



**EPISODE 836**

# **How to Use STRATEGY to Build Your Health, Community, & Life**

**With Guest Seth Godin**

You are now listening to **The Model Health Show with Shawn Stevenson**. For more, visit [themodelhealthshow.com](http://themodelhealthshow.com).

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** To get from where we are to where we want to be. It takes strategy, whether it's transforming our health, our relationships, or the work that we do. To get the results that we want. We're just the right strategy away. The problem is we often try to employ different strategies without knowing what strategy is.

So I reached out to a world leading expert on strategy to help us to understand what it is, how to choose the right one, and to reveal the often unknown forces that are working against our strategy. Today's special guest is New York Times bestselling author Seth Godin. He's the author of 21 international bestselling books that have changed the way people think about relationships, work, strategy, health, and more. And he's one of the most sought after teachers on the planet, with one of the longest running and most successful personal blogs and brands in the world. Let's dive into this incredible interview with the one and only Seth Godin.

I very rarely say this word. Legend. You are truly a legend. We're talking with a legend today. I was trying to articulate to my team how remarkable of a person you are. And I know that you might push that to the side, but you are truly a game changer, innovator, pioneer. Anybody who's been working to get their message out to other people have very likely happened upon your teachings. And today we're talking with the one and only Seth Godin and I'm just excited.

**SETH GODIN:** Wow. Thank you, Shawn.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It is my pleasure. It's my pleasure.

**SETH GODIN:** Very kind of you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I love to talk about to kick things off the power of culture. Because something that was kind of ringing true as I was going through your book was just how powerful culture is on our decisions, on our mindset, on our beliefs. And so whether people are wanting to improve their health, to improve their business, their relationships, they've got to understand the power of culture.

**SETH GODIN:** Yeah. What's culture? It's not yogurt. Culture is people like us do things like this. First, we decide who the people like us are, and then it's assumed. We do things like this, diseases spread not just through germs, but through culture. The expectations we have for who our kids are going to become or how we walk on the earth. That's all from culture. And we don't have to accept it if it's not helping us, but we have to realize. Culture is an artifact of systems and culture is powerful and we better be prepared to push against that power if we want it to change.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So number one, it's being aware that we are in kind of a cultural container that's influencing our choices. We might think we have free will, for example. And we're just coming up with this innovative idea. But you were also pointing to the fact that we're probably coming up with ideas that are based on the things that are happening around us. Can you talk a little bit about that?

**SETH GODIN:** Yeah. Free will is a really useful illusion, but it's not what people think it is. We think. Something is our destiny or our passion. We think we are being authentic. We think this is normal. We think we have a craving for an Oreo. All of those things are artifacts of the stories that we are absorbing from a young age, that the maladies that we have related to stress, the feelings of burnout, these are all artifacts of culture. And it's, In all of the inputs that we get it's not a plot. It's not a conspiracy. It's life. And you cannot live in a world without culture. But you should acknowledge that the culture you live in is different than someone a thousand miles away, or a hundred years ago and it's going to change the way you respond to it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This gives me thinking about cultural influences on exercise, for example. We might be doing stuff totally wrong. I just saw today on social media, a baby in diapers. All right. So maybe they were a year. All right. I'll give them that doing a handstand. All right. So maybe we should be exercising on our hands. But we've just been influenced to do this on our feet.

**SETH GODIN:** Or, I saw a baby recently in a baby stroller drinking from a baby bottle that was filled with Sprite. And, we say that's horrible but baby bottles. Other people say are horrible.

And a kid getting breastfed, a doctor in 1959 would have said, that's horrible. So there's not a universal understanding of what is right. So I think when we have the luxury to have a roof over our head and enough to eat and we start to focus on our health. A key part of it is the story we are telling ourselves that placebos are real and placebos are effective. And placebos come with a story.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Oh man. You don't know this. We haven't talked about this before, but I talk a lot about placebos. The placebo effect and the no SIBO effect.

**SETH GODIN:** Correct.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right! When we get a negative injunction about something happening.

**SETH GODIN:** Yeah, I wrote an ebook about Placebo that has been downloaded two or three million times. I love placebos. I think they're the best.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This is a perfect segue into this topic because you said that, for example, when we're wanting to make change. This is basically we're placeboing ourselves, especially in an environment where we want him to do something. Again, we're influenced by culture. Maybe we wanted to do something innovative. We have to essentially placebo our own minds in order to get ourselves to do what we want to do. And that entails this new project, right? That's what strategy is about. So I'm curious why you decided to write a book focused on strategy.

**SETH GODIN:** I only write a book when I have no choice. I've written 9,000 blog posts in a row. A blog post of mine will reach 20, 30 times as many people as a book would. So why devote a year of your life when you could just write a blog post? And the answer is because when you make a book, you're committing to the world. This one's particularly important and please talk about it. And this idea that we need to talk about it with our partner, with our spouse, with our coworkers, that's missing. People aren't talking about strategy. They're busy doing their job. They're busy plowing through the day. They're busy doing what they do. Without regard for what's going to happen tomorrow.

