

## The Human Upgrade: Episode 1142

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[00:00:04] **Dave:** There you go. That's a profound statement.

[00:00:06] **Shaw:** We can create environments that create an automation of the habits that we want to have and the outcomes that we want if we become aware that we have that power.

[00:00:16] **Dave:** If we define culture itself, define it, and it's really important that we do that, this is the shared attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people that are then passed on from one generation to the next. So defining what culture is, understanding what culture is, we have the power to create our own microculture.

[00:00:38] The most powerful way to make change in our community is by changing the microculture in your household first. Because what I've seen is that you take your culture with you. When people see you, they see the reflection of your culture, and it's very infectious. Of course, especially recently, we've really tunnel visioned things that are infectious. Good things can be infectious as well.

[00:01:04] And so by focusing on creating a healthy microculture, my children are a representation of that, myself, my wife, our relationship. These are things that reflect and influence other people around us.

[00:01:18] **Dave:** You are listening to the Human Upgrade with Dave. And if you've noticed, my voice is smooth, and rich, and slow. That's because I'm interviewing the guest who's been on the show here at his studio in Los Angeles, who has the number one most sought after voice and podcasting after Morgan Freeman. And if that wasn't enough to give it away, our guest is none other than Shawn Stevenson. We're here at the Model Health Studio in Los Angeles. Shawn, welcome--

[00:01:50] **Shawn:** My God. Thank you.

[00:01:51] **Dave:** To The Human Upgrade.

[00:01:54] **Shaw:** This is the best intro ever. And shout out to Morgan Freeman as well. He's been old a long time. He's doing something. He's been old for 60 years.

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[00:02:03] **Dave:** Yeah, that guy's into longevity. In fact, I wonder if I could interview him about his longevity practice. He seems like one of the more interesting minds out there. He's fierce.

[00:02:10] **Shaw:** Absolutely.

[00:02:11] **Dave:** Yeah.

[00:02:12] **Shaw:** Iconic voice as well.

[00:02:13] **Dave:** I'm going to see if I can get him. That'd be fun. Oh my gosh. All right. Thanks for the idea. Guys, if you don't know Shawn Stevenson, he was on the show last October of 2022, and he's one of these guys who's just got a huge embodiment of just peace and calm that comes from a background of having health at least as bad as me, and maybe even worse, which is hard to do.

[00:02:39] And then recovering and becoming a researcher nutritionist who has experience in biology and nutritional science. And we always have these really cool conversations going back and forth. Last time we talked about metabolic switches, dieting, and fat loss, but I want to switch gears.

[00:02:56] The whole point of The Human Upgrade is to upgrade the environment around you and inside you to give you control of your own biology. This includes longevity. It includes muscle, how your brain works, everything. You get to pick where you want to be and what are the things you change. And one of the things that doesn't get enough attention is the fourth F word in my teaching.

[00:03:17] And if you're new to the show, I'm going to go through this real fast for you, and then we're going to get into it with Shawn. He's going to love this intro. Your body processes reality before you can see it, in about a third of a second. And first, it looks for scary things. That's the first F word, fear. Run away from killer. Hide from scary things.

[00:03:36] Doesn't matter if it's criticism from mother-in-law. It felt scary, therefore it's scary, and your body goes into its mode before you can think. Second thing is food. Eat everything in case there's a famine. So you got fear, food. Third F word has to do with keeping the species around forever that all humans have to do. Shawn, what is it?

[00:03:53] **Shawn:** Fornication.

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[00:03:54] **Dave:** Wow. Nailed it. I was going to say fertility, but you're a dirty mind. It's all good. So we got fertility, the other f word I thought you might say. Fornication, you're the first guy who's ever said that.

[00:04:04] **Shawn:** I was channeling Mike Tyson, to be honest. That's what popped into my head, and I don't like it.

[00:04:10] **Dave:** Are you kidding? Mike Tyson's a genius.

[00:04:13] **Shaw:** Yeah, yeah.

[00:04:15] **Dave:** Truly, he's got brain damage.

[00:04:17] **Shaw:** Absolutely.

[00:04:19] **Dave:** His level of self-awareness is unbelievable where he is in his life right now.

[00:04:22] **Shaw:** Genius has a lot of flavors.

[00:04:24] **Dave:** Oh, okay, that's a fair point. Fourth f word, where we were going with all this is friend. So your body automatically says, all right, am I under threat? Am I starving? Do I have love in my life? And how do I serve my community and my people around me? And you've done some recent work in your Eat Smarter book series, and you just came out with your Family Cookbook, which I thought was a good opportunity.

[00:04:46] And no, guys, I'm not going to tell you have to go buy the Family Cookbook. You can if you want to, but we're going to talk about why the Family cookbook is there, why communal meals work, and some things about supporting your community. And I got to say, not only did you write the book about it, but you're probably just thinking about it. I would say no, there's no problem there. You are the most, well-liked podcaster in the nutrition field. I don't know anyone ever said anything bad about you.

[00:05:18] **Shawn:** Wow. All right. I had no idea.

[00:05:20] **Dave:** Yeah. There's always people, I have some problem with this guy, or whatever. They said this thing, whatever. But even if people disagree with you, you just say it with such peace and gratitude all the time that people aren't pissed off, even if you tell them the vegan diet's

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stupid, and all the other bad things you say. I don't know how you get away with that. So what's the worst thing you've said to someone, Shawn? This is going great.

[00:05:44] **Shaw:** Yeah. What's so interesting, even hearing this, it's a really interesting affirmation because I don't think that about myself.

[00:05:50] **Dave:** Yeah, you're humble.

[00:05:50] **Shaw:** You mentioned this calm and peace. It's really profound to me because I don't come from that. I grew up in a very, very volatile environment, and St. Louis, even to this day, it's the murder capital of the United States.

[00:06:06] **Dave:** It took down Chicago?

[00:06:08] **Shaw:** Yeah, for years. At the same time, I just think about when I was experiencing poor health, Advanced degenerative disc disease at the age of 20 was when I got the diagnosis, which that is years in the making before I go in and get a scan done. I broke my hip at track practice when I was 15 years old, chronic asthma, hospitalized on rotation.

[00:06:31] And obviously, a lot of this stuff we think about is relegated to people who are much older. So I was a very, very old person in a young biological-- from a biological perspective versus the chronological perspective, I was 20 years old, and I was a very old person. But at this time, I was also very aggressive and agitated.

[00:06:54] **Dave:** Oh yeah.

[00:06:55] **Shaw:** That's what I'm saying. So to hear this is really powerful because I was walking around with this feeling of I got to prove myself. I got to protect myself, very assertive, very aggressive. And also having kids at a young age too. My patience was just really non-present.

[00:07:16] And I wanted to be better because I grew up in an environment, a household where my mother said something once, and then she's screaming. There's a lot of violence in the household. There's a lot of violence outside my door. And so to have the affirmation and you sharing that just reflects back to me that you can cultivate these qualities.

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[00:07:36] You can, regardless of your circumstances, develop a sense of peace and presence. And it's not that it's a competition or anything, but my wife has seen this transformation where I'm the more patient parent now. I'm the person who's very much more laid back and peaceful.

[00:07:54] And when I'm saying that though, what it really is is I'm more conscious of the options. I'm thinking about the options on what I get to say, how I present myself, and I'm just more thoughtful, more mindful of the power of my words, to put it like that. And so even what people are picking up, and maybe they're talking good behind my back, is because I feel that I'm just more thoughtful in the way that I'm saying things.

[00:08:23] **Dave:** There's two kinds of regulation. What you're talking about is nervous system regulation. And your nervous system is very well regulated. Stephen Porges, who's the father of polyvagal theory, he is just a godfather of how does your body regulate itself. I've had the honor of interviewing him a couple of times, and he talks about how your voice is a really strong indicator of where your nervous system is.

[00:08:49] And from my first interview to my second, when I got on with him, the second, he goes, oh, Dave, your body sounds much more regulated than it was before. And earlier I was talking about your voice. This isn't that you were born this way. It's that you built this. And you built it out of necessity. And maybe that's one of the reasons I think you're cool. I had similar things. So I was really old before I was 30, arthritis, pre-diabetes, three knee surgeries.

[00:09:17] Started when I was 14. They said you have arthritis in your knees. And you're just like, things are wrecked. And when the brain stuff started going, for me, when you don't have enough energy, you get angry real easily. So I had same thing. It just popped into my head. I hadn't thought about this in years.

