



**EPISODE 890**

# **What's REALLY Behind America's Health Crisis?**

**With Michael Beckwith**

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**SHAWN STEVENSON:** If you're looking for something to support your mind, body, and spirit today. I've got your back. Today, I've got a conversation with you that's absolutely brimming with insights, with wisdom, with experience, with tips, tools, and strategies to help every facet of your life. And I'm so grateful to share this with you because this conversation was hosted by one of my two greatest mentors in my 22 plus year career in health and fitness. There are two people that have stood out as my mentors, and one is my mother in love, my mother-in-law, Wambui Caberarei. All right? She was my first mentor when it comes to nutrition, but also when it comes to mental, emotional and spiritual wellness. She's the person who taught me how to meditate and directed me to my internal world because as many of us do, we live our lives so externally focused, and she really helped to empower me.

And the other person right around that time, I found out about the work of Dr. Michael Bernard Beckwith and his communication, his message really resonated with me. And it was years later that we actually met and we bumped into each other, speaking at the same event, and we've been close friends ever since. And he invited me back onto his number one hit podcast called Take Back Your Mind. And I'm so grateful because we got to talk about why personalized nutrition and why personalized medicine is the future of health. We got to talk about the truth about what's causing our epidemics of chronic disease. We covered how to utilize our family and community to transform our health. And we even covered some simple, practical ways to save money on healthy food.

And I know this intimately because when I transformed my health, when I started investing in healthy food, I was living in very challenging circumstances and just trying to get by. You know, so how did I procure healthy food? And again, support my health and investing in myself. We're gonna talk about that as well. And so, again, I'm very, very grateful to share this conversation with you today. And by the way, every time that Michael Beckwith and my other friends come over to my place. They go shopping, my pantry is filled to overflowing with all kinds of amazing foods and supplements and you know, and so oftentimes I have more than enough. And so I encourage my friends and family to go in there, take whatever they want, whatever is resonating.

And one of the things that I share with Michael Beckwith very often are elixirs, are time affirmed, science backed teas. And there's a reason why this has been a big part of his health practice as well. He's one of the healthiest, fittest, sharpest people that I've ever met, let alone in his age bracket. All right? And just the other day, we were at Agape Spiritual Center here in LA and he was giving his talk and all of a sudden he just started doing pushups. All right. That's not, that's not normal, right?

He did a bunch of lunches during his talk, just like as he was speaking, and it was so empowering. But one of the things that has been a big part of his life are specific teas, and there's so much science to affirm this. In fact, a study published just this last year found that people who regularly drink tea age slower than those who don't. And this is something that is so accessible. Many of us grow up with teas around us, right? But it might be this distorted version. I know that I grew up with like sweet tea, right? Lip and brisk tea. My mom sometimes would make sun tea, so she put a bunch of tea bags and put, you know, the water, whatever, and put it in the window seal and let the sun brew the tea, right?

Which is really nice. But then she puts, and I'm just gonna say the scientific term, a butt load of sugar into it, lemon, all that stuff, make it taste. Exceptionally like beyond good. And so there's different flavors and varieties of teas and tea exposures that many of us have. But the true essence of teas are so many wonderful time tested science pack teas like Rebus Tea, ginger tea, green tea, Earl Gray, the list goes on and on. But speaking specifically of anti-aging, a study published in the Journal Clinical Interventions and Aging took 59 overweight or mildly obese subjects to see if another powerful tea. This is actually a tea that I drink most often called ppu Air. Makes a notable difference on weight loss and the randomized double-blind placebo controlled trial had participants to either receive a placebo or ppu for this 20 week study period.

There were no other interventions noted. Nothing else was different for these test subjects. Just some of them got Pu'er tea. And here's what the researcher said at the end of the study, "consumption of ppu air was associated with statistically significant weight loss compared to placebo. Fat loss was seen for the arms, legs, and the hip and belly regions, unquote. The participants who received Pu'er lost more overall body fat, and what was especially

remarkable, especially in terms of anti-aging, was that they maintained their lean mass. They maintained their muscle mass. The weight they were losing was fat and not muscle. Again, the tea that I'm drinking most often is purer, but there's only one purer that I drink.

Only one company that I trust enough and that company is Pique life. Their purer is triple toxin screen for purity made through their patented cold extraction technology that makes it. As effective or better than what's seen in the study that we just covered. It's also wild harvested, so it's truly the best Pu'er on earth. Head over to [Pique life.com/model](https://PiqueLife.com/model) right now and you'll receive up to 20% off plus some limited time free bonuses, like an electric frother to mix your favorite beverages. That's [Pique life.com/model](https://PiqueLife.com/model). It's spelled P-I-Q-U-E-L-I-F e.com/model. Try their teas risk free with their 30 day money back guarantee. You'll either love the teas or you'll get a full refund. Again, go to [Pique life.com/model](https://PiqueLife.com/model) for up to 20% off. And now let's get to the special Spotify review of the week.

**SPOTIFY REVIEW:** Another Spotify review of the Week by Alexandra M. My God, your podcast gives me so much hope, motivation, and literally made me a better person. But this episode, man made me see all the painful loss of my husband being treated badly and taking advantage off of my situation even just makes me stronger and makes me able to overcome anything in my way as I already managed to survive impossible situations in health and soul pain.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's so powerful. Thank you so much for sharing that review. Sharing that comment over on Spotify, and this is something that is new and I highly encourage you to share your voice. Now you can leave comments, you can rate the show as well over on Spotify, and of course Apple Podcast as well. If you're listening on Apple Podcast, please take a moment and leave a review for the show. And again, you can leave a comment on YouTube, share your voice over on Spotify and the comments with each episode. An episode that was mentioned in that comment, by the way, was the episode that we did recently with the phenomenal bestselling author, coach, speaker, former professional athletes. Been through so much, so many insights, and he's just created an incredible life.

He's a really good friend as well. It's the one and only Bo Easton. Alright. So if you happen to miss that episode, definitely check it out. It's so powerful. But again, I appreciate you so much. Share your voice. Share your voice on Spotify, apple Podcast, YouTube, wherever you're tuning in, it really does mean a lot. And without further do, let's get to this very, very special episode where my good friend and mentor, Dr. Michael Beckwith, invited me onto his number one hit show. Take back your mind. Enjoy.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Peace and blessings everyone, and welcome to Take Back Your Mind. I'm the host Michael b Beckwith, and as you've become accustomed to seeing, I have wonderful guests on the program that in their own way have developed a genius in their particular area of their life to help you take back your mind. That is the mind oftentimes is curated by worry, doubt, fear, anxiousness, anxiety, polarization, the deep sense of separation that leads to poor choices, bad decision making. And so we want to take back our mind, come out of a victim consciousness and realize that, you know, when we expand our awareness.

