T-I-T-U-D-E.com/model and use the code MODEL15 at checkout. All right, head over there, check them out. And by the way, they have a 30 night sleep trial. Sleep on them, think on them, dream on them. If you don't absolutely love them, you could send them back for a full refund. So you've got nothing to lose and only better sleep to gain, ettitude.com/model. And now let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

ITUNES REVIEW: Another five star review titled "Started From the Beginning" by Mrs. Moisey. My husband shared this podcast with me, and I was never into podcasts, but I enjoy The



Model Health Show so much that I started from the beginning and I'm working my way to your most current episode. I listen almost every day while I work out and sometimes after, it brings my heart and body so much joy and tranquility to listen to this level of information, not too complicated, but clearly backed by well-supported evidence. Thank y'all so much. Now, would you please share your morning elixir in writing with us?

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love that so much. When it said started from the beginning, I thought it was gonna say started from the bottom, now we here. But just going on this journey with me, so many folks, literally thousands of people every single week are going back and starting with episode one of The Model Health Show, which is mind blowing. And I'm so grateful for this and to be able to have such a diverse, powerful catalog of resources, this is what it's really all about. And keep in mind, if you're ever questioning about something that's going on in your life or somebody that you care about and you're looking for a resource, whether it's somebody's dealing with fibroid tumors or hypertension, or recently diagnosed with pre-diabetes, we've got masterclasses on these subjects, and this is often including the world leading expert on that subject matter.

SHAWN STEVENSON: If not, we're doing a masterclass where I'm providing an absolute abundance of peer-reviewed data and science-backed strategies to help to deal with these situations. And it's such a gift, and I'm so grateful for you going on this journey with me. And by the way, just mentioning the question at the end, it was referencing yerba mate, one of my favorite teas from back in the day that I've been having from time to time. And with any of these teas or coffee, you can add whatever feels good. Of course, we wanna avoid these ultra processed synthetic ingredients, but having some form of a high quality fat. So this could be anything from plant fats like coconut oil or MCT oil, or things like grass fed butter and ghee, different types of milks, whatever suits your fancy, all right? You've gotta create a vibe that you like and experiment a little bit. And by the way, we did a masterclass on my favorite teas. That's one of my favorite episodes as well.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We'll drop that for you in the show notes if you happen to have missed it. And again, thank you so much for leaving that review over on Apple Podcasts. And without further ado, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day. Jason Phillips has been active



in the fitness industry for nearly two decades. After overcoming a challenging eating disorder himself, Jason went on a mission to create impact at the highest level for other people. His journey has led him to becoming one of the most sought after nutrition coaches in the wellness space. He's been featured in an abundance of major media and publications, and also authored several books. And he's the founder of the incredibly successful Nutritional Coaching Institute. And be sure to stay tuned until the end of the episode and you'll learn about a special event that I will be at. And without further ado, let's get into this powerful conversation with Jason Phillips.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right, Jason.

JASON PHILLIPS: What's up, man.

SHAWN STEVENSON: My guy, good to see you. Thank you for coming to hang out with us.

JASON PHILLIPS: Dude, thanks for having me out here. It's amazing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: No doubt, no doubt. All right. So as you know, and you're very passionate about this, and you also understand and know and are proving that there are solutions, but the current state of affairs right now, and this is according to the NIH, right now here in the United States, we have 75% of our population is either classified as overweight or obese. And it's an epidemic, to say the least but we're not talking about from vanity metrics. We're looking at the significant correlation with increased rates of heart disease, heart attacks, strokes, cancer, Alzheimer's, the list goes on and on. It is a serious issue and we need to do something about it.

JASON PHILLIPS: A hundred percent.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so to have you here, I wanna ask you from your perspective, what are the three biggest reasons that people are struggling to lose weight? Because right now, simultaneously, there are tens of millions of people who are doing things to try to lose weight. What are the three biggest reasons that people are struggling?



JASON PHILLIPS: Man, so going to three is gonna be hard, but I'll give you like one blanket statement. I think the scariest part is, you know, here we are, it's 2024, we know more about health and fitness than we've ever known. We understand the application more of health and fitness than we ever have, yet the stats are what you just shared. We're becoming more overweight and we have higher rates of mortality. So the real question to me is: why as we have more knowledge, why as we have more understanding, why as there's supposedly all of these diverse applications, why is this still not working? And I think that's the question all of us have to be asking ourselves. You know, for me, I think, obviously the media is one, right? And I'm not one to blame, like I'm not one to place fingers, but I think that the media, obviously, there's always an agenda, right?

JASON PHILLIPS: And I guess like if people look at what we do for a living, are we marketers? To some degree we are, right? Because we have to get our stuff in front of the right eyeballs because we believe things to be true. And so we look at digital marketing and we look at the marketing of products related to health and fitness, there's always a very specific agenda. And anytime you're promoting one very specific thing, you're refuting everything else. And I think that that mindset is probably the root cause of almost everything wrong in health and fitness. Like, I've gone on record and I've said, every diet works and every diet doesn't work. Like you can't tell me that you can find somebody or that you can't find somebody that's done carnivore, keto, paleo, fasting, vegan, like you name it, they've done it and they've had some experience or some level of success, right?

JASON PHILLIPS: And by the same tool, you also can't tell me that you can go find people that have done all of those diets that have also not experienced success. And so does that make the diet any better or any worse than the other diet? No. But the individual has to understand, why does that diet work for me? Why does that diet not work for me? And the reality is we're sitting here calling it a diet, anybody listening to this right now has now probably created the assumption that success and/or failure of said diet is happening in a window of 10 weeks, 12 weeks, 16 weeks, 20 weeks. And yet, if you and I are having this conversation, we're probably thinking more so in the context of life, right? And I think that's where all of the problems live, is that we are speaking in very absolute terms when in reality,



everything has to be relative.

