

# **THE** MODEL **HEALTH** **SHOW**

**EPISODE 742**

## **The Secret to Healing From Your Past & Creating the Life You Want**

**With Guest Christine Hassler**

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**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Welcome to the Model Health show. More and more data is affirming that the quality of our relationships is the most impactful thing on our health, on our longevity, and our overall happiness and success in our lives. As a matter of fact, a meta-analysis of 148 studies, including 300,000 study participants found that having healthy social bonds was able to reduce our risk of premature death from everything by about 50%. So we're talking about a 50% reduction in all-cause mortality when we have healthy social relationships. Now, there isn't a drug, there isn't a supplement, there isn't anything that can compare to those kinds of results. If you could bottle it up, you could sell it and become Scrooge McDuck with it, so swimming in those ducktails, that ducktail money. But we can't bottle this up, this is something that we have to create, and sometimes we create it by accident, sometimes we stumble into good relationships, but most of us are not taught what a healthy relationship really is. We're not taught how to foster and how to cultivate healthy relationships.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This is a top tier ingredient in our health, in our performance, in our success in life and how long we live, and yet we are not taught about how to do it. And so this one very passionate about bringing forth world-leading experts to help us to understand how to cultivate healthy relationships so that we can be healthier within ourselves, so we can have a healthy relationship with ourselves as well because that deeply matters for our mental health and our physical health as well.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Now, this episode is incredibly, incredibly powerful, so many huge insights, it was just like aha moment after aha moment for me personally, and I'm just so grateful to be able to share this with you today, so, truly, you are in for a very, very special treat. Now, before we get to our special guest, I want you to also keep in mind that our decisions that we make, whether it's in the context of our relationships, whether it's in the context of decision that we make for our health and our fitness, this really does boil down very logically to our energy and to our energy reserves and our energy output. There's this new phenomenon being detailed, this existed forever, but it's being documented in peer view

data called Decision fatigue. Because every decision that we make, we're using energy, we're literally using brain glucose and it's draining our battery essentially, and before long, for many of us, once we get to the end of the day, we don't care. You ask us something, whatever. I don't care. What do you wanna eat, donut? whatever, what do you wanna eat, I don't care.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Our decision fatigue starts to take place, but for many of us, this can happen before the day really even starts, once the day gets rolling, we're already in that state of deprived energy making it difficult to make the decisions that we want to make, and so we wanna make sure, obviously, that we're focusing on a healthy real food diet protocol, that we're moving our bodies on a regular basis, doing our best to stack conditions with our sleep, but what about that little extra?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** What about that go to when you want that sustainable, healthy, clean, high quality energy without the side effects of these "Energy drinks or abhorrent amounts of caffeine over and over throughout the day?" Well, there's finally a solution that is taking over the world right now, and I'm talking about ketone IQ. Numerous studies, including a study published by the Federation of American societies for Experimental Biology, found that exogenous ketones can be up to 28% more efficient in generating energy than glucose alone, plus numerous studies have found up to a 15% increased mean power output when utilizing ketones, more energy and being able to get more done, recover faster. And the key here is there's been a recent innovation where we've had ketone esters and lots of folks have utilized those to some positive benefit, but the on-ramp was not that nice because those ketone esters tasted unpleasant to put it lightly. And now with these recent innovations and utilizing this kind of fermentation process to finally have a ketone product that has a decent taste, I'm not saying this is delicious, but it is much more palatable and much more powerful. And that's what you're getting with Ketone IQ.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Go to [HVMN.com/model](https://HVMN.com/model) to get hooked up with their incredible ketone IQ. They've got these great ketone IQ shots that I actually keep in my refrigerator that even gives it another boost of probability by having a cold fresh out of the refrigerator and a lot of times I utilize them right before a workout or something with a big cognitive load, and it's just really, really remarkable for many people they notice the benefits the first day that they

use it. Go to [HVMN.com/model](https://HVMN.com/model) for 30% off your first subscription order automatically applied at checkout, and also you can get hooked up with free shipping there as well. So again, pop over there, check 'em out. Ketone IQ from HVMN. Go to [HVMN.com/model](https://HVMN.com/model) and now it's time for thr Apple Podcast review of the week.

**ITUNES REVIEW:** Another five star review titled “Wonderfully Entertaining and Informative” by CAST woman. I'm not in a podcast. I would much rather read a book than listen to a podcast. That said, I started listening when I was on a long drive halfway across the US and was bored with my music. I've probably listened to 30 shows during my trip. Shawn and his guests never failed to entertain me, and even though I'm a health and life coach myself, I learned something new with every episode. My only issue with the show is that I don't have enough time to read all the books discussed on the show, and I read a lot.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Thank you so much for leaving that review over on Apple Podcast. I truly, truly do appreciate that. And if you have to do so, pop over to Apple Podcast. This is a call to action. A lot of people hear this and they're like, I'll do it, I'll get to it. Seriously, I would love, love, love to hear your voice over on Apple Podcast. So please take a moment, pop over there and leave a review for the Model Health Show. From my heart to yours, thank you so much. And without further ado, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day. Christine Hassler is a master coach with 20 years of experience in psychology. She's the author of three best-selling books and host of the top rated podcast “Over It And On With It”. She's been featured everywhere, from The Today Show, to ABC, CBS, CNN, E, Style, The New York Times. The list goes on and on. And now she's here to share powerful insights on cultivating healthy relationships. Check out this incredible conversation with the amazing Christine Hassler. All right, it's about time.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah, I'm happy to be here.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's been years, and you don't know this, but you are one of the most downloaded episodes in history ...

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Really?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** ... of the Model Health Show.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Wow, that's quite a compliment 'cause you have amazing guest, so... Thank you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I mean, obviously, you're amazing, and I'm very grateful to have you here. I've been talking a lot about relationships and the impact that it has on our health, our success, all the things, but it's something that we don't get a lot of education on, which is crazy, but being that our health is so deeply impacted by our relationships, it deeply impacts our well-being. I would love to start off by talking about that first, the big picture thing, Why does our relationships impact our health so much?

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah, and I think we do get education, it's just mis-education. I mean the education we get is when our parents do or what we see on TV or what we're told. So we're educated or programmed in a way that usually doesn't serve us, but if we look at relationships, intimate relationships or friendships or even parent-child relationships, human beings, we are wired for connection. We are interdependent beings, connection and belonging are tied to survival. So if we go back to our very primitive days, if we didn't have a tribe, we die. So not feeling connected, not feeling like we're in healthy relationships can push up against that survival fear. It can be super subconscious, not know, Why am I experiencing so much anxiety over this break up? Or why am I experiencing so much anxiety when my partner and I fight or when my kid isn't listening or when I feel like I'm alone? Well, it's because it's pushing up against that. Oh my gosh, do I belong? Am I gonna survive here? So that's like the foundational thing for why we need to look at why healthy relationships are so crucial. And like you said, the problem is people just don't really know how to do it.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And no matter... And I will speak, I'll raise my hand here. Even with the education and even with all the personal growth work I have done for 20 plus years, and my husband who's also deep in this work, sometimes in relationships, we look at each other and go, "have we ever done any work? Have we ever had a day of therapy? We're acting

