



EPISODE 920

Get Fit TOGETHER - The Powerful Impact of Community on Fitness & Longevity

With Guest Claudine Cooper

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SHAWN STEVENSON: What is the secret to staying fit in your forties, fifties, sixties and beyond? Today you're going to find out. And I gotta tell you, the answer is very, very simple. But within that simplicity, you're gonna find all kinds of parts and things to consider, and I can't tell you a better person to help us to understand these parts than our special guest today. She's been working in the field of health and fitness for about 30 years, transforming lives. She's definitely transformed mine, had a big impact on me and my family as well, like instantaneously. Alright, so I'm so grateful to be able to share this conversation with you today. It is full of absolute gems, powerful insights, very practical advice.

And one of the greatest things that we can do is learn from people who figure some things out who've gone before us, who've paved a way who are shining a bright light, and she's an absolute bright light, and I cannot wait to get into this conversation. When she arrived today, I gave her a special gift bag that my wife and I put together full of all kinds of goodies, but one of those goodies. One of the things that I was most excited to give her were some of the new sparkling electrolyte performance drinks from LMNT. When it comes to health and fitness and human performance, we know that electrolytes are absolutely critical. So much so that trillions of processes happening in our bodies every single second are run on the sodium potassium pump.

Alright? Sodium and potassium are two of the most vital electrolytes. These are minerals that carry an electric charge that run our body's processes. These are essentially internal batteries that help our bodies to create and to manage energy. When we talk about creating energy, we might be conjuring up ideas of the mitochondria, the glorified power plants of the human cell. Every time I say power plant, a part of me thinks about Homer Simpson. All right. This is a much better well-run power plant taking place in ourselves than the Simpson version. Alright. But we might end up with the Simpsons version if we're not getting in key electrolytes to help to keep the lights on and to help to keep the reactors from overloading or overheating and blowing ish up.

So since we're talking about the mitochondria, one other quick point for you to know is that another key electrolyte magnesium is literally required in order for our bodies to make new

mitochondria. Magnesium is used as an enzyme co-factor that enables our mitochondria to make copies of itself. So if your magnesium levels are too low, then you're automatically going to have a difficult time making new mitochondria, and our energy and metabolism will suffer as a result, and it will with a sodium and potassium deficiency as well. These three are mega important with our performance, with our metabolism, with our immune system and more, and you'll find all three of these key electrolytes in amounts that are based on hundreds of thousands of data points from real people doing real things in the real world.

And that's what you find in the formulas from LMNT. Go to drinkLMNT.com/model. That's drinkL-M-N-T.com/model. Head over there right now and grab the very best electrolyte blend in the world. And guess what else? You're going to get a free, bonus variety pack of their most popular flavors with every single order. Alright, so this can be on their original drink mix or as I share with my very special guest, their new sparkling electrolyte performance drinks as well. Sometimes at the end of the day, you just want to crack open a cold one. All right, and hang out. Let your hair down. Put your feet up for me, I grew up in a household where it might have been stag of beer, Miller Light, very different vibes, very different outcomes in the household.

All right, my kids see me cracking open an LMNT, and they know what time it is. Dad is chillaxing, but also he stay ready. All right, so either we can hang out, chop it up, or we can go outside. We can get our hoop on, it's whatever. And that's the kind of energy that comes along with LMNT. So shout out to those guys such an amazing company. And again, that's drinkLMNT.com/model. Hook yourself up with the best electrolyte blend in the world, plus you get that free bonus pack as well. And now let's kick it to this very special YouTube review of the week.

YOUTUBE REVIEW: Another YouTube review from at IronYogiFitness6984. Shawn is on fire, comedy, and intellect. I'll do whatever the guide tells me to do for cognitive health.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Amazing. Thank you so much for sharing that review over on YouTube. That's right. If you're not subscribed to the Model Health Show YouTube channel, you're missing out. It's popping over there. We got some amazing original YouTube content as well

as these powerful interviews and masterclasses we do here on the Model Health Show. But you get to experience everything, all right? You get to see the studies, you get to hang out here with us in the studio, and it's just, it's super vibey. All right. So pop over to the YouTube channel and subscribe and also share your voice. Really do appreciate that. And without further ado, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day.

With nearly 30 years of experience in health and fitness, Claudine Cooper is a superstar fitness trainer with a passion for creating accessible wellness resources for everyone, including underserved communities. Her free community workouts bring people together to foster social, emotional and physical health. She's here today to share her insights on creating amazing levels of fitness no matter what age bracket you're in, and how to leverage community to stay healthy for a lifetime. Let's dive into this conversation with the one and only Claudine Cooper. All right, welcome. Thank you so much for coming to hang out with me. You don't understand. This is an honor for me.

CLAUDINE COOPER: No, this is an honor for me. Shawn.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Truly, you know, you've, you've already had a big impact on my life and we'll get into all that. But I wanna start off, we gotta let the cat out of the back. Alright. People see you. They're just honestly blown away with your level of fitness. Being in this particular age bracket, 50 years old. You have a extraordinary level of fitness, so I wanna know, you gotta give me the tea. What is your secret? What is your secret? We wanna know.

