



EPISODE 794

How Other People Impact Your Biochemistry and Health

With Jim Kwik

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SHAWN STEVENSON: Welcome to the Model Health Show. On this episode of the model health show, we're going to be talking about some really weird and freaky stuff. All right now, not that kind of freaky, just regular freaky. For example, we're going to be talking about how being around other people alters our biochemistry. All right, immediately when we are around other people, our biochemistry changes, and this is something that we can utilize to better our health. But there are certain caveats that go along with this. Plus, we're going to talk about if you zoom out and you see that people are also part of a certain culture. We have certain cultural containers. We don't just show up with the kind of brand that we have and the personalities that we have on accident. We have the nature and the nurture aspect of this and people within a culture affect the world. Our behavior and our culture affects our behavior as well. And so if we want to be healthy, we're going to have to plug ourselves into a healthy culture. Now, how do we do this? How do we navigate this when we might live in a larger, unhealthy macro culture where we're gonna talk about the difference between macro cultures and microcultures?

And I'm advocating that we can actually create a healthy microculture that can deeply impact and change the microculture. We're also going to be talking about how your attention is a superpower for upleveling your family's health. Plus practical tips to help bring your family closer together in a world that is full of distractions. And so this episode isn't just about our health and well being. It's about the health and well being of the people that we love. The health and well being of our family and our extended family and our community at large. And this episode, I'm so honored to be able to say this was filmed here at the model health show studio, but it was my friend, New York times bestselling author, and World renowned accelerated learning expert, Jim Kwik, who was sitting here in the studio to interview me.

And I'm so grateful to be able to share this episode with you today in this powerful interview. He asked some amazing questions because new things are going to be unlocked when you're being interviewed by an expert on the brain and learning. And that's exactly what happened. And before we get into this powerful interview, I can't have Jim Kwik. On the show and not talk about Neuronutrition because truly our brain and cognitive function is literally built on the nutrients that we provide our brain cells themselves are made from the food that we eat and what we drink as well. Our brain is actually mostly made of water, of course, but the dry weight of the human brain is predominantly high quality fats, amino acids as well. And then a sprinkle in some carbohydrates and minerals, but carbs get burnt very quickly by the brain in the form of glucose. But is there anything sustainable that really helps to provide sustainable cognitive improvement for the brain? Well, a study featured in the journal

Psychopharmacology found that drinking just one cup of coffee a day, Had some remarkable benefits on mental performance.

The researchers found that drinking coffee that contains just about 200 milligrams of caffeine in a day, created significant improvements in alertness, improved reaction time, as well as enhanced performance on cognitive vigilance tasks. So these are activities involving multitasking and tasks involving deep concentration. What about brain health? Overall, regularly drinking coffee has been shown to help prevent cognitive decline and reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. These attributes are referenced in the journal Practical Neurology. And this is why coffee is high quality coffee. This is the key is certified to be a neuro nutritious beverage.

The only coffee that I drink and recommend is from the folks at four sigmatic. Not only is it certified organic from high quality sources, but it's also infused with science backed medicinal mushrooms like chaga, reishi, cordyceps. All dual extracted. And by the way, the coffee's delicious. If you're a coffee drinker, you're going to love, you're going to love the four sigmatic coffee blends. So definitely head over there, check them out. And by the way, you're going to get 10% off, 10% off storewide. Their think blend coffee that I actually had this morning. They've got a, if you're into the half calf, all right, they've got a great coffee that actually has adaptogens as well. So you could check that one out as well, just to kind of, that one is really formulated with adaptogens that help to reduce stress, and they've got whole bean, they've got ground coffee, and they've got instant coffee that I travel with.

I actually bring these packets with me whenever I travel. And if you're just like, hey, I'm not into coffee, but I want in on those incredible instant coffee. Science backed medicinal mushrooms. Well, they got you hooked up with that as well. They've got dual extracted medicinal mushrooms in the form of teas and you can check those out there as well. Go to foursigmatic.com/model. That's F O U R S I G M A T I C .com/model for 10 % off store Wide. [Foursigmatic.com/model](https://foursigmatic.com/model). And now let's get to the Apple Podcast Review of the Week.

ITUNES REVIEW: Another 5 star review titled, "A Podcast Gem" by Rama Stu. I came across the Metal Health Show a few months ago when trying to find information about hormonal changes for women in their mid 40s, like myself. Since then, I've been an avid listener and learned vital information regarding nutrition and weight loss. Healthy lifestyle, fitness, our amazing human body, graceful aging, our metabolism, mental health, and so much more. Thank you, Shawn, for everything you share through this podcast, bringing exceptional guests, and for forging so much inspiration through your passion for good health and family values. I also share podcast episodes with my husband, family, and friends regularly. And purchased the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook for myself, and since then have gifted it to three

other women, including my daughter who is in college, so that she can empower herself with very valuable information. Thank you again for sharing the knowledge.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That was just a dream. That was amazing. That's everything that I could ever want or imagine in doing this show. Thank you so much for sharing that. And thank you for sharing the love with the people that you care about. Man, that is so powerful. If you have to do so, please pop over to Apple podcasts and leave a review for the model health show. And now let's get into this very special, extra special episode where we have. New York Times bestselling author and accelerated learning expert. And he's actually been the most frequent guest on the model health show, by the way. He's my friend. We've been friends for well over a decade now, and he's been such an influential part of my life in so many different areas.

