

## Paleo Solution - 365

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Robb: Hey, folks, six listeners can't be wrong. It's the Paleo Solution podcast. Today's guest is Shawn Stevenson. He's the bestselling author of the recently released -- Shawn, when was it released? March of last year?

Shawn: That's right, yeah.

Robb: Sleep smarter. And you are also the founder of The Model Health Show which has been featured as the number one nutrition and fitness podcast on iTunes and, holy smokes, that is a giant accomplishment. How are you doing, man?

Shawn: I'm doing great, man. Very, very excited to be here.

Robb: You have a really amazing background and that was at best a paltry introduction. Give folks more of your background and your history. You've accomplished so much in such a brief time although when I say that I know that it's the ten or 15 year long overnight success. But let folks know how you have come to this point. And part of the reason why I like talking about this, even though this is kind of a health-fitness-wellness podcast, I got to say about 70% of the questions that I receive at this point are kind of career path oriented.

People are, they're an engineer or something and they had some sort of a health crisis, they fixed their own health and then they want to figure out what the next step is. Do they go to medical school? Do they become a health coach? It's really interesting to know as much nitty-gritty details about your past and what brought you to be doing what you're doing today.

Shawn: Oh, man. That's such a great question. That's a great insight too about how people kind of happen into this business. And for me, I definitely -- I was an aspiring athlete. I was just talking to my son. He actually goes to the same high school that I went to right now. He's 16. And right when I was right around 16, I was actually 15 years old, and I was doing a time trial at track practice. And by the way, so, if anybody is familiar with NFL Combine that kind of thing, I ran a 45, 40-yard dash when I was 15 years old.

So, I was kind of fast. And so I had aspirations of like playing at the next level and running track and things like that. But when I was doing this time trial, I was coming off the curve into the straightaway and I broke my hip.

Robb: Really?

Shawn:

Yeah. There was no trauma. There was nobody that ran into me. My hip just, the iliac crest, the tip of it just broke off. And, of course, being a hardheaded guy, I just kept coming to practice for a few days until my coach made me go and get looked at. And there it was, just floating off in space and the doctor is just holding his chin. He's like, "That's interesting." But nobody stopped to ask how it happened. He just gave me the standard of care, stay off the leg, gave me some crutches, took some NSAIDs.

The cool thing was he gave me this attachment that makes your at home crappy bath tub into a Jacuzzi. So, I had that for a little while. But like I said, nobody stopped to ask how did this 15-year old kid break his hip just from running? Fast forward the story, I went to a string of about 12 more injuries, kept me off the football field. My next year was my last year actually playing football. I had five touchdowns in three games and that was a wrap. That was the end of my career.

And I did move on and went to college but now I had aspirations, just because of popular culture, like I should be a doctor. And so I went pre-med first and crazy thing was I hated science. I mean, I hated it. And so that didn't really work out very well. After about six weeks, and something that you can probably identify with, the upper class men in the same track, they were like infatuated with disease. They were self-diagnosing themselves with all problems. It just creped me out, man.

And so I saw a movie right around that time called Boomerang with Eddie Murphy. And he was like in marketing or whatever. I was like, "That looks cool. I'll do that." So, I shifted my career path to marketing. Basically, I didn't know what the heck I wanted to do. And so 20 years old now, fast forward about two years after going to college, and this is where I finally figured out what happened with my hip when I get diagnosed with something called degenerative bone disease and degenerative spinal disease.

And so, basically, my physician at that time told me that I had the spine of an 80-year old man when I was just 20. That kind of hit me pretty hard. At first, I didn't really get it. And I want to share this because we're going to come back to this probably as a theme but I asked him what do I need to do to fix this? I asked him -- I still don't know to this day, Robb, if this was like my spirit animal or like my future self jumped into my young body, but I asked him, "Does this have anything to do with what I'm eating?"

And he looked at me like I was straight out from another planet. He kind of looked at me with his pity face and was like, "I'm sorry, son. There's nothing you can do about this. This has nothing to do with what you're eating. This is just something you're going to have to deal with." Great word, Doc. And so fast forward the story again, and just to kind of wrap this up, two and a half years go by and it is the worst two and a half years of my life. Chronic pain, because I had

two ruptured disks in my vertebrae, my L5, L4, S1.

