

## EPISODE 236

**Laila Ali**

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**Shawn Stevenson:** Welcome to *The Model Health Show*. This is fitness and nutrition expert, Shawn Stevenson. So grateful for you tuning in with me today. We've got an incredible guest. Somebody who is literally a legend and the daughter of a legend. I'm talking about Laila Ali, and her story is just remarkable.

And the things that she's doing today are even more remarkable. And I'm just grateful to have connected with her, and to be able to share her story with you today, and also some of the insights that she has as far as health and wellness, as far as how can we create a life of value, and of creating it in our business life, and also in our family life at the same time with all the stuff that's going on.

Just little insights there as well, because she is also a mom. And at no time other than this have we seen so much distraction, right? There's so much going on, so much coming at us, how do we actually continue to take good care of ourselves and we're able to deal with things with social media, and with our financial fitness.

As many tidbits as we can get from some of the people who are doing things at a high level, it's just going to add more and more value to our lives.

But one of the big things that we're struggling with today is being able to afford paying for high quality food. It's something that is one of the biggest arguments that people have when they're wanting to shift over and to start eating healthier.

It's just, 'I don't have the money.' Well there are multiple solutions for that. Number one is changing our story, because I know for me firsthand, when I made the decision to start investing in these exotic foods at the time that are now at every mom and pop health food store, and even at kind of convention stores.

Things like goji berries, and cacao, you know the raw chocolate. I was ordering- I shared this story, I was ordering goji berries from the Tibetan School of Medicine, like maybe getting close to fifteen years ago, because I had read some research about it.

I was like, 'I've got to try this!' You know, and so I was spending all this money that I didn't have being a college student, and just trying to kind of figure this stuff out.

But that investment in myself made it so that I'm here with you today. And it's really kind of shifting gears, and flipping a switch on our reality and understanding that you are the best investment that you will ever have.

And to take action on supporting that, investing in yourself, investing in the food that you eat, and the environment that you put yourself in, because those are the things that are really going to create the experience that you have, and you absolutely deserve it.

That's why you're here. You're here to really make the best of your experience, and to make the best of yourself, and so why sacrifice quality? Why sacrifice when you can be giving yourself the best? And that's what it's really about.

So shifting our mindset with that first of all, and also opening ourselves up to the opportunity of all the amazing options we have today.

Because this isn't like back in the day for me when I was just kind of figuring this stuff out, and I didn't have access to very many resources, where there are companies like Thrive Market.

And Thrive Market provides non-GMO organic, they've got Paleo foods, they've got gluten-free foods, they've got vegan foods; whatever your approach to health and wellness is, they have those categories.

And they do the homework for you to basically weed out and find the very best companies that are making these different things.

So whether it's your laundry detergent that doesn't have parabens, and xenoestrogen compounds, or the snack foods for your kids, or maybe it's the organic almond butter. Whatever it might be, they've did their homework to find the very best companies, and giving you those things.

And so here's the thing. They're giving you these items at 25% to 50% off the retail price that you'll find at conventional health food stores.

I could not believe it when I first went to Thrive Market and I saw what they had, and I was- like my favorite toothpaste, they had it for 50% off.

And by the way, you can go to [www.ThriveMarket.com/modelhealth](http://www.ThriveMarket.com/modelhealth) and you can see a bunch of my favorite items that I get from Thrive Market myself.

And so the amount of money- when I saw it for 50% off, I was just like smacking myself like, 'Why didn't I know about this sooner?'

And so I was a big early adopter of taking advantage of Thrive Market. It's where we get our coconut oil. It's just really amazing, and it's going to save you so much money. And also your time and energy as well.

They ship right to your door, and by going to [www.ThriveMarket.com/modelhealth](http://www.ThriveMarket.com/modelhealth) you're going to get an additional 25% off your first purchase, and you're going to get

free shipping. Alright? All from hopping over and taking advantage of the incredible resource that is Thrive Market.

So [www.ThriveMarket.com/modelhealth](http://www.ThriveMarket.com/modelhealth). Get yourself hooked up with that incredible deal because it will pay itself forward in many ways with your health, with your family's health, and also the pocket change that you'll be saving that you can do other things, and invest in other things with.

So on that note, let's get to the iTunes review of the week.

So this review is from TLC57 and the title says, 'Great content has helped to change my life,' and it is five stars.

It says, 'I've been on a lifelong journey to achieve optimum health and wellness with many ups and downs an inconsistent progress. At one week shy of sixty years old, I feel that I have achieved solid ground, and your shows have contributed immensely.

The content is extremely valuable and presented in a practical and useful manner. Great teaching and modeling is not easy to do, and you do it expertly. Thank you for your commitment and passion, and it is contagious.'

Alright thank you so much, TLC- tender loving care 57, I truly, truly do appreciate that. And everybody, please make sure to pop over to iTunes and leave us a review for the show if you haven't done so already. Or whatever platform you're listening on.

Stitcher, you can leave a review for us there as well, and I truly, truly do appreciate that. It really does mean the world to me, and just kind of energizes me even more to continue this work, and to provide the very best content that I can possibly for you guys.

So thank you so much for that, and on that note let's get to our special guest, and our topic of the day.

Our guest today is Laila Ali, and Laila is a world class athlete, fitness and wellness expert, TV host, cooking enthusiast, founder of the *Laila Ali Lifestyle* brand, and she's also a wife and mother of two. And she is the daughter of the late, the loved global icon and humanitarian, Muhammad Ali.

