



## **EPISODE 957**

# **Why Everything We've Been Told About Addiction is Wrong (And What We Can Do to Change It)**

**With Guest Dr. Adi Jaffe**

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**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Welcome to the Model Health Show. This is one of the most important episodes and one of the most important topics that we've ever covered here on the Model Health Show. Right now, according to the American Addiction Centers, nearly 50 million Americans are struggling with addiction, and the ramifications of addiction are not just a personal issue. It's a family issue. It's a societal issue as well. And the reason that this issue is so rampant is that we very often are unaware or simply not connected to any. Proven science-backed solutions in dealing with addiction. And so today we have one of the leading experts in the world on the topic of addiction and addiction, education and treatment. And interestingly, we're gonna be talking about the capacity with addiction. You know, the stuff that we typically think about, whether this is, you know, drugs and alcohol and pornography and things like that. But also, what about the healthy stuff? Can we get addicted to something that is largely considered to be healthy?

So much so that it harms us. So I'm gonna ask him about that as well, which is a really interesting topic and something for us to think about. And so I'm very excited to share this with you today because in this turmoil that we are experiencing as a society where there are more and more things to be addicted to. We need to have this conversation. We need to have solutions. We need to have some hope, and so I'm very grateful to share this powerful episode with you with the amazing Dr. Adi Jaffe. Adi Jaffe PhD is a nationally recognized expert on mental health addiction relationships, and more formerly a lecturer in the UCLA psychology department and the executive director and co-founder of one of the most progressive mental health treatment facilities in the country.

He's now the founder of I-G-N-T-D Recovery. Dr. Jaffe attended UCLA, graduating with a bachelor's and a PhD in psychology using both his personal experience and research with his clients. Dr. Jaffe now writes for Psychology Today and has been featured all over major media, including CNN, the Insider, Los Angeles Times, and many other media outlets. He's here to reveal the biggest misconceptions about addiction and science back ways to address addiction in our society today. Let's dive in this conversation with the incredible Dr. Adi Jaffe. Let's kick things off by talking about some of the biggest misconceptions about addiction that you want more people to know.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah, thank you. I mean, there's so many, but I'll just pick two or three that we can talk about here. The first one is, I think most of us have an image in our head that somebody who struggles with addiction, you can tell, right? Like you can just see it on them. We picture that those, you know, faces of meth videos where people are just crinkled up and looking like they're about to die or home somebody who's homeless and, you know, just struggling to survive. But the reality is that's not at all what addiction looks like. And the first thing that you need to understand is, you know, even by the most conservative estimates. If you include behavioral addictions, like if we're not just talking about drug and alcohol, we're talking about porn, we're talking about technology, we're talking about gambling, we're talking about food addictions.

At least 60, 65 million adults struggle in this country, right? That's a fifth of all the adults in this country. And so you've gotta realize, and I think this is important for those of us who believe that we'll be able to tell if we're struggling with it, if somebody else is, you gotta realize that next door neighbor, the soccer mom, that high level executive that you see, they could all be struggling with it 'cause people are pretty expert at hiding it. So I think that's the number one thing. It's all around us. And I think we have to recognize that first and foremost, and actually I believe it's the number one hidden cost for all businesses. They don't realize it. Healthcare costs, absenteeism, reduced productivity.

People report in sick, but what they're really dealing with is consequences of their addiction. So, that's the number one piece, or maybe I just added a second one in there. Then, and this is probably pretty controversial, I think one of the biggest misconceptions that people have about addiction is that the only way to beat your addiction is to quit whatever it is you're addicted to and anything else that is mind altering or that can be addictive for the rest of your life like that. There's this assumption that if you crossed over in what we call addict territory, which I hate that title anyway, but if you crossed over into that space, you're done. Like you can never touch a drink, you can never smoke a cigarette, you can never whatever, watch a porn movie, eat a hot dog, or a, you know, a pizza because you've been addicted to that before. So I think that's the other kind of BS thing that we've gotta deal with.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So number one, the face of addiction is different from what most of us think.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** By a far. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Which is huge. And just again, think about that context and how many people, you said one out of five.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** At least.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, yeah. And in any given room, you know, there are people who are struggling and the other piece is, you know, this kind of all or nothing mentality when it comes to addiction. And we're gonna talk about this because again, I'm so excited to have you here. You know, and to have this conversation, and this is something that's impacting all of our lives, whether we realize it or not. And I know that of course I come from a lineage of addiction. And you have your experience as well.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Sure.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And definitely, if anybody's missed your first interview here on the show, go back and listen to that one, because going through your story, unbelievable. And for you to be, even sitting here today is just a miracle in and of itself. But you've turned that experience into teaching and you understand this stuff like firsthand, a lot of people who are teaching around the subject of addiction don't really have that firsthand experience, especially to the degree that you've had it.

And so for us to be aware again, like we've gotta be mindful of how we compartmentalize things, and this is a good point to ask you about this, because for me, that brings up the question about our obsession with healthy things potentially. Right? So we've got a big movement of health and wellness that's going on. Thankfully, you know, the conversation is shifting, but for thousands of years, humans were doing certain things that were just more natural today. We just have an environment to where there's a lot of abnormal things that we

have to be aware of, but our dedication to, we'll just say let's get into the topic of, it's Orthorexia, right?

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Where we can be potentially a addicted to healthy habits. Let's talk about that a little bit.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah. I mean, orthorexia is the name that was given to a disorder where essentially somebody is so obsessed with eating healthy that they end up harming themselves. And again, if you think about it, right, like actually literally as I'm preparing for a talk next week. I keep bringing people back to this definition 'cause in our head we have this idea of addiction that we got from either movies, right, from media, or, and this is by the way, another way that I know that addiction is more prevalent than most of us give a credit for. I've spoken, I'm sure you have as well. I don't know, at least tens of thousands, or probably at this point, maybe a couple of hundred thousand people that I've spoken in front of.

And so, almost in every room, at some point in the middle of one of my talks, I ask people to raise their hand if they or somebody they know has ever struggled with addiction. And the vast majority of every single room picks up their hand, right? So we're all one degree of separation. We're either the person struggling like I used to, or we know somebody who's struggling. And so Orthorexia is more around the obsession. So I'll explain a little in psychology, the term obsession is the thinking about something, obsessively thinking about something. Compulsion is the doing of something. So somebody who has orthorexia is obsessed with eating healthy to the degree that when they go eat they're, they have this compulsion to either limit what they eat or get so obsessive about.

Think about everything from the sourcing of the food to the way it was prepared or you know, the specific cut or you know, there's all these different, the weight of it, all these different elements that they end up really harming themselves. 'cause either they can't get enough calories or a lot of people don't think about this. They restrict their diet so much that they're eating all the food they need in this area, but they're not getting all these vitamins, all

these minerals, all these other things that they need 'cause they're not touching those food sources. It's fascinating.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. So fascinating. And it's easier than ever because of there's so many different diet frameworks to choose from and. Again, the intention can be altruistic and positive and it can help a lot of people, but we have to be mindful of what we decide to put in and what we decide to take out. And I would really think, again, it should always be based on what we need. Instead of just subscribing to a diet framework like it's a religion.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah. But I think that's the problem with modern media, social media, et cetera, is, you know, the algorithm kind of helps you find things that repeat what you've been interested in before, right. They're likely to catch your attention. We were talking about orthorexia and that's, you know, that's around the food you take into your body, but people can get addicted and compulsive around exercise. I think about this every once in a while. I see a David Goggins video where he is like taping up his legs with duct tape 'cause they're tore up and he can't run anymore. I'm like, man, I think you're running too much. I don't know. Something's telling me that maybe you need a break doing upper body up.