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Robb: Because this vertebral column is just kind of compressing over time because of the osteoporosis and all that stuff. Wow.

Shawn: Exactly. And so I've got the sciatic nerve pain shooting down my leg to the degree like -- Most of the pain just walking through the day was probably around four or five. But when that side would hit, it's like it would literally make me jerk back. Like I have some kind of a nervous twitch. So, it was embarrassing and just kind of being in the situation I began to be very **[0:05:41] [Audio Glitch]** and just sticking around to my house because I was afraid to get up and move around.

And so I gained a bunch of weight. I was about 50 pounds -- I say I was a fluffy Shawn at that time. So, I had 50 pounds of fluffiness on me. And my life was just really kind of turned upside down. All of that changed when I finally realized after seeing four different physicians. And by the way, everybody listening, make sure that if you ever get a diagnosis of some type of chronic illness, make sure that you get a second, third or even fourth opinion.

This is not something you just jump right into. Because I would have done surgery in a heartbeat just to get out of pain. But I wasn't educated. I realized that all this time for two and a half years I've been giving my power away and I never really took it upon myself to do anything about it. I was kind of waiting around for this next physician to try to help me. And so everything changed in an instant when I decided to actually get well.

And most people never do that either. They're just kind of like, "I'll try. We'll see what happens. I wish this would work out." But I really decided that I'm going to make this happen. And it entailed three specific things. I went for the low hanging fruit. Being an athlete growing up I knew that I needed to exercise which I haven't done any exercise in two and a half years outside of walking to my car and walking back in, which is crazy looking back on it.

And guess what happens? Your muscles, everything starts to atrophy. Not just your spine. And so I actually came across a study that was done on race horses and actually cited this in the book. They took race horses and they were -- If they break a bone, it's like -- There's potentially millions of dollars of loss here with a race horse. And so they wanted to make sure they had higher bone density. So, they gave the race horses supplements like calcium and things like that.

And they found that it did, in fact, improve their bone density. But they also found, they had another study group, when they gave the horses supplements and walked them, their bone density increased even more. So, that's the big key

with exercise and that people look pass. It's like getting abs and that kind of thing, that's a side effect. The real importance of exercise -- The word exercise is derived from the word exorcism which basically means to get stuff out of you that shouldn't be there.

But it's also about assimilation. And so your cells literally up regulate that assimilation when you move. And so I incorporated movement, and this is a big key here, because I know there's going to be people listening who suffer with back issues and degeneration. But I asked the question what is my spine actually made of? What are my bones made of? What are the disks in between the vertebrae and my spine actually made of?

And I came across information that just blew my mind, all this stuff I've never heard of. Because when you think of bones in common culture, it's usually calcium. And we see the milk mustache and we're just like, "Oh, we just need to drink milk." Well, a lot of that type of milk, conventional, pasteurized homogenized milk can actually leech calcium from your bones. And there's a lot of research out there showing that.

So, for me, I found things like sulfur bearing amino acids, polysaccharides, magnesium. I had no idea how important magnesium was for building bone. And so I started to really find everything that I could, food first and then supplements and things like that, to give my body the raw materials it need to rebuild me. Last thing was sleep. And that was really the game changer because that was my biggest struggle for two and a half years, just trying to sleep at night. Because for me, the pain would wake me up even if I shift the position. So, I found this chemical cocktail and I haven't shared this very often but this chemical cocktail of Celebrex and Tylenol PM. That was my jam to help me to sleep at night.

Robb: Wow. Okay, okay.

Shawn: But come to find out -- I'm not advocating this by any means. But come to find out, and so this was 17 years ago, come to find out that -- Well, I'm sorry, 15 years ago. Celebrex, one of the side effects was restless leg syndrome. But this was before it had a name. So, I'm just going to bed like freaking out like my legs won't stop. And so you had another reason I was having trouble sleeping was the drug that I was taking. But bottom line was this, is that once I got my sleep dialed in, it's just as if the floodgates opened and I got well so quickly.

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So, over the course of six weeks from making the decision to get well, I lost about 28 pounds. And again, this was the weight that I was really abnormally carrying around my frame and the pain that I've been experiencing for those two and a half years was gone. I got a scan done about nine months later and I

regenerated the tissue that I lost because I basically lost about half of an inch of my height. And I just grew. And the two ruptured disks had retracted on their own.

