



EPISODE 777

How To Eat Smarter & Live Healthier

With Guest Dr. Steven Gundry

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SHAWN STEVENSON: Welcome to The Model Health Show. This is fitness and nutrition expert, Shawn Stevenson, and I'm so grateful for you tuning in with me today. Our environment deeply impacts our food choices, our relationships, how we relate with ourselves, and our health outcomes. On this episode, we're going to be talking about some of the science behind how our environment influences our health. And also, we're going to get into some of the strange things that are happening, the invisible things that are happening when we're interacting with other people.

For instance, some researchers at Princeton University hooked some people up to measure their brain activity. And they found that two people who didn't know each other, just being able to talk together for about 10 minutes and create a general level of rapport, they found that their brain activity, their brain waves, literally started to sync up or mirror each other. All right, just when we're in conversations with people our brains start to link up. This is a hidden invisible thing that takes place and has been taking place forever as a species. We see this in other species, right? We might wonder how those birds know how to fly together in that V formation. And I'm not talking about the mighty ducks V formation.

I'm talking about when you look up in the sky and you see birds moving around in these synchronistic patterns and the same thing with other types of animals as well. How do they know how to work together? How do bees know how to have this symbiotic relationship and know when certain resources are required? Based on the activity of other bees that they might not even be near, right? This is something we call the "hive mind." We don't really understand it, but it's always happening. And so keeping all of this in mind, there's so much for us to explore and to understand. But most importantly, we have to use what we do know to our advantage and set up our environment in a way we can make healthy choices automatic.

And that's what this episode is all about. But first up, I want to give a huge thank you to my friends and family at Onnit. They've been a sponsor of the Model Health Show for over eight years, helping to support the production of these shows, and I'm so very grateful. And also they are creating some of the most exceptional products. When we're talking about functional training, we're talking about nutrition and human performance. They've actually put several of their supplements in into randomized placebo controlled trials to actually see if they live up to their promise. And again, the data shows that their pre workout, the ShroomTech Sport does in fact increase stamina by upwards of about 10 percent, improves the output on supersets, combined back squat and chest press improves overall.

And in addition to their increases in our performance, these are actually based on real, earth grown nutrients. There's no nefarious ingredients. They really care about this process. And Onnit fitness equipment has been a huge staple in my life for many, many years. I was actually outside training today with my wife using their primal kettlebells and their steel maces. And I've got a new neighbor who's always seeing me working out outside and just yesterday they were like, I need to work out with you. Whatever you're doing, I need to do. And they had some exercise pants on. I was like, you got your workout pants on. They were like, this is just for show, you know, not really about their life, but I'm just like, I'm right here anytime, any place I got you.

And they saw me training with the steel mace, which can be intimidating. And their jaw was literally hanging. All right. They drove by jaw hanging, like what in the world is that? They'd never seen anything like it. It looks like this heavy implement, but just being able to wield it to do all these cool things. My wife today, she was like, I want to truck, you know, she's done a lot of stuff with the steel mace, but usually it's like lunges some core work stuff like that, but there's something called the infinity swing. And she was like, I want to do that. I was like, babe, you know, you gotta, you know, this, this exercise will humble you, but that's the cool thing about these tools is that they can be utilized anytime, any place.

Also, they can be a tool of conversation. They could be a tool of inspiration, but most importantly, they just make exercise and working out more fun and accessible. So I highly recommend checking out their incredible supplements. Their training equipment is game changing. Truly head over to onnit.com/model. That's O N N I T. com/ model. You get 10 % off, including their fitness equipment, the primal kettlebells, steel clubs, steel maces. That's exclusive because you listen to the model health show. So check them out. Please support onnit. They've been a big supporter of the show and support your health and wellness onnit.com/model. And now let's get to the Apple podcast review of the week.

ITUNES REVIEW: Another five star review titled “can't get enough” by Audi 5, 000. I listened to every episode of this podcast. I bought his cookbook and the info has changed my life. I look forward to each new episode, excited for what he's going to discuss so I can implement it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thank you so very much for leaving that review over on Apple podcast, and thank you for the shout out for the eat smarter family cookbook as well. That makes me so happy. And again, if you've yet to do so, please pop over to Apple Podcasts and leave a review for the Model Health Show. I truly do appreciate that.

And now let's get into our incredible topic of the day. On this episode, I'm actually sitting down, I have the tables turned on me, and I'm getting interviewed by one of my favorite people in the world. He's a true pioneer in the health and wellness space. He's been a practicing cardiologist for many, many decades. He's actually an inventor of many patented products used in healthcare, but he also made a huge shift in his practice to help to keep people out of surgery and focus on teaching real wellness. And honestly, every time I get to hang out with him and my youngest son was actually in the studio when we did a recent interview together and he's just like, I would love if that guy was my grandfather. He just has incredible granddad energy. And also again, very insightful and cool. And he asked amazing questions. And this was an interview that I did on the Dr. Steven Gundry podcast.

And on this episode, we're going to talk about the science backed benefits of eating with the people that you love. Now, some of these studies you might've been aware of, but hopefully when you hear it today, it's going to hit your heart in a different way. We're also going to talk about some of the things that I do personally to get my family excited about having family dinner together. We're going to talk about why your cravings are based on the culture that you live in. We're also going to talk about the invisible exchange of energy that happens when humans interact with each other and much more. Check out this very special interview that I did on the Dr. Stephen Gundry podcast.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Shawn! So great to have you back on the podcast.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Good to see you again.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Thanks for coming. All right, let's jump right in. We were talking off camera. What inspired you to write a cookbook sequel to your first book, Eat Smarter?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome. Well, you know, first and foremost, I was always, and you do the same thing. I try to zoom out and take a meta perspective of things when I see our health as a society going in a certain trajectory. And for years, both of us have been trying to target the macro culture, you know, give people behavior change advice, but it suddenly hit me. Recently, the most powerful way to really affect change is to focus on the microculture because recommending a behavior change for our audience and for patients as well, and then sending them into a culture that's inundating them.

