

EPISODE 232

## Jim Kwik

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**Shawn Stevenson:** Welcome to *The Model Health Show*. This is fitness and nutrition expert, Shawn Stevenson, and I am so grateful for you tuning in with me today. We've got an incredible guest on for you.

And today more than ever, this is why I'm excited about this, is that so much information is coming at us from all of these different angles, and it could be difficult to process and assimilate all of the information that we need to really live our best lives.

Whether it's information to help us to grow our business, or our financial fitness, or our health and wellness, or our relationships. There are so many things that we need to pay attention to, so how do we assimilate it all?

And to put even that at a lower rung, the reality is- and I've got a question for you, and be honest about this. How many actual phone numbers do you know right now? Like just off the top of your head? Probably not many.

When I was a kid, before smartphones, I knew everybody's phone number by heart. Today I know like two. I know my wife's number and my son, and that's pretty much it. And I didn't even know my son's number until recently.

And so in a way we've really outsourced our brains to our smartphones, as our guest today has told me before, and it's just like of course! And our smartphones in a way are kind of making us dumber.

We're becoming like the Lloyd Christmas version of ourselves in many ways because we're not really utilizing that aspect of our memory.

And so today this focus- and we've had him on before, this is the incredible, incredible Jim Kwik, and we've had him on before and we focused on accelerated learning as far as improving your memory, improving your reading speed.

But today we're going to be talking about study skills and how we can actually- even the information you're learning today, how can you learn it faster and really assimilate the information, and put it on a place where your recall is super charged, and you're going to be able to take this into other areas of your life as well.

So whether you are hitting the books and you're doing some kind of studying, or you just want to learn some cool stuff and actually be able to tie it to your memory, or you're just into like playing *Jeopardy* and you want to be killer at that as well.

Before we do that I want to give a quick shout-out to my drink this morning, alright my coffee. I think you've probably heard this before, but I just haven't really been a coffee drinker my entire life. I had a sip of coffee when I was like five years old, it was like my grandfather's coffee, and I was just like, "I will never drink this again. That was terrible."

And you know, he probably had some Folgers in the cup. 'The best part of waking up-' he probably had that kind of garbage, so it probably wasn't that good in the first place, but I just haven't drank coffee since. Like literally not a sip.

And it wasn't until recently where my wife has been having the coffee from Four Sigmatic almost every day for about a year. And you know she rotates, there's different kinds of coffee that they have.

Organic infused with these dual extracted medicinal mushrooms, and I was just like, "What is the big deal?" And I see people of course with their coffee cups everywhere, and so I just started to try it, and now like- listen I get it. I get it with the coffee. I truly do understand now.

It's just something about it, right? It's just something about it that makes you just want to have it. And so I've been having the Four Sigmatic, the Cordyceps formula. And so this one is a little bit of a boost to your energy as well.

And so one of the reasons that we tend to tune in and get ourselves involved with coffee is because of the caffeine, right? And also some of the cardiovascular benefits as well.

But where the caffeine is concerned, here's a little study for you guys. This study found that you can actually increase your metabolic rate by 3% to 11%, and this was published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, when you have caffeine.

And so it actually has a metabolic benefit and helps you to burn fat.

Now of course we don't want to go crazy with this, and there can be some negative side effects of having the caffeine. Your body will actually down-regulate receptor sites for the caffeine.

So we have to be careful about that and rotate things. So we want to rotate pretty much everything that we are bringing into our bodies if at all possible.

And so that's one part, and also we have to understand about the acidity, the acidic nature of the coffee. And your body does a lot to buffer that, so it's not like it makes your body acid. It doesn't really work like that, alright?

The different organs and organ systems in your body have a different pH, and your body is very smart at if you do have an acidic compound coming in, it's able to neutralize that and put everything in balance.

But it might require to take some resources from places that you might need then, alright? So pulling calcium even from your bones to try to neutralize the acidity of the coffee if you're just going ham on coffee all the time.

And so this is why I love the formulas from Four Sigmatic, is because medicinal mushrooms are very alkaline in nature, so it helps to buffer that acidity.

And of course with the Cordyceps, we have this study- this was published in 'Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise.' They looked at thirty healthy athletes for six weeks to record the effects of Cordyceps on their performance.

The group that added Cordyceps to their daily regimen had twice the oxygen uptake of the control group, and oxygen is essential in supplying nutrients to the muscles, preventing fatigue, and from preventing the build of lactic acid. That's that feeling like you just can't go any further.

And there was another study done by the same group that found a 9% increase in aerobic activity from taking Cordyceps. So you get both of those imbued in the Four Sigmatic formula.

So if you're not utilizing Four Sigmatic, head over, check them out. It's [www.FourSigmatic.com/model](http://www.FourSigmatic.com/model) and you're going to get 15% off all of their incredible mushroom elixirs and mushroom coffee.

So do yourself a favor and grab you some today.

And for all of my people in San Diego, I'm going to be dropping into town and doing a very special Meet and Greet, and it's going to be hosted by the incredible team at Organifi.

So make sure to RSVP right now. The event is coming up soon. It's going to be August the 12th, so this is a Saturday from 2:00 to 4:00 and it's going to be in San Diego.

So everybody in San Diego, take action right now. Go to [www.TheModelHealthShow.com/sd](http://www.TheModelHealthShow.com/sd) and you can RSVP right there. You never know who's going to be in the building.

I'm going to have some surprises, we're going to do some really awesome things, and we're just going to have a good time and hang out.

So make sure to take action right now and to come and hang out with us.

On that note let's go ahead and get to our special guest, and our guest today is my really good friend Jim Kwik. And I've known Jim for probably getting close to ten years now, at least. It might even be longer than that.

But getting close to ten years, and he's somebody that very early on, he- and this is just being real, he believed in me. You know when I was figuring out how to do this thing.

I didn't even know it was a thing that you could talk about health and nutrition, and kind of like be a DJ with it, right? Like you'd be like the DJ Khaled of nutrition and fitness, and you'd get up on stage, and you can kind of remix this stuff, and make it make sense, and make it fun.

And I was figuring all of this out, and Jim just really had some faith in me and allowed me to be a part of something he was building early on, and he's just really been a great friend ever since, and somebody who attracts amazing people.

