

EPISODE 237

Dr. Daniel Goleman

Shawn Stevenson: Welcome to *The Model Health Show*. This is fitness and nutrition expert, Shawn Stevenson, and I've got a question for you. Do you believe that we can change our traits?

Now when we think of traits we tend to lump them into the category of genetic traits, so things like your eye color, your height, your skin color.

Now what I'm talking about are traits of the personality. And some of these traits are in fact influenced by genetics, but research has shown clearly that your traits are also largely influenced by your environment.

Now, what does this look like?

Well we're talking about a transformation in your personality traits where someone can go from being very fearful to being someone who carries a great amount of courage.

Or somebody who is maybe very passive, and kind of laid back, to someone who's very assertive or very aggressive, and you can see these transformations happen in people across the board.

But then on the other side, these things can look like a positive transformation in our traits, but then what about the other direction where we go from somebody who is very open and loving to being someone who's very withdrawn and even cold.

And when I think about this, I just so happened to watch this special called *The Defiant Ones*, which was recommended by one of our engineers here, Shoe said to check this out, and this is kind of the story of the Beats By Dre phenomenon, and the billion dollars that they pulled in with their partnership with Apple.

And part of the story looked at Tupac, and how he kind of came onto the scene, and when he started off in his career he was very open, very life-promoting and talking about civility, and even love and caring about the small guy, to a situation where he got shot five times, and his personality changed greatly, and people can see that reflected in the music where he became a lot more aggressive and even changing the content of his music.

Now I'm no way a Tupac expert by any means, I didn't see the movie or anything like that, it's just from my personal introspection and seeing the situation there on that little part of the episode.

And so we can all see this and have these situations happen in our lives, and even on the positive side again, somebody we had on the show recently, Lisa Nichols, who was told by her initial public teaching, she said, "I recommend you never speak in public." Right?

Because just the way that she carried herself, the way that she spoke, she had an opinion of her which was probably justified at the time. Cut to today where she is one of the highest paid, most requested speakers in the world.

How? How can we change our traits like that?

And even the story of virtually every single superhero that we've ever talked about where life is going one way until something happens. A transformation takes place, and now they're living their life in the service of others.

And you've probably heard the statement, 'With great power comes great responsibility,' and that's what I really want to tap into today for you, and to make clear that you are a superhero in your own story.

But how do we bring all this stuff together? How do we alter our traits to become the most positive, powerful version of ourselves? And it starts with the conversation of looking at something called intelligent quotient, or IQ, versus emotional quotient, or EQ.

Because we think that it's something that's indoctrinated in our culture that IQ leads to success. You know somebody with a higher IQ has a greater likelihood of being successful, and today you're going to find out the truth about the situation, and just how much emotional intelligence matters.

Now one other thing I want to share, today when this is being released, this is actually my birthday and I'm just- there's no place that I would rather be than to be here in the studio and creating this episode for you, and to really give you a gift if at all possible, if I may, to carry with you throughout the rest of the year, and to add some growth, and happiness, and some other tools to your superhero utility belt that you can use.

But if there was one wish that I could have would be for you to engage. Share the show on social media if this really resonates with you, if any of the shows on *The Model Health Show* have brought value to your life, that would be amazing if you'd tag me.

Even on your InstaStory, or if you're doing it on Snapchat, that kind of thing, Facebook. Share the show, or just give me a shout-out and I would appreciate that so much, and that would be an amazing gift, just being able to share the show out with everybody.

And again, this is about transforming culture, and we all are in this together. No one of us can do this stuff by ourselves.

And let me tell you, I tried. Silly human. Alright these superheroes, why'd the Avengers get together, right? It's because these problems can be a lot bigger than just one of us by ourselves.

We can get our own individual movie for a bit, but we need to combine superpowers to really make the impact that we're truly capable of.

And so I've been fascinated with this topic of meditation in regards to this emotional intelligence, as we're going to cover today with the best person in the field on this topic.

Because as profound as an impact that it has had on my life personally or that I've seen as well in the lives of others, is it backed by hard science? And he actually went in and dissected to the nth degree some of his own studies.

You know we're talking about funded by Harvard and this kind of thing, didn't even make the cut, you know some of his studies that he did many years ago.

And so he's actually showing the real cutting edge science and how this actually changes your mind and body. And today for example versus thirty or forty years ago when he got into the field, which he has been in the game that long.

Today we can look at actual changes in the brain, experience through a meditation practice, and also we can monitor what happens with things like our hormones and our blood.

For example, even in my book 'Sleep Smarter,' I have a few studies that I shared in regards to meditation in regards to sleep specifically, but also health.

And one of them was from research done at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta that found that meditation practice was able to lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke in all of the test subjects.

And so that's just one little instance, and we're going to cover so much more today. And the question is do you have a practice? You know, do you have a practice?

Is there something that you can pull from this? Something that you consider to add to your repertoire with proven health benefits? And if so, if this is something you already have, or something you've been thinking about, or something you haven't given much thought to, I just want to make sure that you have the science on it. And that's what today's episode is all about.

There's a bunch of different practices, there's mindfulness meditation, breathing exercises which helps to activate your parasympathetic nervous system and deactivate the fight or flight, AKA the sympathetic nervous system just within seconds of doing certain breathing exercises.

There's visualization, there's gratitude practices, there's Tai Chi and Qigong which are more moving forms of meditation. There's great meditation apps out there right now, so lots to choose from.

And just to shift gears for a quick second, a big part of our overall health and wellness isn't just having this emotional intelligence. We know this. As a matter of fact, this is the thing people pay less attention to even though it is so very important.

But for most of us, we are aware now that our health and wellness really resides or depends on the quality of foods that we eat, and also even the personal care products that we use. Because if it's on your skin, it literally gets into your body.

And also this is something we're going to be talking more about on the show as well coming up soon are household cleaning products, and the influence that that can have on our health as well. And you will be shocked to hear this.

