



EPISODE 909

Fix Your Feet, Improve Your Sleep, & Transform Your Health

With Brad Kearns

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SHAWN STEVENSON: Have you ever thought about where your beliefs really come from? Why do we dress the way that we dress, eat the food that we eat, and do the things that we do on a regular basis? Our ideas about how things are "supposed to be", are embedded in us from our culture. Culture is defined as the attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people, and then spread from one generation to the next. Movies are a great example of generational influence. The very first movie I ever remember watching, and I just realized this recently, I was around four years old. Was the Karate kid. All right. I was at my grandmother's house. She popped it in on the VHS, and I watched that movie and I was riveted. I remember this being the first movie experience that I ever had.

And of course I know that I saw movies before that. But I remember this viscerally because of course I was doing the crane kick like a mofo after that movie was over. That movie influenced me to want to get into martial arts, as it did for many people. It just created a movement of interest in karate, in various forms of martial arts, and it was this kind of generational cue, a generational programming, a generational exposure. And what's interesting about that movie in particular is that it's went on to impact different generations over the years and different forms. And one just came out recently and my family actually took me as a surprise for Father's Day and they wouldn't let me see what it was. The guy was just like, what?

What's the big deal? Like you don't gotta hide what the movie is. But I, I didn't see what it was, it wasn't on the outside of the theater either, and I was just waiting and just waiting to see what was gonna pop up on the screen, and it was the new Karate Kid Legends movie. Now, not only did it have peak levels of martial arts, like the, the star of the movie, that kid is phenomenal, but it had these iconic characters as well. The one and only Jackie Chan reviving his role from an iteration of the Karate Kid and also the original Karate kid himself. Daniel LaRusso played by Ralph Macchio and it was amazing. It was amazing experience. It was one of those movies where you could hear in the theater, people were clapping, you know, they were applauding at certain parts, they were speaking to the screen, but not in a disruptive way.

In a cheerful and joyful connective way. Like this movie was a part of their DNA as well. And so it was really cool experience, but it just got me thinking about how these exposures program, the way that we do things and how we see the world. And also, it was another martial arts movie that got a lot of people walking around in those "karate shoes", right? So Bruce Lee esque for me, it was the Last Dragon, Bruce Leroy. All right? And so we got people in the hood wearing karate shoes, you know, from this exposure and low key. Those shoes were probably way better for our feet and for our movement than the shoes that we wear today. Our cultural beliefs around shoes and foot health are going through a renaissance right now.

Actually in our quest for ultimate comfort, we've lost our focus on real human function. Your foot has 26 bones, 33 joints, 19 muscles, 107 ligaments, and each foot also has over 200,000 nerve endings. And it's there for collecting data to determine your movement. And our modern shoes have essentially muted or disrupted thousands of data signals that would normally be transmitted from our feet and fed throughout our body to modulate appropriate movement. The results we have, epidemics of foot dysfunction, foot and ankle injuries, knee injuries, hip injuries, and more that can be rooted back to modern footwear. Now, don't get me wrong, I love so many of our modern styles of footwear, and I wear them often, but today I get plenty of rehab and prehab for my feet and overall movement by wearing and frequently walking and training in my Peluvas.

They have a wide toe box. They're stylish and they have science backed five toe functionality. And right now you can get 15% off your pair of peluvas. When you go to peluva.com/model and make sure to use the code model at checkout for 15% off, that's P-E-L-U-V a.com/model and use the code model at checkout for 15% off. Now, I've been so inspired by this interaction with Peluva and the community and the company itself, the people behind Peluva, and one of them has become my fast friend and a mentor for me. This individual is over 60 years old and he is the number one ranked masters high jumper in track and field in the world, and he's ranked number two in the 400.

He's a true demonstration about longevity and what's possible, and not only is he a phenomenal athlete and author, he also hosts the Peluva podcast. And I was so honored

when he asked me to be on the show and to interview me about Foot Health, about my story, and how I got into health and fitness and the tragedy that really sparked this movement for me personally, and led to me doing this work now for over 22 years. And also, we dove in deep on sleep wellness, and we talked about the number one culprit behind poor sleep quality today. And so I wanted to be able to share this powerful interview with you today. I'm being interviewed by the one and only Brad Kerns on the Peluva Podcast. Now, before we get to this powerful interview. Let's check out the Spotify review of the week.

SPOTIFY REVIEW: Another Spotify review from Daniel Fidel Franco. Heard Shawn in 2018, breaking down telomeres like they were the infinity stones of aging. Been hooked ever since. Binge listened to the whole back catalog and haven't missed an episode since. Each one hits like a Miyagi lesson. Wax on, eat well, sleep deep, love harder. This show helped shape who I am as a man, husband, and father. Big love to Shawn and Anne. Power couple vibes strong. You've both left a mark on my life. If you're new here, don't just listen. Apply it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Holy moley. Now this is a true story, this Miyagi connection I did not know about in preparing for this episode and what I talked about earlier. So this was news to me and this synchronicity is crazy, but that happens with my guy, Daniel. I appreciate you so much. Thank you so much for taking a moment and sharing your heart and your voice on Spotify. That's right. You can leave comments on each episode on Spotify. Of course, you can rate the show on Spotify as well.

That would mean a lot. And please, if you've been listening to the Model Health Show and you get value from it, please take a moment and leave an Apple Review as well for Apple Podcasts and let everybody know what you think about the show. I truly appreciate that. And without further ado, let's get to this very special interview on the Peluva podcast where superstar, athlete and author Brad Kerns is interviewing me about some powerful insights with health and wellness. Enjoy

BRAD KEARNS: Shawn Stevenson, host of the Model Health Show. I can't believe I'm here. Getting to bump your studio off you for a nice interview for the Peluva channel. It's been so great connecting with you, recording that interview for the Model Health Show. Seeing that

great show that you did with Mark and now you're really a good friend of Peluvas. The response from your group has been sensational. So you're really authentically embracing this shoe. And we appreciate you very much. I wanna talk about a bunch of things today and just get to know you, but I think we should start, we should, we should get right into it. As I look down, I'm saying, where's your peluvas man? If if you're, if you're listening and not watching, you're wearing a really sick pair of Nikes. I've never really seen those. They're very beautiful.

SHAWN STEVENSON: These are huaraches.

BRAD KEARNS: Oh, huarache.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So Nike huaraches. Yeah.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah. But it, it brings up a cool point to discuss in a, in a authentic manner. Yeah. Which is, you know, we have shoes for all kinds of things. And one of 'em is, uh, you know, fashion and you're the, you're the fa, most fashionable guy out there. I think all the podcasters.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I mean, the streets say.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's what the streets say. I didn't say it, but, you know.