Kidding. He's also doing the upper body workouts. But my point is, it's very obvious when you take it to that extreme. But, and I love David Goggins. I love a lot of the stuff that he stands for and the transformation he's been through. But to look at somebody like that and say, that's what I need to do with my life. Without any consideration for your own makeup, your biology, your background, what worked for me and I teach this to all the clients that I work with ever. What worked for me may not be the thing that works for you. I'm using myself as an example, my job as a helper, and I'm sure you feel the same way with, you know, like you, when you write.

A book about what people can, should eat. It's a, there's a recommendation of, Hey, this is a canvas. I'm painting my picture on it. Pick what works for you. There's a good chance there's almost a hundred percent chance that everything that I did is not everything you should do. Right. Should be a mix. And I think in today's media, that gets lost because David Goggins is about running whatever, 470 miles a day or whatever he does. Right? Then you've got you

know, each person who's well known, they're known for their thing, or you had Dr. Aman on he know, he's known for his spec scans for the brain.

So if you look at Dr. Amens stuff, it's like the SPECT scan is the only thing that exists in the universe of reading the brain. Well, it's not we can't, it's like social media doesn't give us nuance. You can't, it doesn't blend well. You have to do a lot of really hard work to do the research nowadays.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yes. Now what about, with that being said, and our focus on health, which again, this is something that takes a lot of dedication, of intention today more than ever. Because of the environment that we're in, usually, again, guiding us, trying to pull us, hook us, right, hook us to making choices that we know are unhealthy. More, you know, more significantly. So, you know, the fast food hooks, for example, hooks up to process food hooks. And so eating clean, eating well, eating real food, it takes in intention and dedication. Now what if we're dedicated to that, but it becomes a situation? Can it become a situation? Is my question where we're so dedicated to it that it can damage our social relationships, which are also healthy. Let's talk can you talk about the social dynamic?

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah. And if it's okay, I'm gonna visit this from two different sides, right? So first of all, something we see with all addictions, that's one of the indicators that something's going really wrong, is that your social circle, your environmental milieu, right? The places you find yourself in and the people you find yourself with starts shifting potentially. And it can go a bunch of different ways, right? So I was addicted to meth but I found meth because I was already selling drugs. I was selling ecstasy. And for those of you who were old enough to remember the rave scenes of the late nineties and early two thousands, that's, I was selling ecstasy in that scene.

And people started asking me for more drugs. Somebody asked for meth, started selling meth, and eventually I got myself in this situation where I was really behind on studying at UCLA. And one of my client's friends called whatever you wanna call 'em, were like, Hey, you know that stuff you sell to everybody else? You do some of that, you'll be really good at studying. And they were not wrong. So that's how I found meth. But once I started using it. If

you don't know anything about meth, like you're up at three o'clock in the morning for two days in a row, well who the hell is up at three o'clock in the morning? Not that many people, Shawn. There's not that, there's like graveyard shift people and people are addicted to cocaine and meth. That's pretty much it. So then you end up hanging out with other people who are addicted to meth 'cause they're the only people up in that time. Make sense? So on one side there's a social version of it.

Your whole social environment changes. The next thing you know, all your friends are gone. Everybody else who used to hang out with, they're gone 'cause you can only hang out with the people who do what you do. Or there's the other version where you completely isolate. You get so into your habit, you can't even have a social environment anymore 'cause nobody will spend time with you. 'Cause either you're so out of it or the habits you've taken on are so limiting. And now I'll step back and I just, I wanna put this out here. I got a lot of friends who fall into this category, so excuse me as you listen to this, but like biohacking I think has gone to this level now in our world where it's man.

I know of some, I have friends who are, who fall in this category where they gotta eat their dinner. They gotta be done with dinner by 6:00 PM 'cause they want three to four hours before they go to sleep where their body is done digesting. So, you know, my wife and I, we're friends with them. We, you try to do a double date, try to figure out a way to go eat somewhere out and be done at 6:00 PM some of them are like five. They go to eat at five. And then, you know, they wake up at four o'clock in the morning, they're tired by three. It's it's this insane world. And I just talked about eating habits, infrared, cold, plunges cryo peptides.

I've got, I know these people who, you know, they spend six, seven hours a day on their wellness routine. I don't know how you can spend, let's say you have a job on top of this, right? You do something for work, whether it's being an influencer, you have a regular job like. How do you spend six to seven hours on your wellness routine and do everything else you're supposed to do in life and have a social life? And so to me, I'm, I think we're starting to see these signals like orthorexia and the eating side of people that get so obsessed with longevity. They go so obsessed with maximizing their VO2 max with their potential, you know,



their HRV and all this stuff where they're, they stopped living. It's like they're living for optimization, and I start questioning that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Wow. Yeah. I mean, and of course today with access, there's so much access. There's this influencer, young kid, I think he's around 19 at this point, named Clavicular, and his whole life is all about optimizing his looks. And since he was like 13 or 14, he started taking testosterone. Alright. Just we're talking about around the age of puberty. And just supplanting a natural puberty. And now he's on all of these very regimented drugs that he's taking including obviously testosterone, including crystal meth.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** For hollow cheeks as he puts it. All right. And many people are following him. And as with any quote influencer, it's just what are you really getting? What are you aspiring to? Because he is using, of course you know, plastic surgery and all these different things because he feels like if you look a certain way, you're going to be able to attract mates at will, right.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** In my knee probably. Right?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Create better income.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** All the things.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah. Here's the thing that's amazing to me about the world. We got to, I almost feel like I wanna start taking notes so I don't forget, there's so many thoughts running through my head, right? But first of all, let's start plainly, the idea that looking good is important is not new to clavicular, right? We're all pretty sure that for millennia, I don't know how many millennia, but many of them people have tried to look good. A couple of issues. First of all, what that means changes, right? We talk about women being Ruben esque.

For those of you too young or not educated enough about like art. This, that becomes from a painter named Ruben who painted women as robust and they were bigger bodied. Well, in his time, that was beauty. That was sexy, right? And so, you go to different cultures, you go to different times. What is pretty is different. You look at Twiggy from the seventies, she was like, anorexic. Nobody wants to, I don't want I'll put it this way. I don't want anybody who looks like that 'cause I'm afraid I'm gonna break you by just shaking your hand. So, that's number one comment in terms of him prioritizing looks. That's fine.

But what that means changes with time. The second piece is you look, we live in an age where you can get plastic surgery, you can inject all these things. By the way, just for complete transparency, I'm on testosterone. About 10 years ago, I started having substantial like mood and energy depressions. Went to my doctor, found out I had low thyroid production started there. And then when they tested my testosterone, I was at 50.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Whoa.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Just so everybody knows freight, testosterone, the range is 300 with a thousand for a man. So I was, I think by the way, my meth use when I was younger, 'cause I literally didn't, wouldn't go to sleep for three days at a time. I think I just ran out my body, right? So the idea of using chemicals, using yI was 128 pounds, by the way, so I'm 165 sitting in front of it. Meth is great for weight loss. It's just bad for your teeth. Long term really bad for your legal status as I found out when you go to jail. And then the problem is it's addictive. And then eventually the hollow teeth, the hollow cheeks become hollow teeth and hollow other things. So that's a whole other problem. But using chemicals, using physical alterations to change, that's not new. I mean, no offense Kim, but Kim Kardashian has been doing it for God knows how long you know, and so has every other celebrity that we know on the face of the planet.

So none of that is new. What is new and unfortunately for that guy is that now a 19-year-old who has no experience, no wisdom, and he's not about longevity, but I don't think he wants to die 40 years old from cancer. But he has no idea what he gets getting himself into. Right. He's maximizing short-term benefits right now with zero appreciation. You remember being 18,

man, I thought I knew everything. Yeah. I thought I ruled the world. I thought I was God. Nothing could hurt me. I was invincible. That's what this kid is. He's also, by the way, on meth, I felt totally invincible on meth. So if he's on meth and taking testosterone at 19 years old and getting what was it like jaw surgery to look even better, by the way, good looking kid.

