

EPISODE 239

Dan Millman

Shawn Stevenson: Welcome to *The Model Health Show*. This is fitness and nutrition expert, Shawn Stevenson, and I'm so grateful for you tuning in with me today. I'm very, very, very, very excited - that was four very's right there - because I have on somebody who I've wanted to get on the show for a very long time now, and who's had a big influence on my thinking.

And I remember, this was a few years back, where my wife and I got tickets to a movie screening, and it was this movie that all these people who I was reading their books, and just really admiring studying their work, were raving about this movie. It was called *The Peaceful Warrior*.

And so I got to go to this movie screening, and the film just really resonated with me at that time in my life. It was just kind of this really powerful awakening process you get to see on-screen with the hero in the story, and also seeing the hero's journey, you know just going through that whole process.

And it was just one of the best movies that I've seen that are in alignment with not just entertainment, but giving people actual real value from something that we plug into.

And we definitely need more of that today where there's so much kind of- we'll just say what it is, a little trash, there's some hot garbage out there on the Internet that we can find ourselves stumbling into if we're not careful, and really standing guard to the gates of our minds, and tuning into more positive media. And I think that's what it's all about.

But that movie was adapted from a book, and the author of that book is on the show today, and I cannot wait to share him with you, and also some of his new work as well that I've just had the opportunity to review, and just such a great experience.

And here's another thing. Reading fiction; I used to think that it was- what's a good word? A little pointless. You know? Not efficient with my time.

And boy was I wrong because there are certain parts of your brain that get activated when you read fiction and opens up new layers of creativity and awareness in your ability to really paint pictures and to see things differently with your own mind.

For example, there's actually a study from Emory University on reading fiction and brain activity. And this study found that getting engaged in a fiction book enhances connectivity in the brain, and improves overall brain function.

Crazy pants, right? And this is just another reason to add some fiction reading to your repertoire, and not seeing it as something that's unproductive like I once did.

And so I really think that reading fiction is very valuable, and also being part of an evening ritual. You know, we did a Master Class on creating evening routines, and that's a thing that I really like to implement in my evening ritual is reading some fiction because it shuts down this kind of busyness analytical part of our brains, and allows for that part of the brain to kind of go into rest mode which is what we want to do.

And so just being able to bring somebody like him on the show is such a great gift, and you're going to see why.

Really quickly, I've got to give a shout-out to something that I did today. And I got online this morning and I was like, 'I've got to order some new kettlebells.'

So I just jumped online, order a couple new kettlebells from www.ONNIT.com. The reason that I do this, and that I get these unconventional training tools like the steel clubs, the steel maces, the kettlebells, is because- and it's another thing that our guest today could really help to affirm for everybody.

Just training our bodies in one direction is not how life really is. We need to be mobile and strong in many different directions, and conventional training as we're doing our bench press, we're doing our squat, real life doesn't really happen like that.

Things are always coming at us in different directions when we're really living, right? And so we want to be able to be strong in multiple directions, and that's what these tools allow us to do.

So I grabbed myself a couple of kettlebells, they've got primal bells with these cool like primal figures on there. There's like a chimp and then there's a howler monkey, which my five year old, he uses that one, it's a small kettlebell.

They've got Marvel kettlebells where we have Iron Man on the kettlebell. It's the coolest thing you'll ever see. They've got Captain America weight plates. Right?

Do you know what it takes to be able to partner with Marvel? Top secret, top secret! Sh!

Onnit was able to do that and to get some really cool things in partnership for fitness with Onnit and with Marvel.

And of course I ordered some MCT oil as well. This has a thermogenic effect which means it literally upregulates your metabolic rate, and it has this interesting ability to be almost instant cell food because it bypasses the normal digestive process where basically if we're taking a piece of- we'll just say a piece of 'shicken' as my older son

used to say when he was growing up, he couldn't say chicken for a long time, I still mess with him about that.

But taking a piece of 'shicken' and turning that into fuel, turning that into even you, becoming human tissue, it takes a pretty miraculous and intensive process, whereas something like MCT oil bypasses that process and it can almost instantly be used by your cells as energy.

So I love the MCT oil, I use the emulsified MCT oil in my drinks in the morning. So they have coconut, they have vanilla which is what I had today, and they have strawberry, and the new cinnamon swirl.

So head over, check them out, www.ONNIT.com/model. That's www.ONNIT.com/model and you're going to get 10% off all of that, even the kettlebells, so head over, check them out.

Now let's get to the iTunes review of the week. This review, it's from FloresLove and the title is 'Boom!' Five stars and it says, 'This podcast is amazing and so informative. I've lost thirty pounds on my own healthy and unhealthy practices. I needed a refresher and an eye-opening method to help me to see what I truly wanted, and to completely renovate myself and what I know.'

Outlook of life can be discouraging when your LC doesn't match your BP.' It says, 'I learned this through the podcast.' And that means when your life conditions don't match your blueprint.

'And to come out of the other side of that depressive mindset, I turned to fitness and health to push me out. But to truly understand how our bodies work and can work is a gift. Thank you for taking me to the next level of living.'