It's just good stuff happens around Jim Kwik. And in this episode, Jim is turning the tables on me and interviewing me on how our relationships and being around other people are changing. alters our biochemistry, how to create and cultivate a culture of wellness within our own household, but also looking at the impact of the macro culture and microculture. And again, very practical things that we can utilize in our own lives to transform and uplift our family culture and the health of our loved ones. Check out this powerful interview where I'm sitting down and being interviewed by the one and only Jim Kwik

JIM KWIK: Welcome back to the Kwik brain podcast. We are dedicated to building better brains. Our goal is 1 billion brighter brains. No brain left behind the topic of today. We're gonna talk about social connections, nutritious foods for brain optimization and for greater performance. And I can't think of a better guest to have than the guest that we've had more than any other time on this show, Shawn Stevenson. Many of you know, if you're watching this on our YouTube channel, I encourage you to subscribe. We have over 1.2 million subscribers there. If you're watching this on video, we happen to be at at his YouTube channel. Set right now, the Model Health Show, which is the number one Health podcast. One of our favorites on the team for sure. He's a bestselling author. We've had him on the show talking about sleeping smarter, eating smarter, and he's just one of, one of the best guys out, and these guys got the most amazing voice ever. Welcome, welcome to the show, Shawn.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thank you. I've gotta live up to the hype now, man. Thank you.

JIM KWIK: Thanks for being back on the show. So we've had you on more than any other person and I'm very proud. You have a new book coming out called Eat Smarter, which is a family cookbook, and it's so much more than just a cookbook. Yes, there's great ideas on meal prep and foods that are great for your own performance, your mental health, your brain health, you know, your personal performance. But we're going to talk about not just what to

eat, But the environment you eat in, and the people you're eating with. So what was the impetus for this new book?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, this is obviously a very unique cookbook. It has over 250 scientific references in a cookbook, which has never been done before. But all in a way, and you know this, in a way that's entertaining, that's inviting, empowering laid out in a very beautiful way as well. This is going to be a staple really in people's kitchens. We're already seeing it happen, which is just mind blowing. And really, the driving force behind writing this book was, you know, for many years working as a clinician and being a research scientist and, you know, doing all this. It's work in teaching and speaking, all this stuff.

It was really interesting because a lot of times we mean well when we're advocating for people to make behavior changes, right? You know, we can tell them do this thing to get this result and we give them that behavior change and then they go into an environment that might be counter that behavior change or that might even belittle that behavior change or overall just make that behavior change much more difficult to do in the first place. And what that environment is the culture. The culture that we exist in is what's impacting our choices more than anything else. But our culture is sort of like an invisible hand. We don't really understand or realize what's guiding us. And we make choices based on what we're exposed to. We make choices.

Even cravings are cultural. We're not going to crave in Cambodia, they're eating some, you know, a delicacy is deep fried. Tarantulas, right? It's people that eating tarantulas out there, you know, and, you know, Iceland fermented shark is a thing. Here in the United States, we're going to crave different things, namely ultra processed foods, as you know, is the dominant part of our diet. And this is according to the BMJ. Again, we talk about that in the book. And so instead of treating the symptom. Which is unfortunately what we're doing in modern medicine, you know, we have this model for symptom focus instead of removing the root cause. Instead of doing that with behavior change target, which is targeting a symptom. I'm working now giving people the data and the empowerment to be able to change the culture so that the behavior becomes automatic, right?

So that there's no longer a struggle to do the thing that you deem to be the right thing for you. And with that being said, you already brought this up. How we eat. Who we're eating with has a huge impact on our food choices and our health outcomes. I'll share a couple of studies with you. I'll just rattle them off really quickly. This blew my mind. So one of them was a bunch of researchers at Harvard were collecting data on family eating behaviors, like how frequently they're eating together and their food choices. And this was going on for years. And I was just like, how do people not know this? Like this should be on billboards.

And what they found was that families that eat together on a consistent basis tended to eat significantly less ultra processed foods, namely chips and soda, and significantly more whole real foods, namely fruits and vegetables. And as a result, significantly higher rates of essential nutrients that help to prevent diseases in those family members. And I was just like, that is nuts. Does this apply in other contexts? Like, can we get some specific things that get reduced as far as disease outcomes and I found two studies. Well, I found a bunch more but I'll share it with you, two. One of them was published in pediatrics. So we're looking at outcomes for kids and another one was published in jama. This is the journal of the American medical association.

This is one of our top tier journals here in the United States. And these researchers found that and I'm also going to share a minimal effective dose. Yes, which I'm a big fan of, they found that eating together with your family three times a week, Three times a week led to a plummeting rate of obesity outcomes in those children and significantly lower disordered eating in those children as well when they ate with their parents three times a week. Now also, of course, I wanted to give a minimum effective dose because we've got a lot of stuff going on.

JIM KWIK: Right, right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And we want to find the leverage point, right? Where do we actually see that tipping point to where we get these benefits? But another barrier to entry, which I'm uniquely qualified for. Is this going to apply if we don't have resources, if we don't have access? Because a lot of that, even saying eating with the parents, is that applicable? What if you only have one parent in the household and what if you're working and all these things? And so, for myself, I grew up in the inner city and in poverty and in the United States, I always say this with a caveat, poverty is very different here in the United States versus other places. You know, in the United States, if you're living in poverty, we still probably have a TV.

We still have like, we would get the video game system like a year later, but we still get one. Right. My mom would get, and this is a true story. She'd get cars from a place called okay, junk cars. And so she kept buying these Ford escorts and one breaks down, she gets the next one. And it's actually how I learned how to drive a stick shift, by the way. But we were getting by, we were getting by and it wasn't so much about resources, but resourcefulness, of course. And most importantly, and here's what the data indicated, like, does this apply when it doesn't fit into this kind of white picket fence narrative. And so another study was looking at minority children who generally live in a low income context.

And by the way, we were getting food from charities. You know, there's a place called the Hosea house. We're on government assistance. My mom was trying to find a way to provide for us. She would sell her blood sometimes to get money. She worked overnight at a convenience store. And one of those nights she was actually attacked. She was stabbed eight times fending off somebody who's trying to rob the store. And my mom is different though. And my son is here in the studio with me. She, he knows she's different. She actually not just survived that, but she actually was able to subdue the guy until the police came. Yeah, it's crazy.