And she is a four-time undefeated boxing world champion whose stellar record includes 24 wins, which 21 knockouts, by the way, and zero losses. And Laila is heralded as the most successful female in the history of women's boxing.

She's also a sought after inspirational speaker and author of her life's story, and a dynamic book for the young women entitled, 'Reach.'

And Laila studied business management at Santa Monica College, and she and her husband, former NFL star Curtis Conway, live in Los Angeles with their two children, and now she is here today.

I'd like to welcome to *The Model Health Show*, Laila Ali. How are you doing today, Laila?

**Laila Ali:** I'm doing great, Shawn. How are you doing?

**Shawn Stevenson:** I'm fantastic. I'm so excited and grateful to have you on the show. So happy.

**Laila Ali:** Thank you, it's an honor to come on your show, so thanks for having me.

**Shawn Stevenson:** It is my pleasure. So what I want to do is to just jump right into your superhero origin story. I want to talk a little bit about that. Obviously your father is probably the most recognized name in the history of boxing, but I'm curious, did you grow up boxing? Or did you grow up being a fan of the sport? Let's start there.

**Laila Ali:** That's interesting. A lot of people have that question and they assume that I kind of just went to the gym with my dad, fell in love with boxing, he taught me how to box, and that's the furthest thing from actually what happened.

I never actually wanted to box myself until I saw women's boxing on television for the first time, and I was about seventeen years old at the time, and went to a friend's house to watch a Mike Tyson fight, and all of a sudden these women come into the ring.

And I was like, 'What is going on?' And I was so intrigued, so excited, and they got into like a bloody battle, and I was sitting there going, 'I want to do that!' And of course my friend and her father were like, 'That's crazy, those girls would take your head off.'

So I tuned them out, went home, and started dreaming about becoming a professional boxer. And then of course the fear set in. You know, 'What would people think, what would my dad say, how am I going to do that?' At the time I had my own business, I was going to school full-time, and I was just like, 'I can't do it.'

So it took me about a year to actually follow my heart and say, 'You know what? I'm going to do what I want to do regardless, and actually start training.' And I did it all on my own without the help of my father.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Wow, because that's another question that would come up for people. You know immediately it's like, 'Did you get any counseling from your dad? Did he like get the right trainers for you?'

So what was your story in getting yourself prepared for that first fight?

Because it's a big thing, like you just said, going through that fear, overcoming that, it took some time. And you just seem like somebody who's very masterful at getting past fear. But once you did that, what was the process in getting you prepared for actually getting into the ring?

**Laila Ali:** Well my father- it would have been great for me to go to my father and ask for some advice, but I'm that child. There's nine of us, okay I'm the youngest girl, I'm the only one that became a boxer in my family, and I'm the most like my father I would say as far as when it comes to just being strong-minded.

So I always kind of did my own thing. I'm the only child that told him I didn't want to be Muslim. I'm the one that moved out of the house when I was eighteen and moved in with my boyfriend, you know all these things that he totally was against and we bumped heads about.

So when it came to boxing, it was another thing that I was going to do on my own. And when I first started, when he found out about it, he actually didn't think that I should do it. He didn't feel that women should be boxing in the first place. So I had my own father who didn't really believe in it to begin with.

So for me, I pretty much just found a trainer on my own that came referred to me, started training, and eventually I ended up having to get a new trainer because I didn't know anything. I was with someone who wasn't going to really be able to take me to where I needed to go, but he taught me the basics, and it kind of just started from there.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Wow. So what was it like? I mean you've seen it, you'd been around the sport, but what was it like for you after the training and finally getting into your- into the ring for the first time? How did you feel?

**Laila Ali:** It was tough. I mean I had to do a full transformation as far as just the way that I thought, the way that I ate, everything. I mean I never was an athlete growing up, I didn't really participate in any sports, I didn't even work out. I had to lose thirty pounds just to figure out for my body size what was the best weight class for me.

And of course I got advised of that, and I had to get off about thirty pounds so I would be lean and strong. Because I weighed about 168 when I was fighting- well between 162 and 168, but I'm 5'11" and I've got big bones.

So for me, that was really important being in the right weight class, and just learning how to run, learning how to eat for energy, and all these things that I had to learn, and then having the discipline that it takes to become an elite athlete and work with a team of people that I had to depend on to make sure that I was on my game.

So that was just all new for me, but it was a great experience. I loved every moment of it, and I think- I tell people now when you find something that you really love to do, even though the work is hard, it doesn't really feel like work because I'm getting something out of it every day that I'm going to the gym, and I'm learning my skills, and I'm seeing myself getting better.

So when I got into the ring for the first time, it was an amazing experience. There was eighty different media outlets there to cover my fight, even though it was off the television. So the pressure was on, and I ended up knocking the girl out in 54 seconds I think in the first round, so it was a great start to my career.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Wow that's just amazing, and I really don't think that your name is talked about enough as being one of the most dominant athletes of our time, and this is real talk.

Going back, and I've just kind of been immersing myself in your world for the last few days in preparation to speak with you, but you retired undefeated 24-0 with 21 knockouts and held the WBC, WIBA, IWBf, and IBA female super middleweight titles, and the IWBf light middleweight title.

And now here's the thing, so though you may have accomplished so much, there must have been some challenging times, and that's what I really want to talk about because a big part of greatness is overcoming our obstacles.