I wish you all the best man, but I don't think you need to do all this stuff to still be a pretty good looking person. So this is the problem with social media. It's kind of what I was talking about before, which I know is why you were bringing this up. We're now in this age where unfortunately, if you say the more shocking thing, you increase your chances of being viewed. And we've now correlated. We've associated having a lot of views and a lot of followers with being good and knowledgeable, and I think that misses the boat. So all the more power to that kid. I hope he makes it to 40 or 50 years old. I think something you and I talked about in the past already, especially in this world, especially in this day and age, go do all the research.

Go find all the craziest shit you want to potentially do, but then take a step back and just take a little bit deeper, right? We're not talking about here right now, but I do a lot of work in talks and consulting with people on AI for health and mental health. AI is a tool. It'll do what you want it to do. Once you've found a solution, go to AI and go, here's who I am, here's what I do. Tell me some of the risks. Tell me some of the potential, you know, problems that I may develop by following this piece of advice because if you don't look for the other side, you may get yourself in trouble.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, I love that. I love that.

Are you about that snack life? The paradigm of snacks have changed dramatically in recent years. I grew up my snacks, animal crackers, little Capri sun, maybe some random candy from my grandma's purse. You know, she's got the butter scotches and peppermints in there. All right. Of course we got little chips, little cookie. Listen. That's all fine and dandy, but our paradigm of eating candy has really messed us up. And so trying to get healthier, I started having granola bars right at granola bars as a kid as well. Super sweetened with a picture of a guy with a wig on, you know, look like one of the founding fathers on the box.

You know what I'm talking about, but trying to get healthier. You know, I switch over, I do the granola, healthier, lower sugar, or low fat paradigm of these cereal bars, but still really missing the point. And then today we had all these innovations and these newly invented chemical complexes to try to trick our bodies with fake fats or fake sugars, and we end up with a ultra process conglomeration of a new kind.

What about something real? What about utilizing the paradigm of a food bar, something on the go? But with all real food ingredients, and that's what we have with the Paleo Valley Superfood bars. Not only does it have over eight organic super foods and collagen rich, 100% grass fed bone broth protein, there are no added sugars or sugar alcohols. They come in a variety of flavors, including red velvet, lemon meringue, apple cinnamon, and what I have right here, dark chocolate chip. These are the only food bars that we keep here at the studio for our team and our guests. And I keep these at home for my family and I travel with these as well. Huge fan of the Paleo Paleovalley Superfood bars.

And right now you get access to 15% off their Amazing Superfood bars when you go to [paleovalley.com/model](https://paleovalley.com/model). That's P-A-L-E-O-V-A-L-L-E y.com/model for 15%. They're phenomenal Superfood bars plus all of their other incredible snacks and superfood, whole food based supplements. So much more. Head over there, check 'em out. [Paleo valley.com/model](https://paleovalley.com/model) and now back to the show.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Wow. As I mentioned, you know, the access today is incredible. Yeah. And having also access to resources to utilize the access is another story too, because again, this kid is spending tens of thousands of dollars a month to optimize his looks. And he said blatantly, he's not optimizing for longevity. And as you mentioned, the way he's doing things is probably not gonna see that. Then we've got people who are spending tens of thousands of dollars a month to optimize for longevity and then they end up sometimes looking crazy. Yeah. And or, you know, isolating themselves in order to achieve this hypothetical longevity.

I know, because we don't really know. The things that we do know that contribute the most to longevity are not these new biohacks. They're relationships, they're cultivating and having strong relationships and, you know, being a good person, being supportive. You know, these

qualities that you don't have to invest money to be able to develop. Right. These go beyond looking good is a thing that. You know, people aspire to have to, and also it's something that's built into our, to our genetic makeup, you know, to seek out people that are attractive. It is absolutely a thing, but there's character as well. That's a big part of it too. You know, who, how often do we see, you know, somebody who's got a great personality and who's funny, who has the mate that other people would aspire to have, right?

And they're just like, for him for real, you know, this kind of thing. Because it's not just this one thing. Right? So, so it's being a complete human. And, you know, with that being said, again the terrain is more complicated. We have more access, even access to information and influence. And so I love that you share this again, just take a step back. Take a step back and ask questions, look at the other side of the equation with the choice that we're wanting to make. What is a potential downside? And to be honest about it. And of course, yeah, we can get into a place where we have a cost benefit analysis where, you know, this kid is like, Hey, I'm not, I understand that this is probably gonna shorten my life, but this is what I wanna do. But we rarely do that in our choices, especially if they're big choices on our lifestyle and the person we're deciding to be.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah. And again, as long as he's explicit about it, and if you also don't care about dying young and as long as you look better along the way, but again, that's not that new. He just found a new platform to do it under. You know what was really interesting? As you were talking, this thought came because you were saying it's not all about looks or it's not all about money, right? Which are the two things people seem to care about the most. This picture of the Dalai Lama popped up in my head as you were talking, right?

Like the Dalai Lama and people like him have been promoting longevity for decades. But it's almost so simple and it's so difficult to follow in our world that most people see it admire it, right? I mean, man, he was Dali, almost speaking in New York when I was there one time, the streets were packed, like around the hotel.

He was staying at like 10 people deep just to potentially see the guy, right? And then he was going to speaking in front of, I dunno, 50,000 people. So people appreciate it, but then don't

follow the advice why. We know stress is the number one killer done period. Like I don't, show me a biohack that disproves that and we can talk, but stress is the number one killer 'cause it causes inflammation, it creates these responses in the body. The body has to work like a chronic disease. It has to react to it. Well, we live in a pretty stressful world, right? Texts all the time. Pollution, traffic, all that kind of stuff. You watch somebody like the Dalai Lama walk around, that man is at least as busy as I am.

I'm kidding. He's probably 10 times busy, like he's flying around the world constantly. Private planes. But it's 'cause he's going to speak to luminaries. He's like back and forth co. His country's been overtaken by the Chinese government. Like he's got stress, right? You look at that man, walk around and he obviously that's what he's, the role he's taken in the world, but it's, he has sent himself and I've read a few of his books like ama, you know, amazing books. Unhappiness, joy, you know, contentment in life, but it's a practice to essentially do everything you can to let the stress not overtake you. All these biohacks are people trying to take shortcuts to get to that place. And I think you and I have talked about this personally off, off the air before, but it's like we just, we live in this world right now where everybody wants everything quick. They want it in a pill form or like an injectable. They want something so they don't have to do anything and they can still get the benefits. And I think that's a, that, that's a loss for us.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Say the least. Yeah. Thank you for that. You know, again, a lot of addiction. And again, you're the expert on this, but I think it starts off, there's al, there's a reason there's there's a foundation for it right now. Of course the conversation has shifted recently to like having a genetic predisposition. And you know, but environment plays a big role and, you know, just staying in this conversation about potential healthy addiction. Right. Going to a place where, you know, we are harming ourselves. You mentioned earlier about Twiggy, for example, and this anorexic presenting kind of character traits.

And so I want to ask you about this. I remember working at the gym in my university for many years, and especially around the holidays. After the holidays, you know, there would be certain people would come in and just you know, I gotta work off of this Turkey, or, you know, pat their belly and they're like they're coming in to try to outwork what they were eating.