But when she went in to get, you know, stitched up and go through the procedures, The physician afterwards told her that if you weren't overweight, if you weren't a heavysset woman, as he put it, you would have died. Basically her being overweight, and she was right there teetering on obesity at the time, saved her. And so, what do you think she's gonna attach to that? Right? So now that's her protection. And so I'm setting all this up to say this is the environment that I come from. I come from this very volatile environment, but had my family known what I'm about to share with you, we would have put into place because my mother wanted to do well for us, she just didn't know. So as you said, many times, knowledge is not power. Knowledge applied as power, but that knowledge, that awareness is kind of that first domino is what you're going to do with it. And so what these researchers found was that. For these children in this low income environment, if they ate with their family members, whatever meal, breakfast, lunch, dinner, didn't matter, four times a week, those children ended up eating significantly less ultra processed foods, namely chips and soda, they identified significantly less and they ended up eating five servings of fruits and vegetables daily, five days of the week.

All right. There was something special about eating together with the family that led to these outcomes. And by the way, the researchers noticed specifically when the TV was never or rarely on during mealtimes. And before I pass it back to you, this is not an advocacy for we, my family and I, my son is here. We love a good movie night or, you know, grabbing some snacks and watching the game, something like that. But we also need that face time. In the real world to actually see each other and to connect because the dinner table in many ways is a unifier and I'll just share really quickly and then pass it back to you.

We can talk a little bit about what's happening behind the scenes. Like why is it leading to these different outcomes? And one of those reasons is when you're around people that you care about, we start to make different chemistry. And as you know, we've talked about this before, your thoughts create chemistry in your body instantaneously. The most powerful pharmacy in the universe is in your own body. And I say that because it's not just bio identical. It is made for you.

It is tailor made with the chemistry you're creating Is made for your receptor sites and it's based on your perception. And we're around people that we care about. We start producing one of the compounds we start to produce Is oxytocin and oxytocin has been found to basically counteract cortisol. And so we're switching over from this fight or flight sympathetic dominance that we're all just kind of habitually in today. The average person, we can go to zero to a hundred really quick but we're not very good at going from a hundred to zero and down regulating unless we get around people that we love. So we're switching over to the parasympathetic. Rest and digest is the nickname and nervous system when we're around people that we care about under the umbrella of good food.

JIM KWIK: So let's unpack that. This is amazing and I want to commend you on having the focus on behavioral change because that's a big part. Of our listenership they want to they realize again that knowledge is only potential power only because power when we change a behavior right. And so you're saying it's not just our Neurological networks or our biological networks a big part of our performance and our health comes from our social networks, right? It's when you're in that parasympathetic rest and digest. It's not just what you eat. It's how you're eating the state you're eating in and also the environment?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, and so that's specifically, let's give this a label so we can talk about this. We have a larger culture scape or a macro culture, and here in the United States, and this is according to the CDC, their last published statistics, 60 % of American adults now have at least one chronic disease, 60 % have at least one, 40 % have two or more. We now have a culture, a larger culture scape where if you're healthy, you're not normal. You're no longer in the average. You're no longer in the majority. And so, you see what I'm going at here? That's the larger culture scape. And we do exist in that. Kind of like in a glorified snow globe here on planet earth in many ways.

But what we can do is create microcultures. Within our own household, namely, and in particular, but this is a caveat, the microculture starts with you. You are a reflection of your culture. The culture is coming from within. And I realized this recently, you know, after completing this book, I started to see more real world, you know, what you're attuned to, you'll start to see it. And we went to Hawaii recently for the first time. And again, coming from where I come from to even go to Hawaii. In the first place is like mind blowing and I saw in my son being here. He saw this multiple times as well. Like people would come over to us and talk to us, you know, even on the plane, we're just sitting on the plane.

People will walk by and just like, I love your family. We take our culture with us everywhere that we go. You can plant me into this new culture, but I'm a reflection of my culture. And there's an energy behind that as well.

And that energy, and I'm, you know, I'm a big fan of the work from HeartMath Institute. And you know, for many years, like I don't actually, even when I didn't have much money living in like Ferguson, Missouri. I would like a kind of tithe where I was getting my, my, my education from, right? My spiritual food. And so I would tithe to like the Institute of Noetic Sciences, HeartMath Institute. And We now have innovations where we can see some of the energy that we can't see with our particular range of vision Which we know that some animals see very differently than we see for example But there's a lot of things that we can't see and as you know, everything is energy But there's a field there's an electromagnetic magnetic field that radiates really from the human heart several feet up to eight feet. And they call this a tube torus.

And so truly when you're in the space with another person Our energy fields are interacting, right? So when we're talking about Vibes or we're talking about how our brains sync up and this is from researchers at Yale. Just sitting in a room with a person that we don't even know and having a little bit of rapport for maybe like 10 minutes. Our brain waves start to sync up and mirror each other, right? And it's just like we are social creatures. We're evolved to do that. We see it in other species like how those birds know how to do that V Like who's the lead like how do bees know like? Now we can do that too, but a lot of times we're so distracted from the fact that's happening.

And so, saying all this to say that by intentionally creating a microculture where you have healthier social interactions, where we understand the power of proximity and even microbial, there's a microbial data change. Exchange whenever you're in proximity with another person. It's kind of like music file sharing back in the day. You know, this catalog is getting more expensive, right? And so we have that we have something that we can't see we can see.. The microbial cascade is a little bit more tangible for us. I think as the average person thinks but at the end of the day, When we create this microculture and I have my son right here in the room with us, can you just shout out what do we do today together outside?

SHAWN'S SON: He worked out as a family.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's right. That's right. He's, you know, he's, he just turned 12, so he's got the voice now, you know, he's got to be. But we worked out together and you know, it's just a part of our culture and you know, so much of what we do, whatever we've done, we've created a physical culture in our household and also finding joy in it. You know, finding an opportunity to make sure we're doing things that he loves to do. Even when we were driving over here, I asked him, so what did you enjoy most about the workout? You know, just like taking those mental notes so I can add to it for the culture. And also, you know, knowing, and this is some, just some tips for parents in general.