BRAD KEARNS: He, he's gonna, he's gonna own it. It's says cross to bear. He's always gotta bring his game. And they're looking to see what he's gonna wear.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Fitness Icon. Fashion Icon. I, I need, I know.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But yeah. You know, it's, we were talking about this as well, you know, we have shoes for so many different modalities, and certain shoes are designed for certain

things, you know, like your high jumping endeavors, for example. And that's all well and good. But what Peluvas have done for me is give me rehab and prehab for my feet. And so, yeah. You know, I've got a bunch of different types of shoes that I, that I rock. But a great experience that everybody listening knows about is when you spend time in those other shoes and you get home and you take 'em off and it's just like, ah, ah. It's like relief taking those shoes off. I never feel like that taking off the Peluvas. I never have that. Like, my dogs are barking. Where did that come from anyways? Where do they relate dogs to your feet.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah, right. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, but that's a whole other thing. But I never feel like that when I take off the Peluvas. And so even this is my, this is my routine. You know, we've recorded, uh, we're getting close to 900 episodes, but here at my studio, hundreds of episodes. And what I do when I get home is I kick off whatever shoes I might be wearing and I put the peluvas on. I go for a walk. And most mornings I start my day, you know, after I do my morning routine, not ducking my face in the sparkling water, whatever, but I do my morning routine, you know, maybe a little reading meditation, and then I put peluvas on and I go for a walk to start my day.

And I was doing that for over a year before I connected with you guys. Right? So Mark put the shoes into my hands and onto my feet. And I, I just, I was skeptical. I was skeptical. Like what could, after a year of doing that, I, I just felt different. I felt more connection with my body, if that makes sense. You know, and also just being able to see how it translates over. I felt so much better doing the other things. And I really, this is one of the biggest things is. I really noticed how uncomfortable other shoes were. And you know, whether it was playing basketball, like I really noticed, like my feet did not like that.

Right. And so getting the Peluvas or get just spending more time and also just the intelligence of my feet being free more often as well was unlocked because a practice like, like this of wearing shoes, like this is like, it informs you, it turns some certain senses back on. Obviously proprioception and the kinetic chain, all this stuff, but it's more subtle. It's just like

my body awareness of what I like and what I don't like, what feels right was turned up significantly.

BRAD KEARNS: Oh, for sure. Do you know why those really cushiony, pillowy running shoes are so comfortable? It's because they dull your sensation. And so your proprioception is gone. And so if you take off jogging down the street at the running store, you're about to buy the the big cushioning pair, it feels fantastic because all you feel is like your foot landing into a foam and you don't notice this inappropriately dispersed impact trauma throughout the lower extremities when you're wearing an elevated cushioned shoe because it enables the poor form where you're, you're not landing correctly, but it's dulled.

It's sort of like going to the, the dentist and you get a shot of Novocaine and then they drill and get your tooth out of there and everything feels fine. Thank you very much. How much is my copay? And then when the Novocaine wears off, you're at home going help, you know, get me something I, I need more. And so it, it's, it's just like that, like the shoes are Novocaine. And what you mentioned with that skepticism, we see that a lot when we're at trade shows interacting with people and they, they look at the shoe and they go, well, does it have a lot of support in there? Because support equals comfort with all this flawed shoe marketing that we've been pushed. Like what's the arch support like? And our answer is there's no arch support. The arch support is your own arch being allowed to function and go through its range of motion and give you tremendous support, vastly superior to any shoe as a matter of fact.

SHAWN STEVENSON: What a concept.

BRAD KEARNS: What a concept.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So these fluffy shoes. They basically, like you just said, they dumb, they dumb your feet down.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. So basically we get dumb and dumb, dumb and dumber on each of your feet. And we got like Lloyd Christmas feet out here walking around Christmas and not, and then that intelligence is muted. And so again, we have these epidemics of overuse injuries, right? And it's just people competing and just like not having that full intelligence of their body turned on. It's getting muted. And so of course, I love that you guys are creating a movement where this is starting to translate over into, into other domains like golf, for example. You were telling me about that and football.

And what I'm hoping will be, you know, uh, rolling out from all of this is ultimately is just again, us spinning more time barefoot, like letting your feet be feet. And one of the things that was really compelling for me, and I shared this study with you, you know, on the video, maybe we can link the video below this one. But one of the studies that I shared was looking at, and this is a journal dedicated to orthotics and all this stuff. And so they're, they're wanting to find a hack for disabling your feet, basically. And they were wanting to see what they can do with Holics vulgas. Right. Or better known as bunions and would putting somebody's feet in, because what happens is, is that big toes getting pushed in over time creating that bunion.

What if they put people into shoes with a wider toe box? Would that help? And so they did that, and then they had another study group where they have toe separators and a wide toe box. The group that was just put in suddenly that have bunions into shoes with a wide toe box only their bunions got worse on average. It wasn't enough, but the Toast separators in conjunction created significant improvement in bunions. And for some test subjects, some resolution, like most people don't even know that's possible. Right. They're suffering with bunions.

BRAD KEARNS: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And they're doing all these little cosmetic things to try to fix it, but it's like, how about we remove the cause, which is having our toe pushed in constantly from our cute shoes. Right. Which specifically, this is gonna be impacting women more often. And in truth, having a shoe, like a Peluva nourishes our feet and rehabilitates our feet, it helps to fix

problems we don't even know that we have. So there can be stuff way up chain, neck issues, right? Hip issues, knee issues.

But if we're looking even specifically at the feet, we are so blinded from the fact that bunions, you know, corns and calluses and all this stuff often come from wearing these, what we, what you call, you know, cushy shoes. And then maybe spending some time suddenly we go with a wide toe box, zero drop shoe, you know, and go for a hike after wearing, you know, Sketchers, which is right across the street and got Sketchers outlets wearing Sketchers for years. These maximal on the whole other end, we got maximal issues, right? Rather than rehabilitating our feet, starting to wear some Peluvas and go for going for a walk and getting all that data input and integration with our nervous system, with our feet. And it's just, it's healing, right? So that's another thing I wanted to share too, is like, it's not a good idea to go from zero to a hundred, right?

If somebody's been hiking and hiking boots, right? And then they suddenly they want to throw on their Peluvas and go for a two hour hike the first time, like just wear 'em, put on, put, put some time in going for a walk and spending just time even around your house wearing the Peluvas or the Peluva socks. It's another thing that I haven't shared with you, but a lot of times here at the studio, even if I'm wearing "regular shoes", I have on the Peluva socks underneath and just having like that data, like, it's like my feet are more aware. When I have those socks on and the my toes are separated. So I don't know if anybody shared that with you before.

BRAD KEARNS: Oh, sure. We were shocked because we made the socks as an companion to wearing the shoes. Some people like to put socks in. I don't because you're not gonna get blisters because blisters come from the friction of the toes being wedged together, right? And so you don't really need socks when you have five individual toe slots for your shoe. But the feeling and not wanting to get the sweaty in your shoes and all that, that's great. So then we notice like people are buying socks independently or more pairs of socks than shoes because they're wearing 'em in all the shoes.