Right. Their mindset was, in some instances, you know, I gotta do an hour today. Right. They're punishing the themselves because of the choices that they made with their food. Now I'm saying this, and I'm not saying it lightly. This is something that I observed that this, they were not happy about it. Yeah. They were not happy about, they had to come in here and do this time, essentially because of the choices that they made. Right.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Like payback almost.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. So can you speak to that? Because what I want you to speak to that. What I would love to encourage with everybody is to have a more sustainable framing around exercise, which is, you know, something that should be obvious, but sometimes it's not. And looking at it as something that I'm giving myself as a blessing, as a joy, as something that is something that's cultivating health and wellbeing and something that's more even neutral versus the alternative, which is I'm using exercise as a form of punishment.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So can you speak to that?

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Oof. My God. First of all, I feel like we could do an entire episode on everything, on what you just brought up in this one thing. And I want to hear more about your, the framework for exercise 'cause it, it shifted for me and I, as you were talking, I kind of add this little framing, right? So again, people are addicted to the short fix, the short thing that, that'll get them right. The pill, the injection that'll fix it. The guy with the jaw, right? Oh, I want my jaw to be different, so I'll just go get a surgery and then break my jaw and fix it. I've actually lived through that. Forget the drugs for a second. I lived through that. You know, I was born in 76, I'm about to turn 50 this next summer.

And when I was a kid, we drank soda like it was going outta stock, man. I don't know if that was the same for you or not for sure. Like I would finish at least a liter of Coke a day at least. And then, you know, chef bar eat like the unhealthiest food on the face of the planet.

We talked about this before everything was packaged like, I mean, my grandmother made food from scratch, but like once a week. So I, a lot of my, the food that I ate was packaged. I told you I met my wife. She's not vegan now, but she was vegan when we met. I didn't even know what that was, right? Like I would stop at Carl's Junior two to three times a week to eat or like some other fast food version just 'cause it was easy and it's cheap.

And I was a grad student, like whatever, right? So my mindset had to change. But what my wife did, which is funny, actually, I didn't even think about this until we're talking about it right now. She did it really gradually, like replacing items with similar items of better quality and that are better for you gradually. And when I heard you say sustainable framework around exercise. I think that works with diet as well. So look, I know why as a kid, I like drinking a bunch of coke. It's great, 27 grams of sugar per cup or something, right? You got some caffeine. I see my little girl, 7-year-old, like she drinks a regular soda right now.

She looks like she's on crack. She's running around like a crazy person. And so I got that all the time. My body was used to it. Exercise. If I wasn't playing sports, why would I do it? Like why would I go to the gym and punish myself? So I literally came from that line of thinking. I think what changes for people is the reason behind it, the purpose. So if you get an actor, and I'm just gonna give one example. If you get an actor who knows that in order to get roles, they have a certain body type and they have to fit that body type, they're working out 'cause it's part of their job. And we all have to do things a part of our jobs that we don't necessarily love, but I think they're more on the neutral side of things, right?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yes.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** They're going like, Hey, okay, I gotta put in my hour and a half of cardio today to, to stay in shape. So that's one piece of it. I think the, to me, the sustainable framework, and I feel like this speaks so well, but it's the opposite of addiction. Like what I'm about to describe is pretty much the opposite of addiction, is to have a really utilitarian view as to the food you take on and the movement that you engage in. 'cause they're not separate, they're part of the same family, right? So the addictive tendency is to eat and eat until you're so stuffed that you wanna throw up and then eat some more over Thanksgiving or Christmas,



and then in punishment for that. Going to rehab, you go to the gym for three weeks and you try to work it off.

That's a very addictive cycle of dealing with the scrap. The better one, and I'm fortunate to say it this, these last five to 10 years, I feel like I'm getting to that place, is, look, you still eat probably more than you normally would on Thanksgiving or Christmas. I, when you, if you're going for the fourth helping of a pie, like if you're going back to the dessert table for the fourth time, maybe pause for a second. Not because there's punishment on the other side with working out. But if you have exercised a sustainable part of your life, are you really willing to write that off with one other piece of pie?

'cause in my opinion, sugar is one of the first drugs we had in this country. I mean, caffeine as well to some extent with coffee. But man, purified sugar is a drug. It just is, it makes you feel better. It picks you up when you're tired. It helps you get some energy. But when you're going back for that third, that fourth, I mean, we've all seen it. You get that headache after you get your stomach is distraught, destroyed. So I think what we're talking about right now is the health side that is the opposite of addiction. And it's also, we haven't talked about it at all, but, you know, I don't espouse an abstinence, I don't believe in abstinence being the only route that people need to chase after addiction because of what we're talking about right now.

Abstinence in a way, and people hate me for saying this, but abstinence is a way, is addiction on the other side because now you still wanna do the thing, but you're like, you're just holding on. You're like, I can't have the sugar. You still haven't figured out how to deal with sugar. If you the job is actually to figure out, okay, how do I get myself to the place where I can have a piece of pie? And then how do I get myself to a place where every day I do 45 minutes of working out, or 30 or an hour and a half, whatever that is for you? Not because it's a punishment, it's just what I do. Like I sleep, I eat, I work out, I play with my kids. Right? Like it's just a part of life. And when you have that imbalance, the question of having an addiction to food, it just goes out the window 'cause it's not even on the radar anymore. Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Of course, I could see how people would misconstrue or be upset about your perspective with abstinence, but it makes a lot of sense. It definitely does. And so do you think that there are a percentage of people who abstinence is the best course of action for them?

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah. Whenever we talk about abstinence, I do have to do one very big medical even though I'm not a physician, but a medical warning. If you're heavily addicted, and by that I mean you're drinking large amounts of alcohol a day. I'm talking, you know, eight to 10 servings of alcohol a day, and you've been doing that for years, or you're addicted to benzodiazepines you know, Xanax, Valium, things of that nature. Do not stop without seeing a doctor. It is dangerous for you to stop. You may die. You can have grand mal seizures and 24, 48 hours later just die. So abstinence could actually literally be dangerous sometimes, but let's leave that to the side. Yes, there are people who require abstinence, but I still believe that the reason that is true is because the work, the heavy duty, hard, difficult work of resolving what I call hooks, but resolving the underlying reasons, like you talked about before, for the compulsive behavior.

They're just too deep. And by the way, I don't blame 'em. I've worked with people, by the way, some of 'em are absent right now, some of 'em are not. I worked with people that started having like incest sexual abuse at the age of four. I wouldn't be alive. I mean, I don't know what my life would look like right now, but if a family member had sexually abused me since I was four to like, and I'm talking like 8, 10, 12 years old, right?

Like years of sexual abuse at home, I don't know. I have no idea what would be happening with me. I probably wouldn't be sitting here in front of you there right now. So I'm not judging anybody for whom the wounds are too deep. I'm just saying the reason the abstinence is therefore necessary is because their entire life conceptualization their fight or flight system, their neuro, not just neurophysiological in terms of brain, but neuromuscular the way their body responds to the world. Just think about, I mean, I know it's hard for a lot of us just think about this stuff, but this stuff is happening way more than you want it to happen. Think of what your body has to do. If that's the experience you're having clench, just holding you like the fear, the tear that happens in your life that I don't know that leaves you ever.

So some people have been through so much, have suffered through so much that the healing is either impossible to get to or it's just too much work and it takes too much time and they'd rather hide in alcohol or drugs. So people like that may not be able to use. What I found historically though is they still end up having to be dependent on some other coping strategy because that wound is too big. And so, by the way, just so people know, like exercise can be part of that, meditation can be part of that. They still need coping because the wound is there. And it's speaking out. Does that make sense?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Absolutely.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Let's talk about these hooks.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And you know, your phenomenal book, unhooked is an absolutely great resource. Thanks man, for people, not just folks who are interested in, you know, moving beyond their addiction, but for families yes, as well, just to be more aware because again, the face of addiction is very different from the perception that we often carry. And so let's talk about some of these hooks, because again, yes, we have this, you know, emerging science and, you know, it's still not fleshed out, but genetic predisposition for addiction. But without the hooks we're not getting snatched up out of the kind of normal waters.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** A hundred percent. And I do wanna, so yes to people who struggle and. I almost wrote like a manual for people who struggle. So you can really just have next day help. As you're reading the book, family members, I literally yesterday got a voice message from somebody telling me that they've now listened to the book. They've read it before, but they listen and telling me some things they love and they're a family member. They love it. But there's another piece, and I'm giving a talk about this next week. It's not just addiction though, Shawn. It's like the whole point of the book is these hooks create compulsive loops in all of our lives.