So what comes up for you as one of the toughest times for you during your boxing career?

**Laila Ali:** Wow, you know there's so much I could say there. Boxing- I have a bittersweet relationship with boxing, because I remember when I first started boxing, there was a lot of women- and I always said it throughout my career, thousands of women boxing that had been doing it before me and didn't really get any recognition.

So a big portion of those women had animosity towards me when I came into the sport because I was getting so much attention, even though I wasn't asking for it, I wasn't going around saying I was better than anybody else, and I was the only female fighter.

But because of the public's ignorance, and a lot of people would think that I was the first one, and I would say, "No I'm not."

But you know, so there was a lot of animosity and wasn't a whole lot of support from the other females in the sport, and that made it hard obviously going into it.

You know, in my weight class it was hard because there's just not a whole lot of opponents to fight that are on a certain skill level, because it's harder to find bigger women in that weight range. It's the same with men's sport. There's a lot more

smaller fighters that happen to be more talented, because they rely more on their skills as opposed to their power.

So and then for me, I would have to face girls, a lot of times they really shouldn't even have been in 168. They needed to lose weight and come down to like 130-140, so they just weren't strong enough. So I got to a point where I'm training at an elite level, I had the best trainers; Roger Mayweather, Floyd Mayweather, Buddy McGirt.

These were some of the top trainers and I had to get in there with someone that I felt wasn't going to be that much of a challenge for me, but you have to defend your titles.

So that's why I think with me, when you mentioned not really being mentioned, first of all people don't really always respect boxing like they do other sports, and to be one of the best in super middleweight in boxing is a total different thing than saying compared to say like a Serena Williams who's in tennis, and there are so many more people she has to face with so much talent.

So you really can't compare the two, but that's just real talk as far as I'm concerned. But you know, obviously I can only be as good as I can be and the best that I can be in the situation that I'm in.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, I totally agree. That's profound. I didn't even think about that aspect. I mean you must have- wow to not have the support of other women who were in the sport that you're into, I can just imagine how much kind of tension you were probably carrying about that.

So what ultimately was the transition for you? Because you still had to show up and do your job anyways, so was there a moment where you were just like, 'Just forget it. I've got to just keep moving forward even though I'm not getting support.'

And you mentioned that you were still pointing the light back like, 'Hey I'm not the first, there were other people in this sport, and I pay homage to them.'

So what was it for you that helped you to kind of push through that? I'm asking because so many people meet resistance, oftentimes from the community around them when they're trying to change or trying to do something differently. So what would you say?

**Laila Ali:** Well yeah. Well luckily I got to get in the ring and actually fight, because one thing- one thing it always came down to regardless, especially if it was someone in my weight class, or someone I would eventually face, is that they would end up getting beat and possibly most likely knocked out. And then it's like, 'Now what do you have to say?'



But they would always have something to say. But there were certain girls that wouldn't fight me, but the story was always that I wouldn't fight them, and there's this one that just- anywhere you go on the Internet, you see this same lie, and this woman won't even look me in the eye if she sees me out in public anywhere.

So that was one of the reasons I retired, because I was just tired of it. People want to see the top fighters fight each other, they want to see you in competitive fights. They don't want to see me just knocking people out all the time, and it's not a competitive fight.

And I kept saying that's the way you elevate women's boxing, when you get two fighters in the ring, they know both of our names, they know both of our skillsets, what we're bringing to the ring, and they know it's going to be a good fight.

But I can't make people fight me, you know? But because I'm considered to be attractive, people will believe that I'm the one that just wouldn't fight certain people, even though if you look at any of my tapes I've never been hurt.

Well I've been hurt, but people can see in a fight I've never been stopped, I've never looked like I won a fight, it was given to me, none of that. I've earned everything that I got in the ring.

But that's why I said I have a love hate relationship with boxing, because even now I can go and I can look online or see certain comments, 'Oh she would never fight this person, or she was afraid,' and that individual just wouldn't fight me. But it's like how many times- like I've lost a lot of sleep over that, and I had to just finally let go.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, oh my goodness. That's such a great story, and I'm sure that most people don't hear that part of it because they just see the success, they just see the fact that you're beautiful, they just see the fact that you're doing so much more even after boxing, of course that we're going to talk about today, but- as a matter of fact, let's dive in and talk about that.

Today you've really shifted your focus over to health and wellness, and inspiring countless people to take better care of their health, alright? So what inspired you personally to make this your mission now?

**Laila Ali:** Oh man, it's so needed. I learned so much through becoming a professional boxer. I learned how to get my body at its best. You know when I was boxing it was never about what I looked like, it was never about how much I weighed other than to make weight for the weigh-in.

But once you experience what that's like to be lean, to not have a bunch of extra body fat on you slowing you down, you know to feel energized, to put food in your body that actually makes you feel better, think sharper, all those things, it makes you go, 'Wow there's something to this.'



And then along with just all the information I know about people having heart disease, and diabetes, and obesity, and so many people struggling, and then realizing that the food that we're eating is killing us, and it's being marketed to us a certain way to become addicted to it, and I'm like, 'Wow this is something that I can really be passionate about.'

And every athlete kind of goes through it when you retire from what you love to do, you have to figure out, 'What am I going to do now?'

So for me, it took me about five years because I did have a lot of opportunities. I did *Dancing with the Stars*, and that was strategic to kind of give myself a new platform, and then I had all these different hosting opportunities come to me, and I was learning on the job again, just like I did with boxing.

