



EPISODE 861

**Get Healthy, Stay Healthy, &
Find Strength Through Your
Journey**

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

SHAWN STEVENSON: Every successful journey begins with a decision. Whether it's the journey to transform your health and wellness, whether it's the journey to create healthy relationships and build a family. Whatever the case might be, it all starts with the decision. And what I wanted to do today was to provide you some inspiration for wherever you are on your journey and right now many people are beginning a new journey because of some of the devastation that's taking place in the world in different parts of our lives and even last year was the toughest year of my life, and I was rolling into this new year like let's get it. I've got all these incredible plans and aspirations and then these very tragic fires started burning literally around me here as I stand here in The Model Health Show studio.

The studio was actually closed because of the ramifications last week and much of this area was evacuated. And again, having these aspirations and intentions. So, just even pivoting and finding a way to serve, finding a way to provide some inspiration during this time and, most importantly, keeping my eyes on the prize.

And to stay true to my intentions. We're definitely going to do that. But what I wanted to do today was to provide some inspiration. And this was inspired actually by my oldest son who reminded me, because of course, I was just like, we've got all of these incredible shows. We've got to get recorded and to share with everybody this year.

But he's like, Dad, you've worked so hard for 20 years. You have thousands of hours of shows and interviews available for everyone right now. You've been a pioneer in this field of education through this medium and have been the number one health podcast in the United States for many years. And it helped me to just slow down to recalibrate.

And what I wanted to do was to share a conversation that I had about the beginning of my journey, about my first hour working in the health and wellness field. And also, it is absolutely rich in so many insights that can help you whether it's and it's absolutely rich in some of the most incredible insights for supporting your overall well-being and this conversation was from the show called The First Hour With Kelsey Heenan and Kelsey is one of the most successful, most well-known people in the fitness space in particular and she has millions of followers on social media but just an incredible person. She's been a guest here on The Model Health Show as well and she invited me over for an interview on her show and this was the first time that I did an interview and had a puppy co-host. All right, she had her puppy there and during the course of the interview you might hear some background, but her name is

Ella and she is what we lovingly refer to as a wiener dog when the show started off Ella was over there with her Puppy mom and before you know it over the course of the interview Ella, which I guess uncharacteristically You crawled up on my lap and went to sleep.

And so this was a very heartwarming experience for me and also gave me some love that I didn't know that I needed. But before the show, Kelsey asked me to really dig in on my story how I got started in this field and things that happened in my first hour starting my career, right? So the first hour being the beginning, but through this episode, we also covered how I managed having a family and working in the health space We talked about the shocking state of insulin resistance and chronic diseases in our society today.

And also what type two diabetes actually is. And most people do not know this. We also talked about some insights into my story that I don't talk about very often, including the use of sound as medicine. Also, we talked about how sound impacts our desire and satisfaction with food. We talked about why most people are mentally constipated today The time I caught my wife eating soap The biggest mistake I made as a health professional and how to identify the best diet for yourself So again, this is a very very rich conversation and i'm grateful to be able to share this with you And please keep in mind we've got some amazing New episodes coming your way very soon and I truly do appreciate your support. And if you want to support the show right now and support this mission, please share your voiceover on Apple podcasts, rate and review the show, and hop over to the YouTube channel. That really does mean a lot and subscribe to The Model Health Show.

We've got some incredible new things going on with the YouTube channel as well. But again, I'm very grateful to be able to share this conversation with you. And without further ado, please enjoy this conversation from the first hour with Kelsey Heenan.

KELSEY HEENAN: Being a person in the health space and then raising children, how did you kind of balance that process?

And was there any pushback? Maybe that's a loaded question.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely. You know what? This is the thing, you know, it's a very different reality when you have kids because there was a time, you know, my wife and I, first got together. We could just go.

KELSEY HEENAN: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Hey, you want to go? Do we just go?

Now every decision we make is like, where are they at, right? Where, who is getting who, where's this person, and that kind of thing. So it's always there in your psychology. Right. Your world has to revolve around them in a sense, but at its core your world still has to revolve around you. That's the secret.

And your relationship is like that outer layer besides that. And so the big thing is just not losing track of myself and my wife and my relationship, because that makes everything else exponentially easier with the self, I mean, with the management of the kids. And so, you know, really, and this is even the mission with this new project.

It's really not that difficult when you are coming into it intentionally creating a culture that makes these things easier. Unfortunately, we have a culture, a larger culture scape that makes being healthy difficult. And it, matter of fact, it will fight you if you try to do something healthy.

You know, it's just this very strange paradox we're living in right now because our ancestors would have just been active. They just would have eaten real food. They just would have slept out of just if anything danger of being out and about When we're not nocturnal creatures, we can't see that line, but it could see you You know, we would have been getting better sleep and all the things there were different challenges, of course, but being quote fit was just normal And today it's very different, as you know, and you know, the latest numbers from the CDC, this was published in 2022, six out of 10 American adults have at least one chronic disease, 40 percent have two or more, and it's growing.

And this has gone up precipitously just in the last couple of decades, many rare conditions are now normal. And we even had to change. Adult-onset diabetes, type 2 diabetes, the name of it to type 2 diabetes, because it used to be relegated to adults, but now a lot of kids, you know, that trend has gone up and there's a paper published in the New England Journal of Medicine, which is one of our top tier medical journals, is effectively called 200 years of diabetes.

And it looked back at the last 200 years, the last couple of centuries of diabetes, and the numbers were good. Relatively stable for well over a hundred years, but about 40 years ago, something happened 40, 50 years ago. And in those 40 years, the rates of type 2 diabetes quadrupled, right?

And so now it's one of those things where we have today, 130 million Americans have type 2 diabetes or prediabetes. And this isn't me just spouting this out. This is NIH CDC numbers. Looking at the the trends of chronic disease in our culture it's not okay. It's not normal. And what is diabetes at its core?

And this is one of the things because it can seem this kind of like Very strange aura like diabetes, you know, there's something with insulin and you know, whatever. We don't really know what it is Type 2 diabetes is it's an adaptation. You know a lot of disease labels are alterations in our biology, you know, making our genes, our genetic blueprint.

And, you know, one of my mentors is Dr. Bruce Lipton, cell biologist, and he's really the person who pushed epigenetics into popular culture. And he shared with me years ago that based on epigenetic influences, so your environment Internal and external, by the way, all right, because he always kept bringing me back to mind and how your thoughts alter the chemistry in your body and change how your genes are getting expressed.

And he shared with me that, you know because in my university biology class, I was taught DNA to RNA to protein, right? So the copies that are getting printed out of us as I'm seeing you, I'm seeing the proteins and same thing with me and some minerals, of course, are thrown in the mix here. But basically, he shared that one change, one epigenetic change can have a gene read out or print out 3, 000 different proteins from one gene based on different exposures. And my passion is nutrigenomics, nutrigenetics, and how food impacts our genetic expression. But when 2 diabetes, What is happening, what we call a disease is your body trying to adapt under unideal circumstances to keep you alive with that insane or very rampant amount of glucose exposure that we never experienced as a species for hundreds of thousands of years, kind of in this model.

And suddenly we've got Mountain Dew Red and Doritos and Pop Tarts and it's like all of this glucose exposure. And. Our bodies in order because all that glucose in our bloodstream will kill us. It will break stuff down very very quickly whether it's our brain cells we were seeing insulin resistance in the brain and Alzheimer's disease is being called type 3 diabetes because of the damage that happens to our brain cells. But downstream if we're looking at again type 2 diabetes in of itself and this is the last part with this it's so fascinating with all that glucose exposure.

What happens is we have what's called insulin resistance. It's kind of like, I think about like email, right? We get a bunch of certain message coming in from this one source and it will start to go to spam,

KELSEY HEENAN: Right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's like junk mail. So there's a resistance in that message, getting to the cell with when it comes to insulin and the most insulin resistance sensitive sites in our body is really our muscle cells, right? And so this is also part of our conversation is like the importance of muscle building and maintaining muscle. But in particular, we think about insulin resistance and type two diabetes in terms of fat and particular, belly fat, and visceral fat accumulation, which is a big part of it.

But just to keep us protected and alive, our body makes this adaptation. And. It's, it finds another way to deal with all of that glucose that's in your bloodstream that can break down your capillaries, lead to blindness, loss of limbs, all these terrible things. It's doing what it can to subdue this event, to slow it down.

But what is happening in essence, I mentioned this is an adaptation, but type 2 diabetes is really at its core. It's an accelerated aging disease. And so what a fun way to start this conversation. I know.

KELSEY HEENAN: Right. But very important. And there's, there are so many elements of things that are important to dive into within this.

And in the middle of that, you, you mentioned your specific kind of niche that you'd like to dive into and say the name of it again,

SHAWN STEVENSON: Nutrigenetics

KELSEY HEENAN: and Nutrigenomics. And I am so curious. How you have gotten from where you started in day one in your very first hour to where you are now in that kind of interest in all these things in the books that you've written and the Number one health podcast that you have Congratulations.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thank you.

KELSEY HEENAN: Pretty incredible to see Where you started, where you are now, and how you really got into all of these situations, because these deep dive topics are so important. And I think there's a lot of misinformation. I think there's a lot of fear. I think there's a lot of just people trying to figure it out.

Sometimes people just don't know. How to get to where they want to be in a way that allows them to have an incredible quality of life. And I think that you have some really unique thoughts and opinions that are well-backed by research. I have sent you many a voice memo before asking your opinion on different topics because I trust you and I trust that you are deep in the research and also you have a really cool lens of reality.

In, in understanding that we're all human beings and that these things have to be sustainable. We have to have quality of life. And if things become too strict and rigid and unattainable, then it's not going to lead to quality of life in our body and our mind. So thank you for being here on the first hour, Shawn. I'm so excited to talk to you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Man. It's my pleasure. It's my pleasure. You know, that, that first hour, I love that framing so much. You know, when you said that you trust me, you know, I felt that. And for me, our life experience qualifies us to do certain things. It's not just, you know, our school education and our, Conventional university education, all those things.