JASON PHILLIPS: It has to be relative to the individual, it has to be relative to the circumstance, has to be relative to the goal, has to be relative to the phase of life. You know, dude, I eat differently today at 39 years old with a 5-year-old daughter than I did when I was 25 years old, deep in the fitness industry, right? Does that mean my diet back then was bad? No. Does it mean my diet today is bad? No, I genuinely want to have a long, healthy, active life but the connotation of that then now differs relative to the facts of my life. So to give you three things, man, I don't, I think I'll be mistaken, but I think it all comes down to that one thing, which is more so absolutes and relativity.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love that. I love that. Context is a big thing for me.

JASON PHILLIPS: It's huge.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And we take that out of the equation so many times. And what I hear you saying is, so number one, we're gonna label it this, number one, then we're gonna go to two and three.

JASON PHILLIPS: Let's do it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: 'Cause I'm gonna get these out of you.

JASON PHILLIPS: Let's get it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Number one is the lack of personalization. All right? Because understanding yourself and understanding that you're gonna change, and also, and this is where you come in at also is creating this resource for people, having the right coaching, to pay attention to these things because a lot of times things are hiding in plain sight for us to, have somebody else with experienced eyes looking at things your life and helping you to plan things to fit you right now.



JASON PHILLIPS: A hundred percent.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And understand that that's gonna change.

JASON PHILLIPS: Yeah. I mean, yes and yes. And I'll give you the second yes, which is also, you know, I think that a professional, that person that has those second eyes also has to understand that we're not just implementing a diet, we're not even just talking about life. Like we're talking about emotions, we're talking about psychology, we're talking about, there are so many things that affect the actions that we take, right? We could talk about things that are successful in the fitness industry. You know, before we started recording, we're talking about one of our good friends that did my programming, right? And we could talk about, obviously all of his programs are wildly successful, but they're not successful in somebody that doesn't have the emotions to be implementing them on a regular basis, that doesn't have the emotional intelligence to look at the speed of results or the type of results, right?

JASON PHILLIPS: And there's so many things there. You know, I think, obviously my story starts in anorexia. You know, I was anorexic when I was 18 years old. And if you're a person of faith, then I have this very big belief that God put that in my life knowing that he had built somebody that was strong enough to not only go through this, but to withstand this and to come back from this and use it as a vehicle to change other lives. And so I've always looked at it and said, I would never wish an eating disorder on my worst enemy, because, you know, I've been open about on other podcasts, I'm 39 years old today and I might still label myself mildly anorexic, I might still label the fact that I have an eating disorder.

JASON PHILLIPS: You know, you look at me, I'm 5'9, 190 pounds, I walk around at 8% or 9% body fat. I don't think people think I'm anorexic, but I'm gonna tell you the psychology, it's still there. Like the body image things, like, they're still there. And so I think one of my greatest superpowers as a coach is the empathy I have for individuals. The connection I've been able to have to them and say like, I get it. Like, you didn't fall off last night, you didn't ruin your whole diet but when you wake up in the morning and you see the scale go up, or you look in the mirror, I understand the emotions that go into that, I understand the reasons you feel



that way, and I think we need to discuss that as much as we discuss the dietary interventions that we're discussing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Man, this is, that's powerful. This might be the most overlooked aspect because, and the truth is, it's arguably the most important part, which is paying attention to the mental and emotional health of the person, their own psychology, actually paying attention to their motivations, their fears, their strengths because oftentimes, again, we're coming in with this cookie cutter diet, which again, this is not to say that the diet doesn't work or that it will work, it's paying attention to the needs of the person and where they are mental and emotionally. And again, unfortunately, even though it's so important, it drives all of our decisions, how we're feeling, drives so many of our decisions, our thoughts, our beliefs and if we're not paying attention to that as a coach, as a practitioner, then we're really doing a disservice because we're setting people up to fail.

JASON PHILLIPS: Well, dude, think about it this way, right? As you're saying that, I'm thinking about two very distinct things. I started thinking about the physique industry, right? And in the physique industry, you go to somebody and they say, I'm dieting. You ever see somebody say that with a smile on their face? Like, yo, I'm dieting. Like, I'm so excited to be living in a calorie deficit and feeling like death right now. And the closer and closer they get to their show, and like their face is all drawn in and they're super lean, they're like, yeah, I'm dieting. Like, it hurts, right? And so, like, we as a society have placed this label on dieting almost as if it's suffering. Like, I don't think that there's anybody that hears the word diet and immediately has positive connotations, right?

JASON PHILLIPS: When in reality, I think anybody that is successful with a dietary intervention, I don't even wanna call it a diet, but I think anybody that's successful with dietary changes, with dietary interventions really looks at it as a lifestyle change. You know, we in the industry, we know that to be the truth, right? We've just evolved our lifestyle over the course of our years to become better, become physically more fit, to become healthier, to become, you know, to have more longevity, whatever it might be. We understand it's just lifestyle changes, but all of a sudden we bring that four letter word in and people are like, man, like this sucks. I'm on a diet, right? And you know, on the come up, like, in the beginning



when I was in my teens and my 20s, you heard that word, it's like immediately like, oh, like what kind of diet? Like, what are you eliminating? You know?