And so that was really the birthing of my career. I shifted gears in college and, just to answer part of that original question, and I shifted over to everything that I could that involved biology, biochemistry, kinesiology, and I just started taking classes and just kind of getting that information. But lo and behold, of course, you this as well, I was mis-educated with a lot of things especially in nutrition. But I just made the decision to get educated.

I had enough of that formal education to open a practice, consulting practice and a clinic and having people coming in looking at their blood work, helping them design programs in conjunction with physicians. Because I didn't want to take that path. I didn't want to become a physician. And so having recommendations from physicians and chiropractors and other kind of functional medicine docs and things like that and created a very thriving practice.

And from there, it spread out to be this show, The Model Health Show, the books, the speaking, and all that good stuff. But it all really started from a huge problem that I overcame myself which happens to a lot of people especially a lot of people who are getting to this field.

Robb: That's awesome. That is a common and always amazing story to hear when folks have this huge crisis and then they get it figured out. And in the process of figuring it out, you effectively become a world expert. Like it's essentially you have PhD in that topic by the end of that whole process. Shawn, I'm curious, when folks ask about should I do this or should I do that, did you -- Had you ever taken any of the like Myers Briggs personality courses, the introvert-extrovert? Some people like that stuff. Some people think it's kind of voodoo.

But I've seen people who are super geeked out on health and wellness and they want to help people but they are profound introverts in that being around a lot of people just sucks the energy out of them. It's not that they're outgoing. It's not that they don't like people. But some people, you put them up on stage or around a group of people and they just come to life and they're energized by the whole thing. Other people can do that. But at the end of that process, they're totally knackered. And then, of course, there's people that kind of bounce back and forth a little bit between that. Do you know where you are on that spectrum?

Shawn: I do, actually. But I learned this much, much later. This was maybe five years ago. So, you're probably going to know way more about this than me and other people listening but I believe it's INFJ, is that right?

Robb: Okay, okay. Yeah.

Shawn: And so, definitely there's an introverted *[audio glitch]* but there's also the feeling aspect. I'm very passionate about helping people. I'm very passionate about connecting. And I actually care about how people feel. And it can be a bit of a double-edged sword for sure. But definitely, to just kind of dive in with this question, this is very important, it's really in how you recharge. And so, I am on stage. I've spoken in front of 7,000 people, I've spoken in front of seven people. Both of those situations stressed me out.

But I got to the place where I became very comfortable with that because I knew that I'd be able to retreat after it was all over by being able to get back and recharge and getting more of a solitude. But we all, the very important thing, and we talked about this when you were on my show, we need the connection. That's how humans evolve. So if we're looking at a tribal construct, as we evolve, there can be somebody that's kind of little bit antisocial, but if you want to eat bro, you got to hang out.

And so, but today, because of our technological advances and the way our society is structured, we can create these little caves where we hang out and hide out on our own. And maybe we have our own little family. But the world and how we're hardwired is we need to proactively get around other people and to have that experience and that exposure. But always knowing, of course, that you can recharge. Like my wife, for example, she's the opposite. When she wants to recharge, she wants to be around people. That makes me want to take a nap.

And so for me, it's the opposite. I'll do that with her but then just leave me alone for a little bit, let me read a book or just hang out with my youngest son. That's really what it's about. It's understanding who you are. And so I call myself a situational extrovert. If the situation calls for it, I'll definitely step up to the plate and get my hits. But after that, I'm going to get back to the dugout and hang out.

Robb: Recharge, yeah. And, I think, sometimes we'll call that like a gregarious extrovert where you do really enjoy that time with people and you're quite good at it but at the same time, again, there's just some people that ten hours of being in front of a group of people, their feet aren't on the ground. They just get more and more and more energized.

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And the same people oftentimes they're hard pressed to get them to sit down and read a book. The worst prison sentence you could give them is like, "Hey, man, go sit down and be quiet for five minutes alone." You can just see them like crawling out of their skin and they can't do it. But this is one of these interesting things when folks are kind of fishing around about what should they do? I think

being really aware of that kind of energetic story. Do you need a balance between in front of people and maybe some more introspective stuff like blogging or something like that?