And if you can explain to me why you sat in the drive thru line at the Starbucks for 15 minutes to get that thing you're drinking, what's it for? Who's it for? Why did you do it? You might make a different decision. We need to talk about it because if it's just intuitive. We're going to be stuck.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Now, we, I think that we subconsciously think that we're using a strategy and maybe we are, maybe everything is a strategy. But taking the reins on this, being conscious of it to get us from where we are to where we want to be is what you're really unpacking in each and every one of these powerful like morsels of insight. And if you could, can you talk a little bit about what strategy actually is? Because this is something that I really pride myself on doing, which is. We might be facing off against a particular challenge. Maybe it's a health challenge. Maybe we're dealing with insulin resistance. But we don't know what it is. We just get a diagnosis. Here's some advice or medication. But I'm a big fan of understanding what something is in order for us to really take advantage of it.

**SETH GODIN:** A strategy is built on four things. The first one is systems. Things like the medical industrial complex. The TV industrial complex. Things that are around us that we might not notice. but that are resistant to change. Second is time. That most of the time we have an illness, that illness is going to get better or worse over time. And we need to think about what we are doing today to make tomorrow different. The third one is empathy. If we are dealing with any other human being, they have power. They are going to make choices. So we can't insist. All we can do is help them see that they will get what they want, by helping us get what we want. And the fourth one is games. Games are our chance to make moves with boundaries in any situation where there's limited resources. So let me give you an example of where you might need a strategy.

You finally get an appointment with a specialist who's going to be able to help, hopefully help you with a health problem. What is your strategy for dealing with this specialist? If you do what most patients do and just walk in as a blank slate and let them lead the conversation, it may or may not go well. But your strategy could be, I want this person to feel respected and I want this person to feel like they have the information they need to do the best job she can.

So I'm going to walk in with a one pager describing in detail what's wrong with me and what my questions are. I'm just going to hand it to them.

That's going to save five minutes of backing and forcing of me being nervous, me worrying about things, them making sure here it is. I trust you. Now what do you want to ask me? That starts a different sort of relationship with a doctor, right? Cause you made some decisions about what that doctor might or might not want, right? You made some choices about what's going to happen after you do that. You're not a victim. You're not a cog in the system. You actually have agency. And you're saying, this game, I have an hour with this person, 10 minutes with this person. It's going to cost a lot of money. I got moves to make. But if I make the right moves, they might make the moves I need them to make.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I love that. I don't think anybody has ever said the importance of coming into a situation with a coach, with a practitioner, with a physician, having questions, being armed with your questions. Let's talk about the power of questions.

**SETH GODIN:** Strategy is developed not with answers, but with questions. Plans are answers. You need a plan. That's not what we're talking about here. A plan says, if I do this, I'll get that. But before you can have a plan, you have to be able to understand what are the elements of the system? What do other people want? What are my boundaries? These are questions. And too often we don't ask the questions, right? You get pulled over. By a cop for rolling through a stop sign you need empathy. What does that cop want? What is going on in her day? What are her stresses? Where is she seeking status if I can ask those questions? I'm more likely to come up with a better plan for both of us having a better afternoon.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So the strategy is determining the plan?

**SETH GODIN:** Yes, exactly. That when we have a strategy, the plan arises and the plan isn't always going to work, but it's always going to work better than if we hadn't had a strategy in the first place.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I love that. So the strategy, you liken it to a compass a few times.

**SETH GODIN:** It's not a map.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's important. Can you make that distinction?

**SETH GODIN:** If you've got, if you've got a map to drive from here to Ohio, but it's out of date. Or there's construction on the road. You're not going to make it, but if you have a compass, no matter what arises, you can still get back on track. And so a strategy is going to help us over time, navigate things that are easier or hard. So let's say I'm dealing with a health issue. Some people have a strategy that says I want everything to happen as fast as possible with the highest technology possible. And some people have a strategy that says the body regenerates itself.

And my job is to create the conditions for the body to heal. So the person in the first group gets back surgery. The person in the second group joins a club and goes swimming twice a day. And at the end of three months, who's going to be in a better position. It depends on what was wrong with you and whether your strategy matches what was wrong with you. But we find that lots of times, there are people who want to sell us something in the health world, particularly nostrums and snake oil, who will promise us something just to get us to send them money. That's their strategy. When you ask them for double blind studies or longitudinal research about how does it work on large populations over the course of years, they have to run away because they figure out this isn't for you and you're not for them.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Speaking of longitudinal studies, I was talking recently with the Medical director and director of the longest running longitudinal human study on health from Harvard, dr. Robert Waldinger. And he shared with me based on their data, which he was skeptical of. So he went back and checked his 80 years of data. He's the fourth director to get the information. So he talked to other researchers. He went through the data and what they affirmed was that relationships, what he called healthy social bonds, are the most influential thing on how long somebody's going to live and live healthfully.

**SETH GODIN:** Yup.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And this is why I'm so excited to talk to you, because what that speaks to is culture. It's the power of culture.

**SETH GODIN:** Correct.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** One of the things that you talked about was the influence of time. And you talk about time several times throughout the book. And it really had me thinking about time in unique ways that I never thought about time before.

**SETH GODIN:** Yeah. James Glick's book on time travel is just spectacular and it really reminded me, I'm 64, about the passage of time and how we think about time. Because everyone has the same now. Nobody thinks their now was 10 years ago. Now is right now, right? And everyone gets tomorrow, the same tomorrow, 24 hours. We get to decide when it arrives as a now what to do with it. And if you spend your now focusing on your ailments and complaining to other people with ailments about their ailments, you're going to be in a culture where ailments are amplified. On the other hand, if you find yourself, for example, in a running group and the people in the running group. Run at a safe pace, you're going to run.