But for me personally, you know when you shift gears and you start to invest in your health, and your wellness and your fitness, it can be a costly endeavor, but it doesn't have to be.

You know you get the education and the advantage that I didn't have, that many people didn't have, and even some people listening right now know the game earlier on where you start going and shopping at Whole Foods, and all of a sudden your grocery bill is going up \$200, \$300, \$400 a month and it's just like, 'I have to pay more to be healthy? Is that the thanks I get? I have to pay more to be healthy?'

And first of all, the investment is in the greatest thing possible, which is in you. So let's just put that conversation to the side, we've talked about that multiple times on the show, even if you are paying more.

But here's the great news, is that you don't have to. And companies like Thrive Market are making all the difference in the world.

Thrive Market is providing these organic, gluten-free, Paleo, vegetarian- whatever category of health interest you have today, they've cultivated and pulled in all the best companies, and provided those foods, household cleaning products, personal care items, and so much more at wholesale prices.

So we're talking 25% to 50% off the price that you'd be paying if you were shopping at Whole Foods. And not to take too much love away from Whole Foods, but the nickname sometimes is 'Whole Paycheck.'

Alright so we want to keep a little bit of cash in your own pocket, and so I recommend definitely right now if haven't done so, you've got to do this today. Head over to www.ThriveMarket.com/modelhealth. That's www.ThriveMarket.com/modelhealth.

And not only are you going to get 25% to 50% off all of the things that you'd be spending that extra money on going to a conventional grocery store or more healthier options, organic grocers like Whole Foods, but because of going to www.ThriveMarket.com/modelhealth you're also going to get 25% off your entire first purchase.

So 25% off your whole first purchase, and you're getting free shipping, and a thirty day free membership.

Alright now let me tell you about this free membership because this is such an advantage, you're going to want to keep this membership because here's what happens. I got an email from Thrive Market a couple days ago, and this was sent out to everybody, saying that if you spend \$49 on groceries, you're going to get a free dishwashing liquid and a free laundry detergent.

And these are hypoallergenic non-toxic, no crazy dyes and all this stuff, that some of these things are carcinogens which we'll talk about again, in a future episode.

But we just want to avoid that stuff, alright? It's not just the food that we eat, but what are we cleaning our house in? Stuff that we're eating off of our plates, what are we cleaning that with? What are we putting on our bodies? This stuff matters.

And we don't need to be neurotic about it, but if we're engaging in so many different unhealthy practices, it bio-accumulates.

So it's not about being perfect, it's just about being aware and making the changes and subs where we can.

But anyway, so they gave away free dishwashing liquid- and this is the same thing you'd find in Whole Foods, and a free laundry detergent. We know how costly that can be.

By getting \$49 in groceries that you were going to get anyways, right? And so I hopped on there, ordered some stuff, I got this huge container of coconut oil which was like \$15 less than I would normally pay, it was amazing, and a few other items, and I got those free goodies, and it shipped right to my house for free. Amazing.

So head over, check them out, www.ThriveMarket.com/modelhealth, and now let's get to the iTunes review of the week.

iTunes Review: This is a five star review titled 'Brilliant Show' by Daniel Zigzag. 'I keep coming back to *The Model Health Show* out of all the podcasts I listen to and recommend it to everyone I know whether or not they're interested in health.

Shawn Stevenson is brilliant, so intelligent and sharp, and I leave every show with so much wisdom and knowledge that I can apply to my everyday life.

I work in education and use a lot of the information I get during his podcast during my presentations to educators. This podcast is transformational.

When I get stuck in traffic I'm actually happy because it means more time to catch up on all his episodes.

I seriously love it and highly recommend you check it out.'

Shawn Stevenson: Thank you so much for leaving that review for me over in iTunes. I truly, truly do appreciate that and I love that little nugget about getting stuck in traffic, and actually being something that you can cheer for.

You know, nobody cheers for traffic. Nobody likes traffic. Nobody is sending traffic any Valentine's Day cards. But to say- and that's kind of what today is even about; how to be able to change our perspective and to see things in a different way, in a most positive way so we can get some value out of it and we're not in reaction all the time, and we're more so in response so that we can have the feeling that want and the experience that we want no matter what's going on around us.

So I appreciate that so much, Daniel. And everybody, thank you for leaving these reviews for me over in iTunes. Please keep them coming. It means so much to me, and I promise the best is yet to come.

On that note, let's go ahead and get to our special guest. Daniel Goleman, PhD is best known for his bestselling books on emotional intelligence including the seminal book itself, 'Emotional Intelligence,' which has sold over five million copies in print worldwide in forty different languages.

Dr. Goleman has a longstanding interest in human psychology, neuroscience, and meditation dating back to his two years in India as a graduate student at Harvard.

As a psychologist who for many years reported on the brain and behavioral sciences for The New York Times, Dr. Goleman previously was a visiting faculty member at Harvard.

He's received many journalistic awards for his writing including two nominations for the Pulitzer Prize for his articles in The Times, and a Career Achievement Award for journalism from the American Psychological Association.

I most recently saw him personally on a riveting interview with Oprah Winfrey for her show, *Super Soul Sunday*, and now he's here to share with you his insights on emotional intelligence and his newest work, *altered traits*.

And I'd like to welcome to *The Model Health Show*, Dr. Daniel Goleman. How are you doing today, Daniel?

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Hey Shawn, great to be here. Good to see you.

Shawn Stevenson: I'm so grateful and excited to have you on the show today, and if you could, let's just kind of dive in and I want to know your superhero origin story. Can you talk about what got you interested in psychology in the first place?

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Well in psychology I think I was always interested in people. And my mom was a social worker, my dad taught humanities, they're both professors, but I really wanted to know what makes people run.

And so I gravitated to psychology at a very early point, and I stayed with it. One point I thought I'd be a psychiatrist, but ended up psychologist.

Shawn Stevenson: Interesting. So that was just that initial interest in people is what was kind of the catalyst, and just like, 'I'll follow this thing through.'