A lot of times when we're wanting to change the microculture, it's hard because we all, children, we're just big adult babies. But a lot of times we resist change. Yeah. Because we're comfortable, even if we don't like where we are, we're comfortable with it. And there's something kind of soothing for the mind to have automation.

We've got a quick break coming up.

We'll be right back. 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 two. Tons of peer viewed evidence showing how incredible it is for so many aspects of human health. I'm talking about the renowned spice turmeric. Now 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. By the way, I'm 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 tumeric latte. And my favorite turmeric latte, my favorite tumeric drink, comes from Organifi. 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 Rishi 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. 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 tumeric 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 well being. Check them out. Go to Organifi.com/model for 20 % off. Now back to the show.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so one of the most practical things we can do. And this should be obvious, but it's to pay attention. Just pay attention to your child or to your significant other. Because you know what motivates them. You know what pisses them off. You know what excites them, what excites them. You know what evokes creativity, and the list goes on and on. We know those conditions, but a lot of times we make ourselves suffer because I heard this from my mother, you know, many times, a lot of times she just kind of forfeited relationships, you know, with her, with their kids.

She was just, she would say this, she said, "Shawn, I'm tired". And because we're tired, we don't want to, or don't have the mental energy to be patient, to be observant. And so that microculture starts with us starting to fill up our own cup and starting to.. It's not even add energy, but to activate, to remove blockages so that we have access to more energy for us to pay attention. For us to use as a benevolent leader, those psychological leverage points so that we can create a more cohesive unit. And last point I'll share. So it's like I know that my son loves basketball. And so being able to tie things into that what he loves, you know, I can't just make this about me and I didn't have that... I Didn't feel as seen as a child. And so It was really like you do what I say or else kind of thing and it's still out of love. It's still out of an intention for, you know me, to be a well adapted human But my mom is going to do the best that she knows how to do at the time. And so for me I'm practicing presence. And being able to see what he's interested in and tie our culture into that for his own good and for our cohesiveness as a family. That it is harder, but we get to choose our heart because the outcomes of him rebelling or, you know, having behaviors that end up hurting him or hurting other people, that's going to be hard as well.

So it's like we get to choose our heart and start to stack conditions, you know, and so really the advocacy with this new project is. For us to feel empowered to take control the controllables and creating our own microculture. To make healthy behaviors more automatic. And this is a crazy word, F word, but make it fun as well. And finding the fun in it, finding the joy, and also challenging ourselves too. And we could even find fun in that.

JIM KWIK: In your, you know, I see you interacting with your family. You could be the same parent, but also be a different parent for each child based on their purpose, based on their interests. You know, when you're tailoring these conversations around their personal passions, you know, there's a depth of it. I love how you anchor everything into science, like with this book, you know, you're pulling into not only nutritional science, obviously, but also the social sciences. You know, we've talked about how we become the people we're around with our mirror neurons. And how you know, the neurotransmitters that are being, especially oxytocin, the parasympathetic rest and digest. So all these things, and when you mentioned hard math. Who you eat with affects your blood pressure, affects your heart rate, variability,

all these different things. So when people are listening now, what are, we always talk about these small, simple steps, because I love how you anchor everything into behavioral change.

That's a very Cheetah thing to do for people who are familiar with our brain animal types, right? And also you have a very strong owl, you know in terms of logic and you want to know, you know All the different studies that back this up And your recommendations you can get results because of that and you make it very interesting. So what would be a, if you're going for behavioral change, what are some suggestions or starting points for someone listening that they could take to make this a little bit more effortless and enjoyable?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Great question. I'm going to preface this with one more little nugget for parents, for adults, because I shared a lot on children's health outcomes. There's another study that I cited in the book, looking at office workers at IBM, working in tech can be stressful. But they found that worker morale, productivity, stress, all stayed in healthy ranges when they were able to make it home for dinner. But as soon as work obligations and other things started to cut into their ability to have dinner with their families, work morale plummeted, productivity went down, and their stress levels began to elevate significantly.

And that matters because, and this was published in JAMA as well, 60 to upwards of 80% of all physician visits today are for stress related illnesses. Stress is like a seed of so many of the health outcomes that we're seeing today. And so how do we get these advantages? How do we get this kind of protective force field around our families in transition? Maybe right now that's not a part of your culture. Maybe you don't have those three days, those, that minimum effective dose. And the first step here is one of the things that you talk about, schedule it. Schedule it. When you, when we had a conversation earlier, you mentioned scheduling. I was just like, that is so practical and Captain Obvious, but we don't do it. And so, so many other obligations that are less important than our family go on our calendar.

JIM KWIK: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so this is a call to arms because a lot of times if we don't schedule it today, it's not real. So pick those three days, whatever they are. It could be different meals. It could be Monday Family dinner, Wednesday, family dinner brunch on Sundays, right? Figure out based on your schedule your unique lifestyles could be breakfast, you know, whatever days a week. Whatever it looks like for you and your family right now And by the way You don't even have to stress yourself out trying to get three. If you're going from zero to three You That's quite a task, even just having one or two, right? But three, according to the data, is that minimum effective dose. So that's number one, schedule it. Pick those days, literally put it on your schedule so that it gets some tangibility right off, right out of the gate. Another

strategy here for this kind of transition is. We have to really understand something about us as humans today.

We're addicted to our devices. All right. And so being the fact that we have this addiction and we're in a safe space so we could say it. All right. We are. I'm Shawn Stevenson and I have a problem. You know, we can be honest about it, that our tech is so integrated into our lives. Our devices can divide us. And it is what it is. And so again, I said this earlier, this isn't an advocacy for you to not have a family movie night or to watch a show or whatever while you eat. This is to make sure we're getting real FaceTime with the people that we love. And I'll share why in just a moment, but how do we go from like, my kid is gaming with his friend.