And it might be that after five minutes, your sore ankle isn't bothering you anymore, because the expectation of the group in the now is we're running right now, we're not focusing on that. And so what I want to help people see when it comes to strategy is the health challenge you might have right now could feel insurmountable, but often in our culture, the thing we do to deal with that pain or discomfort makes it worse. But at least it got the patient to stop complaining. And a great example of this is the overprescription of antibiotics. That antibiotics are overprescribed because patients have been culturally brainwashed since the invention of penicillin to believe that antibiotics are the serious way to get rid of certain ailments.

And doctors culturally are under pressure not to argue with them So they prescribe it for a virus but has no impact on the virus whatsoever. And so culturally just a Brief historical aside when penicillin came out, you didn't need a prescription and they put penicillin in everything. That penicillin was just given out like m& ms because it was the space age cure for



everything. Yeah, if you have vd, it's a godsend but for a lot of other problems, it just created drug resistant bacteria.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Crazy pants. Penicillin was M& M's. That's a, that could be a good talk for you coming up, Seth. All right. So, we've kind of unpacked this time element and again, it's getting me to dig a little bit deeper on the influence of culture. And I'm wondering, you just mentioned a big cultural phenomenon with antibiotics. Can we change culture? Can we change the culture? Or is our time better served doing something else.

**SETH GODIN:** Okay. So the culture changes all the time. We can influence it. What we can't do is change it faster than it got built. And so we can plant the seeds for culture to evolve. So, women weren't welcome at all in the workforce for six until 60 years ago. And now we live in a world where it's quite likely that the person of most authority in the room with you is a woman. That's a cultural shift. If we're talking about health and science in the 1910s there was an epidemic in Switzerland of goiter.

Goiter is a horrible disease. Makes your head misshapen. It causes all this pain. And this country doctor figured out that one tiny drop of iodine a day cured goiter, and he invented iodized salt. And he proved, it took six hours to prove that if people ate iodized salt, their goiter would go away. So the question is, how long did it take for The Swiss government and authorities to embrace iodized salt as a response to this horrible epidemic. And the answer is 20 years. And the reason is because the doctor who developed it was a country doctor who had no status. And so he showed up, he says, I got this great idea.

And the status quo said, you don't work in Zurich. You're not some fancy PhD. We're not going to listen to you. And even though the evidence was there, it was obvious, easy to test. It took almost a generation for it to catch on. But now the culture has changed. Every person listening to this has iodized salt in their diet. That's why you don't know anybody who has goiter. And so we can see the culture change that justice slowly arrives, that the arc of justice is long but it arrives and it's our work to influence it, to push it, to encourage it forward and to not get distracted by somebody who wants to sell a snake oil or somebody who wants to do surgery. When we're better off going swimming.

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

One of my favorite strategies for maintaining a high level of health and fitness is to make it easy. When I'm on the go, whether it's traveling to speak at an event or spending all day in my son's basketball tournaments. I'm not going to leave it up to chance to have some nutritious snacks to keep me going. That's why I always travel with the snacks from paleo valley, including their incredible superfood bars that are made with certified organic superfoods and 10 grams of real protein from 100 percent grass fed bone broth protein. They come in a variety of flavors, including apple cinnamon, chocolate chip and more.

And right now, my favorite Pumpkin Spice Superfood bars are back, and the coolest part is you get 15% off when you go to [paleovalley.com/model](http://paleovalley.com/model). Go to P-A-L-E-O-V-A-L-L-E y.com/model. You get 15% off store wide. And also check out their 100% grass fed and grass. Finished beef sticks in a variety of flavors, no artificial preservatives, and also their supplements have no binders, no fillers, just all real organic superfoods. Again, this is what I always travel with, and I also keep here in the studio to share with guests of the show and my team. Head over there and check them out. I've been utilizing Paleo Valley's incredible snacks for many years. Again, that's [paleovalley.com/model](http://paleovalley.com/model) for 15 percent off. And now back to the show.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Can we use the terms or ideas, systems and culture interchangeably? Are these two different things?

**SETH GODIN:** They're close. Culture is invented by systems to defend themselves. So the system of the college industrial complex, which is 400 years old in the United States, where you're supposed to go hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt to get a fancy degree from a famous college is supported by the culture of what's the sticker on your car? What's your standing in the community? Are you a good parent? That's all culture, but it was built by the Harvards of the world to support the system that they developed over the years. First, we got to look for the system because you can try to change the culture, but if you don't understand the system behind it, it's not going to change.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Okay. Now this brings us to one of the most remarkable insights that I came across, which is that these systems exist. We're born into them. And we oftentimes, most people don't realize that they're existing in a system or a culture. And we might have this revelation that a system exists that we don't like or that's causing us distress. That's making it harder to be healthy, for example, and so we want to change the system and you shared something so profound. But it's sometimes a tough pill to swallow that it's often better to work with the system than to try to fight against it. Why is that?