CLAUDINE COOPER: You want me to clock the tea Sha? Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: What is your secret?

CLAUDINE COOPER: I would say there's really no real secret outside of the fact that I've just been really consistent for probably close to 30 or more years.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So the big C.

CLAUDINE COOPER: The big C. Consistency is the key to longevity, especially if you're talking about fitness, nutrition, health, and wellness.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So the secret isn't that big of a secret.

CLAUDINE COOPER: It's not a big secret, but it's definitely hard to lock in. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Okay. Now with the consistency, what are you consistently doing?

CLAUDINE COOPER: So I typically work out about two hours a day, and I wish I could say that I'm really strict about my nutrition, but I'm not as strict about my nutrition because I do expel a lot of energy. So if I'm hungry, I eat and if I'm not hungry, I don't eat. I just listen to my body.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Okay. We going inward. The internal thermostat.

CLAUDINE COOPER: I call it intuitive eating because I feel like a lot of times people get away from listening to their own bodies and what works for me might not work for anybody else. So I'm not here to promote a certain style of eating. I'm really just promoting listening to your own body.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. And that two hours a day, that might sound lofty for a lot of people. So how are you able to do this? Because this is part of the secret again. That secret sauce, which is you're teaching. You're teaching, you're active. I was just with you on Saturday. You taught one incredible group training class.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Then you scooped up my wife.

CLAUDINE COOPER: I did scoop up your wife.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The boys and I, we went to train, you know, lift some weights and you scooped up my wife and went and brought her into your next class.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And you're doing all this stuff with everybody.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Mm-hmm.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And then at, before when we left, you were about to teach another class.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Yes, yes. So what you and I did, we worked out outside, right? And then I went inside to the gym and I taught a strength training class. And then after that I taught a stretch and mobility class. So it's not all high intensity. It's a combination of different practices that bring a wholeness to the fitness routine and I teach, right? You wouldn't go to a dentist and the dentist's teeth don't look good, right? So I'm in fitness, I teach classes, so therefore I do the classes. I don't just coach. I'm also rep for rep with the participants.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You sure are. You sure are. It is pretty amazing. And so what this really speaks to for me is, you've created conditions in your life that keep you active. Right? And you've impacted and worked with so many people over the years and they've got a variety of different professions that they're doing. And what can you say or speak to how can we start to like embed or build in some more activity into our lives by busy schedules?

CLAUDINE COOPER: This is a great question, and this is the hill I'm gonna die on is let's stop sitting down. It's the devices, it's the tv, it's the Netflix, it's the sitting down, it's the Zoom meetings. I feel like us being sedentary is causing overall health conditions and it's isolating us. It's taking us away from areas where we can. Be together. You know, outside, walking, hiking, moving, even something as small as going to the mall. Have you ever been to the mall in the last year or so? It's like a ghost town. We used to go to the mall for fun. You remember?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

CLAUDINE COOPER: As kids it was like. You get up, you go, you're active, you're moving around, and you're not doing anything specifically active. You're not necessarily going to the gym, but just day-to-day life was more active and it's not right now.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. You said, you said, man, when I thought about going to the mall in St. Louis, we had Union Station, right? And so we go there, just have my mom drop me off, or my friend's mom drop us off and we just hang out at the mall for hours. And also we just spent a lot of time outside. Playing pooping for hours. I don't even know how I was able to do all that stuff. Looking back, no food, no water. Just hooping for hours. And we've just gone, as you said, more and more inside. More and more isolated. And this is part of your superpower that you are inspiring in other people? We all have it. But you're activating it. You have like a shared superpower, which is community. Right. You mentioned these behaviors are isolating us and getting together. Yeah. Is part of that secret sauce. So talk a little bit about that and the community importance when it comes to fitness.

CLAUDINE COOPER: You know, I guess when I think back on why I started moving my body, I really got tapped into the healing power of movement because I was suffering from a lot of grief. So I'm from the inner city during my teenage years, I lost a lot of close relatives, friends and family to. What was going on in the inner city. You know, drug abuse, overdose addictions, gun violence, things like that. And so I needed to move in order to feel better, and I think that's one of the reasons I've been able to be consistent is because I'm not moving to look good.

I'm moving to feel good. And what would happen is I would start walking. That was kind of my first intro to steady state cardio. I would start walking and all of a sudden people would wanna walk with me. They'd be like, Claudine, where are you going? Mm, I'm just walking 'cause it makes me feel good. And then I would have family members walking with me. I would have friends walking with me and all of a sudden, me walking turned into us walking. So that's kind of how it started. And that was when I was a teenager, so that was over 30 years ago.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Holy moly. So it really was like a grassroots type of thing and it evolved into something way bigger. And it was simply, again, and this is the cool thing about it, and you sharing that story, it was something for you. Right. It was something for you, but it was contagious as well, you know. So for all of us to keep this in mind, that and, and that bar, I mean this is, this might be the biggest one, needs to be on a t-shirt. I wasn't working out to look good. I was doing it to feel good. And that's so overlooked. It's so undervalued. Because we have such a superficial society today. And the thing is, if you do the one, the other thing's probably gonna happen too, right?