I'm like, we're having family dinner. Get off your device. You know, like you're coming in with the brute force. You could force somebody to do something, but that rebellion is innate in humans. Like we want to be free. And so my son, I know their characters as well. My older son is much more easy breezy. So we could just tell him last minute, like, Oh, family dinner, whatever. My youngest son, he wants to know that it's coming. If he has it, like he has it already mentally checked off, then he's cool with it. You know, but even today, our workout, because he was out of school. I was like, B, we're headed outside, you know, such and such time. I tried to give him some advanced notice. Right. But I could see the resistance there. Because it wasn't already on his schedule plan. Right. So paying attention to our kids' personalities and the same thing with our significant others. Right. So with that being said, how do we transition that? I look for ways to if we have any kind of addiction and just strip it away, we're going to have withdrawal and it can get ugly.

So a much more advantageous thing to do is because that addiction, by the way, oftentimes get filled with something else. Whether we're conscious of it or not. So replace it with something of equal or greater value intentionally All right, and so I want to make sure that his dopamine That's getting dabbled with by gaming that we bring in some kind of a Reward for our dinners as well, right? And so with that being said this could be after dinner We play a game that he likes, Right? And this could be literally we game after, right? We can play a video game together or this could be a family like classic board game, right? This could be a lot of times we end up for whatever reason our family has rap battles or you know was through freestyle together, or you never know like some kind of a Some kind of a creative thing tends to happen at our dinners, right? And so that's our unique kind of family modus operandi. Right? So find out what that is for your family. Give yourself permission and grace to experiment and find out what are those reward things that the family knows, like even subconsciously, To look forward to after dinner within the context of that dinner. Last one I'll share, and there's many others, is a lead into that.

Which is having some kind of a practice, a unifying thing at the beginning of the meal. For us, it's gratitude. We've done different things over the years, but we generally go around and share three things that we're grateful for from that day. And there's a couple of reasons why, of course you focus on what you filter for. And so our days are now more filled with looking for things because we're going to have this conversation later that we're going to be grateful for, and to be able to articulate those. That's part of it. The other part is when we're sharing, we're opening up innately, right? So we're getting conversation going because we might all be in our respective places. And this could be simple things by the way, like I'm grateful for this food. I'm grateful for my family. I'm grateful for turning in my homework today or whatever it is. Or it could be big things. And so sometimes you're going to celebrate bigger things. Sometimes it's small things and you can also see the temperature of where your family member is at when they're sharing. Right, maybe there's it's a tough day.

Maybe they really got to dig deep to find something to be grateful for. And we can be able to catch things, right, before it turns into something later on down the line. So get that real face time, and most importantly, allowing your family members to feel seen. You already know this, we have a deep need to feel significance, right? So they feel seen, we feel heard. And being able to, one of the things that's come from this, and my youngest son, man, I love you so much. He's been. He doesn't know this but like the last couple of days like I've done I don't know maybe 40 interviews in the last, you know, whatever weeks and, it was a lot. It was a lot and he felt that energy in the house and he would come over you give me extra hugs and just like "dad Hey, I want to make sure that you're you know, really, you know kind of take it easy today" or whatever. The reason that he's able to do that is because I opened up in a way that I didn't get exposed to as a man, especially growing up where I grew up at where even showing emotion sometimes. You could get killed, you know, like you really have to, you know, put up this energy, this facade in a sense of protection.

And so when we're sharing what we're grateful for, I'm opening up a sensitivity, right? Or sometimes we go around to share something we failed at that day, right? And so, he gets to hear, oh, my dad failed at something? Superman? Had a hard time? Like, that was painful for you? So it humanizes me, you know, instead of our parents kind of being these figures, right, these kind of action figures, you know, it really helps to humanize us so that we all can become more compassionate, empathetic for each other as a family unit. So there's several strategies in this, again, finding some lead in things culturally. People have been, you know, saying prayers together, for example, for thousands of years. There's something unifying about that moment and being able to stop, to be present. To make that switch over the dial is starting to change into that parasympathetic when you're doing this. Again, especially with the people that you love the most.

JIM KWIK: You know growing up, child of immigrants with my parents had many jobs, but you know, what they would always prioritize would be those are dinners, you know, I didn't get to see my parents a whole lot just because they were working so much, but it was always that time. And we always had this ritual of going around. And I love what you say about prayer or blessing and gratitude exercise, because it puts you in that kind of parasympathetic rest and digest, you know, sometimes, you know, we didn't spend a lot of time. As a child, me, you know, later on, it got a little bit easier, you know, as they were able to kind of elevate, but it was sacred. So it wasn't the amount of time they were spending with us, but it was the quality of time, you know, they were very present and I thought that was very important. You know, so we had an interview with Simon Sinek who wrote "Star With Why", and he was saying just having your device, even if it's face down or in your, who's off, created anxiety just at the dinner table or in meals when you're out at a restaurant because you have this, it's a trigger to you feeling like you have to pick it up because we're so conditioned to get that dopamine. And so it's nice to have a little bit of a detox, you know, if possible to be able to, to be able to do that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I shared that study in the book as well. And just again, having it in eyesight pulls away our attention because our brain knows there's all kinds of goodies in that device, right? So there's something years ago, we stopped bringing our devices to the table, you know, from my older son, you know, like literally he keeps it in his bedroom downstairs and he's been doing that for, again, for years because again, our devices divide us and that aspect of it. And even if it's on your person, this is what the research indicated. So being in the pocket, right. So the researchers like had on the table or like in, in somebody's pocket or like in another room. Being in another room really helped for them to be more focused and present and attentive. But just again and being on your person or being close to you like, you know the association. And so but again, we're not villainizing the fact that you know, our phones are awesome. Us being able to do this wouldn't be possible and we've got to be able to compartmentalize because we've been missing out on something deeply embedded in what our genes expect from us to protect our health. Our physical health and our mental health, we need each other. And, you know, last study I'll share on this note, this was a huge meta analysis that I detailed in the book. This was from research at Brigham Young University. A meta analysis is multiple studies. This wasn't just 10 studies or five. This was 148 studies looking at relationships. In human health. And this was about 300, 000 study participants, by the way.