**SETH GODIN:** Okay, so if you announce that the Earth is melting and climate is changing, and the reason is capitalism. Because capitalism, the system, created the conditions to pump cheap oil out of the ground and burn it. Therefore, the only solution is to suspend capitalism. You got a problem because the number of people who are dependent on the invisible system of markets is so big that you're, and if you don't have a better solution, ready to go in tomorrow, it's not gonna happen. On the other hand, if you realize that the problem was started and created and amplified by capitalism. Capitalism didn't do it because they like putting carbon into the air. They did it because they want to solve people's problems and make a profit. So if you create the conditions for people to solve people's problems and make a profit while capturing carbon, while reducing embodied carbon, it'll take you five minutes to sell them that because that's what they want to buy.

Right? And so, a similar thing is if the culture, if the system of medicine has trained people to pop a pill, when they have a headache. If you go to them and say, pills are always wrong, double blind studies are always wrong. It's going to be very hard for you to sell that to people. On the other hand, if you say what you need to do is every time you take a pill for a headache, also go for a 20 minute walk, and you associate those two things. Now the culture is saying, Oh, he's not trying to tear down what we have. He's just trying to amplify it. And so that gives you the wind at your back. And that's what we need to do to change the culture is see the system. Dance with the system and bend it so that the people in the system can still get what they wanted, but they do something different to get that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I love that so much. This sounds like it could be a game. It could be a game that we play ourselves to get the results that we want. And this speaks to one of those

ingredients that you talked about earlier. Let's talk about this phenomenon of being able to utilize a game mindset in all of this.

**SETH GODIN:** Okay, so there are a few reasons why we want to call it a game. The first one is the very definition of a game is there's a few players, there's rules, there's outcomes. I think we could imagine getting an appointment at the Mayo Clinic is a game by that definition. Number two, if you call it a game, you depersonalize it, right? If you fail in your move, it's not 'cause you're a bad person. It's 'cause you made the wrong move. So even if it's a matter of life or death, calling it a game helps us navigate it. So it's a personal example, a relative of mine needed a kidney, and it turns out that there's six or eight zones throughout the United States for the waiting list for kidneys.

And some zones have shorter waiting lists than others. If you wanna win the game, move to Denver, because the waiting list there is shorter. That's a game move. And the third thing is we understand something called game theory are everything we've learned about what moves are good moves and what moves aren't good moves when you play a game. And so by combining all of these things we realize that our work in dealing with systems and culture is a game We get to make moves. They take time or they take money. What move are you going to make? And what will the system respond?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Because it's going to be a response. And that's where strategy comes in and being a compass. So I want to ask you a specific example. Let's say, somebody has kind of been struggling for the last, we'll say 10 years since they started having kids to be consistent in their exercise regimen. How can they utilize a game mindset for them to be able to get their fitness in, in five days a week, which is their goal?

**SETH GODIN:** This is a great question. The simple solution that Apple came up with is this thing on my wrist. That's nothing but a game, right? That if I close my rings, no one knows but me, but here I am. I grew up in a system of don't get a C minus. You really want to make sure you meet the requirements. And there it is right on my wrist. So at six o'clock, I get a little note saying, Seth, your rings are only a couple of minutes of walk away from being closed. That's a game move. If we're not talking about something electronic.

I say, you know what something I've always been focused on is making sure I don't let my friends down. So if I do the hard work of starting a walk around the block club. That meets every day at three o'clock just before the kids get off the bus. Doesn't matter how busy I am. I'm not going to miss the club meeting. Because that's the kind of person I am. I'm playing a game with myself and with these people. And so now we're using games and culture to help us get what we want to get. What we don't want is to be a pawn in somebody else's game, particularly if they're just hoping to make a profit from us. And so my grandmother, who passed away many years ago, was a sucker for late night TV ads.

And she spent 129 on a device that she thought was going to exercise her, that all she had to do was turn it on and she'd be done, and she was the victim of a game. Because the people who ran that ad knew that there were people like my grandmother who were lonely, who had nothing better to do at night, who called the operator, who got this device and no one was ever going to use it. When it's one of those things and you're the victim of a game. You need to say, Oh, I see what's happening here. They have a strategy. They're using it on me in a way. I don't like.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I remember some of these devices, put some on your abs or on your pecs, you get your, get the pecs popping. And I actually remember seeing, I think it, it might've been a biopic or it was a documentary on Bruce Lee, and he was fidgeting with some of these gadgets and he was using it too in his basic, in his downtime though. So you might see that Bruce Lee's got pecs. I need to get that device. But Bruce Lee is also doing all these pushups and training and fighting and all this stuff. Now another aspect of this, and by the way, I think a great tool for any of us to gamify and it's super inexpensive would be a pedometer. Just simply getting a little inexpensive pedometer, putting it on your waistband and just set a goal for yourself. And it's pretty interesting to see how many steps you can get in just being a person, just being a human. You don't even necessarily need to go for a "walk", but if you're just being active and paying attention to that number, this is a way for us to gamify it in our own minds.

**SETH GODIN:** Yeah, exactly.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** With that being said, games also, an aspect of games is including other people. So you mentioned creating a community element. I think that's very helpful for so many people. Just be, it adds a layer of accountability. It adds a layer of cooperation, competition and cooperation together. And you can put, you can use that term, by the way, Seth, you put that in your next book. But you can, really extract a lot of that if you're leveraging and getting into creating, co creating a fitness culture. So it gives us this instant feedback loop.