And I'm the first person in my family to go to college, let alone graduate. You know, I didn't come from a, a community or a culture where that was something that was even really seen as possible. It's just not something that anybody I knew had ever done before. And, you know, being that, and I just want to make this point as well.

The first time that my show was the number one health podcast in the United States. Which is, that doesn't make sense, all right? I lived in Ferguson, Florissant, Missouri, all right? So I was like living in the quote nice part of Ferguson and Florissant And I just moved from the bad part the quote bad part of Ferguson And and I'm saying that because this is one of those very notable food deserts in the United States And this is new label that's been Crafted, but I don't like it because it still sounds a little exotic food desert, you know, it's not that kind of desert where, you know, you got camels and sand in a music video or Backstreet Boys or something like that.

KELSEY HEENAN: We're still in Missouri.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes, we're in Missouri. And what it really means is that we're just absolutely surrounded and inundated with ultra-processed foods and a lack of access to real food. And I think it's an important distinction. for everybody with ultra-processed foods that, it's a newer term, ultra-processed foods have been around for a couple of decades now, a few decades.

Humans have been processing foods for thousands upon thousands of years, whether it's cooking a steak, baking a sweet potato, or cooking some rice, or whatever the case might be, that is processing the food. And even things like taking tomatoes and spices and making tomato sauce or pasta sauce and, or pressing the oil out of olives or coconuts.

Like that's a process, but that's minimally processed. You could still tell where the food came from. All right. It's just a step or two away from that. It still has the essence of something real. And humans have been interacting with it for centuries. And our genes have been able to really interact in a way that has been health-affirming, to put it simply.

Ultra-processed foods, on the other hand, this is when you have a field of corn. And I'm, I'm from the Midwest, so I've seen many fields of corn, and somehow, some way, that field of corn becomes a bowl of Lucky Charms. That field of corn becomes a bag of Funyuns, or Doritos, or, you know, a field of wheat somehow, some way becomes Pop Tarts, or Eggos, like, if you were to present some Eggos to Somebody in, my wife is from Kenya, for example, there are different tribes.

Someone in the Maasai tribe. And you give them an ego and I say, where is this from? They're going to be dumbfounded. There's, there's no evidence that that comes from anything on earth. It is so denatured, so far removed, all of this very intensive processing in and of itself. But now we talk about all the synthetic ingredients and additives and sugars and artificial colors and flavors and preservatives and all these different things that we never interacted with as a species.

Many of these compounds, and this is just, it is what it is. We've got a whole list with the WHO, by the way. are known carcinogens, cancer-causing agents, obesogens, obesity-causing agents, above caloric control, altering your metabolism in a way that makes you gain fat faster. All right? And, I'll just throw one more in here.

Because being that I'm from St. Louis, Monsanto's home base is there, and they would be at the job fairs, and I wanted to work there. You know, it's like one of my top priorities. Jobs that I want to, you know, get when I, when I graduated and Monsanto has come under a lot of scrutiny recently for glyphosate roundup.

And the WHO has denoted glyphosate as a group two, carcinogen. That means that it probably causes cancer in humans. And you would think, okay, well it's maybe it's just not that prevalent, prevalent. That's okay. Well, the Environmental Working Group and I also shared this in the E Smarter Family Cookbook by the way, the Environmental Working Group did a big analysis of popular products on U. S. store shelves, grain products. They found that 80 to

90 percent of conventional grain products are contaminated with glyphosate, a probable human carcinogen. So we're just inundated with this stuff and wondering why it's so hard to be healthy. And so I didn't know any of this stuff and being from Missouri and being able to craft a show that eventually becomes the number one health podcast in the country is crazy because this is not like a hub of advantage or you know, cooperation and support and all those things.

And I'm saying this to say that it doesn't matter where you are right now or where you come from, what you've been through. You have so much power to create something special. And I'm, you know, a lot of people say this, like, you know, if I could do it, anybody could do it. No, like for real, when it comes to me straight up, like if I could do this, come on.

And so, you know, I'm just, I'm very grateful to have this conversation, to talk about that and what kind of led into all this stuff.

KELSEY HEENAN: That's incredible. What got you interested in health?

SHAWN STEVENSON: There's a distinction too between health and fitness. Yeah, I was always into fitness.

KELSEY HEENAN: Okay,

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know just I was a neighborhood legend You know with sports and all that thing.

KELSEY HEENAN: What'd you play?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Everything I mean for hours and hours hooping and you know, I remember you know like we would spend a lot of time just like at you know, one of the local basketball courts just trying to touch the rim and dunk, you know, and, you know, I was playing hours and hours of basketball, you know, football, and eventually, you know, going to high school, I went to the number two school in the state and, for academics, but also athletics as well. Big baseball school. A lot of pro baseball players come out of their football players.

And I was like that. I was that fast guy. You know, I was the fastest kid in the school in my, in my age group. And each, you know, as we went up each step, I ran a four or five 40 during my freshman, summer, the summer before my sophomore year and everything was looking good.

Everything was looking really good, but But once that season ended, that sophomore season and track started, I was doing a time trial with my coach, a 200 meter sprint. And as I was coming off the curve into the straightaway, I didn't know this at the time, but I came up limping because my hip broke.

KELSEY HEENAN: Oh my gosh.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right. I broke my hip. There was no fall. There was no trauma. I just, my hip broke. Wow. When I, I went, I actually came to practice a couple more days after and I couldn't really run. I couldn't get my leg to fire. And so the coach like made me go get checked out and I got an x-ray done and you know, the physician put it up and he's like, Oh, that's the problem.

Your, your iliac crest is broken. And there's like a piece of my hip was just floating off in space.

SHAWN STEVENSON: He was like, Oh, okay, well, you know, we'll get you, we'll get, we'll get you patched up. And what I experienced was something called standard of care. I was given some crutches, I was given some NSAIDs, some Nostroidal Anti-inflammatories or, you know, I could take some over-the-counter, you know, some Advil or something like that.

And what was interesting though at the time, that I don't talk about often, is like, he also gave me ultrasound therapy, which was interesting and kind of innovative. And if you think about that, it's sound, it's sound used as a treatment. And now we've got a huge database of studies on how sound can, you know, Break down cancer cells kidney stones accelerate healing, reduce inflammation, but also give us feedback, you know, like an ultrasound for pregnancy, for example, and to be able to have images, right?

Based on sound in this kind of resonance connectivity with sound in the human body. So I just want to plant that seed on how science and our world is so much more magnificent than we give it credit for. Right. You know, and we tend to get caught in this tunnel vision, which it was interesting that he applied that but outside of that It was still, you know standard of care, namely because he didn't ask the question. How can a kid break his hip?

KELSEY HEENAN: That's what I was wondering. How does that even happen? If there's not any sort of impact or anything like that

SHAWN STEVENSON: That question I didn't get the answer to for years, which, because no one was asking it. And at the age of 20, by the way, after that break, I just couldn't stay healthy.

You know, my junior year, I've got game films at my house that it's, it's crazy. It's kind of like my son now. He's like at a different level than his peers he's notably faster He's just moving at a different pace

You see me on these game films just like I'm it looks like I'm playing with kids I am a kid, but it looks like I'm playing with kids because I'm just faster There's there's two times in my junior year that you can see me get injured and nobody touched me.

I was running it was either 38 or 39 sweeps and I got past the line, you know, the linebackers, the defensive back was five yards behind me trying to run me down.

And I'm like five or 10 yards from the end zone. And I just fall because I like tore my hamstring or, you know, like in this course, like it's all connected to my hip and my, you know, and I just couldn't stay healthy and my aspirations were vanquished essentially. And that was kind of my way out, my perception because in my environment, That's what people, if, if anybody was going to potentially go to college, none of any of my peers that I knew, but I saw a lot of people that look like me through music or through athletics was like, that's the way that you do it.

But fortunately, I was always, you know, a great student and I thank my grandmother for that. And I was a scholar athlete. You know, at 3.8 GPA. And I honestly didn't really try that hard to be honest. But because I figured something out, which is like that education is a system. There's just certain things that are required of you.

You just do those things. It's not that complicated. Now within that, of course, there is different ways that we learn, you know, and I love this sentiment that's attributed to Einstein, but it's not necessarily. How smart you are. It's how you are smart. And some people are brilliant when it comes to maybe understanding music and art or Language, but they might suck at putting these equations together in math and they're led to believe like you're stupid, right?

You know, you can't succeed because you're not good at this one subject And you get held back, you know, and it's so, it's so silly because we suppress or ignore genius. You know, I believe everybody has some kind of genius if we pay attention to it. You know, I think we just

come packaged with that. And again, we have this rote standard of care when it comes to our kids in education.

There are different communities popping up, different school systems and things like that, that are paying more attention to the child. But it's not the norm at all right now. And but to circle back to how I got into this field when I graduated, I, because of television is because of the Cosby show which damn bill is because of the Cosby show, I saw people who look like me who were successful and happy, right. And at my house. We didn't know what success or happiness really looked like. It was a lot of drama. There's a lot of violence inside the, inside the household, a lot of disease and dysfunction, alcoholism drug abuse. My, my stepfather actually just passed away right before this book came out.

And you know, he was there in my life since I was about nine months old. So he's all I ever knew as a father figure. And he'd been in assisted 15 years almost because of. drugs and brain damage from that. You know, we grew up in the inner city during the crack epidemic. And so I had a lot of family members who were lost to that, whether it's like jail or death or damage.

And it's so strange because it was just normalized to me, you know, but thankfully I had this, sometimes our environment can also be We are a product of our environment, you know, you hear the sentiment, but we're also creators of our environment. That's what makes us special as humans. We have all this capacity to create new environments, but sometimes it's contrast is giving you the opportunity for, right?