And so even a sock is still pushing. It's, it's applying pressure to push the toes together. And so it's disturbing that natural desire for the toes to splay outward and relax and, and realign. So wearing five toes in any shoe is a big, it's a big improvement. Of course, the best would be having the individual toe slots in the shoe and you mentioned the wide toe box, which is great. And so we're all happy to be in the same industry of people fighting against the flawed shoe marketing and the movement toward big shoes. So all minimalist shoes are great. I've used so many other models over the years. I'm good friends with Steven Sashen, the founder of Zero Shoes. Love what all those people are doing.

But there is a distinction between the wide toe box, which is not bad, it's not directly bad for your toes, but it's not helping to relax, realign, and reeducate them like a five toe shoe would be because it's sort of like wearing a toe spacer automatically throughout the day. And you can kind of tell this if you walk barefoot up a staircase. And when you put, when you plant your foot on the stair above you, you'll notice that the foot, the toes splay and the metatarsals widen beyond sort of the outline cut shape of your foot, and that would be a wide toe box shoe. They, they stretch out so far and you can see it instantly when you, when you go upstairs or if you're walking like in the sand or a really soft surface where the foot is allowed to do what it's supposed to do. It's, it's like super wide, like a duck swimming underwater. It's amazing to, to realize how wide the foot really will go if you allow it to.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. And what happens is, you know, you go from a standard shoe to a wide toe box, your feet have been trained most times for decades for some people to stay cramped together.

BRAD KEARNS: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: They don't just suddenly start to, you know, have that natural splay, of course over time, pro, with some training and all these different things. But if you are wearing Pelugas, it automatically creates that toe splay, which is really cool.

BRAD KEARNS: Takes a while people. Now I now I will take off my shoe if you're watching, but you can see that baby toe is like tucked in bed there next to the other one. And it really

should be straight out like this with the bone straight. Same with the big toe where we have that common condition of the bone growing out there. But it takes a long time. You know what Mark Aon says when people are trying on shoes at the, at the trade shows and public events, if you have a problem getting into them, that's great. Because you really need 'em. Yeah. And if you can get into them easily, that's also great 'cause it's a great shoe for you and you're not gonna have that education period. But, in case you were, you were watching how smoothly I put those five toes back into their slots. That's a lot of work and a lot of time wearing these to where I don't have to get down on the floor and wedge with my index finger and pull and make sure that baby toe goes in there.

So the toes need a lot of love and support and this is one step in the right direction along with trying to go barefoot or in five toe socks as much as possible. So, you know, I was teasing you at the start of the discussion here because you're wearing these shoes, but like, how many steps have you taken in these shoes? You went from the parking garage up the elevator, down the hall. So it's like. What's the big deal? You can wear anything that looks cool, and I think a lot of people might relate to that and embrace this idea. But then when it comes time to take care of yourself, that's when you can make this concerted effort to keep shoes off in the home.

And if you're gonna put in steps gracefully, integrate, not that two hour hike out of the gate because our feet are so atrophied and dysfunctional. But, what Mark Sisson did in the early days was he'd pack a pair of five toe shoes in his backpack and put 'em on until he needed some support from the old shoes. And then pretty soon he didn't need the other shoes. And I've had that graceful transition for many years too. But we wanna be patient and we never want to experience things like soreness or discomfort in the day after we put on our fabulous new Peluva shoes and try them out 'cause that means we need to dial it back a little bit and then just allow the feet to strengthen naturally over time.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, that's great advice. Got a quick break coming up. We'll be right back.

Summer is here and it's time for some summer fun. Sun's out, guns out, or buns out. However you wanna slice and dice it, it's time to get out there and enjoy life and enjoy fitness. Now, as you know, especially when it's hotter outside and you're sweating, you need to make sure that you are staying optimally hydrated and making sure that you're getting in adequate amounts of electrolytes. Electrolytes are key minerals that carry an electric charge, that enable your body to do all the stuff that your body does. Whether this is your heart beating, your brain functioning, your muscles moving, everything that's going on in your body, electrolytes are required to do those jobs. Three of the most critical electrolytes that you need to target, sodium, potassium, and magnesium.

There's a sodium potassium pump that's behind pretty much all of our cellular processes. And the energy that our cells are making via the mitochondria is deeply dependent on not just the sodium potassium pump, but magnesium to be present in order to actually make new mitochondria. The bottom line is for optimal physical performance and cognitive performance, we've gotta make sure that we're being proactive in getting ourselves hydrated and utilizing the very best electrolytes possible.

Number one, get plenty of electrolytes through eating real foods. It's super important, but also this is a great place to supplement. But when you do that, you wanna make sure that you're getting the number one clean electrolyte supplement in the world. It has no sugar, no artificial dyes and results that you really notice. And right now, just in time for summer, the number one electrolyte supplement in the world from LMNT has a brand new lemonade salt that you're absolutely going to love. Now, this is for a limited time, so take action on this right now. And of course, with every purchase, you're also going to get a free sample pack where now.

You're gonna get to try out two packets of each of their four most popular drink mix flavors. It's amazing. And as always, element has a no questions money back guarantee, so you have nothing to lose and only better hydration and performance to gain. Go to drinklmnt.com/model right now to take advantage of this. That's drinkLMNT.com/model and hook yourself up for this summertime special again. Try out their limited time you get to try

out their brand new lemonade salt plus that incredible free sample pack. Head over to drinkmnt.com/model and now back to the show.

BRAD KEARNS: So, you know, you've been in this game for a long time. You started the Model Health Show, what'd you say in 2013 or something? I first became aware of you when you, you brought sleep to much greater attention than it had been. Well, I shouldn't say that. It's like everyone says how it was sleep is so important and we've heard that forever. And then no one does anything about it. And no one changes their ways. They just go, oh yeah, sleep's important. So maybe we could get a little timeline of how, how you got into this extreme health game and what inspired you to focus on that topic of sleep and then take it from there into everything that you're covering these days.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome. Well, I got into, I grew up in as an athlete and, but I had a bunch of health issues and I was that kid.

BRAD KEARNS: Oh yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, I was the fastest kid in my school and you know.

BRAD KEARNS: No, I don't know. You, you said, you know, can we edit out those blips? Like when he says, you know, I was the fastest kid, you know? No, I don't know. I was, I was the kid that ran after the ball because I had the great endurance, but the fast kids were fast, man. Yeah. Oh man. I know what that's all about.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, you know, I used that predominantly playing football, but I also ran track and, you know, I had aspirations, of course, going to college and that kind of thing to play, play football. And it was during track season, sophomore year I was doing a 200 meter time trial. So again, time trial, it might be one other student with me, or just at this instance, it was just me and my coach. And so I took off and it's like, you know, the 200 meters, basically half the track, right? So it's going from the curve of the track into the straightaway. And as I was coming into the straightaway, my hip broke.

