



EPISODE 846

The Top Food and Family Tips to Transform Your Health TODAY!

With Dhru Purohit

You are now listening to **The Model Health Show with Shawn Stevenson**. For more, visit themodelhealthshow.com.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Welcome to the Model Health Show. This is fitness and nutrition expert Shawn Stevenson, and I'm so grateful for you tuning in with me today. Right now, we're nearing the season where a lot of people are getting together with their friends and family and celebrating and eating a lot of food. And I wanted to share this with you today because there's so much power in this. And I had an experience last night that really helped to remind me that this is something that shouldn't just be relegated to a certain time of year. We need each other. We need our families. We need our friends. And being intentional at getting people together under that umbrella of food and sharing that time and energy together is so important in our development and our health overall.

And I was invited by a friend who's been on the model health show, Dr. Darshan Shah, and he's an incredibly successful physician. And he's the CEO and founder of next health, who has all of these incredible clinics around the country that are all about prevention. They're about real wellness and getting people out of the sick care system. And so Darshan and I have hung out a couple of times, but he invited me to an amazing dinner at his place and I brought my wife along. And so it wasn't just Darshan and his wife, but he also invited Dr. Casey Means, one of my favorite people, and she's been a guest on the model health show as well and her fiance or her fiance was there as well.

And he's one of my favorite people just right off out of the gate, former Dodgers baseball player. And he's gone from that world into being so focused on wellness and mindfulness and all things wellness. Just about his spirituality and he's just an incredible person, great energy and also Dr. Kelly Starrett, Juliet Starrett was there. And so it was just amazing, just incredible people. And I didn't know how much I needed that. You know, just being around great people, having great food. Oh, the food was crazy. The food was crazy. And of course it's kind of catered around all of our principles. And here's the coolest part. When the dessert came out, Darshan and his folks actually made the dessert, was a dessert from my cookbook, the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook.

I had no idea. And I was just blown away. Like when I saw it, I'm like, that looks like. A pumpkin muffin couldn't be and it was the pumpkin muffins from the Eastmarter family cookbook. That's some delicious like the side was like some baked apples and this saw it was crazy, crazy.

It was so delicious And just going those little things going above and beyond to show love and to make me feel, you know, included and like I matter. And it's not that we don't or that I don't just sometimes getting those external moments of connection are so good for our spirit. And yeah, so to top it off at the heart of all of us getting together Is the fact that we are all powerhouses in this field of health and wellness. And when we unite forces, that's when we can really create change, rapid change with more ease and grace. And so often I've definitely been guilty of being that lone wolf and wanting to save the world on my own, I've got this, I could do this, you know, the superman mentality.

And there's really only so much that we each can do. And that's one of the parts of being human, being alive at this time, remembering how we got here, how we got to this place as humanity. was with each other, working together, finding ways to solve problems together. Cooperation is the key. And so what I wanted to remind you of today is how important this is for your family, for your friends to be more intentional in getting together and having meals together, getting together with your friends and having coffee and just talking and enabling the people that you care about to feel seen to feel heard. And to create a space where you get that experience as well.

And so on this episode, this is a special conversation that I had with somebody who's put together many of those meals like that, many of those dinners. And welcomed me into this new city and been such a great friend and ally for many years. And it was a conversation that I had with my really good friend, Dhru Purohit. And in this conversation, again, Dhru has one of the top shows in the country. He asked me some really powerful questions and I'm going to be sharing. How do we actually influence our family to make healthier choices, all right. How do we, because a lot of times we get a lot of stress trying to get our family to do healthier things to make healthier choices and it can be stressful for us.

So how do we go about influencing our family to make healthier choices? And I'll tell you right now, it's a secret that should not be a secret. All right. So we're going to cover that. We're also going to cover the critical role that your environment and the people you spend time with play on your health. We're also going to cover the surprising results of our current healthcare system and answer the question, are people actually living longer? And you're

going to get a detailed, comprehensive understanding of this in a whole new light. This and so much more is embedded in this powerful conversation. I just want to remind you again that we don't want to make this something that we just do on the holidays. We want to be more intentional about spending time with the people that we care about. It is so important. We need each other now more than ever. So check out this incredible conversation that I had with the one and only Dhru Purohit.

DHRU PUROHIT: Shawn welcome back to the podcast. Pleasure to have you here. Let's jump right in. Happy anniversary, by the way. How have you guys weaved this into your life, especially within the family?

SHAWN STEVENSON: You already know this man. You see the culture that we've built. My son, my oldest son is working at fitness right now. I never told him to do it. He's just around it. And ever since he was old enough to get a gym membership, I was taking him with me, you know, to the gold gym in our, like we, when we lived in Ferguson, Florissant in Missouri. And you know, now he's teaching this to other people and like literally thousands of people are following him now. And he's extending this gift through his unique life experience. And the same thing holds true with my youngest son. Our dedication to fitness isn't about fitness. It's about family. Because for me, the number one reason that I'm training each day is so that I can be more resilient and show up for them so that I can endure any challenges that are ahead and leave my family.

That's the number one reason I'm doing it. I'm not trying to get the abs and all the things that can be a side effect, by the way, you know, but the main objective is like something of a higher order and something that really creates another level of accountability. And so my kids see that, that this isn't just about looking good. This is about performance and being your best self. And so some of the ways that we've integrated this into our culture, like even my youngest son just started back to school today, but I knew that he had the day off yesterday and I was going into the studio late. So, instead of me running off to the gym, I was like, I grabbed him and I said, you know, let's, and also I know his mind, my youngest son's mind, he likes to have his schedule, right?

My oldest son is whatever, right? Anytime, anywhere. Like if I say, Hey, let's go run to the gym. Let's go, you know, on a hike. Let's go. My youngest son is like, you're interrupting his plans. All right. And so it's also understanding the psychology of your family members, which takes patience. It takes energy, basically, at the core of this to be able to assess, like, what is the way to get through to this individual? One of the big secrets that should not be a secret. When I was working as a clinician for many years, the number one thing that people would complain about as to why they couldn't achieve their goals. Like I've given them these science backed behavior changes to do to get what they wanted. Whether it's getting off the metformin, their lisinopril, if they had hypertension, whatever, lose weight, whatever.

This is the way to go. But whenever I would dig and find out what's the reason that you're not able to implement this, people would do this. Well, you know, it's just my kids, you know, they wouldn't, they wouldn't want to eat this stuff. Or, you know, my husband, he's always making this, you know, really bad food. You know, my parents, people would start blaming the people closest to them as to why they couldn't get the results that they wanted, right. And it took some time for me to help them to kind of redirect towards their inner power and stop blaming, which is not to say that our family members don't complicate our lives because they absolutely do.

But for us to understand that we get to create the culture that we want. But it starts with us, right? And so by working on, on, with a lot of different people and then being able to implement this stuff in my life and test this stuff, I've seen it hold true. We have to have the energy, which again, that comes from taking better care of myself. Now I have more patience and I have more understanding because here's what I was going to say was, what all of them are struggling with and what you and I struggle with as well from time to time is that we just want our family members to do what we want them to do. Everything's cool. All right. Just don't kill my vibe.

All right. We're everything's good. I know what I'm doing here. I know what I'm talking about. Just fall in line. All right. Act right. And people are not going to act right. People that you love are, they're their own person and they're going to do things that don't necessarily fit with what you want them to do. And so there's this wonderful quote from St. Francis of Assisi that

says, "seek first to understand and then to be understood". Whereas we most often, we just want people to understand us, to understand what we're trying to communicate, to listen to us. You need to listen first. That's really the secret, but it's harder.

It's not that it's impossible when we don't feel good and we don't have energy. It's a lot harder. And so, pouring into our cup. We've all heard this before. Put your mask on first, all the things. No, for real. And so the last point here was with my youngest son, knowing his mindset, I gave him a heads up. It was like two hours prior. I was like, hey, be at nine o'clock. We're going to do some training. All right. And I could see a little bit of, but he's just, it's also like, well, dad got to me with enough cushion on my, on my day off where I'm kind of chilling out. And so I trained with him, right? I could have, again, skated off to the gym, but this was an opportunity for us to do something together, for him to see what I'm doing to model, and also for him to have that physical experience. One of my mantras, I should put a TM on this, is that, that families that train together remain together.

DHRU PUROHIT: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right. People have heard this, you know, families that play together stay together. Families that train together remain together. There's something really remarkable when humans come together under the spirit of challenge. That bonds you. And again, this is a, like a subconscious thing, but you know, after we completed the workout, you know, it's so, it's so cool. You know, he just came up to me and he's like, dad, thank you so much for training with me today. And, so that's a couple of things we've done just in the context of family fitness. But of course, we're going to talk more about the food piece here in a moment, which is really, which is really, it can be the most complex, but also the highest leverage thing that we can address in our family culture.