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Yeah I was just trying to understand why do people do what they do?

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: I'm not sure I know, but I have a lot of theories.

Shawn Stevenson: Isn't that question, oh my goodness. And so a big influence for me- and this was maybe even ten years ago at this point, maybe a little bit longer, but the first insider discovery I had about mirror neurons was from a lecture that you gave, and it just really blew my mind.

And that was from your talk, and you were talking about emotional intelligence. What was the catalyst for you in actually writing 'Emotional Intelligence'?

Dr. Daniel Goleman: So I had been a science journalist at The New York Times covering the brain and behavior for a long time, and I came upon an article in a very obscure journal. So obscure it doesn't exist today. It was called 'Emotional Intelligence.'

I saw that phrase, I said, 'Wow that's so counterintuitive. It sounds like an oxymoron. Those two things don't go together.'

But then I realized it's being intelligent about emotion, and I used that as a framework for the book which was actually not just about emotional intelligence, it was emotions in the brain.

You mentioned 'Mirror Neurons,' that was the follow-up book to 'Social Intelligence' where I put together what we know about how brains connect when we talk. That's part of it.

And so basically I wanted to also argue that we should teach kids how to get along, how to manage themselves, how to be self-aware, in other words emotional intelligence, from kindergarten straight on.

Shawn Stevenson: Let's talk about that because this is something that still a lot of people have not had the opportunity to learn, but it's probably the most important development, or capacity that we carry which is this emotional intelligence.

So let's talk about IQ versus emotional intelligence.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Well you know, when you're in school you are told that it's how will you do on your tests, how will you do on your exams, how smart you are, your IQ which is the secret to success.

What they don't tell you is yeah that's true until you get out of school, then you get into a career, you get into work, you're dating, you're doing things where IQ actually is not the critical factor.

I just saw a study that showed that after an IQ of 120 it doesn't predict success at all. What starts to predict success are competencies that are built on emotional intelligence.

How well can you get along with other people on a team, for example? How well can you keep pursuing a goal despite setbacks and obstacles?

This doesn't have to do with IQ. It's about managing your emotions, and about sensing emotions in other people, and in your relationships. That's the essence of emotional intelligence.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow. I think one of the lectures I saw awhile back was maybe it was a talk at Google, and you were talking about an example where you had a room full of all of these top level- maybe it was like Fortune 500 guys, and just asking, "How many of you were like the Valedictorian of your class?"

There was like two people out of 200 or something.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Exactly. Exactly. What that shows is that IQ after you're out of school does not predict career success. And companies themselves have done

studies that I looked at that are really telling, they want to know what sets the stars apart from average here in our company.

And these studies have been done now by huge and middle sized companies around the world, and they found that it isn't your IQ, it's how well you're aware of yourself, how you can use that to manage yourself.

You know, you don't let your emotions rock you so much that you can't keep focus, you sense what other people are feeling, and you put that all together to manage your relationships. That's what makes people a star in the workplace.

They don't tell you that in school so it's important to understand that for life.

Shawn Stevenson: I love it. And as you know, it takes time for the books to change, for science to change what's being taught, even in university settings.

And so that's what the Internet today allows us to really do, is to get tapped into this education because one of the things I noticed in school when I was at traditional university was there wasn't a Success 101. You know? I would have taken that class if I could have figured out how to do this thing.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: There should be a Success 101 and it would not be about IQ. IQ actually doesn't change, you know. It's not something you can work with.

Emotional intelligence is learned and learnable. So you know, if you have a problem with empathy, you can get better, you can practice it.

If you're not so good at managing your impulse- I was talking to a fellow who's a very high consultant to the San Francisco Giants and the Warriors, and he was talking about the trouble star athletes have is that they're encouraged to be really strong, really slam that guy, but the brain doesn't distinguish between slam that guy on the field or slam that guy in the bar that night.

That's the problem, is that they need to manage themselves better, and it's true of everyone.

And this guy by the way, very interesting story, he started in East St. Louis in one of the most down and out neighborhoods you could imagine, but he had discipline, he had focus, he managed to get a PhD. Unbelievable.

But it's because he had something that we now can teach kids, it's called cognitive control. From a scientific point of view it's the ability to know what your goal is, and keep that in mind, and pursue that despite your distractions, despite what else happens.

They call it 'grit' sometimes. This is what sets the most successful kids apart. It turns out to be a more powerful determinant of your success in life than your IQ or the wealth of the family you grew up in. It's just levels the playing field.

And you know what? You can teach it to kids. So that's why I became a big advocate of what we call 'social emotional learning.' Bringing this into schools so that kids can learn the right lessons at the right time.

Shawn Stevenson: I love that. I love the fact that it's something that it's not kind of set in stone more so like IQ, and that this is something we can cultivate and develop.

And it's very empowering to hear something like that, and this being a big contributing factor to our potential success, not just in our work life but in our relationships and so many other areas.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Absolutely. This is what people want in their spouse, in a partner, in a lover, is someone who's a good person, who you can trust, who's kind.

Shawn Stevenson: What a concept.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Who understands you. Right! Yeah, but that's actually what makes people successful in their romantic lives, too.

Shawn Stevenson: Love it. You know, I mentioned earlier- and this was coming back to one of the lectures that I saw. And by the way, that was the first Google Talk I'd probably ever seen, and I didn't know it was a thing so I was like, 'I want to do that one day.' I just did a talk at Google maybe last year.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Oh that's fantastic.

Shawn Stevenson: It was the mirror neurons. I was watching it. So let's talk a little bit about that, about this discovery of mirror neurons, and what that actually means for folks.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: So mirror neurons were first discovered in a remarkable way. They were looking at mirror neurons- this was the old fashioned neuroscience where they studied one brain, and one body, and one person, not two brains, and two bodies, and two people. That's where you get the social brain, that's where the mirror neurons lie.

So they were looking actually at a monkey, and at one neuron in the monkey that only made the arm lift, didn't do anything else. Never fired any other time.