And it's just valuable to know that. Because, man, I've seen so many people open cross fit type gyms and consulting practices and they just really, man, they love nutrition, they love the idea of helping people but the reality of having folks in front of them day in and day out just really wasn't a good energetic mix. And so it sounds like you were able to navigate that in a pretty effective way.

Shawn: Oh, man, you just said something so perfect. So, back when I was initially this kind of transformation happened, people at my university at that time began to ask me like what the hell did you do? Like I'm walking out of class after I lose 30 pounds -- But I didn't look like somebody who just lost weight. Because somebody can go from my apple shape to a smaller apple. I looked like somebody who was radically healthy. I was glowing. I just really -- I felt alive like for the first time in years, as a matter of fact to the degree that I never felt before.

It was just kind of weird magnetic thing. And I remember walking out of my, I think it was business negotiation. There's some random class I was taking. The professor stopped me. He was like, "What did you do?" And I'm like, I'm thinking like I did something wrong. "You look so healthy." Like it's a problem. And that was really the birthing of my career. People start to ask me, "How did you do this?"

Again, lowest hanging fruit, all I could think of was becoming a trainer, working as a strength and conditioning coach, helping people in that atmosphere. And in a one on one context, I could do that. But as I started to stretch **[0:17:19] [Audio Glitch]** grandiose idea I needed to reach more people so, hey, why don't I open a gym? Bad idea for Shawn. That's not my cup of tea. I found a better way and a better channel. That's really what everybody needs to do is acknowledge what their talents are and acknowledge the way that they want to consistently give that gift.

And so, happening upon this podcast platform, for example, right? And we've done live events in front of big audiences. But again, that's a rare occasion. But most of the time, it's just me in the studio with my producer. And I'm giving my gift, I'm giving all of this data, all this information that I've accumulated working with thousands of people and I'm still impacting people's lives in a positive way. And I get to see all of those messages and all of the stories that come in but I don't have to be there in that one on one context or one on many context, which over time might drain me.

I'm very glad that I woke up to the fact that opening a gym is not for me. My gift

is better in writing books and doing this show. That's another big channel that people can utilize, is written content. It's free today. But how do you become successful in it? I think we need to talk about that a little bit. The number one thing is, and I had no idea I was going to talk about this, the number one thing, and I've been in this field for a long time, today, the podcast is number one in the US.

How in the hell did I do that? I'm just some kid from the Midwest. And I don't have a big band of people behind me, some big networks, nothing like that. It's just differentiating myself by being myself. That's the number thing, is to be yourself. When I first started online I was writing articles as if I was writing for a medical journal. It was horrible. Those articles are still there. Do not go read them.

Robb: Unless you have insomnia. Maybe that can be number 22 of your essential strategies. It's like if everything else didn't work, read my early writing and you'll guaranteed to fall asleep immediately.

Shawn: Congratulations, you played yourself. Exactly, yes. So, for me, it's really once I was able to really tap into my -- It's so crazy we have to say this, but to find your voice. All that needs is just you, when nobody else is around in a strange but you just being authentically yourself. That's what people are going to connect with. Because people don't buy your book. They buy you. People don't listen to your show. They listen to you.

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And it's important to understand that no matter what kind of branding is around stuff, we're in the most competitive field in my opinion of health and fitness. There's a bazillion people in this field but only a few really rise to the top. But even that doesn't matter because the people in the middle, even the people in the lower tier, you probably heard of the thing, the 100 true fans, right?

Once you get those people, or a thousand true fans, who know, like, and trust you and believe in you and you are their coach, you're their guidance, they will support you in your career and have the livelihood that you want. And plus, you'll be able to give your gift. You don't have to be at the top of the mountain. All you need to do is differentiate yourself and serve the people who connect with you.

Robb: I love it. I love it. It's interesting, so I was involved early on with cross fit. I co-founded the First and Fourth CrossFit Affiliate gyms. Part of their success was posting these workout videos and some interviews and the production quality was terrible, really low quality in that, and then a few folks came in to the scene that had some capitalization and had some marketing background and they did



these really slick polished videos, some nice pre-imposed production, and these things just flopped. They just really didn't go all that well.