CLAUDINE COOPER: It's a healthy byproduct, right? When you tap into movement as a healer, when you tap into movement for your mental health, the byproduct, the physical health follows.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Yeah. Now with the community piece? What are some of those ingredients? Why is that community piece so strong in keeping people consistent? What is it about it? People keep showing up to your classes. Why is that?

CLAUDINE COOPER: Well, we should probably backtrack because I started talking about how I grew up in the inner city and I started walking in the inner city, so I didn't go to a far away place. I just put my feet on the pavement and started walking and people began to walk with me. I then got into lifting weights. So in order for me to be a teenager who enjoys lifting weights, I had to get a gym membership. So instead of paying for a gym membership, I got a job at the gym so that I could have a free membership. Always thinking, always thinking.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes.

CLAUDINE COOPER: And from there I started enjoying taking group fitness classes because I liked. The comradery. I like the encouragement. I like getting to know people of all ages. Group fitness is one of those things where you could have someone in their 20, you could have someone in their 70, and it all goes together like a beautiful mosaic. And so once I started going to group fitness, someone asked me, why don't you teach group fitness? But I was just like in my early twenties, and I said, there's no way that the older participants are

gonna take leadership or teachings from a young woman like myself. So I was very shy, not shy in the sense that.

My personality's not shy, but shy about trying to lead older people, but then someone called in sick and I had a certification that I wasn't using because again, I, I didn't think I was ready. And so when someone called in sick and I had a job at the gym, they forced me kind of in the. Space of teaching. And what happened that day has actually followed me throughout my 30 year teaching career. And that is, I simply told the truth. I said, I'm not that good. I don't know exactly what I'm doing, but we're gonna do it together and we're gonna get better together. And since then, I pretty much tell every class. We're gonna get better together, we're gonna get stronger together. And I'm working on myself, inner outer marriage, parenting professionally, always working on myself, and I'm open about that and I'm transparent about that, and people come along for the journey.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So you mentioned some of these ingredients. And thank you for sharing that, by the way. Camaraderie. Encouragement.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: There's an underlying piece here that. Is easy to overlook. And it's accountability. Alright. So with that consistency, you know, we have a spectrum of accountability, right?

CLAUDINE COOPER: Yeah. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And a lot of it could be self accountability. You know, I'm very good for myself personally, you know, discipline, accountability. There's certain things that I want to do that I hold, I hold myself to a certain standard. But there are of course some areas in my life that may be having my wife to be like, Hey. Tap, you know, tapping me on the shoulder, you same holding me accountable. Right?

CLAUDINE COOPER: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And that cannot be valued enough. I think it's wildly undervalued, having accountability and creating it for yourself externally, right? So the internal accountability, if you are being honest with yourself, maybe you're like, you know what, I don't really keep my word as much as I want to when it comes to working out. Can I have or create a condition or be a part of a condition where there's more accountability there, and that group training or having a personal trainer or having a friend who holds you accountable. These are all powerful psychological tools that I don't think we use enough.

CLAUDINE COOPER: There's two things at play with what you're saying right now. The first one is most human beings don't see themselves. We think. We think we are being accountable. We think we are doing what we said we were gonna do. Because if we tell ourselves that we're not doing it, there's shame involved with that. So most people don't welcome shame in, right? But the second piece is everything is more fun if you have someone to do it with, whether it's gym work, whether it's going to target, whether it's cleaning up the house.

Especially the things that are not that enjoyable become a little bit more enjoyable. If you bring your sister, if you bring your brother, if you have a friend that likes to do it too, and so that's one of the reasons why I took the excuses out. I created a workout that was free to everyone. The parking was easy and accessible. You wouldn't need to bring any equipment. You don't even need a mat. All you need to do, you don't even need an RSVP. Just show up. If you show up, I'll take care of the rest. And what I would do is show up when it was raining. I would show up when it was cold.

I would show up if I felt bad. I would show up if I was breastfeeding, pregnant, nursing. It didn't matter because if I show up, that'll demonstrate the consistency. That'll help you hold yourself accountable. Whether or not you wanna admit that, it's hard to be accountable to working out if there's a resource available to you. It takes, it takes that piece out of it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, for sure, for sure. Now you just mentioned, you know, doing this while pregnant.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Oh yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now, with that being said, you got a lot going on. All right? Yes, you are about that life when it comes to your fitness. But for so many people a big part of this, and actually all the years of my clinical work and working in the health and fitness field myself, 23 years coming up here next month.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Congrats.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thank you.

CLAUDINE COOPER: That's amazing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thank you. It's the Jordan number.