BRAD KEARNS: Oh, mercy.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. So I broke my iliac crest, like the tip of my hip bone broke. I didn't know it at the time. I just came up limping. Right. And I thought maybe I pulled a muscle. I had never been injured before, so I kept coming to practice the next two days and I just couldn't get my legs to fire.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Correctly. And so, you know, the coach was like, you, you can't do this and you gotta go see a doctor. And so I went to see, actually he was a physical therapist. He took an x-ray and he is like, oh, that's the problem. Your iliac crest is broken. And so as my bone was like floating off in space, basically on the scan, and I'm just like, I'm a kid so I don't know what's going on. And he's just like, oh, this is, you know, we'll just give you some NSAIDs. Stay off the leg. Right. You're gonna heal up just fine. And that's what I went through, standard of care. Nobody stopped to ask how did a kid..

BRAD KEARNS: How did happened?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Break his hip from running. Yeah. This was a huge sign of what was to come for me, which was, my body was breaking down prematurely. When you think of breaking a hip, you think of somebody's much, much older.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so it wasn't until I had about half a dozen more injuries. I literally have game film of me at my house right now breaking away. I, I like ran a sweep on the football field, right? And I get past the safety. I'm headed to the end zone. I'm five yards away from the end zone. And I fall because I like tear my hamstring like a severe hamstring tear. Like I just kept on getting injured and I couldn't stay healthy. So my aspirations of playing at the next level, of course were vanquished. And ultimately at 20 years old, I get diagnosed with degenerative disc disease.

So my spine, my, my disc were degenerated severely to the point where my physician said that, and this was a great thing to tell a kid at 20. He said that, that I had the spine of an 80-year-old, right. And. Your definition of 80 is very different, by the way, just to be clear, but like an unhealthy 80-year-old, right? And so that sent me, and I went in because I was having sciatic pain and I didn't know why. And it wasn't from trauma, it wasn't from an impact, it was just from his perspective degeneration that was, in his words, incurable. And so again, I'm thrown into standard of care and all the while, this entire time I'm eating not just the standard of American diet, but the extreme of it.

All right? So, and this is according to jama, this is one of the, this, a journal of the American Medical Association, one of the longest running studies conducted on eating behavior of children. So this was starting in 1999, up till 2018. So about a 20 year study. The researchers found that in 1999, the average American child was eating somewhere around 60% ultra processed, newly invented fake foods. By the end of the study, the average child was eating almost 70%.

BRAD KEARNS: Wow.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right. So it was right around 68% of the average child's diet in the United States was ultra processed food. With any study, there are gonna be people who are outliers. Right? So not every kid is eating around 70%. I was definitely eating closer to 90% ultra processed foods because of the environment that I lived in. You know, living in the inner city, being on government assistance, shopping at, we were talking actually earlier in the show about off-brand foods and stuff like that, so I wasn't eating like lucky Charms or whatever. I was eating, like.

BRAD KEARNS: Even worse.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know? I don't know, wizard, wizard drops or something, or, I wasn't eating like fruit loops. It was fruit rings. Right. So we ate a lot of generic off-brand, ultra processed foods, a lot of ramen noodles and box macaroni and cheese. And, you know, I ate a lot of like frozen pizzas and off-brand pizza rolls. Like, this was my diet pretty much every day,

every meal. All right. And so I was making, literally making my tissues out of garbash. All right. And wondering why I'm breaking down prematurely. I have arthritic conditions as a 20-year-old. And so one of the big principles in how I transformed my life and got into this field, and it took a couple of years of suffering, by the way, because I went through standard of care, on a slew of medications. And my biggest struggle during, from 20 to 22 was sleeping at night.

BRAD KEARNS: Huh.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Because I couldn't, I couldn't sleep for more than like a couple of hours because my pain was so bad. Sciatic pain.

BRAD KEARNS: What kind of pain, like?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh, my leg just throbbing. And just like.

BRAD KEARNS: Oh my gosh.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It just, it's so difficult to articulate.

BRAD KEARNS: That's so wrong for a 20-year-old. I mean.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. So like it, and so I had to take medication just to try to quote, knock me out and keep me asleep. And so, but all of that changed and it, the change happened so quickly. I was afraid. I was afraid for a few months because what, in just a short version of this, I kept, I saw different physicians to get a, you know, another opinion, which I highly encourage people to do if they get bad news like that. But they keep, they kept telling me the same thing. This is incurable. I'm sorry this happened to you. Here's another medication. And another med medications were helping me even with the pain really. And so my lot in life could have been taking stronger, stronger medications. But each one of them also told me bedrest. Don't do anything.

BRAD KEARNS: Oh my gosh.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so now I'm completely, not only has my spine atrophied, but like everything else is, and I've gained a bunch of weight.

BRAD KEARNS: So you had to take that advice, you basically stopped exercising and

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. I wanted to be a good, a good student.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah, sure.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, do the doctor's orders, but it gave me permission to stop. Right. And so, especially coming from the environment I came from where it's so difficult, it gave me permission to not fight and just to sit there on my couch, play video games.

BRAD KEARNS: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, watch TV.

BRAD KEARNS: And maybe sign up for disability someday, you know?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. I was getting, at the time, I was getting like unemployment. Right.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah. Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, you know, just like I, that could have been my lot in life. But ultimately it was thanks to, largely from my grandmother and her bugging me, like always checking in on me. And just like, it was annoying at the time, but she knew my potential and how special I was.

BRAD KEARNS: Ah, wow.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so she was checking in on me. And, you know, just one of those times after seeing a physician, I was, it just hit me like a ton of breaks. I was about to take the

medication to knock me out to sleep. And it just like my question that I had habitually been asking myself of like, why won't somebody help me? Why, why me? Why me? Why this happened to me. I, for the first time asked, what can I do to feel better? Like my grandmother saw, sees all this potential in me, and she knows like, there's something about me, there's something about me, and I'm just wasting away here by myself in this one bedroom apartment in Ferguson, Missouri, you know? And my mattress was on the floor, just like, what am I doing? I was in college, barely hanging on. I kept, I went from like 15 credit to this, 12 to nine to just like barely hanging on and. Just realizing like she invested so much in me, the least I could do is do something.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so fortunately, you know, there's nature and nurture in this, but like, I have a, I'm very analytical. I questioned things and so it wasn't just like I had this revelation to like, get up and do something. I was like, let me put a plan together. You know, let me, okay. If they're saying my disc are degenerated, what are my disc made of? So this was a fundamental question.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so I started to like look into that if I, I need to lose weight at this point because now, even though I was an athlete now, just sitting and being so sedentary, it caught up with me. And so I'm carrying around all this excess. So just logically, like, let me take some of this excess off my spine. Right.