[00:09:34] I was, I don't know, maybe 18. I'm going to the swap meet. People under 40 don't even know what that is. So before we had Amazon, which is basically a swap meet, buy all sorts of cheap crap on Amazon that doesn't work very well because they destroyed a lot of small businesses.

[00:09:50] But you go to the swap meet to buy the cheap crap. And there's the guy with all the skull head spiked rings, and I was like, I want five of those. I just want to be tough. And he's like,

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man, I don't know who's after you? Is it a motorcycle gang? And I'm just like, no, I just like having dangerous things.

[00:10:07] And it was some manifestation of that, just like-- there's a word for it. It's like a bone to pick with everyone, just having a super angry vibe all the time. There's an edge on me. And I didn't understand it was coming from my nervous system, and from my brain, and from the nutrition, and all the things wrong with my biology made me feel that way. And then I believed maybe there's an external threat. Maybe it's the mold in my bedroom. Our bodies suck at all that.

[00:10:33] **Shawn:** You know this. Parts of our brain, our amygdala, for example, we call it an amygdala hijack. You're much more likely to jump into that part of your brain when you're not well, when you're chronically stressed, when you're malnourished, and we've got a lot of data on this. It isn't just something we're just throwing out there. And so we're really not our best selves in a lot of these situational constructs, and in particular in relationships. As you brought this up, this fourth F is so important because our environment is really dictating what we do.

[00:11:02] There's this profound statement that we're a product of our environment, and I lived by that because of where I grew up and really replicating the behavior that I was around. But here's the thing about humans. We're not just products of our environment. We're also creators of our environment.

[00:11:16] **Dave:** There you go, That's a profound statement.

[00:11:19] **Shaw:** We can create environments that create an automation of the habits that we want to have and the outcomes that we want if we become aware that we have that power. And unfortunately, especially in our world today, we've outsourced a lot of that awareness.

[00:11:32] And so a lot of the things that we're doing-- as a matter of fact, I like to look at culture itself, is really the controller of our thought. And I remember this in my economics class, we had this concept of the invisible hand. Culture really works as an invisible hand that's guiding us towards the choices that we're making.

[00:11:55] And depending on which culture you're in, in the United States, we have this belief in this profound freedom that we have. But our freedom is based on our perception of the choices that we have that are presented to us.

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[00:12:06] **Dave:** Yeah. Like if you vote, it changes things. People just believe that despite the evidence.

[00:12:10] **Shaw:** Well, I'm not going to open up that Pandora's box. I'm going to say that if--

[00:12:15] **Dave:** You don't let me put any words in your mouth then. What's up with that?

[00:12:18] **Shaw:** That if we define culture itself, define it, and it's really important that we do that, this is the shared attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors by a group of people that are then passed on from one generation to the next. And so a lot of our beliefs about life are passed down from our predecessors, from our parents, our grandparents, the people before us.

[00:12:42] And so in our world today, however, we have infinite access to all these different cultural inputs, and so we've gone a bit crazy. We haven't evolved in a place where we're able to even take a lot of that on. We might be concerned about the opinions of maybe the 100 people in our tribe. It can be a million "followers" that you have that people are on high alert trying to fulfill the desires of these different people on what I'm supposed to be.

[00:13:11] **Dave:** Right.

[00:13:12] **Shaw:** And so now I want to circle all this back to say this. So defining what culture is, understanding what culture is, we have the power to create our own microculture. You and I, both, for many years, have been working to change the larger culturescape to make health easier for people. And we've made a dent, and we absolutely have, and it's amazing. But it is not a good use of our time because it is hard.

[00:13:36] **Dave:** It's very hard.

[00:13:38] **Shaw:** And what I found in my own personal experience, I've been in this field for 21 years now, and I've worked as a clinician working with real people in real families. And so I've seen that the most powerful way to make change in our community is by changing the microculture in your household first.

[00:13:57] Because what I've seen is that you take your culture with you. When people see you, they see the reflection of your culture, and it's very infectious. Of course, especially recently, we've really tunnel visioned things that are infectious. Good things can be infectious as well.

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[00:14:16] And so by focusing on creating a healthy microculture, my children are a representation of that, myself, my wife, our relationship. These are things that reflect and influence other people around us. And so where does this stand in the science as far as longevity? Because this is one of the things that we're both very passionate about.

[00:14:36] Researchers at Brigham Young University did this massive meta-analysis, and this included 148 studies, huge dataset, and about 300,000 study participants. And they found that having healthy social bonds, healthy relationships was the number one determinant on how long those people are going to live.

[00:14:58] They looked at beating obesity. They looked at smoking. They looked at alcohol. They looked at exercise. All those things do matter, but there's something about having healthy relationships that stood out beyond even those things. And what it is is your relationships affect how you do those other things because the culture, the environment is going to determine your choices.

[00:15:21] **Dave:** When you talk about the culture in the home, I feel like a lot of culture is beliefs about reality that are untested and not supported by observation. And one cultural belief example like that I learned strangely in college. I took this class called religion and violence because I was like, why do people like commit violence in the name of religion?

[00:15:46] I just couldn't understand it as a young Asperger's guy. And it was taught by rabbinical scholar. And he said, well, what do all these groups have in common? I said, well, they're all irrational. And he stops. He goes, no, Dave, they're profoundly rational. And I said, well, what do you mean? He said, well, if you believed what they believe, what they're doing is rational.

[00:16:08] And so you realize culture instills beliefs that haven't passed the reality test, and somehow when culture can infuse beliefs that are reality based and do move humanity in the right direction, it's a really powerful tool for passing knowledge between the generations. And it feels like there's been a lot of erosion of culture. And what you're proposing from a family dinner is a way to put culture back in. But here's my question. You're a dad. I'm a dad. Where does the culture come from that we start in our households? Where do we get it? How do you know it's real?



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[00:16:46] **Shaw:** Yeah, exactly. Exactly. The biggest answer that's jumping out for me is we can look back, and this is one of the most profound things for our health, period. Just looking at what humans have figured out that that looks like it works. We evolved eating together for-- just thinking about this tribal construct, for the first time, my family went to Hawaii, which seemed like-- again, I'm from St. Louis. I didn't get on the airplane until I was, I think, 25 or 26, something like that.

[00:17:22] And so to say that I'm even going to Hawaii, the magic is not lost on me. But I'm seeing this through different eyes than other people. And so as I'm sitting there at this performance of luau--

[00:17:34] **Dave:** Those are not real luaus. Yeah.

[00:17:37] **Shawn:** We're seeing a representation of something that we used to do. So everybody was involved in food, the procurement of the food, the hunting, the gathering, the food preparation, and of course most importantly, eating together. And that is also where a lot of the culture was getting passed down and shared, because this is where stories-- before the advent of writing, for example, your history and the lessons about survival, about moving the culture along was passed down through stories.

[00:18:11] So there was these stories, and songs, and dance, and performance, and it was a really magical experience that was integrated into our culture at the time through our evolution. And now we just look at it like, oh wow, that's awesome. Look at them go, doing the little dances, and things like that.

[00:18:30] But this is how we evolved. Now, from there, we, I'm not going to say devolved, but I did just say it, to where we start to become more separate. So we moved from this tribal construct to our neighborhoods. But even within that, there's still cultures around the world that still have close family, extended family who are in close proximity.

[00:18:52] But that further and further starts to dissipate and separate to the degree today where you have families that aren't typically around extended families. But today we have something new, just in the last couple of decades, in particular the last 10 years, where in your own household, you can be radically separated from your family members because of our screens,

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because of social media, for example. It takes you out of the environment. It takes you out of the present. It inherently does that. It is what it is.

[00:19:21] **Dave:** Sure, it does.

[00:19:22] **Shaw:** And so having four or five family members in one household, that can be completely separate, in completely different mindsets, environments, and cultural experiences. With that being said, I'm not here to villainize these things because they enable us to connect if used in the right way. There's a right use of technology. And then there's a way that might be not as advantageous that can separate us and create a lot of mental dysfunction. But my goal is this, and this is what the data is affirming.

[00:19:52] We know how powerful food is for change. And literally food is what's making up the cells of our bodies. Food is influencing our state of mental wellbeing, our emotional fitness. The list goes on and on. Our sleep quality, the list goes on and on. What if we look at our ancestors and see how they did food and we come together with this and understanding that the dinner table can be a unifier?

[00:20:16] It can be a unifier. And leverage this opportunity. We've all got stuff going on. And my question was, is this affirmed in the data? Are there actual physical changes or health changes that happen when we eat together as a family?