absolutely ridiculous here. Why is it so hard?” Because man, relationships are mirrors, they are such mirrors for the things that we don't wanna look at. And so they really illuminate for us the issues that have been holding us back for years and years and years, and often those issues that go back to inner child wounding have been impacting our health cumulatively over time. I'm sure you and I can agree that most, dare we say all, health issues can be tied to something emotional or something dramatic that happened in the past. The body keeps the score. The body and the mind are so closely connected. So when we can look at relationships as an opportunity to heal, an opportunity for things to be illuminated that maybe we haven't experienced before, it gives us that opportunity to take that mirror, turn it back on ourselves and look within and do some healing work that we've been needing for decades.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, yeah, just even you flipping the switch in my mind, and for all of us, hopefully that our relationships are so impactful on our... Everything in our life. We've gotta really understand, this is tied to our survival. We are hard-wired, deep, deep, our genes, our relationships are about survival, like we don't think about that because everything's so fancy now. We've got electric cars and we can fly, and we seem so evolved, but what it really boils down to is that there's a deep, deep primal need for each other. But that... How to do it, and I'm so glad you brought this up. It really is a mis-education, we're getting fed this programming, television programming repeatedly on this kind of romanticized version of what the stuff should look like, and so that's where we're getting our training... I know that's where I got my training, I didn't learn anything about building a healthy relationship, any kind of academic construct, and even with that, it's still probably gonna be mis-education, and so this is why this conversation is so important and why you are also so remarkable. You have a tough story in the context of relationships at a phase, but what you've created recently to see this, and I've just been sitting back watching like, this is amazing, you are really about that life, the stuff that you talk about and teach, you manifested that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And to have this at a point when some people are just chucking it up to forget about it, and having your beautiful daughter as well, recently, it's just like it is so special. Nobody said it's easy, but you've actually demonstrated what's possible for us, and so I wanna dig in here now and talk about how do we go about this, because if we're wanting to improve our relationships, if we're looking for a healthy relationship in the intimate context,

for example, we're living in an age of dating apps and social media, and just like our attention is so scattered, and what do we do? I know this is a big question, but what do we do? What should we start with to have those healthy relationships we're looking for?

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** First, so I'm done with dating apps, oh my gosh, I did not enjoy those at all. But they have a purpose, and I know many people who've met on dating apps, So they have a purpose. So where do we start? Well, at the beginning, really any relationship, whether it's somebody in a relationship and they're having trouble with their partner, they're fighting, patterns, the polarity is gone, or if someone's looking for a relationship where I always start is childhood. 'Cause it's just where it all begins, like we said, is where the mis-education begins. And back to what we need as humans, we need that survival and we need to feel loved and safe. And if we survey... If we walk down the street and talk to 100 people and say, "did you feel completely loved and safe as a child?", or even consistently loved and safe as a child, 'cause Secure attachment isn't about perfect parenting all the time, but it's about consistency and repaired? I bet out of those 100 people, five, and I'm being generous, would probably say, yeah, I felt really loved and safe as a kid. I felt like I could express myself, I felt like I had good boundaries, I felt like I could be who I am.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Unfortunately, a lot of us have inadequate parenting, and this isn't about throwing our parents under the bus, this is about just being honest with us as humans, we don't get a lot of education or support on being human. And so from a very, very young age, we start to believe things about ourselves that are not true. We start to believe something like, well, in order to be loved, I need to be good. In order to get my dad's attention, I need to be really good at school or really good at sports. In order to make sure my mom is happy and doesn't have a melt down, I need to be entertaining or I need to take care of her. Or in order to be safe in the world, I need to just be quiet because my house is very chaotic and I don't wanna ruffle any feathers and I'm just waiting for the next egg to drop or shoe to drop on... I combine walking on eggshells and shoe to drop in that one, and I'm bracing myself, right. So because of what happens or doesn't happen to us in childhood, we come up with these formulas, about what we think we need to do to be loved and safe, and the truth is we shouldn't have to do anything other than be ourselves to be loved and safe.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Now, every human, especially every child, deserves that. Again, unfortunately, that's just not the way it is right now. So we have these unmet childhood needs, and I could go on and on about the list of unmet childhood needs that we just carry around and time doesn't heal all wounds. I hate that expression. It just doesn't. So we grow up and all of a sudden we're 35 and we've really never dealt with the fact that we really, really wanted our father's attention, and he was maybe physically there sometimes, but just emotionally wasn't available. So then we find ourselves dating emotionally unavailable men over and over and over again, because we're looking to resolve that unmet childhood need, and we look for people that look like our parents, not physically look like them, but look like them in terms of how they behave and relate to us. So the inner child goes, Oh, why didn't I get this from dad, but hey, you make me feel a lot like dad does, maybe it can be different here, because the inner child so wants to be loved by his or her parents. It's so seeking that love, safety and acceptance that we've never gotten.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Back to where do we begin? We begin by looking at, okay, What didn't I get as a kid? What needs were not met? What developmentally did not happen for me 'cause if we look at Eric and stages of development, there's some psycho-social development that we all need to go through, but just doesn't happen for a lot of us? So we ask ourselves that question, what needs didn't get met? And how am I looking to a partner to fulfill that for me, because this is a number one problem I see in relationships is it's like? You and I get into relationship. It's all the infatuation. Hormones are flying. Amazing phase. I got my rose colored glasses on, I'm ignoring red flags is awesome. And then time goes on and things start to happen, and I start to project all the things that I never got on you and expect you to give them to me, so we go into relationships with a lot of expectations, a lot of expectations, and not a lot of responsibility. And so much of these expectations are subconscious, one of the things that couples come to me, and my husband and I would...

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** When we do couples coaching, they come and they say the polarity in our relationship is off, we need to fix polarity, and there's this huge thing on masculine and feminine dynamics, and she's too much in her masculine and he's too much in his feminine. That was a big thing that was said to me in my single year is "Christine, you're too much in your masculine, that's why you don't have a man. You want it alpha man, you gotta be in your



feminine”, and I was like, What do I gotta wear a flower crown and dance around the moon, like, what do you mean? I have to be... It made no sense to me 'cause I didn't feel that.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And what I see with couples is it's not about polarity at all. It's about inner child wounding. It's like, we will use that masculine feminine example. So the woman in the relationship, she might be in hyper vigilance, which could appear masculine. She might be controlling, she might be nagging, she might be criticizing. That's not her being in her masculine, that's her being in hypervigilance. And hypervigilance is a trauma response that comes from being scared. That comes from being out of control at some point, thinking you could trust something or someone, and it not turning out that way and being hurt and scared. And then, I've got to control everything. And so she's not in her masculine, she's a scared little girl that's trying to get control. And the man is not necessarily in his feminine. He probably, as a kid, was shut down a lot, couldn't express his feelings, was told he needed to be strong, or was told he was too this or too that or whatever.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And so he's not necessarily in his feminine, he's just terrified of rejection and hasn't been respected and appreciated as a little boy or a man. And so he's just shut down into that hypo arousal. Though she's in the hyper, he's in the hypo. And people try to work on the polarity. And I'm like, you can try to work on the polarity all you want, but until you get to the inner child, that's underneath all of this and give them what they need? You're going to constantly have those battles in your relationship because you're not going deep enough. Does that make sense?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Absolutely. Can you elaborate on inner child? Because that term can seem a little bit strange, or also, just even in our culture, something that doesn't quite make sense.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah. And I'm glad you asked me that, because inner child isn't some woo woo, California, let's talk about our chakras and our inner child thing. It's not that at all. It is a psychological reality. So if you think about us as people, we're naturally multiple, not multiple personalities. That's a disorder. But we're naturally multiple. And our childhood is where all the computer programming gets put in. It's where we form our beliefs about the