DHRU PUROHIT: Well let's pivot to food and we'll start with the individual, but naturally we'll work into the concepts, the family as well. What are, on that same theme, what are some of the mistakes that you see people doing? Especially in particular, you know, I turned 40 last year. And so I've been taking my audience on a little bit of a journey through even my own navigation, you know. I'm not an expert in this field like you are, but I get to interview a lot of

people and even sometimes I'm confused. And last year, one of the things that I saw, especially having come from the world of being vegetarian and then a raw foodist, which we both were at one point in time and a vegan is that I realized like, wow, like I, unlike you, I hadn't caught the fitness bug in particular. I was good at walking. I was good at meeting up with friends and being active and hiking, which is good.

I had the zone too, but I didn't have the strength training piece. Right. And partly the reason that I didn't have the strength training piece is that. I always felt like I never made progress in the gym, even when I have like six months of really focusing on it, and I was missing the other side, which I was under-eating on protein. Which goes back to one of your core things earlier that you were talking about, is that as we age, and I think the stats are once you have 40, you lose on average 8 percent of muscle mass every decade for those that are not eating adequate protein and also those that are not stimulating their body through training, right?

And we need the walking and we need the training as you mentioned earlier. So I got serious and said, I need to find a support team around me and make this a priority. And I've shared a little bit about things with my audience. And I started to notice the results because I was putting the right pieces of the puzzle together. So even somebody like me was so confused about some of the most basic things that were there. What else do you see people confused about, which is a, you know, part of the reason that you do the work that you do?

SHAWN STEVENSON: We're still eye to eye. This was the other part that I was going to go to when we talk about food and especially getting over 40 is the importance of protein. Now, one of the studies that I mentioned in the Eat Smarter Family cookbook was done by researchers at St. Louis University, which is, you know, my hometown. Shout out to everybody there.

DHRU PUROHIT: Yeah, exactly.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And what they did was they took test subjects who were otherwise healthy, but, overweight or obese. Their metabolic factors, their numbers were again, what they consider to be healthy still. And in an effort to lose weight and or reduce body fat, they

put them on two different types of breakfast. All right. Now these two breakfast items were the same amount of calories, but they had very different effects at the end of this eight week study. So one group was told to consume eggs for breakfast. Okay. High protein. High fat or a bagel. All right. Same amount of calories. Keep in mind. Okay. And of course, during this process, they do put them on a calorie restricted diet, a thousand calories less. So let me just put that out there. And they tracked their biometrics over, over the course of this eight week study.

Now here's what happened at the end of eight weeks. And by the way, this was just for breakfast, right? They just had them eat the eggs for breakfast or these, you know, what can be considered an ultra processed food for breakfast, and here's what happened. At the end of the eight week study. Actually, I'm pulling the numbers up for you. This is crazy. At the end of the eight week study, the people who consumed the eggs lost 61 percent more of their body mass index. All right. Again, same calorie diet, by the way, a 65 percent greater weight loss, a 34 percent greater reduction in waist circumference and 16 percent greater loss of body fat.

All right. Same calories they're consuming, but by eating the eggs, something changed with their metabolic health. And the question is what is going on here? Well, when we're talking about more of a protein dense. implement. Why does this work? Why is protein so important, especially as we age? One of the things you just mentioned, our muscles are literally built from proteins. And if we're not providing that raw material, you can get stronger. You can burn calories, but you're not going to be able to actually build more muscle tissue. Unless you're providing that essential building block, but it goes further than that. When we have these conversations about hormones, which is what I started off with, your hormones are made from proteins.

If you're not providing these essential building blocks, you can't even make Testosterone and progesterone and the list goes on adrenaline. These are all made from proteins. So your body can do a patchwork job, but if you provide the raw materials, it can do so much better. And so, and just to give like a really visceral understanding of this, when we look at each other or when we look at ourselves in the mirror, what we're seeing predominantly is the proteins that we've eaten or the lack thereof. And also minerals. That's a big part of what we see when we

look in the mirror. It is such an important part of this macronutrient conversation, but it's been left out. It's kind of been like pushed to the side in essence, in all this battle about carbs and fat the past couple of years. And it's so strange because protein is arguably the most important of these macronutrients because of it is literally the building blocks for so much. Go ahead.

DHRU PUROHIT: Can I chime in with something?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely.

DHRU PUROHIT: Are you familiar with a lot of the conversations around satiety and people talking about how also protein it seems to fill you up more and make you less hungry throughout the day? Thoughts on that?

SHAWN STEVENSON: I was literally about We're doing it right here!

DHRU PUROHIT: I feel bad because I feel like I'm stealing your punchline out of this.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That was exactly what I was about to mention next. So within that study and a couple other studies that I mentioned in the cookbook, look at the satiety implications. Because, the really cool thing about protein dense foods is that they do in fact trigger higher levels of satiety and they also have this stronger thermic effect, right? So it takes more energy to digest proteins than it does fats or carbohydrates. And my belief is that it's because your body takes it very, very seriously when it gets its hands on some high quality proteins because it can be used for so much. Whereas fats and carbohydrates tend to be used a lot as energy substrates.

Whereas protein is used to build things. All right, not to say that fats aren't used to build things as well. One of those things is, you know, building our brain, for example, there are certain fats that get shuttled across the blood brain barrier to help to build our brain cells or regenerate them to enable signal transduction, stability, those kinds of things. But predominantly our tissues are built with proteins. And so some of the studies indicate an increased production of versus a carbohydrate diet is a couple of. I shared a couple of studies

Like this, a carbohydrate food versus a high protein food, higher production of GLP. One, which is getting a lot of news right now. Higher production of peptide YY, leptin, the list goes on.

There's many different satiety hormones and we cover a lot of them in the book as well. Because for years it was just like leptin and ghrelin. But we know that protein is going to kick on all of these satiety factors. And this is why what we see is it's very difficult in general for us to eat a lot of high protein food in a meal because of the satiety implications. Whereas if we have a lot of carbohydrates, we can tend to eat those a little bit easier. And let me lay all this out. So this is going to get wrapped in this bow. And this study is new. It was just done recently. This was conducted, it's a ward study that's done at the NIH. All right. So this is where people are locked in. You can't sneak out and go to Subway or to Whole Foods. It's a 28 day study.

DHRU PUROHIT: Ward meaning like a prison ward.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's not a prison per se, but if you're the NIH, I get images of like the Hawkins lab in stranger things.

DHRU PUROHIT: Like these are all volunteers that are part of this ward.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Yeah. They're not just like snatching people up in a van off the street.

DHRU PUROHIT: Or like that they were, I think, which is unethical now, but like back in the day that you used to take prisoners and say, okay, you guys are all eating vegetable oil and you guys are going to have saturated fat and let's see what ends up happening.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's not even back in the day. It's still half. It's still.

DHRU PUROHIT: Really? I thought those studies were like unethical now.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. I mean you know what, there are unethical aspects to it.

DHRU PUROHIT: Ok, got it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But we could even circle back and talk about a recent study done on prisoners.

DHRU PUROHIT: With multivitamins?

SHAWN STEVENSON: We talked about that before.

DHRU PUROHIT: Yeah. We talked about that before.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So that was pretty recent.

DHRU PUROHIT: Okay. Okay. Got it. Got it. Got it. So it's a ward study.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes. So this is a ward study. Again, this was conducted at the NIH and they took 20 healthy test subjects 10 men 10 women and they also is a crossover study. So they did both different treat kind of "treatment groups". One group is given and this is a randomized trial. So, you know, you didn't know where he was gonna go first. Ultra processed foods made up their diet. Meals of ultra processed foods. But the same energy makeup as the people who are in the minimally processed slash whole food based diet All right, same calories same macronutrient ratios also comparable sugar as well. But one is coming from ultra process and other the others coming from whole foods or whole food based meals. All right. And so again the test subjects, what's so cool is they experience both parts of the study, right? So after two weeks, they would switch to the other diet. Now here's what's crazy. So after compiling the data, when people were eating the ultra processed meals, again, although that they had, they had the same, and this was, they got to eat as much as they wanted.

Or as little as they wanted, but when eating the ultra processed food test subjects ate about 500 more calories a day on average. Something wouldn't kick on with their appetite just kind of like the suppression their cravings were stronger and their appetite. So we got cravings and appetite. They're slightly different appetite is how much you eat. It wouldn't get shut off and also for some strange reasons unconscious, they ate less of the protein in their ultra

processed meals and ate more of the carbs and fat. They were just kind of driven to do that. All right, so those satiety factors weren't kicking on and protein, that's what can get overlooked in the study, is that they weren't eating as much of the protein that they had offered to them. And of course, you know, just as a result, people gained about two pounds in that study. Group in that study. Period.

DHRU PUROHIT: The people they're eating the ultra processed foods.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Ultra processed foods versus when they were eating the minimally processed last whole food based meals. They lost two pounds on average over the course of those two weeks and again ate about 500 calories or less. They were just more satisfied and so this speaks to real the real part of this conversation and I just want to end this today. And all the infighting that our colleagues, our friends battling about which diet is best speaking, you know, preaching to the choir. And debating over minutiae, when the majority of our citizens here in the United States, and also this is a worldwide issue now, most of our citizens are eating mostly ultra processed foods. We're debating about whether keto is better. Or, you know, whatever, you know what I mean? Like your ratios of fats and carbohydrates and whatnot. Most people are eating fake food.