[00:20:31] And I'll share a couple of quick studies with you. Well, first of all, some researchers at Harvard were tracking family eating behavior for decades. And what they found was that families that eat together on a regular basis just seemed to naturally eat more of these, what they established to be vital nutrients that helped prevent diseases in those family members.

[00:20:52] **Dave:** This was back when Harvard was based on science, when they knew what real nutrients were instead of the vegan weird Harvard of the last five years.

[00:20:58] **Shawn:** Again, I'm not going to open that Pandora's box, but they did find--

[00:21:03] **Dave:** You can open Pandora's boxes. This is my show, man.

[00:21:06] **Shawn:** All of these particular nutrients that these family members-- because what they found was that they were eating far less ultra processed foods. They were eating more real

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whole foods and far less ultra processed foods, namely chips and soda that were coming along with these nefarious ingredients that they had identified in their data.

[00:21:21] **Dave:** Yeah.

[00:21:21] **Shaw:** Now, that's cool. We got some service-level data. That was actually one of the catalysts for me doing this book and this project. And so I was like, what about some specific health outcomes? And I found a couple of these studies. I'll share one with you. It's published in the Journal of Pediatrics.

[00:21:36] **Dave:** Nice.

[00:21:36] **Shaw:** Because I was most interested in the outcomes for our kids. And actually, I'm speaking at my youngest son's school tomorrow for these kids.

[00:21:42] **Dave:** Oh, nice. And how old your youngest?

[00:21:43] **Shaw:** He's 12.

[00:21:44] **Dave:** Twelve. Okay.

[00:21:44] **Shaw:** So fourth through eighth grade. And it's so powerful to be able to speak to these kids. And it's a wellness event. And also to let them know that they have opportunities in wellness. I never saw anybody that looked like me working in health and wellness. But I'm saying all that to say that published in the Journal of Pediatrics. And also I'm a very big fan of minimum effective dose.

[00:22:08] **Dave:** Yeah. Save some time to do other stuff.

[00:22:10] **Shawn:** So do I have to eat with these people every day to live to be a healthy person? And this is not the case. What they found was that eating with your family, these kids in these studies, eating with their family just three meals per week or more, but three was the minimum effective dose, led to far less incidents of those children developing obesity or disordered eating.

[00:22:32] It was a market change from less than three meals to three meals or more. And so this is like an insurance for our kids. There's something that happens that lowers their risk of one of

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the fastest growing issues in our children. Childhood obesity is effectively tripled in the last 30 years. It's not normal. It's not okay. And this is not about vanity metrics, by the way.

[00:22:58] **Dave:** It's about disease and behavioral metrics. Yeah.

[00:23:00] **Shawn:** It's a huge risk factor for essentially--

[00:23:03] **Dave:** Everything.

[00:23:04] **Shaw:** Yeah. Most of the top 10 leading causes of death.

[00:23:08] **Dave:** Yeah.

[00:23:09] **Shaw:** But the question was in addition to that. Now, coming from the environment that I come from, I'm aware of people that are not from where I'm from, wanting to be social justice warriors for me.

[00:23:22] **Dave:** Oh yeah. Without your consent. Interesting.

[00:23:24] **Shaw:** And so saying like, well, eating with your family, eating with your kids, that behavior, that's a privilege. Nobody said that to me, but these are the type of things that I see conversations about.

[00:23:38] **Dave:** That seems unhealthy, mentally unhealthy to believe that.

[00:23:41] **Shawn:** But I have seen people say that to other people conversating about this science. And to reference that and to acknowledge that because it is a privilege, but it's a privilege that we can choose. This particular study, and this was looking at minority children who are generally in the construct of a low income environment like I come from, they track the eating behavior of the kids, and they found that if they ate with their family, their parents, and or caregiver, four meals per week, could have been any meal, breakfast, lunch, dinner, whatever works for the family, those children ate five servings of whole food, fruits and vegetables in particular, at least five days a week.

[00:24:25] And they found that they ate radically less ultra processed foods, namely chips and soda. And the researchers noted specifically when the TV was never or rarely on. There was something about that TV sitting in with you guys, and of course it's telling you, hey, eat some Pringles, eat some-- but just keeping this in mind, if my family would've known, and I'm not

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exaggerating at all, Dave, I can count on my hands how many times I sat down and ate with my parents, my mother, my stepfather.

[00:24:55] And most of those times were holidays. And so most of the time it was my little brother and sister and I, we'd eat together, but a lot of those times would be separate. We'd just grab some food, go sit wherever in front of the TV, video game, go outside with our friends, whatever.

[00:25:11] And this is what I know. Well, I would like to believe this. Had my mother known, had my family known that this could have been a protective element for her children, I believe she would've done it or made it more of a priority to eat with us more frequently. But we just don't know that our environment and sitting down and being present with our food and with each other can help to protect our health.

[00:25:36] **Dave:** It's also free. In fact, it costs less than going out for food. And I hear a lot of people say, oh, biohacking is too expensive. Well, being healthy in the world we've created is more expensive, but it is cheaper to make some white rice with eggs, which has got some good saturated fat. It's got some protein, and throw some oregano and some other herbs, and rosemary in it, and some sea salt.

[00:26:06] It costs way less than Taco Bell, and it's better for you. And if you want to go out from there, add some ground beef. Ideally, you're going to get organic and grass-fed, which is a buck or two a pound more, or maybe you don't, but it's still so much better than what the fast food place had. And something else happens.

[00:26:23] Nourishing another human, it's a profoundly intimate act. The first time we nourish other humans is actually when mothers are nourishing their babies in the womb and then with their breasts. And that's the first time we are nourished by another. And so when you prepare food for your family, even if it's a simple preparation, you're performing essentially a spiritual act.

[00:26:48] And so there's mindfulness to it. And something we talked about at the beginning of the show, a regulated nervous system, what's happening during a meal when there's eye contact and all is that the kids are learning how to regulate their nervous system while they're being nourished by their parents.

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[00:27:05] So they go into this very soft spiritual state, and they're feeling you when they eat. So they're receiving spiritual and emotional nourishment the same time they're getting physical nourishment from their food. And when you look at the world through that lens, like, well, of course this makes sense, but if you look at it through lens, well, you just have to get some calories, and all calories are the same-- I can cancel out a Snickers bar with a Diet Coke-- then you're ignoring this vast swath of environmental inputs that the body gets and your kids' nervous systems.

[00:27:37] They don't even know how the world works yet, so their energy field is always reading errors. And if you were constantly triggered, it means you're easy to program. It means you're not very conscious, and it means you're going to teach your kids to be triggered. And what I would suspect might have happened with you is something that's really common, and it's something I learned. I was about 30. I did my first really deep holotropic breathing. Blew my mind open.

[00:28:02] I went through this four-page checklist of behaviors at home, something that seemed based in, like, did you set the table? And others were, did people yell a lot? And all those things. And you go through, and they're like, okay, if this happened in your house a lot, check the first box.

[00:28:20] God, about three quarters of these things happened in my house, and they weren't all bad or good necessarily. They're just things. And the next one's, oh, if your dad did those, check a box. If your mom did those, check a box. Oh wow. I'm like, that's funny. My parents did most of those things because they happened in the house. And the final call, I'm like, oh, that one's for you. Said, okay.

[00:28:38] So I go, shoot, I only do half what my parents did. I'm doing great. And they go, oh, that other column, that's to see if you do the exact opposite. And I was like, oh man, I'm doing everything my parents did or the exact opposite of everything my parents did. I'm still not free. And so the way you reverse that is you want to go through that list and be like, oh, that's funny.

[00:29:00] My parents were already deprogrammed. They were conscious, and free, and calm, and regulated, so that they could share the best of their-- no parent's perfect. I'm certainly not

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perfect. I got pissed off more than a few times. You can only have so many irrational arguments and prefer like, because I said so.

[00:29:17] We all get there. And it's probably good that kids hear that too. They need to know there's limits. But I believe that if you can be someone with more healthy behaviors at that dinner table, like you're talking about in the Family Cookbook, your kids, when they're done, they don't have to be reactive either by copying or by doing the opposite. They can just choose.

[00:29:38] And it just creates so much more energy in their lives. And I do remember though-- I mean, your son's 12. You're talking about going to their school and all. I taught my kids a long time ago. I'm like, look-- when they're five, I started telling this. I'm like, look, there's going to come a time when you're about 14 where I'm going to be the dumbest person on earth.