Thank you so much for sharing that. I actually got a little bit hard to speak right there. I truly, truly do appreciate that, and I'm very grateful for you taking time to leave that review for us.

Everybody, thank you for leaving these reviews over for us on iTunes. It means the world, so please keep them coming. If you have yet to leave a review, pop over there! It's right on your phone! Click a couple buttons, leave us that review, and it truly, truly does mean so much.

And on that note let's get to our special guest and our topic of the day.

Today we have Dan Millman who's a former world champion athlete, university coach, martial arts instructor, and college professor. Dan's seventeen books including 'Way of the Peaceful Warrior' have inspired and informed millions of readers in 29 languages worldwide.

The feature film *Peaceful Warriors* starring Nick Nolte was adapted from Dan's first book based upon incidents from his own life. And one of my favorite books, by the way from Dan, is a book called 'Everyday Enlightenment,' which I have right here as well, which really helped to bring practicality to the traits that I've developed in my own personal meditation and study.

And just being able to bring a real world kind of anchoring into the things that I was learning about my kind of higher elevated traits and character.

And much of Dan's time is devoted to writing and speaking. His keynote seminars and workshops span the generations to influence people from all walks of life, including leaders in the field of health, psychology, education, business, politics, sports, entertainment, and the arts.

And he lives today with his wife, Joy, in Brooklyn, New York, and they have three grown daughters and four grandchildren.

And I would like to welcome to *The Model Health Show* the one and only Dan Millman. How are you doing today, Dan?

Dan Millman: Hello, Shawn. Good to be here with you.

Shawn Stevenson: I'm so stoked to have you on the show. This is such an honor.

Dan Millman: Well I'm honored, too. We're all honored, you know? All human beings on planet earth.

Shawn Stevenson: See this is the vibe we're going to get today, guys. This is the vibe. Dan, I want you to really- if you could, let's talk a little bit about your superhero origin story. I'd really love to know what got you interested in gymnastics, and how in the world did that transition into becoming the accomplished writer that you are today?

Dan Millman: Well I can answer that in two ways. One is I haven't the faintest idea. Life seems to be a mystery and it unfolds differently for different folks. I don't have any trail of breadcrumbs to follow, or stardust to follow.

We each blaze our own trails. But in my case, I loved- as a young, short, wiry kid, I loved climbing trees. My cousin and I used to do that, and we got a big view from as high as we could climb.

And I started realizing, even when young, that things look better in the distance, when you get a bigger picture.

So we liked climbing things, and also swinging on ropes, and I tried jumping off a garage- you know a one-story thing with a parachute I made with a big sheet and some ropes.

So I was always physically active as a kid, and agile, and it became apparent that basketball wasn't going to be my sport being about 5'6" tall, so I just liked to do different games in sports, but one day I discovered an old trampoline at a summer camp.

And all the kids liked jumping up and down, but I just stayed with it. They went elsewhere to do other things and I just kept jumping because there was something about it- jumping and leaping.

You know I found it's impossible to feel depressed and jump on a trampoline at the same time.

Shawn Stevenson: Right, right.

Dan Millman: It's just not going to happen. So I just kept doing it, and when my middle school teacher started a trampoline and tumbling club- you see how luck enters into it, and timing, I was so there.

And I started learning handstands, and rolls, cartwheels, and somersaults on the trampoline. I didn't show any particular potential, I really didn't. People wouldn't have looked at me and said, "That kid is going to be a champion," but I just loved it, and I kept doing it.

And if somebody had said, "Dan, where could this possibly lead for you? Jumping up and down and doing flips, how can that ever help your life?"

Well it led to, as you noted, a world championship in 1964, I was eighteen years old, and it led to a scholarship, a gymnastics scholarship to UC Berkeley, and a coaching job at Stanford University, and then a professorship in physical education and movement arts at Oberlin College in Ohio.

So who can guess these kinds of things? Who can predict them? But I did follow my heart, and that is the key for anybody.

Even if they don't end up becoming a professor or a world champion, if they follow their heart, they're going to be doing what they love, and of course at some point in our life we need to find a way to monetize what we do so we can transform our calling into an actual career.

Shawn Stevenson: Oh I love that so much. And you know, what's so interesting is that- I love the statement that, 'Luck is when preparation meets opportunity.' And just

how life is kind of qualifying you along the way, and these happy accidents are showing up that are leading us along the way if we're willing to pay attention.

And I think that's one of the things too that is shown throughout your work, and you kind of putting that into words.

And so your way of writing, you've got- it's fiction imbued with this autobiography. What was the catalyst for you to begin writing in that style?

Dan Millman: Yeah, it kind of happened the same way everything else seemed to happen in my life, Shawn.

My first book took seven years to take shape. It's not that I wrote for seven years. Maybe I stopped for six months, or a year here, and then wrote some more, and then stopped for awhile.

But over time it took shape. It was something I wanted to share based on my experiences I thought might be valuable to other people as well.