But you know, shows come and go, and then when they go away it's like you're at square one like, 'Now what?'

So for me, I had to really- it took me about five years to figure out what am I passionate about? What do I love that I would do for free if I could? And then when it came to really helping encourage people to live the best life possible through their health, wellness, nutrition, spirituality, all those different things.

And I've really just been spending my time figuring it out along the way, and having a team of people around me to help me bring all of my projects, and all of my goals to fruition. So that's pretty much it.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Pretty much it? This is amazing! There's so much there in just looking at your track. And I love how you mentioned the *Dancing with the Stars* and being strategic, and that's one of the things, is when I was doing the research and kind of diving into your world, I had no idea, and then I see you dancing, and just like killing it. You almost won the competition.

But you seem like you also have- and I want to talk about this. You seem like you have that attitude of like, 'When I put my mind to something I can accomplish it.' And I think a lot of people start to cultivate that attitude within themselves.

So let's talk a little bit about that. How do you think we can- coming from a place like you went through your fear stage. How can we start to build more confidence for ourselves to go and execute on the things that we set our minds to?

**Laila Ali:** I think that confidence definitely is something that you can grow with time, with practice, because a lot of people aren't confident. But my confidence comes from preparation, I say that all the time.

I'm not just one of these people- I'm naturally a confident person. I do believe in general that I can pretty much do the things that I want to do, but I also believe you have to put in the effort.

For me, if I'm not prepared, then I'm not going to be confident. I'm not confident about 100% of the things that I deal with on a day-to-day basis, but the things that I want to put my heart into, and my energy into, and do the work that it takes to be good at, and to be successful at, I am confident.

And I think it takes courage, that's the thing, because you have to understand people who are successful, people who have fear the same way, or self-doubt, it's not that they don't feel those things, it's just that we push past it.

Like sometimes I'm afraid and I'm like, 'I'm going to do it anyway.' You know what I mean? And I just do it. Because what's the worst that's going to happen?

For me, one thing that is a fear for me is to feel like I didn't try to do something, that I never even stepped foot out the door to try, you know? That would be regretful for me, and that's what I don't want.

But I mean I know how to stay in my lane, I don't try everything, I know what things I'm not good at, you know what I mean? Or just don't really fit me, and I just won't do it because you can't do it all, you know?

But yeah, the things that I do, I go all the way in.

**Shawn Stevenson:** I love that. That reminds me of a couple things from Oprah. You know she said that you can do anything, but you can't do everything. And she also talked about why one of the big reasons she was so successful is, 'I stay in my lane. I know my lane.'

But then here we are like, 'Ah, Oprah doesn't know! Laila doesn't know. Let me jump around in these lanes.'

**Laila Ali:** That's the thing, I mean you have to try different things, but it's like you've got to be methodical and strategic and kind of figure it out along the way. Like I've tried some things that just didn't end up working, but I will assess the situation soon enough and have people around me who are going to give me some insights- some smart people around me as well, because sometimes you do need help. Sometimes you do need different opinions from the right people.

Yeah, but definitely not just be all over the place.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, you know and for me, this is the same thing. There's a figuring out process as well, but I believe as we cultivate more confidence, and it just kind of comes together. Like the confidence helps you to make the right decision, and

the right decision helps to build your confidence. You know? And it just kind of feeds into each other, and you just kind of build it.

And I love that you brought up even today you still have fear, you still have things that you're not necessarily confident about, but you get in the ring and you fight. And so we can all bring that to our own lives in one way or another to just get in there and do the thing, because that's going to build that muscle of confidence.

**Laila Ali:** And then when you fail- I'm sorry, I didn't mean to cut you off. But then when you do fail at something, and people don't like the word 'fail,' let's just say if it doesn't turn out the way you planned, or the way that you hoped, that's when you learn from the situation.

I mean that's what you do, and what people tend to do a lot of times is not really look at themselves, and look at what they could have done differently, and I happen- that's one of my strong points. I've got a lot of things I need to work on, but one thing I'm good at is taking responsibility and saying, 'In any situation, what could I have done differently?'

So that's how I learn as well from the things that just don't work out. And there's been a lot of successes and there's been a lot of things that haven't worked out along the way, and I've learned from them all.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Oh my goodness, you're speaking my language for real. Like we're speaking the same thing, because for me, that's literally what transformed my life and my health, was just simply taking responsibility. You know taking responsibility for my choices, for my actions, for my thoughts, and stop kind of pointing the finger outside of myself.

And we all can be guilty of that from time to time, but some people habitually are doing that. It's always somebody else, it's always outside of myself; this situation, this circumstance.

We all have different circumstances, and a matter of fact when problems show up, we call them problems instead of surprises, right? Surprises are kind of like problems we like in a way, if that makes sense.

But it's just really how we label things, and beginning to take responsibility. But one of the things I want to talk to you about is the change in responsibility in the food that you are eating and feeding your family.

Side note to everybody, she's got- I think you've got two kids at home right now?

**Laila Ali:** I have two kids. Yes, I've got a six year old and an eight year old.

**Shawn Stevenson:** You've got two kids in the house, they're somewhere running around, and there's a dog present too, it made an appearance earlier, so just keep that in mind. Just being able to do this in finesse, having a family.

So we're going to talk about some of the things with Laila and food, and one of my favorite recipes that I got from her, right after this quick break. Sit tight, we'll be right back.