DHRU PUROHIT: And living sedentary lifestyles. And not strength training, right? So you add all those things together and it's like, Most people just need help with the basics and to make them simplified so they can live a long, healthy life and minimize their risk of chronic disease.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Precisely. And that chronic disease, we're beyond epidemic of proportions. Last year, the CDC's numbers came out and they stated that 60 percent of American adults now have at least one chronic disease.

DHRU PUROHIT: Crazy.

SHAWN STEVENSON: 60 percent and 40 percent have two or more chronic diseases. And they put this out in this little infographic to I guess maybe soften the blow is a little nicely. It looks nice like happy little cartoon characters, but everybody's sick.

But that's not what the images look like right and also in that infographic by the way, they noted that there's it's we have a 4.2 trillion dollar Healthcare system here. And they're talking about where money's going to help to reduce these things. But no everything's getting worse. And a big part of this is the fact that we're fueling, not just fueling our body on this low quality stuff.

We're building our tissues out of fake things. And what does the problem really look like? A lot of people have talked about this. I think we talked about this in our last conversation. According to the BMJ, 60 percent of American adults diet isn't made of ultra processed food today. The average American, I was far worse by the way. All right. For me, it was up close to 80 to 90%. This is not an exaggeration. Absolutely. Yes. And this also led to the disease onset that I experienced when I was 20 with an advanced arthritic condition of my spine and my bones. I broke my hip, which is usually reserved for people much older. just while I was out running at track practice because I was made out of garbage, really.

And so, but here's the thing, and this is the first book that's sharing this data. I'm very grateful for that, but it's also, this is a call to action. A recent study came out looking at ultra processed food consumption of our children in the United States. And this was a big reason that I wrote this book is centered around this. This was published in JAMA, the Journal of the American Medical Association. They looked at food consumption of our children aged two to 19 years. For about 20 years in 1999, the average American child's diet was 61 percent ultra processed food already beating out American adults. But by 2018, the average American child's diet is now close to 70 percent ultra processed foods.

DHRU PUROHIT: Wow.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And, what are the outcomes that we're seeing: skyrocketing rates of obesity in our children, skyrocketing rates of diabetes, lifestyle induced type two diabetes in our children. Significant degrees of early onset of heart disease in our children. Mental health epidemics. The list goes on and on and on. This is not without repercussions. And this is really the mission is to understand like, again, we have an opportunity to make some shifts here. But if people aren't aware of how bad it is, and I know this, like, I grew up in this in the 80s. It

was revolutionary when Pop Tarts came out, all right, I was there. Popping out of the toaster and I got this like rectangular breakfast ready for me and I'm going to school and just to fit in with my friends, you know, all the, all the kids we've got our little, you know, I was also there when Lunchables came out, you know, but we've got all these ultra processed foods.

It was a game changer when my grandmother gave me Capri Suns, all right? That little straw with the pouch, and that was in my lunchbox. I had like a Knight Rider lunch box or something like that. But this was just how it was. We didn't realize that our culture was now programming us to eat ultra processed fake foods. And just really quickly, if you can, let's make this distinction. I've been on a mission talking about this, but also a lot of my colleagues are now speaking out about it. Humans have been processing foods forever. All right. Whether we're talking about, you know, cooking something right? Cooking meat or cooking a potato or taking an olive and pressing the oil out.

That's been done for centuries. That's processing and that's not what we're talking about. Ultra processed foods are when we take, there's a field of corn or a field of wheat and somehow through an immense amount of processing that field of wheat becomes fruity pebbles. All right, it is so denatured that you can no longer recognize where this thing comes from. Not to mention all of the added, you know, the preservatives, food dyes, all these different chemicals. And one of the things I'm also bringing forward in this project is the WHO has denoted that glyphosate is a class two, a carcinogen. That means it probably causes cancer. There's been a lot of talk about glyphosates and it's dangerous, but I just want to get right to the point.

This very likely causes cancer in humans. And the environmental working group did an analysis and found that glyphosate, Almost 90 percent upwards of 90 percent of grain products on our store shelves are contaminated with glyphosate. At amounts that are far exceeding what's tolerable or considered safe, right. And so when I was trying to get healthy in college, when I was experiencing this condition and I was like, you know what, I need to, I need to grow up. I need to put the honey nut Cheerios and Cap'n Crunch to the side and I'm going to eat an adult cereal. So I got the Quaker oatmeal squares, right?

It's so wholesome. You know, look at this guy on the box. He's a Quaker, right? And come to find out that was like number one on their list of the most contaminated with glyphosate cereals was this Quaker oatmeal squares. And I was doing that because of the marketing. It's high fiber, right? Whole grains, all of these, these are, this is called health washing. Healthy catchwords to attract unaware buyers to buy an ultra processed food because at the end of the day that Quaker oatmeal squares is the true essence of an ultra processed food. And so I'm trying to improve my health with that. And this is why there kept being these blockades. Of course we can get better.

If we're just stepping away or reducing the amount of ultra processed foods that we're consuming, we're going to see improvements in our health. And that's what we tend to see with a lot of these diets. Whether it's a vegan protocol, whether it's a paleo protocol, keto protocol. When we switch over and start eating more real foods, our health improves. But we put it all into that particular diet framework and not to say that any of them are not valuable because they all are valuable. But the question is what's best for you and what's at the heart of why people get better when they're doing these things. It tends to be because they're eating more real food.

DHRU PUROHIT: It's so important.

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 percent off. When you go to paleovalley.com/model. Go to P A L E O V A L L E

Y.com/model. You get 15 percent off store wide and also check out their 100 percent 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 natural. 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 forward slash model for 15 percent off. And now back to the show.

DHRU PUROHIT: You know, we were chit chatting a little bit before the episode and it's kind of a dark thought, but it's like if another country, if a crazy radicalized group was really trying to get at the heart of destroying, you know, we're recording this in the U. S., you and I are U. S. citizens. Obviously, we have a global following that's out there. But really trying to destroy a nation, in this particular case, the U. S., they would be encouraging more the behaviors that are so pervasive that are destroying our health and our family. I'd love you to just tick off a few of those, right?

They're so obvious, but it's like, these are the habits, these are the lack of priorities, these are the things that are genuinely eating and eroding at our foundation as a country. What are some examples of those things, right? So, number one, you just mentioned it. They would have us focus on convenience at all costs, and prioritize a diet of ultra processed foods. That'd be number one, right. Number two, you mentioned earlier, they would have us live a more sedentary lifestyle to the degree that most people, the most amount of walking that they get in their house, besides shuffling around a little bit between the kitchen and that sort of thing would be to maybe walk out to their car. And then walk back in, right? What are some of the few other habits that you think a group, a nefarious group might implement to try to destroy the foundation of a country?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Another thing would be to fracture the family unit. Because, you know, the longest running human study, longitudinal study, looking at like what really is protective of our health long term, and this was Dr. Waldinger and his associates at Harvard. They found that the number one thing impacting our health long term is our relationships. And to top it all off, and then to dig in, like, why does this really matter? There's a meta analysis of 148

studies, over 300,000 people. And this was conducted by researchers at Brigham Young University.

And they found that having high quality relationships or healthy relationships led to a 50 percent decrease in all cause mortality. That's a 50 percent reduction in death from all causes by having warm, healthy relationships. Now, the question is, how do we do that? How do we ensure that we have healthy relationships? We're not taught that in our culture. As a matter of fact, we're more fractured than we've ever been. We're more divided from each other. We're even more. Our nuclear families are so divided. We can be all in the same household and I've seen it time and time again and everybody's on their respective screen.

We're disconnected. Our devices can be divisive. And so understand, by the way, this isn't to villainize these things because all of these things also have value. They tend to have value as well. Even with ultra processed food, they might keep you alive in a zombie apocalypse situation. You know what I mean? I think about like the walking dead, if you happen upon. You know, some honey bonds in a convenience store that's been bombed out and depleted. That might keep you going. You know what I mean? And that stuff's going to last for a hundred years, you know? Are you going to thrive? Probably not. You know, so everything has its place and it's not to demonize any of these things, but it's to take back our power. And here in the United States and this has been spreading worldwide as well, but we're really the king of this. We don't understand the power of culture. Because both you and I and many of our colleagues have been trying to get people to change behaviors. To not go to that ultra processed food establishment or to go out and, you know, get their exercise in that their body is, is, is starving for.

It's very difficult to make those behavior changes in a culture that is unwell, in a culture that is driving you to do the opposite. And that's really the issue that was being missed. It took me many years to figure this out. I've been in this field for 21 years. As of this month, it took me years to figure this out. We have to address the culture. We talked a little bit earlier, their culture still in existence on planet earth, that their cultural belief is, if I don't move, I die. In order for me to eat, I am required to move, to gather, to hunt, to prepare food, and also historically, we ate together as a species. This was all a tribal construct.

