

EPISODE 254

Build Unstoppable Self-Esteem, Reprogram Your Mind, and Make a Bigger Impact – With Tom Bilyeu

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've got a question for you; what is the impact that you are wanting to make on the world? Have you ever thought about that? You know sometimes, especially with all the things we have going on in our lives, we can get caught up in the day-to-day, and we can get caught up into our own problems and forget why we're really here.

And for me, it's truly to give our gifts, our talents, and capacities. But the thing is, of course some of those things are dormant. We don't necessarily know right now what it is that we're here to do, or what our gift, or what our talent might be.

And today I'm hoping to draw some of those things out of you with the conversation that we're going to have with somebody who knows a thing or two about impact.

Before we do that, I want to give a quick shout-out to our show sponsor, Four Sigmatic. It's like that old Visa commercial, 'Never leave home without it.' I think that was Visa, maybe American Express, I don't know.

Never leave home without it because this stuff just works. And last night, for example, been on the road quite a bit, just to help with the sleep.

The 'Journal of Pharmacology, Biochemistry and Behavior' did a recent study and found that rishi significantly decreases sleep latency, so you literally fall asleep faster. Alright?

And they found that it increases overall sleep time, plus it increases deep anabolic sleep and your light sleep as well. All of that from rishi.

And here's the thing; without side effects, alright? Rishi has been around for about 2,000 plus years documented use, and it's something that we can lean on rather than the conventional medicine approach, alright? So I want to make sure that you have these things in your hand.

The important thing to understand, you don't want to just go out and buy any random Company X rishi. The reason that I love Four Sigmatic is that they do a dual extraction.

So they do a hot water extraction and an alcohol extraction, so you actually get all the stuff that you hear about in these studies, you actually get it in the product.

And so with the hot water extraction you're going to get the beta glucan components, and with the alcohol extraction you're going to get more of the hormonal components, the terpenes, and things of that nature.

So make sure to check them out ASAP. It's www.FourSigmatic.com/model and you're going to get 15% off. That's www.FourSigmatic.com/model. 15% off everything, alright? Make sure to head over and check them out.

And also by the way, speaking of sleep, I just came across a study and this was from the International Association for the Study of Obesity, and they found that melatonin is a very potent fat burning hormone.

Wait, what?

Please understand, we know about melatonin for sleep. This is actually a very potent fat burning hormone. They found that melatonin immediately increases your metabolic activity of your brown adipose tissue.

How cool is that? So this is a type of fat that burns fat. And the reason that it's brown is that it's very dense in mitochondria, so it's a very energy active type of fat.

And you can get more of that by getting a normal sleep cycle, alright? What a concept.

So all of this stuff just says make sure to take care of your sleep, make sure to take care of your health, check out www.FourSigmatic.com/model. And on that note, let's get to our topic and our special guest.

Our guest today is the one and only Tom Bilyeu, and he- and this is the thing guys, listen. You've seen them, you've come across them more times than you can imagine, Quest Nutrition, right? The Quest bars, you've seen them everywhere.

He is the co-founder of this billion dollar brand, and I can tell you right now you're going to hear his story today. He had no idea that he was going to end up in the place that he's at right now.

But he's recently taken a little bit of a branch-out from the brand, and he's creating something really remarkable right now, and he's in a very intensive building phase of something special, and this is focusing on human excellence and impact.

And today I'm really going to call forth and ask him to deliver the goods to help you to get in alignment with that, and to really focus on your human excellence, and your impact as well.

And I'd like to welcome to *The Model Health Show*, Tom Bilyeu. How are you doing today, man?

Tom Bilyeu: Dude I'm doing well, man. Thank you for having me.

Shawn Stevenson: It's my pleasure. It's my pleasure. I was noticing of course your shoe game as soon as we met. Respect.

Tom Bilyeu: Yes, thank you.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, you've got it man. So I would love to start with if you can let everybody know pre-Quest. What was your path, you know? What were you dreaming about? What were the things that you were wanting to do?

Tom Bilyeu: It really depends on when you tap into my life story. So in the beginning it was I wanted to be a filmmaker, and growing up as a kid in Tacoma who my family teetered between blue collar / white collar.

There was a time where my dad was a purchasing manager, and then he was a mechanic, and unemployed, and so it was a world in which the idea of getting rich was very exciting to me.

So I wanted to become a filmmaker and get rich in the process, and as a child of the eighties, like the film industry man, like that was just how you made a lot of money. It was either that or be a doctor, and I certainly didn't understand the financial system so there was no sense of like, 'Oh I could go be a banker.' That wasn't even on my radar.

So I wanted to get rich making movies, and there were actually two things I promised myself as a kid. One day- as a chubby kid growing up in a morbidly obese family I was like, 'One day I'm going to be rich, and one day I'm going to have six pack abs.'

And those were like the two things- I had no idea how I was going to accomplish it, but those were the two things that I knew that were going to be true in my life at some point.

And so I go to film school, to make a very long story short, at first it looks like I'm going to crush it, and then in the end I fail miserably. And I graduate from film school at a time before the Internet, before YouTube, so if you didn't walk out with a senior thesis film that crushed, like good luck being able to direct.

Because you're going to have to convince somebody on the low end to give you \$100,000, right? Which is no easy task for somebody that doesn't have money or know anybody with money.

So when I graduate feeling like a failure, I literally have no idea what I'm going to do with my life. I go through that- like I always say I was flirting with depression. I just didn't know what I was going to do with my life, I felt hopelessly lost.

And I at that point end up teaching and I meet these two guys- I was teaching filmmaking and I meet these two guys who say, 'Look you're coming to the world with your hand out. And the reason that you're not able to make the movies you want to make is you don't control the resources. So come get rich with us, come into business, get rich, and then you can go back and control the resources.'

And I thought, 'Wow that makes a lot of sense.' These guys were yoked, by the way. So these two like body-builder dudes, I'm like, 'They have six pack abs and they're rich. Like these are the guys. Like I need to follow these guys.'

So they said- they hired me as a copywriter and said, 'Don't think of yourself as a copywriter. Think of yourself as being in a start-up. You can have any role you want in the company, you just have to become the right person for the job.'

So man, I went all in and it was all about money, and I was dreaming about money, I was chasing money, and it really pretty rapidly stopped being about film, and it just became all-consuming, 'I want to get rich.'

And that ends up having very negative consequences in my life. But if you want to know what I was thinking about, what I was dreaming about, what I was chasing, that was it. Money.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow. Wow, I was not expecting to hear that for the initial story. So really quick, with the film industry, filmmakers, who were some people that were kind of your idols?

Tom Bilyeu: Man, what an awesome question because this- you get to find out what people are really about when they say they want to do something like, 'Who do they idolize? Who do they want to be?'