You've got to follow Jim on Instagram. I mean he's hanging out with Bill Gates, he's hanging out with will.i.am from the Black Eyed Peas. He's hanging out with Will Smith. Just all these amazing people, but they're coming to Jim because of his skillset.

He's an exceptionally talented human being, but this was not something that was just gifted to him. In fact he has this story where- and he's talked about this on a past episode, but he had a childhood brain injury that left him learning challenged.

And because of that, and going through all those trials and tribulations, he put together strategies to dramatically enhance his mental performance. And I've seen this guy just do these incredible feats of memory, and speed reading. He reads a book a day, it's just crazy stuff.

But today he's going to be sharing with you how to increase your retention, how do you learn this information, all of this information that's coming at us today, and assimilate that stuff better.

And Jim has been bringing his cutting edge techniques and entertaining style to companies like Virgin, Nike, Zappos, Base-X, New York University, Fox Studios, Harvard. Just on, and on, and on.

People come to Jim because he is the best in the world, and he's also the host of the wildly popular podcast, *Kwik Brain*. And by the way, his real name, Kwik. *Kwik Brain* which is consistently the number one training show on iTunes, and you can check him out at [www.KwikLearning.com](http://www.KwikLearning.com) for his online courses as well, and he's got students in over 150 countries.

And I'd like to welcome to *The Model Health Show*- welcome back, my good friend Jim Kwik. How are you doing today, man?

**Jim Kwik:** I'm doing fantastic, DJ Shawn. Seriously, you have changed my life. Some people know that I suffer from sleep apnea, which is like this breathing disorder, it's genetic, and it'd really taken a toll, and you've been my sleep sensei if you will, so thank you.

Thank you for everyone for tuning in.

**Shawn Stevenson:** It's my honor, man. And you know what's so interesting? Is that knowing Jim and just seeing his growth, and his transformation, and impact that he's making, and now him starting this new podcast is so awesome to see. And people are just gobbling up the show, man.

It's so good and there are so many wisdom nuggets in it. And I'd love for you to kind of start with why does it matter in your opinion for people to learn how to be able to study and retain information better?

**Jim Kwik:** Yeah, I mean I love this conversation we're about to have because it's not like previous episodes. In the previous episodes we talked about remembering names, and clearing brain fog, and reading faster, and all those so I encourage people to re-listen to those.

Yeah this is fresh cutting edge. I'm actually right now at Harvard University, and I've done these programs helping people to study more efficiently. And whether it's high school students, or college students, or graduate students, or maybe you're just a student of life.

I mean I think all of us- you have to continue our education, right? Learning doesn't stop when we finish school. I mean that's our starting off point if you will.

And so I think what we want to do is have this conversation about how do you really- when you want to- the difference between studying to remember and understand versus cramming to forget something.

I think a lot of us had this experience back in school, right? We didn't really study, we just crammed. That's the idea here. We don't study for five weeks, but for fifteen hours the day before, it's just like nobody could talk to you, you pull these all-nighters which you know is horrible, and when you don't sleep- because that sleep and memory go hand in hand, we know that.

And then the next morning nobody could talk to you at breakfast, and you can't wait to take the test because once you take the test, it's like gone, right?

**Shawn Stevenson:** Right, you just unload on the paper.

**Jim Kwik:** Exactly. And people know there's a learning curve but there's also a forgetting curve.

And so whether or not you're a student, I know that if you're listening to this you're a lifelong learner, and you probably have books that you want to read, and blogs that you want to catch up on, and podcasts, and everything.

So how do you really study a new subject? So if you have a subject or a skill whether it's Mandarin, or martial arts, or it's marketing, or it's music, whatever it happens to be, let's dive into it.

What I wanted to tell people is- and this is fresh here what I'm teaching here in Boston, is there's good habits and bad habits. Right? I really do believe that we either learn how to learn properly early on or it's kind of at a default.

I don't think that there's such thing as a good or bad memory, or good or bad learner, there's just good or bad habits, and trained or not trained. And that's really what it's all about.

But I noticed some people make mistakes, so I just wanted to talk about a few mistakes people are making when they go to learn something, or to study it, and then maybe a few hacks to be able to get over those mistakes.

One of the big ones, and you know this one because you and I have talked about this. What I love about your show is it's kind of like how you and I hang out.

We go, we get a juice, and if we just record our conversation, it's pretty much like it's how you are. You know what I mean? It's how you are behind-

**Shawn Stevenson:** DJ Shawn. Another one.

**Jim Kwik:** Exactly. So how do you study smart and not just hard? How do you do it?

So I would say there's a few things that you want to stop right away. Some of this is going to be common sense, but as we've discussed in the past, common sense is not always common practice.

And I really think for people really wanting to make the rest of this year and years coming up, they really want to simplify because if we can't simplify, if we make it too complex it becomes insurmountable, we don't do anything.

So simple things that you can do. First of all I want to encourage people as a reminder to stop multitasking. And I will get a lot of slack from that, just like when I tell people not to touch their phone the first hour of the day.

It's hard because it's something that our brains are getting rewired for things, right? You and I have talked a lot about superheroes, and having superpowers, and you keynoted one of our superhero brain events.

But I think there are supervillains right now. I think there are three big supervillains that are attacking us, and so it's the three I talk about, is the digital ones.

First of all digital overload, which you mentioned. There's too much to learn, too little time. Like taking a sip of water out of a fire hose. How do you keep up with it all? And so we're going to talk about that in this episode on how to study it properly so you can retain it and really master it.

The second one is digital distraction. Our brains- you know this, they're getting rewired to just be distracted, to wander all the time. And it seems like part of it is like these smart devices that you mentioned in the intro.

It's rewiring our brains and it's a challenge because it's the first thing in the morning when you're in that very impressionable state, that alpha data state in the morning, that relaxed state of awareness. Picking up your phone the first thing is training yourself to be distracted.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yes, exactly.

**Jim Kwik:** And you know, like you've studied like decision fatigue, and how we can only make a certain amount of good decisions a day. But a lot of people are suffering from just brain fatigue, and part of what's fatiguing people is just going on their phones and getting all these dopamine hits.