JASON PHILLIPS: The keto diet eliminates carbs, carnivore eliminates everything, vegan eliminates animal foods and it's like, why is everything so elimination based? Because for me, like if I think I'm going on a diet, if I'm really dialing my stuff in, I'm thinking about what am I gaining? I'm gaining more energy, I'm probably gaining more muscle tissue, I'm gaining better body composition, I'm gaining more overall wellness, better sleep, like the ability to spend more time with my daughter in my life, I think about that side. I don't think about anything I'm losing 'cause I'm not losing anything, I'm just making choices to have more in my life.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right, I've got one through three already laid out here. Number one, we've got a lack of personalization. Number two, we've got the mental and emotional aspect of weight loss, which is widely overlooked. And number three, we've got the psychological beliefs or connotations around dieting itself as a culture.

JASON PHILLIPS: And I'll give you one more that I think to be true, so we'll like... That I was trying to think of as we're going through this, which is I think a lot of people start dietary pursuits without any clarity on their goals, in that, so obviously I own the Nutritional Coaching Institute and we educate coaches a certain way. And one of the tools that I always use with my clients was I used to draw a triangle for them. And at the top I would write the word performance, the bottom left I would write the word aesthetics, in the bottom right I would write the word longevity. And I would give them a pen and I would say, inside this triangle, draw your goals. Like, draw me a small circle that represents where your goals are. And, inevitably, they'd put it wherever, but let's just say they put it right in the middle. And I would ask them, I'd say, okay, cool. Like, your goals are your goals, I'm not here to dictate your goals, but can you just tell me what does that mean to you?

JASON PHILLIPS: What does that mean your goals are? And they would tell me and they would say like, oh, I want to get a little stronger, I want to perform a little better. I definitely want to look a little better, but I want to live longer. And I was like, cool, can I tell you what I see? And they're like, sure. And I'm like, so you're okay with like the least, almost like the



average of each of those. Meaning, you are not going to perform as well as you think you can perform, you're not going to look as good as you think you can look and you're not going to be feeling or working towards living as long as you believe you can, that you're willing to make sacrifice in each of those so that you can have a little bit more in the other.

JASON PHILLIPS: And they're like, oh, well no, like, I really want to do this 'cause I want to look better. Oh, okay, so we should move it more towards aesthetics. Well, yeah, let's move it more towards aesthetics. Okay, great. Now let me tell you what I see again, you are okay for us to lose body fat and because we're going to need a slightly bigger calorie deficit for a slightly longer period of time, you're okay performing worse in the gym and feeling worse throughout the pursuit, 'cause we know those are the byproducts. Well, no, I don't want to feel bad. Oh, okay, so we should go back towards longevity. Well, yeah, I want to feel better. Okay, great. So you are okay not looking... And it was like this eye-opening thing where people are like, wait, I can't just have it all in one moment. Well, no. Like, we can't do that in one moment.

JASON PHILLIPS: That being said, over time, I believe everybody can have it all. It's more about what we want right now so that ultimately we can have it all forever. And I think that for me, inside the space, that was huge. Like getting... I started with CrossFitters and they're like, oh, I want to win the CrossFit games. All right, dope, I don't care how you look because you know what they give the person that wins the CrossFit games, they give them a medal. You know why they give them that? They give them that because they won every workout. They didn't look the best during every workout, they also didn't give them lab work and said, like, your labs say you're going to live to be 100 years old. They don't care. They are given an award for being the absolute best athlete.

JASON PHILLIPS: They give an award to Mr. Olympia for looking the best. I mean, we know if they gave them like a health screen, they're not living forever, right? We know if we put them in the CrossFit games, they'll probably have a heart attack in the first month or the first minute. And then the person that lives to be 110 years old, let's be honest, they weren't a very good athlete and they probably didn't look that great, but that's okay. And those are like the extremes. And we have to decide where our journey taking us. And I believe that it was that



understanding fundamentally that allowed us to really get people to what we mentioned in one, two, and three, which is that dietary compliance, which is that psychological mindset of knowing exactly where I'm going. And it does create context inside of the application of what we're doing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. This is... It's another big thing that I'm feeling right now and feeling the importance of sharing, which is there are seasons.

JASON PHILLIPS: Amen.

SHAWN STEVENSON: There are seasons, literally all of life...

JASON PHILLIPS: Periodization.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Is revolving around that, and there's really no escaping it. Now, there's degrees of seasons depending on where you are on the planet for sure but this is a part of our lives. And so, but being honest and paying attention to what are our goals during this particular season...

JASON PHILLIPS: That's it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And even within that, you having such an impact on the lives of so many people but this started with you figuring these things out for yourself. And I want to go back and talk about that because before the show we were talking about, I had no idea because even diving into your world and listening to some of your interviews and media and things like that, I didn't hear you talk about golf.

JASON PHILLIPS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so come to find out you've been about that life for a long time. Let's go back and talk about golf and then let's talk about your history with your own body image.



JASON PHILLIPS: Yeah. So I picked up golf at 14. Like it was, honestly, man, it was like one of those summer things. Me and one of my boys went to the driving range 'cause we were bored and I missed the ball more than I hit it and I left there and I declared that I was going to play with Tiger Woods one day. I was like, I'm going to go pro. So like that tells people like the, I don't know, naivete I have in this world, but like, I always believe that like people that achieve great things, they believe in themselves at an early age or like early on. And so I knew I loved it. I was like, I was hooked in it. And so by the age of 18, I was one of the top amateurs in the world.

JASON PHILLIPS: I had scholarship opportunities pretty much everywhere, took one and the summer between my senior year and freshman year of college, I had my first ever injury in my life. I tore my labrum in my left shoulder, and I found myself in the rehab setting. First time I'd ever stepped foot in a gym. I never wanted to pick up a weight, they looked way too heavy, right? And, dude, like when I say I didn't eat healthy, I grew up in an all American household. Dinner every night was like mac and cheese, chicken fingers, pizza. If it was unhealthy, it was served in my house, if it was healthy, we didn't talk about it. Like that's the household I grew up in. And so all of a sudden I find myself in this setting, and I'm like, kind of like it, this is kind of cool.