Alright we are back and we're talking with the one and only Laila Ali, and right before the break I wanted to talk about food with this amazing person.

First of all, oh my goodness, cornbread stuffing recipe. We had that over the holiday, and it is so good, it doesn't make any sense. So thank you for sharing that.

But I'd love to know what are some of your guiding principles for what you eat and for what you feed your family?

**Laila Ali:** I just try to keep it as simple as possible, and just really focus on eating whole foods. You know there are so many different diet theories as you know, and I take a little from there, and a little- I never follow anything 100% because I know from experience that everything doesn't work for everybody. So one thing that might work for me may not work for the next person, and yada, yada, yada. Plus I've got two picky kids at home.

So yes, we are speaking your language because it's just right. We're just right, Shawn. No, I'm playing. But so for me, like I try to- some of the principles that I've learned over the years that I try to incorporate is I like to try to have something raw on my plate, I like to have some good fat on my plate, some lean protein, mainly vegetables.

I've been trying to really cut out sugar, so just any carbs that turn into sugar for the most part, that's just what I'm doing right now.

You know I'm getting older, as we all are, we're still living, and just trying to find ways to kind of work out less, not quite as hard, but maintaining my weight is important to me because like I know what weight I should be just because of my boxing career, I weighed myself every day, so I still do.

So it's not about being small, it's just about being the right size for me. So a lot of that has to do with eating, because I love sweets. I'm one of those people who's like- if I walk by a glazed donut, I'm probably going to take a bite. Like I might just take a little bite, but I'm going to get something.

And I'm not one of those people that's like, 'Oh I eat so clean that I don't even crave those foods anymore, and sugar just doesn't taste good to me anymore.'

It's like I can still eat sugar, I can still eat the bad food, and it's fine. Like I don't get sick to my stomach, it doesn't hurt.

So what I do, is I try to at least once a week have something that I want. We call it cheat day. So for me, that's been working. But yeah with my kids, I try to not have them eating processed food, junk food, and if I am going to get something processed then I buy a product that non-GMO, organic, you know has better ingredients in it.

Because you do need to have snacks for your kids, you need to have things that you can send to school, and I don't want them to feel deprived. But my kids eat pizza, my kids eat burgers, it's just not every day.

I make sure that I cook our food so I know what's in it, and then when I get busy sometimes we eat out, and I just make the best choice possible. You know, and then my husband of course he'll come home and have a bag of Cheetos and a soda sometimes and I'm just like- you know I don't flip all the way out because it's not going to kill him, but you know at the same time that's not something we want to be doing 90% of the time. We don't want to be doing that.

But yeah, whole foods, that's the main thing.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah. I love the simplicity and not carrying dogma around about food because being 100% anything is going to separate you from everything, from everybody, from society. It's really about knowing what's right for you, and being flexible within that because I mean there times- my wife was just sharing this story the other day.

There was a time- this was about maybe five years ago, and I was so neurotic about- and I did a Master Class on this subject, it's a Water and Hydration Master Class, and it's become one of the most downloaded episodes on iTunes of any show, and I'm very, very proud of that.

And during this time, this was again about five years ago, we ended up getting our flight delayed, and then we couldn't even get another plane unless we went to another city.

**Laila Ali:** Wow.

**Shawn Stevenson:** So we ended up staying the night in another city, and I didn't drink any water that whole time because I could only find water that was bottled in plastic. Alright?

I was so neurotic about not taking in one iota of a xenoestrogen from plastic that I was probably dying of thirst, you know what I'm saying?

**Laila Ali:** Right.

**Shawn Stevenson:** So it's just like you have to make adjustments in the moment, and do the thing that's best for you in the moment, and of course get back on with the thing that really lights you up and makes you feel the best.

You know so I recommend, guys don't die of thirst, alright?

**Laila Ali:** Right, definitely don't do that.

**Shawn Stevenson:** It's bad for your health to die of thirst. So let's shift gears now, let's talk fitness, alright? And by the way everybody, I will put her stuffing recipe- it's all good ingredients, coconut oil, all the stuff we love. I'll put that in the show notes, so make sure to check those out at [www.TheModelHealthShow.com](http://www.TheModelHealthShow.com).

Now let's talk fitness. There are so many paths to getting to this goal of being fit. There's lifting weights, there's running, there's playing polo, you know? There's playing basketball, there's Zumba is popping right now, and of course dancing is another thing that I recommend people do as well, and you were on *Dancing with the Stars*.

So I want to talk first about like what inspired you to do that, *Dancing with the Stars*, a little bit deeper, and then I want to talk about some of your fitness approaches today.

**Laila Ali:** So *Dancing with the Stars* came at a time when I had decided that I was going to retire, so that was 2007. So long ago, it feels like. I got a call to do the show, and at first I said no. I was like, 'I'm not doing that corny show.'

You know it was only in season five and I was kind of like, 'I don't know if that was cool to do, or not. Was this going to be crazy? Make me look good? Bad?' You have to think about all those things.

And after I got off the phone, I had said no, I thought about it and I said, 'You know what? This might be a great opportunity to- it's got forty million viewers a week.' At that time it came on Mondays and Tuesdays, and I could show a different side of myself.

So I went ahead and called me back and said, "Yeah I'll do it." And I was scared- that scared me too because for one, I had never been in a situation where I had to dance with a partner. Now you have to rely on someone, and just being in ball gowns and things, and like what are they going to have me wear, and all that.