What they kind of figured out, and I was just reading an article about this the other day, even on YouTube, things that look overly produced, things that look more like network TV just don't do that well. Because there's almost inevitably this focus on the production side versus the content side. I just find that really fascinating that with the -- I think there's something like 40 years of content that is uploaded to YouTube either daily or weekly or something like that.

And so there's so much material that you could sift through. But again, just these authentic voices, authentic messages. YouTube itself is now, I think, the second most utilized search engine in the world second to Google. It's really interesting. And folks are typically, I think they've grown beyond just the cute cat videos and they're typically data mining something that they're interested in whether it's ketogenic diets or knitting, like my wife has been teaching her daughters how to some really basic knitting type stuff. And there's everything in the world you can imagine on there about knitting for kids oddly enough. It's really interesting.

Shawn: Oh, man, I'd say so. I recently did a talk at Google and being able to have conversations with the people who work there and you look at all this stuff with innovation and all -- I mean, there's stuff that's coming that's just mind blowing. But what it all really boils back down to is simplicity today, more than ever. And we can look at this. There are huge brands out there that don't get the same amount of love and attention online as just somebody's doing YouTube videos in their bedroom.

Because people want to connect with people. We want to buy from people that we know, like and trust. Those corporate walls, like the dinosaur industry, is kind of coming down. And this is like the perfect time for you to take action on building career that you really want whether that's in health and fitness or whether it's in something else, which you have to have the willingness to be yourself and you have to have the willingness to put out consistent -- That's probably number two, is consistent high quality content.

Consistency is really the big key here. So many people start a show, they start writing a book or they start this or that but they don't follow through. That consistency is really -- It's so overlooked and it sounds so simple but if you do that every week or you just write a few pages every day, before you know it you got a master body of work. And that's really one of the other big keys. And kind of even Sleep Smarter came about. It went through different manifestations as we talked about before the show.

I first self-published a book about four years ago. And this was before a lot of people are getting information, like some of the stuff we'll talk about today. I've

been impressing in the culture for years now. And now people are like, "Yeah, I've heard that piece before. I've heard that piece." There's a lot of stuff people still don't know about it. But it started out from this one book. And crazy, crazy thing, man. Arianna Huffington got that first book, right? And used that in research for her book. I was like, how?

Robb: Wow.

Shawn: How? And so, but from there, I looked at -- I mentioned this as well. I had the audacity to put it together and put it out there and then get to work spreading the word. And that got the attention of all of these major publishers.

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I don't know if I'm at the liberty to say how many and what all that entailed but it was -- Like I could not believe that it was happening. But then again, I absolutely knew because of that consistency, and so that really birthed the book that I have today with Rodeo. That's international bestseller. Actually, right now, my microphone is on top of, I think this is the French translation of the book.

So, again, just that consistency and putting out high quality work and going through each step. Because in today's space, it can be kind of easy in some aspect to jump levels. But that can be a little bit dangerous in a way because you still have to grow. You have to be ready for the success when it comes or it's just going to mess you up.

Robb: Right, right.

Shawn: I don't know. We talked about this, Robb, but--

Robb: No, no. I definitely want to talk more about your book but it's kind of funny. I've been getting more and more interested in the process that people have around their success and their kind of life path. Clearly, the knots and bolts. You've put together an amazing book here, the Sleep Smarter: 21 Essential Strategies to Sleep Better. It's just a phenomenal book but it's also things like these that are really kind of you have the world before something like this and the world after something like this.

I think it's really worthwhile to kind of dig into what went into that. What was that process? And I don't know if that's replicatable per se because you have a really fascinating individual history of a health crisis or resolution to deal with that health crisis head on and then lots of and lots of exploration that involved some experimentation like trying a gym and then saying, "Well, the gym isn't quite it but, man, I really want to reach people."

And so utilizing formats like podcasting and occasional large group and also corporate speaking gigs has clearly been just right where your power band is, where your sweet spot is. And so, I think, it's really worthwhile investigating that stuff.

Shawn: Sure. Yeah. I think it's valuable for people to know what the catalyst was. We're not Henry Ford. Because he has that quote of if I would have gave my customers what they wanted they would have just gotten fasten horses, something along those lines. And so it's understanding, first, you want to make sure that we are creating something that people actually want.