About whatever it is we're talking about. We can make good choices for ourself. We're not gonna choose from fear. We're gonna choose from real knowledge, real transformational knowledge, transformational information. Today I have back with me again. He was my first guest, by the way, when I first began this number months ago here with Shawn, Shawn Stevenson. This is, this is more like family, you know? His wife and his sons we're cool like that. So welcome back.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oh man. It's good to be back. I'm glad you, I can't believe that I get to sit here with you still to this day.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** I don't know why you don't believe it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Well, I mean, it's just, it's such an honor. It's such an honor. I was listening to you. When I was in Ferguson, Missouri, didn't have two nickels to rub together. And you know, you've been such a guiding light, so this is really special.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Hey man, I feel the same about you. I mean, everywhere I go I tell people about you

The model health show. Certain people that I see out in the world, I say, man, you need to, you need to hook up with, with, with my man Shawn. He's got the information. And what I appreciate about your work, and this is what I tell folks, you know, you actually do the deep research. It's not anecdotal. Yeah. It's like you go in and have these peer reviewed research, Harvard, all these, these major universities. So, you know, I'll say something and I know I'm right.

Then I check in with Shawn, is this right? Yeah, yeah. He said, yeah man, because that Harvard Review 19 something, something, something. They, they did a peer review, da da da da. That's absolutely true. So, so when you hear Shawn speak, 'cause a lot of times you see a lot of things on the internet, people just saying things that may or may not be true. When you hear Shawn speak, it's generally, it's backed up by real science, not pseudoscience, but real science, real research. I, I always appreciate that about you, man.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Thank you. It's an honor. I mean, you know, this month is my 21st year working in health and fitness.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's, you know, it's so, it's so amazing. Like time has kind of flown by. Yeah. In many ways. But, you know, I started off into this field, working at my university gym was my first step.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I was working on my degree.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And studying biology and really being able to have this really, really cool place to experiment and to study. Because being at a university, you've got people from all over the world. And you can see these consistencies that cultures share, but then you can also see these differences and distinctions.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And trying to find those unifying pieces. But also eventually, I'm very grateful, and this is part of this, this new mission as well, is like helping people to cater to their own personality. And personalization. That's really the, the future of wellness and medicine. Because you're unique.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And we all have a literally a unique metabolic fingerprint, a unique microbial fingerprint.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so often we don't understand that we get to create our own microculture. We might exist in a larger culture scape.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Which right now our culture scape isn't doing very well. And just, actually this was just published last year by the CDC. They've determined that right now 60% of all American adults have at least one chronic disease.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** At least one.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** 40% have two or more. And it, it is still upwards.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Wait minute, 60% have at least one.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** At least one.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** 40% have more than one.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Exactly. Yeah.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** So basically we're, right now, basically we're saying that in this Western world, that touts itself as the number one in so many things. It's basically one of the sickest nations in the world. That's what you, that's what you just told me.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We're experiencing a paradox right now where we have all of this apparent innovation. And yet we're the sickest and most disconnected we've ever been. And you know, right now, and this is one of the interesting things about this, we know what the causes of these outcomes are but our attention keeps getting redirected to other things. And also there's so much infighting about minutiae. And what I mean by that is the Journal of the American Medical Association published this big analysis back in 2018, and they determined that poor diet is the number one cause of our epidemics of chronic disease. And by the way, when I said 60% have at least one chronic disease, that means the majority of our citizens are unwell.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Now, if you are, well, if you're healthy and disease free, you're not normal. That's, that's the state that we're living in right now, you know? And so we wanna strive to be weird, but also most, most importantly, we want to shift this. We wanna create that tipping point to normalize wellness again, because knowing that poor diet is the number one cause, why are we so focused on all these other things? And also not, it's not that these other things don't matter. Exercise, sleep quality.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yes. Yes.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And also we're gonna talk about what's controlling our diet today as well. But even within all of that, to understand that yes, we are dealing with this very sketchy situation right now, but there's so much opportunity to change.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And what I want to share for everybody, first and foremost, is that the reason that diet is so powerful and kind of my bridge even into this field at this level is that it's what's making up what we see when we see each other.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right, right, right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You know, it's making up all the tissues of our heart, of our brain, of our gastrointestinal track, you know, everything of our.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** You are what you eat essentially, for real.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You are what you eat, literally. Yeah. You know, you are what you eat, you are what you drink. Thank you. Are what you think. Of course. Yeah. This is why we're on this show right here.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right, right, right, right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And you know, you are what you breathe.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** As well, you know, I can go down the line. We don't wanna get caught in a silo. All these things matter. But there's something so remarkable about food is because we're taking something from the outside world and making it a part of our tissues.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's a very intimate, powerful thing. And so, you know, I'm really on a mission now to help shift, help give people the empowerment to shift the microculture 'cause the macro culture is not doing well.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But, and you've, you've heard this, we've said this a thousand times, we are products of our environment.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And we are, if we're unaware, because we're also creators of our environment.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so for years, I spent a lot of time and energy trying to target the macro environment. You know, getting people to don't do this, don't go to that place, you know?

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right, right, right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But in a in a graceful way. And encourage them to make behavior changes. But then I send them out when they leave my office to a culture that is fighting them in that change instead of helping to shift the culture, the microculture that they're going back to. So this is when I start to work with families.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yes.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's when I start to work with entire. Organizations. And that's when you see sustainable change because now the microculture makes the healthy behavior automatic.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Instead of making it hard.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** You talking about changing people's habits, you've said a lot. First of all, I wanna go back to this point about our uniqueness and that one size doesn't fit all. And so you really assisting people to discover what works for them. Like a diet for somebody may not be good for someone else based on their culture, based on where they live, based on how they've grown up. And so we don't want to just slap something on the wall and say, this works for everybody. Yeah. So people have to begin to discover as you're assisting them to do that. There's something that works for us uniquely and individually. It's powerful. Now, one of the things that you really talk about too, is how people eat, whether they're eating with their families, whether they're eating on the run. There's a whole social dynamic as well as the food we're eating. But also, how are we eating it? What environment are we eating the food in? This is also, you also bring this out in your book.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. This is the ultimate controller. And I, I searched around, I, I jumped around in the research and in my own practice as well, and teaching. Again, I've been in this field for 21 years, but the most important thing was staring me right in my face the entire time. And one of the studies that I highlight in this new book, it's a huge meta-analysis. This was published by the researchers at Brigham Young University. And meta-analysis is multiple studies, but this wasn't just a few, this was 148 studies.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** 148 studies.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And 300,000 study participants. This is a huge, big study.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Oh. This wasn't like 10 people.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This was a lot.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And they uncovered that having healthy social bonds having healthy relationships led to a 50% reduction in all cause mortality. So what that means is a 50% reduction in early death from everything. When people had healthy relationships, there was something remarkable. And they, the research indicated this was more determinant on our health outcomes than beating obesity. Than smoking, than anything else you can name. It was relationships. And I was just like, this is nuts. And within a short period of time of coming across that study, and when I was working on this book, now I get introduced to this professor of psychiatry at Harvard, who's the director of the longest running longitudinal study on human longevity. And longitudinal means they're following people. Right. For years.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** They're following them. And his research, he was the first, he, he was the fourth director to get this baton pass. He was like the anchor leg.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right. Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** In this, because he's been running for 80 years.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Their research indicates the number one determinant on how long you're going to live is the quality of your relationships.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** You know, I saw, I, I, I agree with that. I mean, obviously it's, it's real. I saw something about, I don't know if it's the same study, but they were, they were studying people who lived to be a hundred and more, and they were asking them, you know, about their life. And these people said something similar that every day they woke up and they felt connected and needed by their family, that they had a reason to wake up the next day. They had grandkids, they had great grandkids, they had family. They wanted to associate with them. They wanted to assist in some way, shape, form, they were needed as well. And they just kept living. There was no, I wanna get out of the body. You know, it was like, I love being here and I got this broad, beautiful family. This is what you're saying in substance

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's a sense of purpose.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's a sense of significance, right. And these are deep human needs. And now again, all of those, that's wonderful. We can just, we can have a sense of purpose. That's something else.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But there's something about relationships that really help to activate that in people. And so here's, here's where it all comes together. Our relationships are according to the research. And also if we pay attention to our lives, the biggest determining factor on our diet, on our exercise habits, on our spiritual practices, and community. Our relationships determine so much about our happiness, our success.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's the tip of the spear. That that's why it's so powerful in the, in the data, is that our relationships are affecting how we live our lives.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Deeply. And if we're honest, good relationships make life a lot better.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And when they're messed up?