So it's a huge data set. They found that having healthy social ties led to a 50 % reduction in all cause mortality. All right. So said it in other words, having healthy relationships led to a 50% reduction from dying from everything, everything prematurely, right? They said it was more powerful than exercise, than beating obesity, than smoking. Our relationships are that cultural shift. Why?

Last thing here, most important takeaway today, our relationships determine so many of those other things. There's nothing more impactful on our food choices than our relationships. There's nothing more impactful on our mental health than our relationships. There's nothing more impactful on our success, our exercise habits. If our relationships are tattered and we're struggling in those, it automatically affects all that other stuff. So this is really the tip of the spear when we're talking about cultural change. If we can focus on creating healthy, supportive relationships, it makes those behavior changes, those positive things, more automatic.

JIM KWIK: I love that. You know, and we'll put all this, the, some of the studies and links to your books and your podcast, everything in the show notes at jimKwik.com/notes. A few months ago, I have a newborn. He's eight months and I started a few months ago sketching out like a little family crest on a sketch pad, you know, in terms of our values for our family. But when I started putting on there, and you could, you should take this idea. It started putting around it questions to ask, you know, for the family and it's like a placemat. So imagine having you know when you would go to you have like a little like eating mat. You know to put the plate on everything else has like our kind of family building out like started drawing a kind of a struggling Illustrator but a little crest and then talking points of things, you know, like what are you grateful for? You know so many times you ask somebody how was your day and they're like good, Right? But things like, you know, what did, what's something you learned today? You know, you know, what's something you did for somebody else? And it starts these kind of deep conversations.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love that so much. We've been talking about, funny enough, my oldest son just mentioned this maybe a week ago about creating like a family crest.

JIM KWIK: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And you know, we swim in the same circles a lot of times, but to add questions into the, that is. I got to do that. That's so powerful.

JIM KWIK: I mean, he's thoughtful. We talked about in, you know, for your show, the power of questions. And so questions that aren't open ended, but they're really get people to, to share at a deeper level, you know, and connect. And as you mentioned it to feel seen, you know, also, it's funny, it's not funny, huh? It's sad that, you know, less of these meals or gatherings are happening out there. You know, even at restaurants, sometimes we'll gamify it. And I'm sure other people do this also, have done this or, you know, we're at a restaurant and everyone will take their phone out. Maybe it's a business in the luncheon. But we'll put it And we'll stack them together and like, okay, whoever touches their phone first pays for the meal

or something like that. But it's, there's some kind of, kind of consequence, but it gets it, it really emphasizes like, Hey, this is our time for the next 45 minutes or an hour or whatever. This is something where we get to spend time and really investing in those relationships. I would imagine a lot of those longevity studies, it's not just the food they're eating. It's the fact that they are how they're eating and the environment they're eating, you know, when they're eating and who they're eating with.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now, I don't know if you know this and you might be missing out but every single Monday I'm sending out book recommendations bonus content from the model health show protocols and gadgets that I might be experimenting with and so much more every single Monday, For model Mondays. And the cool thing is you get access to model Mondays for free. Just go to the modelhealthshow.com/Mondays.

All right. [Themodelhealthshow.com/Mondays](https://themodelhealthshow.com/Mondays). So you don't miss a thing. And also now keep this on the low. We're also doing monthly giveaways. That's right. We're giving away some of my all time favorite things every single month. So this might be exercise equipment. This might be my favorite foods, my favorite supplements. We even gave away an entire cold plunge tub. All right. Those things are pricey. All right. So again, to make sure that you're not missing out on any of this goodness, head over to themodelhealthshow.com/Mondays and make sure that you're connected for model Mondays every week.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So what is the state that we're in right now, by the way, because we evolved doing this together. As a species, we would hunt together, gather food together, prepare food, eat together, celebrate. That's, again, it's super fresh for me coming from Hawaii recently and seeing this dramatization of something we used to do together being in the form of this luau that we're all, you know, just sitting watching a show. Like, this is how we evolved, and this was a big time of learning as well. Storytelling, passing on. really important tenets and insights that our ancestors had picked up from one generation to the next. And really that's what culture is, by the way. It's the attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors of a group of people passed on from one generation to the next.

Now we have books to be able to do this, but there's something very primal about being able to connect and to hear people's voices and stories. And so we evolved doing that. 100 % of people were doing it, and More recently, so the latest statistics show that only about 30% of American families eat together on a regular basis. All right, so it's on the endangered species list big time right now. And even when we kind of removed tribe like the tribal construct and we start to have like communities neighborhoods. We still had family close by. Now that's even more fractured. Yeah, and so again your genes evolved. We're talking hundreds of thousands of years in this kind of form very close to doing this certain thing.

It's an epigenetic controller. And suddenly removing that just in the last few decades, like, of course, we're going to have some ramifications from that and we're seeing it, we're seeing the dysfunction. And so we've got to invite that back in now. So friends and family, by the way, it's not just family. Friends are included in this because we humans, we do certain things really well. We oxytocin it up. We're around people that we love, we're around people that we care about. And so being more intentional about this, inviting people back together. If you don't know somebody who's doing it, be that person, you know, get your friends together. I've got a friend out here in LA. He's always been that guy. Just like, well, we meet for brunch, right? He's already made the reservations, he's already done the thing. He does it to create the environment so that you pretty much can, all you can do is say yes. In a sense, you know, and you want to be a part of it because you feel good after, you know, so be that person in your group. Help to create a culture where everybody's connecting. And also this is, I can't say it's the most important, but it's very important. When you do this with delicious food. I mean, it just takes things to another level because this is something else we evolved doing. And there's recently, you know, because of our different health issues. There's been some kind of, people started to get more divided in what is the best diet, right?