[00:30:00] They're like, daddy, you could never be. You're the best daddy ever. And by the way, all kids believe their parents are the best ever, no matter how bad they are, because we have to believe that. Well, thanks. I'm so happy you feel that way about me. But here's why. When we were tribes of 150 people, there weren't enough people for you to find a girlfriend you weren't related to, or a boyfriend.

[00:30:20] That means that mother nature is programming you to think, I'm so stupid, when you hit puberty, that you're willing to risk being eaten by a lion to find another tribe so that you can have healthy babies. This is to protect our species. So it's okay. Between about 14 and 24, I might be the dumbest person on earth, but I love you anyway. And sure enough, man, I think it's happening. And my kids are teenagers now, and I remind them of it, and they roll their eyes.

[00:30:45] **Shawn:** I've got an older son as well. It sounds familiar.

[00:30:48] **Dave:** You know the feeling, right? But let's go back to dinner. I want to ask you a couple of questions.

[00:30:52] **Shaw:** Not that you're that're you're dumb, but also that I know.

[00:30:56] **Dave:** Oh god, yeah. They know everything. And there's a behavior that all humans have, and I do my best at dinner with the kids too to unpack why we're doing it. What are the unconscious parts and the conscious parts?

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[00:31:11] And when we're talking about fear, a lot of kids are learning how to process fear and how to have courage in the face of fear. But then there's this food thing, and there's a genuine biological fear that you might starve to death. And it's not a belief. It's in your bones because humans have died of starvation a lot if you go back over a few generations.

[00:31:29] So when you put food out on the table, the teenagers are the ones who are going to take all of the meat, no matter how much is there. They're just going to take it all. And so I sat down and said, especially for my son, look, there's something that men do, and it's time for you to learn. You're starting to learn how to be a man.

[00:31:46] And what men do is they make sure that the others at the table eat first. And you're stepping into that. So it's your job not to make sure you have the most on your plate at first, but it's your job to make sure you pass it around. And when you sit with that, you earn respect.

[00:32:03] And there will always be enough food in our home. We don't have a problem with that. We grow the cows. We don't have a problem with that. And every single meal, when one of the kids, I need more. It's not fair. It's like, did you make sure that everyone else ate? Because nourishing another person, it's a leadership thing. It's also a kindness thing.

[00:32:23] And when you look back at a traditional Chinese or a Japanese tea ceremony, you would never pour your own tea. You pour everyone else's tea and someone pours your tea. And you do that because it allows them the opportunity to be of service to you.

[00:32:38] Because it feels good to pour someone else's tea. It feels better to pour their tea and just to pour yours. So I've worked on teaching my kids that. But I think there's a lot of service to others in a family meal that just goes unspoken for, and it's such an important thing. So as a dad, how do you deal with that?

[00:32:53] **Shaw:** Yeah, even you having the construct or the context, the cultural construct for you to have that opportunity to have that lesson with your son, that's unique in our world today.

[00:33:06] **Dave:** Was that culture appropriation, though? I'm just wondering.

[00:33:08] **Shaw:** Of white culture.

[00:33:09] **Dave:** A Chinese tea ceremony.



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[00:33:10] **Shawn:** Oh no, wait, wait. No. Another Pandora's box.

[00:33:17] **Dave:** I love laying those out for you because you always handle them so good.

[00:33:21] **Shawn:** Just to circle back on you said something so profound to lead that off, which was talking about the change in the nervous system and opening the door for more connection and compassion. This is echoed in another study. There's over 250 peer-reviewed references embedded into a cookbook, which has never been done.

[00:33:40] **Dave:** I love that you put that much research in a cookbook.

[00:33:42] **Shaw:** But also I made it fun. I brought it to life and made it fun.

[00:33:45] **Dave:** It's called The Family Cookbook.

[00:33:46] **Shaw:** Yeah. Eat Smarter Family Cookbook.

[00:33:47] **Dave:** Eat Smarter Family Cookbook.

[00:33:48] **Shaw:** And so what they did was they tracked tech workers, so workers at IBM, and they looked at their frequency of getting home, finishing work and getting home. "Making it home for family dinner." And what they found was that regardless of how high stress was at work, as long as those office workers were able to eat dinner with their family on a consistent basis, their work morale stayed high, productivity. They were able to metabolize that stress better.

[00:34:18] But as soon as other obligations cut into their ability to eat dinner with their family, guess what happens? Work morale goes down, productivity goes down, stress goes up. Why does this matter? It's so many studies on this, but meta-analysis published in JAMA today, and I've said this many times, so hopefully people have heard this before-- if you haven't, this should be a huge aha moment-- according to a huge meta-analysis of office visits for physicians today, upwards of 80% of all physician visits were stress-related diseases today, stress related illnesses.

[00:34:54] Stress is a huge underlying component because it's invisible in a way until it's not. Again, stress doesn't have calories. We don't think about how that impacts our health. And so sitting down and eating with our families, there's a shift that takes place from this sympathetic

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fight or flight nervous system to-- the nickname for the parasympathetic is rest and digest nervous system.

[00:35:20] Key word digest in there as well. We assimilate our food better. We have more satiety related hormone production. We digest and eliminate the food better as well. And this is just scratching the surface on some of the benefits, like how do we see these benefits? So you mentioned the change with the nervous system, but let's talk specifically about oxytocin.

[00:35:43] **Dave:** Oh, there we go.

[00:35:44] **Shaw:** Oxytocin is having a moment right now. It's got the nickname of the cuddle hormone or the love hormone. Just being in close proximity to people that you care about, you're going to produce more oxytocin. And it's one of these really remarkable hormones that appears to have a neutralizing effect with cortisol, and it promotes bonding with humans.

[00:36:07] So it's not the fact that we just are producing this haphazardly. It's something we evolve to do when we are in proximity. And here's the key. The psychological benefit that you hinted on is when I'm sitting with my kids, I can see them. This is one of the most important human needs. Tony Robbins talked about this as well, the need to feel significant.

[00:36:33] Today, more than ever, thanks to social media, we are starving for that feeling. These kids are doing so much to try to feel seen and to feel significant, and they're looking at the lives of all these other people, and it's creating this psychological loop of not being enough.

[00:36:50] And so to be able to sit to see my kids, for them to feel like I am being seen, I matter, my voice matters, and also you can pick things up as well. You have an opportunity to see potential because, as you said, the time is going to come when you're not as smart as you think you are, parents. I know you can start to see certain things.

[00:37:13] **Dave:** Yeah.

[00:37:13] **Shaw:** And the last point here, and there's many other reasons that are proven in the data, but we have an opportunity as well to really create a linchpin for our culture around the dinner table. And so what I mean by that is, why on earth would we, even with this great data, want to eat with our family-- and friends are included as well-- more often if the Walking Dead is so much more entertaining, or Game of Thrones, or Power, or whatever you're watching?

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[00:37:48] **Dave:** Breaking Bad.

[00:37:49] **Shaw:** Breaking Bad. And not to villainize any of these-- we were living in the golden age of television, right?

[00:37:54] **Dave:** Yeah. Until Netflix fucked it up.

[00:37:59] **Shaw:** Pandora's box alert. All right, so knowing that there's all these things vying for our attention, one of the principles with habit change is to replace it with something of equal or greater value, not just rip the bandaid off. We're going to sit and eat together. Shawn and Dave were talking about this. Sit down, and we're going to eat together.

[00:38:20] It's creating an environment that feels good. This doesn't mean it's always fun. This could be a time where there's a lot of emotion. This could be a time where bottled up feelings are getting expressed. But this is creating an opportunity to where they're feeling something that is real.

[00:38:38] And I've shared a bunch of tips on how to do this, but coming into this, creating a new dinner table culture purposefully. And so for my family, this is before aspirations of this book were even thought of, for whatever reason-- we ate dinner together on a regular basis, and we've got tons of video on this too, of my family. My wife will be recording, or somebody will be recording.

[00:39:05] We end up dancing or having a rap battle after dinner or during dinner. And it just started happening. And that evolved over time to where now we're passing a fake microphone, like a spoon or something, to where we got a microphone, an actual microphone that we started passing around. We started making beats. Somebody at the table makes beats on the iPad, on my son's iPad. Again, I didn't know. And this is one of the first times I ever even shared this.

[00:39:35] **Dave:** This is cool.

[00:39:36] **Shaw:** I didn't know that this would be something that was a documentation of what I'm talking about. And now that evolved to-- and this is one of the coolest moments of my life and for my family as well. When the cookbook came out, I took my family there for the experience in New York. Did Good Morning America, all the things, but the most fun experience was this show called Sway in the Morning. I don't know if you know about this show.

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[00:40:01] **Dave:** I don't know the show.