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** The whole..

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Everything can go bad really quickly.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** The whole cascade of toxic chemicals start flowing through the temple.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** You know, you, you said something about, you know, when you went out into the macro, you know, don't do this, don't do that. But you realize you were throwing people out into a, a, a weird environment. You know, that's what happened for me to start Agape. I was doing workshops, you know, way before they were really popular years ago, standing room only. And I remember sitting in my living room one day and we were graduating another group of people and I felt a little bit of sadness. I didn't understand what the sadness was, and then it caught me. These people are gonna go back out into a society that doesn't understand these five to 10 weeks of training I just gave them.

They're gonna go right back out to the same families, the same churches, the same. And that began this movement to actually start a community that would actually support what they were learning in the classes. So they could actually be in a community of people who were on the, on the, on the edge of discovering who they are, developing the habits about growth, development, and unfoldment. It was very similar to what you're saying, you know, the, the, the, the larger environment wasn't supporting these te this is 40 years ago. This stuff was weird back then. Yeah. You know, now it's, you know, it's all over. But back then it was like, oh, it was weird. You know, what do you mean your thoughts create your reality? What does it mean law of attraction, all that stuff, you know. But it was, it's a very similar dynamic. Yeah. You know, now.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oh, let me, let me go ahead. Cut in here, because that is a, speaking to again. Now it's not that we need to have that. There are people who have that sheer will that will persevere in the most tumultuous environments.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** There are people that can do that.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Well, we're sitting here because of certain people who did that

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Exactly. Exactly. Now with that being said, it is incredibly difficult. It is so difficult that many people will forfeit. They will give up. They will give in, and that's the thing is we tend to, to bash those people for not being strong enough, for not having the will. When in reality, again, it's incredibly difficult. We put ourselves through so much suffering.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oftentimes when we're, again, we get these insights and then we're living in an environment that is fighting against it. And so it's not that it's impossible, it's just we can make it easier. We can make it normal to do these things and let's tie this in with food.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Absolutely.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** One of the things that we've been doing together as a species. Thousands of years is eating together.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But here's the thing. It's even deeper than that. When we were living in tribes, all of the process, it was a community process. Hunting, gathering, food preparation, eating together, celebration. We just got back from Hawaii for the, from the first time. And every time I think of Hawaii, by the way, I think of Magnum pi, my grandmother.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** She liked that. Huh?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** She did. That was her time. That's her one time. I have to go, I have to find something else to do. 'cause grandma was watching Magnum pi. But anyways, and we see this dramatization of something called a luau.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right, right, right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We sit back and watch it as a show. But that's how things were. As, as I'm watching, I'm just like, this is incredible.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** It was culture.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. It's the hunting and they bring in the food out. The food is prepared. We, we all dine together, celebrate dance sings, you know, communicate. Storytelling, all these things would happen under that umbrella. And over time, especially the last few decades, really the last century, our, our, our tribes have been more and more fractured because even when we start to have our neighborhoods, we'd still be near family, oftentimes. But now it's not just that we have our nuclear family, that's usually tends to be the small, you know, mother, father. You know, parents. Whatever those parents, construct are and children. And even within that, now we're even more divided in the household because of our technology.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so we're getting further and further away from each other. And my question was, was there something about eating together that was protective of our health that we're missing out on? And that's what led me to some of the craziest data. And it just made sense. Again, it's one of those things where, you know. But also, here's another thing about me with research is. I'm also looking for the thing that is counter to what I believe.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right. Right. You have to go through.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** 'cause I have to have a balanced perspective.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right, right, right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Because I have to, I have to be open to us eating in front of a screen for the rest of our lives, unlocking some kind of superpower.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right, right, right.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You know, who knows? But what the data indicates is, and this was a big analysis done by some researchers at Harvard, they found that families who eat together on a consistent basis, those family members consume significantly higher amounts of real foods, fruits and vegetables. And by nature, tremendously more essential nutrients that prevent diseases.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** And just eating together.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Just eating together, and significantly less ultra processed foods.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** That's important.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's some dangerous chemicals as well. And then we stretched that out because after I found that, I was like, how is this not up on billboards? Just eating together? And we'll talk about why, by the way, which is really important and also the barrier potentially. And so there's two studies. One was published in the Journal of Pediatrics that's looking at children. The other was published in the journal, JAMA Journal of the American Medical Association. These researchers found that, because I'm also always asking what's the minimum effective dose? How little can people do to get the benefit? Because I know, and you know this, yeah. People want change, but they don't want to change that much. Right, right.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** I like that They, they want, they want change, but they don't wanna change.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yes, exactly. Exactly. Want bring their old self to the new party. It's not gonna happen.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** I want these results, it's not gonna happen.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But I don't wanna change. Right.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** I wanna, I wanna get stronger, but I don't feel like working out. Just let me get the muscles up off. Right. Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You know? And so I was looking at again, what's that minimum effective dose? And these researchers uncovered that is three, three meals a week with people that you love. Friends and family.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Just three meals?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Three meals a week.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** In that seven day week?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Three meals a week out outta seven day week, three meals a week led to significantly reduced incidents of those children developing obesity. And disordered eating plummeted when kids were eating with their family three times a week. For parents, there was a great study looking at office workers from IBM and tracking their, getting home and having family dinner. And their work morale, productivity stress. They found that when they were able to make it home for family dinners work, morale stayed high, productivity stayed high.