Everybody was involved in the process of food, in the process of eating. We just got back from Hawaii recently, and this is a dramatized, it's a dramatization of something real, which is, you know, this luau phenomenon, which is cool. You see the dancing and the food and all the things. But, this is about, we're hunting and gathering, we're preparing the food and we're eating together and we're celebrating together, right? We see this as like, Oh, that's this from this time that's forgotten. Like look at this. This is really interesting. This is how we evolved. And so my question was, has something happened, a protective, a protective force field really for that terrorist situation, a protective force against that? Has that been destroyed with the fracturing of our family units.

In particular surrounding food and eating together. And that question sparked this journey, which led me first, the first domino was this vast database that some researchers at Harvard were compiling, looking at family eating behaviors and their food intake. Like what were they eating when they were eating together versus when they were eating separately in isolation? And what they found was that, in particular. When children were eating along with their parents on a consistent basis, they had a significant increase intake of vital nutrients that helped to prevent chronic diseases. That lower our resilience that make us more susceptible to disease and dysfunction and also make us easier to manipulate if again, we don't have that energy to stand up against whatever the force may be, right?

And also they had a significant reduction in intake of ultra processed foods, chips and soda, namely in the study. And I was just like, this is crazy. Why do, why do, this should be everywhere. Everybody should know this. Why don't people know this? And so, but I was just like, okay, this is an isolated data set. Although these are people at Harvard, they're pretty smart. But I was like, there's gotta be some other research on this. And I found it. Two studies. One was Published in the Journal of Pediatrics, another one was published in JAMA, Journal of the American Medical Association. The researchers found that when families ate together with their children just three times a week, was that kind of minimum effective dose, three meals a week with their children.

These children who ate consistently with their family, again just three times a week, had a significantly decreased incidence of developing obesity and a significant decreased incidence

of developing eating disorders by eating with their family more often. Now, is this going to be perfect across the board? No. But this is something that really stood out for these researchers that there's something protective about eating together as a family unit. Last study, I'll share this one. This one hit me the hardest because a lot of people theorize about access and people not having an opportunity to be well, to eat healthy, to exercise and things like that, but they don't come from where, from where I come from.

I come from that environment where my family's on food stamps, where we're getting food from charities. Literally there's this place called the Hosea house that we would get food from charities. Even my Christmas gifts for several years came from charities. And one time we actually went on this, basically a poor kid's trip. We didn't know what it was, you know, and we got to like ride in the wiener mobile, the Oscar Meyer wiener. It's out here rolling around in the streets. And we went to this, you know, this place that they took us to, and we got these Christmas gifts and you know, but the thing was, I got the same Christmas gifts every year, which sucked. Like I kept getting Yahtzee, which I still, to this day, I don't know how to play Yahtzee. But that, those were the conditions that we were, we were in. And I can tell you, and I'm, this is, I'm being 1000% with you here. I can count on my two hands how often I ate together with my family.

DHRU PUROHIT: Wow.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right. And usually most of these times was a holiday of some sort. And a lot of times in low income environments, one of the parents are gone and, or we only have one parent. And so this was the situation I was growing up in. My mother worked overnight at convenience store and she's again, trying to put food on the table. She would literally, she sold her blood many times to get money for us to get food.

DHRU PUROHIT: Wow.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And, but working at the convenience store, one of these evenings, somebody tried to rob the store, and do something to her and she was stabbed eight times and she ended up. My mom's different though. I mean we just from where we're from she

ended up subduing the guy and police came all the things. When she went to the hospital, you know got stitches and you know. The, her physician told her that if you weren't overweight you would have died

DHRU PUROHIT: Wow.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This body fat that you're carrying you being a quote heavysset woman saved your life. What's it going to do to her psychologically? That's her protection, right? And so again, this isn't cause sometimes it would be like, well, why don't you guys just work harder? You know, pull yourself up by your bootstraps. You know, like I'm, I'm sharing what my mom was doing to try to make it.

DHRU PUROHIT: Of course. And the reason why she's not able to have dinner with you. She's working.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. That part. And my stepfather was involved as well. He worked that late shift. 11, I'm sorry, three to 11 shift as a cook and, but also we're growing up in an environment during the crack epidemic where, you know, many of my family members are getting addicted to drugs and alcohol. And so that's happening in my household as well, right? It's the culture is just like, you're inundated with this stuff. And so with this being the case, regardless of the quality of food that we're able to purchase. This particular study, and I share this, all of this, all the studies that we're covering, by the way, most of them are in the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook, but researchers looked at low income households of minority children.

And it was so incredible because what they found was that families that ate with their children just four times a week, whatever meal it was, the kids ended up eating five servings of fruits and vegetables five days a week, at least. And significantly less processed food, chips and soda. And the researchers noted in particular when the TV was never or rarely on during family meals. Now, regardless of our circumstances, had my family known that we can have better health outcomes and protect our children just by eating together.

DHRU PUROHIT: Even if it's fast food, that's all you're getting at that time. That's all you can afford. There's still a difference with eating together.

SHAWN STEVENSON: There's something that's unlocked. There's, there's some, there's some shifts. We're talking about epigenetic influences. We could talk about why this is, by the way. Part of that is if we know, for example, we're having family dinner on Wednesdays, for example. There's going to be an overall a subconscious like, okay, the planning of it, like, okay, we're going to eat this, what we deem to be like a square meal, right? So that's going to be there, but sometimes life's going to happen. You're going to end up maybe ordering something and that's okay, but still there's something protective about eating together. One of those things is we see a significant reduction in that kind of sympathetic, fight or flight nervous system activity and that switching over to the parasympathetic "rest and digest".

Okay. Nervous system, significantly less stress when people are able to make it home. And we'll just talk about the adult side, which is another study that I cited as well. This was done on recent, on workers at IBM. If they were able to make it home for family dinners on a, at a reasonable time and to have time with their family to eat together, their work morale stayed high. Their stress levels stayed low and stress is a huge killer. JAMA published this data years ago, upwards of 80 percent of all physician visits are for stress related diseases. Stress is a huge component of this. We can think ourselves into disease because our thoughts create chemistry in our bodies, instantaneously.

And so if we're having habitual thoughts of worry, of fear, of anger, we're just altering our chemistry and this isn't bio identical, this is made for us, in us, by us. FUBU, for us, by us, alright? And so we have to understand the power of our minds and also the fact that being around people that we love, that we care for, there is this really innate activation of more health affirming hormones and neurotransmitters like oxytocin. Just being with our family, with people that we love and care about, we're very good.

Humans start producing more oxytocin, which oxytocin, this hormone, has this counter effect to cortisol. And we know this very clearly now. The question is, are we getting a healthy dose of it on a daily basis like we evolved doing? Because there's also a difference between being

with your family and on a device. That being with your family, right? So that's another reason why there's these better health outcomes. And one other thing, there's several other ones as well. But another part of this is the innate connection that happens and the health outcomes for the children, because now we can actually see them and we could allow them to feel seen.

And so this is so important. We have a deep need to feel significant and to feel like we matter. And so for our children to get that, but also we could see their, you know, their speech pattern, what excites them, what makes them kind of close closed off, right? What conversation pieces we get to really, the, the dinner table is a unifier. It's a connective entity, right. We know this outside of, even outside of just our family circle. We talk about breaking bread, right. But just like even a lot of business is done over meals, right. A lot of connection, but truly for our family, that dinner table is acting as a unifier and a place of learning leverage for your children that are different personalities.

I talked a little bit about my two kids personalities. I've learned much of this by eating together with them, including yesterday, we're all sitting around eating. And, because some of the things that I dealt with over the years and also working with a lot of people is "picky eaters", right? We're trying to get healthier, but we're struggling to get our kid to eat certain things or you know another family member. So what I start to do and toward the ends of my into my clinical work was I would find ways to talk to the family, right. And because I was very good at pointing out certain character traits and finding leverage points for especially for the kids. You know, whether it's like they're wanting to be a better athlete or a better mathlete, right?

And I've used that as leverage for them fueling their body differently, right? But here's the key. This, and this should be, this should not be a secret at this point. It's using joy instead of using, instead of using restriction. Me coming in and taking away things from this family. If I'm coming in, I'm like, sorry, kid, you can't have fruity pebbles anymore. That kid's gonna be pissed off at me and or rebel. He's gonna find a way to get those fruity pebbles versus let me find a way to get him something that he really enjoys equally or more. That's made from real food, which it should not be a secret anymore. That is not just possible, but probable.