**SETH GODIN:** But it's worth mentioning here, Shawn, how we've been pushed so hard to avoid interacting with other people. Two, you're in the waiting room at the doctor's office and you see someone who's obviously alone and obviously in a bit of distress. It will cost you nothing to sit down and connect with them. Your day will get better and so will theirs. But you're not going to do it, right? That you see three people who go for a walk around your block and you would love to join them, but you're afraid to go over and say, can I walk with you? Why it's free, right? They can say, no. But we're afraid we've been pushed to be apart. And there are plenty of cultures where that's not the case. People in Western culture decided they can make more money by dividing us rather than by encouraging people to do stuff together. But you can fix that because people are just as lonely as you are, and they will be delighted that you went first.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I'm so grateful. I get to ask you this question personally, because this is something I'm curious about, which is, you just mentioned, we have a culture, we've never been so isolated and, we have these devices that are intended or supposedly to connect us. And there are great applications of that. There's a right use of it for sure. But being that we are so far apart today and the impact that this is having on business, on mental health, on relationships, on every aspect of our lives what can we do Seth? What can we do with this environment the culture that we're existing in right now that you just said it. We've been programmed or forced to be pushed apart. Like this has been very intentional in certain ways, again, this isn't some big conspiracy, but it is the result. What can we do if we're again, wanting to start a business, improve our business or our health? What can we do when we're being so pushed apart everywhere that we turn?

**SETH GODIN:** Okay. So it's important to understand that you don't, and cannot, change the whole world. What we're seeking is the smallest viable audience, not the biggest possible one. So if you go to the gym, that's the only world you need to change. 25 people, 25 people put a poster on the wall of the gym where people can write down their progress and other people can congratulate them on their progress. That you can hand out name tags. So now these people aren't strangers. That's Bob and that's Bruce and that's Jennifer. It's awkward, but it's totally doable. And when we start to create that alternative culture, then it sticks and it spreads. And there are countless examples of this, where we have little tiny circles where we can make a difference. There's a, I don't know if you've ever had Ben and Jerry's brownie ice cream.

It is the most popular single flavor of ice cream in the United States. And all of the brownies in Ben and Jerry's ice cream are made four miles from here in Yonkers, New York, at the Greyston Bakery. And Greyston started as a Zen Buddhist Sangha where people would come together to meditate, and they wanted to contribute to the community, so they started a bakery. And as the bakery grew, they met Ben and they met Jerry, and they started making brownies for Ben and Jerry. That's the background. The Panchalaya story is, Grayson has an open hiring policy. And the way it works is when you get there to the front desk, there's a clipboard, right? Your name and phone number.

And if there's a job opening, the next person on the list gets hired. There's no interview. There's no credential. The next person on the list gets hired. It doesn't matter if you were previously incarcerated, it doesn't matter if you've had drug problems, the next person gets hired. You have two weeks of training, and if you can't handle it, if you can't show up on time, if you can't do the job, you can't stay. But if you can, now you have a job. This changes people's lives. Dramatically it heals communities. It's spectacularly powerful. Most businesses don't have open hiring. It will take a long time for businesses to understand open hiring, but that's okay. They got time. They started with one little thing that was under their control. Now they're teaching other organizations how to do it. That's how we change the culture, a little bit, and then we multiply it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I love it. I love it. All right. So again, I get to ask you this, I'm grateful because this is something that I kick around in the back of my mind a lot. I've seen all the Terminator movies, all right, AI is here. It is here and it's integrated itself into a lot of my friends and colleagues lives and businesses. And, there's a large group of people who are concerned about becoming irrelevant in a way. And again, this is one of those things that can potentially push us further apart, right? Why do I need a team if AI can do it for me and I'm curious about your perspective on the influx of AI so quickly it happened really quick. The buildup took a long time, but then it happened so fast. And what if somebody is feeling like this can replace me? Is everybody replaceable with AI right now?

**SETH GODIN:** Okay. Since I was born, we have invented 7 billion jobs. That's extraordinary. It's just this weird coincidence that there's almost enough jobs all the time. Most of the jobs are invented by technological change. So if you were a ditch digger in 1910, you saw that there were a lot of ditch diggers in the world, and the steam shovel was a very big threat. But the steam shovel invented more construction jobs, then it destroyed. That when word processing showed up the typing pool disappeared, and all of those people had to go find something else to do. So now we got AI that can read an x-ray better than a mediocre radiologist can. Does that mean that people who understand the inner workings of our body are out of work. No, it just means they better be able to use this new tool to do something even more useful.

So what I think is this, if you have a job that an AI can do, you need to figure out before your boss does how to do something AI can't do. Because as soon as your boss figures out that AI can do what you do, They're going to have AI do it. And I wouldn't say that the typical organization is a team. I would say the typical organization are a few people who make decisions telling other people to do tasks. And we're going to shift to a world where tasks are free and generally done by AI. So you need to promote yourself to a job where AI works for you, because you do not want a job where you work for AI.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Okay. He also said, A fascinating word in there, you said mediocre. And talking with you, I just have this feeling and I'm curious if you agree or have something else to say about it. But I feel like, yes, for example AI can write a book for you, but it can replace a mediocre writer. But I think that there's still a lot of room and maybe always will be, maybe AI



can get to the point where they are excellent, but I think there's a lot of room for excellence. Specifically living through the human experience. And being able to articulate yourself.