And every time they get a like, and a comment, and a share and everything, and if that's the first thing that you're giving your mind in the morning, it's training itself to be everywhere.

And the other thing, the problem with picking up the phone besides training distraction is training you to be reactive, which is not what superheroes want to do, right? The first thing in the morning.

They don't want to train themselves to just react to everything that's going on, all the fires that we have to fight, and everything that- everyone that needs something from us. It's better to be more proactive.

But the third enemy is- going to the solutions, is so you have digital overload, and you have digital distraction, and then you have this thing called digital dementia, which you've talked about in the past where we're outsourcing our smart devices, and if your brain is like a muscle, it grows stronger with use, but it's use it or lose it.

And one of the things I love following you on social media is like your family. Every morning without fail, it's so inspiring, you're doing all the workouts, and you inspire people, and you're not only just inspiration, it's instructive too.

I really think that's what people are looking for. They want to be inspired but they also want to know what to do.

And so when we geek out, you and I, we talk about how to do that for your mental muscles. Just like making your physical muscles faster, stronger, more agile, more flexible to give you more energy and strength, we want your mental muscles to be more agile, more focused, sharper, faster, more energized, and strong obviously as well.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Absolutely.

**Jim Kwik:** But we're not getting that same exercise because we're so reliant on technology to be able to tell us everything. What to do today, and directions, and just everything.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Oh man. I tried to do some basic calculations the other day, and it was hard. I was just like, 'I'm not going to use my phone, I'm not going to use-' I used my phone, even that little app.

**Jim Kwik:** Yeah, and that's the thing. It's tough, just basic algebra is difficult.

And here's the thing, it's not that- I think we all admit we want technology because it's very convenient. But as long as it doesn't cripple us at the same time.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Exactly.

**Jim Kwik:** You see all these movies in the future, or animations in the future where everyone is sitting in their pod and being- they have their digital device and they're all hooked up to that. It's just moving around, they're not exercising, they're all-

**Shawn Stevenson:** What was that movie with the little robot?

**Jim Kwik:** Which one is that one?

**Shawn Stevenson:** Where the entire future was like people were just so overweight. *Wally*. It was *Wally*. And I think he had a little friend who was like- I don't remember her name. Ava or something.

**Jim Kwik:** And it's not a very pleasant picture of where everyone's going. Very sedentary, not moving, and just not eating the best foods ever. But it's just our minds, they aren't getting exercise either; new thoughts, and new stimulants, and new-



**Shawn Stevenson:** We need that. The brain is just like a muscle, you know? We've talked about this before, you and I, and also with Dr. Daniel Amen. It's a muscle that is basically if you don't use it, you lose it, just like the rest of your muscles.

**Jim Kwik:** Right. And that's the best news ever because it works both ways. If you're listening to this right now and you're concerned that senior moments are coming a little early, and you're absent minded, it's not your fault.

It's just we're not trained on how to do these things. And the good news is only one third of that potential is pre-determined by genetics and biology, but two thirds is in our control.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yes.

**Jim Kwik:** And it's the things that you're always talking about; eating the right food, and getting rid of negative thoughts, and exercise, and movement, and supplements, and being around a positive peer group, and clean environment, and sleep, and brain protection, and new learnings, and stress management. All of these play a role.

So I think a good place to start-

**Shawn Stevenson:** Well before we get to the solutions, man, I want to do a quick recap because these are so important. And you talked about first of all something that we need to pay attention to, and try to avoid doing, is multitasking.

And this one is going to be- for a lot of people it's like, 'I multitask like a boss! What do you mean I've got to stop multitasking?'

**Jim Kwik:** Yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Well research shows- and we talked about this with Jay Papasan, who is the author of 'The One Thing,' how literally if you look at the studies, multitasking makes your brain work about as well as it does when you are high on marijuana.

As a matter of fact, they outperformed when you're multitasking. So we have this illusion that we're getting more stuff done, but we're really taking away our proficiency, we're really taking away our ability to execute at our highest level when we're distracted and multitasking.

**Jim Kwik:** Right.

**Shawn Stevenson:** And then you said distractions as well. And the other one is cramming, right?

**Jim Kwik:** It is. And we go- I'll touch on each of these things. So the multitasking, I completely agree with you. The research is showing- there was a study at the University of London saying that actually lowers your IQ, similar to if you stayed up all night and pulled an all-nighter, you drop it fifteen points.

And so the goal here is you can multitask in terms of doing something physical and something mental. You could be on the phone and going for a walk.

But two cognitive intensive tasks is not possible to be able to do it.

And so people were actually- it's taking anywhere from an extra five to twenty minutes to regain your focus and your flow. There's a high level more of errors that's being made if you're trying to multitask.

So if you feel like you're multitasking because you want to be a better performer and more productive, it's absolutely not true. It's actually taking away from your productivity.

The goal is to do one single mental thing at a time. Really multitasking is actually a misnomer. The more accurate term is called 'task-switching.' Because every time you switch tasks, you have to refocus your energy, and so it takes more time and there's definitely more mistakes.

The second thing that you mentioned is just as we're rewiring our brains for distraction is focus is a muscle, just like your memory is a muscle for you, creativity is a muscle. It's not something you have, it's something you do.

It's like you don't have creativity, you do creativity. You don't have memories, you do a memory. You don't have focus, you do focus.

And the good thing about making it a process is you can duplicate it, right? There's a recipe there because it's a verb as opposed to just a noun.

And so with focus, it's something you could do, but every time- that's the benefit of being mindful, right? I think most of your listeners have some kind of meditation or mindfulness activity that they support every single day.

If not, I would highly encourage it, but it's not the twenty minutes or thirty minutes of meditation, and getting in that Zen-like state. Certainly that's good to flow through alpha and theta brainwave states and such.

And what's even more important I think is that every single time you lose your focus and you bring it back in to a thought, or to a mantra, or to a point, or to a space, or to an energy, a gratitude, a feeling, a breath, then you exercise and you build your mental focus, your focus muscles.

So it's not that you don't get loose focus, it's when you bring it back that you get the strength.

And so I think one of the things is to be able to set your environment up to win, right?

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yes.