CLAUDINE COOPER: It's the Jordan number and you love it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. That part. Yeah. I, I love it so much. But with that being said, you know, just. Having honest conversations, surveying people asking like, okay, so you want this particular goal? We know how to get there. All right, but what is the thing that. Hold you back, or like, maybe we have a plan and they come in, you know, a couple weeks later mm-hmm. And there's different interruptions to the plan. Or, or obstacles come up. Nine times outta 10, it would be related to their family. Right? My, you know, my kids, you don't understand, you know, my husband makes it so difficult. My wife keeps bringing this food into the house, right. Is pointing fingers at the, the family. Well-meaning not intentionally, like they're the problem, but it's complex when you've got family, when you've got a career. You've got a lot of stuff going on. How are you able to manage yourself and stay consistent? When there's so many, the ball's in the air if you're juggling, if you wanna make that analogy. Or so many curve balls life can throw at you. How do you maintain it?

CLAUDINE COOPER: Ooh. So the first thing I wanna circle back to is that you said when you speak with a client who's not able to stay on track, after you guys have actually discussed a plan, they immediately place blame upon external factors.

Which confirms what I was saying before, which is that most people do not wanna hold themselves accountable. Most people are not gonna say. You know what? I drank too much wine. I ate too many desserts. I went to go get fast food. They're gonna say my husband brought the wine in my kids, made me go get fast food.

But the truth is at the heart of anybody's results is accountability. That's where the real results lie. And that's not just in fitness, that's not just in nutrition, that's financial health. That's investing. That's how we parent our children. If we can hold ourselves accountable, we can also change the things we say are making us do X, Y, Z. Okay, so off topic, how do I stay balanced and how do I stay consistent with three young adult children and a husband of 22 years? The first thing is I married someone who's more disciplined than I am. That was the first key. The person we are going to partner with for a lifetime is one of our most significant choices we will ever make. My husband is more disciplined, more consistent, more strict about his nutrition than I am, which allows me to consistently feel like I need to level up. That's one. Number two, my kids can eat whatever they want and I don't necessarily need to join them. It's called self-control.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Come on, come on, come on. So I want to go back to that first point, which is what if people don't have that level up? What if they don't have that person who holds them to that higher standard?

CLAUDINE COOPER: I read something that said we are the sum of the five people we spend the most time with. Our actions reflect. What we're around, who we surround ourselves with. I would have to say probably one of the most difficult parts of my personal level up is that I've had to let go of relationships that negatively impact my overall wellbeing, and that's not something that I recommend everyone do. But it is something that has been of significant impact in the way that I conduct myself, the way that I'm able to elevate in my profession and in my personal life.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. And, you know, life, it's gonna make room. Right? You know, there's only so much of us, and if we are actively engaged, connected, pouring into relationships that might be detrimental and whatever that definition is. It's complex.

CLAUDINE COOPER: It's very complex.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's going to, it's going to be taking up space. And if you want to create space for better or for different, or whatever it is that you aspire towards, sometimes it does require choices like that. And so I love that you said for me, right? Because there's varying degrees of what that can look like.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But we are factually.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We cannot help it. Yeah. We are environment. We are who we hang around. We absolutely are. You know, there's this statement from, you know, even from when we was growing up, you're a product of your environment. You're a product of your environment.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Mm-hmm.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That is true, but it's also true. And what makes us special is that humans, you and I, we can be intentional creators of our environment. Right. We might be born into unideal circumstances. Right. But you know, I'm just thinking about a squirrel in my neighborhood. Alright. A squirrel pops up. It's born into this environment.

CLAUDINE COOPER: It is what it is.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's what it is. You, it's probably not gonna venture off too far from this environment. As a matter of fact, this squirrel is living in, in one of my neighbor's cars. Like I see it always scurry out when he starts the car anyway. Squirrels tend to do that. But I'm saying that to say that we can expand and intentionally change our environment.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Yes we can.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. And we can dare I say, move outside of our habitual environment. Right. And that's what I even did. Just even coming to see you. You know, getting outside of my environment and it just opened up additional doors for me and just for my heart as well. And so thank you for sharing that because it's one of those things that we don't think about enough. We can choose to have certain people around us.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Yes, we can.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right? And this is one of the superpowers we have today. Even if it's virtually yes to start.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Yes, you can. Virtual is where we are right now. We're in 2025. We're literally sitting down recording a podcast together, which is gonna be seen by, I don't know how many people, but what I do know is the virtual world mirrors our real life world as well. So if we are watching people online or watching negative videos or toxic content, we will be taking that in. We are responsible for what we put in our bodies. Nutritiously, but we're also responsible about what we look at, who we surround ourselves with. We're responsible for all of that because it has an impact on our bodies, believe it or not.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Facts.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Mm-hmm.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We've got a quick break coming up. We'll be right back.

It cannot be overstated. How much stress can wreak havoc on our mental and our metabolic health. And there's one nutrient, one antioxidant nutrient that stands out above all others when helping our bodies to manage and metabolize stress. Data published in the Journal of Nutrition and Food Sciences states that both emotional and physical stress can affect a person's vitamin C status. It increases the requirement for vitamin C to maintain normal. Blood levels went under stress. Stress depletes vitamin C levels in the body and reduces the body's resistance to infections and diseases and increases the likelihood of further stress. So

this truly does become a vicious circle, and when vitamin C intake is increased, the negative effects of excess stress hormones are reduced.