[00:40:02] **Shaw:** All right. So Sway is this iconic MTV VJ from back in the day. But he's very well respected, probably the most respected cultural figure from a talk show perspective in Hip Hop. And so shout out to his team. One of his co-host, Tracy G, has been listening to my show for many years, and they invited me on to talk about health and wellness in the new project. But just the week before LL Cool J was there.

[00:40:29] **Dave:** Oh, nice.

[00:40:31] **Shaw:** Missy Elliot, Kanye West. Everybody goes here. But pretty much everybody also freestyles as a freestyle rap after their interview. I didn't come there for that, Dave.

[00:40:45] **Dave:** Oh, did you have to do that?

[00:40:47] **Shaw:** But also people that are more-- Neil deGrasse Tyson, for example, came on there. They didn't make him freestyle. He didn't have to freestyle.

[00:40:53] **Dave:** He should have. I'm not sure I trust that guy.

[00:40:55] **Shaw:** They didn't have me there for that either. But my son, when he met Sway, my oldest son, he whispered into his ear, my dad could freestyle. That's how it happened.

[00:41:03] **Dave:** You're saying not you.

[00:41:04] **Shaw:** I didn't know this until later. And so the interview was over. It was powerful. The room was buzzing. It was amazing. And then I'm just sitting back like, okay, job done. Job well done. Impact made. And then Sway starts getting hype, and they put on the track, and he's just getting on hype. If you see the video, there's a moment I'm looking like, what the fuck is going on? And he's like--

[00:41:26] **Dave:** I got to see this.

[00:41:26] **Shaw:** I heard there's this healthy [Inaudible] in the building, something, whatever. And now I was like, oh, this is happening. Okay. And I just went off of what was in the room. But I built this muscle. And I built it with my family, being involved. My son helped to make that moment possible. And the room was flipping out. They just saw LL Cool J freestyle. They were not flipping out like that when I did it because that's not expected of me.

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[00:41:54] I'm a nutritionist. But I built this skill set up and this culture with my family. That's what I'm talking about. You take your culture with you. So we were able to impact that moment in so many lives of the people listening, being that, something we cultivated together. So whatever that could be for you, game nights. There's so many different games out there.

[00:42:18] **Dave:** Storytelling.

[00:42:18] **Shaw:** Storytelling. There's these wonderful conversation starter little card sets. Of course, if you want to use your phone, for example, there's heads up little games, and things like that. We just did a top 10 list of best Marvel movies and ended up becoming a heated discussion.

[00:42:40] **Dave:** Nice. So what was the best one?

[00:42:44] **Shaw:** For me, it's Infinity War.

[00:42:46] **Dave:** Yeah. It's hard to argue with that. All right.

[00:42:50] **Shaw:** So choosing for yourself, creating a culture of wellness around the dinner table, but even proceeding that, and maybe if we have time, we could talk a little bit about it, but creating the kitchen culture, the healthy kitchen culture that you want that makes you want to make food in the first place, right?

[00:43:05] **Dave:** Mm-hmm.

[00:43:06] **Shaw:** And last little piece here with this, if you think about another psychological transition into eating together, if you know, for example-- and by the way, this is my walkaway for everybody. This is the take home assignment for everybody. This is fun homework. Pick three days, whatever that looks like for you, three meals.

[00:43:28] This could be Monday and Wednesday, family dinner, and then brunch on Sunday. Or this could be breakfast Monday through Thursday, whatever that looks like. Those three days, that minimum effective dose for your family, take out your schedule. Put it on the calendar. Make it real. Give it some tangible action.

[00:43:46] And part of this is, immediately, if we know I've got family dinner on Monday and Wednesday, with my wife, she's already planning psychologically. She knows, oh, what are we

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going to eat? Versus, especially when we first moved to LA, we moved here right before all the action of 2020.

[00:44:05] I didn't know this was going to happen. And I didn't have DoorDash where we lived in St. Louis. We lived in Wildwood at this point. We had moved out of the inner city, and we're living in the woods. DoorDash didn't even mess with us.

[00:44:18] **Dave:** Right, right.

[00:44:19] **Shaw:** So I came to LA, and it's like, I can get anything delivered to me to our door? So we were flying by the seat of our pants when the world went upside down. But even with that, my wife recently, we had family dinner planned, and she got caught up in LA traffic. And so last minute it was just me and my boys, and we're just like, well, I'm going to have DoorDash. DoorDash has some high-quality food, of course, but we still sat down and ate together.

[00:44:47] **Dave:** Yeah. It still helps.

[00:44:47] **Shaw:** Yeah.

[00:44:49] **Dave:** I got to show you a picture on my phone here. I'll put this one up here. I got this text yesterday, and you just reminded me of it. It's from my son, and he's 14. I'll show it to you right now. He said, hey, dad, I had a friend over for dinner, and look what I cooked all by myself.

[00:45:12] He cooked a medium rare grass-fed, grass-finished New York. He plated it. He made creamed veggies with grass-fed butter. He sliced it up, sprinkled it with sea salt and herbs. He's 14. He could work at a restaurant.

[00:45:28] **Shaw:** Yeah, the presentation is gorgeous.

[00:45:30] **Dave:** Because that's what we do. Yeah. He even grilled the rosemary or fried it in some fat. It's gorgeous. And the kids learn how to cook. And this one reason I like your book, is like, look, it's an important life skill. So I know my kids absolutely know how to cook, and they actually love it when they get a night to themselves just to make their own dinner because it's

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going to be delicious, and it's going to have as much of the meat and the animal protein that they've learned makes them feel good.

[00:45:55] But all the side dishes that they want, all the good stuff. And you realize that's just like getting dressed in the morning. It's an act of self-care. And you talked about feeling significant in the world, and this goes back to that conversation at dinner about serving someone else first.

[00:46:12] You don't feel significant. Take a scoop of whatever's on the table and put it on someone else's plate. Just look in their eyes and you do it, and they're like, thank you. You're receiving gratitude for it, and you feel significant because you got to do it. And the next step up from that is prepare the meal for another person or for the family.

[00:46:30] And doing that, screw Instagram, and TikTok, and all that. It's not the number of likes when you cook a meal. It's the way it made the other person feel when they were done eating it. And part of it was you made it from good ingredients. The other part of it is you actually put love in the food.

[00:46:48] When I was on your show, we talked about Danger Coffee. We have a ceremonial grade coffee that comes every couple of months, and it's ultra premium. It's super flavorful, and it's not meant to have it alone. And it's the coffee that you use when you invite someone over to have a conversation that matters, and you make a really good cup of coffee, and you pour over, and you do it the right way.

[00:47:13] And it's the act of service of sharing something special. It's like if someone comes over for dinner and if you still drink alcohol, they're like, oh yeah, let me open a bottle of the really best stuff because we're going to just be together in quality time. So you can do it when you know how to cook.

[00:47:29] And if you don't know how to cook and you're just going to open a bag of Doritos and throw it at someone, it's just not the same vibe. So I love it that you're talking in your book about the ways to start doing a family dinner, and then you're talking about how important it's to teach the kids how to cook.

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[00:47:46] **Shaw:** That's a skill that a lot of kids have lost. A minority of our children now are able to actually prepare a complete meal for themselves. It's a skill that's being lost by our kids. And on the other side, though, if you think about this too, according to, this is published in Nutrition Journal, they found that people who frequently eat alone and in isolation do in fact make poor food choices.

[00:48:08] They eat more food, and they also tend to have, of course, those biomarkers of worse health accordingly. But here's the key. When it comes to just this act itself, it's so simple. We're going to eat anyways, but scheduling a time to sit down together. And the pre part of that is understanding, know thyself. My wife doesn't really like people being in the kitchen with her. It's her vibe.

[00:48:38] **Dave:** I get that. I'm the same way.

[00:48:39] **Shaw:** She would choose times that she does things. She will schedule it mentally. I'm going to bake this thing with my son, or I'm going to prepare this with my son. And now stand sitting here today with you and being proud to say same thing, my oldest son is-- I can't say this. All right, I'm not going to say this officially.

[00:49:00] **Dave:** You got to say it.

[00:49:01] **Shaw:** There's not a competition going on, but he's a great cook. I almost said arguably the best cook. No, no, no, I'm not going to say that. Not going to say that.

[00:49:08] **Dave:** He's going to hear this.

[00:49:10] **Shaw:** But he's an amazing cook, and he does grilling things that none of us even know how to do. He's on a different level with that. And so many times over the years, he's made family dinners for us. And it's such a great experience when your kid can do that for you.