What that looked like for me was -- This was, again, right around four, five years ago in my clinic. And this is after a decade in doing clinical work and working with -- We work with a lot of chronic illnesses from diabetes to heart disease, cancers, things of that nature. We have pretty high success rate with type II diabetes specifically. And helping people to get off the Metformin and insulin and things like that.

But it was through generally diet, lifestyle changes. But there was always this percentage of people, would you say 20%, 25% of people, who would not get the results that everyone else was getting. And ironically, it would keep me up at night. Like what the hell are they doing? Are they lying to me? Or is there something, flawed system? And it finally clicked because my sleep was so good I didn't think about it anymore. But it clicked for me to ask them about sleep like how is your sleep?

And also stress and things that surrounded that, which I just, for whatever reason, didn't put a lot of attention on and still found a way to be moderately successful. But when I did this, I was like -- I had to hold my hand under my chin to keep my jaw from dropping onto my desk when people were telling me about their sleep history. And I was just like, how are you alive? How are you walking? That sent me on this just passionate path because -- This is another thing, is that most people do not want to turn their world upside down to get a result.

They don't want to have to change their life a lot to be able to lose that 20 pounds or to be able to get off that statin, whatever it is. They want it to be something that they don't have to do much. And I understand that. So, I want to work with the system. And so I looked to find what can people do? Some clinically proven strategies that people can do. And a lot of these things, they don't have to turn their lives upside down. They could just do what they're already doing, maybe add these things in.

And so once I gave these to my patients and to the clients, it's like the floodgates opened. Same thing with me. Like they got well so fast. The weight came off, the blood sugar got normalized, the blood pressure, whatever their thing was for the

biggest percentage of people in the least amount of time that I've ever seen.

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And so with that said, I had just been starting this podcast and, not too long after that, and so I did three shows, like a trilogy on this topic with sleep health and these strategies. And they became like the top downloaded show. I'm like, wow, people are really interested in that. Then from there, that's when I wrote the first version of the book. I had proof of concept. And then eventually that became the major, with the major publisher and all that good stuff as well.

Robb: Right. And it's interesting, in *Wired to Eat*, I have this concept of the four pillars of health, sleep and photoperiod, nutrition, exercise and community. And it's interesting. I don't know if this is just confirmation bias and you and I are both knuckleheads and we're both looking in the wrong direction or it's actually like, oh, there's something to this because we're both looking at this. But in looking through the list of the things that you talk about, it basically addresses all of that stuff, the way that you lay this stuff out.

You've already made a pretty good case for your chapter one, know the value of sleep. I think folks that listen to podcasts, they're reasonably sold on that. But one thing really fascinating or like counterintuitive elements is chapter two, get more sunlight during the day. Could you talk about that? Because that one just throws folks for a loop and oftentimes this is one of the most challenging things for folks because of the structure of our work day.

Shawn: Oh, man. You just said it. One of the fascinating things, and this is a big kind of headline for today is that a great night of sleep starts the moment you wake up in the morning. And for that, it's because of these biological rhythms. And we're somewhat ignorant to that today because of the way that our society is set up. We can basically manufacture a second day time. We don't have to pay attention to nature's cues anymore. That can cause just devastation with what's going on with our hormones.

And so, in the morning, actually with the research, it was between right around 6:00 am to 8:30 am, things are going to change with the different time of the year and that kind of thing, but just the general spot, that photo exposure -- And so this was published in the journal *Innovations in Clinical Neuroscience*. And I found that sunlight exposure during that phase significantly decreases cortisol levels later in the day. And so that's what we really want. We want to get a normalization of cortisol. And I call it a cortisol reset. And that sun exposure, oddly enough, and the thing is -- I know you know this as well but cortisol is not a bad guy.

It's been vilified. It makes things sound kind of catchy but it's just when it's

produced at the wrong times and the wrong amount. That's when it can be a real problem. But it's essential for so many things including even thyroid function. So, what we want to do is get it normalized and through our evolution we would have that spike in the morning and those early hours and gradually decline and drop out in the evening.

And I like to say that cortisol and melatonin have kind of an inverse relationship. So, if cortisol is elevated, melatonin is going to be somewhat suppressed. And so we want to make sure that cortisol is low in the evening. Clinically, we've called these people tired and wired. Their cortisol was upside down. And so this is one of the strategies, getting sun exposure can help to reset that cortisol. But also, in the book we do break down the dos and don'ts with sunlight because there's a lot of misinformation out there about that.