And the body's ability to cope with the stress response improves. Now, I've been sharing this information like crazy and enlightening people to this little known fact, but more and more people are realizing this, that the vast majority of vitamin C supplements on the market. Those little vitamin C supplements those little packets out there at the checkout counter, for example, are made from genetically modified corn syrup and corn starch. It is truly bottom feeders, the worst forms of vitamin C from these very, very low quality sources, and it simply does not work as effectively in the body. In fact, a randomized placebo controlled study published in the Journal of Cardiology had people that were undertaking a pretty oxidative habit, which was smoking to have concentrates of my favorite form of vitamin C, which is from Camu, Camu berry, versus standard vitamin C supplements, which come from again.

Genetically modified cornstarch and corn syrup. What the researchers found was that over the course of the one week study, participants taking the concentrate of camu camu Berry had significantly lowered oxidative stress and lowered inflammatory biomarkers, and there were no changes in the group when they're taking the synthetic form of vitamin C. Bottom line, we definitely wanna make sure that we're getting in high quality vitamin C from our food, and also superfood concentrates that have Camu Camu berry, AMLO berry, and Acerola cherry. These are the top tier forms and sources of vitamin C, all organic from Paleo Valley in their incredible essential sea complex.

Head over to paleovalley.com/model and you're gonna get. 15% off your entire order, including their essential C Complex. That's P-A-L-E-O-V-A-L-L-E y.com/model for 15% off. Hook yourself up, hook your family up. This is the Vitamin C supplement that I've been utilizing for years, especially during times of stress. Check them out. paleovalley.com/model and now back to the show.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So what are some of the challenges that, and I know you've seen a lot. What are some of the challenges you face in getting people together.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: To work out in the spirit of fitness and wellness and wholeness. What are some of the challenges with doing that?

CLAUDINE COOPER: Okay, so like I would say the biggest challenge I face hosting big group workouts is that people always tell me they're going to come and then don't come, and then they feel guilty when they see me, but they don't realize I'm good. I'm good guys. I'm good. Whether you come or whether you don't come, whether you went for a hike, whether you did the stairs instead of an outdoor workout. Whatever it is. I'm not judging. If you say you're gonna come to the workout and you don't come, it's all good. It's all good. It's gonna be there as a resource for people who need it and people who want it. But I never want people to feel like I'm, here comes Claudine, she's gonna ask me why I wasn't at the workout. I just don't roll like that. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, I'll, I've seen that too. I don't want you, I don't want you to come up to me with excuses I didn't ask and it's cool. It's all right. And, but just to, actually, let's just highlight this point.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You said it a little bit, just a little sprinkling of it earlier, but you've been doing something phenomenal and as you mentioned, just being able to, yes, you have to sustain your livelihood.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, you have a career.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But you know how important it is to give. And you know how important it is to uplift our community, especially coming from the conditions you come from.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Absolutely.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Same as me. You know, i'm just thinking about, I met, I met Anne when I was living in Ferguson, Missouri. And I would, you know, just get outta my neighborhood. I'd run from my apartment. Up to the park and run back. People were known for getting shot in that park. I'm just gonna keep it one thousand.

CLAUDINE COOPER: You were risking your life for Anne.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But you know, no, she was risking her life coming over to see me.

CLAUDINE COOPER: To see you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: She didn't had no business being in the neighborhood, to be honest. But, you know, just getting out my doors and Yeah, finding a way and there was like a pull up bar at the park and just doing what I could do with what I had. You know, and fortunately I had access to the university gym. Right? Which was just 15 minutes away, the university I was attending. And so, but there wasn't any other gyms in our area. In Ferguson, florissant. In Florissant, there was like a club fitness eventually that popped up. But, you know, it, again, it's just being able to, for us to be aware that there are options, there are opportunity. But also creating that for other people.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. And so what I started to do was. You know, start to have events, you know, and like free classes for people to attend. To learn about nutrition, you know, exercise classes and giving people the access that I didn't have, right? And so if you feel like you don't have that access, create the access, right?

CLAUDINE COOPER: Bingo.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so that's one of the things that you've done here in Inglewood. And again, you mentioned you don't need any money.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Nope.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You don't need any equipment.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All you need is your body. And. A little bit of fun, a little bit of preparedness to have some fun. You know, just show up. And the rest, when you push play, it's beautiful. You know, we talking, we got kids. Maybe like three years old, up to folks who are like 70, maybe 80 years old. And everybody's engaged and having a great time. And also what I saw was you're providing levels for everybody along the way. Just your experience, your expertise, your care, you know, so everybody can participate. Right. And I just wanna thank you for that.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Aw. Thank you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Because this is, we need this so much. And doing that, what was the inspiration for you to create that and create that accessibility for everybody?