With other behaviors or poor behaviors, it's very difficult to change. And this is where you have to have mighty willpower in order to get the results that you want. And so I want to take willpower out of the equation. Let's make changes in your environment to make health easy.

Let's make changes in your environment and your family culture so that healthier choices are just easily accessible and fun.

You know, throwing the F word in there as well. Like what a concept. And so that was really the kind of modus operandi behind this book. And that sent me on a trajectory of studying, like, is there any impact? Both of us have been talking about this for quite some time and I've learned so much from you over the years. And by the way, just shout out to everybody listening. Doesn't Dr. Gundry have the most wholesome voice ever? So wholesome. But, you know, a lot of research has come out about longevity and the factors that really go into that. And I shared in the new book a huge meta analysis conducted by researchers at Brigham Young University. And they looked at 148 studies, about 300,000 people were involved in this study. It's a huge data set. And they found that people who have healthy social connections have about a 50% reduction in all cause mortality. I mean, it's about a 50% reduction in death from pretty much everything when you have healthy social ties.

And to take it further, my biggest insight and really what I'm providing in this book is. It's not just our social ties, but where do we connect most often? What is the thread that goes through all of our interactions and its food? So much of our relationships are revolving around food, whether it's a first date, whether it's a date night, whether it's, you know, after school, I was just talking about my youngest son playing basketball after school or after the game, any kind of family event, holidays. So much of our lives revolve around food. And my question was, has recently the family dinner, which has been a part of our society for centuries, but even deeper, thousands of years going back, when we were existing as tribes. And I just recently took my family to Hawaii and we had this, it's a dramatization when you see a luau, but it just stuck even more.

There was this tribal connection. We're all working together to hunt, gather, prepare the food, eat together, and celebrate. That was built in. And over time we've become more and more isolated. And I came across some research from some colleagues at Harvard and they found that only about 30% of families now eat together on a regular basis. So this is something that's kind of on the endangered species list. And so one of the things I want to share today is some of the latest research on how eating together. So yes, our relationships are absolutely critical, but how eating together affects our health outcomes.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: You're right. The family breakfast or the family dinner seems to be a dinosaur. What contributed to that demise? Then maybe we don't need to do that. Cause I think everybody knows that this demise has happened. So how, how do we get that back? Number one, why do we want to get that back? And then we'll segue into how do we get that back, which is your cookbook.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Perfect, perfect. So I'm going to share a couple of studies really quickly. So one of them, those same researchers at Harvard, they took a look at family eating behaviors and health outcomes, food choices, that kind of thing. It was a multi year data set and they found that families who eat together on a regular basis consume significantly higher amounts of vital nutrients that help to prevent chronic diseases and significantly less ultra processed foods. Couple that with, I'm gonna combine two studies, one was published in pediatrics and one was published in JAMA Journal of the American Medical Association, and they found that families that eat together just three times a week, this was that minimum effective dose.

Those children and those families had significantly lowered incidents of developing obesity, and eating disorders. All right, so those were from those two separate studies. And now all of this was sounding really good. And I was just like, why doesn't everybody know this? And we're going to talk about why this is happening. But for me, I come from a low income community. And within that, we're just really inundated with ultra processed food at every turn. And it's cheap, it's accessible. That's all I really knew existed. And when I was in college, as a matter of fact, I was living in Ferguson, Missouri and every fast food that you can name, literally you could just rattle off any of them, was in about a two mile radius of my apartment.

And as soon as I go out my apartment, there's a liquor store, shelves filled with ultra processed food. There wasn't an organic section of my store. There was no gyms. I didn't know what yoga was like. None of this stuff existed in my environment. And so I was like, how can that apply to people who don't necessarily have access to healthier food or don't, are not aware of their ability to have access? And I came across a study that. I was just like, I have to write this book when I found this study. And this was looking at minority children who are generally in the context of a low income environment. Kids like me. And what they found, what the researchers uncovered was that children who ate together with their family, any meal, four times a week, consumed significantly higher amounts of fruits and vegetables. Their data found that kids who ate with their family, those four times a week, ate five servings of fruits and vegetables, five days a week, at least. And significantly lower amounts of chips, soda, and other processed foods.

And they noticed specifically when the TV was never, or rarely on during family meals. There was something about that technology kind of getting in the way. So this really, for me, if my family would have known that just the act of eating together would have created more of a protective barrier around our health because every person in my nuclear family, my close family and also extended family had at least one chronic disease. And we're not unique. The CDC's numbers just last year, 2022, stated that 60% of American adults now have at least one chronic disease. As you know, 40% have two or more. And so we were on that higher end.

And so with that being said, now let's talk about why, why is this having this impact? Why does it improve our health outcomes? I'm just going to do a very logical one, which is if we know, for example, and by the way, we'll just go with that minimum effective dose of three meals a week, which is what I'm going to encourage everybody to do moving forward after this episode. You know, we'll just say, and it's got to be based on you and your lifestyle and what's practical for you.

So for my family, this can be Monday, Wednesday, family dinner, brunch on Sunday's. By the way, you got to schedule this. We all have a lot of stuff going on. We schedule things that are far less important than our families. Put it on this calendar. We have something called instinctive elaboration. Your brain is always asking questions on, especially if it knows, like, we have family dinner on Monday. What are we eating? Right. So it's inciting this practicality in planning, but more so what we're doing when we're in proximity with people that we love, as you know, this, we have an alteration in our chemistry. We start producing more things like oxytocin. And oxytocin, by the way, has been found to kind of counteract the activity of cortisol.