**SETH GODIN:** Well said. No, mediocre just means average, right? A mediocre crossing guard isn't someone who's letting the kids get run over. They're just an average crossing guard and mediocre has always been the most easily replaceable work. What happened when the camera was invented is that all the mediocre painters were out of work. Because if you just want a picture of your mom, use a camera, right? But the great painters did even better than before because they were making paintings, you couldn't make a count, use with account, create with account.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's one of the most profound things I've ever heard. That's so wow. That's powerful. So another ingredient, we talked about time. We talked about games, empathy. Let's talk more about that. Why is that one of these ingredients?

**SETH GODIN:** So empathy has this reputation as being the soft word that when you're kind, you have empathy and I'm in favor, but that's not the empathy I'm talking about. I'm talking about the empathy of power and realizing you're not in charge. You need other people to voluntarily want to go along with you. And that means you have to imagine what they want and give them something that benefits them, if you want them to play along with your strategy. So a couple of minutes ago, we talked about getting pulled over by a cop. That cop maybe wants to avoid doing a lot of paperwork. That cop maybe needs a little bit more respect in their day. That cop maybe wants to discover that people can change right?

I'm not sure what that cop wants. But if I start yelling at them for pulling me over, I'm guaranteed to get a ticket and maybe even get arrested. But if I say if I call that person sir or ma'am and I acknowledge that I was in a rush and I apologized and blah blah maybe, because I have empathy for what they want, My story resonates enough with them that it's easier for them to give me a warning and go home than it is to teach me a lesson and write me a ticket. I don't think that's manipulative because they're getting what they want and I'm getting what I want. And the same thing is true if you're in third grade and have a teacher who cares about

one teaching instead of a different teaching, you can't teach that teacher a lesson, but you can figure out how to get them what they want while you're getting what you want.

So the reason is that empathy is important. Organizations and people with power, forget it all the time. If you're a doctor and you want a tuberculosis patient to take all of their meds. Yelling at them makes it sound like you have all the power, but when they leave, they have the choice to take their meds or not. So your job is to create the conditions for that person to want to take their meds. And that requires empathy.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** In the conversation about longevity, we want to remain youthful from the outside and inside. We don't want to have a youthful appearance, but a very old heart or a very old brain. We want to make sure that we're taking care of ourselves from the inside out. And there are certain foods that are well established, not only in peer reviewed data today, but have been utilized for thousands of years for their longevity benefits. More recently, a study published in *Advances in Biomedical Research* found that royal jelly has the potential to improve spatial learning, attention, and our memory.

In addition to being antimicrobial, anti tumor, and anti inflammatory, royal jelly has been found to facilitate the differentiation of all of our brain cell types. And to top it off, researchers in Japan discovered that Royal jelly has the power to stimulate neurogenesis, the creation of new brain cells in the memory center of the brain. Now, if you're wondering what royal jelly is, it's not that kind of jelly. It's not smuckers. All right. We're talking about this incredible, renowned bee product. And while worker bees live on average about a hundred days. The queen bee, exclusively feeding on royal jelly, lives one to two years.

Alright, so we're talking somewhere in the ballpark of seven times longer lifespan. There's something really remarkable about this food. Now, I've been utilizing royal jelly for years. From regenerative bee farms and also is third party tested from the incredible folks at beekeepers naturals and combined in their incredible new tropic called brain fuel. Not only do you get royal jelly, but you also get one of my other all time favorite things for brain health and longevity and cognitive function, something that's called BACOPA. A randomized double blind placebo controlled human trial published in 2016 found that just after six weeks

of use, BACOPA significantly improved speed of visual information processing, learning rate, memory consolidation, and even decreased anxiety in study participants.

This is some remarkable stuff here. We're talking about brain fuel from the good folks at beekeepers naturals. Go to [beekeepersnaturals.com/model](http://beekeepersnaturals.com/model), and you're going to get 20 percent off store wide. So that includes their phenomenal brain fuel, also their superfood, honey, their propolis immune spray, and so many other phenomenal things that, again, this is exclusively at [beekeepersnaturals.com/model](http://beekeepersnaturals.com/model). Go to [BEEKEEPERSnaturals.com/model](http://BEEKEEPERSnaturals.com/model) for 20 percent off site wide. And now back to the show.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So is this something that we could, I don't know how much we can improve our intelligence, like our IQ per se, but I know that we can definitely become a lot smarter and we can know a lot more and have a diversity of ways of engaging with this stuff. I'm curious about EQ, right? Our emotional quotient. Can we build that?

**SETH GODIN:** Yeah, exactly. My dad passed away a bunch of years ago and he had certain kinds of dementia, early onset stuff. It was very sad. And he loved placebos as much as me, maybe more. And I discovered when I visited him that he was taking 153 different things every day. And if I had said to him, dad, you can't take this, can't take this. It would not have worked because he was still my dad and he had more wisdom than me. So I found a doctor in buffalo who it turns out he had seen and trusted and I worked out the hippo with the doctor and I said we're coming to the office for a consult. And the only thing I want you to do is go with my dad through all 150 bottles and divide them into two piles. And because we could sit in that setting the doctor said, you're taking 19 different kinds of selenium here. That's not helping, right?