DHRU PUROHIT: Or even starting with that first, and then you want to have a little bit of whatever afterwards, it's all good. And you've been mentioning kids, but there's so many people, you know, that listen to the podcast that maybe they don't have kids or their kids are grown up, right. And they're like, Hey, I'm done with all that parenting stuff. My kids are, you know, adults on their own, but still, even if you have a husband, you have a wife, you have a boyfriend, you have a girlfriend, these are the same dynamics that show up there. How often do I hear from people? And I'm sure you do as well. It's like, I'm trying to make these healthy changes. And my husband doesn't want to eat this thing. Or my boyfriend doesn't want to eat that. Or my girlfriend is not into this component. So it's like, how do we end up? Or I'm divorced and I live alone and I don't have a significant other.

My kids are off living their life, you know, I'm not, I don't want to bother them. They don't live nearby me. So I don't have somebody to eat with on a regular basis. And just that loneliness epidemic that's there for individuals that are in that position, especially as they get older. So all these same principles, they apply to everyone. Everyone, you know, it may not be the examples with your kids. It may be with somebody else like your husband, your spouse, whatever it might be, or it might be that you have so much lack of being able to share and break bread with other people that it's easier for you to fall into some version of being in despair. You know, maybe you're not full blown depressed, but you're just not as excited about things in your life because you don't have anybody to share it with and that's no judgment on that situation. It's just to say hey, we might want to prioritize this aspect of how at least even a couple of times a week can we break bread with somebody else?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely, and in another thing was like is there data on the health outcome when we're eating more so in isolation and absolutely there is and so I cited a study that found that when we're eating alone more frequently, our diet quality tends to be significantly lower. So the more intake of ultra processed foods and also far less intake of essential nutrients. Our diet is just worse when we tend to eat alone more often. Now, this doesn't hold true for everybody who's really just about that health life. But could you be missing out on another powerful ingredient by not eating more frequently with people you care about? And by the way, this extends to friends too.

This isn't just family. This is friends included in this as well. And so one of the things that I admire about you so much is that if this doesn't exist, you build it. You make it happen. If that friend group isn't there and you're just like, I really want to be the person that makes it. You know, you said that to me several times. It's just like, we have so much power and agency in this, but we get attached to our story of what we're lacking. I come from lack. That's where I come from. And there is a way, matter of fact, there's 10, 000 ways. It's just changing our perception of these things, because also, and also seeing the advantages that you have, because even in that environment, not having much at all, like real talk, not having much. It incites such a level of creativity that is kind of mirrored in society now, you know, whether it's created creativity towards music expression, towards athletics, you know, we literally had the crate on the phone pole in the alley.

Like, we did that, and you know, also, you know, there's some aspects of even creativity with food. One of my most prized memories of food, there's two. I'll share the first one really quickly because I've said Fruity Pebbles multiple times. It was my great grandmother who, she's lived at a senior home, and she took me there. It's like a little senior bus, they go to the grocery store, and I went back with her. And I was probably four at the time, and she poured me a bowl of Fruity Pebbles, which I'd never had. That I could taste it to this day. That food experience was like, it stuck with me forever, right? And it wasn't, she was trying to mess me up. She was just a great grandmother showing love to her great grandbaby that she is fortunate enough to spend some time with, right? And she knows that kids like this stuff, because it's a kid's, "kid's cereal". Which is part of the problem. It's the cultural thing driving us to eat that food.

DHRU PUROHIT: Kids food versus adult food.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The marketing towards us to eat that ultra processed food. But another one is my stepfather, man, so many times, man, we just be like, you know, we're hungry, you know, and just like, there's no food. There's not anything to, you know, really put together. And, this is one of the days where he was there and my mother was at work and we didn't have anything to eat from, from my perspective, we're just like, we're hungry. And there was some government cheese, which is like this block. It's actually really tasty. It doesn't melt

very good, but it's the government cheese. There was some frozen deer sausage in the freezer that my grandfather had hunted and sent, right. Which I didn't want anything to do with eating Bambi. That was my mindset. I'm not eating that. And we had some Texas toast, which is like some thicker bread that came along with like the WIC program or whatever it was.

And there happened to be some tomato sauce in the cabinet. And my stepfather made pizza out of those ingredients. He's a chef and that creativity and he made pizza out of that. And it was, I still remember this. I was like eight years old. I'll never forget that experience and being able to eat it with him. It's just so powerful, man. And it's not that it tasted like dominoes, you know, it didn't taste like a typical pizza, but the fact that a kid loves pizza, right. I'm checking that box and also this food experience with somebody that cares about me and also making something out of nothing. That's the power that we have, man.

You know, and so I want us to embrace that power and to, and to utilize that moving forward. That's the protective force against the terrorist organizations that might be, you know, trying to dumb us down. The terrorist groups. hurt our health, you know, make us less capable of performing. But you know, when it really boils down to it, man, there's something really special about eating together with the people that you care about.

Our experience of energy in the human body is driven by the power plants of ourselves, AKA the mitochondria. That's what we hear about in our conventional education and in conventional science, but the story is far deeper. Every process in our bodies is running off of this really remarkable sodium potassium pump. It's the driving force of all movement and energy creation and processing in the body. And if you hear those two minerals very explicitly, sodium and potassium, these are key electrolytes that are enabling our bodies to do all of that. All the cool things that the body can do. Now, what happens when you're deficient in these key electrolytes? Well, your body and your metabolism in your brain start to suffer. Researchers at McGill University found that when you're deficient in sodium, not only do we lose brain volume, we also increase the risk of neurodegenerative conditions. When we have long, continuous bouts of not getting in these key electrolytes, again,

including sodium, sodium helps to protect our brain and enables our brain to maintain proper volume.

Another key electrolyte has a powerful impact on our brain and also on our mood and our temperament. A 2016 study reported that magnesium is able to reduce the activity of your sympathetic fight or flight nervous system and turn on the activity of your parasympathetic rest and digest nervous system. And a study published in Pharmacological Report states that magnesium is able to interact with inhibitory GABA receptors and induce anti anxiety effects. I can go on and on with the benefits of these key electrolytes. These are minerals that carry an electric charge that enable our bodies to do all the things that the body does.

Number one, of course, we want to eat foods that are rich in these key electrolytes, but also the number one electrolyte supplement in the world is from the incredible team at LMNT. Go to drinkLMNT.com/model and hook yourself up with the number one electrolyte that has no sugar, no artificial dyes, no nefarious ingredients, just the highest quality electrolytes that are in the right ratios based on hundreds of thousands of data points from real people to fuel your energy, to fuel your metabolism, and to fuel your cognitive function. And by the way, with every electrolyte purchase, LMNT is going to hook you up with a free gift pack to sample all their different electrolyte flavors. And by the way, make sure to check out their brand new sparkling electrolyte beverage as well. It's something that I keep in my refrigerator all the time. Not only is it a delicious sparkling beverage, but it is a performance beverage as well. Again, go to drinklmnt.com/model and now back to the show.

DHRU PUROHIT: Yeah. I wanna ask you a question, sort of like a bigger picture question, which is that in the world of health. One of the questions that naturally comes up is that okay, seeing every year that the populations are getting unhealthy, not just here in America. We're exporting this all around the world, right? We're trending in the wrong direction and it looks like it's starting to become an exponential trend. We're getting more overweight as a society. We're less likely to share meals together and all the other stats that we talked about earlier. And unless if we have, you know, a sort of a figurehead, like a president who like literally this is their like main sort of thing, right.

Or congress gets on board, you know, is there enough momentum just between books podcasts other stuff that we yeah, you know the people that are healthy. They're getting healthier, right? People often ask me like are people getting healthier or are they getting worse off. And it's actually both. The healthiest people the people that are tuning in here. They're actually getting super healthy and they're becoming more aware and they're getting fitter and they're doing things, right?

You see a lot of the people that write you and many of my friends listen to your podcast. I see it within their own families. They're getting healthier. And the folks that are working two three jobs. My only have one parent in the household. They're trending in this other direction. I think I read some statistics of the day that like 5 percent of patients and often these are patients that are in, like, dealing with like dialysis and other sort of extreme things in many health systems as they can amount to almost 70, 80 percent of the total cost of healthcare is taking care of 5 percent of patients that are there, right? These are the people that are just very sick and very unhealthy, often from chronic disease. So you have one side that's going in one way and you have another side that's going in another way.

And for the side that's going in the wrong direction, at least from health outcome wise, is the advice that we're sharing on the podcast, walking more, making food at home. Is that enough? Or do we need a major. Intervention. And one of the major interventions that's having a lot of topics and discussions these days, even hinted towards earlier when it comes to obesity is these GLP 1 inhibitors, right? We've had multiple clinicians come on this podcast talking about, and I want to ask them because I see a lot of people here, we live in LA, you see people are taking ozempic, wagovi, whatever.