world. And looking at our nervous system, for example, our nervous system from zero to seven, that's when it's being formed. And until seven years old, we're always co-regulating with people. But especially until seven, we're co-regulating mostly with our parents. So we are like blank slates. I mean, I do believe everybody comes in with their unique expression, their unique karma and things that just make people unique no matter what their nature nurture situation is.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** However, there is so much that happens in those formative years that imprint us. So the inner child is the part of us that had to go through those experiences. And it's also the really magical, spiritual, intuitive, playful side of us. If you just look at the archetype of a child, a child that's in a safe and loving home, they're going to be curious and playful and totally autonomous and discerning and connected to their intuition and connected to animals and nature and all those things. So the archetype of the inner child and the healthy inner child is a beautiful thing. But what happens is we get fragmented. So, imagine that at five years old you were abused. Maybe it was one time, maybe that's when it started and it was multiple times. So that doesn't just go away.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** There's a part of us, the inner child part that just sits with that and holds that pain. And it gets not necessarily locked in, but it gets shut down and really, really tucked away. And so, this part of us that never really got loved and healed through that just has to sit there and wait for us as the adult to go back and do something about it. But the problem is, most of us don't. Most of us think, okay, well, that was in the past and a lot of people are afraid of doing inner child work 'cause they don't want to relive their trauma. And we can bookmark that and come back to that. However, like I said, time doesn't heal all wounds. So often there's this child, this part of our psyche. It's like you can... The best way to think about it is, it's like a big part of your memory and a big part of your past and your experiences.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And it acts out subconsciously. So let me give you an example. Let's say that, well, I can use my inner child as an example. So sometimes as an adult I would go to social situations that I knew were safe, that I knew the people were going to be nice. No one was going to tease me or put me in a corner or go and whisper about me. Nothing was going

to happen to me physically, but I'd walk into these situations with so much anxiety. So much anxiety. My reaction did not match the reality of the situation at all. And that's because my inner child who was bullied, who was the... I hate Christine Club, who didn't fit in, who was a late bloomer, who always felt separate and awkward, who was talked about, was still hanging out in my psyche, going, danger, danger.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** This is not a good situation. I've got to rev up some anxiety right here because this is not safe. So it wasn't my present day self that was reacting to that situation. It was that inner child part of me that hadn't fully healed from that experience. And as adults, we just try to push through our pain. We try to push through our anxiety instead of actually going inside and going, huh, what is this message here? Why do I have anxiety about this? Or why do I sabotage relationships every time people get close to me? Or why do I procrastinate on doing the things that I want to do? Or why am I still people pleasing even though I'm building resentment inside? And so, often it's because there's still an inner child who's trying to get needs met, but doesn't know how to do it in a really healthy way.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This is so fascinating. I really... And within this, this is tough. This is tough. Just thinking about my little brother and sister, and the different environments that zero to seven age bracket. And yeah, my little brother, he's had this residual thing with me just like, I had some advantage over him. And with you sharing that and the way that you did, I did. I stayed with my grandmother, kindergarten, first grade, second grade, so up until I was about seven, for three years and I had safety, I had certainty, I had the feeling of significance, I mattered. And also, again, like the resonance with those nervous systems in that household, it was a lot of love. A lot of... My grandmother, my grandfather, they were an entity.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I'm not saying that of course they didn't have any conflicts, but they presented as a unit of... For me, it represented the epitome of love. There was... Love isn't all sweet and nice. Also there's discipline. There's standards. All of these qualities were there and I was just picking it up in that environment because the other environment is one that was very volatile. There's a lot of violence in the household. There's constant yelling, there's physical altercations, there's drug use, there's a lot of alcohol abuse. There's... This is our daily life. And so, and not to mention outside the door in a lot of these environments where there's

gun violence and there's crack house and all these different things. And so being in these environments, for me, I'm taking that with me and I don't even realize that I have some of that imprint.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah. Absolutely.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But at the same time, for me, I've always felt like with my little brother and sister, okay, this is the conditions we're in. But we are going to do better than this. I thought it was a collective understanding. I never said the words, I just felt like they're seeing these a\*\*hats acting crazy and we're not going to do this. But they follow those patterns. And so, this really cracked me open a little bit more today and just thinking about how important it is with those inputs. Especially, again, we are in a diff... Literally our brains and our nervous system are very different. Some of the research indicates we're more in more theta brain frequency, which just, we're very impressionable. This is why we're... The Easter Bunny, Santa Claus, really a guy's coming down the chimney and all of this, but it's very real.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And then we start to "have reality set in later". But that is a part of us. And so even, and this is the part I want to swing it back to you, even as I'm sitting here and thinking about these things, they exist, they exist for me in my mind, in my spirit. So the term that we've put on this is an inner child, that is a very real phenomenon. And nobody else understands your inner child like you do because you're the only one that truly experiences those experiences. And so with that being said, you mentioned that self-inquiry, being able to ask some questions. But you also mentioned people not wanting to do this work because they don't want to relive certain things. Let's talk about that.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah. Yeah. I will. There's a couple things you said I want to unpack a little bit. So with your siblings and that example. So growing up in chaos like that children, oh my gosh, children have to endure things that they just can't. And so they have to go into this survival part of their brain, and it really shuts down people. It really just kills spirits in so many ways. And so, for example, growing up in a chaotic house is going to create an insecure attachment style. If we tie this back to relationships, it's going to create an insecure attachment style, specifically, most commonly a disorganized attachment style. So if we look

at attachment style, they're secure and insecure. And within insecure, there's anxious, avoidant and disorganized. And that chaotic, it creates this just organized attachment style where you have this come here, go away thing with people. It's like you want people, but you don't, you want closeness, but you don't, you can't get a grip on life. Feelings are just really big so you need to numb, you need to do something because you had no regulation as a child. So...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Or do something really big for attention.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah. Exactly. So, I have so much compassion for the human experience and I've coached 1000s of people at this point. And so many adults come and they get so frustrated because they can analyze themselves and they know they should be doing better, and they know they should have more confidence, or they know they shouldn't procrastinate, or they know they shouldn't sabotage or shouldn't drink or shouldn't cheat or whatever. But I'm like, but there's a part of your brain that just can't. There's a part developmentally that you didn't learn. It's like when we learn grammar, we learn it in a certain way so that we can communicate in a way that people can understand. And there's so many things that happens in people's childhood where they miss big things like how to conjugate a verb, and then they just have trouble communicating or relating in this metaphor to other people.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And so our childhood can't be used as a scapegoat. And our parents can't be the blame for all the reason we have, don't have what we want in our life. It's not about blaming parents, it's about having compassion for parents too. And we'll get to spiritual bypassing and forgiveness of parents. But it's having just so much compassion for our human experience, especially our childhood. And like you said, no one knows our inner child like we do. And so many people just have no idea how to connect to their inner child at all. So I'll wrap how to connect to your inner child in answering your question about, okay, how do we deal with our inner child if we don't want to relive trauma? So I don't believe in reliving trauma at all. I don't think it's useful. I do believe there's huge value in somatic experiencing, in allowing ourselves to release things from our body that we've been holding on to for a long time.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And you don't necessarily have to remember it. I was working with a client who had repressed memories of sexual abuse come forward 20 years later, 'cause she finally felt safe enough to have those memories come forward. And we were in a session and she's like, oh gosh, do I have to remember details? And I said, ask your higher self. Go inside, ask your higher self, 'cause we all have a higher self. Do you need to remember details to heal? She went inside and she asked, she got a very clear, no. She said, how am I going to heal without remembering the details? And I said, well, you know what happened, that's enough. And knowing that it happened and giving yourself permission to remember that it happened is going to give you access to express the feelings you never got to express. So we can go back to a time in our life and give ourselves, especially with a counselor, a coach, in a safe environment, give ourselves permission to feel the feelings to...