So eventually it took shape in a book that became 'Way of the Peaceful Warrior,' and I've written two kinds of books over the years; seventeen in all over thirty years.

But one, later- my books later were just self-help guides. They were clear guidebooks. The one you mentioned, 'Everyday Enlightenment' talks about twelve gateways, or you could say courses.

We're all here to pass in the school of life in order to graduate, so to speak. It comprises the entire arena of personal growth.

But my first books, I decided to write a book based on my life because it was my first book, and I didn't know how to structure it, so I just started with my college days, and about a rather unusual old service station mechanic I met who wouldn't give me his real name, but I called him Socrates. He reminded me of the old Greek sage.

And my adventures with him, and the lessons that flowed from that became a semi-fictional autobiography. So much of the book is true, but I also wove in from my creative imagination the elements that would complete the story, and help might help instruct and inspire the readers.

And the two other books in that trilogy took me- well I didn't write the second one for ten years afterward, and I was ready to write it, and I did. And it was 37 years after the first book was written that I finally was ready to write my newest book which just came out called, 'The Hidden School.'

And that book I couldn't have written before, but I found a way to articulate what I wanted to share, and it will eventually have a huge impact I hope and believe, but it

may take readers a second read to really get the genuinely new information inside that book.

So it is another story, it's an adventure story, not a straight self-help book, not a how-to guide, but it contains some substance that impact the bigger picture of all our lives.

Shawn Stevenson: Oh yes, and I went through and I pulled out so many nuggets of wisdom, and I want to dive into some of them today of course.

But I'd love to start back, and take a step back here, because you said 'Peaceful Warrior' a couple of times, and of course that was the name with the book and the movie, and I'm curious for you, what does that actually mean to be a peaceful warrior?

Dan Millman: Well that's easy to answer, but there's a bit of a story behind it. You know I studied martial arts before I studied gymnastics.

When I was nine years old I took Judo, and later Karate, and later Aikido. I got a black belt in that, and then some Eskrima Arnis, some Filipino arts, and then some Tai Chi. Learned the long form on both sides, and then more recently a Russian martial art called Systema, a traditional art.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah.

Dan Millman: So I've done martial arts, so the idea of warrior wasn't new to me. When I was a professor at Oberlin College, I taught a course in Tai Chi and Aikido, kind of more harmonic, health-giving, flowing arts.

And at the same time I was watching an old classic TV show called *Kung Fu* with David Carradine playing this half-Chinese fellow named Kwai Chang Caine, and he was a Shaolin monk. He believed in non-violence, and yet he was trained in temple boxing as they called it. Shaolin temple boxing.

So he was like- he was a warrior but he was also a peaceful man. And when I came to title my course, I was going to call it *The Way of the Warrior*, The Path of the Warrior.

But then I said, 'No, that's not quite a fit. I want to call it *The Way of the Peaceful Warrior*.'

And since then, I've been associated with that kind of idea. And to answer your question in brief, the simple answer is all of us, every listener out there is a peaceful warrior in training in the sense that all of us are looking to find a way to live with a peaceful heart.

Less stressed, less tension in our life, more harmony going through relationships, and work, and everything else in the busyness in politics and all of the craziness to learn to live with that peaceful heart and centeredness and serenity when possible.

But there's also- there are moments in our life when we need a warrior spirit.

Shawn Stevenson: Yes.

Dan Millman: Not just in the gym training, but facing the everyday challenges of daily life, to call on that warrior spirit. So that's really why I say the term peaceful warrior applies to all of us. We're all in training.

Shawn Stevenson: I love that, and I know that this is the real reason why it became such a big hit, is because we all do feel that.

Dan Millman: Yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: And to have both of those ends of the spectrum, and to be able to imbue them, and gracefully draw those out when need be, I think it's just an amazing story.

And when I think of Aikido, the first person that pops to mind is Steven Seagal with his weird running, and his raptor arms when he's running or whatever.

But such a cool discernment from this other side which I never even considered about this more of a peaceful art to it, and I just really enjoy the fact that that's imbued into the language behind everything, whether people are interested, or are doing martial arts or not, they can glean a lot of lessons from it.

And that's what I want to talk about next. In 'The Way of the Peaceful Warrior,' the main character Dan has a remarkable transformation, and in the new book 'The Hidden School,' we continue on with Dan after some transitions in life that many of us face.

The strain or loss of love, major changes in education or career, and even uncertainty about what the future holds.

So I'd love to talk about some of the ways that 'The Hidden School' can help readers today to face some of our accelerating change.

Dan Millman: Boy, you've got that right. Accelerating change. Do you know about thirty years ago when I gave my first talk, I don't remember what I said, it was thirty years ago, but I do remember the one thing I emphasized that the pace of change is accelerating.

This was before the Internet, this was a long time ago in our life history, it was before many of us were born, but I said the pace of change is accelerating, things are intensifying.

And 'The Hidden School' is an adventure narrative but it contains teachings sprinkled through the story, but as you know a book within the book, a journal.

It addresses four big paradoxes. Now a paradox is just two opposing statements that are both true. How can that be?