You know, the drugs that are out there. And I've heard a lot of nuanced thoughts about it, right? I've heard a lot of nuanced thoughts from people who come on clinicians and say, Hey, you know what? This is kicking people in the right direction, but there's a right way and a wrong way to do it. You know, and other people saying that, you know, what is really the long term impact of these? And is there really ever a free lunch with things? Do you have a perspective in the midst, especially in the context of your nutritional background, but then also your ability to empathize with the most disenfranchised enfranchised societies, because

you shared earlier that you have actually lived in a part of town that's like that, right? So what do we need on a national level? And is there a role for these pharmaceutical interventions? Or are they taking us off track? It's a lot there.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Of course. Well, you already know my, I tend to bring a balanced perspective because I'm not afraid to look at the things that I disagree with and see their value. I even mentioned honey buns having a value again.

DHRU PUROHIT: Fruity pebbles.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Ideally in the context of a zombie apocalypse, you know, like, but on a daily basis, like, would that be something to eat? If you're trying to perform at a high level and have good metabolic health, probably not. The same thing really holds true with this pharmaceutical model. But the problem is that we now exist in a pharmaceutical model of health. It's the domineering force that's dictating how people are being cared for. And this is a multi trillion dollar Industry, you know. There's so much money being made from the farming of sick people and not getting them well. Not helping them to remove the cause none of these things are bringing a cure. These are oftentimes creating lifetime customers of a thing.

And again, not seeing the health outcomes that we are promised. There was a recent analysis that was done, huge meta analysis, looking at the health outcomes from statins. Alright? And statins, there was a time when it was near number one, as far as drug classes that were getting prescribed. Multi, multi, multi, multi billion dollar drug class. It still is. But there was a time when it was just, but some, something is chipping away at the statin industry right now. And as some of the science is getting out, they were looking at actual increase or potential decrease. They were, the science was just looking at the data on lifespan when having access to a statin or being prescribed a statin.

And the researchers found this vast difference in what was believed. Essentially we were seeing minus 15 days of life and upwards of maybe 30 days when being on a statin for years at a time. All right. So we're not really seeing an increase in lifespan. And the question is, well, what about quality of life? You mentioned a certain, a certain group of people taking up a lot

of the resources as far as healthcare, what we're really good at is keeping people alive. But not necessarily living, you know, it's not that we're necessarily living longer, we're dying longer. We can kind of extend the suffering and keep people around, but what about quality of life?

Well, being on a statin, another one of these studies, I did a huge, like, master class on this on my show. And there's several studies on this, by the way. We see about a 30 percent increased incidence of developing diabetes for statins. It's creating another. This isn't a side effect, it's just other effects. Alright, it might be effects that you don't want to happen, but we call them side effects. But it's an effect of taking this particular drug class. It's going to not just alter how your body's processing cholesterol, but what is cholesterol responsible for, what it's interacting with. What's the effect that's going to have on a pancreas or the liver health or your brain?

Because that's another thing that has, there's even noted warnings on products about potential memory loss when taking a statin, you know, the FDA after years will come out and add a label in the context of Ozempic, Wigovi and the like, there's a black box warning by the FDA on Ozempic warning that, Hey, this was in laboratory animals, but we do see a significant incidence of developing thyroid tumors. Just letting you know. It also says it's unsure that this would happen in humans. That unsure should make you unsure. But this brings into the question, would somebody losing a hundred pounds and all the metabolic benefit that that can bring and reducing other risk factors. Would that cost with an increased potential of developing cancer?

Could somebody justify taking ozempic? And I believe that there are cases when yes, absolutely. And are we actually addressing the root cause of the obesity in the first place. Because you said it earlier, something along the lines of there's no free lunch. Every action has a reaction. We live in a universe where there's causality, there's cause and effect. It just, it's a principle in physics. Stuff isn't just going to happen. You don't get this weight loss without a cause. Every cell in your body is being influenced. It isn't just targeting GLP 1 because that's communicating with every single cell in your body is being affected. And what are the long term outcomes?

That's the last part I'm going to share here in this, and I'll pass it back to you. We don't have long term data on this, but we do know that this is one of those things where it is being advocated to be on for extended amount of time, potentially forever, if you want to maintain these benefits. And in that black box warning, it says treatment, duration, dependent tumors, and the amount. So how much you're taking and how long you're taking, every one of those steps increases your risk, potentially, of developing thyroid cancer in animals. We're not animals though. All right. So again, I would just encourage a higher degree of skepticism, but also being open to this being a potential, not solution, but supplement to cracking the code of severe obesity in our society.

But the other problem is that this isn't often used for people that are struggling with severe obesity. This is more so, in, you know, in some instances, vanity metrics and also not directing people and supporting them in what is the thing that's really going to help their bodies long term to sustain these results. So we got to keep all this stuff in context, but I would just, again, come into this very, very skeptical because there, everything has a price to it. And if we're not addressing the root cause, and that's really what our, what our society has been terrible at. So going back to that specific point, this is one of the most important parts of this conversation.

There are two tracks. There are two trains right now. It's two bullet trains. Sands, Brad Pitt, all right, we've got two bullet trains. One is that people are getting healthier than ever. We're talking about extending lifespan substantially and quality of life, not just lifespan, but healthspan. And then we've got multiple epidemics of chronic disease. The likes of have never been seen in human history. We are the most chronically diseased society in the history of humanity. And the question is, where's the bridge for people that, because here, this is another thing people don't understand. I've never met one person who didn't want to be healthy, never.

DHRU PUROHIT: Everyone wants it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Everybody wants it. But we might have stories about what it costs and things that we tell ourselves, even sometimes not even feeling worthy of being healthy. And

so we tell ourselves, we can tell ourselves and tell other people we don't care, but that's not true. Everybody wants to be healthy. It's just a matter of, again, the conditions that were existing in and what this really has to do with disease kind of battles of culture. We can get into our little bubbles of health and think that everything is a lot better than it is. But most of our citizens and our families are struggling and it's getting worse.

So how do we change this? Because for me, for years, I was trying to target social behavior change, target the macro culture. And you can make some changes. I've, my first book, Sleep Smarter, it's an international bestseller. It's getting close to 30 different languages it's translated in, and it shifted the culture. It made the conversation of sleep wellness something that was popular. Many books have come since, but it was a trigger. It was like a, it was the first domino for something really big and really special. So I know my power in that. And that's still not, The fastest way to get to that tipping point. I'm actually rereading Malcolm Gladwell's book tipping point right now. He did this really cool shout out for me for my show not too long ago. And he's just one of those people that it's just a great thinker. And this is how epidemics are started. There's a tipping point. And we tend to frame epidemics as things that are negative. But we can also have epidemics of wellness.

We can have a culture where it's normal to be healthy. Right now, it's normal to be unhealthy, right? And so if you're a healthy person who doesn't have a metabolic disease in this culture today, you're weird. You're, you're not normal. And we want to embrace the weirdness. Yes. But at the same time, how do we create that tipping point where we normalize wellness, where we make it easy for people to make healthy choices, where we make it easy for people to access ways to, to express their bodies and to move their bodies and to access healthy food.

It doesn't start by targeting the macroculture, which is what a lot of people think, who don't come from where I come from, which is like, we need access. We need more access to healthcare. We're getting access to a system that is keeping us sick and disempowered, all right? We need more, people don't have access to healthy food. That's what the problem is. There was still healthy food in my environment. I just didn't know that it existed. I didn't know the difference. You know, living in Ferguson, Missouri, coming out of my apartment complex,

the first thing I see is a liquor store with shelves and shelves of older processed food. They're not, that's just one of the liquor stores I'm surrounded by. Not to mention, which shouldn't, shouldn't even be legal. It's not allowed in many other parts of the, of the country, like "nice neighborhoods". But every fast food you can name within a two mile radius, I'm surrounded by all of it, all of it.

So that's what I see and is cheap. And so the culture is programming me like, this is food. This is what you eat. I don't realize that that's not even food. It's fake food. And so how do we change this? We change this by shifting the microculture first. And so what do I mean by this? The macroculture is the culture that we exist in. Our culture, just to define what culture is, a culture is the attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors of a group of people that is then passed on from one generation to the next. That's what culture is. That's what it's defined as. We have no choice but to be affected by the culture that we grow up in. We say this, we're a product of our environment. Absolutely, we are. But what's different about us as humans, we're also creators of our environment. We can consciously make alterations in our environment that alter our outcomes. And so the microculture is a culture in your household. But also your culture is something you carry with you. When we just went to Hawaii recently, I realized like I'm planted now into this other culture. But in my culture, people were literally coming up to me and my family multiple times there.

They were just attracted to us for some reason. And I know what it is now. I thought on the surface, like, okay, maybe it's like the kind of healthy exuberance, maybe, right? My son's out here with all these muscles, you know, whatever, like, what do you do? What do you guys do? What do you, how do you, you know, what is your workout? That kind of stuff. But it's because of our connection. That's what was attractive, you know, and I, this true story, just, even when we got on the plane, you know, twice on that trip, people walked by us and said, your family is so beautiful. Right. One lady who was probably in her sixties or seventies, she was like, can, can you guys adopt me?