And for me, like I absolutely love Kubrick. I think he's the most talented filmmaker in terms of his ability to utilize all the tools that cinema has at its disposal, and affect me personally as Tom Bilyeu on an emotional level. But the filmmaker I want to be is Steven Spielberg.

And when I look at his trajectory, both I love his films and they weave the fabric of my entire childhood with the different stories that he told. He's continued to grow and develop as a filmmaker but most importantly he created a studio.

So he was an artist that understood that if you really do want to control the art, like at some point you have to control the finances. You really do have to control the studio. You have to become your own entity so that nobody can tell you no, nobody forces you to say yes.

So it is the journey that as a filmmaker I want to go on.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow, that's remarkable. Can you share some Kubrick films with folks so they know who he is?

Tom Bilyeu: Yeah, so *A Clockwork Orange*, *2001: A Space Odyssey* are probably two of his most famous. *Eyes Wide Shut* is another one of his. *Barry Lyndon*. *The Shining*. *The Shining!* How could I forget that?

So really, really- he made very few films if I remember right. It's something like thirteen films?

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah it wasn't that many.

Tom Bilyeu: But whoa, the impact that he's had not only on audiences, because a lot of his movies when they came out were just smashes, but also on filmmakers.

And so he's one of those directors that's like the filmmaker's filmmaker, so a lot of people that are in the industry- and I think partly because- and you'll get this being really into health and fitness.

It's like when you gain mastery in an area, you can suddenly recognize somebody that has like a really nuanced game, and you can see genius in what they're doing that people that just don't really care about that, they wouldn't be able to see the nuance, right?

Shawn Stevenson: Exactly.

Tom Bilyeu: So the more you study filmmaking, the more you realize, 'Whoa! Like this guy really like understood the craft.'

It's funny, I've never thought of this before, but I have an obsession with skill acquisition, like getting really good at something.

And so when somebody's just objectively good, they've worked their behind off- PG13; they've worked their buns off to get great at that thing, that for me is exhilarating, and he's one of those people that to shoot- and I forget what film, but to shoot one of his films, he wanted it to be entirely lit by candlelight.

But the lenses didn't exist, like there was no way to do that, so homie had to go work with- I don't remember who, but he worked with a lens maker to come up with a lens that up until that point didn't exist so that he could capture the vision that he wanted to capture.

Like that's about skills, right? That's understanding the tools that you have, and then really making something extraordinary as a result of that.

So he reverberates through the industry itself, I think even more than popular culture.

Shawn Stevenson: Yes. I want to come back and talk more about the skill acquisition. But you were on the money train.

You went from this dream of being a filmmaker to now you're full on the money train. #WesleySnipes and Woody Harrelson I think.

But so what happened? What happened from that?

Tom Bilyeu: Well so that in the beginning was- it was so clear, right? I want money, I knew what I had to do, that became the filter by which I judged all of my decisions; when to work, when not to work, whether to spend time with my wife or not spend time with my wife, and so it was just all in on business.

And in the beginning it was actually quite beneficial. So I knew the skills that I needed, I had to get good at business, I had to think like an entrepreneur. I had exactly zero entrepreneurial instincts. Zero!

And so if people want to know whether you need to be born an entrepreneur or if you can become one, I sit here before you as a testimonial to the fact that you can become anything you want.

So in chasing money I realized I had to get really good at business, and I just went hard down that path, and in skill acquisition. Trying to get better, trying to learn how they think, understanding finance, understanding management, like just understanding that whole game which is a very big and complicated game.

And then probably about six years in, it just- I woke up one day and realized I hated my life. And it's a slow slide, right? So it's not like literally I woke up one day and thought I was happy the day before and realized I was miserable.

It was, 'Oh this kind of sucks, but it will be over soon. Oh wow, like this is taking a lot longer than I thought.'

When I got into business I thought it would take eighteen months, and we'd sell the company and get out, and I'd be able to direct a film.

And eighteen months turns into the six plus years, and so somewhere in there it stopped giving me energy, it started taking energy away, I started to feel really drained. I dreaded Monday mornings, I lived for Fridays, I just didn't feel alive.

And the easiest way to explain to people like what passion is really about, it's about developing something where you fall in love with it, you're getting good at it, it's giving you more energy than it takes away.

And so there was a time where business was doing that, but I'd hit this tough. It was taking, taking, taking, wasn't enjoying it, I didn't enjoy who I was becoming, I didn't enjoy like looking out at the skillset that I would have to acquire to continue to get good at getting money was not interesting.

And so I hit this crisis moment where I realized, 'Man, life is crazy short. And to keep going down this path, and feeling the way that I feel, and feeling just drained, and not like I was myself, and not tapping into any of my passions.'

And the way that I always explain it to people is Superman, right? Superman is just another dude, unless he's in the yellow sun, and the yellow sun gives him all these extraordinary powers.

For me, that's the perfect allegory for passion. When I don't have passion, I'm just like everybody else, man. But when I'm passionate, I'm unstoppable. I actually feel superhuman.

So but now chasing money, I realized I didn't have a passion for money. Money is inert, money doesn't do anything in and of itself. You could burn it and release heat energy, but that's essentially it.

Money is a facilitator. It makes other things possible.

Now I'm a huge believer in money. I want more money, but it's only because I know what I'm going to do with it. I have a 'why.' Why do I want to make the money?

And you asked in the beginning, 'What's the impact that you want to have on the world?' I know what the impact I want to have is, and it requires capital. But I didn't have that at the time so I completely burned out.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow. So just to take a step back, I'm curious about with Quest specifically, why go in on that particular medium with the nutrition bars? And what was it about the formula? Why do you think it really took off?

Tom Bilyeu: Yeah so Quest was in many ways a reaction to just the naked chase of money. It was pushing back against the misery. It was actually born out of misery.

So going into this position, I get into a really dark place, I realize I'm not doing anything that makes me feel alive, I'm out of my yellow sun, I feel like a normal human being, I am deeply unhappy, I'm flirting with depression again for the first time in my life since I had graduated college, and I wanted to do something that made me feel alive.

So I went in to my business partners and I said, 'Look you guys, this has been amazing, I've learned so much. I can't keep doing this anymore. I am literally dead inside. Like this is so miserable, I can't stand the thought of another day.'

And by that point I'd earned equity in the company, and so I said, 'Look, here's your equity back. If I don't cross the finish line, I don't think I should get anything for this. You know, best of luck but I'm going to go do something that makes me feel alive.'

And I was making more money than I'd ever made in my life at that point, it was just like literally living the cliché of money can't buy happiness.

So I go home, driving back, and I'm pulling into the driveway at my condo at the time. And I call my wife, I'm like, 'I did it, like we're out.' We were going to move to Greece, it was going to be amazing, we were going to only do things that made us feel more alive.