JASON PHILLIPS: I felt this self-improvement journey and I noticed everyone around me looked like they felt better. And I was like, all right, this is kind of cool. And two critical things happened in that moment or in that timeframe. One, I was, this is 2002 by the way, just to set the stage. I was in Abercrombie & Fitch, and I leave Abercrombie & Fitch, and this modeling recruiter says to me, she says, "Hey, you should model for us." And I was like 18 years old Abercrombie model, I was like, it's like my wet dream.

[laughter]

JASON PHILLIPS: Every female in the world is going to fucking want to be with me, right? And every guy's going to think I'm the coolest guy in the world. And I was like, all right, dope. And so she gives me her card and she says, make sure when you send pictures, you send pictures



of your abs. Bro, let me remind you, I ate mac and cheese, I ate chicken fingers, I ate burgers, I didn't have abs. I was what most people would call skinny fat, right? And I'm like, okay, yep, I'll do that. And bro, I'm like asking everyone, how do I get abs? How do I get abs? And so my pediatrician at the time, really good family friend, and he was like, oh, he is like, just read the magazines, read, it's everything nutrition, right? It's all nutrition. And I was like, all right. And so I started reading everything. Like, I think my parents probably thought something weird about me.

JASON PHILLIPS: Like I had Muscle and Fitness and Flex and Ironman and Muscle Mag, and it's just a bunch of dudes and no clothes and they're like, what's going on with my son? But, it was all like, it was all nutrition, right? I'm trying to look a certain way. And all I saw was lists of don't eat this, don't eat this, don't eat this. And so I had this massive list of what I couldn't do, and it's obviously like, do lots of cardio, right? So I'm like going down this rabbit hole, and it wasn't bad at first, but then I was at a football game for like a local high school with a couple of my friends and we walked by another one of my friends who was with his dad. And his dad looks at me and he says, "You've been in the gym?" He said, "You are losing some of that fat."

JASON PHILLIPS: And bro, when I tell you those words pierced me, I could right now this second draw you a picture and tell you exactly where I was standing, where the scoreboard was, what the field looked like, who was around me, like, that moment will live ingrained, burned in my brain forever, because it was the first moment in 18 years that I had ever considered I have fat, I am fat. Like, I don't know what the identification was, but it wasn't good. And I was like, man, I went home and like, that's all I could think about. And so it drove me back to this list of things I shouldn't be eating, it drove me back to these actions I was supposed to be doing. Before I knew it, man, I was eating like 800 calories a day, doing two hours of cardio a day, and basically berating myself anytime I deviated from what I had read in the magazines. And I ended up 118 pounds, again at like 5 '9 with the testosterone of a 90-year-old male.

JASON PHILLIPS: And I was two days away from a clinical intervention when I came out of it and I'm very grateful for the coach that got me out of it. And, but it was that, right? And I



talked about earlier, it was that test that I think God gave me to want to pay it forward, to want to help people. And so I know what it's like to be at rock bottom, in those moments, man. I mean, I could go deep into the rabbit hole, I was suicidal, I almost lost my life, like it was a bad time but I learned a lot. And so I think it gives me the ability to now look at that. But back to the golf side, I ended up, I went to Florida State to get my degree. I went there and I did the party thing for like a year and realized like I don't want to waste my life. And so while everyone was partying, I needed something to do. So I moved down to the golf course and I started playing golf again.

JASON PHILLIPS: And I left my senior year to play professionally. So I did play two years professionally. I was probably the worst pro ever on tour, so not that I was very good. I don't say I was pro 'cause I was very good, I just barely made it. And then honestly, man, I got in the field and put the golf clubs away, put them away for a better part of 10, 12 years and then just hustled to do what we're doing today. I've been very fortunate, but then two years ago I lost my father and it was my dad's dream to see me play at the highest level. And so we lost him and I'm just committed I was at least going to play again. And turns out I was still pretty decent. So I won my club championship that year, and as I told you off air, my goal is to become one of the top amateurs in the world, and there's a back doorway to Augusta. So that's my side hustle.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh, man, I love it. I love it. Such a great story, man. And this speaks perfectly to the seasons.

JASON PHILLIPS: Yeah, that's it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I want to ask you just circle back a little bit, because this is one of the things we've seen increasing as well, is, eating disorders among children. And this is one of those epidemics that isn't getting a lot of attention, and you just shared an aspect that is widely overlooked. We see higher rates of suicide ideation, of mental health issues, but we don't usually put the two together with eating disorders, with depriving oneself on the basic things that your brain needs. Let's talk a little bit more about that.



JASON PHILLIPS: Man, it's a rabbit hole. It's a vicious cycle. I think at the core, I didn't know at the moment I was truly anorexic, I knew something was wrong. I knew it wasn't normal, like the behaviors I had going on. I remember right after senior year I went to the beach with my parents and you go to the beach vacation, you gain a pound or two, no big deal, you gain five or 10, it happens, right? I lost four pounds that week. And I'll never forget, I would wake up in the morning and there was like, three miles away there was like a grocery store, and I would ask everyone, what you need, what you need, just for an excuse to go there, right? And then I would come back and they'd be like, oh, it's time to work out now.