One day the monkey's sitting still, and that neuron is firing, and the scientists are really puzzled. 'What's going on?'

And then they realized- it was in Italy, a hot day. The lab assistant went out for gelato, he's sitting in front of that cage, and every time he lifts his arm to take a lick of the gelato, the monkey's neuron from the same thing fires.

In other words, the monkey's brain is mirroring what that guy is doing. Our brains are peppered with these, and they create in us an immediate felt sense of what the other person is doing, intending, and feeling.

So it keeps interactions on the same page. Enormously powerful. If your mirror neurons are off, people will find you very strange.

Shawn Stevenson: Right. Oh and this is another thing that's very empowering. I want you to understand this that your brain has these very powerful capacities that are always monitoring your environment, whatever you're watching, whatever you're- if you're witnessing somebody speaking on stage for example, there are parts of your brain that are kind of simulating you doing that thing.

It's so remarkable, and then we start to become aware of like, 'What am I actually exposed to? What am I seeing in my environment? Maybe I might want to put myself in a more empowering, nurturing environment so that my brain can start to respond accordingly.'

Dr. Daniel Goleman: This is such a good point Shawn, because if you're around negative messages all the time, put-downs, people being upset, it gets to you. And I love what you're saying about finding an empowering social environment particularly.

People that are going to support you, guide you, encourage you, because it impacts you immediately.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah. Well from that point, you know after I was kind of studying some of this stuff early on, things have really changed in science, and a lot of new information is coming out, and I think that's what's really led to your latest book, and I want to talk about that.

It's called 'Altered Traits,' which for everybody, this is available September 5th and I would suggest you pre-order it like right now. It's absolutely fascinating, and I'm getting so much from it.

And I would love if you can share what the inspiration behind this book was for you, and what the core of the book is about for everybody.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Well the inspiration was actually when I spent two years in India, I was a graduate student in Psychology, and I met yogis who were very advanced. I met lamas who had really done a lot of practice, and they had a quality of being that was beautiful.

They were very present, they were very kind, very loving, and I thought, 'You know I'm studying psychology-' I was at Harvard at the time, 'and the way they are is not even on our map. We're studying psychopathology, anxiety, depression, what's wrong with people, not what's right with people.'

And I thought, 'This is so important.' And not only that, I learned that there were maps and methods for making this happen. It's not that these people were born that way, it's that they practiced. It's like mental fitness. It's like emotional fitness.

You can encourage these capacities in yourself, and you can grow them, and that's really what the book is about. It's about the fact that the brain changes with sustained practice, and if we do the right practices it's going to change in the best ways and make us a better person.

Shawn Stevenson: I love that. So you just said something that I had actually jotted down, I wanted to talk to you about, is the fact of- and it's the same thing. Initially going to school premed, just because it's like even though I hated science, 'You know I should do this. Right? This is something that I should learn, I should become a doctor, that whole thing.'

But seeing the upperclassmen were so obsessed with self-diagnosis, and there was just this- it was a study of pharmacology and a study of sickness really. Like that's where everybody was really focused, it's not focused on health.

Like how do you actually be healthy? And today there's new science that is covering just focusing on happiness, what the qualities are.

So I wanted to talk to you about that. About number one, conventional psychology being aimed at neuroses, and just generally negative psychological patterns. And what do you think is like the shortfall in that?

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Well the problem is that people don't want to learn how to be more upset, more depressed, more anxious, they want to learn how to be more happy, or how to get joy in your life, how to connect with people. That is what makes life worth living.

And it's only in the last decade or so we've had a positive psychology which has methods, for example sometimes we put ourselves down, but you can talk back to the put-down is what they call cognitive therapy.

It's very powerful. You don't just believe everything you tell yourself, you weigh it. Is it helpful? Is it not helpful?

And now with the 'Altered Traits' book, we have methods for fine tuning attention, for increasing the capacity to calm yourself, to handle disturbing emotions much better, and to increase the happiness.

Actually the ability of your brain to be happy, to be loving, to be kind, to be compassionate; those are the methods I think are the most valuable in life.

Shawn Stevenson: You know, you mentioned earlier in how this actually changes our brain, so I'd love to talk a little bit about neuroplasticity.

We've had some great people on the show who've just kind of tapped their toes in a little bit to talk about it, but there's a fascinating example of neuroplasticity that you talked about in the book when individuals who've lost their sense of hearing, and their brains actually change to activate more of their senses for their vision.

And it's just amazing, it's like a superhuman capacity that we all have. So let's talk about that.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Well you think about all the amazing blind musicians that have lived, why is that? And the reason that neuroscience discovered is that if you're born blind, the visual cortex, the part of the brain that would be used for seeing is used for hearing.

So they actually have a more powerful brain in the auditory sense than anyone else, and they hear differences, and it makes them natural musicians.

So essentially this is showing neuroplasticity. The brain will adapt to any situation.

But the other part of it that's so important for all of us is that the brain is like a muscle, and the more you exercise certain circuits, the more you exercise a particular muscle, the stronger that circuit gets.

That's the essence of neuroplasticity, and this is what meditation is essentially, is working out the brain. It makes the brain a mental gym.

And every day when you practice your meditation routine, it's like practicing your routine in the gym, and it strengthens the circuits just like it strengthens a muscle.

Shawn Stevenson: Oh love that so much. Mental fitness, emotional fitness we're talking about today, and there's nobody better to share this with us.

And research in altered traits looks beyond basic unhealthy to healthy spectrum even when we're talking about psychology, to an even more beneficial range, something you call 'wholesome traits of being.'

Wholesome traits of being. Can you talk about what that means?

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Yeah so wholesome traits of being are the exact opposite of where psychology was stuck when I was studying it, which is what's wrong with people.

This is what can be right with people, and wholesome traits are things like- instead of judging people, being equanimous, hearing them out. Or instead of being reactive, being responsive.