And my partners called me on the phone and they were like, 'Hey look, come out to dinner with us.' And they ended up saying the now famous words, at least for me, 'We could do this without you, but we don't want to.'

And in that, it let me reconnect to something other than money, and because at that point I didn't feel like I had anything to lose. It was like if I was going to go back, it was only going to be on my terms.

So I said, 'Look here's the truth of who I am and what I've been fighting against in this chase for money.'

I care about the brotherhood way more than I care about success. Like that connection, that's real for me. That gives me energy, it doesn't take away. I want to bring value to people's lives. I don't care if it's more profitable, I want to do something that brings value.

If that also, by the way, is profitable, I love that. Right? But I can't lead with profitability anymore. I want to be who I really am, I want my real personality to shine through the company.

If we were going to do another product, it would have to be something that we believed in, that ignited our passions, and I opened a gate.

Up until that point we'd had such a commitment to each other that we would do whatever it took, within our code of ethics, but we would do whatever it took to build this business.

And now I was saying something fundamentally different which is, 'I'm only interested in being passionate. I'm only interested in delivering value. And if that happens to work as a business, great. But if it doesn't, I don't care.'

So that's literally- because to go in and quit was such a huge emotional thing, it was so difficult to do, and so I wasn't going to get sucked back in unless it was going to be beautiful, right? It was going to be a beautiful thing in my life.

And so they were like, 'You know we actually feel the same. We've felt the same for a long time, too. We just sort of all got caught up in this trap of thinking, 'Hey we're about to sell, we're about to sell, we're about to sell,' and that just kept receding.'

And so in that I realized the struggle is guaranteed; the success is not, so you need to actually enjoy the day-to-day.

Like whatever the grind is, the grind in and of itself needs to be fun. You'll get this because you're in fitness, right?

You need to find a way to enjoy the process of going in and lifting heavy weights. You need to find a way to enjoy the process of not eating something, of doing the cardio, right?

There needs to be something in that process that actually ignites something, that gives you energy and doesn't just take. Business is no different.

So because of that, for three very different reasons by the way, we settled on getting into nutrition. Now for me, I'd grown up in a morbidly obese family.

There's a great quote often attributed to Mother Teresa, I'm not sure if she actually said it or not, and that's, 'No one will act for the many, but people will act for the one,' and so I just thought of my mom and my sister.

And I'm not a fool, there are hundreds of millions, if not a billion plus people that struggle with food exactly the same way that they do, but they're the ones that I know. They're the ones that like the thought of losing them too early because their diet is terrible is just crushing.

I had an uncle that died of obesity related complications when I was twelve, like my mom and my sister have been morbidly obese essentially my entire life. I mean it's just like this brutal, brutal cycle.

And so telling them to eat less and exercise more just- it's not working, right? Like, 'Hey jig is up.'

Like we've tried it for seventy years or whatever telling the world to eat less and exercise more, and it works for a very narrow band of the population, and they get amazing results, and that fools us into thinking that it's a global solution but it's just not.

And so what we wanted to do was make food that people could choose based on taste, and it happened to be good for them. And when it got hard, I just thought about my mom and my sister, and they were so real, and something I was so passionate about that it became easy to fight.

Shawn Stevenson: And that was the birth of Quest nutrition bars.

Tom Bilyeu: That was the birth. And so to the question that you asked, like what made it work? There were really three things. One, the product was awesome meaning there was nothing on the market that tasted as good as that but didn't have sugar.

The reason we were able to make that bar, because I'm sure many other people had formulated it, the reason that we were able to make it is because we became our own manufacturer and then engineered our own equipment.

So nobody had like been willing to take that leap, right? Everybody was using co-manufacturers, which I totally get it.

But in the beginning we had to do it ourselves to show people that it could be done. So that was huge for us. And then from a marketing perspective, we were all in on social from day one.

So this was before people were doing social. I remember the debate at the time- we starting thinking about this in 2009, and the debate at the time was, 'Is Facebook just a distraction? Will it ever be useful for business?'

And we were like, 'It's pretty obvious because it's just a megaphone. You're giving people the ability to have a global interaction within minutes of dealing with your company.'

So if you give them reason to say something positive, they can say it to a global audience.

I mean now this seems so self-evident, but you have to understand in 2009 no one was talking about this. And so the fact that we- every dime that we had from a marketing and advertising perspective went into social.

So it was all about community, it was about supporting people, it was about celebrating transformation, and all of that combined with a product that didn't exist that actually was metabolically advantageous, and boom you get that explosion.

Shawn Stevenson: Love it. I want to talk about community, and how important that is in building a brand, and also from the individuals who are part of the community. So I want to talk about both sides, why this matters, why it's so profound.

Tom Bilyeu: Yeah so man, community as a human being is just already everything, so that is- so do you follow Elon Musk at all?

Shawn Stevenson: A little bit, yeah.

Tom Bilyeu: Alright so here's why he blows me away; he talks about getting to the physics of the problem. Now this is a guy that's building a rocket company to take us to take us to Mars. He had no background in rocket science, okay?

He was in finance and decides, 'Well I can learn that.' And the reason he believed he could learn it was he could boil everything down to the physics, right?

The laws of physics are immutable so if I understand those then I can build something that, as long as it adheres to those, I'm fine.

I feel that same way about people. Community is one of the laws of the physics of being a human being, right? Brain chemistry, they give you a lot of the laws of the physics of human beings.

And so our desire to be a communal animal is just hardwired into us.

So people are always going to respond positively to an uplifting, positive community. So that's just true, that's the physics, so we wanted to build that.

We had a decision to make. Do we make the bar a reward for having six pack abs, or do we make it a catalyst for change?

We decided we wanted it to be a catalyst. It was the thing you gave to somebody who was struggling, and now you could help them.

Or with somebody like yourself that has deep knowledge of nutrition but it tastes really good. Right?

So you were meeting people where they were, either giving somebody who was all about self-denial something that felt indulgent but was metabolically advantageous, or to somebody who was really struggling to not eat things that they knew that they shouldn't be eating and give them something that tasted great.

So you were giving instead of taking away, and then celebrating their transformations. Essentially doing what we call mirror marketing, reflecting themselves back at themselves.

Rather than saying, 'Look at me, look at me.' It was like, 'Hey look at you guys, look what you're doing. This is really, really amazing,' and then encouraging them to support each other, and so that just really caught on.

And then there was two parts to that question. What was the second part?

Shawn Stevenson: So the community itself for the individuals who are in the community, how important that is. And then for building a brand. You really did answer both of them.

Tom Bilyeu: Yeah and so just to put a fine point on why that's good for a brand is you're making them feel good. Just the neurochemistry of it, they feel good, and now that halo effect washes over the brand.

And this was accidental but for anybody that really wants to know why this is good for a brand, understand this, the world is changing. Okay?