[00:49:23] It's just like, oh my God. And then my youngest son, he's been preparing his meals since he was seven. By the time he was 10, he can make a complete. Breakfast he can make himself just some of the basic stuff and really nourish himself. And it's such a great gift to give our kids that they can feed themselves.



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[00:49:41] Because here's the other part of why I mentioned that study earlier. With kids, a smaller percentage of them being able to cook, what are they going to default to? Ultra processed foods.

[00:49:51] **Dave:** Yeah.

[00:49:52] **Shaw:** Period.

[00:49:52] **Dave:** And there's something else really magic. If you're a parent, teach your kids to cook so you don't have to cook for them. It's not that hard. I remember my house is gluten-free, and I taught the kids how to make pancakes. And we're not keto. I'm happy to be keto for a brief period to go in and out for cognitive benefits, the way I teach. But a lot of times people will somehow think I never eat a carb, and that's not how it works.

[00:50:20] So we make it with rice flour. And you can put eggs in it for the protein. You can add collagen or whatever. And I just taught the kids how to do it. And so my son got really into it, into YouTube, and said, I'm going to make crepes. Making crepes out of rice flour is not easy because you need all that gluten and stuff.

[00:50:36] But he figured it out, and he makes a really good crepe till he mastered crepes. And he just moved on, and then it was pie crusts. And I'll tell you, he can make a much better pie than I can because he's baked hundreds of pies, and the crust is rice flour. And he's got all the right ingredients and the right ratios. Oh, that needs three more drops of water. And you realize you're teaching him science and chemistry, but most of all you're teaching them to make you a pie, and then you get to eat it.

[00:51:01] **Shaw:** Right. Exactly.

[00:51:03] **Dave:** That's the win that we don't talk about. There's a little bit of selfishness as a parent. Because you're enabling your kids. You're giving them the power to control that huge environmental aspect of what goes into my body.

[00:51:12] **Shaw:** Yeah. And it's a remarkable experience for parents. People who might have younger kids, there will come a time, hopefully, where your kid will give back to you. But the thing is, it's without expectation. My oldest son just invited me to lunch, maybe two weeks ago, and we hung out. We had lunch, whatever. He paid for it.

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[00:51:35] **Dave:** Nice.

[00:51:36] **Shawn:** He whipped out his card. I didn't think that would ever happen, to be honest. I never expected. I'm just sitting back like, oh shit.

[00:51:43] **Dave:** The first return on investment. Nice.

[00:51:45] **Shaw:** Yeah. And the same thing holds true with preparing you a meal. And it feels good to them.

[00:51:53] **Dave:** It felt good for him to pay for it too. That was him nourishing you, stepping into a man. That's really a big moment.

[00:52:02] **Shawn:** The five love languages, right?

[00:52:04] **Dave:** Yeah.

[00:52:04] **Shaw:** Of course, it's massive bestselling book. Food ties into those loved languages so deliciously because if you think about acts of service, food right there. And by the way, for people who aren't familiar with the five love languages, this researcher, accurately, in many aspects of this, has identified that we all give and receive love in different ways.

[00:52:32] **Dave:** It's a great book.

[00:52:33] **Shaw:** Yeah.

[00:52:34] **Dave:** What are your love languages?

[00:52:35] **Shawn:** Mine are words of affirmation and physical touch.

[00:52:47] **Dave:** I'm acts of service and physical touch. And I think I talked about this on the episode. I don't think I've had the author on. I really should. Have you ever interviewed him?

[00:52:54] **Shaw:** I have not. Yeah.

[00:52:55] **Dave:** We should put that on our list. Let's collaborate on getting him to come on. And the book's been on the New York Times bestseller list for 5,000 weeks or something. It's a massive book. I think most listeners have heard of it, but if you don't know this work, your partner is showing you love the way they like to be showed love.

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[00:53:13] And if it's not in your love language, you won't feel it. So if they keep buying you gifts, you're like, I don't care about gifts. I just wanted her to hold my hand. Maybe if she knows she should hold your hand, that would be useful for both of you, and vice versa. And for me, I don't care that much about gifts.

[00:53:29] But when I know it's someone else's language, I'm stressed. I'm like, I don't really know what gift to buy because it's just foreign to me. So I have people help me figure out what should I buy for that person because they like gifts. And then I put it on the calendar to make sure I do it.

[00:53:42] **Shaw:** But you figured that out.

[00:52:44] **Dave:** Because I know about it.

[00:53:46] **Shaw:** But also those are the ways that I feel like I receive love. But the way that I would give love would be through acts of service or gifts. My wife and I, we've been together for 19 years, and when we were in college, I was just feeling the lovey dovey vibes heavy.

[00:54:04] And we still have it. It's actually in my office. There's this big poster board, and I can't believe I'm sharing this shit right now, but I wrote her a poem. And so I've been at this a while with the writing.

[00:54:18] **Dave:** Yeah, ChatGPT.

[00:54:20] **Shaw:** Look, look. Hey, this wasn't [Inaudible], man. But I had a school poem. Was read over the intercom.

[00:54:27] **Dave:** Oh, nice.

[00:54:28] **Shaw:** So I won this school poetry concert.

[00:54:30] **Dave:** That's cool.

[00:54:31] **Shaw:** But I did it. After I wrote it, I rewrote it on this big poster board with paint, all these different colors.

[00:54:38] **Dave:** Oh, cool.

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[00:54:39] **Shaw:** It took a long ass time, and I'm just like, oh my God. But I'm feeling the love. I'm just like, oh. I'm doing all the madness.

[00:54:47] **Dave:** You're an artist, you're a rapper, painter, man of many talents.

[00:54:51] **Shaw:** Man, come on. Stop it. Stop it. A master of-- okay, so here's the thing. I present this to her, and of course she's like, oh my God. Oh, that's so sweet. But she moves like, it wasn't the response that I thought I would get from this immaculate creation that I gave. For her, the gifting isn't a thing.

[00:55:12] But at the time, I didn't see it that way, the gift giving part. But for her, once I learned her love language and also some of the work of Tony Robinson as well, just feeling the sense of certainty is very important for her.

[00:55:32] **Dave:** Yeah, knowing someone's there for you.

[00:55:34] **Shaw:** Knowing someone's there for you. And also taking things off her plate.

[00:55:38] **Dave:** So acts of service.

[00:55:39] **Shaw:** So those kind of acts of service versus my gift that I created is something that for her, she opens up more. She feels more connected to me, all the things. But because she spoke in a different language, I thought that she didn't appreciate the gift as much. And even to this day, she'll sometimes bring it up and be like, no baby, I love the poem. It's just I didn't know that you felt that way at the time.

[00:56:05] **Dave:** Wow.

[00:56:06] **Shaw:** And so some of these things can get crossed up, but just to circle this back to why these love languages apply to food and my embarrassing story, if you look at food and put into those boxes, again, acts of service, and I think about my mother-in-law, when she prepared a bunch of meals when my wife had our youngest son and brought him over and being able to take that off our plate so we didn't have to worry about food, what we were eating, she felt so good about that.

[00:56:33] And also for us, receiving the gift was really important and helpful for our mental wellbeing too. Physical touch. Nothing touches you closer than food does. Literally, it becomes a

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part of you, or it's used to drive and fuel this experience of being a human. We've got giving gifts. So receiving different gifts of food are awesome, right?

[00:56:59] **Dave:** Yeah.

[00:56:59] **Shaw:** So whether that is receiving a pie, or maybe it's a supply of your favorite Dave-approved nutrition bars, or coffee, right?

[00:57:12] **Dave:** It's funny, you just made me think of that. I generally am not a gift giver, but man, I love giving people coffee. I've sent out thousands of bags of coffee to people. I'm not trying to get them to talk about it. I'm like, I was on your show. Have my highest manifestation of coffee right now. This is for you. I want you to drink it. So maybe there is a little gift giving in there that I didn't know about. You just pointed that out for me. That's funny. Isn't there another love language that we didn't talk about?

[00:57:41] **Shaw:** There's two. One of them is words of affirmation.

[00:57:44] **Dave:** Good job.

[00:57:45] **Shaw:** And so for my mother-in-law, it wasn't that act itself. What spoke back to her and made her feel loved is the words of affirmation. You see her light up. She glows when we tell her, tamu sana. She's from Kenya. The food is so good. And that for her feeds her spirit. It makes her want to make more food for us. But the last one is quality time.

[00:58:16] **Dave:** Oh, that's a toxic one.

[00:58:19] **Shaw:** That's the one that this whole project revolves around.