You know this glorified stress hormone. It's not that cortisol is bad by the way But it's just like we can really get into that dominant place. And so what we see in .The data is there's a switching happening moving from that sympathetic fight or flight nervous system. That just tends to just be on all the time now. To the parasympathetic, rest and digest is the nickname, nervous system when you're around people that you love, especially under the guise of eating good food together. Also, we've got to give ourselves some grace because just a couple of weeks ago, actually, my wife was planning on cooking dinner and she ended up, you know, we live in LA now. So, uh, traffic can be just. You know, it can be a surprise. So she got caught on the other side of town and she wasn't going to make it back in time to cook. And so me and my sons were at the house and it's just like, okay, well, we're going to go ahead and door dash, but we're still going to eat together. We still sat down, ate together as a family, had a good time, had some laughs and also got that connectivity, which is, and here's another aspect of why this matters, the dinner table, whatever meal it is, it really functions as a, as a unifier. And you get to see, especially again, if you've got technology put to the side, and I talk about a bunch of strategies for that in the book. You get to see your child. And a lot of times everybody's kind of living their respective lives and they never really cross over and pay full attention because there's going to be subtleties that you're going to pick up, right?

Certain physical traits, right? Because a lot of our expression is through body language, right? And you're going to be able to pick up. And also the power of asking questions as well, and creating a new kind of cultural trend. For thousands of years prayer has been a part of mealtime.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Mm hmm.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And part of that is taking a moment to really decompress to be in the present to slow down. And so whether it's a prayer, whether it's a gratitude practice. So every meal when we eat together We all go around and share three things that we're grateful for from that day And so it just starts to exercise that muscle of self expression also, the Our minds are, you know, really operating with a filter, right? What are you filtering? That's what you're going to notice. And so if we know we're going to share what we're grateful for That day we're looking for things to be grateful for right. And so last piece here and I could share ten more reasons why this is effective. But one of the other interesting studies that I shared in the book, was just the process of slowing down and being more present with your food while in the context of you know, rather than mindlessly eating in front of You know, whatever, YouTube, which is so cool. I do that sometimes. But slowing down and actually the process of actually chewing your food, being present and chewing your food, enacts that parasympathetic rest and digest nervous system and reduces stress. So I shared a couple of really cool studies on how eating together and how we're eating reduces overall stress and you know stress is a big component of many of our major killers.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: I've met your wife and kids. How old are the kids now?

SHAWN STEVENSON: So my two sons that are at the house, my oldest son just turned 23. He's in his last semester of college. My youngest son, he just turned 12.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Yeah, all right. So he's about to be a teenager. He already thinks he is. How do you put this into play in someone who that phone really needs to be in his hand? How, and he's glaring at you because his best friend has posted something and he's out of the loop and . You want to thank God for dinner. How do you, help, help us work because everybody watching wants to know how you pull it off.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Because of course, like we, first of all, we've got to admit that we have a problem. We're addicted to our devices.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: True.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right. And so, you know, we've got all these channels, you know, the dopamine connection, you know, just this kind of like very strong desire to open that phone up. And even if we're hanging out with other people just to check on our phone, even if it's, I shared some data in the book too, just being an eyesight pulls away your attention. Whether or not you're actually, your phone is, you know, blinking or whatever, but just the fact that it's

around you. Because your brain knows all the goodies that are in there, you know? And so knowing that, you know, if our kids, if they're into gaming or, you know, social media or whatever the case might be, to suddenly come in and say, we're having family dinners now! This scientist on the show said, this is good for you.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: That's right. You're going to do this.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. You know, that's not the way to go about it. And by the way, when people were coming in to see me each day, a lot of times, a lot of the reasons or justifications people would give for not being able to accomplish their behavioral change goals and get the results they want. A lot of times, you know, people will be like, well, you know, I really want to do this, but my husband, you know, I really want to do this. It's just my kids. It's just my mother, you know, you just don't understand. She just makes it, you know. And they will point to people that they love being the biggest obstacle in them getting where they want to be. And part of our suffering and disconnection is that But to be honest with you, we just want people to act the way that we want them to act. We just want them to fall in line. Don't kill my vibe. Just, I know what's best for you. Just do what I want you to do. And inevitably, whether it's your significant other, you know, your kids, your, your parents, they're going to do stuff that you don't like or don't necessarily agree with.

And our suffering is because we expect them to just do what we want instead of realizing this huge, really insight. We know our family better than anybody. We know what motivates them. We know what excites them. We know what depresses them. We know what makes them happy. It's just a lot of times we don't want to deal with it because a lot of times our energy is strained and we just want them to act right. And so as we build our own energy, again, that microculture starting with ourselves and our energy tank is filled up a little bit more, we have a little bit more patience. And we can pay attention to those cues. And so I'm thinking right now about some people are just going to be contrarians. All right. And every family pretty much has one.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Usually one.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But there's going to be an extreme to like, I don't know. Have you seen this show? Yellowstone?

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Uh, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. You seem like a Yellowstone guy. All right.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Now I'm more of a succession guy. Okay.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's just the voice. It's the voice. Dr. Gundry. And so with Yellowstone, Beth. All right, the character Beth, she's a problem at dinner. She hasn't finished one family dinner ever. All right. She's always going to be a problem, but the other family members know that and they expect it. Right. And so they already know what they're going to do. And so knowing the care, and by the way, we're not necessarily going to have somebody that's a total problem, but just knowing what excites and brings your family members together collectively. And so just to give an example with my two sons. My oldest son is very people oriented and family oriented. He loves his family. And so hanging out is not a big deal. However, that phone can be a distraction. And so we both, but I can't have him do something I'm not doing. So we both made it a pact to not bring our phone to the table, period.

This kid, for years, he would actually keep his phone downstairs in his bedroom a lot of times. Even just when he came upstairs in general to see us or talk to us or hang out. He just kind of got into that habit. And my younger son, now he's even more inundated with technology. This isn't necessarily everybody's, but my kids are the last to get the phones, usually in the class, my youngest son, my oldest son was, and my youngest son doesn't have a phone yet. But he does have his iPad, you know, his friends, they text and things like that but I know that he is, he enjoys his little shows. He enjoys gaming with his friends. And so for me to say, I need you to get off of that, to come have dinner with us. This is the bridge. It's with any addiction really, we can't just remove the behavior. We have to replace it with something of equal or greater value. And so I employ ethical, psychological strategies to make them excited about having dinner together. And so this could be something as simple as asking my son, like, okay, so we're having family dinner tonight. What do you want to have for dessert? Okay. Right. Do you want cherry frozen yogurt pops or do you want, um, or do you want an acai bowl or whatever?