And so I get to see exactly what I don't want and what I'm not going to do. And it's tough if you don't know what you're going to do. And so that'll lead to a lot of like trial and error trying to figure things out. And that's really what my college experience was because I didn't know anybody who graduated from college except maybe my teachers.

And, because of the Cosby Show and Bill's character was a doctor, you know, and his wife was a lawyer. And, you know, seeing the, the happy family and, you know, Theo and, you know, Claire Huxtable and Rudy and this family dynamic. I wanted that, you know, I wanted a happy family. And because of that example, I decided like I'm going to, I went to this private university in St.

Charles, Missouri, and they had a great pre-med program. But here's the problem. I hated science. I hated it. I hated

KELSEY HEENAN: That's so interesting because you're so science-driven now.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes. It's crazy. Yeah. That's going back to that sentiment of life that qualifies you for the thing that you do if you're paying attention.

So I did my first semester there and it was an elective, by the way, I took nutritional science. You didn't have to take that. I took nutritional science because I thought it had to do with fitness.

KELSEY HEENAN: Gotcha.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. I thought this was going to help me to be more fit and like perform better and walk on and the football team and you know, all that, all that kind of stuff.

But I was, wow, the education from that really messed me up. Just my thinking, because it was, it was science that was funded by General Mills. Like they're a contributor to our nutrition program. Right. Right. So in these, this is a hallmark company of ultra-processed foods. And, you know, the first day of class, the professor said, you know, weight loss is, is, is very simple from the perspective of science.

All you have to do is expend more calories than you take in. Or if you gain weight, you consume more calories than you're, than you're expending or burning and maintenance is, you know, they're equal. And that's, that, that's that. And that's not that. Because he was notably overweight. A smart, really smart guy, but something wasn't adding up for him.

Because I know if he could choose, he would not be in that situation that he's in. And that's what kind of the basis of the, this was food pyramid time. The basis of that food pyramid is seven to 11 servings of what he called healthy whole grains. So very sugar-dominant foods are the basis of the diet.

And little did I know again, I was getting miseducated in a way, but I still had that experience, big auditorium classroom, these lectures, a lot of science that was just not applicable to the real world. And this ties back to also to what you said about me being real is one of my, like, I can't help it.

All right. This has to be something that is practical and based on reality. I love all the different hypotheses and different perspectives and exploration of science. But what about right here, right now, what matters? And the truth is, It's going to be different for different people at different times, you know, there isn't one cookie-cutter way that things are supposed to be, period.

But anyways to put the icing on the cake of this story. The first semester went by, I hated science. And I got out of it. So I shifted over to the business school and that was based on another television experience was from the movie Boomerang with Eddie Murphy, and he was like in marketing and just like seems so sexy and cool.

And I'm just like, I'll do that. So literally my choices were based on television programming. Shortly thereafter, I get diagnosed with this condition and it goes back to explaining why I broke my hip at track practice. I had an advanced aging disease. I had degenerative disc disease. So my spine was deteriorating and my bone density was dramatically lower than my peers in my age group.

My bone density was that of somebody who was 70, 80, 90 years old and this is coming from my physician at the time. Once I get this diagnosis, he puts the MRI out for me to see and I'm I'm just dumbfounded that he's looking at my spine when my leg was what brought me in. I was having leg pain and He said and I was like, it's like, okay, so so what's going on?

And he's like, well, son, you have degenerative disc disease and this is what's causing your pain. And he showed me I had two severely degenerated discs, my L4, L5, S1, those are the lower discs. And they were herniated as well. So they were herniated and on the sciatic nerve and they were like black because they were so degenerated.

And I'm 20 when I got this diagnosis. And what's so crazy is that when people see that. And even if, whether it's a heart attack or stroke, the, the onset, like where you officially get the diagnosis of diabetes or Alzheimer's, those are years or decades in the making. I didn't just suddenly have degenerative disc disease.

That was years upon years in the making. My body just falling apart and it was happening before my eyes. I couldn't stay healthy physically. My body just kept breaking. And so I asked him, okay, so what do we do to fix this? Let's go, let's go. You know, And he said, you know, he, he did his hands like this, like, slow down, son.

I'm sorry, but this is, this is incurable. And son, you have the spine of an 80 year old man. And this is something that unfortunately you're just going to have to live with. And we're going to help you to manage this. We're going to get you some medication. We can look at you for back surgery in a couple of years.

You're still really young, but I'm sorry, son. This is something you're just going to have to, to, to live with. And my optimistic mind was like, All right. So, and so I just asked another

question, which for years, I didn't think I had any grounds to ask this question. But then I realized I was in that nutritional science class a couple years before.

And I asked him, does this have anything to do with what I'm eating? Should I change the way I'm exercising? And he looked at me like, You idiot. He looked at me like, like I was from another planet, like you're so strange. Like there's, he said this, this has nothing to do with what you're eating. This is something that just happens and I'm sorry that it happened to you.

Again, we're gonna get you some medication, to help you deal with this pain. But you know, I'm sorry son. That's all we can do. And that's when the deflated feeling start to like kick on. You know, it's just like I got poked and the air is just starting to leave the room and leave my body and I left there. I came in with a nuisance of pain and I, within about a week's time, the pain became unbearable.

Because my mind had been infected and this is a no, it's called a nocebo effect. Placebo effect is a lot of people hear about.

KELSEY HEENAN: Sure.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And, but what people don't realize is that in clinical trials, we have to account for the placebo because it works pretty much every trial. Somebody believing that they're getting a treatment, they'll have the therapeutic response.

And so across the board, on average, on average, in clinical trials, the placebos are around 30 percent effective, 30, 33 percent effective. So somebody believing that this medication is going to lower my blood pressure normalize my blood sugar, break down this cancer tumor We have evidence on this.

Many studies have reversed my anxiety. There's even, there's so many trials where this has been done. Sham surgeries, where, where, you know, today we can, you can put a video up and watch your own knee surgery, for example.

KELSEY HEENAN: No, thank you, but that's interesting. I know, right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: But they'll, you know, put up somebody else's art, you know, surgery or, you know, cut the, you know, Patient open, but not doing any therapeutic change, but then believing that they got the surgery, their meniscus repairing, or ACL, whatever the case is, we've got data on all this stuff, the power of the mind, and so for some conditions,

the placebo effect is even stronger, in particular with mental health conditions, 80 percent effective for depression, and it's the belief in the thing, a nocebo effect, however, is when you get a negative Transcribed Injunction or a negative message that something bad is going to happen, right?

You are never going to walk again. You have three months to live. You, this condition is incurable and you're going to be in pain the rest of your life. That was my message. And so I didn't realize this but my, every cell in my body I took that belief on and so I went from, again, a nuisance of a pain to like I was so scared.

After about two weeks time, I was scared to stand up because the pain was so bad. I just sat as much as I humanly could. And, I dealt with that for the next couple of years. I was on a slew of different medications different drugs to help me sleep at night, too. Because one of the medications he gave me had the side effect of restless leg syndrome, which didn't have its own unique pill at the time.

So My legs felt like they were trying to leave me at night.

KELSEY HEENAN: Oh My Gosh.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And that was Celebrex was the drug that he put me on. And, yeah, it was just a huge struggle. But the reason that I'm in this field today is that after two years and seeking out multiple perspectives as well, which I encourage people to do, get a second opinion, get a third opinion.

Okay. But every physician said the same thing. I'm sorry, this is incurable. You have degenerative disc disease and there's, this is incurable. There's nothing you can do about it. Okay. And everything changed when I decided, I decided to stop blaming the doctors, asking why me 24 7. It was just going on in my head.

Why me? Why? Why is this happening to me? And I decided to do something to feel better. It was literally that simple. I decided. But when you actually decide something, there was no other possibility for me. It's like, I'm going to find a way to feel better. And it started with something small. Just like, what can I do to feel better?

And my low-hanging fruit was activity. Every doctor I left with another prescription and another note for my job so I don't have to work. And they would put me on light activity. And I would be living out the rest of my life, because 22 is when I made the decision, the rest of my life with minimal activity.

And nobody would have thought twice about it. You would never know my name. You'd never know who I am. Since that moment of decision, and The crazy thing was the solutions were there the whole time. I just wasn't attuned to them because I was so locked into the, what was me? I just watched Wednesday, by the way.

KELSEY HEENAN: Whoa.

SHAWN STEVENSON: What was me? And rightfully so I've been through a lot and he gave me permission basically to stop fighting. And it was a fight, but I felt like because of my grandmother, so grateful for her, just like she believed in me. She, I just had this feeling that I was going to do something special as well.

And. A friend of mine who I'd known for years hung out with her a lot. This is the first time I was just riding with her and she pulls up at Wild Oats, which is since been brought up by Whole Foods. They were like kind of like a mom-and-pop type of Whole Foods. I didn't know this existed. I drove past this place hundreds of times, literally.

In Missouri. And by the way, at this time there was one Whole Foods in all of St. Louis and it's a major city. It's a huge city and one Wild Oats. And now I'm like seeing all these different, like. What is all this stuff, all this like organic, what is organic food and all these different supplements and books and I have one of those books on my shelf from that wild oats still to this day It was a nutritional prescription book.

Basically, if whatever your condition was you look it up and there are all these scientific studies Affirming like how to address this With food or with nutrition and I looked up my condition, degenerative disc disease, and it noted different studies on calcium deficiency and I was like, I'm drinking milk all the time, but it noted that calcium is required for clotting your blood amongst other things, and there's like a hierarchy with your body if you're not bringing in enough bioavailable calcium, your body will leach it from your spine and your hips first. Wow. Yeah, those are my two. That's when I was like, holy What? But now I'm trying to do the math. I'm like, I'm guzzling milk. Like that's my jam.