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** 'Cause, if you look at something like abuse, for example, when kids are abused, they may cry a little bit, but mostly they have to freeze and take it. Kids that are abused don't then get to process their feelings and have a safe adult hold them when they cry or let them express their anger or their shame or anything. It just all gets sucked inside. So healing isn't about, let me take myself back through the circumstances. It's let me go to that inner child who's still frozen in time somewhere and give that little one the opportunity to express. So when I do inner child work with someone, first I create a really safe container. I never do it in the first session. I need rapport, I need them and all parts of them to know that they're safe, that they have a non-judgmental person with them.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And it can take a while for the inner child to even feel safe enough to come forward. I know for me, when my first coach, Mona, took me into inner child work, I just, I was like, where is she? I'm broken. She's dead. I can't find her anywhere. I have no access. And I didn't have a lot of memories either. There's a lot that I just really, really forgot. But over time, and we can talk about some techniques over time, I started to see her in visualizations. And the first really profound visualization I had, she was standing behind a tree with her arms crossed, and I kept wanting to see her and I kept trying to walk around the tree and she kept turning around the tree so I couldn't really see her. And so in this visualization, I just sat down and I said, I'll wait.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** I'll stop chasing you. I'll wait till you can come to me. And then eventually in this visualization, she did. And that was the beginning of my rapport and relationship with her. So often the first step is just creating that connection, going back and realizing, oh, there is still a little me in there. It does exist. And we have to be very patient and gentle with allowing that part of us to feel safe enough to come forward. And that, like I said, can really take some time. But when it does, then that's when we can go back again with a trained person or even on our own. My husband and I teach an online workshop for people on how to really go back and heal your inner child because it's such a critical part of healing and relationships as we're talking about.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** But when you're doing it, allow yourself to go back in time but not go to the abuse or the hard thing, but to the age where you feel like you didn't get to express something and be that loving person and say, I'm here. What are you feeling? What do you want to say? What are you believing? What are you making this mean? And when we can give the child the healing that they never got to experience, the emotional expression, then it's like, these things don't have to become so lodged inside of us. And the inner child starts to realize, oh wait, there is a loving person who wants to hear what I'm saying right now. So it's beautiful work and it's simple work too. It sounds really complex, but it's actually quite simple and profound.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I would imagine there's all kinds of ways that we would express. It's not just a cookie cutter, okay, you're allowed to cry or to yell or to just articulate how you feel. There's going to be a wide spectrum of expressions if we're allowed that space to do it.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Oh yeah. It might be dancing, it might be laughing, it might be drawing. The inner art is such a fantastic modality for the inner child. There's so many, it might be sounds, no words, it might be asking for a need to be met. And there's so many things that can, there's no one road to healing. Everybody's different and you'll find your way. But I want to just reiterate, again, it is so possible, and in my opinion, better to do this work without taking yourself back and retraumatizing yourself. You've been through the experience already. This isn't about reliving the experience, it's about giving yourself the emotional release around the experience. 'Cause I see this with my daughter. She's 20 months old right

now, and I'm really learning to just hold space for her big feelings.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** I do my best not to say it's okay or try to calm her down. I let her have her feelings and acknowledge 'em. Say, I really see you're upset about this. You're angry, you're safe, I'm here. And then it's done. Then it's just done. And she's fine. And that's what the inner child needs, a safe space to just express in whatever way they want to express and be received with unconditional love. And the problem I see so many people get into when doing work with younger parts of themselves is they go back with reassurance.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** So they go back and say, "It's okay Shawn, your parents. They were doing the best they could. They really were. Your mom was really stressed out, your dad had his own abusive mother, they were doing the best they could." And it's okay, 'cause you're gonna meet a wonderful woman, you're gonna have kids of your own, you're gonna have this successful podcast. Like it's all gonna turn out okay. That means nothing to the inner child. Because for them, they're still in that moment and it feels dismissive. So we have to make sure we don't give into reassurance, and it's kind of like, it's all gonna work out type of thing, it's really honoring where they are and what they need in that moment.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, yeah, you mentioned some other important tools as well, and you mentioned forgiveness, and that was really... That changed everything for me. Of course, being able to perspective take as well, whether it's within and looking at my different stages or looking from other people's perspective to the best of my ability, but I used to have this recurring dream when I lived with my grandmother and even after I moved back with my mom. And I've never said this before, but it would be this... This was my... My brother's basically five years younger than me, and it was my mom, and she was holding him, and I would be trying to get to her, and every time I would get close, she'd go through another door and I'm just... And it kept happening, I could never get to her and she got further and further away.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And I just... I longed for my mom, even though I was now in this kind of



safe environment, there was so much beauty in this place, I still longed for her, and I can't remember my relationship with her prior to moving in with my grandmother, but I know that obviously, I was bonded to her, and I felt like when she would be holding my little brother, she wasn't holding me. But my mom because of the environment that we were in, because it was a reframe for me as well, so it's that part of acceptance, it's the part of being able to express myself and how I felt at the time, but also understanding why she did some of the things that she did as well, and where they were coming from, right? And so we were in a volatile environment. We were in a place where I could die, I could die in a certain interaction outside that door, and she wanted me to be tough, she wanted me to be resilient, she wanted me to be somebody that can handle myself in these conditions.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so she put me in certain scenarios, which is wildly inappropriate, fighting other kids, that kind of stuff, to develop these capacities and I hated her for it. And, but then going through life with that, as I'm replaying that in my relationships now, if there's a problem, we resort to violence, right? Whether it's like friends or people who are just testing me outside my door, and it kept leading me into more problems, of course, because it wasn't really resolving any of this stuff, but getting to a place where I was able to forgive her for the situation she put me in for the abuse or whatever the case might be, the things that I went through and being... I literally like when you said you freeze and I just thought about all those times that I got hit.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It was a regular occurrence. And again, from her perspective, she loved me, she wasn't trying to hurt me, she was trying to discipline me and make sure that I'm not doing these certain things so I could survive in this environment. And so if I was to carry that with me, even today, I would suffer, I would be suffering still, and now I have... And this is what I wanna ask you about as well, because we tend to look for those things to fill those spaces.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And if we're doing this intentionally and from a place of healing can it not be healthy to have some of these needs met from other relationships. Because I'm asking this because after forgiving my mom and even that and truly forgiving her, it opened up this