CLAUDINE COOPER: Right. So, as you said, I too am from the inner city. I'm from Minneapolis, Minnesota. And where I come from, there are gyms, but they are, you know, more like, we would say like family friendly type facilities. So in my mind when I moved to Inglewood, I was like, oh, I'm sure there's gonna be something similar here. Well, I moved here 25 years ago and there weren't a lot of wellness resources. So I did what I've always done. I put my tennis shoes on and I started walking outside in a neighborhood where people didn't walk. They got in their cars and they drove to where they needed to go. And I'll never forget one of my neighbors who used to sit out on the front porch and smoking and drinking and doing whatever they're doing, was like, girl, what are you doing?

I said, I'm walking. Where are you walking to? I said, I'm walking for exercise. He said, what? Well, you look great. I said thank you. Next thing you know, somebody he knew was like, I wanna walk too. Those same neighbors from 25 years ago come to my workout. And I could get choked up thinking about it, but what I've been doing is just being a demonstration of what it looks like to use what you have and just do what you can. And so when I noticed there were limited resources in my neighborhood. Instead of complaining about it, instead of rattling cages, I just said, how can I, what can I do? And a woman from the gym classes that I was teaching said she could no longer afford her gym membership. And I've been on hard times before, so I know what that feels like.

So I was like, well, maybe I'll create a outdoor bootcamp in the park, and I'll do it while my kids are at sports, so that it's kind of like I'm able to do two things at once. And so I asked her if she wanted to come to that and she said yes, and I felt like, also I was connecting it to my service. Something that I really feel passionately about is that all of us have gifts and we're all called to serve each other with those gifts and not to be in expectation mode. Just doing it because someone else could benefit, and so she did come to a couple of those workouts that were outside in the park, but what was surprising was other people came.

And then more people came, and by the time 2020 hit and all the gyms shut down here in California, you know, California was one of the most strict environments during the pandemic. This outdoor workout that I had created years before became like a mecca for human connection, and it went from maybe 20 people every week to 200 people every week. And every single week, Shawn, someone would come to my free outdoor workout during the pandemic and break down in tears. And I'll never forget even listening to you and how human connection is a pillar of wellness. But to remove that and believe me, I took a lot of flack for, continued to gather people during a time when we were not supposed to gather. I would do everything exactly the same if given the opportunity again.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, you were outside by the way.

CLAUDINE COOPER: I was outside in a park that is massive and held hundreds of people for the purpose of movement and connection, and it was one bright spot, in a week, where people didn't see a single soul.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. We need each other. I'm just gonna keep on saying that. We'll put a study up for everybody to see. But this was just published and these researchers were looking at, yes, we know that relationships, healthy social bonds are quite actually the number one determinant on how long we're gonna live. But the opposite is true as well. And so these researchers accumulated all this data. And they found that social isolation is deadly. It is deadly. And there's a big difference between being alone and being lonely, right? So, just to be clear. So what they found was that, you know, having some time, you know, when you are, you know by yourself, you know, that's, that's perfectly natural.

That's normal. But when we're disconnected from each other, it starts to create these epigenetic changes in our bodies that make us less resilient to stress. Right. We need human connection, even the most introverted among us. We need each other. We need human connection. We need, it is a important part of processing stress. And also just being in a space together with other people, you know? I think, again, this, some of these things are very primal. And we can't explain it yet. We're trying to figure out why it's so powerful. But we see in this, in this particular study, about a 30 to 40% increase in early mortality when you are socially isolated. It's deadly. It's, it's very, very bad for us. And so being thrust into conditions where you're no longer around other people is it's, you know, we've got data on some outcomes.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Don't get me started. Don't get me going.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, and again, looking back in retrospect, many of the health authorities have changed their tune, but certain things are just like very, very obvious. And we knew what was gonna happen. But with that being said, I want to ask you about again, when somebody is in a situation where they want to get started.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. They won't, they want to get healthy. They want to exercise, but they're, we just say they're, they're scared. They're hesitant. They're uncertain. Mm-hmm. About getting into a gym environment, or coming out. What would you say to that person?

CLAUDINE COOPER: Hmm. To be honest, I'm not in the business of thrusting people into environments that make them anxious or nervous or make them feel uncomfortable. So I wouldn't press anyone to go into the gym if they're not a gym person. I also wouldn't press anyone to go to my, my massive workout, my big workout. But what I would say is find a place where you can just lace up your shoes and you can just walk. You can do it for 30 minutes, 10 minutes, whatever works, because that's really how I started. I started by walking, and then I moved into putting a VHS tape into a VCR, and then I moved into working out at the gym. It was a progression, and with anything progression helps us feel a little bit more confident and a little bit more comfortable, and then we can go to the next level.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love it. Just steps.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Steps.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Baby steps.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Baby steps.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now you mentioned A VHS. What's a VHS? What is that?

CLAUDINE COOPER: If you don't know what A VHS is, this conversation is not for you. But yeah, I did used to have to steal my mom's videotapes of the back then those would've been the influencers. They were aerobics instructors who made videotapes, and I used to. I didn't like the music, but I used to pop the tape into the VCR and I would turn on my own music. And, you know, I was a teenager, so it was West Coast rap for me since probably the time I was in the ninth grade.

SHAWN STEVENSON: West side!