KELSEY HEENAN: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But this pasteurized homogenized Factory farmed and in this Eat Smarter Family cookbook. I make a note of, you know, a video people could check out with common practice cows getting fed all this leftover like Halloween candy and shit like that wrapper and all in this big vat Along with, you know the synthetic nutrients and antibiotics, but the antibiotics are not to keep the cows from getting an infection.

Most of the data is pointed to, and this is what's done in the industry. It helps them to gain more, gain more weight, gain weight faster because of the detriment to their microbiome. All right. So from these sick, and that's a whole different thing as far as the calcium and the bioavailability, but also my biology might be unique in I'm not really getting what I need.

as far as calcium from that source. And so I set out to, by the way, calcium wasn't even absorbable without these other things. And it's just like, I found it about like 20 other things that I was not getting on my drive-through diet at the time. And this is the final point of this. I was making my tissues out of very, very low-quality things.

90 percent of my diet. This is not an exaggeration with ultra-processed foods, 90 percent every single day of my life, every day. And I'm saying I'm not, this is not abnormal either because in the Eat Smarter Family cookbook I share for the first time a book is, a major book is published, this new study published in JAMA, the Journal of the American Medical Association.

They looked at the consumption of ultra-processed foods by children in the United States aged 2 to 19. So children and adolescents. And they found that in 2018 the average child's diet was already 61 percent ultra-processed foods, fake foods, fake ass foods. And by 2018 that number was almost 70 percent of our children's diet in the United States is ultra-processed foods.

And if you know anything about research, there's going to be people on each end that's average is almost 70%. There's going to be people who's 20. It's going to be people who are 90. I was 90. And so I'm literally making, your body cannot do certain processes. Just even one nutrient, magnesium, is responsible for over 650 biochemical processes that we're aware of.

That means your body can't do these processes without magnesium being present. Or it can't, it will find again, it will add, have to make an adaptation, which is probably going to lead to loss of function. Even in my university-level science classes, I was never taught this because there was a break in the education between what we're learning and what's applicable to you as a person in the real world.

And so we were taught about the mitochondria and ATP and the energy currency of the body. People talk about that stuff, but you're, that's not an active version of that energy until it's bound with magnesium. It's ATP-connected mg. ATP is the usable energy currency of the body. All right, that's how important it is.

I'm Ridiculously deficient in magnesium. Of course, I'm deficient in almost everything.

KELSEY HEENAN: Yeah

SHAWN STEVENSON: and there's a big difference between Synthetic versions and whole food versions and I shared a ton of different studies on that in the book as well It isn't just hearsay or guessing like it's true and so realizing this and now I'm bringing in all these vital nutrients that my body been starving for all these years and when I tell you I got better so quickly like six weeks after that moment of revelation The pain I was in for two years was completely gone And I'd lost at this point for two years and like not doing anything and eating the drive-thru diet.

I'd gained a lot of weight I was close to 200 pounds and I'd lost about 16 pounds in that six weeks and I just felt like and people saw me at the university, you know still in school. Thankfully I was barely hanging on But people started coming up to me You know, after a couple of months, they're just like, what did you do?

Because I didn't look like a person who just lost weight. Like, I looked like a person who was radiantly healthy.

KELSEY HEENAN: So what did you do? So, so you're going from 90 percent highly processed foods. How did you make these switches? Was it? Kind of a huge one 80 into only specific things or what did it look like?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. My first hour was slim fast first.

KELSEY HEENAN: Okay. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Because of marketing. I didn't know shit about nutrition. I took a university nutritional science class and the marketing from television is telling me and it seemed very logical. This has all the nutrients that you need a shake for breakfast, one for lunch and a sensible dinner.

First of all, that was suffering. It was, but we're led to believe that you have to suffer in order to be healthy. And so as I'm starving and starving throughout the day, I'm just like, okay, I'm losing weight. I must be losing weight. I'm starving.

KELSEY HEENAN: Isn't that such an interesting concept that sometimes when people feel like they are suffering or they are hungry, that somehow equates to them doing something good for themselves as far as losing weight or getting healthier or whatever that is.

I don't know what that psychology is specifically, but. In a lot of people that I've worked with, that seems to be a correlation.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, that's again, it's the culture. It's a, we have an unhealthy culture as far as our connection to food. And we're taught to believe that in order for you to be healthy, restriction, deprivation, suffering, joy, and enjoyment is going to be a far side dish, maybe a little dessert later, you know, and I'm talking about metaphorically.

All right. So enjoyment is not your modus operandi. And so it's very illogical though, because humans, we are driven to, to rebel against anything that is putting us into a box. We do not like to be told what to do. And we also, we have a very complex flavor palette and also, It's another fascinating thing.

Like the human nose is one of the things that is really special in the animal kingdom too, because we're not likable to sniff out, you know, I don't know, like who's got cocaine at the airport.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We don't have that kind of a nose where these dogs do, but our ability to our flavor ability to understand flavor has a lot to do with our sense of smell.

This is why if somebody has a cold or something like that, yeah, your food tastes super weird because that integration and also sound. Has a lot to do with our enjoyment of food and this there's actually a Nobel Prize one. It's called the the sonic chip experiment

KELSEY HEENAN: Mm-hmm.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's kind of like the Nobel Prize Nobel Prize is awarded and this is conducted by the Nobel Prize committee awarded to things that they as they say that'll make you laugh, but also make you think and the scientists had test subjects to consume a uniform food And something that has the same density and they're pretty much the same, every one of them, which was Pringles.

And they put the headphones on them and they amplify certain aspects of the crunch. And they found that when the crunch was put in a certain frequency, the test subjects believed that the food tasted better. It was 15 percent fresher and tastier based on the sound. And this is because through our evolution Even if you come across some apples, right?

The crunchiness of that apple is an indicator of its freshness. When, if an apple you bite into it, it's soft. That's like, it's immediate. Like, Oh, that's, that's probably not good. Right? And so there's something with crunch, with, with sound, with flavor, with smell, and all those things integrate into our desire to seek tasty things.

All right. All animals, all animals. If you've ever thought about this, why did, why? Why do these sheep go and eat those things? Why do lions eat that? Why? Everything is going after something that tastes good to it. But we villainize in our culture, like the fact that we like to eat things that taste good.

And on the other, we have to be honest though, food scientists have manipulated our desire to eat tasty things. Absolutely.

KELSEY HEENAN: A hundred percent.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's where the situation gets sticky. But our desire to eat things that taste good is not the problem. And to ignore that, and I know like my colleagues, some of my colleagues are like, the food is fuel.

And, you know, eat to live, don't live to eat. I respect that, but that's not reality, that even just based on biology, we have a certain ability to taste flavors to drive us to eat those flavors.

KELSEY HEENAN: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so if I could share this one quick thing, last, last thing, there's this phenomenon is called post ingestive feedback.

And basically through our evolution. If we're in natural conditions, you know, we'll just say we come across some apples, right? Some crab apples or, you know, we come, come across some berries. We would eat those berries and we'd get all these different nutrients. Maybe it's like a little bit of selenium, some copper some vitamin C these few amino acids over here and our cells are taking stock.

Essentially, cellular memory, writing notes on, okay, I got this particular nutrient, these nutrients from this flavor. And if we develop a deficiency in those nutrients or run low on those nutrients, we would develop a craving to go and seek out that flavor.

KELSEY HEENAN: So cool.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right. And there's been many studies affirming this as well, animals and animal and human studies that we seek out different foods based on the flavor, based on our cell's needs.

With that being said one of the inventions recently was a gas chromatograph where scientists were able to identify the chemistry that makes certain flavors. So we can create the chemistry, the formula that makes that strawberry flavor. And now we can add that strawberry flavor to things that are not strawberries.

We can add it to ice cream. No strawberry are necessary. Soda. We can add it to Pop-Tarts. And it doesn't have to taste exactly like a strawberry, but it's just enough to muddy up that communication. And so now we have very devolved sensing mechanisms on what we need to be eating, what flavors we should be seeking out.

Not to mention the hyper-palatable aspects of these foods designed, you know, technologies like Bliss Point. Like vanishing caloric density and really manipulating our biology to make us want to eat these ultra-processed foods. And so yeah, so that's a really fascinating thing. And last, really, really quick thing just to summarize.

What did I do? The first thing that I did after SlimFast, which lasted about a week, I did lose two pounds. But by the end of the week, I'd pretty much gained it back. But the next thing was I ended up with my friend at Wild Oats. Alright, so within that, because my perspective was different. I was trying and I'm looking at things differently.

And with that experience with her and Wild Oats and me finding out about all these nutrients, then I became a natural pill popper. So now I'm like, okay, these nutrients, let me get all these supplements.

KELSEY HEENAN: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And that I felt better, things were happening, but it was mad expensive. And I was living in Ferguson, Missouri, you know, and, and college and all the things, and it's just like, it was not feasible.

And also, thankfully I came across some other data on how much food mattered, you know, just, and what I did was now I start to look for what foods have these concentrations of these nutrients. And a lot of these foods I wasn't necessarily eating before, which helped with me blending a blender came in handy and eventually, you know, I use a juicer for a while but the big thing was simply upgrading.

This is the big secret. That shouldn't be a secret. I upgraded the things that I was eating. Rather than going to McDonald's and getting you know, two for 99-cent cheeseburgers and fries. I was going to Whole Foods and taking a calculated risk investing in myself because it did cost more getting grass-fed beef. You know, like a sprouted grain bun or something like that.

And if I did want fries, I was getting like these organic oven fries, but I would have a side of vegetables, like whatever veggie I would eat because I hadn't eat a salad yet. In my entire life, I had never had a salad still. I didn't eat a salad till I was 25, by the way. But I would eat broccoli. Like broccoli was cool.

I could do some green beans and, you know, fruit, as well. So I just started to make my sides more like real, very minimally processed foods. And now again, I'm getting these nutrients and these nutrient inputs, man, I got better so fast. And some key supplements I was still taking as well. One of those essential ones was Omega 3s which was huge because one of those studies found that Omega 3s and I actually shared a new study on Omega 3s and bone density, specifically the hips and spine in the new, Be Smarter Family cookbook, because it's just like, I found it about this.