It's a simple thing to look at. For example in the beginning of the book 'A Tale of Two Cities' by Charles Dickens, he begins the first words in his book are, 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.'

And he goes on with pairs of opposites. 'It was a time of belief, it was a time of incredulity,' and he goes on and on.

Now how can that be true? Well you or I could probably make an argument how this is the worst of times, crazy times if you read the newspapers, and politics, and so on. Look all over the world.

But we could also argue it's the best of times. It depends on our viewpoint. There's a proverb that says two men looked out of prison bars. One saw mud, and the other saw stars.

Both mud and stars exist, we can't deny the reality of one or the other, but where do we want to put our attention?

So in exploring some big pictures of life such as does time exist? Do we have free will? Are we each a separate self? Does death exist?

All these questions you could say are true and not true. And of course I go into that, why that is so, and how they can both be true.

How can time exist where time is also an illusion? How can we have free will, but in a sense free will we could say is an illusion? Are we separate selves or are we all one? Yes to both.

Does death exist? Yes. Is death an illusion? Yes.

How can that be true? Well most of us don't contemplate these kinds of questions in our day-to-day lives because our attention is rightly focused on our relationships, our health, our financial stability, education, children, career.

But at the same time, understanding paradox and how it applies to our lives provides a kind of foundation, really the basics for all the pursuits of daily life.

And it leads to- understanding this bigger picture can lead to wisdom and ease, reduced stress, and an expanded perspective on the changing currents of everyday life.

So I'm not saying, 'Learn this and you'll reach your peak performance! Learn this stuff and you will have a better relationship! Learn this stuff-'

No, there are books written on those topics. This is underlying everything, and that's why I felt it was so important.

And by the way, I might add that though many people think 'The Hidden School' comes after 'Way of the Peaceful Warrior,' that's not the case.

Actually it is part of the original story because in the original book I referred to travels I did around the world in a half a page. I didn't really say any details about it. I wasn't ready to.

So this book takes place- it's actually part of the initial story. It stands alone. Somebody who doesn't know my work can pick up 'The Hidden School' and get good entertainment, as you know, and learn a lot.

But it does complete the story and shows what prepared me for a kind of death experience, and re-birth, and awakening that I describe at the end of my original book.

Shawn Stevenson: You know, this really brings up one of the things specifically that I pulled out my highlighter and had to track down in the book, and this was a part- there was a seemingly negative situation that took place, and one of Dan's teachers says to him, "Since meaning is a human invention, let's make a positive meaning of this experience."

Dan Millman: Yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: And so that really speaks to- we have the opportunity to choose more than what is for just our kind of standard way of being, and that immediately increases your power. You know, your experience of power and having a more empowered way of living today.

You know and just instead of being a victim, we actually can see things differently and change our perspective instantly, and see the paradoxes that are there.

Because every- and this is another thing, and I'd love for you to talk about this. As Dan is kind of trying to break down and to articulate some of his great mentor's words, he says the statement that, 'Change. It's the death of one thing, birth of another.'

Why was that something that you made a point to highlight in the book?

Dan Millman: Well when things are going great for us, we don't want change, we want everything to stay the same.

Shawn Stevenson: Right.

Dan Millman: We want to stay the same, we want the world, everybody around us to stay the same. But that isn't how it works.

The Buddha once said, "Everything that begins also ends. Make peace with that, and all will be well."

And in fact life comes at us in these waves of change. Most of us know this. Don't believe it just because I'm saying it.

If we look back on our lives, these changes are- we can't predict them or control them, but we can learn to surf. That's what we have the power to do. To learn to surf these waves of change, and to recognize that it is simply a part of life.

And we don't- again we don't have to pretend to like it when we have a financial dislocation. Sometimes the changes are very positive and they're fun, but other times they're difficult and challenges.

But how many of us haven't faced challenges before and overcome them and brought us to this present moment?

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah.

Dan Millman: So we know we can do it, we don't have to pretend to like it.

When I was a young man, as depicted in *The Peaceful Warrior* movie and my book, I was riding home from visiting my sister one day on my motorcycle, and just turning dusk, and a car turned in front of me, and I flipped over it and shattered my right leg in about forty pieces.

And that happened, it was a change, I didn't like it, it was very painful and disappointing. I was in my top shape, an Olympic potential fellow, but I made the best use of that.

And in fact if that hadn't happened, I may not be speaking with you today, or have written any of the books I did.

However, I do not recommend fractures as a method of personal development.

Shawn Stevenson: Right!

Dan Millman: There are other ways, too.

Shawn Stevenson: I love that. You know, and so this is kind of the story or the guise that all of us seem to be under.

And I love how you articulated was when things are going good, we don't want change, right? Just keep it coasting.

But that's not really how life works because at some point, as crazy as it sounds, we would get sick of the sameness, you know?

Like there's a sense of certainty that we do all enjoy and require, but we also need that variety, and also understanding that- and this is just my opinion, is that part of our being here is a process of unfoldment, of becoming more of ourselves.

And all of these life situations really help to cultivate an opportunity for us to grow, and to learn more, to be more, to have more, to experience more.