**Jim Kwik:** So you talked about stop multitasking, also eliminate distractions. I mean to focus, when you need to study, you've got to turn your phone off.

I mean people are picking up Instagram like over fifty times a day. Over fifty times. And if that's something that- if you're doing it less, that means that somebody's looking at Instagram even more than you are.

And there's ways of using technology for your advantage, right? There are self-control apps like *Freedom* or *FocusMe* to block out certain websites like social media, or block out sites that you might visit when you should be focusing on something else.

So that's the other thing, is just when I talk about focus, the metaphor that I use is that if you're outside and it's a nice warm day and you have a magnifying glass, do you remember when you were kids, we used to burn like leaves and stuff like that?

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah.

**Jim Kwik:** When you see the light go through the magnifying glass, it creates a very bright focus point there that is very highly concentrated.

And it's interesting that the word 'bright' describes it, because also we use the word 'bright' to describe really smart, intelligent people, right?

But maybe they're not smarter, maybe they're just better focused like that magnifying glass is doing to the light.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Interesting.

**Jim Kwik:** And so there's a lot of power in being focused and being- so if you want to study better.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, let me add something here real quick because with the distractions, this is something really simple. When I was working on my book recently, one of the most important things- because it would be so easy for me to just have my phone right there by me, and have certain things open where I'm getting notifications.

I just literally turned it off, and I let people know because some people are like, 'Well what if there's something important?'

There's like 0.000000000000% chance that something that catastrophic is going to happen, so give yourself the opportunity to actually execute and get this job done so you can hang out with your friends and family and do those things.

So I would literally shut of my phone off, and I'd get it away from me because even if it's in hand's reach, if you just start to get like a little mental lull, you're just like, 'Well let me-'

Before you know it, you're going to push the button and like check one of your accounts really quickly, you know?

So actually having the audacity, like when you want to focus, turn off your notifications. Just do that one step. There are different apps and tools and things like that, but if you simply turn off your notifications.

And for me, I don't get notifications from Instagram popping up on my phone. I don't get notifications from Facebook Messenger, and those kinds of things.

I know they're there, and I might not be the best at getting to all the messages that I get, but I'm getting work done so that I can actually be of service and help people in the greatest way.

So just a little shout-out to everybody, just even doing that one thing. And he mentioned this earlier about dopamine. It's not an easy task because dopamine is very addictive for your system. It's just like you have this drawn desire to a neurochemical that makes you seek things.

And so then you get the little opioid hit when you're seeking, and it creates this very powerful feedback loop. And so once you try to set it down and focus on something else- this is why other things are less interesting.

This is why your relationship with your significant other might not be as interesting as Instagram explore page, or whatever. You know?

And so we have to find ways to make real life entertaining, and finding the novel things, and the uncertainty, and variety in life itself, and not just our tech.

So man, that's so good, dude.

So one of the things that I want you to talk about if you can is this concept- and this was the first time I ever heard this, was from you, of recognition versus recollection when we're actually doing this work to study and assimilate things.

**Jim Kwik:** Right because- okay so one of the things that I think that keeps people from learning faster is they're so passive about it, right?

It's this idea between passive and active recall, and I actually recommend people don't reread chapters of their nonfiction book. I mean a lot of people will read something and reread it again thinking they're going to get more out of it the second time right afterwards.

And certainly it is, but it's marginal returns because you could easily- here's the thing. What people found that by rereading things is to study, right? Is that they could delude themselves thinking that you really know the information when you're reading it instead of really- instead of the better thing to do is to test yourself.

Because like for example, you read the chapter and then instead of rereading that same chapter, close the book and recall and recite all you can remember because there is a difference between recognition and recollection, meaning recognition requires a trigger for you to remember something that you might not get on the test.

It's like when somebody recognizes a face. They don't necessarily remember the face, what they're doing is they're recognizing it because it's right in front of them and they realize that they've seen it before.

One of the reasons why names are so difficult sometimes is because you don't get that same prompt. You get the prompt with the person's face, but you don't get that prompt or that trigger for the person's name.

And so studying actively with focus on recollection as opposed to recognizing something, one of the things to best do that is to quiz yourself. Read something and then ask yourself these questions, because often questions are the answer.

And I think a lot of people, Shawn- like when they're reading, and people are like, "Jim how do you-" and we did a whole podcast episode on speed reading.

People are like, "How do you read a book a week, or how do you read a book a day?" And one of the ways you can do it is- and do you really understand and retain it? And I'll tell you that if you want greater speed, I always tell people to use their finger while they read.

A visual pacer will help boost your reading 25% to 50%. But if you want greater comprehension, you have to train yourself to ask better questions. Ask more questions and ask better questions because as you're reading, they act like a magnet.

It's like, 'Oh there's an answer, there's an answer, there's an answer.' And I think part of being more active in recollection is actually asking yourself, 'What do I want to

learn out of this? How does this compare to what I already know? How am I going to teach this to somebody else?'

Because that's all thinking is, is just this process of asking new questions and answering them also as well.

And so I'm a big believer, is that just don't fool yourself into thinking that you know something because you can recognize it. See if you can really retain it and recollect it by quizzing yourself as you're learning something brand new.

The other thing I want to mention also, as you mentioned at the top, is just stop cramming.

And the reason why cramming is a big mistake is because they've done studies where they found that the average person loses their focus after 25 or 30 minutes. That's kind of like a TV show, and that's our attention span for a lot of things.

And so there's this time management technique called the Pomodoro Technique which basically means you're setting your alarm every 25, 30, maybe 45 minutes and when it's done you take a break.

You take not a 25 or 30 minute break, but you're taking a 2, 3, 4, 5 minute break to do things that are good for your brain.

So what are those things? Movement is very good. Most people are way too sedentary, they're sitting all day, eight hours a day, and that's bad for you. Obviously some movement is key because as your body moves, your brain grooves.

The other thing I would suggest is deep breathing whether it's Box breathing, Hatha breathing, Wim Hoff, whatever people subscribe to, and it's to get the oxygen.

And also hydrate obviously. And it's again very, very fundamental, but so many people dabble in these things when they really should really master this process.