BRAD KEARNS: Give it a break. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But the first thing I jumped to to, to be honest, was because of marketing on the tv. I did slim, A Slim Fast. Right. The Shake for Breakfast, one for lunch and a sensible dinner. Right.

BRAD KEARNS: I was like, tell Lasorda. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's the way to do it. Didn't really work out for him though, you know? No. Respectfully. Or just, it's like it's one of those It was suffering. It was suffering.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I was hungry all the time. I did lose like two pounds the first week, but that went out the window quickly. But it's because of my search.

BRAD KEARNS: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And the search brought me to, again, what are my disc made of? And there were all these compounds that create the tissues that were needed. And I wasn't giving my body any of that stuff on this ultra processed food diet. And this is for everybody listening, or watching. Is if you're dealing with any particular issue, if you're not providing your body, the raw materials to make the tissue, your body, the human body's incredibly resilient. It'll figure some things out.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And to help you to just "survive", but you can't really thrive. Yeah. And so learning about these disc, I found out how important omega threes were for my disc. I didn't hear anything about omega threes. Like my bones.

BRAD KEARNS: Not the doctor's office.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. When I broke my hip, it's just like, you need to eat more calcium. Like I was guzzling milk, like I was getting paid for it. All right. Have you seen that movie? The Professional, by the way, with Leon, the Professional, he's like an assassin, but he's drinking a shitload of milk for some reason. I don't know why, but anyways, probably he's, his milk does a body good.

Whatever wasn't helping me. My bone density was incredibly low. But even for your body to assimilate calcium, you need other compounds. The body works synergistically. And so I

needed like silica, I needed these omega threes. I needed certain amino acids, you know, I needed sulfur, I needed all these different things that I was not getting in my drive-through diet. And so I went from, okay, I found this out. Let me take a bunch of supplements, which was incredibly expensive on my college ferguson income, all right, to what foods can I find these things in? And so now that directed me to eating real foods. And so that's all I ate exclusively. So I was eating real foods and now that I'm feeling a little bit better and my lowest hanging fruit was exercise.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Because I would've been an athlete.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I was scared to move. So I start off on elliptical. I'm sorry, I started off on a stationary bike. And I moved to the elliptical, then I start to tinker around with the weights. I was just moving.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And also that movement exercise, one of the most overlooked aspects of exercise is it increases assimilation. Right. So those tissues that are moving and, you know, like your, your ligaments and tendons, it's creating this kind of vacuum phenomenon and pulling in nutrients. Your muscles do the same thing.

BRAD KEARNS: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so now I've got this nutrition, I've got this movement practice. Now I'm suddenly sleeping better. I'm sleeping better at night because of the things I'm doing during the day. Yeah.

BRAD KEARNS: Without the meds.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Without the meds. And now I got better so fast. It was, it was insane. Like six weeks to the day of making that decision, I'd lost almost 20 pounds, which is not typical. I just, I was a naturally thinner person, and so the weight just kind of flew off me pretty quickly. But the pain was gone. The pain that haunted me every single day of my life for over two years. It had destroyed my life. You know, my livelihood. It was gone. Yeah. And so I spent those next few months in fear, like I'm just like, I'm, I was scared it's gonna come back because it happened so fast.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah. Oh sure.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And my mind wasn't able to kind of recalibrate.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But what helped me to, and this bridges everything and puts the cherry on top, what helped me to accept it was service. Because people at the university that I was going to, the University of Missouri, people started coming up to me and asking me like, what did you do? How did you, like, I didn't just look like a person who lost weight. I looked like somebody who went from being. Incredibly sickly to radiantly healthy. And so people were coming up and asking me like, Hey, can you teach me? Or like, what did you do? Whatever.

BRAD KEARNS: Wow.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And that was the birthing of my career because I didn't know the people because the first person was a friend of mine's, that I went to high school with. His little sister went to the university. And so she knew me loosely, but she came up to me, she was like, you know, what did you do? Like I, she was like, can you help me? And I was like, yeah, can you come to the gym on Saturday? Like, what? She was like, how much should I pay you? Huh. And that's when time froze. Like, what? She would pay me, like, I was gonna do this for free.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, and this is true story, I said \$7 because..

BRAD KEARNS: 'Cause you had your eye on some minimum wage bone broth at the nearby market.

SHAWN STEVENSON: No, minimum wage was like \$5 and 15 cents at the time. Yeah. And I'm from Missouri. Okay. I don't know what now. It's probably, what is it? It's like \$20 or something crazy.

BRAD KEARNS: What is Los Angeles trying to up it to 20 bucks or something? Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But you know, like \$7.

BRAD KEARNS: It not, not good as \$5 back then though. Still rough. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: \$7 was like a nice job for a college kid.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so I started training people like \$7 a session.

BRAD KEARNS: Oh wow.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, and I got my certification ah, and I switched, shifted all my coursework back to, because initially the first university that I went to, I went into the pre-med program. But I hated science. It doesn't match up. I just did it because I thought I was supposed to because of marketing and what I saw on television. Yeah. And coming from poverty and a family that doesn't have any examples, I was like, I should do that. But I hated it. And so I got out of that major, I went into like marketing from another television exposure, a movie called Boomerang with Eddie Murphy. I'm can remember that.

BRAD KEARNS: Oh, Eddie Murphy. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But it was like, he was like in marketing. It was so fly. Yeah. So I did that. But, so this brought me all the way back to science, but now I understand it now in my biology class, I remember the last day of my biology class in college, the teacher cried. It was this big auditorium class, and all the kids, most of the kids were kinda looking like, this is weird. Like, why is she crying? And I got it. I understood because she knew that we were leaving that classroom. She was hoping that this knowledge of what, what she taught was going to filter its way into the rest of their lives.

BRAD KEARNS: Wow. Because that's a dedicated teacher right there.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But I got it because of what I went through.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. When I was learning about biology prior to that experience with her, it was very superficial. We're learning about the parts of the cell. Right. The mitochondria, all these different organelles.

BRAD KEARNS: The kreb cycle. Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But it's so superficial, it doesn't really matter to me.

BRAD KEARNS: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But when I understood that, that mitochondria is made from my meals, when I learned that the nucleus is made from the nutrients that I eat, that everything that I'm looking at when we're studying the cell, the human cell is made from food, it lit everything else up for me. Like I, I'm making this, this doesn't just happen. I get to provide the raw materials to make this. So that was my connective tissue with it. And I get to determine the health of my cells. And so, you know, having that knowledge base and then healing from something that was supposed to be unhealable, it gave me this power that you can't, you, you can't buy.