And if we try to hit the coast button, you know put it on cruise control. Like the other day I was teaching my sixteen year old son how to drive, and he just got his license.

And shout-out to all the parents who've taught their kids how to drive, and all of that stress on the heart, and make sure that you get your check-ups done because it's not the most enjoyable situation. You know, like every little small thing I'm just like jumping out of my skin, but I've got to keep the cool face on.

But he was asking me about the cruise control, and just what's the point of it? And so just trying to explain that, and maybe it's kind of you can take a break, you can just kind of kick back, relax a little bit more.

But when it really boils down to it, you need to pay attention so that you can make the turns and the twists and the readjustments to get to your destination when it all really boils down to it.

And so one of the things I want to ask you about next from 'The Hidden School' is about changing values. And we're going to talk about that right after this quick break. So sit tight, and we'll be right back.

Alright we are back and we're talking with the great Dan Millman about his new book, which I have right here, 'The Hidden School.'

And this is part of the saga of 'The Peaceful Warrior.' But this book in and of itself- I would first of all recommend if you haven't seen *The Peaceful Warrior*, the movie, make it a movie night.

Get your popcorn, maybe it's popped in coconut oil or whatever, coconut Heirloom seeds, whatever it might be for you, but kick back and check it out with your loved ones. It's a really great film and it's great for the whole family.

But this is part of it and this is the newest book, and it's in the saga, but this is a standalone piece as well because I read this and just gleaned so many important lessons from it, and just it's such a great adventure as well.

But in the book, Dan you talk about how Dan is having a change in values, a shifting perspective, and he has now different importances.

And so what seems to be important to all of us changes as time goes on, right? So can you talk a little bit about why you made that a point to mention in your book?

Dan Millman: Well let me say something about books first and movies very briefly. That movies you can watch- it's a meal for consciousness in about two hours, whereas a book it takes a little more time for most of us, but I love audiobooks.

And I narrated the audiobook of 'The Hidden School,' and my other books as well. So I love when I'm exercising, going for a walk, I listen to- when I'm walking to the Y to work out, or back, I listen to audiobooks.

So that's another way to enjoy a book.

And in terms of what you were saying, you know when I wrote 'Peaceful Warrior,' I thought I had a pretty good handle on what people wanted. And that's a presumptuous idea to know what other people want.

Some people might say, 'Well I'm really working on a better relationship. That's what I want.' If you ask people what they want, they'll say different things.

'I want financial stability.' 'I want better health.' 'Freedom from pain.' 'I want this, I want that.'

But all of those things, what the implied promise is when I get that, I'll be happier, I'll feel fulfilled and satisfied.

Shawn Stevenson: Right.

Dan Millman: And so that is- I thought back then what we really wanted was happiness. Ultimately that's what everybody was moving toward. The sense, and that is our evolutionary guidance. What makes you happy?

You know one of our parents saying, "I just want you to be happy," right?

So more recently I've realized even more than a sense of happiness, there are things we want including meaning and purpose, knowing our lives count for something, a sense of 'what am I doing here?' 'Why am I doing it?' A sense of direction, meaning, purpose, and connection.

Connection with ourselves, connection with other people, and connection with maybe even the transcendent, which is what religion and spiritual practices are all about.

The ultimate health practices, holistic health, is about connection with that bigger picture of life. That higher promise and purpose.

So that is what I address in my books. There are plenty of people who can address how to fix the plumbing, and repair your car, and do all these other things.

But if people want to appreciate the bigger picture of life, and a better sense of what we're doing here, and what we're here to do, then they can go to www.PeacefulWarrior.com and get a sample.

Shawn Stevenson: Perfect. Perfect. So another part of the book, you mentioned the old saying that comparison is a form of suffering, right? Comparison is a form of suffering.

But you mentioned that Dan went on to compare himself anyways, and I would really love to talk with you about this. How do we handle comparison today when there are so many images that we're faced with daily reminding us of what we might or might not be, what we might or might not do, or what we might or might not have.

How do we really handle that comparison?

Dan Millman: Well you may have seen the studies that show that people are- if they don't have much money, they can still be reasonably satisfied unless their neighbor has more.

So we do tend to compare, we can't deny that. To know how we're doing we tend to look to the right and left, but you know the reason the Buddhists say that comparison is a form of suffering is because there are always people who are going to be better off and worse off than we are.

And what does that mean? It's a profound disrespect for our own process.

You know when you see a baby learning to stand for the first time, many people have seen that, their children or grandchildren, or nephews or nieces.

The little babies in their diapers, the toddlers, they stand up and they shake and they sit down. They stand up, and they shake a bit, and they lose their balance and sit back down.

But I'll bet that baby doesn't think, 'I'll bet the baby across the street is learning this a lot better.'

No, we learn to do that. We get in a class, and we're easy on ourselves for the first hour or two, and then we start looking around the room and often we'll compare ourselves to the best person in the room, and feel miserable.

And look what happens, people get miserable on Facebook because they're always looking at all the wonderful things everybody else is doing because people present their best selves.