And their stress levels stayed negligible. But as soon as things started cutting into their ability to have dinner with their families, stress went up where product productivity plummeted and also work morale went down. And so why does this matter, and I share everything that we're going over, by the way, is all in the eMAR Family Cookbook. And why does this matter? Another study published in JAMA and jama iss one of the most prestigious journals. Yeah. Especially coming from the US journal of the American Medical Association.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** They're not, they're not bought and sold at this point by anybody.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. They, they do a lot of good work. It's more balanced. It's not that everything is good that's published there. But they do a much better job. Them, the BMJ has

really done a great job. And so what they found was that 60 to 80% of all doctor visits today are for stress related diseases.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right. Right, right, right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Okay. So it's, and we're not educated about this because stress is, in many ways, it's invisible. It doesn't have calories. It doesn't have any, you know.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** It just pulls on your mind and your heart, your soul. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's because our thoughts create chemistry. You know, it alters our chemistry. And so getting home and having dinner with their family was creating this incredible buffer against stress. And the question is why? Let's dig into why.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Please.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, number one, when we are in the space with people that we care about, we are very good. We start basically producing a chemical cocktail of good stuff. And one of the main things being oxytocin, right. So oxytocin starts getting produced and all oxytocin is, it's got a couple of nicknames. One of them is the love hormone.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Absolutely.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And it's one of the few hormones that we've identified that literally counteracts the activity of cortisol. Right. This glorified stress hormone, which cortisol isn't bad. Right. You need cortisol and get up and go. But when it's running the show that, that's when it can be a problematic. And for a lot of people, they can go zero to a hundred real quick. Right. But they're very challenged and going from a hundred to zero.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oxytocin helps to switch over from that fight or flight sympathetic, go, go, go to the parasympathetic rest and digest, nervous system. And that's all, again, when we are able to have this dinner table as a unifier. It doesn't have to be dinner, by the way. Right.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** It could be lunch.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Any, any meals. But it's a unifier. So that's number one. It's helping us to switch over to the parasympathetic nervous system. It's, it's like magical in doing that. And it's because it's an epigenetic controller. And so that's number one. Break that down though. I know what epigenetics mean, but when you say it's an epigenetic controller, what you saying? Absolutely. So of course I know, you know Bruce Lipton.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah. That's my boy. And, we both know him very well.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. It's been a great, great mentor. And, you know, I, I have these wonderful conversations with him and he's always directed me back to the mind. Even, because there's entire fields now of nutrigenomics. Nutrigenetics. Looking at how food alters our, our gene expression.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right, right, right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But he's always like, mind's first.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Mind's first.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Mind's first.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Everything else is second. Absolutely.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So what we know today, which in my university education we were taught, you know, it's DNA to RNA to protein. Our genes are controlling what's getting printed. That's the end of the story.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's what's..

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** You're, you're basically dancing to your genes. That's it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Your genes control your life.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** That's the old science.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Today, we know, and there's a wonderful study that was published recently is another big meta-analysis, looking at many of the major killers in the United States, and they found that the ba basically the title, title of the study, and if we're watching on the video, maybe we could put the study up for people to see. Is that genes are not the major causative factor of our disease epidemics. Alright. It's something else. And it's epigenetics. Which epigenetics are above genetic control. So it's kinda like our epidermis. Right? It's the, it's the above epidermis. And so our, our epigenome or epigenetics are determining how our genes are getting expressed.

This is what makes us so different because we might have collectively 20,000 genes we're sharing as a species. Bananas can have more so when they did the, you know, the human genome project, they're like, we're gonna find, we're gonna, we've got a million genes, I'm sure. No, no, no. What's different about us is all the variation in how things can get expressed. That's what makes us so unique and so special as a species. Now let me add this little bit tidbit in here that Bruce probably didn't have for you yet, which is now we understand that most of the genes that we're carrying, if we go gene for gene, most of our genes are bacterial. Uppers of about 99% of our genes that we're carrying are bacterial genes.

And now we're looking at the interface between our bacteria genes and our genes. Right. And now again, it's just like creating even more variety and diversity in our outcomes. Because one of the things Bruce shared with me was, you know, what we label to be diseases, we don't have genes that code for diseases. There are very, well, let me put it like this.

There are very, very few true genetic defects. Most of the time, these alterations, when we see an outcome, like for instance, manifestation of type two diabetes. It's an alteration. It's not the gene made this.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right. Right, right, right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's an alteration.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** We're not wired for that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Exactly. We're not wired for that. It's, it's an adaptation that the body is making under unideal circumstances to keep you alive.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** That's like arthritis too. Same thing. It's, it's, it's, it's a protection against something trying to get in your system. So it would create a buffer that we call a disease.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. And we get mad at the symptom. Right. But we don't understand that our body is making this adaptation to protect us in some way and there's gonna be a hierarchy. And also because of our unique gene makeup and how things are getting red, it's gonna have to be a different expression. There are no two people that have the same arthritis. There are no two people that have the same cancer, diabetes, same cancer.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right, right, right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Everything is unique, but we have this blanket system. We come in like, was that Linus in the peanuts with the blanket? We come in with this dirty blanket.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right, right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And we throw it over you and give you this label and now this is your identity. You're a diabetic and there's nothing you can do about it. This is who you are.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Take medicine the rest of your life.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. But now we know, of course, there's so much, and under most importantly, of course, like removing the cause, let's address the root cause of this dysfunction. And that's really even going back to when I was advocating for behavior change with people. When I was, you know, doing my clinical work. That's kind of like treating the symptom in many ways, I'm not addressing the root cause, which is the culture. And so to tie all this together so that switchover, we've got parasympathetic activation when we're around each other, we've got oxytocin.

Being this kind of dominant hormone in other chemistry as well. Deactivation of things like cortisol, adrenaline. But also one of the reasons that, that this is so effective is that simply knowing today we got all this stuff going on, that we're having family dinner on Monday and Wednesdays. It, it incites this awareness that, that's coming. And also it incites planning. So we're naturally going to start to, because when we're thinking family dinner, we're gonna have a construction in our mind. It's gonna even unconsciously to make a, an actual meal. Now, here's the thing too, about this project and this work, we gotta have grace with ourselves as well. But I do want to advocate for people today. Pick those three days and, and schedule it. Because we schedule things that are far less important. This is so vital as a protection for your kids, for yourself.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** That's beautiful. Tell, tell them that because I think that's, that's powerful.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Yeah.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** That's, that's, yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You know, when I would ask it used.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** That's how it used to be back in the day. I mean, when I, when I came home from school, you know, I knew dinner mom was gonna have dinner. We were all gonna sit around the table. I can see my father sitting there, my mother's sitting there, my brother's over there, and I, I can see it right now. That was every night. You know, then on weekends we

may have done something a little different. Yeah. But it was like, what's for dinner mom? You know?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, yeah. And this is the other beautiful part about this you just said exactly, I can see. This is what is so powerful about it, is that you can see your loved ones, you can see your children. And this is an opportunity to get some real face time. Right?

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** It's a real face time.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Real face time because a lot of our communication is physical. A lot of our communication is nonverbal. And so we can pick up subtleties with our kids to find out their state, to find out what they might be struggling with. We can't see it. If we're not paying attention. And that dinner table being a unifier, we get to actually be present and to catch things early. Plus being able to offload ourselves to be able to let go of some of the stressors by just speaking about things tends to release. And so also I've integrated this into our family culture.