So for me, it was really scary but it turned out to be a great opportunity. Very hard show, you know I stayed on the full- every single show to the end, because at that time the finals was the last final three, and I was one of the final three.

And my goal with that show was to get to the finals. It wasn't necessarily- I mean I wanted to win, but if I didn't, I was okay with that because I knew that there was a lot that came into play to winning the judges, the audience, it wasn't in my full control. So I let that go.

But I said, 'I want all my air time.' You know? 'I want every single show, I want that opportunity.' And I got that. And I felt like I won because I went on to host, and it really elevated my career outside of the ring, and that's what I wanted.

So that's what motivated me, it was very strategic, and it was one of the- during the show it was really, really hard, and I had one of the toughest partners to deal with, Max, which is documented, everyone knows that, it was his attitude.

But at the end of it, it was all worth it, so it was fun.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Wow, love it. Love the story. And so today, obviously again, you've got a family, you've got a bunch of stuff going on that you shared some of the things with me.

But what do you do today? Like you mentioned earlier it's about being more efficient and effective, so of course we label that working smarter, not necessarily just harder. And so what is your approach to fitness now?

**Laila Ali:** I mix it up. I get bored pretty easily, and I like to mix it up like I said. So I have a home gym because I don't really feel like- a lot of times I just don't feel like getting dressed and having to go to the gym, drive twenty minutes to get there, twenty minutes back, and I don't have time.

So what I try to do, is I try to work out for at least 45 minutes to an hour, and 45 minutes of that is usually going to be cardio. Because I was an athlete for so long, it's hard for me to feel like I actually got a good workout in unless I'm like drenched in sweat. That's just one thing, plus I like to get the toxins out of my body, it just feels good.

But if I have only thirty minutes, that's fine too, I'm going to do like a high intensity workout. It really just depends on what I'm doing. So for example, if I have an hour I'll probably do a circuit where I'll do my Stairmaster, then I'll do some sprinting, and then- fifteen minutes right? And then I'll hit the heavy bag, and then I'll do some floor work with abs and all that, and then I might get some free weights in there, but not really heavy weights.

My husband works out totally different than I do, and he always makes fun of my workout. But I tell him, 'Look I've got to enjoy what I'm doing, so as soon as I get bored, I kind of mix it up.'



But that's pretty much it. Sometimes I get into spinning, I love spinning. I'm thinking about buying one of those new- what is it called? Peloton spin bikes?

**Shawn Stevenson:** It beats me!

**Laila Ali:** You know what it is?

**Shawn Stevenson:** No, no.

**Laila Ali:** Oh okay, so there's a spin bike out there that you connect with other people, and there's actually a screen and you can be in a live class.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Oh.

**Laila Ali:** So it's a really expensive bike, but I was just like, 'I might break down and get one,' because I love spinning, I love the results that it gives. So I like to work out hard. I'm one of those people that other women say, 'Oh we should work out together sometime,' and I'm like, 'No I'm good.'

Because I already know, I've tried it before. I'm like, 'You want to go walking.' Like that's great, I encourage people to stay fit and elevate your heart rate, and if you want to walk, that's great.

But for me, that doesn't do anything for me because for so many years I pushed my body to the max, and if I walk my body is like, 'What's that supposed to do?'

You know I get the best results when I fire up those muscles in the same way that I used to, even for a short period of time. So like I said, I love the high intensity workouts when I don't have that much time.

**Shawn Stevenson:** I love it. You know somebody listening, I want you to make the meme with Laila on there and somebody asking, 'Hey Laila, can I work out with you?' And then it's just like do you know what you're getting yourself into? Alright?

Make the meme, show her face looking like, 'Are you crazy? You have no idea what you're saying.'

**Laila Ali:** Look, I have some actress friends of mine, and one of them said, "You know Laila, I want to do a boxing workout with you. I want you to work me out real hard." I'm like, "Really? Are you sure?" She's like, "Yeah I've got some stuff coming up."

And I already knew in my mind she doesn't really want to work out that way, so I got her in the gym and gave her maybe 55% not even 60% of what I would consider to be a hard workout, and her heart was hurting, she had to get on the floor. I was like, 'Really?'

So I'm saying a lot of people have a different idea in their mind of what a hard workout is. So you know for me, like I said I like to be drenched in sweat, and I feel like I worked.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yes, I love it. I love it. So with the change in your focus on fitness, and nutrition, and health, another big area for you is family. You know, and I know you mention that on your show as well.

So the big question for- especially for the people out there who have a family, the moms and dads, how do you make it all work? You know, you just mentioned getting in 45 minutes to an hour in your training each day, cooking for your family the majority of the time.

So how do you make it all work? That's what we want to know. How do you make this work?

**Laila Ali:** Oh the question that I still don't have an amazing answer to- no I'm joking. I think for me- first of all, I don't work out like that every day. Like for example, my plan today was to get up and actually work out before I did this podcast with you, and it just didn't happen because my kids got up, they wanted breakfast, there was just a million things going on and I was like, 'Great I'm just going to have to work out this evening which I don't like to do.'

So I had to change that up, and I'm not even tripping about it, because it's happened before. But for me it really comes down to having balance by having my priorities in place. As soon as I lose track of my priorities, things get out of control.