You know, some, there are some camps and I, you know, I know the people who are like the face of every diet framework. They're my friends and they all mean well. And I could tell you they're all right and wrong. One of those camps is eat to live, don't live to eat to live, don't live to eat. Mouth pleasure. That's for, you know, that's for cavemen. Here's the thing. We have a very sophisticated flavor palette in our nose as well as we talked about that integration. Have you ever thought about why certain animals eat certain things? You know, like why does a cheetah eat that? Like why does a cheetah go and try to eat that animal? Or why does, you know, that bison go and nibble on that grass one day and then go nibble on these weeds over here another day? Like what is driving them to do that? We're driven to eat things that taste good to us, that they're attracted to. That's what drives them to do it. And the same thing with humans.

We have very sophisticated a flavor palette that drives us to eat tasty things. We evolve with it. Now, of course, food scientists have manipulated our desire for tasty things. Absolutely. But that doesn't negate the fact that we enjoy food. And it's a big part of what unites us as a species. Like, Everything revolves around food, everything. Whether it's the first date, whether it's the celebration. It's the you know, a new baby's coming into the world, and the baby shower after the game is over, you know, the list goes on and on. It revolves around food. It brings people together. But we become more isolated. And our food choices have become more ultra processed, and so now oftentimes we're eating ultra processed food in front of a device. And if we can check these two boxes at one time, real food and real people, like we're going to have this huge impact on our genetic expression. Last part, and this is

what's so special about this. I'm a huge foodie. I'm a nutritionist. All right. I'm a nutritionist. I've been working in this field for 21 years as of this month.

Being that I'm somebody who loves the science around food and I love food, like that's a superpower right there. And working so many years, I taught all these different nutrition classes and cooking classes before, you know, getting into the, you know, podcasting and writing books. I was on the ground making sure that food tasted delicious so that people would eat it and enjoy it and go home and make it themselves. And so being able to put all this together. And first of all, of course, I identified a little over 40 of the most science backed foods for improving your sleep quality, your metabolic health, your cognitive performance. What are those top 40 plus foods? And also because we have an emoji culture as well.

Like we do this as well. We, when we text. We can put, we can even have a conversation with just emojis. But once you find out that these anthocyanins and cherries have been found in this peer reviewed study to shrink fat cells. I'm going to put the muscle emoji next to cherries for metabolic health. I'm going to put the sleep emoji next to cherries because it's one of the few natural food sources of concentrated melatonin ever discovered, right? The list goes on and on. Whatever those emojis are with that particular food, you'll be able to eat for a purpose. And now we take that cherry and it's cool, you can eat some cherries as a snack, but what if we take this cherry and make an amazing meal or some kind of food item with that cherry, with those cherries. So the frozen yogurt pops, for example, or the heart health shake, that's just like this chocolate ice cream, basically, you know, it's just so delicious that now you can go back to the recipes and see those emojis. And like, I want to make sure that I'm doing something for, you know, I'm trying to get better sleep quality. And get these good sleep nutrients in my body in a delicious way. Last I'll share a couple more really quickly.

JIM KWIK: By the way there's going to be a huge spike in cherry sales. This is the Shawn Stevenson effect.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's a real thing apparently. But you know, I can't talk with you and not mention this, but something for brain health and cognitive performance. You know, a lot of people over the years we've talked about this, you know, we know about DHA and EPA, these Omega threes. Listen for years in my clinical practice when I found out about omega 3s. Because I was educated in a conventional university. I wasn't taught a distinction between them. Because there's multiple forms of vitamin C. There's multiple forms of magnesium the list goes on and on and the omega 3s as well. And so I would tell people to have you know, flax seeds and hemp seeds and borage oil and all this stuff. Get your omega 3s in. That's ala the plant form and your body can convert a small amount into DHA and EPA, what your brain needs, but you can lose upwards of 80 % in that conversion process, depending on your unique microbiome, your genes, the list goes on and on.

So it's not efficient to me to be able to meet your needs. And we know what the needs are. And I talk about this in the book. So, these researchers use fMRIs to look at people's brains. And to see their intake of DHA and EPA and the impact that it had on their brains. They found that people who had less than four grams of those omega 3s had the highest rate of brain shrinkage. So the brains were atrophying. Four grams was that minimum effective dose to keep the brain robust and healthy. We do not want shrinkage. All right of any type really but especially for your brain. And so the question is why are omega 3s so remarkable for keeping the brain volume where it needs to be. These, what makes them different than ALA. ALA can primarily be used as an energy substrate like with carbohydrates or ketones.

DHA and EPA are used as structural fats. There are gates in the blood brain barrier that shuttle DHA and EPA to the brain in vast amounts whenever it's available to help to ensure signal transduction of your brain cells, you know, plasticity. Our brain cells oftentimes have to live for years, sometimes decades, and it's not like other cells. So if there is metabolic waste leftover and the glymphatic system is pressing out, you know, like we've got some old kind of shoddy windows, like there's kind of boarded up on these brain cells. Now we've got some omega threes and we can help to rebuild that cell, right? But what if you're deficient in them? You're not going to be able to rebuild and restructure, remodel your brain as you were remodeled through life. So that's why they're so remarkable. Where do we get them? A lot of times you go right to supplementation, which is cool, but that should supplement an already dominant diet for your cognitive function.