So that's why the Buddhists say it's a form of suffering or dissatisfaction, but mainly it disrespects our process.

I've taught many skills in my life, handstands and various things, and some people take longer to learn than others, but the ones who take longer to learn often learn it better than the ones who learned it faster.

So it's so important for us to respect our process, and to stop measuring ourselves based on someone else.

There was an English lord once who said, "I cannot write a book commensurate to Shakespeare, but I can write a book by me."

Shawn Stevenson: Love that. I love that so much, and there's so much there to unpack, and today- it's not going to stop anytime soon, the bombardment of seeing other people's highlight reels, and even creating your own.

But if we can just keep this in perspective, and really understand that we're on our own process and on our own journey, there's value in seeing what's going on with other people, sure.

But the most important thing to point our attention to is how and why, especially why we're doing the things that we're doing and focusing on our own growth and development, and what we can be able to give and serve with our time here.

And the example with the babies, that is so good because we have this level of innocence until- as we go through life and we start to get conditioned to look around, and to compare ourselves.

But I just saw recently this movie *Boss Baby* with my kids, and it's like this baby's already got his suit on. He's like, "I'm management." Like that's what he was born and bred for, and it's Alec Baldwin who's playing the voice of the baby. Really good movie, and it can pull some tears.

Especially- I don't know if anybody else has experienced this listening, but when you have kids you suddenly become so much more sensitive to things involving kids.

It's kind of like the reticular cortex or the reticular activating system in your brain starts seeking out things that have to do with kids- you start seeing pregnant people when you didn't.

You're just like, "There's a lot of pregnant people in life," but they're already there, it's just you weren't attuned to it.

But just becoming so much more sensitive, man. These little movies man will grab me, I get the lump in my throat.

So anyways, really great, really powerful and profound perspective there in looking at something that again, is not going to be slowing down anytime soon, and just to have that anchor. So thank you for sharing that.

There's another thing-

Dan Millman: Oh and we compare ourselves to ourselves, too.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah.

Dan Millman: I mean so many older people, and you know, I'm 71 years old now. I'm in good shape but I'm still getting on in years, and I find people around my age group they say, "Oh you know, when I was young I used to be able to do this. And I used to be able to do that."

Or somebody who was injured. "Oh I can't do what I could do before," but even that is disrespecting us in this moment, and I think accepting ourselves is a way to inner peace.

It doesn't mean we don't improve and continue to improve, and grow, and evolve. That's a natural part of life.

I view life as a form of spiritual weight training. If you don't lift any weights, you don't get stronger. That's what we talked about earlier, the sense that these challenges in life are going to make us wiser and stronger, and we take it on like weight training.

So that's why I think it's important for us to respect who we are right now, accepting we will continue to grow and learn just as we've learned much more than we knew when we were teenagers.

But we can still accept ourselves in our process. I think it's so important to trust ourselves in the process of our life unfolding.

Shawn Stevenson: Oh I love that. I don't want to give too much away in the book, but there's a part where Dan arrives at a place that he's going to be living and training for awhile, and he needed to do his part in caring for this place.

And the person who's sort of the glue holding this place together says to him, "Please take pride in all that you do. Everything matters." And that really stuck with me. Why did you write that line?

Dan Millman: Well that's another paradox because we could also view life is a game that we play as if it matters. And that gives us a more lighthearted approach to life. Not quite so clingy like, 'This has to happen. I know what should happen.'

But on the other hand, a whole Zen idea that how we do anything is how we do everything. One Zen master said, "If you can learn to serve tea properly you can accomplish anything because you're giving it your full attention, you're breathing, you're relaxed, you're in the moment, very mindful-" that's a term that's become popular, of course.

But that means focusing without judgment on the present moment, and if you learn how to do one thing properly it can be a master metaphor to show you the way to learn anything.

And so that's why it's so important to treat everything as meaningful and that it counts because life is a series of moments, you know?

We don't remember days, we remember moments, and life is a series of moments unfolding, and the quality of these moments become the quality of our life.

So it's not as if we have to grit our teeth and go, 'Alright that was one moment. Oh, there goes another one.'

It's not like that, it's just more like appreciating this moment rather than getting too lost in memory of what we think already happened or imagination of what we think might happen.

All we have is this present moment, and this present moment, and this one.

So I think that's a good thing to keep in mind.

Shawn Stevenson: Dan, you're waking some people up right now, alright? It's really powerful because within that statement- I didn't know that would be the first thing you said, in just mentioning this paradox in and of itself, because that's something that I've repeated for people is how you do anything is how you do everything.

And that statement of- you know especially when we're wanting to get from where we are to another place in our lives or in our growth, oftentimes we're not giving our best

in the situation with this idea that, 'When I get to this other situation, then I'm going to give my best.'

Right? And not understanding you're going to bring your same self with you, so how about you give your best now so that you can actually be in resonance with life and saying that, 'I'm here to show up and to give my best, and how I do anything is how I do everything.'