20 years ago and it's still applicable. We need mega threes for our bone density, not just for brain health, but for the health of our bones as well. So that was my process on like what I did as far as nutrition and eventually by, because food is information as well. And it started to change my palate, what I was attracted to.

And so now I'm like, I'm open and like desiring to eat these other foods that I wasn't eating before. You know, and just sneaking some things in, but then all of a sudden, like I could, I like the way that that tastes. And with the fitness side, there was a study I came across on racehorses. And it found, they were looking at bone density for these racehorses, which that's, it's a billion dollar industry, by the way.

And so they want to increase the bone density of the horses. They had a control group, they had a group they were giving, these nutrients to supplements and those horses did improve their bone density. But for another group of horses, they walked the horses and gave them supplements and their bone density was even higher.

So the exercise, I was like, I've got to do this. And so I spent about a week on the stationary bike. It was really hard to walk. So, and then I did a week on the elliptical machine. But by this point, like a couple of weeks into it, I'm feeling really good with my nutritional changes. And I started sleeping better on accident.

Because of what you do during the day helps you sleep better at night. And you know, after that I started walking around. There's an indoor track at the school. Then like week three or four, I started like dabbling with a couple of weights, which was really my jam back in the day, you know, just being an athlete.

And again, by six weeks it was as if nothing had ever happened to me. And nine months later I got a scan done and my two herniated discs had retracted into place and I regenerated the kind of suppleness of my two lower discs. So much so that my spine looked a little bit advanced age. Yeah. But by the age of 30, when I got a scan done, my spine was effectively, again, there's a chronological age and biological age.

My spine looked younger than that of my peers in their 30s. And so, yeah, that's what's possible, you know. It's really remarkable.

KELSEY HEENAN: That is wild. And how cool, too. I love that. Your first wave kind of dabbling into this and this curiosity of being able to kind of heal yourself in those senses. It wasn't a zero to a hundred.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

KELSEY HEENAN: It was, how can I upgrade the things that I already like and the things that I'm already eating? And I feel like that's such a breath of fresh air in, especially in today's day and age, because you can hear some of these statistics that you've been talking about and it can be a little bit alarming.

Obviously it is alarming and, and people live in this fear and there's a lot of fear-mongering of people that will only spew these things and say, okay, well food, like you were saying, some colleagues will have a rhetoric of food is only fuel and if you're enjoying it, that's almost bad. Right. So being able to think about, okay, yes, we are.

We need to understand these are the types of nutrients that our bodies need to function well, to heal ourselves, to be able to have this longevity. And also how do we understand human psychology and what is accessible for people? And not everyone lives in Los Angeles and has all of these things accessible to them or the opportunities to go to Air One and get these, you know, delicious foods all the time.

So how do we make these choices that can allow us to simply just upgrade? In, in just the smallest ways. And then the curiosity, I don't like pickles right now. I, that's a very specific

example to me. I used to not like fermented foods and so I just kept trying it and now I love it. And I eat it pretty much every day.

Right. And so in your, in your cookbook, one of, I've tried two recipes so far. The first one is the upgraded breakfast sandwich. And I love that that's the language that you use. I'm very specific on language around food and the importance of that to people's relationship with food. And you're, you do such a good job of that.

It's really nutritious ingredients, but it tastes. So good. So that was one. And then the other one that I made was the sweet potato pancakes. And I'm on a, I'm on a new chef era where I'm trying, and your food is delicious but really accessible. And so I, I think that that's a really important thing that people need to know they don't have to just go all out, you know, and never enjoy a treat ever again. Yeah. Right? Do you feel that way?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Those two examples that you just mentioned, were two of my favorite foods from McDonald's. Yes! That's where this came from, you know, the upgraded breakfast sandwich.

And I shared a story in there too. Each of the recipes has a little bit of an Anecdote. Yeah. And I remember watching the movie Big Daddy with my daughter, who's my oldest, and we watched it a lot. And there's a scene where he's like, okay, so, because a kid peed in the bed or whatever, and he wouldn't go back to sleep because he laid down a bunch of newspaper for the kid to lay on because he had no business really having a kid.

And he was like, okay, so since we're up, we could, guess what, we got time to make it to McDonald's for breakfast. And he gets there, and breakfast had just ended. You know, he was ordering. But he realized that because it was almost 11 o'clock, it was like 10:58 or something, but breakfast ended at 10:30. And that's happened to me before, because for some reason I thought it was 11, but making it to breakfast in time at McDonald's, I get the, you know, sausage, sausage McMuffin.

KELSEY HEENAN: I was a bacon, egg, and cheese person. Bacon, egg, and cheese.

SHAWN STEVENSON: On the McMuff, or the biscuit?

KELSEY HEENAN: Yep.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Which one? The biscuit?

KELSEY HEENAN: Oh, I'm a biscuit person for sure.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So then there's of course the English muffin version. There's a hot cakes and sausage was the hot, the hot cakes. That was my jam. So just upgrading those things with real food ingredients.

So now we're not using a very high glycemic flour base for pancake. We're using a very, very nutrient-dense, complex sweet potato and anthocyanins. As I noted in the book as well, you get to learn over 40 of the most science-backed foods for improving your metabolic health, your memory, and your sleep quality.

And you get to see the studies there. One of the studies with the sweet potatoes looked at these anthocyanins essentially targeting the memory center of our brain and enhancing memory, which is like, what really? And also the benefits for. Our gut health as well and you'll see little emojis by each of the foods as well So you don't have to even read the studies you see by sweet potato.

There's a muscle emoji for metabolic health and Brain emoji for you know, memory or cognitive function and a little gut emoji So but now let's turn this into a delicious meal experience And we also increased the protein fraction in there too. So it's not just like a high carb food and not to villainize carbs though, but just looking at what the majority of people are going to be most responsive to and having some good glucose regulation.

All right. Very good glucose variability. And you know, the same thing with the breakfast sandwich as well. Now you mentioned something really important, which is the access. Like how do we do this? But if you don't have the means, man, you're so right. People don't even know, man. When you come out here to LA, it's nuts.

I mentioned there was one Whole Foods. When I moved away from St. Louis, almost at the very end of 2019, there were three Whole Foods in St. Louis. St. Louis is a big city. Big. Here, you literally, I'm talking, we could throw a rock out this window and we could hit a Whole Foods, you know. But what I've learned, I thought this was a very health conscious city.

But it's more, it's, it's about the trend. It's about what's fashionable. Not a lot of these folks are really interested necessarily in the science. They do know they might have some awareness of certain things might be better, but it's just like, it's a cool thing to do and it's so accessible. And also if you have money, right, there's a certain vibe to it.

And I get that. I was mistaken. I thought that coming here was like, Oh, there's this, there's this Sanctuary of health consciousness. It's not necessarily like that because we have a huge problem here in California as well with metabolic health and with chronic disease. And it's not okay. Even the homeless population here in California, and this is recently published.

The obesity rate in the United States prior to the pandemic was 42.5 percent of Americans were clinically obese. These are like, again, CDC, NIH. The homeless population in California is 38 percent obesity. How is that possible? Usually we have this perception of if you don't have money, we have less access.

We see more of a degradation and according to the Lancet, which I shared in the book as well, did this huge meta analysis, multiple nations, So there's over a hundred countries they looked at and they determined that poor diet is the number one global risk to human health. More people are dying now from overconsumption of ultra processed foods than from lack of food.

We have this weird paradox that's taking place. So even if you don't have money, you could still be obese, but still be starving internally for nutrients. And so, you know, I have a unique perspective on this because I come from that situation. I didn't have, I was at Whole Foods many times, like, okay, I'm ready to put stuff back based on what the cashier is going to tell me.

And sometimes I'm like risking buying this food versus like getting the money to pay my light bill. But here's, so there's a couple of things here. Number one, there are ways to save money, which we'll talk about in just a second. But more importantly than that is the investment in yourself. because I can't, I can't even, I really hope people get this.

I can't even explain all of this seemingly. And I don't like to throw this word around a lot. I'm not talking about some David Blaine. I'm talking about magic, like beyond anything that we can understand on how powerful we are. And you know, I've loved studying for, you know almost 20 years now, quantum physics is really the, That's where we're at, all right, in the observer effect and how, you know, in the phantom DNA experiment and all these different things, these different experiments affirming how, as humans, we affect the world around us with our focus, with our perception.

It's, we're so powerful. And so I'm saying all this to say that when I started taking those risks to invest in myself, I started feeling better. And I start to make more money, which enabling me to buy higher quality food, but not just that, that's not what changed. The biggest, most shocking change was I got to a place within a matter of years where a lot of food I didn't have to pay for anymore because now I'm an advocate.

And now all these wonderful companies are just sending me food there. I get seafood delivered, regenerative. Gathered seafood and, and regenerative, you know farming practices, you know, whatever, whatever you want to name I'm thinking about, I'm trying, I was not going to share this, but goji berries are one of those things that is pretty hot now.

KELSEY HEENAN: Sure.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I found out about goji berries maybe like 17 years ago, I want to say, and I was like, I was fascinated. I was like, what? Yeah. And there was, of course, they're not at any store in my, around me. Sure. So I went to in University City, there's like there's a acupuncturist and they had some goji berries there.

And also I found out that the Tibetan school of medicine, like you can order some, like I'm, I'm like spending money to try to get these berries I'd got fascinated with. And it had these really unique compounds. It's a complete protein in a berry, which is very unique.

KELSEY HEENAN: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And. It had some evidence pointing to potential of Supporting human growth hormone production all these like really cool things but After doing that and this is this is absolutely true story.

I was speaking at like Not a health necessarily event, but like, it was like holistic wellness event. So they had all kinds of people there, you know, weird stuff and like kind of down to earth stuff too. And there was a table there for this, the top brand of that had Goji berries at the time. And the person who was running the table was like, their back was turned.