You know, I know he likes desserts. He's like his mother, you know, he likes the sweets at their, you know. After every dinner, he's like, I'm going to move for some sweet or it could be, you know, my family also, we have this kind of culture of creativity. This could be something as simple as, like, we know that we're going to have a fun game night, or there's going to be something entertaining that's a part of this meal as well. You know, and so there's going to be some kind of a, uh, an allure. Of fun and just knowing what they're into and I invite that into the family dinner time.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: So you could bribe your kids with food To get them to the dinner table?

SHAWN STEVENSON: In a way in an ethical way. It's tricky to use food as a reward, per se.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Right, right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But if this is something

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Is there a particular flavor that they're interested in? Yeah that part.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, so just like You know If we're making a smoothie together, just like, do you want strawberries or, and I don't ask, do you want the smoothie? I say, okay, so I'm making a smoothie. Do you want strawberries or blueberry smoothie?

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But just giving options, psychologically, we like options. We don't like being told what to do for the most part, but giving options, suddenly we feel a sense of freedom and freedom of choice. This is a huge takeaway for everybody. Our culture is determining our choices. Whether we realize it or not, we might think we have free will. You just have free will based on the reality that you've been exposed to because cravings are cultural. Cravings are cultural as well. There are people right now in Cambodia who are munching on tarantulas.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Ooh, nothing like a good tarantula.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is a real thing. I wouldn't be surprised if you've dabbled in this before, but deep fried tarantula is like a delicacy, right? People in Iceland eating fermented shark, you know, like cravings are cultural. Here in the United States, we oftentimes our cravings are related to ultra processed foods. We consume more of it than anybody. BMJ stated 60% of adults. Now their diet is made up of 60 percent ultra processed foods for the average American adult. I'm grateful that I get to share this, but I'm also, this is a call to arms. This is the first book that sharing the latest data on ultra processed food consumption by children in the U S. So this was a big, is a 20 year analysis published in JAMA, the journal of the American medical association. They looked at Ultra processed food consumption by U. S. children aged 2 to 19, starting in 1999. And at that time, they were already eating 61 percent ultra processed foods. By 2018, it was almost 70% of the diet of our children in the United States is ultra processed foods. I've been on a mission to recently, and many of my colleagues are also making this distinction right now. Humans have been processing foods forever, right? Cooking a food is processing the food.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: True.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Taking an olive and pressing the oil out. That's a process, but that food you could still recognize where, where it came from. It's minimally processed and can be incredibly healthy as you know. And you've, I've got so many of your olive oil things in my cabinet. But here's the thing, the difference between A processed food or processing a food in the health affirming way versus an ultra processed food is, we take an olive and crush the oil out, or we take a sweet potato and and mash it or bake it. Versus you see a field of wheat and Somehow that becomes a bowl of fruity pebbles, or pop tarts, or a field of corn becoming lucky charms, or funyuns, snack chips, right? So it is so far removed from anything natural. It is so denatured not to mention all of the additives, preservatives, food dyes, and not to mention it's riddled. Obviously with pesticides and herbicides and rodenticides, the list goes on and on. It's not even real. It's just chemicals. It's just synthetic garbage, that's what ultra processed food and that's making up the majority of our diets today unfortunately.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Now you spent a lot of time in the book talking about brain health, and happiness, and connections. And where does all this ultra processed food fall into? Why we're not happy anymore? Why we're not connected anymore? Why our brain doesn't work anymore?

SHAWN STEVENSON: This boils down to what we're making our tissues out of, and also the energy that's fueling processes. And you know, your expertise, you're a legend. I hope people really understand that.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Oh, shucks. I'm just a country boy from Omaha, Nebraska. You're from Missouri.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I know, yeah. That's, I'm thinking of Footloose right now, the whole Footloose scene of us dancing. but here's the thing is, you know, when you're in your conventional training, same as me. I took a fancy pants, nutritional science class, a big auditorium, all the things. Same with biology. As we're studying the human cell, we're not taught that mitochondria is made from your menu. We're not taught that the nucleus is made from the nutrients you consume. We're not taught that the membrane of that cell is made from your menu or from, from your meals, right?

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: They were just there.

SHAWN STEVENSON: They're just, it just happens. Yep. Right. And if you don't have that revelation that all of these things, every component of ourselves is literally made from the

food that you eat. Not just that your hormones, your neurotransmitters, your cells being able to talk to each other, your brain cells, signal transduction is all dependent on the fuel that you're giving your body. And there's a big difference in fuel types. Just like with your car, there's different stuff that you can put in there. It's going to get very different results. If you're putting hydrogenated vegetable oil into your gas tank, you're going to have a problem.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: That's true.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You better have triple A, you know, a.k.a, you're going to need to see a doctor for your car, right? The same thing holds true for us. What are we using to fuel our system, to fuel all those cellular processes, but also what are we making our tissues out of? And me alluding to your legendary status and looking at the human heart, for example, if somebody is a cardiologist and they, you know, go to school for 12 years. To be a master of this craft, but they're not aware. They're completely oblivious to the fact as they're looking at their patient's heart, their blood vessels, their arteries, capillaries, the blood itself, and not understanding that's all made from their patient's diet.