Because your power comes from the fundamentals, and so I would go back to- and the other reason why you don't want to cram is because if you study for six hours straight, not only are you diminishing returns because your focus after the past half an hour, is there's these two memory phenomenonons.

One's called primacy and the other one is called recency. Primacy means that you tend to remember something at the beginning, so if you go to a party and you'll remember the people that you first met.

Recency says you'll remember things more recent. So if you're at the party, you'll remember the names of the last people that you met at the party, and you'll probably forget most of the people in between.

Same thing with a list of words. If I gave people a list of thirty words to memorize, they'd probably remember the ones at the beginning, primacy, and then more recent, recency.

And the reason why you want to take breaks every half an hour or 45 minutes is because you can imagine after like a six hour study time, you learn something at the beginning, you retain stuff at the end, but in the middle there's a big dip.

But by creating breaks let's say every hour, you create more beginnings and ends, and more primacy and recency. So you pick up a whole lot more data and recollection. So don't cram.

And then I would say the fourth thing that I would stay away from, besides stop multitasking, stop distracting yourself by controlling your environment, eliminating distraction, turning off your phone and so on. Don't cram because that's a big mistake because you're actually losing ground.

Is have this thing called akrasia. And akrasia is this state- and we know what it is. I mean it's kind of like a state where you're acting against your own better judgment.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Right. Why do we do that?

**Jim Kwik:** Exactly. And so Socrates played a- it was in one of his books, ask precisely how is this possible? If one judges action A) to be the best course of action, why would anyone do anything other than A? Right? But we do.

We're not always logical, if anything we're more biological or more emotional. It's like why do we do this? Why do eat foods that are not good for us? Why do we not journal, and meditate, and work out, and eat good food? Why don't we do that all the time if that's in our best interest?

And so that's what akrasia is, it's this acting against your own better judgment.

And so there are apps out there that helps people to stick with their decisions, and their habits and stuff. So there's an app called *Stickk* I believe. There's one called *Beeminder* also as well to help you keep you to your commitments.

I did a whole episode on my podcast about like how to stop procrastinating, and that's one of the big things. There's something called the Zeigarnik effect.

The Zeigarnik effect actually is a memory principle named after this psychologist in Europe who was watching as she was getting coffee, that the wait staff would remember everyone's order. And like how do they do that naturally without any kind of training?

And they called it the Zeigarnik effect basically that they would remember the person's order up to the point that it was fulfilled, and then after it was fulfilled and they got what they ordered, the meal, then that would just disappear.

But the idea here is that if you have something in your life that you're procrastinating about, that if you just start something you're more likely to finish it because the brain needs closure. It doesn't like open loops.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Right that's how the greatest kind of Golden Age of TV is getting us right now. You know? Like these writers are so good at opening these loops, it's like you have to know what happens.

Like what is going to happen with *Coulson*?

**Jim Kwik:** Exactly. And then you binge watch like eight episodes of like *Scandal* or *Breaking Bad* or whatever it is.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Just one more. Just one more.

**Jim Kwik:** Because they have all these open loops, but we are like that with our life. We start something, we have this big drive to need to close it off.

And so it starts something somewhere, that will definitely help you with that. But that's the Zeigarnik effect.

So those are the four things that I would ask people to stop, because you want to stop something but you can't just stop something, you want to start it.

So stop multitasking, stop or eliminate distractions in your life, don't cram, stop cramming, always take a break every 30 or 45 minutes, and then hack this thing called akrasia which is this idea where we don't finish the things that are good for us.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Perfect.

**Jim Kwik:** And one of the ways of doing that is to start somewhere and maybe use some kind of commitment apps that allow you to incentivize yourself to, 'Hey if I don't do this, then I'm going to make a donation to one of these places that I don't really support.' You know what I mean?

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah.

**Jim Kwik:** So there's some kind of punishment.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah it's like you've got to donate to like birds and you just can't stand birds. Donate to like the rare birds foundation or something. I love that, man.



Well man, there are so many insights here and I'm taking mental notes as well, but I want to talk about taking physical notes, you know? This is something that I've got stacks, and stacks, and stacks of notebooks from earlier in my career.

And just whether it's a lecture, or whether it's an audiobook, or whether it's a video, just taking notes. And I learned a whole new way to take notes and to assimilate that information far better from you.

But we're going to get to that, and plus I want to ask you about music when studying. So we're going to get to that right after this quick break, so sit tight and we'll be right back.

Alright we are back and we are talking with accelerated learning expert, speed reading expert, my good friend, the one and only Jim Kwik.

And before the break we were talking about a couple of things that I'm really interested in. One is how to take and actually assimilate the notes.

Because for a lot of people, I know you probably go to an event, you take notes, and you never see them again, and you also don't remember what you wrote down.

But you have this good intention like, 'Yeah I'm just going to take this little note, and I'm going to execute on it.' Probably not going to happen, alright?

So we've got to talk about that, but first let me ask you a quick question with studying. Let's go back just really quick to studying.

What do you think about listening to music while you study? Personally I like more of a quiet environment, but I do sometimes tune in and listen to certain- it's instrumentals.

So what do you think about like maybe somebody's like listening to Tupac trying to study algebra versus like classical music?

**Jim Kwik:** So a lot of- and I think a lot of the parents can relate to this when they hear their kids studying, they have the Pandora, Spotify in the background, and the TV, and the video games. They're like multitasking up the wazoo.

I would say that music has been shown to enhance the studying process as long as it's not distracting. So I'm not talking about music like hip hop or heavy metal, rap. The music that's been shown to support studying is classical music as you would think instrumentals specifically of the Baroque Era.

So Vivaldi, Bach, because that era happens to have music a lot concentrated on sixty beats per minute, which also happens to be the resting heartrate.

And so it puts you into this- what they call this alpha state, this alpha brainwave state, which is that relaxed state of awareness.

And that's the state we go in when we meditate, it's the state we go in when we watch television, it's the state we go in when we do hypnosis.

It's where you become highly suggestible, and so when you're studying something it helps- let's say that- and I believe that if you combine music with space to repetition.

So like we talked about the four challenges that you need to stop; the bad habits like multitasking, cramming, and such.

There are four things I would recommend people do. So one of them was we talked about just practicing active recall like quizzing yourself. So it's the difference between recognizing and recollecting something.