love for her, a different kind of love of like, Thank you, thank you so much for bringing me here, thank you so much for keeping me safe in these particular environments, to the best of your ability. Thank you so much for putting food on the table, thank you so much for selling your blood at times just to be able to feed us. Thank you so much, thank you so much.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Thank you so much for the abuse that you had to endure, and it became this very... But it was personal, it didn't necessarily change how I'm treating her, interacting with her because she's still who she is, but it gave me freedom and I have this new experience within myself where I'm not carrying all this resentment. And so, now this is my question. As I processed a lot of these things. Then I met my wife. A funny thing, right? But with her, I met my mother-in-law. And those boxes that I was wanting to check just to have a mom, just to have somebody that I could count on is there. I can just go to her house and she's there. I got that. And I'm curious if that is a healthy... Because I'm intentional about it, but I feel the need for that as well. I still feel that need for love, I still feel that need for a mom. So can you talk about that a little bit?

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah. Oh, thank you for sharing all that. I just wanna go back and grab that little boy and hug him and be like, "I got you." Yeah, so this is a beautiful example of both and. My current coach is always reminding me both and, Christine, both and. Having the perspective to forgive your mother is a beautiful place of freedom to get to understanding her journey and what she went through as a child and the intention behind a lot of her actions, is a great place to get to inside yourself because it's spacious and you can let go of a lot of that resentment, like you said, and move into that acceptance. So that's the spiritual, I would say, side of this. The emotional side would be going back to that little guy who was five, six, seven, something like that, if your brother was about five years younger, and saying, "What were you really needing? What did you want from mom that you didn't get? And what does the answer be?"

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I just wanted her to hold me.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah, you just wanted to feel held and nurtured and safe and loved, and probably like... So your nervous system could calm down, right?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** So being held is an instinct, wow. We go into regulation, so probably as a little kid, you had to be on high alert a lot of the time, so going into your mother-in-law's home right now probably is like being held.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** There's probably a part of your nervous system that just goes... (sigh) And I'm not surprised that you have such a passion for health, because so much of what you talk about is really about regulating your nervous system.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Because this was such a huge need for you. So you've done it for your little boy. Maybe not consciously, but by really creating environments for yourself that are safe, so you've taken care of him, and you've brought experiences into your life that are giving you and him what he never had. So something you could do next time you walk into your mother-in-law's house is just check in with little Shawn. Be like, "Hey buddy, you're here with me, you're coming with me and we're gonna go in and we're gonna get a big hug. And we're going into a warm house with yummy food, and we're just gonna let all that love in." so just invite him along for that.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And this is absolutely healthy. Yes, so much of our work is done independently, but like we said earlier, we are relational beings, we are interdependent and expecting to do it all on our own is ridiculous. And so having experiences that fill those needs that we didn't get as children, is deeply healing. But going in with an expectation or projecting all our stuff on somebody, if you subconsciously, we're projecting this mother wound on Anne, I don't think you'd still be married. If you were looking to her to make you feel good, to make you feel safe, to regulate you, if you took no responsibility in your own life for learning how to regulate your system and get yourself out of chaos, it would be a problem

in your relationship, but you've taken responsibility for that and you've probably done more inner child work than you realize. But I would just say, if I can just put on my coach hat for a second, bring more consciousness to little Shawn, like let him be part of your now life more.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Got a quick break coming up, we'll be right back.

[music]

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** No lifts, no gifts. Here are just a few benefits of building muscle seen in peer review studies. Building some muscle mass can significantly improve your insulin sensitivity, improve your overall hormone health, improve your cognitive performance, improve your immune system, protect you against injuries and speed recovery and defend your body against age related degradation, this is just a small slice of what a little bit more muscle can do. Now, the barrier of entry to building more healthy muscle and reaching a state of physical fitness, is easier than ever. Having a few key pieces of equipment at your house can absolutely change the game for you. Kettlebells, steel clubs, maces, battle robes, all of these phenomenal multi-faceted pieces of equipment are readily available to ship directly to your door.

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**SHAWN STEVENSON:** The thing I love about you is like you point me to certain things that I do on accident, seemingly on accident, but as you know, just doing the work, investing in

myself, working to figure things out, working to feel good to find happiness to be more graceful in life, in how I operate, how I relate to other people, how I relate to myself. You happen to point out certain things. And one of those things too, because I had to also be on my Ps and Qs to make it out of the environment as well. I was very... Even though I was a very playful kid. In the classroom, just like I'm on my sh\*t. And I feel... Of course, and this is a lot of people experience today, like countless kids where they have the spirit of play and creativity, all the things, and you just gotta sit there. And I push myself through those scenarios, but now there is an intentional spirit of play in my household, in my environment that I encourage. That I've encouraged through my actions and also just again, wanting to provide a better blueprint.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And, now, I gotta ask you about this, what about when we swing the pendulum all the way to the other side? Because you started off by sharing that our nervous systems are looking for certain things, to feel loved, to feel safe, and that questioning 100 people, maybe five, have that condition. Now, there's a lot of these adults walking around here who are aware of this stuff and they're trying to do that for their kids. All love and safety, all the time.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Impossible. [laughter]

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We're trying to...

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah...

[overlapping conversation]

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Maybe, because there's this new term of helicopter parenting, right? Maybe taking away some things of resilience, of adjustment, of all... Fill in the blank. And so my question is, Where's the balance here? Because that's what we really want. We wanna get to a place where we are more integrated, balanced human being.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah, well, I love this question. And back when I used to, like 10 years ago, I used to speak a lot on the millennial generation, like 10-15 years ago, and people would ask me about helicopter parenting, and I'd say, "It's not helicopter, it's cockpit parenting." These parents are flying the planes for these kids, they're not hovering, and that wasn't so great, because kids didn't learn autonomy and resilience and rejection, and learning how to deal with all those things. So some natural, appropriate suffering is part of the healthy development of the child and the human being. What I notice when the pendulum swings the other way is that a parent is so uncomfortable with their own big feelings and their own suffering that they can't handle it and can't stay regulated when their child is suffering or have big feelings. So one of the biggest things we do as parents is to stay regulated the best we can when our child is dysregulated and not try to get them out of their pain, not rescue them all the time. Let them fall on their face and just be like, "I'm here, and I love you. What do you wanna talk about about this?"

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** As long as you're that safe, consistent space, that is actually way more important, and will create a way more adapted human being than fixing all their problems. Because we fix our kids problems because we're uncomfortable with them. Believe me I'm only 20 months into parenting so I am no expert, but it is one of the hardest things is just to see her struggle and see her suffer, but I know it's part of being human and it's part of how she develops resilience. So yeah, having no boundaries, I don't think is love and safety at all.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** To me, love and truth go together and we need boundaries, we need like... And a lot of times when Athena is really upset about something... I showed you that video, how she likes to drive and sometimes it's time to get out of the car and she does not wanna get out of the car, and we talk about it and I say, "Okay, I can see you don't wanna get out of the car. Now I'm gonna lift you out of the car 'cause it is time to go in and you can be mad at me, like I see, Oh, you're really mad at me. Yeah, you're really, really mad at me. That's okay. You can be mad." And she's just mad. And that's just okay. And the other thing I noticed so much, especially with the previous generation of parenting, is really wanting kids to like us, like being a little more invested in our children, liking us, than setting those boundaries and really being the parent. But in order to parent...