Like when I do executive coaching, some people really avoid it. You've, and we've all ran, run across somebody like this, a boss, a manager who just, they can't handle conflict, right? Like conflict happens in the office and they back away from it. That's, well, you wouldn't think about it as an addiction, but they have a compulsion to run away from discomfort, to run away from conflict. And that compulsive habit hurts them, and it hurts the people around them 'cause they're not having the real conversation that need to have in life. So the book relates to all compulsive habits in a way. So the hooks themselves. Right. I conceptualize a hook as an internal memory or a lens on the world that creates a response in you to what's happening around you that requires coping.

So what do I mean by that? I like giving examples and stories, right? So in my family my dad was gone most of my life up until the age of 14 or 15. He just worked a lot. I didn't really see him much, but when I did see him, most of the time, if we weren't on vacation, what I got was critique about things I wasn't perfect at. So one of the big stories that I always tell is I came home with a 97 on a math test, and my dad's first questions were, what happened to the other three points? Now I got to make back up with my dad later in life. And so I don't know if he was even joking or being sarcastic when he said that, but as an eight 90-year-old kid, I didn't hear sarcasm.

I heard it's not a hundred. Let's find out how to make it a hundred. And the story in my head, therefore, and I'm sure other people listening have different versions of that story in their life was, if it's not perfect, it's not good enough. A hundred is really the only acceptable score. Right? That was the story I told myself. So now the hook was that if I'm not perfect, I'm worthless. And that was a lens that was like just this perspective in the world that I walked around with. Now the rub, the problem for me, I was hardly ever perfect 'cause we're human and we're not perfect. So anytime something happened in the world that showed me that I wasn't perfect, I felt worthless.

That caused me social anxiety like crazy. Man. I would sit if I, if you and I were sitting in the room, we're talking, let's say this is now 25, 30 years ago now. Right. I wouldn't be able to focus on our conversation 'cause I'd be thinking about what does he think about what I'm saying? Are you looked at my shirt. Is that, am I okay? My brain was constantly processing

what other people may be thinking of me because I was so insecure. So that's a hook now to solve that hook. I started drinking at the age of 14 and it went away, like when I was drunk, I didn't care. So the reason to my mind that my, the way I look at it, the reason people do these things anyway, is not because the alcohol feels good.

Alcohol tastes like ass. Let's just all be honest about it. Nobody likes the taste. You get used to the taste of wine and then you start associating with really nice things. But fermented fruit doesn't taste all that good. Vodka is a nightmare. So we do it because of the effect that it gives us. And why do we like the effect? We like the effect because it either gives us a reward, it makes us feel good, or it removes a feeling of feeling bad. And what we know about addiction, most of the times, it's more about removing a bad feeling, that it is about celebrating something good.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Wow.

As you know, mental health challenges have skyrocketed in recent decades, and without addressing the root cause of this emerging change in our society, we're going to continue to see poor outcomes we need to address, of course, nutrient deficiencies, our sedentary behavior, our lack of social connection, our poor sleep quality. All of these things are proven to contribute to these epidemics of poor mental health. Of course, medication can be helpful in some context, but most people are not educated about the science-backed natural supplement that has been shown to be as effective as many medications, so making sure that we're being mindful of our lifestyle factors, but also utilizing science-backed supplementation.

An analysis published in the Journal of Effective Disorders found that the renowned spice called Saffron was just as effective as conventional antidepressant drugs like Prozac, Zoloft and Celexa. Additionally, and of the utmost importance, people who are utilizing Saffron had none of the side effects that were seen rampant in those who are utilizing those conventional treatments.

So something that is far safer, but equally, if not even better in effectiveness. That's what we get when utilizing something like Saffron. And my favorite resource for Saffron in therapeutic amounts, and actually in a tasty version, are the happy drops from Organifi. Go to [Organifi.com/model](https://Organifi.com/model) right now, and you're gonna get 20% off their phenomenal happy drops, right? As a matter of fact, you're gonna get 20% off storewide. Now, these happy drops are exceptional. It's not necessarily just for a mood boost, but something that can be utilized as a tonic, something that is good for many other aspects of your health, because Saffron doesn't just have one benefit of supporting mental health.

It's also been found to be supportive of metabolic health as well. And here are a couple of real world testimonials when it comes to these happy drops, Nicholas said. Happily surprised. I was extremely skeptical about this product. Despite all the good reviews. However, using it daily for the past two weeks, I can definitely say that they work. I definitely have an easier time staying positive and rolling with the punches of daily life with the help of Happy Drops. And Hilary said Happy Drops will make you happy that you ordered. I found out about these little drops of bliss from Instagram. I was skeptical as every product makes claims that aren't always backed.

Upon trying these happy drops, I've noticed a mood improvement energy that lasts throughout the day. AKA no afternoon slump anymore, and improved sleep at night. I'm thrilled. These are just some of the incredible testimonials. You could check them out over on the website. Again, go to [Organifi.com/model](https://Organifi.com/model) for 20% off right now. That's O-R-G-A-N-I-F-i.com/model for 20% off. And now back to the show.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Mind blowing. Mind blowing. This is, this has me thinking about all the things that we try the first time and we're just like, you know, kind of repulsed by it. And even with coffee, for example, you know, of course. And just maybe this is not ideal, whatever. And we do stuff to dress it up, to make it taste nice, but maybe there's some compounds there that are just, you know, your body's I don't know about this. And same thing with beer, right? Yeah. And again, to this day I've yet to meet a person who the first time they sipped a beer was like, man, this is delicious.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I get it. You know, but your taste buds can adapt and, you know, over time and, but. The thing that we're looking for is the feeling that it gives us.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right? And it's to help us to cope with something. And that's really where the work is the hooks. What are we trying to cope with instead of I just need to have abstinence, right? I need to go culture, I need to get away from this thing. Yeah. That's usually what people are trying to do in addiction management is like, just get away from the thing and not dealing with the hooks and why we're doing it in the first place.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** A hundred percent. And let's talk about the people who are probably a lot of them listening to this right now, right? Let's just talk about food for a second, right? If you have a compulsive eating problem, you can't stop eating. That cannot be the solution. That cannot be the prescription for you cannot be abstinence, right? So what do we do and why do we think that sugar, fat, salt, et cetera, are so different than cocaine?

Everybody talks about fucking dopamine, man. Hey, sugar activates dopamine receptors. People fat. When you eat it and it tastes good, it activates dopamine receptors sex does, you know, reading a good book does an A on a test does there are reasons why, but I did my PhD research with animal models on these drugs. The effect is not as extreme as you think in terms of changing behavior, doing things that are good and novel and new activates dopamine. But that's true for everything. So let's take somebody who comes home late at night and finds themselves eating a whole large pizza and a tub of ice cream. Anybody listening to this right now wanna tell me that person did it just because they really wanted some pizza and some ice cream?

No, I don't buy it. There's a reason why that excess makes sense, by the way. It takes time to build up to that level of excess, right? But the reason is people, I mean, we say it right? You're eating your feelings. It's like a phrase that we tend to use.

Well then why is not eating the solution? That's not the solution. The solution is, I gotta go back to understand what feelings am I trying to eat. I do wanna give a caveat, and I think it's still alive, but we have a seven day sober experiment online that is totally free and people can do it whenever they want. I'll send you a team, the link and we can put it in here.