With myself because in, you know, a lot of people grew up like this, but it wasn't, there wasn't really a soft moment with the men in my life. Right. And so my, my sons can tend to pick up that nothing hurts me. Right. That I'm Superman.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right, right, right, right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Like, I'm good. Dad's good.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so having it where we can go through, go around the table as you, we've had many meals together.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right. That's right.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We'll go around and share, you know, what we're grateful for. But also sometimes we go around the, the table and share what we failed at today. What did you struggle with today? Everybody go ahead. You know, we'll go around and we'll share. And so they get to hear, oh, you, you struggle with something.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right, right, right. You right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so it's like opening up a new door of compassion.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** That's so true. That's so true.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Of empathy. And these things get embedded and they carry on to their family because that's what culture really is, by the way, is to find that culture is the shared values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that are passed from one generation to the next.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah. You're bringing up a lot of memory. 'cause I can remember, obviously sitting at the dinner table with my dad and mom and my dad would teach us things like, don't believe everything you read in the newspaper. We got that at the dinner table 'cause my brother would say something sometimes and my father would say, well, how do you know that's true? And my brother would say, well, I read about it. He says, how do you know that's an opinion or a fact? So he would break that down to us. That's before the internet. Before the internet. Now we really have to do it.

Yeah. You know, and, and it was something else that he did. Uh, oh. I remember one other time I was, I was a little kid and we asked my father something and he said, I don't know. That was a shock to me as a little kid. Dad doesn't know what. But it is like what you were saying, the vulnerability at the, around the dinner.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Humanize.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah. He says, I, I, I don't know the answer to that. You know, when, when, if you find out, please let me know. Yeah. That kind of empowered me, and that's okay. You know, like, dad doesn't know this. I'm gonna find out the answer to this. Yeah. You know?

Yeah. So, so you also deal within this book, like Smarter Strategies for Shopping. You go into that as well.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Mm-hmm.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** You know, that's, that's break that down a little bit because people think they need to be like, have a whole lot of money to get what you need. Yeah. And sometimes it's not even about that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You know, as you know, I made this transformation. I was living in poverty in Ferguson. I grew up in poverty. And I always like to caveat poverty in the United States is different from other places in the world. Right. Because you still probably have a tv. Right. We had a video game system. We might get it a year later. It wasn't his Christmas, but next Christmas.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Even the shoes might be a year later too. You know?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's right. Yeah. Oh, I, I never, I didn't even know what Jordan's were. Yeah. I didn't know we was at Payless. And I had, but I was pumped to get these particular, you know, but, and we, we got food from charities, literally, you know, there's this place called the Hosea House. That we would get charity, you know, food from charities. I would go on charity trips. You know, for Christmas they would give us gifts. You know, we oftentimes, mom, you know, we didn't, couldn't afford gifts. Right. And, but also, of course, government assistance, wic, and. And food stamps and all the, like, that's, that's the reality that I was in. And but again, even with poverty, we, we were on the bus a lot, that kind of stuff. But my mom was getting cars from this place, this true story called Okay, junk cars.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Okay. Junk cars.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. And she kept getting a Ford Escort, like whenever they get one in this one break down, she get her, she re-up on the escort. I guess it was escorting to the next one. But, you know, so this, these are the conditions that I grew up in.

And with all of that said, most of the food that we were getting was ultra processed food. All right. And we know that that's the majority of money that's going out with government assistance today is for ultra processed foods. And this is the culture we're existing in right now, which is 60% of the average adult diet in the United States, according to the BMJ is ultra processed foods. Alright, so this is not.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** It's not food, real food actually.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Processing food is something humans been doing forever cooking. It is a process. Pressing the oil out of olives is a process. Right. All right. We're talking about ultra processed foods where we have a field of wheat that somehow becomes a bowl of fruity pebbles. Right. It's so disconnected from anything real, not to mention all of the synthetic ingredients, food dyes, all this synthetic chemistry, insecticides and pesticides, all this stuff, and so that's ultra processed foods.

That was the majority of my diet growing up because it's worse for kids. This is the first book publishing this new study. I'm honored to say it, but this is a call to action too. And looking at the diet of children in the United States. This was published in JAMA as well. They looked at US Children's Food Intake for about 20 years. Kids two to 19. They found that the average child in the United States back in 1999, their diet was 61% ultra processed foods. By 2018, it was almost 70% ultra processed food. We're making our tissues, our kids' tissues out of fake foods.

So I'm saying all this to say that growing up in that environment, I'm surrounded by ultra processed foods. That's all I'm aware of. That's part of this is awareness, because once I knew better, I could do better. Absolutely. And accessibility, that's another one of the objections that people would have. You know, who oftentimes don't come from where I come from saying, well, you, you, you have access or you know, most people don't, aren't privileged to be able to have dinner with their families. Or to be, to be able to afford healthier food. Let me tell you how I did it, because I did it.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yes. So, without being rich.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oh man. Far from it. Yeah.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Far from it. Some, some of the many times I'd be at the cash register, like, do I have enough? I hope this goes through, you know, I'm about, I'm ready to, like you put, put, put that back, you know, whatever. And so a couple of things, we are, so first of all, I'm talking with you, so I gotta talk the real.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Come on.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We're so powerful. We are. We are. We are far more powerful than we give ourselves credit for.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Absolutely.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And even if we know, we forget.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right. And so it's that practicing this and understanding there is no, there isn't any barrier that can stop you, but you truly.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** That's true. That's begins with the mind.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yes. And so making that decision to, like for me, I made the it a mandate. I eat the best food ever. That's my goal. I eat the best food ever. And even though I didn't have very much money. Really incredible things started to happen by me making a decision to get well. Living in Ferguson surrounded by all of this, you know, volatility. And, you know, when I walk out my apartment complex, it's a liquor store right there. You know, foods, you know, shelves line with older, processed foods, every fast food that you can name around me. Suddenly when I make this decision, I find out four years. Four years there's been a farmer's market five minutes away.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** I had the same experience.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** In the good, the "good part" of Ferguson. Right, right next to the police station, which, you know what I'm saying? I wasn't trying.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** It's quite interesting. You didn't, you didn't wanna get too close to that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, but that was there, and now I'm paying sometimes half of the amount that I'd be paying at a place like Whole Foods. And by the way, I'm from St. Louis.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right, right, right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This year, again, it's the highest murder rate in the United States. Alright. This is a big city. I'm, I'm trying to reference, it's a big city and there's also a lot of volatility. And I come from the center of that, right. And understanding how big the city is. And this true story, there was one whole foods in this entire big city and here in LA you could throw a rock any direction and hit a Whole Foods. There's a few of them. It's, it's more excessive.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Eron Whole Foods. You know, you name Trader Joe's.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You know, not to mention all the mom and pop ones, you know, but this just wasn't something that was around. So I had to go outside my environment to get to that place. But I didn't know Whole Foods existed until I made the decision.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** That opened you up? That opened. That's what happened to me. I was, I was mean. I, and I was driving down the street. I was decided I'm going to eat healthy food, and all of a sudden I see this pink building on Crenshaw Boulevard. I said, what's that? A pull in? It was Lindbergh's. Have you ever heard of Lindbergh's? Okay. It was one of the first nutritional health food years ago. We're talking back the early seventies. So I walked in there and I, and I saw all these vitamins and all these different kind of wonderful food, you know, supplements. And I said this, how long have you guys been? And they said, 20 years. I said, I've been driving down that street. Well, you know, when I was, before I could drive. I was taking