Reactive means, 'Oh man you pushed a button, and I'm going to unleash on you.' Rage or whatever. But if you respond, you take it in, and then you give back, but you do it in a way that is beneficial for you.

So it's compassion, it's altruism, it's evenness, it's equanimity, it's managing yourself so you don't get so upset, but you can let your positive emotions flourish.

That's the range of wholesome traits.

Shawn Stevenson: One of the things that is very important and powerful about this book is that you're going in and you're dissecting some of the research and the studies, because it's really a big wave that's happening now, studying meditation, because of all the positive benefits seen.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Absolutely.

Shawn Stevenson: However, some of the studies previously, they weren't up against rigorous scientific method.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Right.

Shawn Stevenson: And first I want to mention one of the studies before we kind of dive into this, and what we can actually garner from meditation.

One of the studies you cited looked at strengthening sense of purpose, strengthening sense of purpose led to an increase in telomerase activity that lasted even five months after this meditation program.

And so we've talked about this on the show, we actually did a show dedicated to this topic, and talking with Elizabeth Blackburn and her co-author.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Wonderful.

Shawn Stevenson: So we had the authors on the show, and we went and we broke down this whole concept of telomeres and telomerase. So just as a highlight- and we'll put that in the show notes for everybody.

But the bottom line is your telomeres are sort of like the best biological marker we have currently for how long you're going to live. It can kind of tell us that.

And as we do certain activities, life is itself an activity, we can either- we can potentially shorten our telomeres faster (sleep deprivation, drugs, that kind of thing), but there's this enzyme that was discovered by Elizabeth Blackburn, she actually won a Nobel Prize, of telomerase which is an enzyme that can actually add length back on or slow down the process of your telomeres shortening, thus you getting older faster.

And meditation being one of those things that can help to increase that telomerase activity blew my mind.

So with all that said, this study was looking at meditation and also deepening our sense of purpose. This is kind of an issue today. I think a lot of people are struggling with having that deep connected sense of purpose.

So what are some things that we can look at to help us to literally kind of turn back the clock for us, keep us healthier, and more vital by tapping into that sense of purpose?

This is a big question, but I wouldn't give it to anybody else.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Well a sense of purpose and meaning in life I think is what keeps people going. There's so much literature now, so much science that shows this, that meaning and purpose, feeling that you can contribute somewhat.

I did a book with the Dalai Lama for his eightieth birthday, it's called 'The Force for Good,' and the Dalai Lama of course is all about purpose and meaning.

And the book by the way is not a Buddhist book, it's a book for everybody. He wants to reach five billion people on the planet he says, because he feels each one of us has the sphere of influence as people who listen to us, who we can sway, who we can impact, and that each of us has a purpose, and that what we need to do he says is just get in touch with what your personal strength is, how you can use it.

It has to do- I don't know if you've heard of the concept of 'good work.' Good work is what you're excellent at. What do you do so well? It's what you enjoy, what engages you, and what has ethical meaning. And if you align those three things, excellence, engagement, and ethics, then you can be jet propelled because it feels good.

In fact you feel good as you're doing it, but it's going to have the most positive impact because you are fulfilling your purpose as you do your good work.

So each of us has a project in life which is finding, 'What's my good work, and how can I do it best?'

Shawn Stevenson: Perfect. So what I want to talk about now is to look into these different types of meditations because one of the things that you made a point to really drill down on in the book was that some studies collected different individuals who were 'expert meditators,' but there's so many different flavors of that, and it can skew results.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: That's right.

Shawn Stevenson: So I want to talk about some forms of meditation and actually some of the clinically proven benefits right after this quick break. So everybody sit tight, and we'll be right back.

Alright we are back and we're talking with the incredible bestselling author, Dr. Daniel Goleman, and we were just talking about before the break the various types of meditation.

And one that was pinpointed in the book, in the brand new book that you talked about throughout the book is something called mindfulness.

So let's talk about what that actually means. What does mindfulness mean?

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Well mindfulness is right now the most popular kind of meditation. It's going into business, going in schools, people using those apps for it.

And mindfulness means simply being present without reaction, without judgment to what's happening to your thoughts and to your feelings. It's all it is.

And to do that you have to establish a kind of neutral platform inside your mind. So very often people will start with just watching the breath, and then you watch your breath, your mind is going to wander, and you're going to bring it back.

That's a basic move, and by the way every time you bring it back, you strengthen the circuitry for managing your concentration, for ignoring distractions.

So mindfulness then extends to, 'Okay I'm going to just watch my thoughts, I'm going to watch my feelings. I don't have to let them push me around, I'm just going to see what they are. I'm going to watch them come, and I'm going to watch them go. I'm not going to judge them, I'm not going to put them down, I'm not going to favor this one or that one, just neutral.'

That is what mindfulness does. And it has surprising benefits right at the start. One of the things is that it sharpens attention. This is direct training and attention.

Remember I was saying it's mental fitness, so you get a big bump in attention. You know people like to multi-task. Interesting, the brain doesn't multi-task, it switches very quickly.

And if you're very concentrated on one thing, 'I've got this project I've got to do,' and then you say, 'Oh I'll check my email, I'll look on Facebook,' that's multi-tasking.

When you go back to that first thing, it takes you a long time to ramp up to that level of concentration you had before, unless you do mindfulness. If you do ten minutes of mindfulness, it nullifies the loss of concentration for multi-tasking.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: So it's remarkably powerful. Another thing, another benefit for students is this. You learn better. Working memory as we call it is stronger. The ability to pay attention to what you're taking in, transfer it to long-term memory, and bring it back.

So college students who learned mindfulness got a 30% higher score on the graduate school entrance exam.

So mindfulness pays off right at the beginning.

It also strengthens the brain's circuitry that controls negative emotions. So when you get upset, you recover more quickly. That's the actual definition of resilience is how quickly you recover from being upset, stressed, or distressed.

So it has huge payoffs.

Shawn Stevenson: This is one of the things that I've mentioned this several times on the show, but I think that at no other time is it more important than to share this with you.