JASON PHILLIPS: And so I would run there and I would run back and then stuff inside the house, and then everyone's going to ice cream and I'm like, cool, I'll walk with you. And, oh, but I don't need the ice cream. And then I'll never forget, I took some classes at, I grew up in Northern Virginia, so George Mason University. While I was injured, I stayed home for a year and I wanted to get going on my degree. And they started talking about eating disorders, they started talking about the trophies that eating disorder people hold in their life. And I was like, you are literally describing what I just went through, where, like, if you came to me in those moments, I'll be like, man, I went three miles three different times, I ran three miles, I walked three miles twice.

JASON PHILLIPS: I did a workout in the room, and all of you guys, you went and you just barely made it, and you had ice cream. And like, I'm disciplined enough to not have ice cream. And it was like my trophy, right? It was like what I held onto. And so I think that at the core, like we have these crazy behaviors, but then like, when the quiet times sits in, it's like the root of all of it really kicks in. And I know, for me, I knew I was unhappy, I knew I was unfulfilled and there's always a deeper reason that we get to that. I don't think any person wakes up in the morning and they're like, man, I'm so excited around what it would feel like to starve all day. Like, I'm so excited to wake up as a 19-year-old male and feel like I have the testosterone of a 90-year-old male.

JASON PHILLIPS: Like, absolutely never crossed my mind. And so I knew something was wrong, but for me, I had correlated a positive body image. So to me that was leaner abs, like abs was the very specific thing, with women liking me more, with getting more respect from



my peers and I don't know if we want to call that more alpha or whatever, but having things that maybe I didn't have, right? I grew up just a very average looking kid. Like I had lots of friends, but like, maybe I wanted that, like, elite status. I don't know what drove it, but I do remember that was always it. Like if you asked me today, like gun to the head, why do you think it got that extreme, it's like, man, like that having women like me, having dudes respect me, like for some reason I had this insecurity.

JASON PHILLIPS: And I think that, we go back to the very beginning of this podcast and we talk about marketing of nutrition and we talk about marketing very specific protocols, well, look at how we sensationalize what health and fitness "is", I mean, dude, we go to Men's Health and we look at the cover of Men's Health, it's always a guy with abs. Well, we could sit here and probably debate for the next 12 hours, are abs the picture of health? And the average person is going to say yes. And I'm going to tell you every time I've dieted in my life for a photo shoot, I feel the worst when I get to the point where I'm photo ready. That's not the picture of health. I could tell you stories of going on shoots and some of the things I did to be photo ready, a million percent not being healthy.

JASON PHILLIPS: And it's like why are we portraying health through the perspective of aesthetics? Because as I said earlier, when we choose our very specific goals, performance, aesthetics, and longevity, they're maximal distance from each other. And yet now we're conflating the two. And so all we're doing, again, is creating confusion. We're telling our kids, we're telling people in the world that you should be healthy, yet when they go to these health outlets, we're showing them a visual that is not really healthy. And then we're giving them protocols that are really aren't even aligned with either one. And so I think it's a, I think there's confusion, I think there's identity, I think there is us creating association between things that classically should not necessarily have association. Not necessarily saying there should be complete dissociation, but I don't think that we have to say your image and how you feel should be clinically associated.

JASON PHILLIPS: And you know what? I wish I had an answer, because I know we talked about this off air. I have a 5-year-old daughter, and my daughter is like a princess. I mean, she is into fashion, she is into makeup, way too young, right? And so I know to her image is already



important. And I've already had the thoughts, how is this going to manifest in her life? How is this going to show up in the health and fitness side of her life? Like, you want to get into clothing and makeup, like do you babe, like I'm super excited. I daddy will support you. I'll buy you everything in the makeup store 'cause I want you to just have a blast and maybe one day you'll have one of those makeup lines. But as soon as it goes into how you see your body and how that now defines how you feel about yourself, I'm scared out of my mind.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, it's a very complicated terrain. And I love that you just even mentioned the positive side thereof it because we, as you know, we tend to go to these extremes today, whether it's with diet, whether it's with our self-image, but it is what it is. Right now we have access to so much, there are so many potentials and our brains are not really even wired up to deal with so many possibilities. Like you had, we evolved in a tribal construct where it's just like you got maybe like 10, 20 things you could do maybe, now it's like thousands of options. And sometimes that leads to kind of this paradox of choice where we choose nothing, we end up feeling stagnant and stuck. That's a big sentiment that a lot of people are feeling right now as well. Got a quick break coming up. We'll be right back.

[music]

SHAWN STEVENSON: Did you know that there's a spice in your spice cabinet that can very likely improve your insulin sensitivity and help you to burn more fat? This spice has been utilized for thousands of years and now today we've got tons of peer-reviewed evidence showing how incredible it is for so many aspects of human health. I'm talking about the renowned spice turmeric. A turmeric is actually in the ginger family, but it has its own claim to fame today. And researchers at the Department of Neurology at USC found that one of the active ingredients in turmeric, curcumin, is able to help eliminate amyloid plaque in the brain, slow down the aging of our brain cells, and also help to remove heavy metals and reduce inflammation in the brain.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And by the way, in talking about its impact on body fat, turmeric has been found to both improve insulin sensitivity, reduce blood fats, and directly act upon our fat cells. And to take it up one more mental notch, research published in the Journal of