So for me, what's really helpful is just having a list of things that need to be done short-term, long-term. You know I'm always writing lists down a lot of times before I go to bed just to get things off of my mind, and making sure that I hit the most important things that I need to get done first.

And you know as it is with kids, regardless of what your plans are, sometimes things happen and you've got to be ready to switch things up- yeah at the drop of a dime.

But in general, it really comes down to learning how to say no, especially for the women, because a lot of times we don't know how to just say no. And it's not always just the word 'no,' it's just about the choices that we make.

You know, when your friend asks you to do something for them, or when somebody's texting you or calling you when you're in the middle of a thought. You know that's something I had to stop doing because I was multi-tasking so much that the quality wasn't there, and then at the end of the day I'd be trying to get one task done and I'm like, 'Man why can't I get this done?'

Because I keep stopping to answer the phone, and to answer other people's needs, and to answer texts, and it's like I started saying no, and I've got to just shut this off. It can wait.

You know but you get into this habit of doing it and you don't even realize it.

So for me like I said, it's about shutting everything out, getting everything that's most important that I need to get done done, and then trying to spend time with my family. You know for me, I also can get to a place- and I'm sure people can relate, to where you're there with your kids, but you're not fully present, you know?

You're like, "Oh yeah, okay. Okay, yeah." You're not really paying attention, and for me that's when I feel bad, and my husband has to remind me. He's like, "Babe, put your phone down."

Like we're watching a movie together and I'm sitting over there like- and I feel like, 'Well I'm hailing business.' But it's like but you have to stop, you don't want your kids to always have this visual of you on your phone. You know?

And I'm just like, 'You're right.' You know? But it's like I have such a hard time doing it because I feel like if I don't take care of this, it's not going to get done, and then I'm going to run out of time tomorrow. But sometimes you've just got to say the heck with it and shut it down and force yourself.

So that's what I've been really doing lately, and the world keeps spinning. It will all be fine.

**Shawn Stevenson:** That's the funny thing, like the world doesn't stop because you're not answering your emails. I had to come to grips with this not too long ago that the day that I leave this planet, that I leave this body, my inbox is still going to be full. You know?

**Laila Ali:** Exactly.

**Shawn Stevenson:** So it's just I've just got to let that go, you know? And do what I can, because real talk with the amount of messages that I receive today, literally even an eight hour work day every day, I would not be able to make it through all the messages.

And so what I really focus on, how can I connect with people in the greatest way possible, which is why I put so many hours of study and research into the show each week, so I can give people value and let them know that I do care, and of course get to all the messages that I can.

So I love that. And also having a family so that you have more, and you can give from that overflow. And I love that so much because I know that there's people

listening, and we've all been guilty of this where we've decided we're going to spend some time with the family, and then we're caught off handling something, some work related thing maybe on the phone or instant messages.

And you mentioned this multitasking. This is a very powerful word, and it's been brought up by so many experts lately, and multitasking- so first of all, if we look at the research, and I talked about this in 'Sleep Smarter,' that when you're sleep deprived- and I shared a bunch of studies correlating sleep deprivation to being basically legally drunk. I'm sorry, illegally drunk, past the legal limit. Is it legally drunk? That sounds like a movie title.

But getting past the legal limit. So people are- but you can't monitor for that when you get pulled over.

And so they found that multitasking is equivalent to being sleep deprived- significantly sleep deprived, thus drunk. And then we're making our decisions and trying to get work done, not understanding we're really just in many ways wasting our time, so to get more focus.

So I love that you shared that. What I also love is your show. Alright you've got a new podcast now, and I'd love for you to talk a little bit about that.

Like first of all, what's your show about? And what inspired you to start a podcast?

**Laila Ali:** My show is called *Laila Ali Lifestyle*, and it was pretty much an extension of what we talked about earlier; just me and my passion for going on this quest to be the best that I can be, and kind of bringing everybody along with me.

I call myself a fitness and wellness expert, and I've branded myself that way, and obviously that doesn't mean I know everything, I mean nobody does, and I'm continually learning. And what I know, I know from just the research that I've done, but so many people need information on health, wellness, fitness, spirituality, just what it takes to win in life.

And I wanted to have a show where I had this platform to kind of talk about the things that I want to talk to, the length of time that I want to talk about them, and to the guests that I want to talk to.

So podcasting, as you know, takes a lot of work, takes a lot of dedication for it to be successful, and I realize that, but you know I think it's something that is so needed, and a lot of people wanted it.

You know they wanted just for me to have an outlet where I can kind of put my voice out there. So it's been a lot of fun, but like I said I learn a lot from you, watching your show, and like you said, you can tell you do a lot of research, and it's appreciated, and I can see why you have the number show.

So just give me all- just pass everything, the research that you have on to me, and I'm going to copy it and put it on my show. No, I'm joking.

**Shawn Stevenson:** I've got you. I listened to your show today, and this is why I wanted to talk about confidence earlier. When you was doing like a solo episode and talking about confidence, and it was so good, so powerful, and then the guests that you have on the show.

A really interesting collection of people, and there's like some superstars, and then there are some people that people might not yet have heard of who are doing amazing things in the world. So it's just a really awesome show.

So everybody, make sure to pop over and check out Laila's podcast, because I think it's going to be one of the hottest things going, so make sure to do that.

Final question for you. What is the model that you're here to set with the way that you're living your life personally?