So generations go in cycles of what they want, what they value. Money comes and goes, sometimes it's more about community and connection, and we're going- like millennials kicked it off. Gen-Z is going to take it to a whole other level.

Now for someone like me, this is a magical time because I'm wired for connection. Like whatever that spectrum is where some people may be, 'Yeah it's fine,' but they don't really like go hard on it.

And then other people are like almost to their detriment, like really about connection, and team, and all of that. I'm over here on that side of the equation.

So I love connection. Like my wife is the most important thing in my universe because that like connection with her is like a drug for me. So I just love that.

Now so as we go into this period where people want that, like societally we're pushing back against money, we're looking at people who are money grubbing. Like back in the eighties we celebrated that. Greed is good, right?

That is out, man. That is disco. So people are really now about supporting each other, about trying to be socially conscious.

And so as we get into that, people are demanding that companies aren't nameless faceless organizations anymore. They want to know who's behind the company. They want to know, 'If I support you with my money, what do you do with the profits?'

Like what is your ethos? What do you stand for? Like what are you going to put out into the world? Literally what is the impact that you want to have?'

They want to know that about the companies, about the people. And so if you can step out front, if you can say who you are, right? You know it's your personal brand.

Like it's really about being you, it's about being authentic, it's about inviting people into your world.

So it's changing now in a really dramatic way. So if you're from an authentic place building a community, then people go, 'Okay I get what they're about. They want to see other people do well. They want to support the people that are using their product.'

It's not just about taking the profitability, it's about really investing in that community and doing something amazing, and the brand just gets all of that warm emotional glow.

Shawn Stevenson: I love it, man. So at this point where we are right now- so you really executed on that, obviously you took Quest to again, a billion dollar brand.

But you made a pivot recently and as I'm looking at your incredible painting up here of Michael Jordan.

Tom Bilyeu: Yes.

Shawn Stevenson: First tell me about this. What's the inspiration with this right here?

Tom Bilyeu: So that's the Jordan flu game.

Shawn Stevenson: Oh yeah.

Tom Bilyeu: So it's Michael Jordan but in a very weird pose you wouldn't normally see him in; hands on knees, bent over, head slung down. That to me maybe is one of the most meaningful pieces of art I've ever come across in my life because-

So the story goes that he either had the flu or food poisoning, and he plays- it's like game six or something in the finals, and he has 103 degree temperature, and he still puts up some of his best numbers of the series. I mean just absolutely incredible, and they go on to win.

So that to me is like you show up and you play. Like if you really believe in what you're doing, like if you want it that bad, there are no excuses. It is extreme ownership.

And the irony being that I got that painting- and I don't follow sports at all, dude. I'm not a sports guy, but like that bit of I'll call it mythology, like that story made its way into my heart, so when I saw that, I had to get it.

And like, I don't know, two months after I got that I got really sick, like really sick. Fever, like not your normal cold, this was like an all-out flu. It was gnarly, and I had a double episode.

Jim Kwik, our mutual friend, the reason that we are here together, he was one of the two people coming on.

And I remember waking up that morning and being like, 'I don't know how I'm going to do this.' Like from a 'I want it, I want to do this.' But you know when you get those chills where just moving, your body is just overcome with like shivers and chills. It was one of those.

And I was like, 'I don't have one episode. I have two episodes.' And so this is obviously happening over multiple days, the first day that it really was just brutality, I had to prepare.

Now I do just an enormous amount of work, preparation. Hours, and hours, and hours, and hours, and hours, and I had to do all of that with a 103 degree temperature, and then I had to show up the next day still with a crazy temperature and actually do the episode.

So that to me- like that whole time I was just thinking about Jordan. Like if you want it badly enough, you show up and you play.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow. So that's one takeaway. Another takeaway is be careful what art you pick.

Tom Bilyeu: Yeah, exactly. Right?

Shawn Stevenson: That's amazing, man. And this just reminds me of my friend, Eric Thomas, he's a motivational speaker who he's the guy who really pushes into public consciousness when you want to succeed as bad as you want to breathe, then you'll be successful.

And you know, so many of us today because with social media we see so many ideas and facades and stories of what success can look like, but we don't actually know what it takes to attain it.

And there are different levels to this. Really again, everybody today it's just about what feels like success for you? What feels like impact for you?

You don't have to go out with 103 fever and score forty points, you know what I'm saying, if that's not your path. But sometimes that is in your own way, and how much do you really want it?

Can you make those action steps, and just keep moving forward even when it's like major struggle going on?

And so for me even today, I was just talking about this. My greatest motivator, my greatest driving force is growth. And so every day I just have to get at least 1% better. You know?

This might be in relationship context, it might be in finances, it might be in my physical health, but just 1% and at the end of the day when I lay my head down I feel successful.

If I don't, which it's been a long time since I've felt this, but I feel like- like you said earlier, dead inside. You know? I feel like a White Walker, you know?

And it's as simple as making these small mandates, small switches in our psychology.

So I would love to talk about the pivot now, you know? So you branched out, you shifted your focus to something new. What was the catalyst for you doing that?

Tom Bilyeu: So I always knew that there were two problems I was meant to address; the pandemic of the body and the pandemic of the mind.

Now the pandemic of the body is easy for people to see, right? When you die of diet-related complications, it happens very visually. Usually the person is overweight dramatically first. If they get diabetes or something like that, they could literally be amputated starting at the toes and working their way up.

So it's just a very visible problem.

The pandemic of the mind on the other hand is very subtle. It's just a life that's unoptimized. It's feeling dead inside.

Now it can go all the way to suicide and there are some terrifying statistics about suicide rates. In young men in Australia it's the leading cause of death. In young men in America it's the second leading cause of death.

So I mean that's already scary.

But let's back up to the more insidious because it's really invisible in just anxiety, depression, never feeling like you could achieve something.

And so a lot of this- you know I'd love to say that there was like one sort of hard line moment in the sand, but it really went like this.

When I was in college I Big Brothered, and it ended up being like an eight and a half year relationship with this kid that grew up in South Central Los Angeles. He was adopted and abused by his adoptive mother, so I mean just a crazy, crazy situation.

I end up being the guardian of the court system when he got taken into foster care. So I mean this like really left an impression on me, and it was such a long relationship.

Until my wife, he was the longest non-familial relationship I'd ever had, which is pretty crazy. I've never even thought about that until literally right now.

And so he was like this huge thing in my life, but the foster care system ends up moving him so far away that I lose contact with him.

And then I go at Quest and we start manufacturing, and manufacturing is sort of by nature going to be in the inner cities again, and now I have say 800 employees from the inner cities.

And in the beginning, for the first couple years I interview every single one of them. And for the first year and change I was working on the production line every day side-by-side with these guys.

So really got to see the impact of the inner cities, and expectations on them, and the way that they think, and like their vision of what their future is going to be.