And so that power was injected into, at, when I became a nutritionist and I was working with people every day. Working as a strength conditioning coach all those years at the university to when I started a podcast. That essence is there. It's a part of the tone and the texture of what's behind my voice. It's like something undeniable there that's telling you nothing is impossible, you know, you can get better. And so, and then that translated over into the books. And as you mentioned earlier, you know, sleep. I'm a nutritionist. It wasn't my intention, but this was missing from the conversation at the time.

And we talked about this before the show, the agents I was talking to when I self-published the first iteration of Sleep Smarter, they were like, no, you know, you should do a book on nutrition. You know, fitness book do really well with you and your platform. Sleep books just don't do well. And I was just like, I was so adamant that I didn't choose to work with them. And after selling the amount of books that I did, you know, self-published, which I didn't have any per like barometer of like what's good. I happened upon the person, the, the company that ended up being my agent and with the success that I'd already done on my own just by sharing this message, which was, by the way, seeing people every day who've got their nutrition dialed in, they're exercising, but they, we can't get their blood sugar normalized.

We can't get the weight off. We can't get their hypertension under control. When I finally started asking them about their sleep and I gave them, I'm a researcher, so science backed waves, where they can do these small things where they don't have to turn their world upside down to improve their sleep quality. Now the weight's coming off. Now we've got their blood sugar under control. Now we can working with their physician, get them off metformin or lisinopril with their hypertension or whatever the case was. Just seeing these cases that would keep ironically, keep me up at night, like, why can they not get the results everybody else is getting?

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It really just cemented like this component of sleep is so big. It was impacting their nutrition. It was impacting their exercise.

BRAD KEARNS: Sure.

SHAWN STEVENSON: More so than I realized. And this is the thing too, when you're healthy, like my sleep was good now, I just didn't think about it anymore. So I didn't think about it in the context of these other people.

BRAD KEARNS: Right. Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so in the book, I put together 21 clinically proven Strategies research to back it up. This is long before people were grabbing research and sharing it online. You know, as like a true, and I did.

BRAD KEARNS: You had to go to the library probably.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. The Dewey Decimal system. It wasn't to that extreme, but like just hanging it on the tree of science and then using common sense to affirm it. 21 clinically proven strategies to improve your sleep quality. After meeting my, eventually my agent, we got 11 offers as I shared with you for that book. And it became like a bidding war because the book was such a powerful force. And it was already proven to be effective. And from there, now it's translated into, it's either 26 or 27 different countries, different languages. These are all separate form book deals. It was the first sleep wellness book to become, to become an international bestseller. And it was not my intention. I didn't know that that was going to happen.

My intention was to give people this tool set and this awareness to heal themselves. And it came through that medium. And so I'm very grateful that it came through me and that I was a part of it. And now it's like, especially in the health spaces, it's so, it's so common knowledge about sleep wellness, and people are doing all these different things, but like I helped to popularize and bring forth the ideas of blue, blue light blocking glasses and screen time and all this stuff, you know, back over, you know, what, 12 years ago now. And so I'm so grateful that like the conversation has changed, but we're still messed up.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah, I was just gonna ask you like 12 years ago, come on. I mean, we, the information's been out there. What are the main ways that we're still falling behind?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, it's, it's really, the technology is not slowing down, obviously. And that's, that's really the, the biggest deterrent right now. And by the way, those two, I had two herniated disc, they retracted on their own and gained back the value.

BRAD KEARNS: They retracted, they retracted back into alignment.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. L four, L five S one, both herniated.

BRAD KEARNS: They were just getting nourished by your exercise and by your diet.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. And so you could see it on the, on the MRI prior to this.

BRAD KEARNS: Wow.

SHAWN STEVENSON: They were like black.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Because they were so degenerated, but so to have that volume where the light is shining through them, and so, but that was nine months later after choosing to get Well, by the way. So I don't know when, how quickly I got well. And I was scared to go get an MRI because I didn't want to get bad news.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah, right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. But the, my physician, the final physician that I had dealing with that issue, he was just like, literally just holding his chin. Like, whatever you're doing, keep doing it. I haven't seen results like this before.

BRAD KEARNS: Dang. He should put your x-rays up at a medical presentation. I like, look at this dude. Nine months later.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I told him though, for, I told him what I did for sure. But it was just like pseudoscience..

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah, it kind of doesn't register.

SHAWN STEVENSON: ..To him at the time. He was, don't change the way I was eating and exercise, whatever. But here's the, now today we have huge meta-analyses showing that the vast majority of disc herniations and bulges heal to some degree on their own.

BRAD KEARNS: Wow.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And some complete remission, complete, heal, healing of the disc.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, but this is not true for everybody. There's different situations, different states and different things that need to be done for everybody. But the vast majority of the time, something can be done. Your body is very adept at healing itself. And then to circle back to our current situation with sleep, you know, the biggest thing that I've seen, like it's just more and more addictive. You know, we've got brilliant engineers who are designing things to keep us just checking, you know, the just checks picking up our phone constantly or you know, we are living at the golden age of television. There's so much good stuff.

BRAD KEARNS: Streaming entertainment. With your next episode, we'll play in seven seconds, six seconds, five seconds. I try to jump up 'cause I know I'll watch the next episode, but if I can turn that TV off in seven seconds, maybe I'll have a chance of going to sleep. Yeah, yeah, yeah, you're right. The, the world's lead, the smartest guys and the highest paid workforce on the planet is Silicon Valley software engineer. And they're, they're ripping, yeah. Or Hollywood here making great content. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And we've never had a time where we can work 24/7, you know, like we've got, again, the..

BRAD KEARNS: Isn't that amazing? We've never been able to before.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You can't even step away from work.

BRAD KEARNS: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Because it's right there in your phone for so many of us. Right?

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So I've got work calling me everywhere basically. You know, like I could do get to some emails or I could, you know, I got Slack message coming in, whatever the case might be.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You might be out trying to hang out with your family. But you know, this, that 24 7 access that we didn't evolve, this is new. This is new, and our brains have not caught up remotely with how to handle this because we have hundreds of thousands of years being a certain way.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: To like 40 years, 30 years of this complete immersion in the technology.

BRAD KEARNS: This is the most challenging time to sleep of all times of two and a half million years of evolution.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yep.

BRAD KEARNS: For sure.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. So what do we do? This is the thing.

BRAD KEARNS: So yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is..

BRAD KEARNS: Gimme a few of those 21 tips the solution before we go.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The solution with the technology piece is very simple, as most solutions are. It's very simple, but we've gotta replace that evening habit of being on our screens with something of equal or greater value. Okay. So you can't just tell yourself, okay, and by the way, we got research from Harvard, for example, showing that being on that device with the the blue light. It's not just the blue light, by the way. Okay. Just that stimulation of light is throwing off your circadian clock. It suppresses melatonin every hour you're on your device at night, suppresses melatonin for about 30 minutes. All right. So even..