CLAUDINE COOPER: West side! And, and so I would pop the music in and I would turn the videotape off or the, the music and I would use my own music and I would do those moves. You've been to my workout 30 something years later. I still use a similar technique. I play the music I enjoy and I do the moves that you might find on an old videotape of the aerobics instructors from back in the day.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, that's the thing. It's contagious. You can't help but dance. You can't help it. And yeah, that really speaks to. Again, for, for me, my experience with you is just vibes. It's just such a thanks, a fun vibe.

CLAUDINE COOPER: It's a vibe.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And that, that in and of itself, it helps to bring down those walls of hesitation and worrying about, do I look a certain way? Everybody seemed so free and just engaged. And that's such a blessing. Those are the type of things that you can't turn off. It's just, it's on you. It's a very powerful testament of who you are. So again, I just want to wanna share that, but how'd you get here? All right. Because obviously those baby steps also come with your own education and training and your researching and what you're reading. So, what have you been doing for yourself to really kind of build up that reserve that you have and this, this bank of knowledge that just is beaming from you?

CLAUDINE COOPER: Well, I still feel like a baby in the industry, and even though I've been doing fitness for over 30 years, I am open and I'm a sponge to learn. I love new information. I have started to read a lot of information about the connection between the mind and the body and how we are holding on to a lot of our stress internally. Especially as I enter this next phase of my life, which would be like the menopausal phase. I've noticed that a lot of my peers are also having high stress, toxic stress, trouble releasing weight.

And so I've made it a mission to read more about how our body holds onto stress and how movement can actually move that stress out of us. And so you say, at my workout, people felt free. That's the highest compliment because that means that I'm allowing people for even an hour a week to just release their inhibitions and to feel more free and more connected to one

another. There's a few things I've discovered in my reading. One of them is exactly as you mentioned, isolation is terrible for our soul, but it's also bad for our physical health. People who suffer from chronic illnesses or people who suffer from sedentary lifestyle, tend to be alone a lot.

And it's interesting o Shawn, because it's hard to say what comes first, the chicken or the egg, because people who live a sedentary lifestyle are also depressed. Not in, not 99 out of a hundred, but a lot. And then they tend to expel a negative energy. So then does that make people want to be around you? No, it doesn't. So there's this sort of symbiotic relationship between having less movement in your life. And also having less relationships in your life. And so when you open yourself up to moving, you're also moving your body, but you're moving out of your chair. You're moving out of your living room, and you're making way for new connections to find you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes.

CLAUDINE COOPER: And that's what happens at my workout. It's social, it's emotional. It's physical and it's mental.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes. Going back to what we talked about earlier, making room. You're making room.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Making room.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And making it possible. That's so powerful. I love that. You mentioned you're a student you didn't go to like Yes, I am such an expert. I know this, which you are respectfully.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Thank you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You just went to I'm a baby. I still feel like I'm a baby. I'm a sponge. That's why I'm sitting here with you today, right there. And you could probably see it on my face, but like, I'm a fan, right? The people who sit here, I'm a student. I'm a fan. And sometimes

people, you know, they talk, you know, maybe they listen to my show or read my books, whatever the case might be, I don't care. I'm a fan of you and your greatness. You know, there's something extraordinary about you and I'm just here to learn. You know, sometimes it might be like, well, you know all this. I don't. All right. I don't wanna know that I know or talk about that. I know. I want to hear it from you. I want to hear how you say it, you know, and so everybody listening, that's such an important quality to keep that kind of childlike state of mind or perspective, and to stay curious and to never feel like you got it all figured out. These are some crisis qualities.

CLAUDINE COOPER: And I gotta say this, you're a fan of me, but I'm a fan of you. And speaking back about relationships, the relationships that I have had to let go over my time of learning and growing and processing are the relationships where people say things like, yeah, Claudine's cool, but I'm not a fan. And those are people that you might find close in your circle that, that as you elevate, there are people who say, wow, I'm a fan of what you do. I'm a fan of what you do. But there may be people who knew you from back in the day who might not be a fan. They may still be holding you to the version of who you were when they knew you in seventh grade.

And guess what? That's okay, because that just tells you where they are and where they've stayed. But me, I want to grow. I wanna learn. I wanna take in as much information as possible. And if the people around me aren't committed to that level of learning and growing, having a beginner's mind, it tells me that they may not. Be able to go with me if they can't grow with me, and that's no offense. It's just that I wanna make sure that I am in the right place with the right minds at the right time. And I am a huge fan of the work you do, but the fact that I could sit here in this chair after you've had people who I've read books of who I listen to, and you ask me and I say, I don't have all the doctorates, I don't have all the letters behind my name. I'm still trying to absorb as much information as I can to this day and until the day I die.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes. Alright. This has been awesome already, but I gotta ask you practically for the people listening. Get some, get some tips.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Oh, tips. Tips.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So if, let's just say, you know, that we're still, as did this recording. We're still in the summer. Right. Summer bunnies are still out here. All right. What are, and I know it's, again, there's gonna be, there's a lot of answers, but I'm gonna ask you for three.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Okay.