Ethnopharmacology points to turmeric's potential to reduce both anxiety and depression. Turmeric functions like a Swiss army knife for human health and benefits. And today, more than ever, people are going beyond the casual curry and doing one of the most remarkable teas that you're going to find. And that is having a turmeric latte. And my favorite turmeric latte, my favorite turmeric drink is coming from Organifi Gold.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And this is because it also has other bio potentiators that make turmeric work even better in the human body. I'm talking about cinnamon, I'm talking about ginger. And also, here's the thing that makes Organifi's Gold so remarkable, it also has the medicinal mushroom, Reishi, which according to research published in Pharmacology, Biochemistry and Behavior, they found that Reishi was able to decrease our sleep latency, meaning that we fall asleep faster, was found to improve our overall sleep time and also improve our deep sleep time and light sleep time, so our REM sleep and non-REM sleep, pretty remarkable.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So I highly encourage you to check out this incredible Organifi Gold blend. Go to organifi.com/model. That's O-R-G-A-N-I-F-I.com/model. You get 20% off their incredible Gold blend as well as their Green Juice blend, their Red Juice blend and actually store wide. So definitely take advantage of this and make yourself your own turmeric latte. I love the turmeric blend the Organifi Gold with some almond milk or milk of your choice. Warm it up if you're feeling spicy and it's one of those things that really helps to add another layer to your health and wellbeing. To check them out go to organifi.com/model for 20% off and now back to the show.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I'm so glad that you mentioned this because I was going to ask you about what is it about our culture that is creating this mental construct where you had this body image thing because I'm thinking about my wife is from Kenya and prior to her moving to the US, she was like in Kenya if you were overweight, that means you were rich, like you wanted to be, you know what I mean? That's something you aspire towards, like, they're eating good.

JASON PHILLIPS: Wow, yeah, I never knew that.



SHAWN STEVENSON: Right? And then she comes here and it's a completely different paradigm. And so if you can add another layer of understanding, what is it about our culture here in the US that has, and I'm going to throw an example out, we'll say on the cover of that magazine we got Chris Hemsworth and you see what this outcome is, you see this presentation of this human and then in the magazine though they'll be like do Chris Hemsworth three-day superset program to get ripped like him. And you don't really see what this entails to become this, we're getting sold this other bill of goods.

JASON PHILLIPS: Man, I'll tell you a great story. I woke up to a text one time, I was like 24 and my buddy said, "Hey, I'm doing your workout." I was like, "What workout is that?" He said, "The zigzag workout." I was like, "What the hell is the zigzag workout?" And he said, "Man," he said, "It's in the magazine. Jason Phillips does the zigzag workout to look like this." I was on the cover of that magazine and I was like, "Send it to me." I'm like, "This is complete news to me." So I go down to the store and I look and I'm like, sure as shit, the cover model does this workout. And I was like, man, I ain't never seen that workout in my life. And if you think that workout is the reason I looked the way I looked on the cover of the magazine, you are completely mistaken. I was in prep for the one and only competition I ever did in my life and I did not feel very good on the day of that photo shoot.

JASON PHILLIPS: But they portrayed it as like this is the workout I did. I still think it comes back to just the conflation of aesthetics and longevity and wellbeing. If you and I sit here and we started this podcast and we talk about stats from the NIH, and so if we went into the medical field and we just talked about health, health largely, our biomarkers are largely numerical. We can't even see them in the mirror. But if we ask the average person to tell us about somebody that's healthy, I guarantee you they will give us descriptive terms that have aesthetic markers. I think obviously we talk about blood pressure, cholesterol, cardiac markers, but when I think of somebody that's healthy I think about it 360 degrees. I think about you sleep well, you wake up feeling good in the morning, you're in a position to live long, so all your biomarkers are healthy but you love your life. You feel good about the way you present yourself. You love the people you're around, you're career oriented.



JASON PHILLIPS: You like the path, the direction, the trajectory of your life, I think that's health and I don't think that's ever discussed as health. If you and I sat here on The Model Health Show and we talked about life trajectory, people are like, they're not talking about health. No, we're talking about health because you show me one person that's super excited about where they're going that is not overly healthy and I think they'd be hard to find. You tell me one person that has amazing relationships, that sleeps fantastic, that has balance across all the dimensions of their life, like their physicality, their spirituality, their relationships, their business, they're healthy. And yet we go to, and this is not a knock on any specific publication but we go to the publications that are about health, everything is workout and nutrition. I own the Nutritional Coaching Institute, I want you to be into nutrition. Don't get me wrong, it's my business, how I make my money but I'm here to tell you that nutrition is only one component of the solution.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, it sounds so familiar, man, so familiar. The reason that I started this show and I really, and I'm grateful for this, it wasn't my plan. I'm a nutritionist, this is what I started off doing, working in the gym and working with clients. But I found that there was this gap in the education around sleep and I just felt this huge passion to put together something to get this information out to more people because I felt like it was like kryptonite, you know, when people are doing the diet, they're doing their exercise... They're exercising their ass off, why aren't they getting the results? But then that led me down this path of like no, there's this dimension, this dimension, this dimension. There's so many aspects of health and that's what this is really about because nutrition absolutely, absolutely. We'll talk more about that. Exercise, absolutely, but what about your feeling of significance? What about your relationships? What about your financial wellbeing? All of these things deeply impact our health. And so that was really the catalyst for the direction of The Model Health Show in the very beginning. And we're here in year 10 right now which is crazy pants.

JASON PHILLIPS: Just amazing. Congrats.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thank you, man. But right now, fortunately as... And this is circling back, we're zigzagging back, the zigzag workout, we're zigzagging back to the beginning of this which is right now here in the United States there's this paradox. We're kind of the leader



of the paradox but it's a worldwide phenomenon where we have access to so much information. All the stuff is there, so many things that you can imagine and more and yet we're also struggling more than we ever have. And so for you, how do we actually get ourselves connected to information and resources that are helpful for us right now when there's an infinite sea of noise and also again, not that they're not well intentioned, when we see the magazine, I've been in magazines too.

JASON PHILLIPS: That's it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But their goal is to sell magazines and this is not necessarily about you, it's not necessarily about, again, personalizing paying attention to where you are in your life. How do we find a way to actually navigate in all of this complexity, resources that are actually helpful for us?