And I remember one kid after working with me for a year or something, comes and goes, 'You know for the first time I actually have hope for my future.' He was like, 'I never thought about my future before because you either die or end up in jail.' He was like, 'So I never really thought about it.' And he was like, 'But now I'm actually hopeful and excited about my future.'

And I was like, 'Whoa.' And so that whole process just made me realize that the way- the frame of reference of somebody who grew up in the inner cities is so terrifying because it's so limited.

And I started thinking of this concept, I called it 'mining for astronauts,' because it was just like this concept- you can be anything, man. Like whether you're from the inner city, whether you're from a rural village in South America, Africa, whatever, it does not matter.

Like humans are capable of the extraordinary when they put in the work.

So I'm mining now for these people that have that readiness to wake up, right? So I use the reference of *The Matrix* all the time.

So like they talk about in *The Matrix*, not everybody is ready to wake up. But you find these people that are ready, they're excited, they want to take ownership, they want to do something, they want to go on a path of skill acquisition, they want to work hard, they want to do something extraordinary, they're willing to believe once you put a little- like invest a little bit of belief in them, they're willing to take that and run with it.

And so doing all of that, like at Quest I wasn't thinking like, 'What's my next move?' And to be honest, I always thought Quest was going to be my forever company. And that's why- so what is now Impact Theory originally started as Inside Quest, and we built an entire studio inside of Quest.

We were making all of our own content, we did an interview show like I do now with Impact Theory, and I thought that the brand would be able to expand enough to take in both the body and the mind.

Now I learned a very hard lesson about the way that people approach brands, which is they thought of us as the protein bar company. So they're looking at me as the co-founder of a protein bar company and doing the show about the mind, and they're just like, 'What are you-?'

Like it was such a disconnect for them, and so it was going to be a very long and expensive slog to get them to see the brand in the new light, which wasn't the vision that was necessarily shared by my partners, and so it was going to be me sort of dragging them along in this journey that was going to be very expensive. It didn't match with where they saw themselves going.

So we'd had the kind of success where we didn't have to do that. So it was like a beautiful fourteen year relationship, absolutely loved it. We did some extraordinary things, but I couldn't not build Impact Theory.

So if it wasn't going to be inside of Quest then it meant that I had to spin it out and do a standalone company, so that's what we did, and here we are.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow. Wow, that takes some courage for sure, but it just sounds like you were compelled- like you just said, you couldn't not do it. That's so profound.

How- well before I get to that, the name impact, Impact Theory. So what's up with that?

Tom Bilyeu: Yeah, well oh man, I wish that we had done like a time lapse of us trying to name this company.

It was a brutal slog of where you're trying to take your ideology, where you want it to really say what you're about, and we went through just an inhuman number of variations, and floated some out to- like there are services that will actually let you survey people.

So you pay like \$200 and you get 800 people to reply and say like, 'What do we think of this name.'

And the one that I *really* wanted was Mission House, and I just- I loved it so much, and it just- everyone was like, 'I think it as soup kitchen, soup kitchen, soup kitchen.'

Shawn Stevenson: Exactly, yeah.

Tom Bilyeu: And so I was like, 'Oh man.' But it really captured my imagination. But I just had to acknowledge.

Shawn Stevenson: No I mean that- actually when I was a kid, the Hosea House popped right into my mind. That's where we'd get food for our family when we weren't doing too well.

Tom Bilyeu: Yes.

Shawn Stevenson: So as soon as you said it, that's what I thought about.

Tom Bilyeu: Yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: So good job not going with that, but I see why it would be awesome.

Tom Bilyeu: So- and for the reason that you think of it was actually part of the reason that I liked it, right? It had the sense of like, 'We're going to look after you. This is a safe place.' And just, 'I'm on a mission,' but mission is very much a word that has just way too much baggage.

So we were brainstorming a bunch. We had thrown Impact Theory- we must have had literally 250 to 300 names that we had thrown out. Some of them were hysterical.

And this one just stuck around, stuck around, stuck around, and we were just at an impasse, 'What are we going to do?'

And somebody said, 'You know, what about Impact-' Originally there were two; Impact Machine and Impact Theory.

And I was like, 'Man, I really like Impact Machine, but I don't feel like we've earned that yet.' And there's this whole concept, I think it's been largely debunked, but it put the notion into public consciousness that the moon was created from an impact on

the earth from a meteorite or whatever, and that's what spun off the moon so it's known as the 'Impact Theory.'

And so I always liked that, that it came from this other realm of cosmology, and so I found that very interesting. And then I just thought, 'You know it's right for us because I'm not dogmatic.'

I have a hypothesis, and my hypothesis is this; to have the impact that I want to have on the world, I need to build a studio that will rival Disney. So TV shows, movies, comic books, all of it.

The reason is the way that humans assimilate truly disruptive information is through narrative. That's just like when I talk about getting to the physics, that's the physics of the human mind. We transmit things through emotion and story.

So when you want somebody to take on a new identity, you have to give them an identity to adopt. Now that could a real person, Elon Musk. It can be you, you know that I'm sure there are many people that look up to you that want to be like you.

So you can give them a narrative in that sense, or you can give them a real just straight fictional narrative. *Star Wars*, *The Matrix*, and a whole host of other amazing stories.

So that's what I believe to be the answer to this problem of how do you end, what I call, generational poverty? So think of me again in context, working with a lot of people in the inner cities, and I see that it's ideology passed on from generation to generation.

So how do you break that cycle?

So I didn't want to do the equivalent of eat less and exercise more, which is essentially I think the kind of content that you're - and thank you - giving me the platform to do right now, is eat less and exercise more.

It's me diatribing about the hard work, and all of that, all the things that I've done. It isn't the like entertainment, emotion, going on this awesome roller coaster that I can love just for that sake, right? Like pure raw entertainment.

The Matrix changed my life, but it's just entertainment. But I read a layer deeper, but that was up to me. It exists on both levels.

So that's my theory. So we called it Impact Theory. This is really our theory in how to have that impact, and I joke that if ten years from now we end up being right, then we'll change the name to Impact Machine. But for now it's Impact Theory.

Shawn Stevenson: Awesome. Awesome, wow. Just hearing this and then thinking back to my story since we heard Mission House earlier. This is a situation where I can speak from experience and growing up where we were getting food from a food pantry, or where we were- my mom would have me to look in a dumpster for cans to go recycle to get some money so we can get food on the table.

You know she would sell her blood literally sometimes. And growing up with those conditions, and seeing every now and then my mom would come into some money, but very quickly it would disappear, you know? Like that money thermometer was an issue.

Where can people start? Because for me it was definitely a process of starting to see those paradigms and carrying around those perceptions about reality, and being financially stable or even financially wealthy.