I think it runs on autopilot all the time. There is a value to not engaging in your compulsive behavior for a period of time. And by the way, quitting is not a problem. If you wanna quit completely for the rest of your life, all the more power to you enjoy it. But there's a reason why abstaining for some time, seven day, 14 day, 1330 days, like a dry January that I'm sure, I think this is coming out potentially in January, so dry January or something like that. If you hide your feelings in a coping strategy. Eating, drinking, exercise. I don't care what it's, if you make yourself stop doing that thing for even one day, but let alone a week oof the stuff that's gonna come flooding at you, you're gonna be angry, you're gonna be anxious, you're gonna be scared, you're gonna be resentful, you're gonna be confused.

Most people are so scared of those feelings. They run back to the behavior. What I teach, everybody I work with is just stop. Let's go back to that Dalai Lama thing. Just stop your body, your brain. They're trying to tell you something. Sit down. You don't have to meditate. Take a piece of paper. What are all the thoughts that are coming up? Who are you mad at? What are you upset about? What are you ashamed of? What are you scared of? Just write it all out. That is gold because. I'll take alcohol, but or food. But the reason you eat so much, the reason you eat when you eat, the reason you drink when you drink is 'cause you don't want to deal with the thoughts and the feelings.

That's the whole point. How many people hate their jobs? So they just go to a happy hour and a 5:00 PM Why? So they forget about all the things they hate. But I've got a newsflash for you and I had to deal with this about 20 years ago. If you just keep pushing the can down, if kicking the can down the road, if you keep pushing all the things that you don't like about your life over to the next year and the next year, they're just gonna get worse. Nothing gets better if you don't do something about it. So if you hate your job so much, you gotta go get drunk every day after work. You don't have, stop dealing with the drinking. Go deal with your job. That's the thing you gotta deal with. And that's why abstinence to me is not really the



solution 'cause if you stop somebody from drinking and they still hate their life, they're still an miserable life. That's not a good solution.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** When you say this stuff, it just sounds very obvious. It sounds very obvious. You mentioned a certain word in there and it's a, it's, I think that it's rampant in our culture today. It's existed, you know, all of our feelings, our thoughts and emotions, they're there for a reason. Yeah. We have them built in and they're wonderful guidance tools, but many of us can get stuck in a certain temperament, certain belief, certain feeling, tone about life and start to live through those things. And the word that you mentioned was shame. Yeah. So can you talk about that in regard to being a potential hook? And is there any perspective that you can share? Because I think that it's a very powerful force, a motivating force in some ways. It can also be very dangerous and detrimental.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah. I mean, look, I like that you made that delineation there. In the end, it could be useful and it could be detrimental. The way I conceptualize shame, and I'll start out with everybody, talks about the difference between guilt and shame. Guilt is feeling badly about something you've done. Shame is feeling badly about who you are.

And so that's a big piece of the puzzle as initial separation. But I'll go a little farther on the shame piece, and that is when you feel like your thoughts, your beliefs, what makes you, you is something that is seen by others as bad to its core. There's something wrong with it. That you don't fit society, you don't fit your environment that you were born into. That's when we come into the high risk of having shame, right? I had a lot of social anxieties. I didn't feel, I didn't feel like I was good enough, right? I never felt like I was measuring up. The shame was about my lack of worth. Right. That was the shame. I was ashamed of that. You know, and then you start doing things.

Unfortunately, the way the world works, we talked about the universe kind of coming together to send you messages before before recording this podcast, right? It's like your life is a mirror. If you walk around feeling like you're worthless, life will show you a lot of different ways to prove that you really are worthless. And so now you start behaving in ways that if you didn't have the shame would just be, you know, small little fixes you'd have to make along

the way. But now you're so ashamed of yourself. You hide and you hide. And it's I always talk about the Green Mile, that movie, remember The Green Mile?

That guy that like eats everybody's pain. You do that to yourself. You just, you eat more and more hate and more and more pain and more and more suffering. And eventually for a lot of people it gets so big you don't even understand how to start revealing it. And now just, I don't know the makeup of men and women I should have asked before we, we kind of got on here. But that could be about your looks to the point we talked about before that could be, you know, a lot of men I talk to have used porn. Like porn is one of the things they've used since they were kids, like 10, 11, 12, 13 years old. And they've used it all into their adulthood, but they hide it. They don't talk to anybody about it.

Now imagine doing something, and I used to be in that camp again 15 years ago or something, but imagine doing something most days of your life that you don't talk to anybody about. We start developing a ton of shame around that. So shame becomes a reflection internally of your worth and what, how you think you fit in or don't fit into the world. Why is that a hook? The reason it's a hook is I always talk about shame is one of the closest feelings to death, in my opinion. And if you think about it historically, developmentally, if you don't fit your people and they see that and they don't want you as part of the group, it could literally. Be deadly, right?

Think about us in tribes. If you are ostracized by the people you live with and you rely on them for the warmth, for the shelter, for the food, and now you're alone, how do you survive? And so I think shame literally brings up this internal fear of being ostracized to the point where we're, we'll be completely alone. So that's why I think it's such a big deal. And so people will do a lot to hide their shame. There are a lot of different coping strategies, psychologically, et cetera, but one of the easiest ones is just not be to be intoxicated, to not be cognizant. Yeah. Not that this is one of the only things that caused the shame, but I'll just give an example.

I've worked with, I don't know how many, but a substantial number, let's say a multitude of dozens of men who grew up knowing that they were gay in very strict conservative like Bible

Belt areas of the country. Now imagine you're 10 years old, 11 years old, you realize you're attracted to boys or you like boys in ways that you're not supposed to 'cause the Bible said it's evil. And they would start drinking, you know, teenage years. They would drink so they could kiss girls, they would drink so they could pretend to be normal, because the shame that they had about who they were underneath that was so massive. And then the reason I'm, I'll go one more level.

The reason I don't judge anybody who struggles with an addiction is because of my lens and how I look at it. The addiction was there to protect something inside. And me judging somebody for drinking too much or using too much cocaine or meth or eating too much, is essentially saying your wounds that you had from whenever you developed them in an earlier life are not important enough for you to have figured out how to cope with them. Right? You should have figured out a healthier way to do it. And I think that's judgment. It's like the, you know, walk a mile in their shoes kind of metaphor. I've seen a lot of people who struggle with more than I think I would've survived myself.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I know that this is obviously very individual based, right? The what the hooks are you know, the potential way to get unhooked, but there are some guiding principles for us to all be aware of and to kind of cultivate, to share, to encourage. So I wanna talk about that. I wanna talk about some focus solutions. So you've got these very specific quadrants for people to address when addressing addiction. And if we could, let's go through these and kind of offer up some strategies and things for people to really think about.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah, a hundred percent. So I split, I get into this in a lot more depth, obviously in unhooked, so check it out if this makes sense to you. But biological, psychological, environmental and spiritual factors are the things that I look at and I break down the environment. The physical environment, like the, literally the space that you're in, the neighborhood you live in, the country you live in, that kind of stuff. And then social, the people that you spend your time with. So those end up being five kind of factors. Overarchingly I actually have, again, I think there's a free version of an ignited I need to get you guys the link, but of something I adapted called The Wheel of Life that actually even

breaks that down into 10 areas that somebody across those five that people can measure how they're doing it.

The reason I need you to do what we're gonna talk about here soon is a lot of people when they first come to get help, they've been hiding what's wrong for so long. They wouldn't necessarily even be able to tell you if you ask them the question. So if you say Hey, why do you drink? They literally, they don't have an answer 'cause they've been drinking so long to forget why they drink that they don't remember it. We start thinking they're lying. We start thinking that they're obfuscating the truth. I truly believe they've erased it from their conscious memory on purpose over time. Right? It's like that's the whole point of the addictive behavior. So biology, psychology, environment, spirituality, and environment is split up into physical and social. One main piece of advice. Find somebody, I don't care who it is in the world, but find somebody that you can be truly transparent and honest with about how things are going in those arenas. And that is, I talk about this in the book, we talk about shame. The only way I know to eradicate shame is to find compassion, forgiveness, and acceptance.