All right. These are true. This has really happened. And in the moment I don't think about, I'm like, just, oh, that's so sweet. But then I'm just like, after, you know, having this conversation, I'm just like, why, what, what would trigger somebody to acknowledge us like that? And so I

realized that you take your culture with you wherever you go, you influence the world around you, and we don't really get it. All right. So for example, I can now, because of the culture that is built within me, I can go into what you would deem to be the most unhealthy circumstances and still make choices that are advantageous to me. And, and what I'm about and what I believe in many people, myself included, there was a time when we go into a certain environment and we might tell ourselves, I'm not eating that shit, or I'm not drinking with these people, but you get into the environment and other things happen, you know, the environment dictates.

And so it's creating the culture within yourself and your family. And so that microculture is the most powerful, effective force because my family, not just me. There's an energy that gets created when there's more people involved is such a powerful model or influence to other families, right? And so when they see us, they see what's possible. But I had to consciously create that culture in my household. A lot of things were unconscious though. Let me be clear, but eventually got to a place where I'm making choices and here's the rub. No one said this was going to be easy. No one said this was going to be easy. You, but you got to choose your hard.

You've got to choose. It's hard having your children have chronic diseases. I had asthma, my little brother, chronic asthma, of course, arthritic condition, by the way, in high school. My little sister had severe eczema. My mother, obese, diabetes, stepfather, addiction, eventual obesity. This is all we knew was disease, right? That's hard. That's hard. Oh, but we got to eat all kinds of stuff, right? We were eating, I mean, Yeah. I get the food, this was back when the food stamps came in a little booklet. So you had paper, you know, little pieces. My mom would give me like a 10 food stamp. I go to the corner store, it's on, all right, I'm getting all kinds of, you know, old Vienna hot chips and not orange juice.

Orange drink was one of my favorite things, right? Because just being in the hood, be growing up where I grew up and also, you know, penny candy. Literally, one penny gets you a piece of candy. You come in with a dollar? We literally, all of us are walking around the hood with a bag, a paper bag full of like, starts off with a hundred pieces of candy and it's just getting ran through by the end of the day. All right. It's crazy. And so that's hard as well. Okay.

So we feel that we get to do whatever we want, eat whatever we want, but we're also all struggling with diseases. And struggling with our connection with each other and struggling with an ability to make it out of this volatile environment.

Because that's what the data shows. There's already clear data on this. When we venture into obesity, being in a low income environment, it is substantially harder to get out of it. Reach a place of financial security because it's, it's not that we can't, it's not that it's impossible. It's just harder because we have to have the energy to be able to do different things. And so we get to choose our heart. The other heart is we start to proactively find ways to bring more healthy assets or exposures into our family environment. Knowing that there might be some resistance. If, for example, we've got kids who we've spent years putting a device in front of them and they would eat while, you know, watching a show or playing video games and we don't eat together often at all, if or at all, it's going to take a shift in the culture.

But what I did was I dug into the science, absolutely. And just also being very practical, like what are some of the things that you can do to help to make that transition more smooth? Because the solution at its core is connecting, this is with adults and children. We're just a big adult babies, really, you know, to be honest, we still have a lot of the same wiring. We don't think that we're affected by peer pressure. For example, we tell our kids, don't be so subject to peer pressure. We do the same thing now. We're probably more subject to peer pressure when we get older. But being able to understand the psychology of our loved ones, what motivates them, what de excites them, it's all got to be driven by creating something. We can't just take something away that people enjoy. We have to replace it with something of equal or greater value. That's the key. That's the key. So if I'm coming in saying, okay, I know that you love Denny's pancakes. You know, you're, you're a Denny's boy. Every week you're at Denny's. Moon's over my hammy, all the things, but you got to get your pancakes.

We can't just take the pancakes away. Yes. You said this earlier. You can have the pancakes and we add in these other things and or we can even make some delicious pancakes that rival your Denny's pancakes over here. But now we're adding in all these real food elements and you know, our friend Mark Hyman says that food isn't just food, it's information. What if we can slide in some of these protein sweet potato pancakes and all of those, all of that new

information into your body that starts to alter those kind of epigenetic influences. We have nutrigenomics, nutrigenetics, and now your brain starts working differently. Now your metabolism starts working differently.

You just ate a pancake though. That's all you might be even concerned about. I'm eating a delicious pancake, right? And so that's what, that was the part of the mission as well. Let's talk about some tactics for the family to create this environment around the table. Also the kitchen culture. To get people more into a place of celebration and joy versus like, pulling everybody along. And also the food, because that's at the end of the day, what am I going to eat? And so even those pancakes that I mentioned, that's one of the most popular recipe, that's in the book. These protein.

DHRU PUROHIT: Do you have a photo in the book?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Of course. Yeah. We can pull it.

DHRU PUROHIT: Let's see if we can find it. While she's pulling that up. A shout out to Tessa. Thanks for pulling that up. Let's talk about food and recipes. We brought up the recipe. This looks beautiful. For those that are just listening on audio. This is a gorgeous pancake recipe. What's the name of this?

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is sweet potato protein pancakes.

DHRU PUROHIT: Talk, talk about a big picture. Like what, what, what, is there a story behind this? Is it literally like you're one of your sons? Like how did this recipe come, come to be and get included in the cookbook?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome. So, number one, what I did was you see those little emojis right there? A little brain emoji.

DHRU PUROHIT: Walk us through. So those watching on YouTube, you could see it. And, but yes, there's a brain emoji, a muscle. There's a brain with a lightning sort of like brain power.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Cognitive function.

DHRU PUROHIT: Cognitive Function. And then there's digestive.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And yeah, exactly. And so we've got the cognitive function with the brain emoji. We've got the muscle emoji is like metabolic health. And then the one with the kind of lightning bolt through the human mind is our state of mental wellness, you know, so mental health aspects. And so what I did was, I targeted some of the most nutrient dense, science backed foods, and whatever particular part of the body that had the most data that they kind of target, helping to improve the function of, I created a correlating emoji because we have an emoji culture. You know, sometimes like a couple of emojis says more than a paragraph, you know, and so I wanted to leverage that. And so with those foods, one of them was sweet potatoes. And there was some remarkable data on its influence on potentially even improving our state of mental wellness because these really remarkable anthocyanins. Well, let's just talk about that really quickly.

DHRU PUROHIT: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So the anthocyanins in sweet potatoes apparently can help to improve our memory. All right. So there's some data on that. And also it's providing this little serotonin hit that can help like serotonin is kind of glorified as this feel good neurotransmitter slash hormone. A little sweet potato can actually increase your body's, production of serotonin and also utilization of serotonin. So what I did was I was just like, okay, my family, we love brunch, you know, brunch foods. Pancakes is a big thing.

DHRU PUROHIT: Literally my favorite meal of the day.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes. I mean, it's for a lot of people. And so I just like, what can we do to bring in some real food nutrients, nutrition? That also tastes delicious into a pancake recipe. And also the biggest kind of downside with a pancake is the fact that it's just this very carbohydrate dominant thing. And so bringing in a really high quality protein source, you know, this could be a high quality, you know, grass fed way or whatever the case might be to up level the protein ratio in in the meal as well

And so, I, I worked, man, I made so many pancakes trying to figure this out, uh, the recipe because we're big foodies, like my family, all of us are, like my, like I mentioned, my stepfather's a chef, executive chef actually at Morton's of Chicago for many years. And so we're, we're just really big foodies. We all like to cook and make amazing food, but we also, we also tell you if something doesn't taste good, you know, so we're not shy about that because, you know, for me, I've never, I've never really bought into this idea of eating to live and not living to eat.

DHRU PUROHIT: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Because humans, we, just like any animal in nature, have you ever thought about why certain animals eat certain things? Like, why are they driven to eat that thing? We are designed, we have a certain flavor palette that drives us to eat certain foods. We just evolve that way. And if we were living in natural, normal circumstances, there's something called post ingestive feedback. We talked about this before, but we would eat a food and our cells would basically take notes that, okay, I just ate these cherries and I got, you know, this vitamin C, I got this melatonin.

Wow. There's melatonin in this food. Right? I got this selenium, right? It's just like taking notes. And so if we become deficient in those things or start to run low, our stock and ourselves, we would, it would create a craving to go and seek out that, that flavor, all right, that cherry flavor. And so that's called post ingestive feedback. The problem is today food scientists have really manipulated those pathways and now it's like the waters are so muddied because we could take that cherry flavor and isolate it using a gas chromatograph and be able to identify the chemistry that makes that cherry flavor. And now we can add that flavor to candy. We can add that flavor to popsicles and the list goes on and on.

No cherries required, right? And so what we're doing with this is taking back control of our, of our palate, of our biology and starting to retrain our palate with real food. And so that flavor intelligence starts to come back online and we start to ironically crave healthy things. That's the crazy thing. That is possible because we know it. And some people have experienced this with exercise. Like they don't feel right if they don't exercise. Like they crave it. Something

hard. What? This is what's possible. And you get to choose your heart, but we can become, create basically a positive addiction essentially. And, but also an addiction where you don't overdo it because that appetite regulating network gets proper inputs.