So where can people start to get from that poverty mindset to more of a mindset of success, and abundance, and access?

Tom Bilyeu: I think the honest answer is recognizing the physics of the human animal.

So we are the ultimate adaptation machine. We've become the apex predator because of our ability to adapt. So every species through evolution has had to make the choice to become hardwired, or do we become- are we set for flexibility?

And most animals are hardwired. That's why a horse comes out and it can walk and run the day it's born, right? Think about that from a human perspective when kids start walking at like a year or some crazy thing.

So we're born for maximum flexibility. We're a ball of jelly, can't hold its own head up, has to be cared for, but what we've traded off for is the ability to go in essentially any direction.

Now if you can believe that, and if you can believe in brain plasticity, meaning that the brain responds to the environment that you can learn virtually anything and the brain will actually rewire itself to accommodate that new knowledge.

So then it's like, 'Okay if you believe in that,' and that's really- when I say humans lead with belief, which I think its 100% fundamental and true, you don't do anything until you believe you're going to get a positive result.

Now that doesn't mean that I don't pick up a basketball unless I think I can win the NBA finals. It means that when I pick up that basketball, I believe that I can improve.

So that is the core fundamental step one; believe that you can get better over time. Now if you need further scientific proof of that, when they decoded the human

genome they thought, 'This is it. We're going to solve everything. Cancer is going to be gone, heart disease is gone, everything just gone, gone, gone. We're going to be able to solve all these problems.'

And they realized, 'Wait a second, there's only 20,000 genes in the human genome? How can that be possible when an onion- some types of onions have 40,000 genes? Are we really saying that an onion is more complicated than a human being?'

And the answer of course is no, but they were discarding all of the stuff they called junk DNA.

Shawn Stevenson: Right.

Tom Bilyeu: Then they realized what junk DNA actually is, is epigenetic signaling. So it's our encoding's way of saying, 'Okay these are the 20,000 genes you have but I can turn them on a lot, I can turn them off, I can turn them on a little bit,' right? Like all these shades of gray.

Now you take those 20,000 and magnify them over our near infinite ability to respond to our environment, and you get this crazy apex predator that's capable of just about anything.

So like that- I just want people to understand that, because what happens is people develop an identity of who they are. By the time they hear my message, good Lord, like they have such a solid view of who they are that is so influenced by literally the zip code that they grew up in, okay? Not like what they're capable of, the zip code that they grew up in is going to form their own opinion about themselves and what's possible.

That's so horrifying to me that I can't even begin to tell you.

So just believe humans as a species can adapt in any direction. Now people will believe it as kids, they have a harder time believing it as adults because there are things that are slightly more stubborn and all that, but you still can change in any direction that you want if you're willing to put the time and energy into it.

If you believe that, the poverty mindset will rapidly vanish.

Shawn Stevenson: Absolutely, and the reason- one of the reasons for kids being much more malleable is that before the age of about six or seven, we spend a lot more time in theta.

So this is kind of like a hypnotic trance in a way. So this is why kids are so impressionable, Easter Bunny is real, Santa Claus, everybody, Elsa, you know? Ninjago.

All of these characters are very, very real and it's not until we get around that age that things start to become more solidified, we start to spend more time in beta, and a little bit more analytical about things.

But we're very impressionable, and so that's really what I want to talk more about, is once we start to solidify our beliefs and they start to become a lot stronger and more anchored, and we start to- and here's something interesting I think about people as well, is that we find data constantly to back up what we believe. Right?

So my question then is what's like one or two action steps we can do to start to find evidence of other things?

Tom Bilyeu: Man, well in today's age with social media, finding evidence about the things is very, very easy. The catch is, like you were pointing out, how do you open yourself to being changed by that?

So there's two things that you need to do. One, you have to change your identity, and identity drives behavior even if that behavior is what to choose to believe.

And so if part of your identity like mine, this is so core to who I am, I am not dogmatic. Right? Look at the name of the company. We just went through the whole diatribe about it.

I refused to name it anything other than theory because I want to remind myself that I'm open to being wrong about this.

Shawn Stevenson: Love it.

Tom Bilyeu: That I have- my mission is important to me, right? Getting people to think in a way that's empowering I think is the domino- the lead domino that then has a massive impact on the world.

So- and I think I know the way, but it's a theory, right? And so we'll see if it ends up playing out. If it doesn't, I'll switch and change directions.

So that's a core part of my identity is to be open to new information. So people need to adopt a very open identity so that they'll take in this new information.

The second thing is what do you build your self-esteem around? Because it matters a lot. Now most people by default build their self-esteem around being right, being smart, being talented, all things that they believe they were born with.

That is a very fragile position to be in because you can be a truly world class athlete, but if you finish eighth in the Olympics, like you're going to feel like a loser. That's what's crazy, but you're one of the eight best athletes on the planet and you feel like a loser, right?

So you have to be just insanely careful what you build your self-esteem around.

So it is inevitable you're going to be around people that are smarter than you. It's inevitable that you're going to bump into people that are right more than you.

In fact, I've never met a human being that wasn't wrong more than they were right. Even people that smash it out of the park.

Take someone like Warren Buffett. The vast majority of his wealth comes from like three companies, or something stupid like that.

So it's like even he doesn't get it right every time, right? It's just that he's wise enough to learn from his mistakes, realize that he can get better, learn more, grow, make new decisions.

So when you build your self-esteem around being right, being talented, being smart, it's just a death trap because people need to feel good about themselves.

They're going to move towards areas that make them feel good. So if you want to be smart, you're going to put yourself around dumber people so that it bigs you up, right?

Conversely if you switch what you build your self-esteem around to being the learner, for instance, to being willing to admit that you're wrong faster than somebody else, to identify the right answer no matter where it comes from.

Like those are anti-fragile as defined by Nassim Taleb. And he said- look he wrote this book called 'Antifragile,' and he said, 'At the end of the day, things that are resilient, tough, strong, they're all still defined by their breaking point, it's just that their breaking point is really far away.'

Something that's truly anti-fragile, the more you attack it, the stronger it gets.

So imagine I have the identity of a learner. I build my self-esteem around being a learner, which means when somebody comes and says, 'Tom, you're an idiot,' I think, 'Fantastic. I only have one question for you; in what way?'

Because if you tell me why I'm an idiot, now I can go figure it out, I can learn, I can empower myself. I don't pride myself on who I am today. I pride myself on my willingness to stare at my inadequacies, to recognize where I need to improve, and then most importantly I'm proud of the fact that I actually will put in the work.

I will put in the work to go and get better, and I so believe that about myself that even in moments like that where someone is trying to attack me - and I have the chills right

now - even when someone is trying to attack me, they only make me stronger because I switched my identity.