If they don't get that, they're missing a huge foundational piece of human health. And this is why we're in the state that we're in with medicine today, because we're really missing the point. Like, what is all this stuff made of? And so in the same vein with our mental health and our outcomes, and we've got so many studies on this now, with seeing how our diet is affecting our mood and our mental well being. It really becomes obvious because all this neurochemistry is made from food chemistry. And so if we're bringing in literally newly in all this newly invented garbage into our bodies. The thing about humans is we are very resilient. You know, we can live off of some crazy stuff and survive, but a lot of our health outcomes that we put labels onto are really our bodies making adaptations to continue functioning and keep us alive under unideal circumstances. That's amazing that our bodies do that, but we get a label. And then we get prescribed medication to treat a symptom and not remove the cause that's creating the dysfunction.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: As I tell all my patients, family history just tells me that if your parents had health, a health issue, or many health issues, and you eat like your parents, then, That's your family history. It has nothing to do with the genes you inherited from your family. You inherited their eating habits. You even inherited their microbiome, which probably we won't get into today, but that has a huge effect as well. And you're right, uh, You know, traditional medical training is we're going to name a disease if your family had it, you're going to inherit it. And that's not true at all. And the good news about books like yours, and hopefully mine, is you can change this. It's not set in stone.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now I can't talk to Dr. Stephen Gundry without talking about longevity. Dr. Gundry is in his 70s and he's running circles around people in their 20s. He just got back from a ski trip when I was hanging out with him last. And learning from people who've actually figured some things out is what it's really all about if we are dedicated to longevity. He's probably got a secret or two that we can learn from. Now if there's one beverage that's most associated with a longer lifespan You probably want to look no further than a meta analysis of 40 studies published in the European Journal of Epidemiology, revealing that regularly drinking coffee was associated with a lower risk of death From cardiovascular disease, certain types of cancer and all cause mortality. Although this is a notable association, the researchers did adjust for a variety of confounding factors like age, obesity, alcohol consumption, smoking status, and more, and still found that drinking high quality coffee stood out as a strong element of longevity. Now the key is high quality coffee, not coffee that's laden with pesticides and herbicides and synthetic chemicals and all of that nonsense.

I'm talking about high quality organic coffee. And for me, the only coffee that I drink and that I serve my wife. Each and every morning is also infused with science backed medicinal mushrooms like lion's mane and chaga. As a matter of fact, chaga is the highest source of antioxidants, the highest auric value substance in our food supply. While lion's mane medicinal mushroom has been affirmed by researchers at the University of Malaya to be neuroprotective and to actually stimulate nerve growth factor in the brain. So we're talking about a very, very powerful combination for cognitive performance for antioxidant health. And the antioxidant density of the coffee itself is an incredible combination.

And you only get this from Four Sigmatic. Go to foursigmatic.com/model. That's FOUR SIGMATIC.com to get 10 % off. Okay. They're incredible organic coffee blends that again have lion's mane, cordyceps, chaga, and so many other adaptogens and medicinal mushrooms to come along with that wonderful cup of coffee. Plus, if you're not into coffee, you can get these mushroom elixirs, dual extracted mushroom elixirs as teas as well. So head over there, check them out. That's foursigmatic.com/model for 10 % off store wide. And now back to this incredible conversation with Dr. Stephen Gundry.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: I want to go back to one thing. I just got back a few weeks ago from Europe in France and also in Italy. And one of the things that used to frustrate me, no end. Long ago it was nearly impossible to get a check at the end of a meal in a restaurant in France or Italy and it actually is still impossible. And one of the things I've learned through the years is they want you to. Be present in the meal, to linger at that meal, it'll force you, among other things, to talk to whoever you're with there. And my wife and I find and we also had one of our daughters with us. It was normal to spend two hours at lunch. because the bill didn't come. Even if you wanted it, it wouldn't come. But those two hours, you're right, was a huge

time of interaction. And, you know, looking back in the dark past, family meals were a long period of interaction.

I luckily grew up in a family that had a Lots of aunts and uncles and actually grandmothers and grandfathers and great grandparents and all within a few miles of each other. So it was not unusual to have an extended family gathering where, and you, you were kind of there all the afternoon or all evening and interacting and we just don't do that anymore.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, as I said earlier, it's really on the endangered species list right now that activity and our genes really do expect that. That's another one of those things where it's not your genes that are causing the problem. There are certain inputs, epigenetic influences that are going to determine how things are expressed. Our genes expect us to connect. It's how we evolved and as we become more, and more, isolated. And I'll throw this one out there as well. This was published in Nutrition Journal. They found that people who eat alone in isolation frequently have a much poorer diet quality and far less consumption of vital nutrients that help to prevent chronic diseases. You know, and again, this is something that we have not done very long. This just been a couple of decades to be honest.

To do it at this level. With technology replacing our relationships in the real world, but also, again, caveat. I'm a fan of having a family movie night and then a meal or watching the game with some food, that kind of thing. But we want to make sure that we're getting that vital input and eating together without those kinds of distractions and really being present with the people that we care about.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: I've written two cookbooks including a family cookbook. And one of the big push backs that you get is, well, it's unrealistic because everybody's, we're working two jobs, both the husband and wife, or the two parents work, a job. Kids have got all these interests. Your son's got to get on the basketball court, or die.

How do you make this happen in our society? You and I are, we both agree, it's actually pretty easy to make meals. It really is. How do you get started? And your book is really great. I had a, in my first book I had a saying, Do with, do what you can do with what you got wherever you are. And you've got some great stuff in the book like, okay, here's the really bad stuff. Here's the stuff that in a pinch, it's not going to kill you. It's not the best, but it's not the really bad stuff. And then here's the really good stuff, and you've got columns of three. It's great. So translate that for us. How do you as a family make, make this work?

SHAWN STEVENSON: So number one, as I said, we have to first get honest about what matters most to us. And most people, if you ask them, like, what's the most important thing

in your life? Most of the time, they'll say their family, and myself included, but then I had to analyze and be honest, is my life really a reflection of that? Am I really living my life in a way that my family is the most important thing? And at the time it wasn't, I was doing so much other stuff to help other families. And you know about this and not investing the time and energy into my family that I really wanted to. And then I knew it was possible. But it just took a reorientation of what I was doing because it's not that I suddenly got more time.