And so we left with 20 placebos that he could take every day and 133 that I could put into the medical recycling bin. And the next six months of his life were terrific compared to previously because it was less weight on his brain. The point of the exercise was that the doctor understood. He could not scold my dad. I understood that I didn't have standing and that there was a system in place and a belief cycle in place. But because the two of us came

together and talked in ways that he could understand, that he wanted to hear, we were able to make a change happen.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. I think one of the core qualities for building our emotional intelligence is. Being able to perspective take, right? Just taking that tiny moment to put our, "put yourself in someone else's shoes". And that's I think that's a big part of what wisdom is. You mentioned wisdom is being able to see things from multiple perspectives. Alright, so we've covered the empathy part of this. We talked about systems, time, as well. And we also hit on games. So, just because I have you here I want to give you another specific example. As we're existing in a culture right now that is radically unwell. All right. According to the CDC's most recent data and publishing, and they put a cute little infographic with some little cartoon characters, but the bad news is 60 percent of American adults now have at least one chronic disease, 40 percent have two or more.

And so we're existing in a culture where it's normal to be unwell, right? That's the norm. Yeah, and one of my favorite parts of the book, what is the heartbreak of an intuitive strategy? And in this section you have this line you say, The rat doesn't know someone built the maze. All right, the rat doesn't know that someone built the maze. So again, we're existing in this culture. We're trying to change something about our health. We have a certain food culture that's giving you what you believe to be the only options that you have to eat. You know, a culture of sedentary behavior, whatever the case might be. Let's talk a little bit about the heartbreak of an intuitive strategy and also again, how do we operate and get the results we want in a culture that's unwell?

**SETH GODIN:** So what do I mean by an intuitive strategy? I simply mean it's worked for you so far, but you don't want to talk about it. It's worked for you so far, but if the world changes, you're not sure what you're going to do. An intuitive strategy feels authentic. An intuitive strategy feels unplanned. It's just, I'm just being myself. It's a heartbreak because you're wasting tomorrow because you're setting yourself up to be fragile because by not naming it and identifying it, then you're going to be a victim of it. So yeah, I had a big piece of cake at the birthday party because the social pressure on me to have a big piece of cake was more than my desire to keep my blood sugar in place.

If I say that out loud, it's way easier for me to not have a piece of cake next time because I just named the system, right? Whereas if I don't want to talk about it, I'm just going to be a victim, a cog in the system. So what we're looking to do is come up with a narrative. That's concise and consistent. I haven't had meat in 40 years. There is no social pressure that would make me eat a hamburger and I don't even have to think about it anymore. I just, I named it. I have a strategy and I'm sticking with it because I can see why it's a good idea for me. And that's different than well, it depends on who's in the room and I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings.

I promise you no one's feelings are hurt if you say no to a hamburger, but you didn't say it out loud. So you don't know that you're just going along to get along. And I think your health is important enough that you should name the things that got you into this spot. The systems that you think are working against you, because if you name them, you can try to fix that. For example, a simple one. Oh yeah, I ate two candy bars yesterday. What I'm going to do is I'm going to move the candy bars to the top shelf and put a basket of apples in that spot. Because if I say that out loud, and now I understand the habit, maybe I can change that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Changing the environment.

**SETH GODIN:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Our kind of like microculture, right?

**SETH GODIN:** Exactly.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I love that All right. Can you talk a little bit because that's a tactic is that not a tactic?

**SETH GODIN:** That is a tactic in support of a bigger strategy, correct?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** All right, let's talk about strategy versus tactics.

**SETH GODIN:** Okay, so tactics can change, tactics can be secrets. Tactics can be a competitive advantage. Tactics are these small steps we use to support a bigger strategy. So a strategy could be, I'm going to get my health in order by controlling my environment and intake before I start using Ozempic or surgery. That is a strategy I can live that for the next 40 years. I have lots of different tactics for it. But that's a strategy, and a tactic is I need to change the environment. I need to look for the triggers. I need to keep a diary. I need to have a buddy call me on the phone at 11:30 and ask what I'm going to have for lunch. Those are all tactics. But the longer strategy is to take control. You decide what's going in your mouth, not the system.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I love that. So with tactics, this is something that personally I worked to kind of implant this mind virus for people that tactics are something that we can gamify, because I think we tend to get too tied to the tactic not working, right? And just being able to pay attention to the feedback, right? So okay. Oh, that didn't work. Let me try this. Being a little bit more flexible with the tactics, but still having your overall strategy in mind, having your end destination, what you want in mind, but being able to kind of gamify the tactics.

**SETH GODIN:** Yeah. If you think about a big food company, they got, they spend billions of dollars and have hundreds of people working overtime, trying out new tactics to get you to do the wrong thing. So to imagine that one set of tactics and you're done. So I'll give you an example. John Scully, who's well known for running Apple for a little while, used to work at Pepsi. One of the things he did at Pepsi, which he bragged about, was he figured out 16 year olds gain status by being able to slam swig an entire bottle of Pepsi in one gulp. That's like a great way to show off if you're 16.

So he pioneered the idea of making the top of the pepsi container a little bit wider so you could drink it faster. I think that's horrible because how many people got diabetes because of that innovation? But if you think about how many millions of dollars, we're at stake, to create a tactic to get you to do exactly what you don't want to do. Yeah, you're going to need new tactics and you're going to need to rotate them all the time to support your strategy, because you got other people trying to undo your tactics. Other people putting peer pressure on you to do the opposite.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yes. Yes. Yes. I love that. I love it. I think a good place and I don't want to let you go. But a good place for us to kind of finalize this conversation. And by the way, there's so much more. Every single page has these morsels of wisdom. This is strategy. And as of this recording, as of everybody reaching this, it's available everywhere that books are sold. Pick up a copy. This is strategy by the living legend, Seth Godin. And I want to talk about this subsection you have here. It's toward a strategic practice, right? And this is broken down into these three categories, chores and tasks. Leverage, and emotional labor. And emotional labor was particularly poignant for me, but I want to talk about these three things and why you put this here in the book.