The second thing I would say, where you can combine it with music, is this thing called space repetition. So that's the idea where yes you can learn information by deeply immersing yourself.

And another way of learning something is by spacing it out, that through this kind of interval learning, or recall if you will, and if you space things out that you're learning and review it maybe an hour later, a day later, a week later, a few weeks later, then you can drive it from your short to long-term memory.

There's actually good software out there like Anki that's like these repetition software flashcards. So for people that want to learn a language for example, or something that's maybe more repetitive.

So what they could do, is they can combine space repetition with music like the Baroque music to learn a language, to study for the medical law exams, to memorize names and faces, to brush up on your geography, to master a poem or lines in a play or in a film. Practicing even musical chords it could help you also.

Space repetition is a very powerful way of driving it deeper inside of you.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah I think I heard the word intervals in there, and so it's like how- this is clinically proven across the board for interval training in exercise to be so much more effective and efficient than that kind of long duration, steady state studying / cardio confessional that we would do.

**Jim Kwik:** That's exactly it. This is just for the mind. This is like mental interval training. And so that spaced repetition really helps, and that space review helps a lot because it's in that downtime that actually we're getting a lot of the integration and things are moving from short-term to long-term.

So I would say practice the active recall by asking questions and quizzing yourself. Have spaced repetition, add the music that we're talking about here, it can really accelerate as long as it's not distracting for people. It's helping to relax you because you're in a brainwave state where you absorb faster, it's where your critic conscious mind can only handle so much, right?

**Shawn Stevenson:** Right.

**Jim Kwik:** That's the part that really gets stressed over everything. When you think about all this, for example lyrics to songs that we know. I mean how many- hundreds, right?

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, right oh my goodness.

**Jim Kwik:** But how many do we actually study this, and write it out. None of them, right? We all learned when we didn't realize we were learning, we were just having fun.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Exactly.

**Jim Kwik:** And that's really that unconscious mind that's really processing.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Holy smokes, man. Wait man, you just hit something here.

**Jim Kwik:** Yeah, let's do it.

**Shawn Stevenson:** I just- the other day there was a song from like twenty years ago that came on the radio, and I haven't heard in years, and just like I knew all the lyrics. And I was just like, 'What?!' Like I started to really think about how is that possible, you know?

**Jim Kwik:** Exactly, and so we learn- we know so much more. We didn't actually learn it in school or anything, we learned so much more than we've ever given ourselves credit for.

And so part of it is because we were just in that unconscious playful state, and I feel like that's a powerful way to learn is just like children. Because children have that beginner's mind, and we just-

And remember we've talked about it in the past that information combined with emotion becomes a long-term memory. Information combined with emotion becomes a long-term memory.

So that's why like we remember things through scents, through taste, music that brings us back to when we were children, and music is highly state-inducing. And so that's high level of emotion.

And speaking of scents, I would actually add that as a third thing. So besides active recall and spaced-repetition, and with music, I would actually add the sense of smell because the sense of smell is the most powerful sense that we have when it comes to connecting to our nervous system, meaning that- I don't know if it was because we needed the smell of poison before it actually- to save our life or something.

But here's the thing, our environment gets connected to the information, so you want even better studying because that's the theme of what we're talking about, it always helps to study in the environment where you need to recollect the information.

So for example, here right now I'm doing programs here in the Boston area for the colleges and stuff. It'd help them to study in the lecture center that they're going to be tested in because unconsciously we connect that.

And it's something I've mentioned before where they did this study and they put students under water with breathing apparatus, and they gave them words to memorize, and they'd take them outside back on the surface to test them, and they'd put them back in the water and test them, and then which one do you think people remembered more?

Back in the water, right? Because that environment got connected to the information. And so knowing that and studying in your place, for example in your workplace where you need to give the speech, or that Ted Talk, it always helps to study in that environment.

And it's not really practical for most people, so the idea here is to actually- can you take the environment in with you? Meaning using the sense of smell. If you had a unique and familiar scent while you're studying, one of the methods that could help you jog your memory is spray that on you or taste it during the actual exam, when you have to give that presentation, that book report, or take that test.

That if you chew a strange kind of gum, or essential oil, a perfume, or cologne, and then you have that same one when you need to recall it, it's going to be more available to you. And so I recommend playing with that.

And speaking of essential oils, there are certain essential oils that have been shown to be able to activate and wake up the mind. Essential oils like peppermint, like rosemary helps increase the chances at remembering things that you need to be able to remember. Helps improve your focus, helps improve your recall.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Fascinating, and there's actually science to back that up which is so crazy. It's just like our sense of smell, it's one of those things that helps, as Jim is describing, to drive memories deeper and create a stronger connection when we're learning some information.

So utilize that channel, that's just an open thing that's happening on automatic anyways.

And peppermint for example is one of the things that I saw when I was looking into the research. Using the essential oil, maybe you can just- right before you get started, maybe have a few drops of peppermint oil that you- I don't know, wipe on the book or something.

**Jim Kwik:** Yeah and it's often what you do before the actual act that really shows up when you need to perform. And same thing with doing a light workout before studying can help you to retain information better. Right?

And so anything that's going to be good for your heart is going to be good for your head. So again that blood flow, the artery that goes directly from the heart to the brain is the carotid artery, right? It's just like the first is the primary one, and getting the right amount of oxygen and circulation is very important.

So the fourth thing I would actually put is music, what we talked about, so I'll make that the fourth thing to do after we're talking about the different sense of smell.

Because there was research done at Stanford School of Medicine basically saying that playing certain types of music such as classical or Baroque can help students engage the parts of their brain to help them pay attention, and better anticipate, and make predictions better.

Besides the fact that some music will actually enhance people's mood, which would be good just because all learning is state-dependent and you want to be able to always control your mood and your outlook for things when it comes to stuff.

**Shawn Stevenson:** I love that. You said all learning is state-dependent.

**Jim Kwik:** All learning is state-dependent, yeah. It's one of the primary beliefs that we have when we talk about *Kwik Brain*, is like the state of mind and body, the emotions, the feelings.

Like think about it. Back in school if people were tested on, 'Oh what were these state capitals? And name these presidents. Name this periodic table.'