So it's- look I feel this thing just like anybody else. I hate being wrong, it sucks, it's not fun. Like we're hardwired for that, but at the end of the day my identity kicks in and I remember, 'Oh yeah, I'm the learner.'

So it doesn't- like being wrong, I'm actually proud of being able to admit it.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, oh man just yesterday as I mentioned I was hanging out Mark Sisson who is just a boss when it comes to the nutrition, and this primal kind of paradigm, and he's I believe 64 years old.

Tom Bilyeu: Wow.

Shawn Stevenson: And he is in like the most amazing shape. And I asked him what his model is for everybody he's trying to set. He was like, 'I want to show people what's possible at seventy. You know, what seventy really could look like.'

Tom Bilyeu: That's amazing.

Shawn Stevenson: And but he shared with me something so profound, but it was just in passing, and this wasn't recorded, and so I want to share that right now and it was about identity, but it was random.

He didn't think about this, it was only until you said that, and he was- we were talking about St. Louis because I'm out here with you guys right now in Cali.

And he was like, 'I've got a St. Louis story. I was there-' and he was an elite endurance athlete. He won like fourth place in the triathlon- like the Y Triathlon.

And so he was there doing a competition, and the night before in the hotel he was staying in, it was like a Holiday Inn Select, or something like that, but there was like a class reunion.

And I was thinking maybe he was going to be bothered by it or something the way the story was going, but he was like, 'You know I went downstairs and I slapped on a nametag, and just crashed the party.'

And basically he was like, 'Even six people came up and said, 'I remember you,' and he had never seen any of these people before in his life but he changed his identity and he was like, 'I had one of the best nights of my entire life in St. Louis when I decided to be somebody different.'

Tom Bilyeu: Wow.

Shawn Stevenson: That's how simple it actually is. We can actually decide to be somebody different. It's looking at the wiring that we're carrying though, because again this is like physical substance in our brain.

You know these neurons are connected, the synaptic connections, it's physical but we can create new channels at any time. You know and it's something we kind of open with, with this idea of neuro-plasticity.

And so that's what I want to encourage people to do, and I would love for you to talk more about it, like some- maybe a couple of action steps on changing your identity.

How do you go from, 'I'm the person who is the victim. Like why does this stuff happen to me? Why do people keep hurting me?' To being somebody who is the courageous person or the strong person that other people can look to?

Tom Bilyeu: You know man, what's amazing, you gave me the chills. Just in asking the question, that is the answer.

So what you did was you identified somebody saying, 'Oh I'm the victim,' right? So step one, identify.

What is your identity right now? Like what is the story that you're telling yourself about yourself? And then you're going to co-opt it and you're going to tell yourself a new story, and you're going to say it in such a blatant simplistic way.

I think people think I'm joking, but this is how I went from scrounging in my couch cushions to find enough change to put gas in my car, feeling lost, incapable, stupid, under-educated, to building a billion dollar business, is I started telling myself things like this.

'I'm the type of person that.'

'I'm the type of person that reads. I'm the type of person that isn't afraid to admit when he's wrong. I'm the type of person that will take a good idea from wherever it comes, whether it comes from the janitor or the CEO. Like if it's a good idea, it's a good idea. I'm the type of person that.'

I used to struggle getting out of bed in the morning. So 'I'm the type of person that gets out of bed in ten minutes or less.'

'I'm the type of person that is always in shape,' right?

These were all things, by the way, that I was saying when I was sixty pounds overweight, when I was the guy that would argue for hours, and hours, and hours about something because I didn't want to admit that I was wrong, right?

I was flipping- everything about my identity that I thought was counter-productive towards taking me towards my goals, which by the way is a linchpin in all of this, you need to know what your goal is.

If you want to be empowered, if you want to be lean, if you want to be in shape, if you want to build something that matters, if you want to have impact, like get real clarity because then you can just ask, 'Hey these are all the things that make up my identity currently. Are they moving me towards my goal or not?'

For instance, 'I'm smart.' Okay is that moving you towards your goal? Yes or no?

And that was a real breakthrough moment because that seems so like empowering. People say it to their kids all the time.

But when you take your identity from being smart, how do you react when something makes you feel stupid? You shy away from it, you move away from it, you try to never be in that position again, you try to argue and convince other people.

And you have to have the awareness to recognize that you're doing it, but there is a voice inside of you that screams at you when you know you're wrong.

Even if the only language that scream has is anxiety, discomfort, anger, right? It's why there's the Shakespeare quote, 'The lady doth protest too much.'

When somebody overreacts to something you immediately go, 'I touched on a nerve,' right?

So if you find yourself overreacting, something is touching on a nerve. Figure out what that is, re-change or change your identity now to be something where it's going to actually empower you and move you forward.

So changing your identity is really very simple. There is a knock-on effect however, which once you start saying like, 'I'm the type of person that is always in shape.'

Well then you'd better also be the type of person that eats right. 'I'm the type of person that goes to the gym,' and you're going to either earn or lose credibility with yourself every day, and this is where people get messed up.

They think, 'Well nobody's watching, I can get away with this.' But you're watching, and so you're going to erode your sense of self.

And it doesn't matter what other people think of you, but oh dear God it matters what you think of yourself tremendously. So getting micro victories is really huge.

So you'll notice I say to myself, 'I'm the type of person that goes to the gym every day.' I'm not saying, 'I'm the type of person that goes in and sets a PR every day,' because there's some days where I don't feel like it.

But let me tell you, I'm going to roll up to the gym, I'm going to do what I said I was going to do, I'm going to earn that credibility with myself.

And then yeah, there are some days where I really push and I go hard, and I reward myself emotionally for that. 'Well done,' you know? 'You really pushed today, that's awesome, feel good about that.'

And so then I'm more likely to do it the next time.

So when you set- it's what I call bright lines. When you create a bright line- for instance I have a massive number of bright lines around my food, which is how I've been able to lose sixty pounds, keep it off for almost ten years at this point, just bright lines.

There are certain things that I eat, and that's it. Like I have a set number of calories for the day, and there are days- let me tell you, there are days I want to take my calories up, but I don't because I have a bright line, right?

Because I don't want to lose that credibility with myself.

So know that you're always watching. But if you do those two things; say, 'I'm the type of person that,' and then actually back it up with your actions, then you can change your identity startlingly fast.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow, love it. And that is basically giving your belief legs is what you're doing. If your belief is sort of like this tabletop right here, and just it's getting an affirmation plus it's getting anchored deeper into your psychology. I love that. And it's so simple, and it works.

I would love now to talk about- let's talk about fitness.

Tom Bilyeu: Let's do it.

Shawn Stevenson: Alright? Since you are talking about the training. So what does that look like for you today? What do you like to do when you go to the gym? Drop something on us, man.

Tom Bilyeu: Well it's so interesting. Earlier when we were talking, I was saying, 'You know you really have to find an intrinsic way to enjoy it.'