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And again, there's no perfection with parenting, just like Gottman says in his workshops and his research on marriage and on relationships, it's not about being perfect, it's not about never fighting, it's about repair, same thing with attachment parenting, it's not about being perfect, it's about being consistent, and it's about repairing when things kinda go off the rails. So there's no perfection, but having that intention to be consistent, to have those boundaries and do your own work. 'Cause we talked about relationships triggering us, kids are really great at showing us our own unprocessed stuff as well, they're excellent at it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** They're masters.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah, they are.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Masters. So you've said this term expectation a couple of times, this is one of the really seminal works that you've shared with everybody is the expectation hangover, right? And so again, it's not... The problem isn't addressing your needs through a relationship, that's normal, the problem is holding these expectations and putting that off on another person, right? So can you talk a little bit about expectation hangovers? Is like, What is that?

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Well, it's one of three things, either something that you really wanted or planned or worked hard for, it doesn't happen, or something that you really wanted does happen, but it doesn't make you feel the way you thought you would like you finally get that great job or get into that relationship, but your insecurity issues are still there, or life just throws you an unexpected curveball. Someone breaks up with you. Diagnosed with an illness. Lay off those types of things. So in a nutshell it's disappointment, it is, and in relationships, so much of expectations are projection. So much of expectations are, this is what I didn't get, or this is what I'm not giving myself, and so I'm gonna project it on you subconsciously or consciously, and it's your job to give it to me. And another thing that we do in relationships is we really expect the person to be a mind reader and to know what it's like to walk in our shoes. So when I do couples work with people, the thing that I work hardest on with people is

to get them in the other person's shoes to really look at how someone else sees the world, because we all have a very distinct way of seeing the world.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** We all have a very distinct opinion about how things should go and how someone should act, especially our partner. And our partner can see things completely, completely different. And so, so many of our expectations are unspoken, and then that just leads to resentment. So my biggest thing in relationship is one, please don't expect your partner to be a mind reader. Like, don't. Even if you've been together 50 years and you think that on your anniversary, he should know you like flowers, don't expect it. Just be like, I'm really looking forward to the flowers this year. I wonder what this year you're gonna get me. Take control, take a responsibility for not getting disappointed. And something I hear so often from couples is, oh my gosh, I don't wanna have to tell my partner what I need. And I said, well, then prepare to be disappointed. [laughter]

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right, right.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Like, take responsibility. And yes, there is a room for pleasant surprises. And I do think as a partner, we do wanna anticipate the other person's needs, that's a big thing too. But the more responsibility you take, the more responsibility your partner is gonna take if you're in a healthy dynamic. But yeah, those expectations, man, they just lead to a lot of resentment.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yep, yep. And it can show up, as you said earlier, like so much of our physical ailments have an emotional component. And yeah, it's the expectation that oftentimes is a thing that we're carrying physically as well. My stepfather passed away recently, and when I got the news... And I was having a good day. But also this... We knew that this was imminent. He'd been on assisted living for like 12 years. He had some cognitive stuff from drugs. And then things kind of took a turn for the worse more recently. And I got the news, and then within the hour, I started having a pain in my neck, and it just got progressively worse, and I did all the things. I'm like working on it, I got all the different equipment and I'm hitting it all these kind of ways.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And then it kind of resolved a little bit. It was like I could turn my head a little bit easier, and the next day it was on the other side. It's just like, ah, I'm just gonna move over here. And I felt like initially, because I didn't do the self-inquiry, that it was because of the news and I was holding onto it. But it wasn't that at all, because I felt on, again, it's kinda like with my mom, I felt this joyful, like this gratitude and this beauty and all these other things, and I'm just like, am I missing something? And I did the inquiry, and I just like, this isn't what it is. And it wasn't until, again, the importance of relationships, I talked with a trusted advisor. And it was Michael Beckwith. And I told him about the situation, and how I was feeling, because I even took that with me because we were leaving for Maui two days later.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I had a pain in my neck in paradise. Yeah. I had the Lomi Lomi massage and all, nothing could get rid of it. It could just make it so I'm more functional but the pain was still there. And after I shared with him finally a week later, almost what it was, and just the context of things my brother and sister and the call and whatever, and I'm about to head back to St. Louis, it was what I was carrying the expectation about my brother and sister and how they were going to respond and how they were acting and all the things. It was my expectation. He was like, the expectation is the problem. He said specifically that word, the expectation is the problem.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And once I got to look at it, and I just... I honored the fact that it was there. I realized that I saw it. I looked at why and I let it go. I let it go. And I stopped that silly behavior I was putting myself through of holding these expectations over these grown people's behavior, and I just let it go. And within 24 hours, the pain was gone.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And it was a mental reframe. Something I was caring about an expectation. And so I deeply, deeply see this. And so I want to ask you about this. Yesterday, my youngest son was writing, it was a question for this particular thing he had to do. And the question was, what do you like most about your identity? And I'm just like, he's coming to me as like, what are they talking about? And I was just giving him some examples about what his

identity is.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** It's a big question.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And I got to see his answer. Later on, I was blown away. And he started off... He has his... And I love the fact that he communicates as he talks, and I'm trying to keep that encouragement going. And he answered the question. He started off saying, I'm not gonna lie, but the thing that I like most about my identity is that I care about people. And then he went on to describe different scenarios and how he does this. And he shared... He even added a story in there about his birthday party. One of his friends wasn't happy, wasn't feeling like they were included. And at his own... He was like, at my own birthday party, I stopped everything to make sure that my friend felt included.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And then, but also I start to feel a little bit of something unsettling as I'm reading at this point, because this is about others. And then boom, the next sentence, he was like, but also, of course, I've gotta make sure that I'm taking care of my happiness because that's gonna impact how I communicate with other people. And he was like, kind of throwing that back to the question answerer. Just like, I'm included in this too. And so to have both of those is my question. Having that self input and also if we're working to give something to others. I guess my question is how do we find that balance? Because it's so easy to be so other focused or so easy to be so self-centered. Like how do we find that balance? I know this is a big question as well.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah. I love your son. How remarkable. I don't know, Shawn, there is a balance. I think it's more about an order of things. And I love that they're asking him about identity 'cause I mentioned Erikson's stages of development and the psychosocial stage of development he is, is identity and role confusion, like really figuring out who he is in the world. So beautiful that this question is being asked. So much of how we think of ourselves is how other people perceive us. And that's just natural. That's just a natural part of being human. And I do think that, I'm sure this is true for me, I'm sure it's true for you. The older you get, the less you kind of care, and it's tremendous freedom. But it seems like as we're younger, what other people think, it really does matter because we're back to that need of belonging.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** We're back to that need of like, where do I fit in the world? And he's still trying to figure it out, and he's found a recipe for fitting in. And part of how I fit in the world is I help other people. So what I mean by the order of things is, where that gets troublesome is if he is giving from a place of depletion. Like if his own cup isn't full, like if he was having a great old time at his birthday party and his needs were met and he's like, oh, well, like this person doesn't seem like they're doing well. I'm gonna go over and see what they're doing. That's a different come from, then, oh my gosh, someone isn't having a good time and it's my responsibility to make sure they're okay. Much different come from. So that's what I think we need to be aware of is both the order of things of like, am I full? Am I coming from a resourced place? And that's more of an adult question. And what's my come from in doing something? Is it because I think I need to do this because this is how I belong in the world? Or is it really coming from a heartfelt desire of like, yeah, this feels really good to me to do this.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I love that so much to come from, and even us big adult babies, we could pay attention to that.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. It's something I've had to just be so mindful of in my work, because I hear day after day, like really difficult stuff. And there is a part of me that just wants to go in and mother everybody and save everybody. But I'd be sick by now if I did that. And so we have to learn empathy is not sympathy. Sympathy has a feeling sorry for, and a judgment tone to it. And like, I need to... Something's wrong with you and I need to help you in some way, and I feel sorry for you. Empathy is just, I'm with you. I see you and I'm with you. Compassion. Co means with, passion means suffering. The original definition, that's compassion. Just really being with it. So that's one of the things, especially people that may have developed a strategy early on to be a people pleaser or a caretaker, because that's one of the programming. If I take care of other people, then I get love, then I get validation, then I belong, then people need me, I won't be left. Like there's a whole, there are a lot of perks to being a caretaker and a people pleaser. So we have to really look at like, again, where is that come from?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** All right. This is awesome. So I want to ask you, this is also from your