All of this stuff that we learned back in school, most people don't remember it for two reasons. Number one is relevancy, right? Relevancy meaning maybe they didn't see a one-to-one connection on why it's important and relevant to their life.

Sine, cosine, tangent X, hypotenuse Y.

But the other thing is the emotional state people learned it in, that students learned it in. For most people when you ask them how do they feel mostly when they're sitting in class being lectured to, most people say, "Oh I was bored."

On an emotional scale, that's like a zero, right? But anything times zero equals zero. If information combined with emotion becomes a long-term memory, if the emotion level is zero, there's not a lot of recall because that's the first part, the first third of the memory stages is called encoding, and that's how you actually encode the information, put it in, then you store it, and then you retrieve it.

But part of the encoding is making- if you want better recall, is to make it more emotional. When someone says, "What do you see? What do you feel? How is it touching you in a certain way?"

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah. Oh you know what? When you said relevancy, it just really sparked up a lot for me because I loathed biology and science. Like I couldn't stand it. And up until even a few years ago, I'd have these nightmares where I'm in biology class, and just like I didn't have my homework or something, or like human anatomy or physiology.

And I still remember my teacher. She was a little creepy, and she'd be in my dream and I'm just like, "Oh no, I've got to figure this out."

And it was because I just really didn't want to be there. I couldn't stand the process.

But what created this connection, why I love- like it is my life. No one makes me study biology every day, but I just- I'm very passionate about it now because the relevancy, you know with it applying to my life personally.

And that's what we do with *The Model Health Show*, is how can we connect this information to your life so that you want to learn about it? So that it becomes fun, and entertaining, and engaging, it becomes a part of who you are more easily.

And that's really one of the big secrets I want everybody to walk away with, is tying in- the things that you want to learn, tie it into something that matters to you, right? Why do you want to learn it?

Not just, 'I should learn it just because, or it's important to learn.' You need to consciously create an association to it.

And for me, it's teaching. So when I'm learning things, I'm thinking, 'How can I teach this? How can I make this make sense to other people so that they can have their lives changed?'

And so that's just one of the big takeaways of the many that we have here today, but I want to make sure that we talk about taking notes.

Because that just blew my mind when you had us do those two columns way back in the day, you taught us about taking notes, so let's talk a little bit about that.

**Jim Kwik:** Right. So one of the ways that you can increase your ability to retain the things that you're studying is to take notes. That people don't realize that there's 80% of what you learn can be gone within two days.

So you listen to a podcast, you read a book, you go to a lecture, 48 hours later 80% of it could be gone, and one of the ways to mitigate that from happening is by taking notes.

But it's like how do you take notes? There's all these different ways, and for most people they never really learn a process, or if they did it was kind of like that linear outline.

You remember, Shawn? It was like one Roman numeral- like A, and Roman numeral one, two, that kind of thing.

And the challenge is- so they've done lots of studies on research to find out some of the best ways of taking notes.

And so there's qualities to active note taking. Because instead of passive note taking. They found the worst way of taking notes, actually really surprised them, it was by transcribing what the teacher was saying. That was the worst way of taking notes.

And it's kind of interesting because you would think maybe part of people would think is, 'Hey wouldn't it help me to take notes by having every single thing word for word?'

And they found actually- it actually hurt people.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah.

**Jim Kwik:** And so first of all I would say you don't have to go for those transcriptions.

A question I always get is about typing notes and handwriting notes. They find the studies show that taking notes by hand is actually better for people.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah.

**Jim Kwik:** So it's interesting, taking notes by hand is actually better for people, and one of the reasons why is because you could technically type- somebody could type as fast as somebody could speak, but they can't necessarily- when you're handwriting you can't write that fast, and it forces you to really qualify information, to

filter information, to take notes with purpose, to listen to everything and just write down and hone in on the things that are really important.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Makes sense.

**Jim Kwik:** And that alone, besides the notes itself, helps to increase your understanding and your effectiveness there.

But we generally want notes that meet this quality.

Number one is that you want notes that are active. Because I did a whole session last time you and I were talking about how to learn anything faster, and we talked about the Fast Method, and everything. But the A is being active, because learning is not a spectator sport. You need to be active.

The second thing when I'm taking notes is taking notes with purpose, like you said, relevancy. Right? Like you have to know your purpose of what you're looking for, otherwise how do you know whether you find it or not.

Good note taking is also very organized, and so you have to figure out the best way of organizing the information for you. They find that the best way of taking notes actually is in your own words, and not the expert's words, but your own words itself because it's more personal for you.

They also found that taking key ideas and using like images is more effective than just writing everything out.

And so- but then how do you take that information and lay it out? Some people are familiar with Mind Mapping, right? Mind Mapping is a creative way of doing left and right brain note-taking where you put the main idea in the middle, and then coming out like spokes of a wheel, or maybe like branches of a tree, you see the other areas, and then those branches get broken down, and so on and so forth.

A very easy way that I like to teach people to take notes on, you mentioned is drawing a line down the page. And it's so simple, but again we keep things purposely elegant because anybody can make things more complicated. Right?

I mean we want things to be so simple, and easy, and elegant that we're going to do it on a daily basis.

So I put a line down the page, on the left side I take notes, and so I'm writing down how to remember names, and how to learn a language, and how to speed read, and all those things.

But on the right side I'm not taking notes, I'm actually making notes, which is a slight distinction, but this is what I mean.



On the left side I'm capturing information, on the right side I'm creating it meaning that if I'm going to get distracted and focused somewhere else, I'd rather get distracted on the right side of the page, and on the right side I'm writing my impression of what I'm writing on the left side.

So it's like how am I going to use this, or questions that I have, or how am I going to share it with somebody else, or how does it relate to something I already know?

That's the difference between note-taking and note-making. It's the difference between capturing and actually creating notes, which is just as obviously effective.

And then again, doing it with handwriting instead of a digital keyboard, you'll get a nice lift on there.

There was a study done at Princeton University that shows that note takers actually retain more information by hand than by typing.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Right. And you know everybody's got their laptops, and their phones to take a little note here or there, but just listening to the expert who actually knows his stuff, to pen this down.