You can start that process by yourself. It's hard, but you can start that process by yourself. It works much faster and much better if you have somebody to bounce that off of that. Could be a therapist, it could be a coach, it could be a mentor, it could be a friend. But you've gotta find somebody. You can start being honest with lying is the quickest way to keep exacerbating shape. And then once you do that, the reason there's a framework of those five different areas is you have to start literally looking at your life and analyzing, how is my body doing? How do you know how many people I deal with that come to me? They have back pain or their shoulders been whacked for a while, they, you know, they can't walk well 'cause their leg and we find out a while into it.

It's, again, it's stress, it's depression, it's anxiety and it's, it manifests itself physically. So that's the biology part. Psychologically, we have a lot of stuff, and I know I won't talk about it in here, but about perception, the way you look at the world environment, I would argue environment and spirituality are probably the two that most people underestimate in spirituality. I'm not talking religion, just so it's really clear. If you have a religion, that's great.

I'm talking about a connection to something bigger than yourself. The smaller your life gets, the more you're only focused on what you need and what you do and what you care about, the worse your life gets. I just, I don't have a better way of saying that.

So to me, spirituality is about expanding, figuring out how you fit into to what happens in the world. That could be about God, but it could be about the universe. It could be about helping other people there. There are a lot of different ways, so we talk about that in the book as well, but the environment that ends up being one of the factors that people don't normally look at, man, and it sucks. People live in places, they work in places that they hate. And they feel like they're stuck and they undervalue how much removing them from that situation can help calm their system and help them deal. And the same thing is true for people. I hate saying it. I'll talk about one of the things that I'm not gonna say I don't allow in my life, but if you're a friend of mine, you know how this comes up.

If you're, if we're really close gossip, these other versions of like social interactions in your environment that are just damaging, they're like poison. We take 'em for granted and we just accept them. But if the people that you spend time with are toxic, if they're not lifting you or supporting you, if they're helping you go down, or maybe even pu pushing you down, it isn't gonna be incredibly hard to change your behavior with those environmental influences in place. And so the whole point in the book is to help you understand why do you behave the way that you behave? What are the factors that are causing that? And then it's like a checklist right, you guys do the podcast, there's like a production checklist. Do we have lights?

Do we have, you know, is sound working? You just gotta go through this checklist in your life and say, how am I doing on this? How am I in my friendship? How am I at working? And unfortunately, I, maybe I shouldn't say unfortunately, it is what it is the way I found it. This is a process that never stops. You always need to keep an eye on it. Especially if you're like somebody like me who has struggled before. You may start collecting some dust after a while and kind of settling in on a way that isn't exactly the most beneficial for you. So I'm a big supporter, like every month, every two months, just to keep assessing how you're doing on these areas of your life and keep cleaning it up so that you don't find yourself stuck again.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's a great analogy of like dust settling over time.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. And it just makes sense. Again, especially again if you're prone, if you have a history to have those check-ins. But all of us should do that. All of us, you know, we're just so caught up in the day-to-day and this grind and not having time for self-reflection and analysis. And it helps so much just to kind of guide and clear up the cobwebs and just to remember why we're doing what we're doing.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Do you find sometimes that because you do a podcast like this, it keeps you more on your game in terms of your own health and wellness.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Of course, is the biggest blessing.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Is it?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I didn't know that would come as like a, like this hidden benefit, which is I always have this to look forward to and to prepare for and to show up, you know, and to do what is necessary to qualify myself.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah. Yeah. So that's something, the reason I was asking the question is I was actually talking to this group. I've been leading the same group at 1:00 PM on Tuesday since 2017. So it's been eight years. I've probably called in sick or was traveling for eight to 10 of those maybe 15. But I've made it most, the most of those, right? And I love it whether there's seven people in there, five people or 30 people, I love leading that group. Why? Because it serves me. And the reason I asked you the question is there are people listening right now that when I talk about spirituality purpose, feeling like you fit into the world, they think either something really big.

Becoming religious or, you know, ending world hunger or making the world, you know, stopping homelessness. Those are all amazing goals. And if that's your goal, by all means, go for it. I think it's different. I think it's feeling like what you do matters not for you.

But because it matters in the world. And so in an interesting way, you doing this podcast, you gotta stay on top of things. 'cause otherwise you're gonna lose some of the value of why you even do this thing in the first place, right? Me having to show up to a group every Tuesday that I don't get paid to do, I just do it makes me better, a better person.

And so for everybody who's listening right now, who hasn't found this, and spirituality feels scary, or that, that concept feels scary, think about things that you love doing and you're close to. And then how can you just start? Once a week, twice a week, just engage in them, get involved so that there's a little piece of your life that just feels like it fulfills you and makes the world better.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Great advice. Can you give us a little bit of insight into why is biology a part of this?

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah. I'll start with this. My PhD is in psychology from UCLA and my area of focus was behavioral neuroscience. So when I came out of UCLA, so that's 2010 is when I graduated with my PhD, I was a pretty, maybe 2009, I was a pretty firm believer in the fact that biology was more than half of it. I'll say what do I mean by that? Your neurotransmitters, your the different systems that operate in your brain, your genetics and epigenetic influences and the way those interact with what happens when you develop a compulsive behavior and addiction, that they run the mechanism. And the idea for me was simple.

That's the machine. And well, if you're gonna get addicted, you must be using the machine. Right, because if I'm gonna drive, I have to have wheels and I have to have, you know, a steering wheel and I gotta have an engine. That's what drives it. If you're gonna have an addiction, it must be in the brain. As I develop more and more knowledge, I realized that's, that explains, that, describes what happens. But it's not necessarily a causal component. So here's what everybody talks about in addiction all the time. You do something that's rewarding. Your brain fires off dopamine. That dopamine is a signal to your brain.

People talk about it wrong. They say dopamine is a pleasure, neurotransmitter. It's not, but it is a reward or a, the thing we're doing right now is good indicator. So your brain walks

around, it's having a regular day. Boom. Dopamine hits it, it goes up. Whatever we just did to get that dopamine, that's good. Let's do more of that. That's why sugar releases it, right? It's also part of nutrition. So, drugs, many drugs, not all drugs, but like cocaine, meth, nicotine, indirectly. And a lot of, and a lot of the drugs that people abuse, part of their mechanism is they somehow hack that biological system for for dopamine.

So for instance, what meth does is in the neurons that release dopamine, there are these vesicles they're, think about 'em as like little containers that have 10, 15, 20 little dopamine molecules in them. And the neurons have a bunch of them stored so that when you get the signal that dopamine needs to fire, the vesicles can release some dopamine and then the neuron can fire them. Okay? What meth does is it breaks apart those vesicles, so they start leaking and now the meth kind of just leaks instead of being released by actual activity. So that's why you get this feeling of euphoria. That's why you feel really strong is you bring, it's flooded with dopamine. Cocaine does that, but in a shorter way.

Other drugs of abuse, by the way, like MDMA, well, I guess it's not abuse as much, but MDMA doesn't do that at all. Heroin barely acts on dopamine. It's primarily through opioids, right? But people really like talking about the dopamine route. The thing is, now your brain's been flooded with dopamine. You've exhausted your dopamine stores, your brain has to work to make more dopamine, and then a lot of people get caught in that cycle. You talk about tolerance, developing a tolerance for a drug. Now the same amount of the drug can't release the dopamine that it wants because a lot of the dopamine has been exhausted in the same amount of the body's used to that level of meth, let's say.