JASON PHILLIPS: Yeah, I'm going to give you the cheat code. It's access and application are two very different things. And so we've certified over 7000 professionals in the last four and a half years since we've been in business. And I tell everybody, in my certification it's not the cheapest one in the world. You come into me on day one and I'm like, man, I'm really sorry to tell you, everything you're going to learn today, it already existed on Google. You didn't have to give me a penny. You could have gone on Google and you could have found everything. My job as the owner of this certification is to take that, synthesize it and give you the things that I feel are most important. But tomorrow I'm going to give you the reason why you are needed in the space. That's when we take the things that will never be spoken about on Google, that's when we take the things that are not currently showing up in the industry and allow you to be agents of change. And that's how I view nutrition coaches.

JASON PHILLIPS: And that second day is when we teach nutritional application. That's where we talk about getting people connected to the right targets. That's where we talk about the seasons that you discussed, we call it nutritional periodization. That's where we talk about protocol design around the individual. That's where we talk about lifestyle design around why this protocol even matters. Why do you want to lose weight? Is that really going to validate you, right? Because all of a sudden you're 15 pounds lighter, if I could snap... I always ask my



clients this, if I could snap my fingers and make you 15 pounds lighter now 'cause you said you want to lose 15 pounds, tell me what changes 'cause if your husband keeps walking by you, if you look in the mirror and you don't see anything different, if your clothes don't change at all, if you're not happier with your friend group, if you don't get a promotion at work but the scale is 15 pounds lighter in the morning, are you actually happy? The answer of course is no. And so what do we do? We go right back to Google and we look for more information.

JASON PHILLIPS: Maybe now we're looking for information on fulfillment. Why do I lack fulfillment? And the articles will tell you you lack fulfillment 'cause of this, you lack fulfillment 'cause of that. Right? Okay, well I got to get back in better shape so I can be more fulfilled so I could do this, right? And so then we find another protocol. So we undertake another protocol. But the reality is we never actually search for the one thing that matters, which is how do we find the application of that protocol to suit something that we're actually going to A, enjoy the process of, and B, enjoy the results of. And I promise you that doesn't exist on Google. That happens through human connection. And that really is the foundation of the movement that I believe we've created, right? Everything I've always said it was like what's your approach? Well, I didn't reinvent nutrition, I didn't reinvent biology, metabolism, physiology. Trust me, I'm not that smart. But what I did is we built a connection based model and I believe that in this world connection is king.

JASON PHILLIPS: I think that my claim to fame in 2012 when I really got into coaching was I told individuals, I said, I'm not Layne Norton, I'm not Alan Aragon, I'm not any of those really smart guys. I mean, they've forgotten more than I'll ever know. But at the end of the day if you're out to dinner and I know the routine, you look at the menu and you're like, oh my God, I don't want to blow my diet. I don't want to mess up, what should I order? I'm like take a picture, send it to me, I'll help you through it. Sometimes I'll be like, yo, just get the dessert, it looks amazing, 'cause you're in the moment, that's what you should be doing. And other times I'm going to be like, you know what? No, I need you to do this.

JASON PHILLIPS: And sometimes you're going to have to sacrifice that gratification for a couple of days because you're very specific about your target but at the end of the day you're going to have the support. Support moves the needle, connection moves the needle,



application moves the needle. Knowledge? It doesn't do anything but more people get themselves excited about acquiring more knowledge. We could sit down with a lot of people that are overweight, they got plenty of knowledge. We could go sit down in front of a group of overweight people, here's a Big Mac, here's a salad, which one is more nutrient dense? Which one has less calories? Nobody's going to fail the test. As a society, 75% of people are failing the test. That's where the application comes in.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is so incredible, man, so powerful. And this is why access to folks like you, education and also the things that you're putting together like you've got this amazing event coming up, for me, the most transformative moments of my life have sprung from live events and this is real talk, the creation of Sleep Smarter, the idea happened when I was at a live event.

JASON PHILLIPS: Really?

SHAWN STEVENSON: The Model Health Show itself was something that sprang from a live event. I went to speak at, it's called TEDxSinCity. This was like...

JASON PHILLIPS: Vegas?

SHAWN STEVENSON: In 2010 or something, yeah. And that's where the conversation started about podcasting. I didn't know what it was. And obviously back in 2010, 2011, whenever that was, a lot of people didn't know. But getting in the environment, it's something very powerful because something we also don't realize is that we become conditioned by our environment and the sameness. And so getting yourself out of your day-to-day routine and getting yourself around other like-minded people absolutely but just that novelty, the change and the immersion is so powerful and this event has been getting bigger and bigger each year. Let's talk about the event coming up.

JASON PHILLIPS: Man, it's wild. I think I'd be lying if I said I don't still identify as the 18-year-old anorexic that every night after dinner went up to his room in his parents' house and thought about killing himself, right? I mean, to some degree that's still my identity. And I



know that the truth is I've been extremely fortunate and very blessed in this life, I've created some financial success. We've led 7000 plus coaches and to think about I'm going to be a person that puts a room together where over 1000 coaches are going to come learn from industry leaders like yourself is mind blowing to me. My company, we live by the code impact over everything. That's it. That's all we care about. Every decision we make, is this helping more people? Not, is this making us more money? Is it helping more people? That is the foundational code that everybody that works for me, everybody that's been through, that's what we live by.