And so there's a variety. The most popular food out there of course is going to be salmon, but there's also mackerel, sardines, there's a ton of different quote fatty fish that are rich in DHA and EPA. But even within salmon, there's a range. There's king salmon, there's coho salmon, but one serving of king salmon, which is the most omega 3 rich, one serving, we'll just say six to eight ounces, you're going to hit that four grams. And because it's from that salmon that has astaxanthin in it, which is that reddish pigment. It's going to protect it through cooking. All right. We don't want to deep fry the salmon, but just a gentle cooking process. Usually, you know, maybe you grill it or whatever. You're going to get those Omega threes.

All right. So you can meet that. We got an egg yolks, grass fed beef as well. But if somebody is doing a vegan or Vegetarian protocol, please get yourself some krill oil, which is microscopic. Keyword: microscopic, microscopic shrimp. All right. Incredibly rich in astaxanthin. This is what the salmon are eating to get the mega threes in their tissues. Or if you want to go full on vegan: algae oil. Get yourself a concentrate of algae oil. We don't have the peer review data on that though. We know that it's in there. But, the robust data on, you know, and this was published in the journal Neurology, they found that eating one seafood meal per week, people do in fact perform better on cognitive skills tests than people who aren't eating it.

All right, so there's something about it. There's an affinity towards the brain. And so we take that and I'll share with my favorite meal, probably right now is the salmon burgers in the Eastmarter family cookbook. They're fire. They just are. They're amazing. So it's not, okay, cool. We can have a salmon filet. But what if we turn this into a experience where everybody is flipping out just like, Oh, this is so good. And having that energy around the table with the people that you love. That's getting logged in your brain as well. Like, wow. When I get together with these people, I have these amazing, pleasurable experiences that my genes evolved having. So yeah.

JIM KWIK: You know, is this going to work? Being if it's, if you don't have a family unit, like, years ago, I lived between New York and LA. When I moved to LA and I didn't have my family, I moved out to Los Angeles for the work we do in Hollywood, but I would, you know, I would miss them and I would host these dinners like every week and we would have these rituals. And one of my favorite holidays is Thanksgiving, right? So I would host like a friend's giving because I, you know, I was a transplant in LA like most people are, but I didn't have my, you know, a family. And so, you know, and we would have these conversations, people would share a personal or professional success or a challenge that we're dealing with. Or we'd go through a rosebud thorn exercise. You're familiar, like rose, you, everyone shares a rose, you know, something that's happy in the, currently, or a bud is like an opportunity, or a thorn is something that's challenging them, those kind of things. But does it work? Does the people get the same kind of benefits if they're communing and it's not family and it's friends and co-workers?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Great question. Absolutely. Yes. Yes. And I've been to a couple of these dinners with you. One of them resulted in that book that's over on the shelf right there, Sleep Smarter.

JIM KWIK: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: By having that dinner with you and that time with you and the incredible people you were bringing together. Magic happens, man. You know, incredible things happen when humans get together in the real world and connect as we evolve doing. Yes, our technology can unite us in other ways, but it can also divide us. And so, making sure that we have in the real world some real face time. And like you just said, especially if, what if you don't have your family nearby?

Be that person. Bring people together. You know, get a couple of friends together. One of my friends here in LA. He has this men's group that he put together and you know, no one else was you know kind of getting together for the guys? So like every Sunday they get together

and they go for a hike or something or they go to brunch or you know. Like he decided to be the person because he saw his friends starting to isolate and separate, you know. So yes friends are invited. You know do this for our little ones and our elder ones as well, you know whenever we can but again. It's a superpower to schedule it because that's an action. Like you're taking an idea and making some tangibility out of it. That's really the first step. Make the decision right, get the awareness that this matters in a big way. And take action by putting on the calendar.

JIM KWIK: I have to recommend this book. This is Eat Smarter Family Cookbook. It's not only nutritious, but it's delicious. And the photos in there, we were talking about it. Absolutely amazing. And it's such an easy and enjoyable read. And I love all the references for the family. And it's just not nutritious for your mind and your body, but it's also, it's nutritious for your spirit.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Thank you so very much for tuning into this episode today. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this. And listen, number one, make sure that you have a copy of the eat smarter family cookbook is an incredible resource to have in your kitchen. Countless families all over the country already have a copy in their kitchen at all times. And it's one of those things that I actually, this is true story. I was outside working out today in front of my house. And a car pulled up next to me. It was a, it was a Range Rover pulled up next to me. I'm like, who is this? Why are they slowing down? You know, they trying to jump into the training session with me, in the training sesh. And they rolled the window down.

They were like, I have your cookbook. And I love it. And it was this amazing woman. And she shared with me, she was like, I don't really cook like that. I don't really cook that much at all. But what I did was, she was like, I strategically gave the book to people that I know cook. So that I can enjoy the meals that they make from it. And I was like, that's interesting right there. There are so many creative ways to go about utilizing this book and sharing the love and eating delicious food together. Because when she said that, I actually thought it was extra special because she was supporting and influencing other people into creating delicious meals that are also made with incredible ingredients, real food ingredients.

There's over 250 peer reviewed references utilized in the making of this book. And also the fact that we love to eat. We love delicious food, and you know, those are just these magical moments that happen in life, and I'm so grateful for that, and by the way, again, if you got a lot of value out of this. And the interviewer of this episode, my really good friend, Jim Kwik, Accelerated Learning Expert, if you're like me, I want to get accelerated. All right, I want to up level my brain, my cognitive performance. Check out any of his episodes, any of his interviews here on the Model Health Show. Again, he's been our most frequent guest.

On the show and for good reason. And listen, we're just getting warmed up. We've got so many amazing masterclasses and world class guests coming your way very soon. So make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day, and I'll talk with you soon. And for more after the show, make sure to head over to the [model health show.com](http://modelhealthshow.com). That's where you can find all of the show notes. You can find transcriptions, videos for each episode. And if you've got a comment, you can leave me a comment there as well. And please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave us a rating to let everybody know that the show is awesome. And I appreciate that so much and take care. I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.