So I'm going to be- when I wash these dishes I'm like, 'I'm not missing a spot so that when I get on to be able to be a writer, or to do my show, or to be the best parent, whatever the case might be, I'm paying attention to the details and giving my best.'

So that's one part, but then the other part of not taking things so seriously, and being so stressed, and carrying that level of agitation into those activities to try to do your best, when we can bring this balanced perspective again.

You know because I think that deciding what we want, and deciding the person that we want to become, the life that we want to live is great.

But if we can come to it with a more lighthearted approach, and to know that if I get it or if I don't, I'm still happy, that's real mastery in my opinion.

So there are so many other nuggets of wisdom that are imbued into this incredible story and following Dan through these travels, which I just don't want to give away, I want people to check out the book.

But I want to talk about one other thing that you wrote in the book that really jumped out at me.

And this was when searching for the school, Dan is tired, he's hungry, and he's starting to question things, and question everything, and he remembered a proverb he'd read and it said, 'When on a long trek, it's okay to quit whenever you like, as long as your feet keep moving.'

So can you talk a little bit about that?

Dan Millman: Sure. Yeah, that's one of my favorite quotes. It's actually from a Japanese psychiatrist named Shoma Morita who said that. Like when running up a hill, quit as many times as you want as long as your feet keep moving.

It is a recognition that a lot of subjective stuff goes on in our head. 'I quit, I can't do this, it's complicated.'

Maybe that's why Mark Twain once said, "I had many troubles in my life, most of which never happened."

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah.

Dan Millman: Because they happen in our head, not necessarily in front of us in the world.

So we need to start to differentiate all that stuff that whirls in our mind. You know, it's why another writer said, "The lesson is simple, the student is complicated."

We have a way of complicating everything, so that's why I recommend again returning- I have for 35 years, just returning to what is going on in this moment, because we can always handle this moment.

So that quote is about action. We can internally say, 'I can't do it, I have doubts, I'm afraid, I'm anxious,' and keep your feet moving.

So that is really one of the keys, and you know that children's song that I also present in 'The Hidden School,' in the book, about *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*, that it's really a secret of how to live well, that song.

And just the idea of row, row, row your boat, it's about what we do that shapes our life. There are so many books and teachings I think kind of idealistic and sometimes misleading.

Magical thinking that if we just intend and wish something and focus on it, it'll appear magically in our life.

Wouldn't that be nice? But if it doesn't work for somebody, they go, "Oh I must have messed up. I didn't do it right."

Maybe it's just an unrealistic notion because we have to work for things. You know, the horse I'm betting on is effort over time. That's why I recommend to people to dream big, but start small. Get your foot in the door, do some small thing in the right direction, and then connect the dots.

So I think that's one important point. And you know, I've seen many young men and women who are in their twenties, mid-twenties, thirties, and it's as if they wake up every morning and they're running a foot race, and they want to keep up, and get ahead, and reach their peak potential.

One young man came to me once and said, "Yeah I'm doing well in life, and I've got a good job, and I worked hard, but I don't know if I reached my peak. I don't know if I'm working 100%. Maybe I haven't reached my potential yet."

And I said to him, I took a deep breath and I said, "Well maybe you have. What if you have reached your potential? Maybe it's free play from here on out. Just enjoy life."

Because all this desperation and anxiety about 100%. And that's what you pointed out to before, that there's no future happiness, there's no future peak, there's only what we have now.

And it's good to look ahead up the path, and what our target is, we're hardwired goal seekers. And I think life is most meaningful and most satisfying when we're moving toward a meaningful goal. But we also want to look back some at how far we've come.

It's important to do that as well; look ahead, look back, and then appreciate where we are right now in that journey.

Shawn Stevenson: I love it, Dan. So awesome, so awesome.

So one thing that I'd love to talk with you about before we wrap up here is I watched one of your- it was a TED Talk, it was a TEDx Talk recently, I believe it was at Berkeley, and I think you might have been maybe sixty at the time, and you just broke out and did a handstand on the chair. It was just like, what?

It changes people's paradigm like, 'You're not supposed to be able to do that.'

So I would love if you would share a little bit of your morning routine. You know just kind of like a foundational thing that maybe helps to contribute to the grace, and the energy, and the abilities that you have today as other people- when we get to that point in our lives we're thinking there are so many things that we can't do versus what you are able to do.

So can you share a little bit of that? Kind of take us through what your daily ritual kind of looks like to start the day?

Dan Millman: I'm happy to do so. Now it's going to sound a bit impressive for a 71 year old, but I need to say that it's important for each person, no matter what their age or physical condition, to respect where they are.

Older people need more exercise than younger people, but they need different kinds of exercise. Not Crossfit, and wind sprints, and so on, but appropriate to age and- to some degree, we don't have to assume one is disabled when they're older.

So what I do in the morning, the core of my exercise life has been always the Peaceful Warrior Workout. It's a flowing movement routine of deep breathing, tension release, gets every part of the body, every joint, muscle group balanced, rhythm, timing coordination.

And it's designed to be completed, this routine, in less than four minutes a day. It's almost excuse proof.