If someone was to ask me how did I get from where I was to where I am today, you know being somebody who at the age of twenty diagnosed with a so-called incurable spinal condition, degenerative spinal disease, degenerative disc disease.

And spoiler alert, Dan I know you don't know this, but everything's good now, you know.

But having that diagnosis obviously can turn your whole world upside down. And getting my health not just back, but better than it ever was, was- there were transitions along the way, but it was a process.

For me, it was the lowest hanging fruit to change how I was eating, to change the way that I was moving, you know becoming more physically literate. But one of the

big catalysts for changing my life in the direction and imbuing more purpose was meditation.

And initially when I learned this, it was from my mother-in-law who actually studied at [Inaudible 00:43:32]. You know she did the training there at one of the centers in Kenya, right? And just really an amazing story.

And this was back like I think maybe The Beatles or whatever were popping and hanging out with Maharishi and that kind of thing.

But her teaching me meditation from that point, it was over two years I did a meditation every day, it was a 32-minute meditation. And that's a lot easier when you don't have little kids running around, let me just put that out there as a caveat. I'm not telling everybody to do that.

And so but that literally changed everything, but today I do more of these mini meditations, but having that practice is what really was kind of a catalyst.

And so I'm bringing this up to say that number one, this is a very powerful tool, but it's very practical as well. And Dr. Goleman is already sharing some of the practical things that we can apply to our life, and so what I wanted to share was this.

When we are multi-tasking, just to go back on what you shared, there's something called a 'switching cost,' and that's what he detailed. It takes time to get back into what we were doing.

You can nullify this, and the reason I'm bringing all this up is my wife swears she can multi-task like a beast and I'm just like, "Why are all these windows open on your computer all the time?" She's like, "I've got this."

And she's the one who initiated me into learning meditation. So there you have it, Honey. I know she's listening.

So now, let's talk about 'Altered Traits' specifically. That's the title of the new book, but what exactly does this mean?

Dr. Daniel Goleman: So altered traits means what kind of person are you day-to-day? Not while you're meditating. You know you've got your 32, or ten minutes, or twenty minutes of meditation, you're an angel then.

But who are you when it gets rough? Someone's like angry at you, or you've just got to handle the kids and they're pushing your buttons.

So altered traits means that there's a pay-off from your meditation practice that goes beyond the session. It changes who you are and how you react to the world around

you, and you become more focused, you become calmer, and you actually become kinder.

Shawn Stevenson: I'm writing down these traits that you're making me think of that- I grew up in a very volatile household, there was a lot of yelling, a lot of violence, and carrying those traits with me unknowingly when I had kids and having a big lack of patience in the beginning.

Which people that know me today would not believe that, but it was definitely the case, you know? I was more on the edge whereas today I have like quantum leaps in my patients.

My older two kids, I'm sure they're probably jealous of my youngest because it was a figuring out process. But I'm so patient now, and so much more attentive, and I think a big thing that you highlight in the book, and I want to talk about that next, is compassion.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Oh yes.

Shawn Stevenson: I've developed this very- this is why I do this show is I've developed this very deep sense of compassion.

So let's talk about that and why that was such an important part of the book.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Well and you mentioned purpose. I think compassion is one of the higher purposes in life is helping other people.

So compassion is directly enhanced by meditation, but a particular kind. You mentioned, Shawn, that there are different meditations just like there are different kinds of workouts.

There's an aerobic workout, there's an upper body, lower body, you name it. Whatever you focus on in your practice is going to get stronger. The same with meditations because different meditations enhance different parts of the brain.

So when it comes to compassion, the meditation that it helps best is called loving kindness where you actually wish and think that people you know, people you love, people around you, people everywhere be safe, happy, healthy, free from- whatever you wish for them, positive wishes, it turns out that strengthens the circuitry in the brain that we share in common with every mammal.

It's the parent's caretaking circuitry, the parent's love for a child is the basis in the brain for compassion.

So you will help a stranger even if you have a lot of compassion. If you don't have it, you may not even notice them.

But the circuitry for caring gets stronger and stronger the more you do this. And the stronger that circuit is, the more likely you are to actually help someone in need when you run across them.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, it literally opens up places in your brain. Like you said, when we are not cultivating this, I've seen this as well. When somebody is in need, we can literally 'turn a blind eye,' and you don't even see the person.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Absolutely.

Shawn Stevenson: You see somebody who's homeless, and I can't do that. I have to say something. I haven't shared this before, but this was a little while back and there was a mother and her daughter were outside of- and this was a really nice neighborhood, and it was like across the street from a mall, and she had the sign that, 'I just lost my job and I need to feed my kids.'

And I went to the ATM and I gave her \$100, and I just- but I saw her as well and I just was like, "Whatever this is, it's going to turn around for you."

There's only so much of course that we can all do in our own lives, but if we can all see the people, see them and do something. And I just saw- before I even did that though, I saw so many people passing them and it was just like I don't want to see that because it hurts. It hurts.

But when you start to develop more compassion- please talk about this, the three different kinds of empathy, because I think that that can help to clarify.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Oh very important, and then there's some research that pairs directly on what you're saying about the visibility and visibility of people who are suffering.

And the three kinds of compassion are cognitive, 'I understand how you think, I understand your perspective, your views, the words you use to language things. I can talk to you effectively.'

The second kind is emotional empathy, 'I feel what you're feeling.' Those are two different brain circuits. But those two alone aren't going to help you help that lady outside that mall.

It's the third kind which is called technically empathic concern. It's caring, it's loving.

And what the studies have found, and we reviewed these in the book, people who see someone suffering like a picture of a burn victim actually avert their eyes, they look away.

The reason they look away goes back to the mirror neurons. You pick up the feelings of anguish for that person. It's very unpleasant.

So by tuning out, you dampen that down in yourself, but you don't help them because you don't see them.

The added ingredient that gets people to go ahead and help that person in need, to go to that ATM and give that woman the money, is love, is that loving concern for other people.