BRAD KEARNS: Hour, 30 minutes. Hour, 30 minutes. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So even if you go to bed and you're exhausted. You're not gonna go through your sleep cycles efficiently because melatonin is all wonky.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright. So we wanna give ourselves a little bit of a screen curfew, and I encourage people just even 30 minutes because most people, they're on their device literally to the last moment. You know, many people, like, they look at their, they're just like literally looking at their phone. They're like, I really should get some sleep. And they put it down. So 30 minutes, start with 30 minutes if you wanna be a rock star, 90 minutes..

BRAD KEARNS: Nice.

SHAWN STEVENSON: ... is incredible. And of course you can get, have the blue light glasses in between and, you know, there's modes for you. Our computer screens, there's flux.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, night shift is built into the phones now. Yeah. And I know these companies, they know they're messing people's sleep up, so they're trying to be proactive and, you know, doing these things.

BRAD KEARNS: It's like PR campaign to say, Hey, look at our little, you know, adaptable things.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We're protecting your sleep, we're looking out for you. Buy now! So have, having those things are cool, but you gotta give yourself a screen curfew because it's still stimulation, right? Outside of just the light inputs. And so replace it with something of equal or greater value. Okay. So our phones are incredibly valuable to us. All the, so many good things to look at. Right. Basketball and high jumping and..

BRAD KEARNS: Jokes and, yeah. Friends, interactions. Yeah. Connection. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And there's butts. Everywhere. Fitness. If you, if you're a fitness influencer, you might not even be looking for the butts.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But if you're just falling a few fitness influencers, it's gonna start you some butts. And you, maybe you could push not interested. Okay. You don't want the butts flying at you, but there's so much stimulation coming at us from our phone. Infinite stuff. Now, what can be of equal or greater value than that? It's tough. This is gonna be individual, right? It's paying attention to yourself and what you value.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so if you want to think back to like when we were kids, many of us had a bedtime ritual. Right? We had our routines for going to bed, right? Many high performing people have morning routines. Right. That we self kind of impose on ourselves. But truly. My grandmother, for example, she had had a certain nighttime routine.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Which included maybe a bath.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Maybe, you know, reading a book, saying prayers together, whatever the case might be. But give yourself an evening routine that nourishes you. There's a difference between relaxation and restoration. Right? Relaxation is kicking back and watching severance. All right. Or Game of Thrones, or whatever the case might be. Restoration is being, getting away from all the stimulation, getting high quality sleep.

BRAD KEARNS: Right. You're still getting stimulated with an enjoyable show, even though you're relaxing. Big difference's, right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Your brain is firing like a mother in certain ways. And so what does that evening routine look like for you? Do you love reading books? Like do you or do you, do you love reading, you know, romance novels or Harry Potter, or, you know. Ideally in this, there's some data on this as well, that fiction is actually a little bit better for supporting sleep. Right. Versus like..

BRAD KEARNS: Current events or things that could.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, that kind of like personal development. Some stuff can be helpful though. You know, spirituality, those kind of things. It can be helpful, but sometimes you, you get, you might be thinking too much about like ideas and implementation and all this stuff. So fiction is really great for supporting sleep. Here's a cool thing. Now, do you

wanna stare at your phone on, or a Kindle or something like that? No. Physical books are still out here. They still exist. All right. So you can use a physical book.

BRAD KEARNS: We still still got some for sale, you and I. So That's right. You go out there and get that book. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Or audio books. We're living at the golden age of audio books as well. Yeah. You know, and you don't gotta stare at a screen to listen to an audio book.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah. And close your eyes. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. And so there's also podcasts, but again, I'd be mindful of what you're listening to.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Trying to wind down, you know.

BRAD KEARNS: Showing like lure our voices. If someone's trying to fall asleep right now, we can take the last few. Yeah. And just talk a little slower. That's great advice, Shawn.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Good night.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah, thank you very much. Sometimes you might even fall asleep listening to a podcast. That would be great. You know what, I love how you, you've, you've characterized this whole conversation in a very positive manner, rather than trashing social media and trashing our phones. And we really good at that now. And we can all tell us how bad it is, but like they're, they're very valuable to us. You mentioned that.

And so it's all about, you know, weighing those priorities and finding something of greater payoff. And I was just thinking about this when you said it, like maybe the best payoff for me is how I feel the next morning. So if I can delay my gratification 'cause I love watching the next Netflix episode in the series as much as anyone else. Yeah. But when I'm, when I'm good,

when I'm not good, I'm staying up and I'm ruining my next morning. 'cause I'm very sensitive to, we were talking about that, like, I need a lot of sleep, man. I always have. But like, if you can look at it in a bigger picture perspective or. Now we're talking about kids too.

What's more valuable than streaming entertainment? How about quality home, family time, where you get a little chatting in with those teenagers that aren't likely to talk that much? That's vastly more valuable. Yeah. Than your shows, but like we really have to. Be hugely disciplined and committed to put these things into the mix. Even your switch from phone to reading, it's a big deal because we're outta habit and sometimes I like to just veg out, rather than work my eyes hard, which have been working all day. Yeah. But you do get that payoff really quickly over time. I mean, your story is like the greatest payoff of all time of anyone to turn their entire life around, starting with getting better sleep. That probably helped those, those diss, you know, get that nutrition that you were feeding them.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely. If you're not sleeping, you're not healing. That's where the magic really happens. And you know, just to lean into that point again, even bringing up family, like playing board games or whatever the case might be, is another thing that could be more valuable. But you just mentioned the thing that, for me personally, is really a powerful force for not being on my screen, which is I value feeling good better than I do the next episode. That's for me personally. For other people, it might not be like that.

BRAD KEARNS: No judgment, if you guys disagree. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. And so for my wife, it's like, it's a, it's a big deal if I'm like, you wanna watch another? I know. And I also know that, you know, if she's happy, you know, but which is could leads to another thing of maybe personal time with your significant other. Might be more valuable than the phone. Right. So talking with them, seeing them listening to the sound of their voice, you know, maybe investing into some other potential things that hopefully is more exciting than your phone, you know?

BRAD KEARNS: Oh, I tell my wife, I go, you have a standing appointment for a massage at 9:30 PM upstairs, but if you're gonna, if you cancel, like, I, I, I can't take late customers like, you

know, it's like an incentive. She sleeps less than me, which is really interesting. And when we have more time to talk, maybe we'll do a whole another show on this. But like, she can easily stay up later than me, so I try to put in these things like, I'm toast, I gotta go to bed right now. And. It's, it's a constant like yeah, temptation of many different options, which are all enticing, you know?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yep. And even, you know, with that physical touch, intimacy, these things help to relax, that sympathetic fight or flight

BRAD KEARNS: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Helped it.