So when I travel on the road, no matter where I am, I can always do the Peaceful Warrior Workout as a minimum.

But on top of that I do exercises like physical therapy things for certain joints and areas.

Do you know that as a result of that motorcycle crash there were some imbalances and it caught up with me over time, and in March I had a total knee replacement, in April I had a total hip replacement.

So it was a surgical spring for me, now I'm Dan 2.0, and I'm doing fantastic. Swimming, doing weights, I do handstand pushups- I still do handstands plenty.

I went to a trampoline center the other day and was doing somersaults.

So I don't assume anything about my age. I'm not saying every 70 year old or 71 year old should be doing all that stuff, but it's worked for me.

I've kept active over the years, and just done what I needed to do, paying attention to regular moderate exercise, balanced diet, and enough rest. And that's a core for anybody's life.

Shawn Stevenson: Love it, love it. And this is a transition to my final question that I have for you, and wow this is just really enlightening for me. So Dan, I'd love if you'd share 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 setting for others with how you're living your life?

Dan Millman: Well that's an important question of course, probably why you saved it for last. And I so respect each person's process that I don't believe they're here to live my life, or someone else's life, but it is helpful to find role models that we admire, and see if we can take in some of those qualities.

If somebody smiles a lot, has a good sense of humor, maintains an active life of exercise, and so on, I think these are- they can move others in a positive direction.

And to answer your question in a roundabout way, you know Albert Schweitzer once said, "In influencing other people, example is not the main thing, it's the only thing."

And as you know Shawn, as a parent, James Baldwin once wrote, "Children have never been very good at listening to what their parents tell them, but they never fail to imitate them."

So each of us can influence, can teach. You know many of your listeners may or may not see themselves as teachers, maybe they see themselves as students of life, but we're also teachers.

We teach and influence those people around us. Our peers, our friends, our colleagues at work. We may not think they're watching us, but they are, and we can raise the bar or lower it.

So in my case, yes I maintain an active life. And you know I was at the birthday party- the eightieth birthday party of George Nissen. He invented the modern day trampoline.

And George was an amazing fit guy, but when he was eighty years old at his birthday party, he pressed up to a handstand on a table. Eighty.

So I'm not so impressed with myself. I aspire to that. I want to be able to do that when I'm eighty and maybe even past that, what George did.

So he inspired me, and I hope in some small way my example inspires other people.

Shawn Stevenson: Love it. Dan, this is just amazing and I'm so grateful to be able to have you on the show today. Can you please let everybody know where they can find your books, where they can connect with you online, and good stuff like that?

Dan Millman: Sure, thank you for asking. If people find this interesting and they're curious about maybe their life path, and want a free taste of interesting system to clarify their life path, they can go right to my website, www.PeacefulWarrior.com and there are many features there that they can look over; videos and other things that they might enjoy. They can get the flavor.

And of course my books are all there, and audio courses. Even that Peaceful Warrior Workout, I teach it online through a link at my site.

Shawn Stevenson: Love it. Dan, you are amazing and I can't wait to see what you do next. I'm definitely going to be staying tuned and paying attention, and just thank you so much for sharing your gift with us today.

Dan Millman: Really been a pleasure, Shawn. 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. You know this is somebody on my list of people who I really wanted to bring and present for you guys to extract some values and new insights is the one and only Dan Millman.

And definitely grab his new book, 'The Hidden School,' and if anything, again we can consume educational- kind of like instead of this educational model, being entertainment.

You know in a different format watching *The Peaceful Warrior* the movie, grabbing the book, there's a lot of positive media that we can get involved in.

And again, it's a different format so it's fiction imbued with his autobiographical experience as well, and even the story of him shattering his leg. It's just so heart wrenching, but so empowering at the same time, and being able to consume content like that through fiction that actually has real meaning and not just-

I remember when I was a kid, my mom had all these romance novels, right? And just like the covers were like, 'I shouldn't be seeing this, should I? I'm six.' Right?

And so now we can actually swap those out- but if you're into that, all good, no disrespect. But we can swap that out and add in something that actually has a real powerful message tied into it, and that's what Dan is one of the best in the world at doing.

I'm so grateful for you tuning into the show today. We talked about paradox, we talked about being able to change our perspective, and something that came up while Dan was speaking was the quote from Bruce Lee.

"I fear not the man who has practiced 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who has practiced one kick 10,000 times."

And changing our perspective when need be to stay the course, to focus on developing that one thing instead of bouncing around all over the map, and really taking advantage of our time here on the planet.

This opportunity is of the utmost importance because I think that one of the things that we run into as we grow is that we think that we have more time than we do, and we're coasting, and this is something that Dan talked about as well.

And again, when things are going good, we love the coast, alright? But how can we not make it so that life has to throw a big obstacle in front of us, but ease into this discomfort?

Seek out mastery, seek out challenges so we can keep growing and be able to handle when the tough stuff does arrive on our radar.

Now we've got so many amazing episodes coming up, some incredible guests, so make sure to stay tuned. I appreciate you so much, have a great 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.

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.