the bus. Yeah. That had been there 20 years. I'd never even seen it in it's pink, big pink building. I never even noticed it. I noticed Fat Burger.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. For sure.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** You know what I mean? The double chili cheese with bacon on top. But I never noticed this place until, like you said, I made a choice. And the decision that I was going to eat better and all of a sudden I noticed it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Our focus depends on our filter.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Absolutely.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We see what we filter for. And so there was one Wild Oats as well, which has since been bought up by Whole Foods, but that was my first time seeing a health, a store that was dedicated to health. And it was a friend of mine, I'd known her for maybe three years. I see her off and on for years. But now this was in like a week and a half of me making this decision to get well. She takes me to wild oats, right? Like, I didn't know where we was going, but we ended up there. And I walk into this place and I'm just like, what is this? They got grass, you know, you know, wheat grass sitting on the counter. I'm like, why is there grass in here? You know? And but I went right to the, to the reference section. You know, they had these great books and I saw all of these like, published studies on at the time, because I had really low bone density. I broke my hip as, you know, at track practice.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right, right, right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And I had this.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** You were your own Guinea pig.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** In terms of nutrition Yeah. And supplementation.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. And I had this arthritic condition of my spine, essentially, degenerative disc disease, which was so severe that the physician when I was 20 said I had the spine of an 80-year-old at the time. Which, that's even a disrespect, by the way.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** For 80 year olds.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Because Right. Exactly. There's some 80 year olds who are killing it. Right. You know, and, but basically my discs were so degenerated that you couldn't see the light shine through them on the MRI. And also, two of them were herniated. And so, but let me just jump to the end of that, which was, after making this decision to get well, nine months later and getting a scan done, those two herniations had healed on their own. And the disc had regenerated. So now I could see the light shining through it. And really at that point, I had already transformed my health so much, but I went back for that affirmation from the same system. Prove to yourself.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I remember the, the doctor, he was looking at it with me. He was like, whatever you're doing, keep doing it. Why are you asking me about like, like, because I told him, I was like, you know, I really focused on changing what I was eating and exercising. He, it just like flew over his head.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah. That, that was not the model he, he had come from.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so, you know, but to hammer these points down with how do we save money, number one, grocery shopping.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah. Yeah. What's, what's smart grocery shopping?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, let's, first and foremost, if we can get access to a farmer's market, just even go into Dr. Google looking in your local area. Farmers markets.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Dr. Google.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You know, this is opportunity to find foods that are oftentimes less expensive, much higher quality. And the nutrient density also helps to address, it's called the ARN in our brain. Appetite regulating network. And so we're more satisfied and we're not eating a lot of other stuff. And so we're actually getting more from the food that we're eating. So that's number one. If we can access a farmer's market, they're wonderful CSAs. Right.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** CSA?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So this is like community gardens. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. They're going to give you, but what the, the thing with the CSAs are you don't get to necessarily pick what they give you. Basically get a box of variety of fruits and vegetables and things like that delivered to your house or you pick it up. But you could save a ton of money. You're just Googling CSAs, you know, food in your area. But another thing was at the grocery store itself. So when I go to Whole Foods, which unfortunately many of those foods are more expensive. And we'll talk about wine just a second, what I would do is I would start to look for those yellow signs, whatever's on sale is what I'm going to eat. All right? Mm-hmm. So I would use that and then also stock up. Yeah. You know, so if you know avocados were on sale, I'd stock up. And the question is like, what do you do? 'cause avocados are, they got an attitude problem sometimes, right?

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah. They want go bad on you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** They can go from delicious or not, not ripe at all to like that, you know, brown to zombie status really quickly. And so here's a couple of real quick strategies with avocados, which I feel like I've mastered. So right before it gets ripe, or even when they get ripe and you're just like, what am I gonna do with these, put in the fridge? It will slow that process down by about three days. And another option that we can do, especially when you've got a bunch that are ripe at the same time. You can cut 'em up and freeze 'em. Open, cut 'em up, put 'em in the chunks, put 'em in the freezer. You can make smoothies and things like that with those avocados.



**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** That's exactly what I do. I, I, that's exactly my strategy. I'll, especially if they're on sale. I'll buy a few, keep some of 'em out. Soon as they start to get a little soft, they go in the refrigerator. I freeze the rest. That's my smoothie deal. I got my avocado, I got my blueberries, I got, whatever of the fruit I wanna put in there, and then my super food greens and my protein powder. I'm good. That's what I had before I came here to see you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** No doubt. You know, it's amazing. You know, we picked these things up along the way, but so many times I had to suffer. I'm taking my avocados from the counter to the trash. Like I spent all this money. Same thing with the people get the spring mix, you know? Before you know it, you're this kind of, you know, aspirational purchases. Right, and we end up throwing food away, food away. So I shared a bunch of strategies like that in the book by the way.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** This is Eat Smart. Let me just say this. I want you to, I want you to get this book. Shawn Stevenson has Eat Smarter Family Cookbook, but you know, I've gone through it. It's more than just a cookbook. It's a cookbook. It's a beautiful cookbook, but he's got all kinds of information. The stuff we're talking about, it's all in his book. He's got studies, research, he's got all kinds of ways by which you can become a better you by eating smarter. So what you're hearing us talk about, it's in the book, forget the book. And, and, you have this, but it's, it's, this also is a compendium to another book.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yes. So I'm so honored to, to say this. It again, just even again, coming from where I come from Yeah. When each smarter came out as the number one new release in the United States of all books. And, it ended up being a, you know, USA today national bestseller, all the good things, but the mission was not done. You know, job not finished.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And what I was most surprised about, because there is a section that has, you know, different recipes, but it was more so it's a big idea book. An education book. I was shocked at how many people were sharing the meals, like cooking the food and making it, and pub posting their, their food pictures and videos and things like that. I'm like, I, I put

5% of my energy into that part. But because we live in this visual culture, right, that's what people, and also there's something so intimate about eating about. That's cool. Learning this stuff. But when you eat something, you have this experience. And so the last part I want to make sure that we emphasize is why. These foods are more expensive, please. Yeah, you were gonna break that down, okay? So the number one reason why I could go to, you know, when I was living at Ferguson, go to Jack in the Box, get two for 99 cent tacos.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** They could still do that now, man. You know, I don't, I don't know what the, what the, I, I haven't been there in year.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Well, I, I don't know what the game is out there with.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** But in the box, they make it very inexpensive for all those places. I, I used to call it, back in the day. I would call it Death row. That was the real death row. All those past food places. Like Up Sugar Night. Yeah. Sugar Night. I said, I remember one guy came running up to me and saying, don't say that you have a member of Agape that owns McDonald's. Don't. I said, can't help it. It is what it is.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's what it is.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Know I can't help it. You know, it's, it's death, death row. You know, the pharmaceutical companies are like, well, you know, 'cause you, you had talked about how sick we are. They already know the diseases that we're gonna have 5, 10, 15, 20 years from now. They've already got the pharmaceutical remedy. They already know. Yeah. You know, so we don't have to play into that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** They're counting on it.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah, they're counting on it. You know, keep eating your sugar pops and all that stuff. We got you. We waiting. Go ahead.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And, you know, that's another thing with that system, it's designed to create repeat customers. Not get, well, yeah. Not remove the cause. but. you know. making