**SETH GODIN:** From the time you were in first grade, the teacher said, it's not your job to come up with a strategy. It's your job to do the chores. It's your job to do the tasks. Get an A on the test. The whole time you were in school, they never asked you a question they didn't know the answer to. Chores and tasks, right? And so we want to work our way up because if that's all you know how to do, then A. I. 's Gotcha, right? We want to work our way up and the highest level is emotional labor, which is doing stuff you don't feel like. It's not the physical labor of digging a ditch. It's the difficult task of asking the doctor one more hard question. The difficult task of admitting that sometimes you have trouble with your bowel movements. The difficult task of looking a relative in the eye and saying i've made a living, will you hold on to it for me. When we do emotional labor, we have worked our way to the top level of making strategy. Most people are pushed by culture to not do things if they don't feel like them. And what it means to be independent is you do it because it's important, not because you feel like it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Yeah. So many of us today It's never been easier to distract ourselves and to create this appearance. Everybody's so busy. Everybody's busy and what we're tending to do is spend a lot of times on tasks and chores, right? And not doing the emotional labor, the emotional work to make those tasks and chores more rewarding and more fun. Maybe even completely different, and bringing us more value, more sense of purpose, more fulfillment. But we're not doing the emotional labor part. And in closing, last question, we know it's important. How do we get ourselves to actually do the emotional labor? To look within and do that inner work? To change our outer world.

**SETH GODIN:** Shawn, it's almost impossible to do it by yourself. That's why there's a book. Find a buddy, find five buddies and talk about it. When you have an accountability group, when you go through the steps together, you are unstoppable. And that is the hack. The ultimate hack is you don't want an intuitive strategy. You want a strategy that you could say out loud and have other people hold you to it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I love it. I love it. Seth, this has been awesome. I'm so grateful to have this experience to talk to you. You've been in my life virtually for many years. And if you could, can you share, of course, your ideal place for people to pick up a copy of the new book and also just where they can get more into your world in general?

**SETH GODIN:** I've been writing blogs for 20 years. I haven't missed a day in 9,000. It's at Seth's.Blog. And I don't care if people buy my book. I hope you will, cause it might be helpful. And if you're interested, it's at [Seth's.blog/TIS](http://Seth's.blog/TIS), which stands for *this is strategy*. What I want you to do is talk about it. Talking to you, Shawn, was such a contribution because you have modeled for people that they can talk about their strategy. And that's why I wrote a book about it, but mostly I just want the conversations to happen.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Yeah. And as of now, AI can't do that. We still get to have the conversations. Seth, this has been amazing. I appreciate you so much for your insight for just taking the time to create and to share your resources with everybody and just being so damn cool, man, I appreciate it.

**SETH GODIN:** All right, I'm looking forward to hearing this. Thank you for doing the conversation with me Shawn. Everyone keep making a ruckus because the work matters. Thank you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Awesome. That's Seth Godin everybody. Everything that we experience in our lives, everything that we get, everything that we're creating revolves around strategy. It's this invisible force that again, it's taking us from where we are to where we want to be, or sometimes where we don't want to be. Because there is a strategy in getting to where we don't want to be. There's a strategy to getting the results that we don't want. And oftentimes



we are utilizing those strategies, unknowingly, and wondering why we're seeing things that we don't want to see. And so it's embracing this revelation of the power of strategy and utilizing strategy proactively, intelligently in our lives.

And some of these powerful insights that Seth shared with us today that are within a strategy. Gamifying things and understanding the power of changing up our tactics, but not necessarily changing our overall strategy and where we want to go. Being able to really leverage the impact of community and empathy and understanding the role of culture in all of these things, whether it's our work life, our relationships, our health and fitness. Culture is literally guiding our choices and presenting our choices every single day, whether we realize it or not. So we want to be aware of that culture and be able to make some changes within it. Of course, being able to control our own micro culture, and also understanding that if we want to change a culture, if we want to change a system, it's oftentimes going to be working from within the system, understanding how the game is played. So that we can influence and start to make some changes when it comes to maybe the rules of the way that the game is played. Maybe the outcomes, maybe the players themselves. There's always some leverage that we can find within the culture to make change.

So I hope that you got a lot of value out of this episode today. If you did, please share it with your friends and family. Of course, you could share this out on social media. Just take a screenshot of the episode and you could share it on Instagram. Tag me, I'm @ShawnModel on Instagram. And I think that Seth is pretty prolific on X, all right, on the app formerly known as Twitter. All right. And if you want to share it on Twitter and give Seth a shout out, I think that he'd love to see that.

We've got some epic 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 [themodelhealthshow.com](http://themodelhealthshow.com). That's where you can find all of the show notes. You can find transcriptions, videos for each episode. And if you've got a comment, you can leave me a comment there as well. And please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave us a rating to let everybody know that the show is awesome.

And I appreciate that so much and take care. I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.