I just started to invest my time a little bit differently. And sometimes these small changes, and here's another big key to happiness, connection, all the things is the quality. It's not necessarily more time. It's better time, right? And as soon as we can do things like get the devices out of the picture, And have more presence. I had one, one guy that I worked with who would keep his phone after he gets home from work. He keep it in the car because he knew if it was around, he would dabble. You know, we have this phenomenon called just checks, you know, I'll just check really quickly and they can pull you into that internet black hole really easy.

And so that's number one, we've got to get honest about our priorities. And suddenly when you do that, this becomes more attainable instantly. Now that. transition place, like how do we make this happen under the context of even healthier food and make this fun, something to look forward to. What I found over the years when we're going from going through the drive through at White Castles or, you know, Burger King or whatever the case might be to, I'm saying, you know, here, here, eat this, you know, drink this wheat grass. That's like a different universe. You're like, why would you try to take that approach when you're trying to help somebody to change their eating behaviors? And so what I did was, and really what I mastered over the years was taking foods that we have this nostalgia, you know, that we have this deep, deep connections to and making these meals with real food.

And so, for example, One of my favorite things, uh, in college when I was living in Ferguson, if I got up in time was to get to McDonald's breakfast. All right, huge fan, the sausage McMuffin, all the things, hotcakes and sausage. But those foods are so terrible. They're so terrible. And of course they're coming from this entity that they're not really concerned about the quality of the foods. And so what I did was, this was a couple of years ago, I made, I just decided one morning I was like, make my son a breakfast sandwich. And I came up with this upgraded breakfast sandwich, really kind of in the same format, but just using higher quality ingredients. It's one of the recipes in the book. It's probably his favorite breakfast.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: And you've got some cool protein pancakes in here as well.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, we love, we love brunch foods. And as I mentioned, hotcakes and sausage. And so what I did was number one, a big takeaway too, is that food isn't just, isn't just food. It's information, right? As you know, our friend Mark Hyman says. And so I wanted to get more real food ingredients into people's bodies, even if it's delivered in the form of a pancake. And so we have these really delicious protein sweet potato pancakes. And there's over 40 specific foods that I identified in the book and I share a bunch of studies with each one of them. This book is really kind of in a league of its own. There's over 250 scientific references in a cookbook, but it's all delivered in a fun way.

And when I'm saying fun is because the culture that we live in today, we have an emoji culture, right? Like I could send you a whole message in just emojis and you're going to know what I'm talking about. And so what I did was I took those 40 plus foods and I shared the science behind, well, for example, with sweet potatoes, there are some anthocyanins in there that have been found to improve our memory and I shared this reflective study, but I also put a little brain emoji next to that food denoting that this is good for this part of your brain physiology, this part of your, of your, you know, your body. And in addition to that, you'll find that same emoji in the recipe, right? You'll see the reflective emojis when you go to the sweet potato protein pancakes to know like, Oh, this is going to be nourishing this aspect of my health microbiome.

There's a little gut emoji, you know, for, it just doesn't improve your mood and mental health. There's an emoji for that. Metabolic health is a little muscle emoji. So you can start to eat for a purpose, right? And so that's a big part of this inviting family in is like let's have some delicious food experiences together. And I've got to make this clear today in this conversation. We have colleagues who are in the eat to live, don't live to eat camp. And what I did was I just sat back. I looked at all of it and I accepted that all of it has some relevance. But we evolved this certain palate as a human beings. It drives us to eat certain things. It drives, we have a desire to eat tasty things. Yes, food scientists have manipulated that recently, but this is how we evolved. All animals are driven to eat certain things. Have you ever thought about why that sheep is eating sheepish foods? Why is he nibbling on those weeds over there? Why is he nibbling on this grass at this time?

Why do they do that? Why are they driven to eat certain things? Did they get some kind of a book? And they were told what's it? No, we're driven to eat things that have certain flavors. And so I also share in the book this revelation about something called post ingestive feedback. Right? So as we evolved, if we were to eat a food a natural food Right? If we were to eat those olives, our cells would be taking like a little sticky note and putting, writing down like, okay, I've got some selenium, I got some, you know, copper, I got some, these essential fatty acids and would keep a note. And so if we ever start to our biological inventory, get low on those things, we would develop a craving to go and eat some more of those olives.

strawberries, or whatever the case might be to get those inventory back up. Right? And this is a highly evolved intelligent system. The problem is one of the recent inventions called a gas chromatograph and food scientists could identify the chemistry that makes that strawberry flavor that makes that cherry flavor and now we can take that cherry flavor and Add it to coca cola or we could take that cherry flavor and add it to ice cream You or whatever, no cherries necessary anymore.

And now your biology that's expecting that when I have a cherry flavor and it doesn't have to be exactly the same, that cherry flavor should be coming along with these certain nutrients. I had that craving for that thing, but I'm not getting those nutrients. So the hunger never really shuts down. It's going to keep driving us to eat more and more of those things, let alone the chemistry that's making us addicted to those foods in the first place. And so, utilizing these real food ingredients for dishes that we love, you know, one of my favorites, another favorite is the salmon burgers, right? So we all know all the health benefits of salmon at this point, but I identify some more kinds of interesting ones in the book, but how can we utilize this food in a way another tasty fun way, right? We have a burger culture, right? All right going back to Popeye and Brutus. Popeye had the friend who was always snacking on those burgers.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Wimpy.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Wimpy. We have a burger culture. And so finding creative ways and fun ways, delicious ways to deliver these foods Into our bodies and have these kind of fun family experiences makes it more inviting for everybody to, you know,

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: The spiritual aspect, certainly, you know, when you look at super long whip people, and I spent a lot of time, particularly in Italy, looking at these folks, the, the spirituality is really important. Can I get the family together and say, yay, God, let's eat? Or do I have to get deeper than that? What, what, what's your findings on this?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Being that I'm more of an analytical person, And, you know, scientists, 21 years working in this field. I've been looking for an opportunity to give people a soft place to land when talking about these topics, because for many people who think similarly to me, we don't necessarily understand that there's an energy, truly that is created when people get together and I'm saying that from the perspective of science. Because there's some great research from the folks at heart math institute And the electromagnetic field that is literally emanating from the human body, it's called a tube torus. That's extending from the heart.