And that overrides the instinct to look away. You can actually- and meditation, the kind I was talking about, actually enhances the ability to keep looking at a person who's suffering and then go to help them.

Shawn Stevenson: Yes.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Because that's what it takes to be compassionate.

Shawn Stevenson: I love it. What's so crazy is that was the first time that I heard this outside of myself, is when I read it in the book, when you were talking about the three different levels.

I don't even- this might have been even before this book came out, but I know it was from you that I got this piece of information. But I would talk about the difference between sympathy, empathy, and compassion.

And just understanding some of the things- when it's sympathy or empathy it's just like, 'I don't want to feel that way.'

But as we develop and we work on ourselves, we can see the suffering, but you don't have to be caught up in it.

Because sometimes when you're in sympathy and empathy, it's painful, and so you get caught in that darkness. Whereas compassion is like, 'I understand how you feel, I see how you feel, but I don't feel that way. How can I help you?'

Dr. Daniel Goleman: This is what we need more of. Love, sweet love.

Shawn Stevenson: Cut and paste, simple. I love it. You know, one of the things that was really fascinating about the book is that you went through and did some more-some looking and dissecting what studies on meditation actually hold up after more scientific scrutiny?

So why did that matter to you for this book?

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Well it mattered to us because there are- now as you said there's a boom in studies on meditation. There are more than 6,000 journal articles- that means peer reviewed articles, serious articles on meditation.

However if you use the highest scientific standards, of 6,000, maybe sixty are really strong. So we focus on those sixty.

So what I'm telling you is the most sound results, the strongest results. And the problem is- and this was true of me, by the way.

When I was a graduate student I did a dissertation on meditation and stress, and when I look at it now I'm think, 'Oh my God, this is a mess from a strong scientific point of view.'

And we use those standards- actually my co-author, Dr. Richard Davidson is a neuroscientist at the University of Wisconsin. He and I both did studies on meditation when we were graduate students, neither of those studies would get in our book.

They didn't get in our book because the standards have gotten stronger and stronger. Also the science has gotten better.

Now we can do something we couldn't do back then, and that is look at the brain as it's functioning. You haven't asked about the Olympic level meditators but those are astounding.

These are like the people that inspired me in the first place back in India, and Davidson was able to bring them over to his lab from India and Nepal one by one, and he saw that their brains are actually extraordinarily different in the best way.

For example, when you have a creative insight, some people you've been trying to solve, and ah-ha, you've got it, you get what's called a gamma wave in the brain, it lasts about a quarter or half second.

It turned out that these Olympic level meditators are in gamma wave all the time.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Science has never seen anything like it. When they start to meditate, like they go, 'Okay I'm going to meditate now,' they do it instantaneously and their brainwaves can increase by 700 times in strength.

It's a strength and flexibility in the brain that is eye-opening for science. It's just a new range of possibility.

Shawn Stevenson: That just speaks to-

Dr. Daniel Goleman: And it comes from practice.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, that speaks to this concept we've all heard before that we're only using a certain percentage of our brain's potential, you know?

And we do use our whole brain, but just we don't use it well I think is the thing.

And training people on that, I would love if we talked about some of the benefits, some of the real proven benefits after your scrutiny and looking at the studies that meditation can have.

And specifically let's start with- there was many of them that you had in here that you talked about, but the amygdala response, right? Measured by an FMRI was found to reduce in people who practiced mindfulness meditation.

So they were able to reduce that response of that kind of reptilian part of our brain.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Yeah the amygdala. Shawn yeah, reptilian but the amygdala is the trigger point for the fight or flight or freeze response. Worked very well early in human history when we were- something might eat us and there's a rush and we run. Or there's something we could eat and we run after it. That's the amygdala.

Today the amygdala is not that functional because we live in a civilization.

Shawn Stevenson: Right.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: And so really the challenge is managing our amygdala, and if it's out of control you're going to get in trouble. So my influence in many kinds of meditation it turns out quick amygdala or make our recovery from it much quicker.

Shawn Stevenson: So you call it an amygdala hijack?

Dr. Daniel Goleman: That's it.

Shawn Stevenson: So the amygdala hijack takes over. You know, we have the best intentions but then we say or do something that we regret later. You know?

So meditation is one of those things that helps again, to calm down that more primitive programming so that our more evolved prefrontal cortex can actually do the executive functioning and decide not to trip our boss when he's walking by, or whatever the case might be.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: There you go. Yeah so this is the deal. The amygdala hijack, there are three signs. You have a very strong negative emotion, it's very sudden, and then you do something that later you regret. You say or do something. Those are the three characteristics of amygdala hijack.

As you said, the prefrontal cortex is the part of the brain that manages the amygdala.

So meditation strengthens the circuitry for the prefrontal cortex, and it helps you handle the amygdala so you don't trip your boss.

In fact you might want to trip him, but then you remember, 'Oh this is my boss. I'm going to smile and change the subject.'

Shawn Stevenson: Exactly, exactly. So you just mentioned something else, which is that you talked about in the book, strengthening those circuits, strengthening the circuitry, but also literally growing thickness of the brain in certain areas.

So can you talk about that?

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Well there is some findings that suggest that meditation thickens some parts of the brain. My co-author Richard Davidson, who is a very rigorous scientist, is not so sure about that.

He thinks instead what happens is that the regular decline of the brain, which I'm sorry to say starts in your twenties or thirties, and the brain shrinks, slows down.

Shawn Stevenson: Right.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: So there is some data that suggests that people who meditate who are in their fifties have a brain that's seven years younger if you look at the norms of brain aging.

So what meditation seems to do is not make the brain age as fast as it would normally. It keeps the brain younger.

Shawn Stevenson: That's exactly what I was going to mention. That was research out of UCLA that- and I was going to tie this to- it's like you wrote this book or something, and I'm going to talk about it. I love it.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: I'm just reading mine.

Shawn Stevenson: I knew it! I knew it! So it's those gamma waves. It's those gamma waves.