You just have to start taking more and more. The body has to start working harder and harder to produce more dopamine, and now you end up in a place where it's reversed in order to even release any dopamine. Your brain is so used to meth pushing on it that without meth in the picture, you actually feel down there's a, an absence of dopamine and now people get into withdrawal. So there's this cycle that ends up happening biologically in addiction. You see it in opiates very clearly, right? If somebody uses, I always tell people like, the drugs will give you what they give you, and when you stop using, you'll pay it all back. So why do you, why do people take opiates? Get outta pain.



By the way, psychological and physical pain, your brain can't really tell the difference. Just so you know, the area of your brain that processes pain is the same for biology and psychology. So emotional pain, psychological pain, physical pain. You take opiates. What's one of the biggest indicators or one of the biggest side effects of withdrawal from opioids? Massive pain. I mean, like you feel like your whole body is being stabbed with knives. People describe it to me as their whole skin being on fire and having the worst possible flu you could even imagine having, right? Like their whole body, their bones ache. You're paying back all that pain tolerance that you had before.

So that's a biological explanation to it. Now again, it makes sense why you would wanna use more heroin if you just used some heroin stopped and then your body went on fire and you had the worst slew of life. My question is different. Why were you in the cycle where you were using it regularly? And then as a final piece of the answer to this question, 'cause you asked about biology. I talk about this literally in the book. It's a line in the book. If you are heavily addicted to a drug that causes withdrawal, unfortunately for you, you've got two parallel things you've gotta work on. You've gotta work on the biological piece, getting yourself settled and your body healthy again and the psychological piece in parallel, right?

You can't do this with only working on one. And that's why addictions are hard to kick because. You've leaned on something to cope for so long. The average amount of time between when you start doing this and it causes problems to when you get help is 15 years. You've been doing this for 15 years or more. That's a habit. That's gonna be a habit that's hard to break. And your body has adjusted to that habit so much that you're gonna have to get it to think differently, behave differently than it really almost ever has before. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And this is why, you know, part of what you teach revolves around a shift in identity.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right. And identity really being a big part of every transformation because we do the actions that we take, the thoughts that we think. Is inherently just being congruent with who we believe ourselves to be and what we believe about life.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Oof.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right. So being able to really focus in and do the work to shift the identity. And thank you for breaking this down, because again, I don't think that we think about how complex it can actually be.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Sure.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right. We just trying to tack one thing when in reality addiction is multifaceted, multilayered.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah. Well that's what you know, just to, I wanna go back to this identity thing. But think about it, right? If you're addicted heroin, you go into detox, they detox you from heroin, why do you go back to using, it's because it's psychology. Right. You go back to using, because you go back out into the world, you get into a fight with your girlfriend, your mom, whatever. Work gets hard. You don't know how to deal with it. You go back to your coping. So that's why you gotta do both at the same time. Speaking of identity, so when I wrote my first book, the Abstinence Myth, I didn't even know about this, but I do now, so I'll share it. Carol Dweck has an amazing book called Mindset. Anybody who hasn't read it, go read the book.

I really wish I would've read it before I wrote my first book, but such is life. When I talk about identity, I'm not just talking about I'm a professor or I'm a podcaster, I'm an influencer. I'm a CEO, I'm a banker. Like I'm not talking about your job or what you do as an identity. I'm talking about literally who you are, right? The reason the book mindset is so important is the first step I had in the abstinence myth is the belief that change is possible is a necessary component for change. If you think you're an addict. And you believe, and you've bought into the BS story that once an addict always an addict, you can't change.

You can't do it 'cause you believe it's impossible. So, you know, what's the Henry Ford sentence, right? Whether you believe you can, you believe, you can't, you're right. The, it works for what we're talking about here right now. So you've gotta believe that change is possible. If that's hard for you, and I get why it would be around addiction, but imagine if you're obese, right? If there, if you're sick in a substantial way, chronically, right? How many times have we thought there's a condition that cannot be changed, and then 15, 20 years later, some miraculous advance happens? And so though we were wrong, you know, we actually can cure this thing. If you believe change is possible, it's possible.

So that's the number one piece. The identity for you therefore has to be one of a person who is growing, learning, changing, improving. So with addiction, if you struggle with addiction saying, I'm an addict and I'm a lifelong addict, I was born an addict, I'm always gonna be an addict. Gets you stuck. That's why I hate that term. You can say, I'm struggling with an addiction. I'm addicted to cocaine, I'm addicted to food, I'm addicted to sugar, I'm addicted to heroin. Say that's a struggle you're having currently. But to talk about the work you're doing, to shift that, to talk about the potential for change and in the mindset book, there's a growth mindset or a fixed mindset.

If you're in a growth mindset, the way you look at the world is, Hey, here's where I am right now. But if I do work, if I do what's necessary, if I practice a different way of being, I'll be somebody else. And there's a line in my book that says, anybody can beat their addiction to anything. You just have to be willing to become somebody who's not addicted. And people read that and they're like, you don't even understand what you talk about. You have no idea. And I'm a living example and I've seen hundreds of them. The guy who was addicted to meth 25 years ago and who got arrested, went to jail, had the same name, same genetic makeup se, same epigenetics, same brain chemistry, technically, right?

Other than the fact that I was using a lot of meth and the tolerance for that same exact genetics existed in my body. But the way I think, the way I see the way I behave, the habits I engage in every single day couldn't be more different. And so the life I live is different. And the reason I tell my story is not 'cause I want anybody to applaud me for the change I made. The life I live is the reward I get. I don't need anybody else telling me that. It was great. It took

a lot of work. The rewards came from change and Shawn, the came change. The change came like year one, big change, year two, big year five, another massive set, year 10, a whole other transformation.

Some of it was amazing, some of it was really painful. But 25 years later, I'm literally not the same human being. And I want everybody listening right now who's struggling or knows who's somebody who's struggling to just remember that, right? It's not quick. Stop looking for quick fixes around this stuff. Quick fixes how you got in this trouble in the first place. Look for the kind of behavior, the kind of environment, the kind of beliefs, the kind of work that you want to have in the future. And then just start one foot in front of the other. Do the work that is necessary to get yourself there. Five years from now, you look back and you go, oh my God, I can't believe I got this far.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Phenomenal, phenomenal man. So you mentioned your book Unhooked. Can you tell people where they can pick up a copy?

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah, a hundred percent. Available anywhere. If this comes out in January, there's the soft cover version is finally available. I think there's still some hardcover books, but I'm not really sure. But Amazon, obviously the Bezos behemoth is, that sells everything on the face of the planet. But Barnes and Nobles and other bookstores have it available as well. There's a website called Read Unhooked. We can learn more about it and see testimonies and things like that, but all over Amazon, all of our bookstores. And if you wanna connect with me directly@adijaffe.com is a website that we set up for that. And I'm all over social media as a, at Dr. Adi Jaffe, D-R Adi Jaffe.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Amazing. Man. This has been so, so helpful, man. Thank you so much for sharing your gift.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Yeah. Thank you so much for having me again, Shawn.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** Love it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I appreciate it. This conversation will continue.

**DR. ADI JAFFE:** I hope so.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** The one and only Dr. Adi Jaffe. Thank you so much for tuning into this episode today. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this. If you did, this is such an important conversation to have and to share. Please share it out with somebody that you care about. Provide a great resource and get this conversation going. And listen again. This is an issue in our society that is affecting all of us, and I'm very passionate about this because I come from an environment to where this was rampant and simply didn't know about any of these root causes. And so this was very enlightening for me and helpful for me, and I hope that it provided some insight for you as well. We've got some incredible masterclasses and world leading experts coming your way very soon. So make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day, and I'll talk with you soon.