[00:58:22] **Dave:** No, it's toxic.

[00:58:24] **Shaw:** Spending time together--

[00:58:25] **Dave:** It's horrible.

[00:58:26] **Shaw:** With people that you care about you. That in and of itself. And the quality time for one person, it might be what's going into the preparation of food itself. It might be the quality time that you spend with the people that you love around food. But all of that is going to feed into, for us, at different degrees-- and by the way, these love languages aren't exclusive. You're not just going to have one or two. You have all of those.

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[00:58:49] **Dave:** You have a dominant love language.

[00:58:50] **Shaw:** But you're going to have a dominant love language. And so that quality time that you can spend together with and around food especially because, here's the thing, food is already so integrated into all of our special social moments, whether it's the first date, whether it's after the game, whether it's a funeral.

[00:59:14] My stepfather just passed away this past year, and right afterwards, everybody's going like-- there's a whole food experience that's happening afterwards, and it's tied into so many aspects of our lives, but it's in our blind spot. And because in our culture in the United States, here in our culturescape, and of course this has been infectious around the world as well, it's usually around really shitty food. But we can change that. We could change that narrative. We could change the cultural container to make real food, health-affirming food, plus that quality time, all meld together.

[00:59:51] **Dave:** You can totally do it. And quality time is one of the love languages. The reason I said it was toxic, I was only half kidding. It's good to have some family time and all that. And people whose predominant love language is quality time probably should be dating people who also have the same love language, because otherwise they're going to need a whole lot of time.

[01:00:16] If you're trying to get shit done, if quality time is the dominant love against, they won't feel loved when you're in a meeting. And sometimes you have to be in meeting to pay for the food that you're going to cook for them when you have all their time later. So I feel like that's the one that's the most expensive love language.

[01:00:30] **Shawn:** I understand what you're saying. I feel that is in need of a reframing for that person because, unfortunately, we separate ourselves from ourselves.

[01:00:43] **Dave:** Spend time with yourself.

[01:00:44] **Shaw:** Quality time with oneself.

[01:00:46] **Dave:** There you go.

[01:00:47] **Shaw:** And so I'm starting to appreciate, and cultivate, and nourish that as well. And again, giving that reframe can be helpful.

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[01:00:56] **Dave:** That's such a profound thing. So you do all the spiritual stuff in addition to food. But you never finished the rap story. Do you have a West Coast style video or anything?

[01:01:09] **Shawn:** We could put something in the show notes for people.

[01:01:12] **Dave:** So you did. You actually have a video. It's out there. Any albums?

[01:01:15] **Shaw:** No. Hell no. I don't have a albums.

[01:01:17] **Dave:** I've got three songs. There's a West coast style video. The line I remember from it is Hypo gly bitchy. That once was me. Now I'm rolling with my yak butter tea.

[01:01:27] **Shaw:** Holy.

[01:01:31] **Dave:** There actually is one.

[01:01:32] **Shaw:** That was fire.

[01:01:34] **Dave:** A friend of mine--

[01:01:34] **Shaw:** I was not expecting that to come out.

[01:01:36] **Dave:** A friend of mine who actually was invited to tour with LL Cool J helped with it. My friend, Craig, helped with it, Craig Henley. And he's like, yeah, we got to do this. And we did this whole video, and I'm driving the fat mobiles giant stick of butter.

[01:01:50] It was a Prius turned a butter with a coffee cup that spins around on top, cruising down like it's a convertible. It was full on palm trees, West Coast style. I have no rapping skills at all, just to be really clear. But we did record the video, and it's somewhere up on my social, and I still laugh about it because that line is hilarious. And I did not write it. Craig wrote it.

[01:02:08] **Shawn:** But you recited that bad boy. That's what Dr. Dre does. He's not writing his own bars. But what's funny for me is, and I've never shared this before, but even if I'm going on a walk, there's a tendency for me to do that mental exercise, or I'm just thinking about these different bars. This is one of the things for us. If you think about just sonics, we started by-- and I thank you for the introduction with my voice. This wasn't my voice.

[01:02:38] **Dave:** Yeah, I imagine.

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[01:02:39] **Shaw:** So there was a transformation that took place. Of course, when I was younger, get on the phone with a girl, you might want to have, like, hey, what's up? It's Shawn. What's up? What you doing? Whatever. But I didn't sound like this. But there was a little flavor there. And the truth is, once I started meditating, and in particular I was doing this meditation for my mother-in-law that she taught me, this was looking at the different chakras.

[01:03:08] She shared for with me in my more analytical brain and just tried to make it make sense, like, okay, you've got all these different hormonal glands along this line, this track, and there's all this ancient data on it, but things can get blocked up. And for me, this meditation resonated because we did meditations for all of the chakras, but it was anahata chakra meditation, so the heart meditation. Because for me, definitely that energy was blocked up.

[01:03:39] **Dave:** You got a lot of heart now. Yeah.

[01:03:40] **Shaw:** Thank you, man. But it was about what blocks It is attention need, attention need. And I grew up in a-- again, my mother didn't hug me until I was an adult. You know what I'm saying? Again, when I was a baby, she held me, all that kind of stuff, but I don't have a conscious recollection of my mom just hugging me and loving on me, that kind of thing.

[01:04:00] But it's not that she didn't love me, it's that she wanted me to be tough enough to survive in the environment that we were in. She wanted to have a tough son, a man, somebody that can handle himself. And so she didn't make me lovey-dovey, and soft, and all these kind of things, but that of course created a deficiency in me.

[01:04:19] And so I didn't know this, even as I'm sharing this right now. That's more of a recent revelation. But at the time, I just felt like this meditation feels good. I feel better when I do this. And it involved maybe, we'll just say, 20 minutes of humming.

[01:04:35] **Dave:** I knew you were going to get to humming.

[01:04:36] **Shaw:** Yeah.

[01:04:36] **Dave:** I was going to say, if you didn't. Humming while you're cooking, talk about that.



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[01:04:41] **Shawn:** Okay. So interestingly enough, humming can trigger your body to produce more nitric oxide. But humans have been doing this a long time. This hum, this vibe. You're creating a vibration and syncing up the vibration of your cells in a way.

[01:04:59] So there's still a lot to unpack with this, but part of the profound change that I was experiencing, I'm changing the chemistry in my body significantly by humming for 20 minutes. The other part of the meditation was just to sit there in silence. And by the time I finished that 20 minutes of humming, everything became so clear. And I've never articulated this before, but empty. I felt empty, but full of space. I don't know.

[01:05:31] **Dave:** Spaciousness.

[01:05:32] **Shaw:** Yes. Spaciousness.

[01:05:33] **Dave:** It's a good feeling.

[01:05:33] **Shaw:** And I was able to just feel, just be present, just be. I felt like from doing that experience, I realized, the very first time that I did it, that prior to that, I didn't really have a conscious thought my entire life. I was just living. I was just in the shit. Of course, I thought about things. I did well in school, all the things, but I didn't think about my thinking. I didn't see the thought that's getting displayed on this window of my mind.

[01:06:05] **Dave:** We call that metacognition, being aware of how you think.

[01:06:07] **Shaw:** I was aware that I was aware, and it changed everything. And it took time, though, by the way. When that happens, it takes time to reintegrate yourself into life. But it was that meditation, and it changed my voice, doing the humming and the meditation practice. And I didn't realize this until years later.

[01:06:29] There was a before and there was an after, but it wasn't just the act of humming that changed my voice. It was that I changed. There was a new sense of peace, of presence, of wholeness that then comes through in the texture of your voice.

[01:06:45] **Dave:** It absolutely comes through. I think I've talked about this before. Years ago, right before I had kids, so this would be about maybe 18 years ago, I decided I was going to wake up at 5:00 AM because that's what successful people do. By the way, that's bullshit. But I

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did it for two years straight, and I'd wake up, and I would do an hour to 90 minutes of meditation with breathwork.

[01:07:13] I did Art of Living, and then I did a bunch of chanting from this guy named Dharma Singh Khalsa, so all these different intonations and things like that. And it really did affect my nervous system. I developed some of the spiritual awareness that I have now. I've studied from lots of different lineages, but I think that also had an effect on my nervous system, even though it turns out you can do the same practice at 7:00 AM if you're not an early morning person, and it still does the same thing.

[01:07:38] But I ended up just saying, I'm actually happier when I don't wake up at 5:00 AM because genetically that's not my, my jam. But then later, I decided, I want to how to sing. I still don't know how to sing, but I said, I want to do this. And I mentioned it to my friend Ken Rutkowski on his Metal groups, as much Metal group I'm a member of.