A lot of people are in fear of getting sunlight. It doesn't really have any legs under it. And so there's a safe and smart way to go about that and I detailed all that. We could do a whole show just talking about that. But the bottom line is we've got to get out of these cubicle dungeons. We've got to get out of -- Even if you live in an area -- And so I want to throw a hack in here. If you live in an area where you don't have access to an adequate amount of sunlight, when you think about place like Seattle, for example, first of all, you might want to consider moving.

Robb: I did.

Shawn: See? Yes.

Robb: Six years was five years 11 months and 29 days too long. So, yeah.

Shawn: There's some people that are more adaptable to conditions like that. Big shout out to the Seahawks. Go, Seahawks. But the bottom line is, what is your priority? But with that said, and so big love and big hug out to everybody in Seattle, but you can also get -- There's great phototherapy devices as well that you can utilize as a hack. Nothing beats real sun exposure but there's visors, there are light boxes. These are clinically proven to be effective to treat things like seasonal affective disorder, for example. There's even -- I don't know if you know about this. Do you know about human charger?

Robb: No.

**[0:35:00]**

Shawn: This is bananas, man. And there's more data coming out about this. But there are actually photo receptors inside of your ear canal. And so you put on these tiny little ear buds--

Robb: I have heard of this, yeah. Yeah. Tell folks about this, yeah. I'd forgotten that.

Shawn: Fascinating stuff. I wonder, again, this will be like a whole show just talking about this but they actually just reached out to me like last week and it's funny because I was playing around with their product because I just did a speaking event. I spoke at an event in the Philippines. So, it's completely like a 180 on my body's clock but I had no jetlag. And it was employing strategies like I talked about Sleep Smarter, but one of those was getting that photo therapy while I'm on that 12-hour flight or whatever.

And so the photo receptors in your ear canal basically -- So, just to kind of put this in a nutshell for everybody, what we don't really understand is that your skin actually has photo receptors that pick up light and send information to your brain that it's day time. And so if we are not sleeping in a dark room, for example, this can disrupt your sleep. I actually shared a study. This was from Cornell University. They had the test subjects sleep in an otherwise dark room but they put a fiber optic cable and this light size of a quarter behind their knee. And that was enough to disrupt their sleep cycle, just that one small light behind their knee.

And so there are photo receptors all over our bodies and our ears specifically. What they're finding is that it has a really powerful effect in regulating this kind of circadian clock. So, in a nutshell, that product, it shoots this pretty powerful light into your ears, but you kind of just look like, instead of being a weird Kanye West with some visor on that's shooting light into your eyes or a jedi, whatever you're into. Now, you got something that's a little bit more conspicuous that you just kind of pop in your ears and get some of these photo therapy benefit.

Robb: Awesome. I had totally forgotten about that, I just pulled it up online. I had some international travel coming up and I'm going to grab some [audio glitch]. You know I've gotten a little bit better at dealing with jet lag, like particularly going to Europe or something like that, I'll grab a little bit of melatonin or GABA, or do some specific fasting to try to retrain my circadian rhythm, but it's still like getting kicked in the jimmy, like it is not a lot of fun. So I'd like to come out feeling fresh as a daisy. I'm pretty envious of that. But, Shawn, another thing that, I think, is oftentimes counterintuitive for folks or they don't really get the significance is being cool or being in a cool environment when we're trained to sleep. Could you talk about that also?

Shawn: Oh, yeah, definitely. So, your body -- One of the things that I was taught in the traditional university setting is like humans we exist 98.6 degrees. That's where we're supposed to be. It's just not true. Your body's temperature modulates significantly throughout the day. Even around exercise, for example. You can't expect your body temperature to remain at 98.6 degrees. And there's actually

cooling off process that happens. It's a process called thermoregulation that your body undertakes in preparation for sleep. And it does this again if we're minding a natural light and dark cycle.

When it starts to get dark outside, your core body temperature naturally wants to drop. And it does this to facilitate release of certain hormones and neurotransmitters, reparative enzymes, that kind of thing. It's like old programs that are tied to this change in temperature in your body. And it's really fascinating but so often we're not abiding by this rule and we're setting ourselves up for a little bit of failure by not making the cool in our bedroom environment.