**Laila Ali:** Well I would say- I mean I'm going to think of this off the top of my head, but I mean I just want to go for it in life, you know? I want to make sure that I'm doing the things that make me happy, be conscious of everyone else around me, contribute to mankind while I'm here, you know to make a difference.

It's like being the daughter of Muhammad Ali obviously comes with a lot of responsibility, and just having him in my household as a father was amazing, right?

But I have a certain view on life and on people because of that. Because as great as my father was, I mean this was the most famous man, you said arguably one of the most famous boxers. He was one of the most famous men in the world, and loved men just outside of even boxing.

And when you think about all of the lives he's been able to touch just by being himself, just by standing up for what he believed in, and he didn't have- you know he wasn't worried about his money, or fame, or you know his titles, or any of that. He cared about the good of all people, and helping people, but at the same time, he had so many flaws.

And being his daughter I know them, so I'm like, 'Wow like you can be that great and still not be perfect. Like have a lot of things about yourself that need improvement,' you know?

So it just really gave me a view on life about things. It's like man, we're all just human beings trying to do the best that we absolutely can. You know so for me, that's the same thing that I'm trying to do. I'm trying to use the platforms that I have to do my best. I'm just figuring things out along the way.

I'm not an expert at everything, but I know how to go get the right people to help me when I need help. And I never get an ego. You never want to start thinking you know it all, because to me that's when things start going downhill.

Somebody always has something they can teach. Even if they're going to teach me something that's, 'That's not who I want to be. That's not what I want to do.' Even if it's that.

You know, somebody always has something teach, so if you learn to be quiet more than you run your mouth, you will learn, you know? And that's just kind of- that was a big, long answer to your question because I just didn't have a clean cut answer.

But that's it. I'm just going for it and doing the best that I possibly can.

**Shawn Stevenson:** I love it, love every word. Can you let everybody know where they can connect with you online, and find out more about you?

**Laila Ali:** Absolutely. Well I have my website, [www.LailaAli.com](http://www.LailaAli.com) and they can connect everywhere from there. But I'm 'TheRealLailaAli' on social media.

My podcast is *Laila Ali Lifestyle*, it's on PodcastOne and iTunes. And I also have a cookbook coming out that's available for presale which is called 'Food For Life,' which I'm super excited about.

It releases in January. January 23rd to be exact, but it's available for presale on Amazon at a discounted price, and other book sellers of course. So check it out.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Love it. Laila, you are the best. I am so happy to have connected with you, and I just love seeing all the cool things that you're doing. So thank you so much for taking your time and sharing it with us.

**Laila Ali:** I appreciate you and all the best to you and all that you're doing too, and I'm definitely going to be in touch with you so you can mentor me and help elevate my game in the podcast world. I'd appreciate it.

**Shawn Stevenson:** You've got it! It's already done. Thank you, thank you, thank.

**Laila Ali:** Alright, thank you.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Everybody, thank you so much for tuning into the show today. I hope you got a lot of value out of this. This is somebody who is truly, truly one of the most incredible and accomplished people, not just women, and I don't like when we separate and we talk about great woman athlete versus male athlete.

Just look at the whole big picture for a second and see the accomplishment for what it is. And what she did was truly remarkable in the way that she came into the game, in the way that she handled herself throughout, and even her compassion in a strange way as she's fighting, knocking people out or whatever, but just understanding like we really- if we're going to do this thing, we've got to have people who are at the same level, or close to the same level to really make something special for the experience, and also special for the audience.

And one of the things that we talked about before the show is she's actually doing a little bit of intermittent fasting, and she's well aware of some of the research.

And one of the things we talked about in the episode, we dove in and broke down a lot of the benefits of fasting and intermittent fasting, we'll put that in the show notes, is something called brain derived neurotrophic factor.

She's been hit in the head a couple times, you know? And so she's really taking action to try to take care of her brain, and so brain derived neurotrophic factor is something our bodies produce naturally via this experience of just simple intermittent fasting.

It's neuroprotective, alright? We're talking about something to activate nerve growth factors, literally re-grow brain tissue.

And I just saw a study recently about the NFL players, and it was found that 98% of all NFL players, all of them tested had the residual effects of concussions and brain damage. That's crazy. And then 87% of people who played football at any level.

So this is something that's going to get a lot more attention, and something I'm going to be talking a lot more about because football and this gladiator nature that we have, whether we're man or woman, is not going to go anywhere anytime soon. It's a part of our genetic code.

We want to train, we want to battle, and do the gladiator thing, and express ourselves. But if that's not your cup of tea, more power to you.

For those who are into that kind of thing, listen, there are a lot of things that we can do today to help to regenerate tissue, protect your brain to the best of your ability, and it would be very advantageous if you pay attention to that stuff.

And of course we're providing a lot of that here in *The Model Health Show*. So I appreciate you so much for tuning into the show today. Make sure to pop over and check out Laila's show. She's amazing and just such an inspiring figure, so I'm just very, very grateful to have her on and to share her with you today.



So I appreciate you immensely. Stay tuned for some powerful, powerful guests and show topics coming up very soon. Take care, have an amazing day, and I'll talk with you soon.

And for more after the show, make sure to head over to [www.TheModelHealthShow.com](http://www.TheModelHealthShow.com). That's where you can find all of the show notes, you can find transcriptions, videos for each episode, and if you've got a comment you can leave me a comment there as well.

And please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave us a rating to let everybody know that the show is awesome, and I appreciate that so much.

And take care, I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.