DHRU PUROHIT: You feel fulfilled and complete, but you're still drawn to these things. And literally like the cells in your body. And they start to be attracted to more of those healthier components. I felt this for so much of my life where once I started shifting how I ate, you literally crave healthy food. And again, a big part of that is that people don't know always what to make, like, what do we eat? What do we make when you learn a few things, when you have some guidance from a cookbook, like yours, it's out now. It shows you that really you only need to make like four to six meals.

And then you have your variations of them, right? Most of us are not making something new every single night and definitely not moms who are often leading a lot of the cooking inside of the household, right? You have your family staples, the recipes that you enjoy that everybody loves. Some things that you might make on a special occasion. And the variation that happens inside of it. I found that just learning, you know three to four to five recipes for somebody and picking your favorites from a book like this is enough for people to completely shift how they how they eat.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. And it goes back also to simplicity with that too, because a lot of my friends and colleagues have put out recipe books before, and I'm definitely, a red flag goes up if there's too many ingredients, you know. And so really making this very simple where most of the ingredients have, I'm sorry, most of the recipes have 10 ingredients or less somewhere around that. And also getting those flavor sensations and food experiences that we love so much. One of my favorite food experiences as a kid was when the, the bomb pop man would drive down the street. Now, I don't know if you know about this.

DHRU PUROHIT: Bomb pop. Like, is that, is that like a popsicle?

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, yeah. So it's an ice cream truck. Right. And so it's got like music or the bells. No matter what we're doing, we hear it. It's like the Avengers call or something, you

know, like Avengers assemble. We're all running outside to stop the bomb pop man. He pulls up and they've got the pictures of all the different types of ice cream and popsicles on the side. And you know, sometimes basically you need a dollar, you know, sometimes some of the cheapest, bomb pops for like 25 cents. And wow, like what an experience on a hot summer day for a bunch of kids in the hood, you know, and so, but knowing that experience of having a really delicious popsicle, for example, it's just like, Oh, no, I got, I have to honor that.

And so we created these, cherry frozen yogurt pops. And these are all really simple things to do and also simple things and fun things to do with your kids. And, even with that, there are different like little trays and things you can make bomb pops and popsicles in the freezer. But what are those made of as well? Because we don't want to possibly, especially all the data is coming out with certain plastics, which is one of the kind of go to's. And so we use a silicone model for that, or mold. And there's so many cool things. So that's another big thing that we talk about in the book is like good, better, best options for doing some of these things.

You mentioned even just even something along the lines of the food preparation and what that energy that it can require. So their strategies on, you know, making food for leftovers, their strategies on, it's another thing that Mark really sparked in my mind to dig into the research on how much food waste we have is crazy. We have enough food that we waste that we can feed everybody on earth. Two, three times over.

DHRU PUROHIT: It's like 40 percent of our food goes to waste.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Exactly. So what are some strategies that we can actually keep a hold on our food? And so another one of those foods, by the way, and you know, I'll just share this study really quickly is avocados. Avocados are definitely having its moment right now. It's even like, there's even McDonald's got, you know, some avocado on their burger.

DHRU PUROHIT: Really?

SHAWN STEVENSON: But, you know.

DHRU PUROHIT: I have not seen that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

DHRU PUROHIT: McDonald's is putting avocado on the burger?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Something. They're putting avocado on different stuff. Yes.

DHRU PUROHIT: Okay.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right. So this is a randomized controlled trial. This was cited in the journal Current Developments in Nutrition, and it found that adding avocado to test subjects' diet over the course of the three month study led to a significant reduction in belly fat.

DHRU PUROHIT: Wow.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Again, all things considered calorie wise, there's something really remarkable about metabolic health regarding avocados. Number one, there's a bridge there. Some people don't even like, I didn't even even eat an avocado until I was about 25, my entire life, because it just looked weird. All right. Now it's one of my favorite foods, but with that, an avocado can be a risky purchase. Also if you don't have a lot of money, I can get two for 99 cent tacos at Jack in the Box. Because of government subsidies, by the way, enable that and an avocado might cost you 3. All right, so we want to make it count and avocados can go from good to like disrespectful very quickly, right? It's like unripe and then like you get disrespectful. So how do you really extend the lifespan of that avocado? Right? So, because we tend to, I know I tend to buy multiple and before I know it, I can end up possibly losing all of these. And it happened too many times where I just look into a little bit of the science. And so right before it gets to that perfect ripeness, or even when it's ripe, put in the refrigerator that can extend, extend the, the viability of it for another three days. All right, just right there off the bat. Another thing is once it's ripe and you know you're not going to use it right now, you can cut it into chunks and put it in the freezer to use to make smoothies.

You're welcome. You're welcome. And we have a great smoothie recipe in the book. One of my favorite ones is the heart health smoothie. And so it has all of these really science backed ingredients for improving your cardiovascular health. And cherries are one of the highlights

as well, but that cherry and avocado combination with some chocolate, ooh, it's not only is it delicious, but you know, it's really, really good for your metabolic health.

DHRU PUROHIT: Add a little protein powder so you can hit your protein goals and boom, you're done. And then besides dessert recipes, is there a way that you incorporate honey in your routine in a week?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely, of course. So this is a food that's been utilized for thousands of years. And there's a recent study that I cited in the book, again, this is one of the foods that we go through and they found that not only does honey not create that initial derangement, spike and crash in blood glucose upon consumption, over time, utilizing honey actually improved people's fasting glucose.

That's crazy! How, a sweetener? No. That's because it's disrespectful to even call honey just a sweetener. It's something different. And oh, by the way, in that study, they also found improvement in blood lipids and overall reduction in cardiovascular disease risk. When test subjects were eating honey, raw honey, just be clear, not the pasteurized stuff that, you know.

DHRU PUROHIT: A lot of fake honey out there.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh man. Yeah. There's a fake, a lot of fake Jessica Alba's out there. All right. So people, some people are going to get that. Some people are not going to get it. There's a movie is a dance flick called Honey Jessica Alba. Shout out to her. But yeah, you're absolutely right. You know, of course, it's easy psychologically for us to see something quote "sweet", right? So adding to a smoothie or the like, or a dessert, but also we can integrate this into, I've got a spicy protein bowl as well. That's got, you know, notes of things like, you know, sriracha, things like that, but all these high quality protein food foods. And then you add a little drizzle of the honey. Oh, it gets, it gets serious, you know?

And also one of my favorite recipes is the honey sriracha salmon as well. In the book, we have that, you know, at least every couple of weeks we'll have that. It's one of our family favorites. And some of these things are very simple to make as well. And you can modulate, you know, bring a little bit more honey or a little bit more sriracha for your sweetness and spicy desires.

but those are just a couple. Yeah, there's a, there's tons of different ways that we can add in honey even into kind of classically lower glycemic recipes. And also not to mention even with something with, you know, a recipe with salmon, everybody knows this at this point, the value of these fatty fish, but we, I dig in, you know how I do it. I'm just like bringing it to another level, but also making it more tangible and practical. But one of the most recent studies found that folks in particular that aren't consuming enough DHA and EPA have the highest rate of brain shrinkage. And so they were actually, they were using MRIs and looking at people's brains and they found that under four grams a day.

What that was kind of like the minimum effective dose for protecting your brain from shrinking over time and losing mass in particular, your gray matter, your gray matter matters, you know. And so, being able to protect our brain, how do we hit these marks. Depending on the type of salmon, by the way, there's a variety and we're not even talking about farm versus Wild caught but you know from Coho to King salmon. Potentially with one serving you can hit that mark and beyond just depending on which type of salmon you're eating.

So it's just like it's a really great food to get those compounds that are so important for sustaining our brain, right? But we can deliver that in a tasty way. We don't just gotta buy a supplement, which again, it's not, I'm not against supplements at all. But it should be supplementing an already great nutrition protocol to fuel your human excellence, you know? And so, let's get this from food first and then add in supplements accordingly, but our, our, our cells have evolved to interact with food.

DHRU PUROHIT: I love it. Shawn it's always such a pleasure to have you on the show. Eat Smarter, Family Cookbook, any kind of fun mentions or the URL of where people can get it from?

SHAWN STEVENSON: You go to Amazon, Barnes and Noble, your favorite local bookstore, and then go to EatSmarterCookbook.com. EatSmarterCookbook.com to get access to all those bonuses that you are going to love and you deserve.

Thank you so much for tuning in to this episode today. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this. Please share this out on social media. Send this to somebody that you care about. Share the love. Sharing is caring. And of course you could show Dhru a little love if you enjoyed this episode. Tag him on Instagram. On Instagram and tag me as well. I'm at Sean model and I love, love, love to see that. I'd love to see the sharing and listen, we've got some epic masterclasses. So world class guests coming your way very, very soon. So make sure to stay tuned. Take care. Have an amazing day. And I'll talk with you soon. And for more after the show, make sure to head over to the model health show dot 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.