Now, again, my wife kind of opposite from me in a lot of things. She's more of a cold bodied person. And so even upstairs right now, in my house right now, it's probably like 70 degrees. She's got a heater, space heater upstairs right next to her right now and it's on high all the time. And so it says hi on it, like H-I, so I call it her little boyfriend. He's like always right there, "Hey, Hi." And I don't like it, man. But I understand. We kind of compromise.

But at night, she does know, and we've tested this, that she sleeps significantly better when it's cooler. Her big thing is getting out of bed in the morning when it's cold. And so I simply get up and turn up the thermostat in the morning. And so also when I talk with Kelly Starrett about this, and he was going nuts about something called the ChiliPad.

Robb: I was just going to ask you. Yeah, yeah.

Shawn: So, the ChiliPad, actually, this is something for people who really tend to run hot. And you can lay this over just one side of the bed so that your significant other doesn't have to suffer because you want to keep it extra cool in the bedroom. There are actually mattresses that sleep cool. There are different companies out there.

**[0:40:03]**

I actually have one of those mattresses that, because some mattresses literally they create more heat as soon as you start landing on them. Same thing with your sheet and things of that nature. So, these are just things to keep in mind. By the way, what the optimal range would be -- And I just talk with like Dr. Joseph Mercola the other day, actually right after I talked with you. He's been out there talking about this stuff a long time. He recommends between 62 and 68 degrees Fahrenheit for optimal sleep. Anything below that or above that can create some disruptions with our sleep quality.

Robb: Right, right. That's awesome. Well, Shawn, I want to be respectful of your time. I know we didn't go super deep on the book and I apologize for that because I

ended up diverting you into career path stuff. But I'm just a rabid fan of Sleep Smarter. Can you let folks know where to track down the book, where to find you on the interwebs, your amazing show on iTunes? Let everybody know where to track you down.

Shawn: Okay. Perfect, man. And it's always a pleasure to talk with you, Robb. So, people can check me out, whenever they're listening to this podcast, you can pop over and check out The Model Health Show. It's called The Model Health Show. Or you could check it out online at [themodelhealthshow.com](http://themodelhealthshow.com). We generally have videos for most of the shows as well, so you can join us in the studio and we have a good time.

And we do master classes on subject matters. So, if it's on sleep and digestion or if it's on how sleep relates to your sexual health or master class on reversing diabetes, water and hydration, obesity, whatever the case might be, whatever you're interested in, we've got a master class on this subject. And also you can pick up the book there at [themodelhealthshow.com](http://themodelhealthshow.com) or anywhere you find books, Barnes and Noble, Amazon, obviously, is a big hub for book sales.

But also, and I don't mention this enough, my wife got on my back the other day about this because we took some time and we shot 21 videos for each of the 21 chapters. And I've only mentioned it like five times over the course of a year. But people can pick that up and get access to those for free at [sleepsmarterbook.com](http://sleepsmarterbook.com). If you get the book and then you go over there, you can get those 21 videos for free.

Robb: Okay. We'll get a link to both the ability to purchase the book and the link to the videos, which is [sleepsmarter.com](http://sleepsmarter.com) and that's genius. Great, great work on that. Nice.

Shawn: Thank you, Robb. I appreciate it.

Robb: Awesome, Shawn. Well, it was so good reconnecting with you. I had the incredible fortune of spending some time with you and your folks, just about seven to ten days ago. You guys do an amazing show. I've been fiddling around with podcasting for a long time and, man, I just really tip my hat to you. You do an amazing job of weaving in science, passion, empathy. You do it all and you do it really well. So, just hats off to you and really congratulations on all the success.

Shawn: Robb, that means a lot coming from you. I receive that. Thank you so much. Huge fan of your work. love your new book. And I'm going to be promoting it like crazy. Thank you for all the work you're doing.

Robb: Awesome. Well, looking forward to seeing you in real life. I am going to make it out your way and get some barbecue with you. I'm going to crash your place at



some point and we'll make that happen.

Shawn: It's already done.

Robb: Okay. All right, man. Take care. Have a great rest of your day.

Shawn: Thanks, Robb. Take care.

**[0:43:26] End of Audio**