personal experience recently too. If people are wanting to find that love and maybe they've gone through again, all the stuff and some things didn't work out how they went recently. So if you could share your recent experience in meeting your husband and starting a family and all the things and the season of life that you were in where again, some of these things, for some people it's like, that's not even possible. Yeah. Can you talk a little bit about that?

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah. Well, last time we recorded, I hadn't met my husband. It was beginning of 2018 and I met him... Well, we were introduced in April. We didn't meet till July. Yeah. So I was married in my late 20s, divorced in my early 30s when everybody else was getting married and having babies. I was definitely doing things on the wrong timeline. And before my divorce, I had a broken engagement. So by 32, I was two engagements in. One called off the wedding six months before, and the other one, we got a divorce. And I was a coach at the time with self-help books. So I felt like such, I was like, oh, am I really qualified to do this? But I knew that I was, because I was really honoring my truth. And one thing I really learned about relationships is that the success of a relationship is not based on how long it lasts. It's really based on what did you learn from it and how much did you heal?

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And I can say with my ex-husband, we both learned a lot and there was a lot of healing that happened. And it had an expiration date. Like there was an end to what we needed to learn and grow together, and some relationships just have those. And so my 30s were very single, like very single by choice for a while. And then I was like, all right, well this is a little boring. Like this is a little lonely. My bed's a little cold. Like, is anybody out there? Hello? So it was a tough time. And I really had to look at, all right, like where do I still have patterns of protection running? And what I realized, Shawn, and it's even been more profound with my daughter. Love on some level is terrifying.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** When we really let love in, like a partner or a child, oh my God, it's like so huge. It's so huge. And because I had been hurt, I didn't wanna risk it. I just did not wanna risk it. And so I had walls up. I pretended I was open and I said I was open, but I had walls up 'cause I just didn't wanna get hurt again. I didn't wanna go through pain and rejection again. And so, there's tactical this things I did that we can talk about. But the biggest shift for me was two things. One, being like I will get hurt again. I will take the risk, and I'll open my heart.

And if I get hurt again, if I get that big expectation hangover, I'll navigate my way through it. So I'm like open to love. I had to do the same thing when I opened up to getting pregnant.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And the other thing was surrender. I had to let go of thinking I was going to make it happen. I had to let go of my list. I had to let go of trying so hard to make it work. And I really had to trust the universe and surrender. And I learned how to be with a longing without suffering. Because I think sometimes people confuse surrender with resignation. Resignation is whatever, why bother? I give up. There's no good people out there. It's not gonna happen for me. I'm happy on my own. That's resignation, that's not surrender. True surrender is not letting go of the longing. It's like trusting the universe, but letting the longing be there. So I let myself long for love. I let myself long for partnership but not suffer at the same time. Not make it mean anything was wrong with me. Not make it mean, time was running out. And this is like approaching 40, like I was right there at that like clock that so many women, people, but especially women, feel and learn how to be with the desire without the hurt and the focus on the lack.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And so the story is, I moved to San Diego. I had this great place on the beach that I loved. I went to renew my lease. The landlord said, Nope, I'm kicking you out. I'm like, what? Massive expectation hangover. I had no idea why it was just a nomad. I think before we recorded, I was on my way to Australia, I was traveling all over. And this is when I really stepped into that surrendering. I'm like, okay, universe, you've just kicked me out of my dream home. What the fuck is going on? Okay, I surrender. How much more do I need to surrender? I really surrender here.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And then I was over at a friend's house and her husband was working on his computer and he said, Hey Christine, can you come and look at this startup website we're working on? And on the screen were the founders. And I looked at his face and I said, I know him. Who is that? And I said his name. And I'm like, well that's a name. It's Stefano Sifandos. I mean that's a name. Never heard of him. I just had this soul recognition. I was in San Diego, he was in Perth, Australia. We couldn't be on more opposite sides of the world. Our friends asked if they could introduce us. And this is also, this was another thing I did. I got super clear 'cause I had a pattern of going for emotionally unavailable, super charismatic life

of the party, very good looking successful men, but they were not available for relationship at the level that I wanted.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And I just kept thinking that, oh, I can change 'em. Expectation hangover waiting do happen. So I was super clear. I told my friend, ask him if he's calling in a relationship, his queen, his wife used whatever word you wanna use. But I'm only, I don't want a PenPal. And I don't want a guy who's like just dating a lot. I want someone who is wanting sacred union and wants a conscious partnership, otherwise please don't introduce us. So I also was like, I did not waver on my non-negotiables because that was something I'd done in the past. I was like, well, he's really cute. That's okay. And finally I got, well, how am I gonna really get what I want if I'm wavering? And that comes from fear too.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** We think, oh, I can't possibly have everything I want, so I'll just take this thing and maybe I can change it. So anyway, I'll wrap this story up. He said, yes, we got introduced, we talked for two and a half months over WhatsApp. We met in Greece. And at nine o'clock in the morning he flew in, I opened my hotel room door and I was like, okay, I'm home. That's it. He hugged me, and I just had... I didn't have fireworks. I didn't have that feeling that was like a drug that had just ended in a dead end and lots of tears so many previous times. I had a feeling of home of like, oh, this is safe and my nervous system regulated. And that's a huge cue for relationships when you first meet someone.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Those fireworks are fun and there's a lot of adrenaline and dopamine that can happen, but what you really wanna feel is a sense of like, whew, I'm intrigued and I'm attracted and I'm also like, I feel safe with you. And I had to get to a feeling of safety inside myself to be able to do that. So we met, we got married three months later, after we met in person. And then we had our daughter at 20... So we met in 2018 and we had our daughter in 2022. And that was another thing, Shawn, that I was like, oh gosh, do I want this? Can I handle loving something so much? Like can I, because one of my things, my kryptonite, oh, I worry, I worry with the best of them. And it's something that I have just accepted about myself and I've learned ways to work with it, especially people I love, oof.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** I can worry till I can make up amazing worst case scenarios and just my