You know, the heart is one of the most electromagnetically active powerful things really in Any species are the human heart and as a matter of fact, and this is not just in at heart math

But a lot of scientists they dub it the heart brain because there's so many neurotransmitters and so much kind of Activity that would be similar to what's happening in the brain in some ways. We kind of do think with our heart. Why did our ancestors thousands of years ago? Kind of focus on the human heart as being this center of love and all these different things. Well, this field extends from the body and we have technology now that can see these different fields and it extends about eight feet on average from the human body. And so when we're sitting in proximity to each other, yes we're sharing a microbiome as well. We're kind of having some microbiome exchange taking place, but also these energy fields are interacting. And so when we say things like certain people have certain vibes. Right. Or, you know, being around certain people makes you feel good or it makes you feel bad or whatever the case might be, like truly it's that feeling is real.

It's real. And so number one, I'm just coming from this, from the perspective of like, first and foremost, we really have a lot of sound science and how this kind of meta perspective, you know, a metaphysical aspect of health is a real thing. And the second part is this, this is something that I've, especially the last couple of years, embraced more and more, how little we know. It is staggering. And even just, you know, the, the James Webb telescope that's out there right now floating through space. And just like, there are billions of galaxies. We live in one galaxy. Billions and billions and billions of galaxies. And we barely understand life here on planet earth. We barely understand ourselves, right? And so there's so much that we don't know. And yet what we do know, we think is everything we latch on to it because we have a need for certainty. And to feel safe and to feel like we know how to operate in our environment. But the sooner we can realize there's so much more that we don't know. And there's this underlying intelligence, because I never asked to.

You know, develop my arms and my legs or my vision. These were just things that were just put into the pro. There's an intelligent program That is manifesting all of these things and there's a wide variety on how these things can be manifested. It's beautiful, and miraculous, and we don't understand it at all. I don't even think some of the right theories are on the table for a lot of stuff But the little bits that we do know right now, which is pretty much 0.0000001 percent of all there is to know that little bit that we do know is special and it should be empowering versus this overarching message of disempowerment. And so the last little part here coming together under the spirit of love, connection, and you know, community is something that is baked into our evolution.

And as I mentioned, having the, this, this, timeless experience of people saying a prayer before a meal, right? An opportunity to give thanks, an opportunity to connect with those that you love. You can have any flavor of that, that, that suits you, and your family, and your beliefs. But truly what we do know factually is that when you get together, and this is said, there's like a scriptural reference. two or more come together. There I am in the midst of you.

a new entity is created. Like factually a new entity is created when our energies are interacting. And so it's really special, but the question is, are we actually doing this? The question is, are we utilizing this special connection and this special thing about us as humans?

Because our superpower has been each other. That's how we've outlived other versions or potentials, you know, homo erectus or whatever, you know, um, that could have been, you know, where we are today is our ability to work together. Same thing with other animals in the animal kingdom, our ability to think externally of our circumstances and our ability to come together and work together and live together Love together has been our superpower.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Well said. Now before I let you go, I want to touch on one last thing. You talk about the F. A. S. T. diet in here. And it's, it's near and dear to my heart and my intestines, I guess. So, tell us about that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So F. A. S. T. is just an acronym, and the acronym is Really making it personalized. This wonderful, it's not a new invention, but something that we've evolved doing, which is having times of feasts and having times of famine and being able to really extract the value from that. What we see, obviously, and you've talked about this in uptick in autophagy. So really just deep cleaning cellular cleaning. We see an increase in things like brain derived neurotropic factor. We see an increase in things like human growth hormone, really things that help us to stay vibrant. And that acronym, that I utilize in the book is because we don't also want to come into this. Thankfully, I figured this out when I was doing my clinical work. Instead of giving people these cookie cutter programs, helping them to adjust it to their unique life.

So FAST is an acronym. So first, the F is for figuring out your ideal fasting windows. What does that look like for you? It doesn't have to be 20 hours of fasting a day or 16 or whatever it looks like. It might be a 12, 12. But even because the research indicates that even at 12 hours, we start to see this metabolic switch happen and you start to get a lot of the benefits that we're talking about. So figure out your own ideal fasting windows. And the other one is to adjust it to your lifestyle. That's the A. With that being said, there might be certain days where it just doesn't fit to fast the way that you've been, you know, that you planned on doing and you become dogmatic. Like if I don't do this, then I fail.

And then I'm just abandoning the whole thing so we can really stress ourselves out. So again, adjusting it to your own lifestyle and giving yourself some grace. So maybe for example, on Sundays, you don't, you want to have brunch with the family. Yep. That's okay. Exactly right. Yep. And the S is to safeguard your fast with supportive nutrition. And what I mean by that is

part of the struggles that we might have with a fast and being able to extract those benefits is that we're deficient in a bunch of stuff, thus eluding or activating a lot of, uh, our hunger related chemistry, right? So we know about ghrelin is like the big one that people know about, but there's several other hunger related hormones and just kind of, you know, Neurotransmitter and overall cognitive activity.

And so we feel a sense of peace. We actually feel more energetic. Crazy enough. If I was told, and also experientially that not eating When I was in college would help me to perform better. Even this book, most of it was written while I was fasting. All right. And, but I don't, of course it's, I don't recommend this for everybody in this cookie cutter way.

I still ate plenty of delicious foods, but maybe my first Official meal was at noon per se, you know, or some days some days it might be 10 It just depended on the day because I adjusted it to fit my lifestyle But generally if I started writing at 8 a. m. and I was writing for those first three hours of the day. Generally wouldn't be eating a meal And I felt so much more clarity and there's some good data on why that is as well.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so the last aspect of this is the T, which is, and this is, should be Captain obvious as well, to track how you look, feel, and perform. There are all these wonderful inventions. We've got aura rings, we've got, you know, things to track our heart rate variability and the list goes on and on a lot of self quantification that we can do. Sometimes that can, it's still very external and it can take us away from listening to the most important data, which is how you feel. Paying attention to some of the most clear data, which is paying attention to how you look and how you're performing, right?