It's kind of like when you're writing something, you're in a way- you're spelling it out, right? You're casting a spell, right? A spell of learning in a way.

And I've got, like I said, all of these notebooks handwritten notes just through the years of learning, and today, same thing.

I'll take something that I hear that's profound, and I'll just write a little note about it. And it's in my own words as well.

**Jim Kwik:** I like that.

**Shawn Stevenson:** And you said also that to cater things, and find the way that works best for you as far as organization, and I thought about a friend of ours, Julia Roy, and when she comes and she's taking notes she's got all these different colors, and things are color coordinated, and just the best looking notes I've ever seen.

I was like, 'That's just not my cup of tea,' you know? But it was really fascinating to see that that's what works for her. She's one of the most brilliant and intelligent people that I know, and that's the way that she does it.

So finding the things that work for you. Even if you are taking notes on your laptop, employing these strategies where you can.

**Jim Kwik:** And I like that too, because it's just like people's diets and their exercise, is finding something that works for people. Because whatever gets people to do it is what I like.

You know it's not right or wrong, it's just good, better, best for individuals.

They did a study where they took a couple scientists, they set up an auditorium full of people and half of them took notes with a keyboard, the other half took notes handwriting while somebody spoke. And they wanted to figure out who would remember the most, and who would retain the most.

And they found that after they tested people afterwards that the handwriting people won hands down, no pun intended. Handwriting won hands down because people understood more, they retained more, they remembered more when they wrote it by hand.

So I would explore with everybody. I know if it's not something- sometimes you have to take a step backwards to take a couple leaps forward, but again it might be individual for everybody.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, love it man. Jim, this has been so valuable, and just loaded with insights which is what you always do. Every time I'm around you, every time we have a conversation, I learn something that I actually employ into my own life because it's so effective, it just works.

And I'd love if you can share what you're up to. I think you've got a new program that's going on right now, and also of course let people know again about your podcast.

**Jim Kwik:** Oh I appreciate it, Shawn. I mean just if anyone's listening to this right now and you feel like you're busy and you just would like these kind of brain hacks, the big thing is- and Shawn, you've been helping me so much just because I've been modeling *The Model Health Show* because you're- it's the best of the best, right? And that's the thing.

And so the podcast is something brand new. Every single week we release- every episode is only fifteen or ten, fifteen minutes long about. It's bite-sized brain hacks for busy people who want to learn faster, they want to achieve more.

So we did an episode on how to read a book a week without speed reading. How to actually speed read. How to remember names. My top ten favorite brain foods, and how to memorize them. How to memorize technical information. How to give presentations without notes. How to change bad habits. How to employ new habits. The first hour of my day. How to focus and concentrate.

We did an episode just recently on how to study that goes into depth on this subject, and it was on the cover of the *LA Times* of high schools.

And it's just like everyone wants to learn how to learn, and so that's the podcast called *Kwik Brain*. You can just search my name, Jim Kwik, on iTunes, Stitcher, and all those fancy places.

And that's really it. And social media, I love- I want to know actually a couple questions, if they could tag both of us. Mine is @JimKwik but I would love whether it's Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter to connect there.

And then also I would love to know if people handwrite their notes or type their notes. That would be very interesting to me if you tag me in that.

I also am very interested in what people are reading right now. Because you mentioned, Shawn, I like to read and I think leaders are readers, and if everyone just read half an hour a day, most people can get through a book a week. And it's very doable, and I think that would radically- I know Shawn, you're an avid reader, and you always study deep study with all your guests and their expertise, so you learn so much.

But I encourage people, just like you're doing your physical workout every single day, Will Smith says, "Every day I run and I read. I do something physical and I do something mental."

And I would love for people to take pictures of whatever they're reading right now and tag us in it because I would love some good suggestions also as well.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Such a great idea, man. And Jim, you're just one in a billion people man, and I appreciate you so much for the work that you do, and for the heart that you do it with, and for showing up for other people. You're just a true superhero in every meaning of the word man, so thank you.

**Jim Kwik:** Shawn, thank you for crushing it and thank you for creating this amazing community. You have such- you and your family have such amazing followers and students, and people are evangelists. And I just love how you bring this energy, and this emotion, this entertainment to this thing called education to really empower people to the next level.

So thank you everyone for listening to this and I look forward to continuing this conversation.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Definitely, alright my man, thank you so much. I receive that. Guys, thank you so much for tuning into the show today. I hope you got a lot of value out of this.

You know again, with all the stuff we have going on in the world today, at no time in history is it so valuable to learn how to learn. And Jim is the guy to learn from. Definitely make sure to check out his podcast.

Take those little bite-sized nuggets in, and utilize them in your life because at the end of the day it's really about making memories, but also remembering the memories themselves, you know?

And with that said, having the opportunity to know Jim personally, and to learn from him over the years, it's just really a gift because it's not about knowing a bunch of stuff, being like a human filing cabinet walking around.

It's really the application of those things as well, because that's the transformation from just 'knowing something' and it actually becoming real wisdom, is you're able to use it and utilize it in your life.

But also having a lot of- a database, a lot of tools in your toolkit to be able to go and grab and use because you were able to assimilate and learn with all the great resources we have access to today.

And Jim really went ham today, you know he even said, "Wazoo." It's like the hardest core language I've ever heard him use. He said, "Wazoo," guys. He really went in and shared a lot of tips and strategies with you guys.

So make sure to put them in action for yourself. That's the key. It's not sitting on this, it's actually putting it in play and seeing the results that it has for you in your life.

And make sure to tune in because we've got some incredible episodes, some incredible show topics, and incredible guests coming up for you. So make sure to stay tuned.

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Alright I appreciate you so much. Thank you so much for tuning in today. Take care, have an amazing day, and I'll talk with you soon.

And make sure for more after the show, you head over to [www.TheModelHealthShow.com](http://www.TheModelHealthShow.com), that's where you can find the show notes, and if you've got any questions or comments, make sure to let me know. And please head over to iTunes and give us a five star rating, and let everybody know that our show is awesome.

**Jade Harrell:** Yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** And you're loving it.

**Jade Harrell:** Yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** And I read all the comments, so please leave me a comment there, and take care everybody. I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.