hypervigilance can really kick in. And I was like, oh, can I, can I deal with loving something that much? Can I really? But then when I really felt into it, I asked myself, do I wanna make a decision from fear? 'Cause that's what I'm doing right now. I'm making a decision from fear, and not from possibility, definitely not from love. So I asked myself, if I go in and make a decision from love, what do I want? And I wanted to be a mom. And I got pregnant in my 40s easily, naturally which was another thing people say it wouldn't happen. And ended up having a home birth because the doctors I went to treated me like a sick person being pregnant in my 40s.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And I'm like, no, we're not doing that. So I had her at home, no issues. And I never thought when I got divorced that I don't know how old I was, 31, 32, that I'd wait 10 years to have the marriage and the child that I always thought I wanted. And I would've thought, no, that's not possible or that's too late. And what I've learned from my own life in doing this with so many people is there's divine timing for things. And it's really never too late for things. And some people may say, well, it's too late for me to have a child. Like, not gonna happen. Well, form is we can look at form, right? If you wanna be a parent, like if you wanna be a mother or a father, how else can you express that? Having a bi biological child isn't the only way to express that.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** No, that was something I came to peace with is if I wasn't able to get pregnant and I wasn't able to have a child, all the ways that I do mother, and I grieve not being able to do that. But there are other ways to express that. And I think that's a trap we fall into in life is we look at what we're lacking, we look at what we don't have versus really looking and creating the feeling, 'cause we're always after the feeling. We're never after the form anyway.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That part, that part. You're amazing. This is so cool. Wow. Thank you so much truly for sharing your story and for traveling. This is big for you even to come here right now because with your connection with your daughter right now, and I don't take it lightly at all, this is really like, you've given so much today. Like, and even just for me, I think you see both of our eyes up here just watering. And yeah, thank you so much for doing this work and thank you for sharing your vulnerability as well. Because one of the coolest parts was when

you shared the struggles in your early relationships and you being in this work and just like, is this, am I not good at this? And it's just like getting face to face with oh, this is what this is because what so many of us think is that there again, it's this certain perfect story, this perfect scenario.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And no matter who you aspire to be or who you might model or think highly of, they go through sh\*t.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yep.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** All right. Some of the wildest, some of the most crazy scenarios, no matter where we are, what our story's been previously, there's always something.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** There's always something.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so you giving us the ability to self-assess for ourselves and also the wherewithal that listen, the divine timing piece, being able to get clear on what you want, being able to surrender, being able to keep walking in that direction, being the person doing the things and ultimately accepting like a big part of your story too is accepting this love, accepting all these different conditions and being able to look at, which is so huge for so many of us I know, that fear of getting hurt. And like accepting it that it's part of the package. And even I'm a fan of celebrating things like that as well. Listen, my wife and I, we've been together for almost 20 years, for 19 years and I made a decision because there was this whole like non-attachment thing. There's certain meditations in different camps, just letting be it be not attached.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And that's one way to be, but also I'm a scientist too. So I'm like we are social creatures and the chemistry and all the things are just like that doesn't make sense. So let me get the best of both worlds. Let me consciously attach to this person and then allow myself to be swayed, the waves of my life to be influenced by this person's presence and her



decisions, and open myself up to being hurt, which I know she's going to hurt me and that's okay. And also trusting that she's going to work on being better for me as I'm working on being better for her. But the last piece is, you said this in the very beginning, expectations versus responsibility. So taking responsibility for myself first and foremost. And you are a huge example of this. I want everybody to follow you like crazy. What's the best places people can connect with you and connect with your work? And you also mentioned that you and your husband do some work together as well. So let's...

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah, we do. We do. There's just something that I feel I really wanna say. Can I say one thing before I go into that?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yes, please do. Please do.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Okay. So I've been in the personal development work for a long time and there's a time and a place for it. And I think what a trend that I'm seeing that I just wanna speak to briefly, 'cause what you were saying just triggered a bell and we talked a lot about inner child work and we talked about some deep work that sometimes the best thing we can do is like just get ourself regulated and resourced again. So something I see a lot of people do is like, they... I had to dig deep and I gotta solve this issue and we need to... Our relationship needs to go to therapy right now. We need to uncover all these things and unpack all these things. And I need to do this workshop and then take this course and read this book and all these things.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And that's all great, but it can also like reactivate trauma. So there's an ebb and a flow to growth, personal development work, whatever we wanna say. Where sometimes, especially if you've just been through a lot, the best thing you can do is get resourced again, get regulated again. It often isn't the time to go do deep somatic work or go to a really cathartic workshop where a lot of stuff is gonna come up. It's the time to do your breath work, not holotropic, but do breath work that really regulates your nervous system, get your acupuncture, feel supported, body work those types of things. Because when we go into, and this is tying it to relationships, when we go into anything unresourced and depleted, we're just gonna get triggered really, really easily. So for people individually, or if you feel like

your relationship is just in a rut right now, before you start digging, what can you bring, what can you do to bring yourself back into regulation? What can you do to resource yourself and the relationship?

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** And then from there, that's when you do the deeper work. So thank you for indulging me in that. I just wanted to say that. Contact me, well, there's lots of ways. I'm on Instagram. I just released the audiobook to Expectation Hangover. The first version wasn't my voice, so I recorded it in my voice and put some extra things in there. And then my husband and I do teach an Inner child workshop. That's available anytime, it's self-paced. It's just [christinehassler.com/innerchild](http://christinehassler.com/innerchild). And then my podcast, which you've been on, so it's a coaching podcast. So every Wednesday is a life coaching podcast. If you're confused about inner child work, listen to the podcast, you'll hear me do it. And then every Saturday is an episode with someone also like you. So lots of ways to connect.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, it's such a good show. Such a good show.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Oh, thank you. I love doing it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Well thank you so much again for making the time. This is like, this is such a special part of my day today straight up.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Oh, me too.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I appreciate it.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Well, there are very few people that I would fly for 16 hours to be with, and I just have so much respect and appreciation for you, Shawn, as a father, as a husband, as a leader, as somebody who's really walking the talk and integrating the work. This was a no-brainer for me to come.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, well real recognize real, so I appreciate you so much.

**CHRISTINE HASSLER:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Christine Hassler, everybody. Thank you so very much for tuning into this episode today. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this. This is about empowerment, this is about self-inquiry. This is about education in cultivating healthy relationships. But the big takeaway is that it starts with us. It starts with the relationship that we have with ourselves and working on that. And if you got a lot of value out of this, please share this out with somebody that you think this will be helpful for. And of course you could share this out with your followers on social media. You could take a screenshot of this episode, tag me, I'm @shawnmodel on Instagram and tag Christine as well. I'm sure it would make her day to see all of the love.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So please share this out on Instagram as well. We've got some incredible masterclasses and world class guests coming your way very, very soon, so make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day and I'll talk with you soon. And for more after this show, make sure to head over to [themodelhealthshow.com](http://themodelhealthshow.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.