They were like doing something and somebody was like asking about one of their products. And. They were like, Hmm, I wonder what, and I was like, Oh, this actually does this, this and this. And you know, they da, da, da, da. And the person who was running the table heard me. And then after the person left, they bought some and then they left, they're like, Oh my God, you're amazing.

And she was like, Who are you? Where'd you come from? And I was like, Oh, you know, da, da, da. And she was, in a relationship with the owner of the company.

KELSEY HEENAN: Oh My gosh.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so cut to within a month, they literally deliver a pallet, a pallet of their products to my house in Ferguson, Florissant, Missouri. A truck had to come in with the forklift.

I swear, yeah, it's crazy. So not only are my needs met now because I was teaching nutrition classes. That's how I got there at that event. And now I have their products there because I use them and I love them. And now, like, I have it for free. That's the power of investing in yourself. That's going to come back to you in ways you might not ever understand.

Or, and that's why I want to encourage people to also cultivate. And if you can, and I'm actually today, when I leave here, I'm going to get a new journal because I stopped doing this. I stopped having a miracle journal to like, keep track of those magical. On just like things that blow you away that happen.

And a lot of times they happen each day. It might be a small little thing. You know, somebody calls you that you were thinking about or, you know, a synchronicity, you know, we just, even at the elevator just now walking in here, that, that was a whole thing. All right.

KELSEY HEENAN: I didn't even hear what you guys were talking about.

And so I'm so excited. Yeah. But isn't that wild? How that can happen? That

SHAWN STEVENSON: is. You see, like these little, and it's something he was talking about something that has been on my mind that I've been talking about with my wife. And it's just like, wow, okay, I got to pay attention to this, right? So to write down those things, because that attunes you to start paying attention to those seemingly miraculous, beautiful, unexplainable Moments and it like you start to then turn your frequency to that to pay more attention to it because it's always going on

KELSEY HEENAN: That's so important We're we're moving so fast trying to do everything that we don't pay attention to all of the things going around We're paying attention to the things that we're frustrated with or that never seem to be going right and we forget about these little amazing things that happen every day and can turn into big things if we're actually paying attention to what's happening

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, what said is that? What you focus on expands. What you focus on expands. And there are parts of our brain, there's this process in the brain called instinctive elaboration. We all have like a dominant question we're always asking, that attunes us to certain things.

This is why for those years when I was in pain, asking why me all the time,

I was just finding data externally and internally to affirm why I wasn't helpable, why I wasn't getting well, and Why, you know, my life was so bad and hard, but by shifting that dominant question to like, what can I do to feel better?

And eventually, and I haven't shared this very often, but I, I created, and I encourage people to have an audacious, like crazy, amazing, big, big, bigger than what makes you comfortable dominant question or goal. And so I started to ask, how can I be the healthiest person in the world? How can I be the healthiest person on earth?

And it might not land us right there being that, but it'll put you in that territory, you know? And so, You know, we have the reticular cortex, reticular activating system, but basically we're going to be attuned to what you're focused on. If you're always focused on your problems and how messed up it is and hard, you've got all these things to do.

Yeah, you're just going to keep seeing more of that. And you're going to feel that in your body because your thoughts create chemistry in your body as well, instantaneously. And so part of being able to do this though, because it sounds good. Again, theory, I'm a big, practical, real person. Why is it so difficult to think the thoughts I want to think?

Here's the bottom line truth. Our ancestors close proximity ancestors. They had a lot of time and contemplation. They just did. We didn't have all this external stuff that we can put our attention to and lose ourselves. Social media and television and all these different things that are great, but we spend so much time outsourcing our thinking.

And absorbing that sh and mistake sometimes creativity for regurgitation because we're just processing all the sh that we're consuming and a lot of us we're consuming so much we get kind of like a psychological constipation like we're not able to metabolize and eliminate and process our own thoughts let alone all the other stuff we're taking in.

For you to think the thoughts that you want to think you have to take You have to take some time to just be, you have to unplug from all this stuff and I'm going to tell you right now, if you haven't done this, it is hard at first because even if we're just a little bored, we pick up our phone.

We're so, it's just like, it's always right there. And so I would encourage people to set up some parameters and to know that. Within a short amount of time, you're going to feel better than you ever have. And I'm not talking about fasting per se from being on your phone, which that

could be helpful. You know, taking a week off or a month, something crazy, getting crazy, but just maybe 30 minutes a day.

KELSEY HEENAN: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Where you just put your phone on silent and maybe just go for a walk without anything. Just go for a walk or, you know, just. And this is, this is hard to do, to just sit there and just let your thoughts come to you, just think about stuff, think about your thinking, be able to get a peek at all the crazy shit going on in your head that's not getting your attention.

It's like screaming at you like, hey, I've got, because what tends to happen when we unplug is stuff that we've forgotten about or that we wanted to do starts to bubble up. And so maybe you can keep a journal by, close by, and like write those things, those things down. So you don't lose that thought again.

Like, I meant to change the batteries in my you know fire alarm.

And now you remember you write it down. All right. But giving yourself that sacred time. So you could be better.

Be your best self. And it's so much easier to think the thoughts you want to think because you have time to actually know yourself. That's like that ancient statement, know thyself. Like why do they put that at the opening of this temple? Know thyself, most important tenet. And the last piece here too, with the accessibility just to circle back.

I found out little did I know in Ferguson, Missouri, that whole freaking time there was a farmer's market. There's no gyms in Ferguson. There's no like organic section of the grocery store. I'm just again, caught into, Oh, this is a food desert. And they're trying to kill us. I could go outside my environment, which was like a 30, 40 minute drive to get to Whole Foods.

I can go into Whole Foods and buy based on what is on sale. That's what I would do as well. Stock up on the things that were a little bit less expensive. But then I find out that there's this farmer's market that was there in the quote, good part of Ferguson this whole time. And now I'm going to the farmer's market.

I'm saving sometimes half. It costs, it costs half the amount I'm paying at Whole Foods and I'm meeting the farmers. The food is fresher so it's going to be more nourishing. The nutrient

density is, is higher. It's just like it all started to feed into itself and then I start to make it an event where each week I would go with my family, right?

And so now it's becoming a part of our culture. And now I found out, wait a minute, there are farmer's markets all over St. Louis. Yeah. On different days. Like, some of these farmer's markets are doing yoga, what the f is yoga? Right. Like, you know, there's like all this stuff that I'm starting to get attuned to, and I'm saving money now, I'm having more enriching experiences, and my kids are growing up in this now.

And, you know, there's CSAs as well, where you get deliveries, you can't necessarily, you know, pick what you're getting, but you're getting like a box of different produce and things like that. There are so many companies that are stepping up and making things like, you know, if people are eating you know, grass fed meats and, you know, as I mentioned, seafood.

that are oftentimes significantly less than what you're going to pay at, not to villainize Whole Foods, by the way, but it can be expensive. But you're going to pay less. The food is going to be fresher. Sometimes, and this is where things are going right now. These companies are already doing things that Whole Foods is going to be pointed to because they're just going to adjust to the market and do what the people are demanding.

But regenerative farming practices, and the same thing with our, with our seafood as well. We have to do something because it's not good. Regenerative beekeeping as well. There's companies that are doing that. And so you can have that stuff delivered right to your door, you know, and save tremendous amounts of money.

So there's so many ways to go about this, but But the problem oftentimes is that if you don't know, you don't know.

KELSEY HEENAN: Totally. And it's a challenge too, because then people start learning about all of these different things. Maybe are experiencing just curiosity. Maybe they feel fearful that they're going to be eating the wrong things, whatever it is.

Sometimes I think people might be focusing on the wrong things when they're diving into that. And just because there's so much information out there. Seemingly contradicting information about certain diets and approaches. And, you know, should you be keto? Should you be vegan? Should you be fasting? Should you be eating six meals a day, all of these different things.

And so sometimes people want to focus on the right things. They're trying to do the best thing for themselves, but they get down this rabbit hole of these different approaches. How would you tell people to navigate that?

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is the biggest question of our current time right now. Because I've never met somebody, I, I worked, I had my own office working as a, as a nutritionist for 10 years.

I never met one person that didn't want to be healthy. And you know, there are people that might say, you know, you're not going to live forever. Let's just, you know, do whatever you want. If they can choose, they would still have their health and fitness. Eat, you know, the deep fried Twinkie as well, you know, like We but we do have stories as to why you know, we might feel that It's too expensive.

It's too hard We don't deserve it. You know, there's different reasons. We might develop learned helplessness of trying so many different things But everybody wants to be healthy And when we do that, we tend to buy into a framework of some sort. And these frameworks can be very valuable, but they can also imprison you because it does come with its own set of boundaries and rules.

And I'm so grateful for this and that experience working as a practitioner. And because I made the mistake That most practitioners make, and many of them never change. I was having people do what I thought was best for me. So if I'm into raw foods, guess what diet I'm going to have you do? If I'm into a vegan diet, that's what you're going to do.

If I'm into keto, that's what you're going to do. If I'm into paleo, that's the best diet, that's what I do. And the truth is, many of these diets And this is at its core are going to be moving people away from ultra processed foods if they're doing it with some level of efficacy All right. And so you're gonna probably feel better on all of these different things and Some of these are gonna be more applicable for the general population for the majority of people based on their genetics You know again going back to nutrigenomics, nutrigenetics.

We all have a certain gene Compilation that certain foods vibe better with us than other foods and also Every bite of food that we eat affects our genetic expression regardless. So that's the two different nutrigenomics and nutrigenetics and So a paleo framework might work more broadly because it's really focused more on an omnivore protocol It's looking at some of these different Potential problems with different toxins and plants, but humans regardless of what that food is, For example, beans might be totally off the menu literally with that protocol But maybe your ancestors like my wife in Kenya have been having Dengu

which is like a mung bean for a thousand years or whatever it is and like now is bad for you. Right?