SHAWN STEVENSON: What are your top three tips if people are wanting to slim down, tone up a little bit. Get in better shape. You know, we're not gonna put like a specific label on it.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Okay.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But people are, they're one to lose some body fat, they wanna feel a little bit better. All right. What are your top three tips for having to glow up?

CLAUDINE COOPER: My top three tips for how to get in the best shape of your life. The first one is find something you actually enjoy doing that's active. It can be pickleball, it can be dance, it could be running, it could be hiking. As long as you enjoy it, you're most likely to commit to it. The second thing I would say is surround yourself with like-minded people once you find that thing, so if you lock into something that you enjoy doing and then you have healthy social relationships with people who also like doing those things, you're more likely to stay committed and to stay consistent.

The third and final thing is limit sugar and limit alcohol. I'm talking to myself right now. Those are two things that we never need. But we enjoy them socially. And one thing I've noticed as I have limited my intake has had an impact on my skin, has had an impact on my mood, has an impact on my sleep. And all those things lead to better overall health.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love it. Mic drop.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Period.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Amazing. Amazing. Listen, so where can people find out more? Where can they find out about your classes? Where can they follow you? Please share.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Okay. This is the hardest part for me. I gotta take a breath 'cause I'm like, I hate promoting myself and this is so hard for me, but I'm gonna do it. So if you're looking for me, you can find me online. I have social media on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, all of the above. You can also go to my website at claudinecooper.com. I teach free workouts almost every Saturday in Inglewood, California, but I've also traveled and done them in other cities. So I'm happy to welcome new people and to meet up with anybody who's interested.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Boom, amazing. Amazing. I got one more question. What is the model that you are here to set for other people with the way that you live your life personally?

CLAUDINE COOPER: Ooh. What is the model that I'm here to set with how I live my life? Hmm. Oh, that's a tough question. I guess I would say I can't really talk about anything related to my journey without expressing my dedication to my faith walk. I'm a woman who believes in a spiritual power, whatever you may call it, but I truly feel like having God at the center of my life has been a game changer for me. Not only in my physical health, in my mental health, but also in my marriage, in my parenting and the way that I meet people where they are. I can only give credit to God.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That part. All right. We're talking spiritual fitness, physical fitness, mental fitness, all of the above. I appreciate you so much. This was awesome. Thank you.

CLAUDINE COOPER: I'm so glad you had me here. I feel so like honored to even be in this space with you. Thank you, Shawn. Thank you for all that you do and especially how you showed up for us during the pandemic. That was big.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's, it's my honor. The honor is all mine. Thank you. Thank you.

CLAUDINE COOPER: Thanks.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The one and only Claudine Cooper, thank you so much for tuning into this episode today. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this. This is so rich with priceless insights. We need each other. We need community, and this time, more than ever, it's important for us to be intentional and proactive. AI is here. More virtual experiences are here than ever before, and they're just getting started. We need to be more human than we've ever been. We need to connect. We need to be together more often in the real world. It is an opportunity as more and more things are shifting into this AI paradigm, for us to focus on being more human, for us to connect, and not to say that the virtual revolution that's happening isn't a way that we can connect.

Yeah, that's awesome. We're gonna be able to step into, put the goggles on. Boom, you're in the room with your distant cousin in Croatia and you're over in Brooklyn or whatever. You're gonna be able to like instantly be in the same room with people and see them as if they're right there. That stuff, it's already here and that's wonderful. These are ways that we can foster and support relationships, but our genes don't know nothing about that. It takes thousands of years for our genes to really make significant changes. Of course, there are mutations that can happen. Shout out to the X-Men, but we've evolved to be together in the real world, and there are certain things that are unseen that we need.

We need that microbial exchange that data file sharing that helps to keep us resilient, to build our immune system. It's like a light workout. When we get together, we need that energy exchange, and I'm talking about this not just in this kind of soft science, but very, very important science when looking at the quantum level and also looking at. Our innovations and being able to take certain measurements and scanning the human body and the energy fields that we emit. We have these things that are very common in hospital settings today and in healthcare, right? EEGs, EKGs, reading the energy that the human body is throwing off this electrical energy.

We have an electrical field, we have an electromagnetic field that extends beyond our bodies. A tube Taurus, according to the researchers at HeartMath, extends from the human body, several feet from your body. It's an energy field that interacts with others, and there's a data exchange. There's an energy exchange that you just can't explain or replicate. And again, we

need that. We need to be around each other. We need to foster these relationships. We need to play together. We need to grow together. We need to train together. We need each other more than ever. We need to eat together. I can go on and on, but please show some love to Claudine today. She's a very, very special individual and very impactful with the work that she's doing.

Share your love, share your heart. She's at fit wit three, so F-I-T-W-I-T, and the number three on Instagram. Again, Claudine Cooper, look her up. Share your heart, share a message with her. I'm sure it will blow her away. Truly pour into her spirit and she gives so much to others. So please pop over and show her some love. And listen, speaking of showing you some love, what we've got in store for you is going to blow your mind. Keep upleveling your life. We've got some amazing masterclasses and world class guests coming your way very, very soon. So make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have 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.