You know there's a lot to be extracted from this book, and actually seeing some of the studies. Because I know a lot of people listening are already taking part in some form of a meditation program, mindfulness program.

A lot of people are like, 'You know, I've been meaning to do that.' And to have real science behind it, because you know truth be told, today more than ever, like we want the facts, you know?

We want the benefits, we want the actual features.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Sure.

Shawn Stevenson: Like what am I actually getting with this? Because we've got so much stuff going on, and it's like meditation versus *Game of Thrones*. Right? It's just like what happened to Jon Snow? You know what I'm saying?

But we can have all of it.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Yeah, just think about your priorities for the day, find the time you can meditate every day. The benefits start right in the beginning, they get better and better as you go along.

So it just pays off continually, alright? One thing we didn't talk about is health, you know? This is a very important one.

A lot of people are living with chronic diseases like chronic pain, doctors can't help, we've got the opioid epidemic. Very sad.

But it turns out that mindfulness helps people live with chronic pain much, much better. And there's no down side to the mindfulness unlike the drugs.

Another thing, depression and anxiety which are rampant in society today. Mindfulness based therapies, mindfulness based cognitive therapy particularly is extremely powerful, as good as medication is.

And also if you're a more advanced meditator, a day of meditation lowers inflammation levels in the body. Inflammation is what feeds into, as you know, just a range of disease from diabetes and heart disease to arthritis. You name it.

So the health benefits are terrific, and if you add what it does for your attention, and your sharpness, for your emotional life, for your ability to be kind and present to people, and then the health benefits, it's a very strong case for- hey, what have you got to lose? Give it a try.

Shawn Stevenson: Love it. I love it. Dr. Daniel Goleman, can you let everybody know where they can find your book, and where they can find your work online?

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Sure. The audio of the book is available from MoreThanSound, one word, maybe you'll put it on your show notes. And the book

itself should be in every bookstore from September 5th or your favorite online book center. It's called 'Alternate Traits.'

Shawn Stevenson: Perfect. Perfect, I appreciate it so much. One final question for you though, got one final question. What is the model that you're here to set with the way that you're living your life personally?

What is the model that you're wanting to set for other people with how you live your life personally?

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Well you know, one thing that I'm very, very disciplined about, even when I travel a lot. You know yesterday I was in San Francisco, I had to get up at dawn to get the flight, didn't matter. I make time for meditation every day.

I really believe the message of the book, and I brought it in my life. I'm trying to do it more and more. I don't know how many years I have left, but I want to make them very rich, I want to make them full of meditation, and have meaning. That's it.

Shawn Stevenson: The one and only Dr. Daniel Goleman. Thank you so much for coming on the show. It's really been a pleasure. I appreciate you so much, thank you.

Dr. Daniel Goleman: Oh Shawn, I love what you're doing. Thank you.

Shawn Stevenson: Awesome. Everybody, thank you so much for tuning into the show today. I hope you got a lot of value out of this. It's another one of my great teachers and somebody who's really influenced my thinking over the years, and having the opportunity to present him to you today was just really, really exciting for me.

And please make sure to check out his work. Look into 'Emotional Intelligence,' and 'Social Intelligence.'

And I remember maybe- this was about a decade ago, my very first video talking about mirror neurons, which when I discovered this and heard about it from him, I went into the research and I went bonkers.

Like I was just looking around and just- I couldn't believe that this was something that everybody didn't know about, and how much our environment mattered, and how much we need to put ourselves in position to be able to consume through our senses positive, nurturing messages.

Because it's nature versus nurture in so many different ways in our minds, but really these two things play on each other, and they complement each other, and we need to be paying attention to both of them.

And so one of the other big benefits that I took from this is when he talked about loving kindness in this particular meditation, and this is some of the- it could be some of the tough stuff, you know?

Some of the hard work that really develops our character, and opens us up to a much more fulfilling life.

And he mentioned in the book one of the experts saying that doing this loving kindness meditation focused on somebody who's more of a 'difficult person,' you know somebody that you might not like versus somebody that you love.

Maybe it's your kids, or your mom or whoever, that's a lot easier to do a loving kindness meditation.

And what they said was doing the loving kindness meditation for one hour for somebody who is a difficult person, or somebody who you might not necessarily like is equivalent to 100 hours of this meditation for those who you find and have a fondness for.

So with that said, some of this is really developing our character, and doing some of the tough work to really open ourselves up, to have more positive and fulfilling experiences here on the planet.

And the more that we can come together, the more that we can start to break down these walls, and get closer, and understand that for the most part we all want the same thing.

We all want to feel like we matter, we all want to love and to be loved, and we all want to have a sense of success, and a sense of community, and of family, and again of purpose.

And so how can we go about doing that where we're not in this Darwinian approach to things of survival of the fittest, right? Because we've got like the fittest people on earth doing the CrossFit, and you're going against them, I don't know. I don't know if we all can make it.

But it's really about- it's not about survival of the fittest. Today more than ever it's about cooperation, you know?

And all the scientific models, the new models are looking at that and affirming that that's the case, and that survival of the fittest is- there are pieces of that definitely. Again nature versus nurture, there are pieces of that sprinkled throughout our evolution.

However if you look at real advancements in life, and especially of human civilization, it was people working together for one common good.

And so that's why this matters to me so much, because now more than ever we have the opportunity to connect, and we have the opportunity to spread positive messages, and to come together, and to make a difference.

And why not? Time is going to pass anyways, we might as well spend this time doing something that we really love and that can do a lot of good here on the planet.

So I appreciate you so much for tuning into the show today. If you got a lot of value out of this, make sure to share this out with your friends on social media, on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and definitely check out 'Alternate Traits,' and check out Dr. Daniel Goleman's work. It's really fantastic.

And definitely stay tuned. We've got some incredible episodes coming up, incredible show topics that are going to blow your mind, and some very, very powerful guests coming up as well.

I appreciate you so much. 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.

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.

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