And maybe their microbiome is just like it has this really great affinity that's helping to reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease and their energy levels are high and all these different things that might, you can't have that now because that doesn't fit into this. And so what I would want is just people to be mindful of whatever diet framework it is.

Don't allow yourself to be imprisoned by it. And a lot of times we do this out of a desire to feel better. And also we have a bigger desire to many people, especially in LA to eat better for the planet. And where the fatal flaw is, is when we feel better doing a certain diet framework, and then we believe that that's the right diet for everybody.

And we become dogmatic and we turn other people into villains. Or idiots because they're not consuming the food that you think is the best. And the truth is there is no diet that is more spiritual. There is no diet that is more ethical when we're talking about real food that our ancestors all over the world have been eating for thousands of years.

KELSEY HEENAN: Yeah, it's, it's. Interesting to think about these things because depending that's why food is more than fuel, right? Because we, we come from, we all come from different cultures and belief systems and things that impact our choices. And, if, if we do become too dogmatic about this one approach, we're not listening.

We're not listening to other people's experiences. And that's where I think a lot of other issues can come up to even beyond food when we're not listening to the things that other people are about and what has happened to them. And I even think of specific examples And just in, in not hearing what people have been doing, like white rice, you know, can get villainized among certain people with certain approaches.

But in, in certain cultures, that's one of the, you know, primary foods that they eat all the time or lentils. Someone was saying to a friend the other day, well, the, the lectins and the lentils are going to kill you. And he's like, well, but that's what I've been eating my whole life. And my ancestors have been eating their whole lives.

And so it just. It can get confusing for people and when they yeah, just try to focus too much on being right versus understanding that maybe just maybe we don't know everything there is to know and that there are Multiple things that can be correct at the same time, even if it doesn't feel right for your body.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Yeah And I'm grateful, again, I have a unique perspective on this because I know the guys, like I know the face of vegan diets, like the top person in that, the carnivore diet, the same thing, these are my friends and colleagues, and all of them, and this is what I want to express, They all believe in service and helping people.

That's why they're so adamant about their diet framework. But can they both be wrong? Like lying that they're helping people with their diet framework?

KELSEY HEENAN: Well researched, smart people. It's, it's challenging to think about, right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Exactly. So the truth is they're, they're both right. And they're both wrong as well.

You know, they're going to see some benefits for certain people, but what you don't hear about is the people who don't get the results on that particular diet framework. Or get results temporarily, but then they change.

KELSEY HEENAN: Or even beyond physical results. How are people mentally, physically, and emotionally during these diet experiences?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, that part, that part. You know, there can be some deficiencies on any of these diet frameworks that tend to make us more agitated and inflammatory towards people who aren't doing the diet that we want. Like, that's a common thing you might see out there as well. Like, that's not normal to start to villainize humans.

And you know, in lieu of like, trying to save a chicken, and then you're like, so much vitriol, and you would gladly stab a human who's gonna eat a chicken. Mm hmm. Like, where's the balance here, you know? So, but again, All of these protocols have value and some of my closest friends and I've done this vegan protocol for five years.

Raw food, 100 percent raw food for three years in Missouri. You didn't know that. It was, it was something, but like that's, that's what kind of dedication.

KELSEY HEENAN: Yeah

SHAWN STEVENSON: Like and figure out, everything is figureoutable, you know, even in those conditions. That's why when I would come out here to LA, It was like, Oh my God, there's like raw food restaurants and all this stuff.

And it's just like, but I'm by myself. We're making food every day or are uncooking food every

day and also teaching classes and all the things. And, you know I felt wonderful for that like the first year and a half, but then I developed some deficiencies and because of my inquisitive nature, I was always fine.

Okay. Well, Let me find another food that could help maybe with my energy or with my cognitive performance or whatever. This is why I know about so many foods that are now popular today. I'm probably much more than people are aware of actually even still but you know, I would find okay Well, shi li ji, I'll try this out and then I would notice okay, I feel better for about a week but then that goes away or you know, then I do chlorella or AFA blue green algae.

Or ashwagandha, or, you know, the list goes on and on and on. I'm trying all these different things pouty arco and, you know, just all these different foods that humans have used for a long time, but none of them were really sustainable for me with the, with the results I was looking for. Because I'd always been a jump out of bed in the morning kind of person.

And now after a year and a half, even with my experimentation, and by the way, I would villainize people that gave up on the raw food diet, people who are the face, I would go to raw food events. Not in Missouri, of course, like Raw Spirit Fest, and I don't fit out from Ferguson. I definitely, like, it was a whole different vibe, but when one of the speakers there had said that, okay, now he's only 80 percent raw, I'm like, oh, and he'd been doing it for 20 years.

I'm like, you're not 100 percent anymore? Bro, you just, you just don't know. You just don't know what you're doing.

KELSEY HEENAN: Okay. So what was that change then for you? Because I, I was that way myself about when I was really, I mean, I developed an eating disorder and so that's a whole nother ballpark, right? But what, what changed your mind there?

I think there's something really powerful about being willing to change your mind when you learn new information. And I've changed my mind about many things. What was that for you with raw food?

SHAWN STEVENSON: There's two things. It was acknowledging what is, that this was not, something was not right. And also having a trusted advisor as well.

And for me, that was a guy named Daniel Vitalis. And I saw that he was incorporating raw milk and eggs. And I'm just like, bro, what, wait a minute. And I, you know, with that, I added eggs in. Now it's kind of like, a battery charge up experience. When I started eating eggs again, Oh my goodness. Like, and it would, that, that energy wasn't going away after a week, you know, it was like, Oh, this, my body was actually missing this.

That was the first part. But then also my wife getting pregnant with my youngest son and not wanting him to be an experiment and also adhering to her cravings because she was craving. Actually she was having something called pica.

KELSEY HEENAN: Okay, yeah,

SHAWN STEVENSON: where she was like really attracted to like soap.

KELSEY HEENAN: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And her sister experienced it as well which was like chalk, you know, and so she's deeply deficient in certain minerals and just like wanting that. You know, meat like, let me get your salt from this. And that we just eventually went to that farmer's market. I mentioned to the best possible, all the things, whatever. And, you know, it was a sadness. But man, she felt so much better. You know, her desire to eat soap had gone away and it was pretty wild. Like sometimes she would, she disappeared when we go to Whole Foods.

And I didn't know this till after my son was born that she'd be like going to the soap section. And this is, this actually happened. This is so crazy. And one day, and it made sense, I walked in on her in our bedroom, sitting on the edge of our bed with a bar of soap she was having an affair with this soap, you know, it's just like she was just sitting there smelling it.

She, I, she might have, I don't know how far it was gonna go.

KELSEY HEENAN: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But I thought, I didn't think about it too much at the time that she just was tired, just sat there on the edge of the bed, whatever, with the soap. But she was actually like, wanting to be alone. And you know dabble in that soap

KELSEY HEENAN: Those who aren't familiar with pica. Can you explain what that is?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah I mean this can be a desire to eat things that we don't associate with human food like chalk charcoal Soap things like that and it's like a subconscious desire to For certain things that are found in those things, right? So in particular certain know, some

micronutrients and it could be triggered by again a smell or it could be triggered by you kind of an experience or an accidental tryst with a thing, and But it's really a big underlying piece of this is deficiencies

KELSEY HEENAN: I think there's power in that being willing to Take a step back.

Like you were saying, unplug and listen to what your body's saying, paying attention to all of these things. Because just because that is working for one person doesn't mean maybe it can serve you in a period of time, but as things change, maybe you're experiencing symptoms or presentations of certain things and needing to make some adjustments based on what your body needs.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. That's the secret. That shouldn't be a secret, which is The ultimate guidance towards what food is best for you is listening to your body. But it's difficult to do that when we're like inundated with ultra processed foods, social media and all these things distracting us from what our body is telling us is best.

And also paying attention, being honest. That was ultimately what changed my diet framework was I had to get honest about the results I was seeing, what I was experiencing. That wasn't normal. That wasn't okay. That wasn't how I wanted to feel. Right.

KELSEY HEENAN: Right. Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And though it felt amazing initially, but that was like my ultimate bridge to no longer eating anything fake was that raw food protocol.

And I did it to the best of my ability. And you know, in my, in my practice, what I would do is again, if I'm into that thing, that's what you're going to be into. But everything changed in the birthing of The Model Health Show and all these books when I checked myself and I, and I started to pay attention to that person and I started to ask about their life, their needs.

Their ancestry, right? Like, again, where are you from? Like, where, where, where's your mother from your grandmother? You like, is there any Greek? Oh, you've got some lineage

over here in Iceland or whatever the case might be. Like, let's look at some of those traditional foods. Right. And start to incorporate those things, things that they enjoy and being able to find ways to upgrade things that, you know, they enjoy that might be a quote, bad food.

And also helping people to stop putting so much morality attachment to foods as well, like good and bad, just reframing things, what's good for you, right? And from there, but it was, to be honest, it was a lot of work. It's very hard. base everything into design programs based off of that one person. That's why I started the show as part of the reason I started the show was it was just like, this was not scalable for me to educate because now I'm only able to see three people, four people a day versus, you know, at a time when it was like eight to 10 and in that eight to 10 I was educating, you know, if somebody is coming in with type two diabetes, I would Reverse engineer basically show them how the disease works like here's your pancreas.

I had a diagram Here's your pancreas and your beta cells and da da da and I would see them light up like oh My god, like I had no idea that this was happening in my body. All they did was get a diagnosis and a drug Right, but not being able to do that at the scale. I was doing it. It felt like I felt like something was missing And I was speaking at an event and that's when a couple came up to me afterwards and they were like, you know we just started this podcast and this was like in 2011 and we are looking for somebody to be the face of it and They told me about what they were doing and they had all these like a million unique visitors to their site and all this stuff And I had like 10 to my site and I was like, oh cool.