basically factory farming humans. And so the, the number one reason why, you know, you get these two for \$2 cheeseburgers, two for nine, 9 cent tacos. Those products are very cost intensive to make.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** There's a lot of different ingredients. There's a lot of processing. The packaging, the marketing, and avocado, literally, I went for a walk. I went for a walk. California is different. There's food falling off the trees. All right? It's just, I'm just walking. It's just like, damn, it's all these oranges, like right. This is crazy.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** We used to go pick 'em up in the valley back in the day.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Listen that, but I'm saying it literally falls off the tree, right? There is none of that work is involved. Why is that \$3 for that avocado and. I can get six tacos, right? For that same amount. Right. What is a family going to do? My mother would go and buy those tacos, to quote, fill up her kids. She's doing that because it's cheap, right? It's quick, obviously tasty, you know, designed that way by food scientists and the marketing. Put that right in our face. Why? The question is, why is it so inexpensive? It's because of government subsidies.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** That was gonna Yeah, absolutely. Break it down, brother.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So what we're looking at is a situation where we have nearly \$200 billion. I shared one of these studies in my, in my earlier book, and nearly \$200 billion just in a recent like 20 year time span in the us. 200 billion was put into government subsidies for foods that largely end up coming through the drive through window. That end up in ultra processing.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** We're paying for that with our taxpayer money. Right. We're not, when I say stuff, we're not even eating. Yeah. We're paying for that to be cheap. That wheat or that soy or whatever it is that they're growing, we're paying for that. And then the fast food companies are benefiting financially from my taxpayer dollars.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** It, it's, it's a, it's an interesting business model.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. You just said it because also whenever we say government, that means us. That means our, our money.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** My money is taken outta my check.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Sent to do that.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And I also shared this analysis where they were looking at people who are consuming the most government subsidized foods and what most of those being genetically modified dwarf wheat.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Corn, which is getting used in all manner. Again, this can manifest into funions or, you know, captain Crunch, whatever the case might be. And obviously a big sweetener. Huge sweetener industry.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Corn syrup. Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Soy canola, the list goes on and on, but basically foods that are used to make ultra processed foods. And they were looking at, and this was published in JAMA as well. Shout out to Journal of the American Medical Association. They're looking at consumption of government subsidized foods, and they found that people who had the highest intake of government subsidized foods had about a 30% greater incidence of being obese, higher rates of inflammatory biomarkers. Things like c-reactive protein that are leaning towards, you're gonna have a cardiovascular event. All of these very, very troubling and disturbing

terrible health outcomes were happening when people were eating government subsidized food. So literally we were paying for the problem.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We're funding sickness. And that's the culture that we're existing in.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right, right. Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Now, and so just to put a cherry on top of some strategies with shopping, so we mentioned farmer's markets, CSAs. Shopping, paying attention to what's on sale and stocking up on certain things based on that. And another thing, and this is kind of just a practical thing, is minimizing food waste. Which we talked about a little bit. You'd be shocked about 40% of all food is wasted. It's a huge global problem. We could feed everybody in the world.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Oh, absolutely. You could feed everybody with that. You can also feed everybody with the amount of food that is being stored, not even being lit out onto the market, because that would lower the price and then thrown away. I mean, there are people with that don't have any food that could eat that food, but we keep it off the market. So that we keep the price up. So this, this, we live in an interesting world.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Yeah. So, and the, again, these are just a few of the practical things that are shared in the book because we also talk about how to transform your kitchen culture to make all this more fun and inviting. Earlier when you shared that you had that moment of sadness. When you, prior to Agape being founded because you knew, I, I immediately thought about this moment of sadness in writing this book. When I was thinking about my youngest son in particular, when he used to come, you know, man, it's crazy. It's tough. He used to come into the kitchen and, you know, I'm kind of full steam ahead.

A lot of times, again, because we are busy. He's got school in the morning. I would just, and he would come into the kitchen and ask if he could help, if he could help, and how many times I told him, not today, but not today. And kind of send him on his way. And I was missing on

those opportunities. And thankfully I caught myself, you know, this is a couple years ago. Now, Braden can come on in, he can cook, he can cook himself. Right. And he's, he's just turned 12. And, I also, you know, all of my kids and even my parents, wonderful cooks we're big time foodies.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** I know. I've been to the house.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You know, I, you know how we do.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Your wife makes a broccoli. That's just ridiculous. We talk about..

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Even making broccoli taste.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** She makes it taste like it's a, that's, I don't even know how to describe it. We'd be talking about Ann's broccoli.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. And of course my, my mother-in-law, and kenya food and.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Oh yeah. That's great.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** All the things.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** When she coming back in town?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** For the holidays are coming up. She'll be here. We're gonna fly her in for sure. You know, that's her love language too. Yeah. But, you know, this is another thing. How do we, how do we equip our children with these valuable life skills that another sobering stat in the book is how. The capacity to be able to cook food for oneself in the most recent generations. It's on the endangered species list. A lot of kids can't cook for themselves.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah. You, you, you're bringing up something. Two, two things Before we, we go one a few months ago, I mean, going back to cooking together, I wanted to have, where did I want to have some potato soup, a whole lot of vegetables in it, so I started

putting it together. All of a sudden my daughter comes in and she starts helping. My son comes over, he starts throwing out the kitchen. Then my grandson comes in and all four of us are in the kitchen basically cooking this meal. And then we did it a few more times. It was like, it was like their mother, my, my cousin's mother had passed over.

So there was like, it was like a, a little sadness in the house, you know? And, but we started cooking and it created whole new memories of us cooking together. Yeah. And it became a part of this dynamic. Now my grandson's often at Howard University. He's not there, the house right now, but I just remember exactly what you're saying. It just became a dynamic in the kitchen. I didn't ask him to help. I was ready. I was gonna do it all. My daughter comes cutting up the potatoes, she starts putting the spices in the thing. My son's coming in. It was just like a good moment for me. You know, and, and it was like, wow, this is a beautiful memory. You know, the the other thing is, I know you have something in your book about what they're cooking on, what kind of pots and pans or they're cooking the food on 'cause you might be doing good nutritional food, but you might be putting some toxicity in the food.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Perfluorooctanoic acid, that's one of the compounds. Banned recently is in Teflon. And I remember, you know, the non-stick cookware was a vibe. You know, it's what everybody had and it makes things easier in many aspects. But little did we know that we were poisoning our population. And again, this chemical is banned, right? It's banned. It's been banned for about 10 years. But even when most people have their blood tested, they're still finding it in their blood.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** It's not, it's not eliminated.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** A decade later, it's still, because it's in this category of forever chemicals.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And what specifically why it was pulled is that it was found to be a notable renal carcinogen, meaning it causes kidney cancer.