That data speaks volumes more than what any of these devices could possibly tell us. But we have to tune in. We have to take a moment and pay attention. And so. Um, if for example, we're having a day where we're especially hungry, you know, maybe again, it's like being able to pay attention to that. Like why am I hungry today?

I'm not usually this hungry. Did I not sleep well at night? Am I excessively stressed? Am I having a conflict in one of my relationships? Whatever that might be to be able to identify the thing and not just run to some Raisinets, right? Because I'm feeling hungry suddenly. Right? So. So. So. That's really what it is. That's that acronym FAST for fasting and yes, we can utilize this great inner technology But at the same time it should not be some cookie cutter way. It should be based on you.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: You brought up one thing. I think it's really important, certainly with my patients. We are so used to feeling kind of so bad as what appears to be normal. That so many people, um, are shocked with. What it's actually like to feel normal without all these bad feelings. Years ago I had one patient, I said, you know, you know, how you doing? He says, you know, feeling well never tasted so good. And just this week I had a, I have a woman who was actually originally from Detroit. And grew up on White Castle Burgers, which you mentioned, uh, if you're from the South, that's a Crystal Burger in the South. She had a leaky gut and a lot of issues. That's gone now. And so I saw her for one of her follow ups. And she said, I gotta tell you what happened last week. And she said, I don't know what came over me. But I just, I decided I really missed White castle burgers. I, he, she said, you know what I'm talking about.

You know, the smell and the flavor. I said, I know exactly what you're talking about. She said, so I had four white castle burgers. She said, you're not going to believe it. I had heartburn that night and I haven't had heartburn in a year since you've been on this program. And she said, what the heck, you know, my body was telling me, you know, What'd you do that for? Are you finding that true? I mean once your body gets the good stuff It's going what what'd you do that for?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, I've got a great story about this I haven't talked about this in years, but for a while when I was in college I was also working as a personal trainer at the university gym and one of my clients is also a friend of mine too and He had really gotten onto my program. He was eating really clean. It had been several, several weeks, probably maybe even a couple of months. And he had, you know, he just transformed his body and his energy was glowing. One of the days he was scheduled to see me, He had just went out the day before or the night before with his friends and they pulled up at White Castles.

White Castle is open for 24 hours, Dr. Gundry. So it's like that late night spot. They literally call it a crave case, by the way, that you can order from there. And he got some, he got some White Castles with his now really clean body. He hasn't been consuming all these processed foods and chemicals, but he's just like, let me get some White Castles. And so he came in to see me and we were working out with maybe like. 15 minutes into the workout and he's like, I got to run to the bathroom right quick. And so he went to the bathroom apparently. And, you know, five minutes goes by 10, 20, it was time for now for my workout. So I was like, I guess, man, you know, maybe he's a, he's a talker.

So I guess, you know, maybe he's like talking to one of his friends or something. So I just started doing my workout. I finished my workout. And then I went into the locker room and I saw him walking out. His eyes were bloodshot red. He was sweating. And I'm just like, bro, what happened to you? And he was, he was on a toilet for so long that he fell asleep.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Oh, wow.

SHAWN STEVENSON: He fell asleep on a toilet. He told me that it felt like it was a roller coaster. He could feel the sliders going through his intestines, and he couldn't get up. And so he ended up falling asleep there. There's a ton of stories like this, of course, but the bottom line is. When you start to change over and make your tissues out of higher quality ingredients, your body starts to reject, and a lot of people that come to the U. S. from other countries. Working at a university, I really got to work with people from all over the world. And initially when a lot of folks come here and they taste the food, they're just like, this doesn't taste real, right? It tastes off. Right? There's something about it. There's something about that Domino's.

There's something about, you know, that, that Burger King or whatever the case might be. And you, you start to get a little bit more addicted to it and the taste suddenly, you don't notice that it doesn't taste real anymore. And so, that intelligence starts to get muted over time. But when the intelligence comes back online and you eat that stuff, you can, it just doesn't taste real. It doesn't taste good. Like real food and it's just like, we can rekindle that. And it happens pretty quickly actually when you switch over. And so like the last point is like you brought up, which is a lot of folks don't know what it's like to actually feel normal, which is to feel good.

DR. STEVEN GUNDRY: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so to see that, like people are just like, Oh my goodness, I'm so energetic. I feel so good. I have so much clarity. That's your normal state, regardless of your, your life conditions, your age bracket, our normal state is to experience that. But a lot of times we're carrying this extra weight and it's kind of like a fog that happens in that fog is generally created by. Are less than real human food that we're eating.

Thank you so very much for tuning into this conversation today. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this definitely check out Dr. Steven Gundry's podcast. Again one of my favorite people in the health space and one of my personal mentors and listen, we've got to keep this conversation going because Our environment is truly dictating our food choices. Our environment is truly dictating our mental health, our self perception, and so many other aspects of our lives. But oftentimes we don't realize it. It's just happening on automatic, as Bane said in the third Batman movie. I was born in the darkness. I was born into this madness, you know, so if you're like me, you were born into this paradigm of poor health and disease and dysfunction, and it was just normalized. And the truth is, as humans, we're not just products of our environment.

We're also creators of our environment. And we can create environments that reward us, that lead to abundant health. That starts to put healthy choices on automatic, but awareness is the key is the first domino. And to heighten the awareness of your friends and family, please share this out with the people that you care about. Send this directly from the podcast app that you're listening on. And of course you could share this out on social media. Take a screenshot of the episode, tag me on Instagram, Twitter, all that good stuff. I always love to see the love. And listen, we've got some incredible masterclasses and world-class guests coming your way very, very soon. So make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day, and I'll talk with you soon.

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