I'll be happy to do it But in my head I was like, What the fuck is a podcast, you know? And but any, anyways, I started working with them. We did that show for a year and a half. It had hundreds of thousands of downloads. This is back like 2011, 2012, which was astronomical. But I, Was building their brand, right?

And I still had a certain pocket that I needed to be in. And that's when I you know, we amicably parted ways and I started The Model Health Show. And the cool thing was I got to like work out certain things. Cause that's what a lot of people are afraid of as well to get started is, you know, the inevitable growing pains of doing something new and becoming excellent at it.

And so right out of the gate, I knew what I was doing. I had my, I was in my power and my voice. And so it's crazy. Thousands of people every single month, thousands of people listen to episode one and start from there and listen all the way up for the past over 10 years of the show. It's I just got a message from somebody yesterday, they posted on a YouTube video that

they had just found out about me maybe two years ago, and they've listened to, they're up to episode 400 now.

Wow. Because they're just listening to it from start to finish, right? It's so amazing, man, but this speaks to, you know taking action to do something uncomfortable and understanding you're not going to be excellent at something when you first start, and that's okay. And you know, for me, the real connective tissue of this, of The Model Health Show, of the Smarter Family Cookbook is that everybody's invited.

It's inclusive. We've got a significant portion of our audience that are vegetarian, vegan, paleo, carnivore. Because I speak to all of that. because I have life experience and all of that. But also, you know, even in the cookbook, I very intentionally provided a burger for everyone. So we've got the boss burger, which is the quintessential epic grass fed burger, beef burger.

I've got the salmon burger for my pescatarian folks, being able to have a salmon burgers. It might, it's my favorite recipe right now.

KELSEY HEENAN: Oh, I'm going to try that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: My favorite one right now. Is so far it's fire. So good. And then. To get people away from this Insanely ultra processed veggie burger out there like the impossible burgers and all that stuff and not to again not to villainize them every now And then that's okay, but that's not real food.

And so we've got a veggie burger that is utilizing real food ingredients right and You know, there's there's so many other recipes like that that cater to you know If you want to make this a vegan version you know, the tortilla soup, for example, is another great example. You can add shredded chicken to it or not, but that tortilla soup is fire.

KELSEY HEENAN: So good.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, so

KELSEY HEENAN: that's, that's one of the things that I really appreciate and respect about you is you are respectful to everyone regardless. Shawn, I have a million other questions that I have for you specifically around like the podcast and your books and some of the business side of what you do, but I think we might need to do a 2.0.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Agree.

KELSEY HEENAN: Would that be okay?

SHAWN STEVENSON: That would be awesome.

Because I really, have so many things that I am dying to know, but I know that we are already over an hour. Let's schedule it. Okay. Because this is my first time having a dog on my lap during a podcast. And this is awesome.

KELSEY HEENAN: Well, she's clearly loving it very much. She's, asleep, I think so. Well, Shawn, this was so helpful. Please tell me about the books. I've read both of them, so I know about them, but please tell everyone else about eat smarter and the cookbook.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome. So yeah, I'm so grateful. Thank you. Even just being able to look at this. Like, I can't believe that I created this.

KELSEY HEENAN: You created these.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. I'm in awe of this every day. You know, again, coming from where I come from, this should not be possible, you know, from me to have books in Target and like, you know, bookstores in China and like, it's, it's, it's, it's amazing. My first book was Sleep Smarter, as an international bestseller translated into 23 different countries different languages.

And it, it really sparked this sleep wellness movement and sleep wellness related books have come after that, but traditionally I'd never done And I believe it's because of the practicality of it. And making a subject that might not seem very attractive, turning it into something sexy. And, you know, being again very practical, there's 21 clinically proven strategies for improving sleep quality in the book.

But, what that did was, as a nutritionist, that put me in a different stratosphere. So when I talk about food, my microphone is so much louder. And I got to write the book that I really wanted to write, which was Eat Smarter, and it came out at the end of 2020. It's USA Today national bestseller and it, it, it just, it changed the game.

It really did. And I'm so grateful. Like it was on the charts in the top 10 with like Matthew McConaughey and like Michelle Obama in this a book on food, you know, it was like, that's, that's crazy at a time when everybody is really focused on, on, you know, consume or consume with fear and disempowerment really that, you know, there's nothing that we can do to be well right now.

And the story is very different. And my, my mission is to help people to become more resilient because the next thing is coming, you know, whatever that might be, but to have people who

are mentally strong and resilient, especially under pressure. It's super important because what tends to happen is stress hits the fan and we devolve into very primitive approaches to things and we need a lot more love and connection.

But you know, as the data indicates in Eat Smarter you know, I looked at food through not just one lens of metabolic health, which I did a masterclass on that in the book and actually for the first time in book form, I walked people through how fat loss works. Where does fat go? Like, how does this process actually work?

And we dive into the epicaloric controllers, so things that control what calories do in your body. Because the calorie in calorie out that I was taught in my university education, that I paid for, paid good money, was wildly inadequate. And so, but also we look at how food impacts our cognitive performance, how food impacts our emotional stability and mood and emotional intelligence, and I highlight how even with prison inmates, Improving their nutrition and a couple of peer reviewed studies had more impressive results in reducing aggressive behavior and reducing Behave what they called behavioral offenses and violent offenses more so than any other intervention It was, it's insane.

It's crazy. Like some researchers that came across that actually repeated the study, you know, with a different set of prison inmates because they couldn't believe it because it works so much better than any other intervention. And so truly, you know, a lot of times we don't do well because we don't feel well.

And our ability to perspective take to metabolize stress has a lot to do with our, our nutrition. At the end of the day, I was so surprised at how many people, because the recipe section in Eat Smarter was so small, I was shocked, but that shouldn't have been because of social media and how many people were making recipes and posting them on social media.

And I was like, you know what, when it really boils down to it, it's about food. It's just about eating delicious food. And yeah. I started off, as I mentioned earlier, I was teaching classes. I was teaching food classes, like food preparation classes. And that's how I started speaking was because of that. And so I'm about that life when it comes to food and deliciousness.

And my stepfather was actually a chef. And so we always had a family of flavor, a family of creativity when it comes to food, even not having a lot of money. And so. You know, with all

this experience, and knowing that the bridge between I want to get well, and I want to eat healthy food, to unite those bridges, it has to be through deliciousness.

Not through, like, making the jump from, you know, McDonald's to wheatgrass shot. Like that jump, you might as well jump off the bridge. Like that is, that's too big of a bridge to try to cross. But what if we take some of our favorite foods and improve the quality and the ingredients like you mentioned the salmon burger in there, the, the sweet potato protein pancakes, the dark cherry frozen yogurt pops that are on the front cover, for example there's something that I grew up in, in the hood.

So we had the bomb pop man or the ice cream man. We'll come around. It's like a ding, ding, ding, like a bell or some music. And we'd be coming out of like all the nooks and crannies of the neighborhood going crazy. Ice cream man's coming. Try to get a dollar, try to find your mom. And we like our little sweet frozen treats.

But what if we have something that is deeply, deeply health affirmative? Like those cherries are used for specific reasons. The anthocyanins and cherries. I share a study in the book that they've been found to literally target fat cells and potentially shrink fat cells. And it's one of the densest sources of naturally occurring melatonin.

In the food kingdom. So all kinds of cool stuff like that. And of course the beauty of it too, right is all of these Nutrients that are in these foods, but if we just find a book like this where we know the ingredients are nutritious We don't have to think. Oh man. Okay. I haven't had a good source of copper today No, let's just get a variety of different foods Lots of different colors and textures that you have already outlined in a book like this.

And we can just eat and enjoy and know that we're being nourished.

SHAWN STEVENSON: If there's one book to get, it is the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook. It is the Consolidation of Eat Smarter is that that science is in there plus all the delicious food and also the entertainment value The beauty of the book itself.

I see this book is a staple in people's kitchen now Just like it stays in the kitchen. So and also we have some of the science around sleep wellness in particular You can have the fanciest mattress and blacked out curtains. But if you don't have the nutrients that you need to build sleep related hormones and neurotransmitters, you're going to struggle with your sleep.

And so we're addressing that in there as well. So it's a really special book is available everywhere that books are sold. Amazon has, because it really took off on Amazon, they

actually reduced the price. So people can save like 10 off the list price on Amazon right now. But of course, support your local bookstores.

We want to help keep them open. Yes. Independent bookstores, Barnes and Noble, all that good stuff. And Barnes and Noble online, you can get the book too. And, yeah, it's a really special book and, you know, just looking at it might make you hungry.

KELSEY HEENAN: I already am. And then, your podcast, The Model Health Show, they can find it in iTunes, Spotify, all of the places.

Any other places that people can find you that you want to share?

SHAWN STEVENSON: I think that's more than enough. Our plate is full.

KELSEY HEENAN: Great. I love it. Well, Shawn, thank you so much for coming. You are truly incredible.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thank you. It's been awesome. And again, this is my first podcast with a sleeping dog on my lap and it's such a pleasure. Thank you.

KELSEY HEENAN: We'll see you soon.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thank you so very much for tuning into this episode today. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this. And if you did, please share this out with your friends and family. Of course, you could share on social media. You can send this directly from the podcast app that you're listening to.

And a big shout out to Kelsey Heenan. Definitely check out her show, The First Hour, wherever you listen to your podcasts. And again, even during these very turbulent times, it gives us an opportunity to reflect. To prioritize and to set very clear intentions. And my intentions are staying true to providing more empowerment, more education, and more connection than we ever have this year and moving forward.

So please stay tuned. We've got some incredible, I'm talking about incredible new episodes coming your way. with some amazing guests and some very, very powerful masterclasses. So make sure to stay tuned, take care, have an amazing day, and I'll talk with you soon.

And for more after the show, make sure to head over to themodelhealthshow.com. That's where you can find all of the show notes. You can find transcriptions, and 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.