JASON PHILLIPS: And I think this event is the ripple effect of impact. If we can equip 1000 plus coaches with the tools they need to go out and create change, think about that. I'm on a billion person mission, bro. My stated mission with the Nutritional Coaching Institute is I want 1 billion lives changed through the vehicle of health and fitness which means I know me personally I'm not going to meet a billion people, let alone be able to touch them, so I need help. I got to give coaches the best. And so, man, we got yourself, we got guys like Ed Mylett coming in. We got real, yeah, this is the best lineup I've ever seen on a stage and we got people like Chris Powell that have been on TV doing it at a high level, Don Saladino, we got your boy Luka Hocevar, we got Brad Jensen, we got Marley Jaxx coming in, we give them everything and it's my way of giving back.

JASON PHILLIPS: Honestly, that's how I view it. Started two years ago, this would be year three. We had 600 people in the room. Last year we had a little over 800 and this year we're expecting between 1000 and 1200 people. And it's a gift. It's the greatest gift to me. The presence of coaches showing up, it's their gift to me and I promise you, I'll spend every minute for four days giving every ounce of myself, every ounce of everything my company has to them to just put them in a good place to go out there to win, to touch people, to change lives. And I mean, that's really what it's about.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Dates, website, where can people get tickets?

JASON PHILLIPS: Yeah, April 3 through 6 in Orlando, Florida, Rosen Centre, pretty much got the whole place rented out so it's going to be a big health and fitness coaching conference.



But ncievents.com/cc2024 is the place to go. And so yeah, go there, grab a ticket. You want to meet the man himself, get the VIP and they get a little Q&A with each speaker afterwards, 45 minute intimate Q&A where it's a very small group of people who get to interact and ask questions. And we're very big on experience. We're very big on, I believe, very much like you do, get in the room, right? That's always been the secrets of my success in this world. I've had the best mentors in the world, I've had the best network in the world, and I would not be who I am if I didn't know some of the people I know, man.

JASON PHILLIPS: Like I've been, why so many people have been so nice to me and so gracious to me and open up so many doors, I don't know. I'm grateful for it every day, I thank God for it every day, and I owe it to people to pay it forward, man. If I can put the room together, if I can open the door, if I can create the intro, if I can give you the access, if most importantly, I can give you the application, right? If I can give you those things so you can go out and you can win, you can change lives and obviously if you change lives, you deserve to be compensated, change your own life in the journey. We're doing something cool, man. It's a good time.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely. Yeah. The thing that jumps out the most to me and even before we got started, these are some of the best people. Ed Mylett, great person, Luka, I love Luka, that's my brother, great person, Don Saladino, great person. And to learn from them and of course I'm going to be speaking as well, literally it's priceless. It's a priceless opportunity. So definitely pop over to the website right now. You still got some time to get tickets as of the release of this episode, ncievents.com/cc2024. Jason, is there anything else you want people to know? Any directives? This has been amazing.

JASON PHILLIPS: Man, this is where I get to just thank you, right? I feel like I think every time someone goes on a podcast, they're like, I'm going to promote this and that but honestly, I wouldn't be me if I didn't thank you. I think that you've inspired so much of my journey, Model Health Nation, everything you've put together, like, I told you before we started you spoke at Google a week before I did and I didn't know who you were then but the people there they said, oh, this amazing guy came in. And so I started listening to the podcast. I read the book and I followed everything you did. I've been fortunate enough to connect with you, build a friendship, and you've always been there, man. You've been one of the realest ones. And so



honestly, I just want to say thank you on your platform for everything you've done for me but the millions of people that have been impacted by this show, we all owe you gratitude, man. So just thank you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Man, I have the chills. Thank you so much, man.

JASON PHILLIPS: A hundred percent.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thank you for seeing me, and I'm grateful to be a part of your life and your story, and we're about to do it up big, man.

JASON PHILLIPS: We are.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So thank you so much for taking all of this and putting it together because that's where the real work is, making it applicable for people, that's such a big thing. Even in this conversation when we were looking at what are we going to bring for people, it's the application part.

JASON PHILLIPS: That's it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's the bridge between there's this knowledge and there's this person and that's really the missing ingredient. And so you specializing in that is something special in of itself and I'm just grateful to hang out with you. And of course I'm going to be there in Florida, everybody come out, come and hang out. One more time, ncievents.com/cc2024.

JASON PHILLIPS: We're there.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Coaching Con 2024 live, come and hang out with us.

JASON PHILLIPS: That's it. Appreciate you, man.

SHAWN STEVENSON: My guy, Jason Phillips everybody.



SHAWN STEVENSON: Thank you so much for tuning into this episode. I can't stress enough how important it is to get yourself in the environment of the people, of the energy that you want to have more of in your life. It is such a powerful input. We are who we hang around, absolutely. And sometimes it takes for us to get out of our day-to-day routine, our day-to-day environment and get ourselves around people who can truly help to lift us up, to call out the best in us and also to provide us with resources. And this is why I'm so excited about this event coming up with Jason and also just the fact that he put this together and put in the time and energy to make something like this possible. And also it speaks to my heart so much because, again, you never know who you're impacting because before Jason and I even met, he was impacted by this show and this community and I just appreciate you so very much for being a part of this and we've got a lot more work to do.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We led off this episode talking about the current situation that we're dealing with with our obesity epidemic and also our epidemics of chronic disease. There is so much work to be done and this is why more of us need to work together. And I hope that I'm sparking that fire within you to do something for ourselves. Of course we've got to heal... Healer heal thyself. We've got to take care of ourselves and lift ourselves up but also being able to pay it forward and to share this with our family, with our community, being able to just, if we all can help and impact one other person, we can create an absolute transformation in our society just like that. I appreciate you so much for tuning in. We've got some epic masterclasses, 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 could find all of the show notes, you could 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.