All right. And this, we're, we're literally cooking this and we're definitely, we're absorbing it into our bodies. And so the thing is this, this is still, these products, even though that chemical's taken out, there are many other unsavory compounds. And these companies are gonna just keep selling their stuff until they're forced to change. And oftentimes it's decades later.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** And they don't even use it themselves. Many times. The people that are producing it. Yeah, especially if they know.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Especially if they know, but. So we talk about what are some higher quality options. And also, by the way, with all of this, we're operating with some grace here because I didn't change all this stuff overnight. Just encouraging a couple of swaps here or there. You don't have to change at all your pots and pans, maybe just get one, you know, if you don't have one a really good cast iron skillet that's well seasoned. And also, of course, like some people, even that industry with Teflon framing that that's bad for you. Because you're gonna get some iron. Right From the cast iron skillet. It is negligible compared to what you're getting in the Teflon and all those cast iron way here. It's not even close. It's not even close. And of course, cooking, traditionally, my, my mother-in-law, she cooks with a lot of stainless steel cookware, which is, I, it's kind of hard to do. Mm-hmm. But she's figured out how, because it's all, it's like a dance, being able to use these things.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** The oil and the, you know.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. And also there's great ceramic options. As well. There's many different, is that what you use? Ceramic? What do you use in your household? It just depends. It depends on what you're cooking. It depends on the dish. And so, but just sharing.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Is any of that in here?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's all in there. It's all in. It's all in there.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** It's all in here.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But most importantly, rev, I gotta share this because to tie all this together, my biggest struggle, you know, I didn't know at the time, even when we didn't have much to eat, had my family known that eating together would provide some protection, which all of us had some kind of disease or dysfunction. All of us, even the children. Me and my brother were in and outta the hospital with asthma. My sister had terrible eczema. Skins just broken out all over. Constantly had to wear this cream. Like every day. You know, my mother, obesity, diabetes, my, my stepfather, obesity, addiction. You know?

But we're all trying to get by living in this environment. And sometimes when we didn't have food to eat, there was this one moment, it's one of my most core. Experiences like you just said, like that was healing for you. You know, when your family came into the kitchen together. But I remember this day he was home from work 'cause he worked the late shift as executive chef at this fancy restaurant, ironically.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** This is your stepdad?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. And, but we didn't have much food at our house a lot of times, but he could cook. It was amazing. And this time, you know, we're opening, this was a, not a uncommon day, but you open the cabinets, there's nothing there. You're looking at a bunch of nothing. Like, there's like tomato sauce. And then in the, in the refrigerator there's like some milk and government cheese. You know, that block of cheese, if you don't know about government cheese, you, you can't understand government cheese. But it tasted good actually, but it just didn't melt very well.

And then we had some Texas toast, which was something maybe we got from the WIC program, but in the freezer there was some deer sausage that my grandfather had hunted and sent. And I wasn't psychologically, I wasn't trying to eat Bambi in my mind. I'm just like, but I didn't know what it was. And so he took those ingredients that day when we were like, we're hungry, there's nothing to eat. You know? And we're just like, we're hungry. My little sister, my little brother, and he went in there and he looked around and he turned those ingredients that I just mentioned into pizza. He made pizza the crust, was that Texas toast?

He had the tomato sauce in the cabinet that he seasoned up, and we used the government cheese and the deer sausage, and he made pizza out of it.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And it didn't taste like dominoes, by the way. It didn't taste like that. But the fact that kids, we, we love pizza. And the fact that we were eating pizza and the fact.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** You were eating love.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And the fact that I was eating love and I was eating with him.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I'll never forget that moment. I'll never forget that moment. Yeah. And this speaks to the immense creativity that can manifest from. A, an environment that might seem like one of deprivation, right? There's an ex, there's an opportunity to evoke this creativity. It's just where we pointing it. And so that's carried over into this work as well. And the last part is for me, even the accessibility. I'm like, as I'm looking at this data on eating together. Maybe it's because you have more opportunity. Maybe it's because you have more money and you can do something like that.

Listen to this. So I shared another study in the book that was done on minority children that are generally in the context of a low income environment. They found that these kids eating together with their family just four meals a week, any of tho any meals four meals a week, those children ate five servings of fruits and vegetables at least five days a week. And significantly less ultra processed food, namely chips and soda. And then researchers noted when the TV was never or rarely on was the key thing. And so even if we didn't have much money, had my family known that eating together. Could help to protect our health in some way.

I know we would've done it. We just didn't know. Just didn't know. Because I can count, I'm not exaggerating, rev. I can count on my hands how many times we sat down and ate a meal

together. It just didn't happen. It might be a random holiday when we do that, but my family, you know, our family unit mother, stepfather brother and sister, myself, it just, we ate at the same time a lot of times, but we scattered. Scattered, yeah. Tv, video game outside. That wasn't a part of our culture.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And we do what we are aware of our culture is determining our choices, our culture, even our cravings are cultural. We crave things that we've been exposed to. You know, and so understanding.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** You become addicted to that because it's just the pattern of the chemicals that are being produced around that experience. You, you register that as good for you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. And so just even knowing this, we can start to again. Understand. It's not even taking our power back. Right. We already have it. We just are unaware. And being able to write the story, create a powerful microculture in your own household. It starts with you. Yeah.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** And here's the cool thing. I'm loving it. I'm a, I'm, I'm, I'm do a lot of that, but now I'm, I'm, I'm ready to skyrocket to a whole nother Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And last thing, here's the, here's the thing. Also, on that Hawaii trip, I realized that where you go, you take your culture with you. You can go into another culture, but you're an influential, influential factor wherever you go. That's the most powerful thing that you can do to affect change in the world around you, is change yourself and at a family unit. A healthy family unit. Wow. Wow. The impact that it has, just when people see us move. You know, you, you've seen this, you sure it is infectious. It's not just bad stuff that can be viral. You know, it's good stuff. Good health. Wellness can be, can be.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Health can be contagious.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Contagious as well.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Optimism can be contagious. Love can be contagious. Hey, this is Shawn Stevenson, and you know what, I'm gonna have him back again, so get ready for him because it's so much information here as well as his other books. Just, just his whole life. He's a, a, a wellness encyclopedia. And so appreciate you being here with me. And, you know, remind, I've, I've seen some studies where, because of the love and because of the family, even people eating bad food because of the love, the serum that was produced in the blood was of a very high standard because of what you were saying.

Because they were together, they were in love, they were celebrating, you know, so this, it's a, it's a whole lot here. So this is called Eat Smarter. This is Shawn Stevenson, the Model Health Show. Number one in the USA. Check that out as well. Any last words? You covered a lot of material, man. I

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** mean, pick up the book anywhere where books are sold. We have a national campaign at at bookstores across the country, and most importantly, go to [EatSmartercookbook.com](http://EatSmartercookbook.com). [EatSmartercookbook.com](http://EatSmartercookbook.com). We've got some wonderful bonuses there. Bunch of stuff we're giving away. And so pick up the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook anywhere the books are sold.

**MICHAEL BECKWITH:** Eat Smarter Family Cookbook, peace and blessings everyone take back your mind. We'll see you soon.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Thank you so much for tuning into this episode today. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this. If you did, you already know what to do. Share it out with the people that you care about. Help to extend this message. Share with more hearts and minds. And you could share this on social media. Of course, take a screenshot of the episode and share it on Instagram X, Facebook, wherever you're hanging out. And of course, you could tag me. I'm at Shawn model on Instagram and tag Dr. Michael Beckwith as well. Share the love. He'd love to see that.

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