BRAD KEARNS: Right. And the tv might not.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Oh, for sure. Especially what were your shows? You mentioned, you know, watching Vin Diesel before bed, like, you know, like you're gonna be ready to, you know. But you know, with that being said, on in sleep Smarter. And I didn't do this on purpose, on page 69 is the Big O and how sleep is related. A reader told me this, I had no idea how sleep and sex are so intimately connected as well. And so, having that intimacy and whether or not there's a orgasm involved, like we release a cocktail of chemicals.

That help to relax the nervous system, prolactin and oxytocin, all this stuff. But you can get a lot of that oxytocin in particular. And this is one of the hormones that's been identified to kind of counteract the effects of cortisol. And cortisol isn't a bad guy. But for many people, cortisol's high.

BRAD KEARNS: Chronic overproduction of cortisol and the other hand?

SHAWN STEVENSON: We called them tired and wired clinically, you know, where they're cortisol's too low in the morning, too high at night. And the, again, the stimulation from our devices isn't helping. And so just a hug being close to somebody that you love, that you trust. Dramatically increases your production of oxytocin. And so again, these are just a couple of

practical things. A warm bath is at night as well, helps to raise that, the skin temperature. But then you, your body actually goes lower than normal afterwards, after it cools down, which helps.

BRAD KEARNS: I appreciate you. Maybe we'll elaborate a little bit 'cause people don't understand that, like, you need to have that lower body temperature to fall asleep. Right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. There's intense.

BRAD KEARNS: So how does, how does it happen when you get a warm bath or jacuzzi, which is one of my favorite things to do before bed than what happens.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. So, and this isn't necessarily a fall asleep, but to have more restful sleep to go through your sleep cycles more efficiently. We evolved no matter where you are on the planet, pretty much where humans have been hanging out at the temperature is cooler at night than it is during the day.

BRAD KEARNS: Name somewhere where it's not. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Okay. But we have this perfectly climate controlled environment in our homes where it might be.

BRAD KEARNS: It might not be true. You're right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. And so.

BRAD KEARNS: Because we crank up the heat at night.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's, it's called thermal regulation. And so your body is always, we don't have a perfect, like 98.6 degrees, whatever. Your body, your temperature changes significantly throughout the day. All right. Depending on the time of day, what you're doing, if you're exercising, your temperature's probably gonna be a little bit higher. And that's okay. Now we have a natural drop in our body temperature in the evening to facilitate.

It's basically, it's not necessarily causing, but it comes along with an activation of all kinds of restorative hormones, enzymes, neurotransmitters, your body's going into a more relaxed state to facilitate higher quality sleep at night when your, when your core body temperature drops. Now, if your body has to fight against the environment because it's too hot.

BRAD KEARNS: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We all know what it's like to get sleep because it's too hot in the environment. Yeah. You know, and I got a memory that's popping up. My mom didn't turn on the air condition. I live in St. Louis. Grew up in St. Louis.

BRAD KEARNS: Oh, that's hot. Steamy man.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Summertime. So it's not just hot. It's humid. Yeah. All right. So if it's 95, the quote, you know, "heat", it feels like the heat indexes could be 110, right?

BRAD KEARNS: Oh, sure. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And it doesn't go in here in LA it doesn't hold on the air doesn't hold onto the heat at night, so it's cooler.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: In Missouri. The nighttime hubs, it holds onto that sleep and throws it into your window. All right? And so she wouldn't turn on the AC and I, our room was upstairs. All right. And so heat rises as well.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So it would be bacon in there. All right. And so I remember like literally spraying myself with water before bed, having a fan in the window, spraying myself with water and being bucket naked, and having like the sheet around my, you know, around my special parts. Just in case my little brother comes in or something. I don't wanna, I don't want

him to feel inferior, you know, whatever. But anyways, and so just trying to find a way to cool myself off just enough to fall asleep. Right. But it's just like tossing and turning when you're hot. And so with climate control that many of us have access to.

Or just opening your windows. Right. If you can in a safe way. But if you can drop the temperature on the thermostat at night or just have less, you don't have to have the big comforter, you know, maybe something a little bit thinner. Now there's all these different contraptions that help to cool down your mattress. You know, mattress pads and things like that. There's so many ways to cool yourself off that it might be an investment initially, maybe a couple hundred dollars for something like this if you don't have like AC California. So SoCal, even my guy over here, he didn't have air conditioned for years. Right.

BRAD KEARNS: I know. It's amazing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You just moved to a new place. And you know, like it's just a thing, but again, it's cooler in the environment. You can open the windows at night and get a little bit cooler and fans and things like that. So yeah, getting your body a little bit cooler, I got tons of studies on this and why it's effective and sleep smarter, and yeah.

BRAD KEARNS: So go get the book, sleep Smarter People. Way more in there. And I think your advice came into two major categories. One of 'em is like the artificial light and digital stimulation. And then the other one is the things that we have in our environment. And I'm sure we can go on and on with getting it really dark and not having the mental stimulation and the clutter. Anything you talked about getting down into that parasympathetic state is the essence of restoration, and we're not good at that when we flick off the TV and then try to hit the pillow, right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, right. As my friend. Kelly Starret, Dr. Kelly Starret says, we're very good at going zero to a hundred, but we're not very good at going a hundred to zero, right? And so, and, but one of the biggest stamps of approval and like that does my heart so good, is when I found out before I even met Kelly Starrett, I was a fan from afar, student from afar is that they had copies of sleep smarter at their gym.

BRAD KEARNS: All right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: For years. And of course people would sometimes not bring them back. And so they kept buying them before we even met. And it's just, again, it was just, there's nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come. Right? So there's that great sentiment and it just came at that time. Now, even some of the things we talked about, many people have probably heard before, but this wasn't a part of the health conversation. You know, some of these things are very practical, very commonsensical.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But if we're in a culture that is basically programming us to have poor sleep. It's, we're inundated, we're immersed in a culture.

BRAD KEARNS: Yeah. Nobody cares, man.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. So you gotta be able to put up some defense for yourself and create a healthy microenvironment for yourself, microculture that supports good sleep, that supports high performance and good function and doing the fitness things that we want to do. And have all these things in a synergistic way to where it's just your lifestyle and it just feels good. Thank you so much for tuning into this very special 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. We've got some amazing, amazing guests in store for you that are gonna blow your mind, and we've also got some powerful masterclasses that you're truly going to love. So make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day, and I'll talk with you soon. And for more after the show, make sure to head over to the [model health show.com](http://modelhealthshow.com). That's where you can find all of the show notes. You can find transcriptions videos for each episode. And if you've got a comment, you can leave me a comment there as well. And please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave us a rating to let everybody know that the show is awesome. And I appreciate that so much and take care. I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.