[01:08:00] And he goes, you know who's on the call, Dave? I go, who? He says, Roger Love. And Roger's been on my show. He talks about some of the stuff we're talking about. Roger taught, was it Bradley Cooper who's in the movie with Lady Gaga where a star is born? He didn't how to sing, but he wanted to sing those parts.

[01:08:18] So Roger Love taught him how to sing. He teaches all these professional singers. And Roger's like, Dave, I drink your coffee. I'd love to do some lessons with you. So all of a sudden, I have these voice lessons. He just taught me more how to read my audio books and how to control my breathing differently than meditation so that my voice sounds more like me to me.

[01:08:37] And it was really profound work on just understanding people perceive your voice, but all your cells perceive the vibration of your voice. And if you just have the mechanics right, like you see a precision dancer, and you can see it, but a precision singer, you can't see what they're doing, but it's the same amount of precision as a dancer.

[01:08:57] And the effects on that sense of peace, which brings your ability to rest and digest, and to nourish, and to be nourished, I'm actually really happy you talked about that, and it seems like that's a bonus piece of advice from the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook, is you should hum what you're cooking for someone else, and you get a double benefit. Right?

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[01:09:18] **Shawn:** Yeah. I got to throw this in here too. When you mentioned the love that you're imbuing into the food, this is very real as well. And by the way, on the other side of that attention need was unconditional love, and so cultivating that. I really didn't know what that was.

[01:09:34] **Dave:** Most people don't.

[01:09:36] **Shaw:** And in this conversation about love, of all the different emotions or ideas that we talk about as a culture, this is the biggest one. It's integrated into so much of our reality. And there was a phantom DNA experiment that was conducted.

[01:09:56] **Dave:** I don't know about this. What is that?

[01:09:57] **Shaw:** So this was done maybe 20 years ago. And these researchers, they had a vacuum. Basically, there's nothing in it. So it can literally eliminate anything from being in this space. But there's something that you can't get rid of, which is bio photons, the little packets that make up our reality. And the researchers saw inside the vacuum and they saw that these bio photons are just in this random scattered position.

[01:10:24] But they took human DNA and they put it into the vacuum. And to the researchers surprise, all of the bio photons that were in this vacuum adhered themselves to the human DNA. They conformed to it. Now, of course, they were surprised by this. They were interested. They had a hypothesis, but what happened next blew their minds because they did not expect this to happen.

[01:10:50] They thought that once you remove the human DNA, the bio photons would go back to their seemingly random organization. But when they removed the human DNA, the biophotons stayed conformed as if the human DNA was still there. It made a long-lasting impression on the very thing that makes up our reality.

[01:11:10] And so when we're talking about you imbuing or changing the energy of that food is a very, very real thing. We impact the world around us in profound ways. We impact each other in profound ways. HeartMath Institute, right?

[01:11:25] **Dave:** Oh, yeah.

[01:11:26] **Shaw:** So they're able to literally measure the electromagnetic field that emanates from the human heart. It's called a Tube Torus.

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[01:11:34] **Dave:** I was an advisor to those guys in 2008. I brought them into the world of biohacking and quantified self. I love it that you know about this research.

[01:11:41] **Shawn:** Of course.

[01:11:42] **Dave:** Dude, that's so cool.

[01:11:42] **Shaw:** I was living in Ferguson, Missouri, but I was lending little donations to HeartMath.

[01:11:50] **Dave:** I love that.

[01:11:50] **Shaw:** Paying my spiritual tithe as I'm-- yeah.

[01:11:53] **Dave:** Wow. So few people even now know about this, this profound stuff. Keep going on this. I'm impressed that you know that, that there's a little corner of biohacking.

[01:12:01] **Shawn:** Yeah. So the Tube Torus is extended from what they saw upwards of eight feet from your body. There's this field. And by the way, just a very practical, real-life example of what that is, heart monitor. You see it. You see this electrical energy that's being expended from the human body that you can measure. But this electromagnetic field literally extends several feet from your body. You're not just in your body.

[01:12:28] And so when we're talking about people's energy, there is a real energy exchange, an integration that happens when we're around people. And so of course you want to be mindful of who you're hanging out with. If somebody has, what you might say, bad vibes or good vibes, this kind of stuff, pay attention to that stuff.

[01:12:44] Yeah. And also, some researchers at Princeton, and I love this, where we are today. We could do all these really crazy and fascinating measurements, but literally tracking the human brain, the brainwaves and the activity of the brain of two people who hadn't met. They put them together in a room, just had them talk for a little bit, create a little bit of rapport for 10 minutes. And what they found was that their brainwaves start to sync up.

[01:13:10] **Dave:** Oh yeah.

[01:13:11] **Shaw:** They just met. Our brains sync up with each other when we're in conversation. So again, who are you conversating with, who you're hanging out with. I love this statement I

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just heard from somebody recently. We hear this statement that we're the average of the five people we spend the most time with. They said that we are the average of the five nervous systems that we spend the most time with.

[01:13:33] **Dave:** Ooh, I like that. Wow.

[01:13:35] **Shaw:** Right?

[01:13:36] **Dave:** There's an important ingredient to what you talked about, though. It's that spacious state that you talked about. If you create spaciousness and you're in a conversation with somebody not thinking about what you're going to say next, you can start to download what they're saying. You don't have to get the words. You can see the images that they're doing.

[01:13:53] Yeah, it's an advanced practice, but it's not that advanced of a practice. So when you're really vibing with someone, you're getting the download. And someone who's skilled can actually transmit what they're saying with more intention, and that magnetic field around you, it's just a torus if you don't know how to manipulate it.

[01:14:10] You can take that field and you can reach around the world with it, and you can touch someone that you love, and they'll feel it. And I have a few friends I can do that with. They'll text me or call me, and all I have to do, it's not just thinking about them. It's feeling about them. It's a heart thing because the heart's what generates the field. It's not the brain. The brain is a much smaller field. And when you just realize you're not crazy, if you think that your friend calls you when you think about them, it's because this is how it works.

[01:14:36] **Shaw:** The field, we're all connected.

[01:14:38] **Dave:** Oh man, here's a cool thing. I read about this. I want to attribute this. I don't know who to attribute this to. It's just something I picked up. It always drove me crazy. I'm a network engineering guy. I know how to build TCP/IP, and Wi-Fi, and Starlink, and all that stuff is my background.

[01:14:56] And I talk about how Native Americans would use smoke signals to communicate. You can't even do zeros and one. Smoke poof, there's nothing you could do. Pee in the fire, it's more steamy. There's no signal you can think of there. And I always thought that was stupid, and they must know something. And this has to be a shamanic teaching.

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[01:15:18] But here's what they were doing. They light the smoke signal to tell the other guys that are far away, tune in. All it is, is like, hey, signal coming in, and that guy sits there and just opens up his spaciousness, opens up his heart, and he goes, oh, I know what he's thinking.

[01:15:34] So this was not to send information. It was an attention signal to receive information that was being sent with intent. That's how the world really works. And you can put it in your food, and you put it in the person across from you at your dinner table, which is why I think your book is important.

[01:15:51] **Shaw:** Thank you so much. I appreciate that.

[01:15:53] **Dave:** Thanks for coming on The Human Upgrade. You can go to the [modelhealthshow.com](http://modelhealthshow.com), guys. If you don't tune in to Shawn's work, just listening to his voice. I don't know if this true or not. I hear Morgan Freeman also listens to it just to hear his voice. I'm not sure about that, but I think it might be true. Shawn, you're a legend, and I really mean it. Every time I've ever mentioned you to anyone, they say, man, I love that guy. There's nothing bad in there.

[01:16:18] **Shawn:** Thank you. I love that, man. Thank you. You really helped to fill my cup today.

[01:16:22] **Dave:** Nice.

[01:16:23] **Shaw:** Hanging out with you. So it's truly my honor. Thank you, Dave.

[01:16:27] **Dave:** If you like this episode, you know what to do. Don't order DoorDash today. This episode, not sponsored by DoorDash. What you should do is go to one of the other apps, like Instacart or something, and order some ingredients, some good ones, and maybe even go to the store if you want to pick out the good cut of meat, and cook food for someone you care about.

[01:16:47] And if you don't have time to do that today, then make a cup of coffee for someone you care about. Yeah, you could make a Danger Coffee, but honestly, just do anything that's an act of service that nourishes another human being. And if that's all you did from watching the show, that would make me really happy, so thank you.

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