Part of me was laughing because I really don't enjoy the gym. And so the thing that I've had to latch onto are the results. Like when I'm in the gym and I'm really not

having a good time, and I want to leave, I start thinking of, 'What do I want out of this?' Right?

So one thing that I want is longevity, I truly want to live forever, and while I don't think that motivates many people, that actually motivates me and I believe so much in technology, and I'm a techno optimist, I really think if I can like make it another thirty or forty years that we'll hit a point where for every year that we live, we'll gain more than a year of life in just medical advancements.

So I actually think that I have a shot at living forever. Now I live in the friction between I think I have a shot at living forever and I know that I could have an aneurysm before I finish this sentence and be dead. So like I get that both I'm not just living in delusion.

So that's part of what motivates me to push in the gym. The other part is I want to look good naked, and that's just me owning like the truth of who I am.

I like strength, I like being powerful, I like feeling solid, all of those things are meaningful, but I'm very religious about going to the gym. So even though I don't like it, I get a tremendous ego boost out of that.

The fact that I don't like it and I still do it makes me feel like a stud.

Shawn Stevenson: Thank you for the honesty because I just got a message from somebody a few days ago who's a part of one of my programs, and she just put herself out there.

She was like setting it up with, 'I'm sorry to admit this, but I don't like eating healthy. I don't like going to the gym. I don't like-'

And basically she had conditions stacked so much against her that no progress could be made, and that's what she was seeing in her life.

And so there's a couple things. Like one of them is tying the action to something else.

And another thing, you mentioned it earlier briefly, but it's falling in love with the process. You know, finding something to love about it.

And thank you for sharing that, because I know there's a lot of people that feel the same way.

And also I've got to put this out there for folks too. It depends on the results that you really want. You know, my favorite type of exercise is F-U-N. You know what I'm saying?

Whatever it is that makes you feel good, whatever it is that you enjoy, and think outside the box. Like if you love roller skating, like throw those bad boys on and get your crazy legs on. Do whatever you've got to do.

If it's dancing, if it's basketball, you know find something that you actually enjoy to couple that with the stuff that you really need to do to get these great exceptional results, if that's what you want.

So I want to talk about that. So when you're lifting, so are you doing like power lifting? Are you doing like unconventional training?

Tom Bilyeu: I do pretty standard bodybuilding lifting. So I do a push / pull leg split most of the time. And yeah, that has been my routine for awhile.

When I was in a really hardcore masking phase I varied it a lot more. I was doing up to two hours in the gym six days a week, and I've never put on more muscle than in that phase.

I mean just the answer is almost always do more.

But now I'm in and out of the gym between 45 minutes to an hour, sometimes like an hour and ten. If I'm really trying to get lean I'll do cardio, but for the most part it's bench press, curling, squats.

You know I mean just like the deadlift, your real basics.

Shawn Stevenson: Got it, got it. So this is something that I can impart then right now is implementing some of this unconventional training.

It was a couple of months ago when I got into that- because this is the stuff that works. Number one, it's like the 80/20 if you do those things you just talked about. But in this game, like the 20% matters too.

So I actually injured my wrist. I was doing- I don't even like telling the story, but I was doing a heavy deadlift the day before, and the next day- and I've done this so many times.

I was doing a press workout, and I grabbed two 110-pound dumbbells, and my grip was ridiculously weak this day. And I've seen it before, but not this week.

And a smarter version of myself would have been like, 'Maybe I'll just do something else today.' But I was like, 'Nah, I've got this. I just need to get it up and I'll be good.'

And so I kicked the weights up, and I had them over my chest as I'm laying back, and I felt like my wrist had to pop, which I just popped just now, and so I just let it pop. And when it did, just pain just shot down my arm.

But you would think I would put the weights down. I didn't. I did the set. You would think I'd be done at least. No, I did two more sets, and I did an incline press, and I finished the workout.

Because I just was like, 'It'll go away.'

Tom Bilyeu: Yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: And the next day I couldn't turn my steering wheel, you know?

Tom Bilyeu: Whoa.

Shawn Stevenson: And that lingered on for a couple of weeks until eventually I got a scan done. And there was no structural damage fortunately, and I even got an ultrasound done recently.

But it was just a nuisance. And this also reminds you of like when things are going so well and you feel good and something happens, you start to really understand how valuable these things are in your life. Right?

You start even seeing people like, 'Look at him turning his steering wheel. It's messed up.' You know?

And so- but the message is prior to that for like two, three, four weeks I was telling myself over and over again, 'I need to get on my kettlebell work. You know, I need to make sure that I'm doing my wrist mobility exercises.'

Those were the exact- it's like the Michael Jordan. Like you've got that piece and something showed up. You got that lesson, you know? And so for me it was to not push that 20% out to the side.

So I've got my kettlebells now. And by the way, the Onnit kettlebells, I don't know if you've seen these. The primal bells?

Tom Bilyeu: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: They've got the primal bells. They've got a partnership with Star Wars.

Tom Bilyeu: Nice.

Shawn Stevenson: They've also got like the Storm Trooper kettlebell.

Tom Bilyeu: That's dope.

Shawn Stevenson: They've got Marvel- they've got a partnership with Marvel too, so they've got an Iron Man kettlebell.

First of all, they're sexy. Makes it just fun to just go over and grab it and do some swings or something like that.

But so everybody, make sure to check out www.Onnit.com/model. That's www.Onnit.com/model and you get 10% off all of their exercise equipment. Also battle ropes. Do you ever work with those?

Tom Bilyeu: I have not. I know what they are but I've never used them.

Shawn Stevenson: Oh bro, you're going to love it. I'm going to get you a battle rope. It's going to be the gift. So battle rope, Big Red is the one I have, I think it's like fifty pounds. So it's some serious, serious weight. You can do a lot of stuff with it.

So guys, head over, check them out. Of course they've got amazing supplements as well for human performance, gear, www.Onnit.com/model.

Alright so this has been absolutely mind-blowing for me because of hearing more of your story. Like there were certain things I had no idea about, even the story of impact, and being a Big Brother.

That's really profound and it's just amazing to see that, and to see that as the underbelly of what you're doing.

But I'm curious when you made the decision, and I know that it wasn't easy with your partners, but I'm sure that there was some tension.

So what would you say to people who are wanting to make a shift in their life, but the people who are currently in their life aren't 100% on board with what they're doing?

What would you advise people to do in that situation if they're really passionate about the direction they want to go?

Tom Bilyeu: Yeah. Man, I may be the worst person to ask that because I don't struggle a lot with that. So for me it's like once I know what I want, then I've just learned that your life just keeps getting more and more miserable when there's something calling to you that gives you energy, that's going to pull you through hard times, it's going to pull you through boredom, and other people don't want that for you.

Like that honestly for me looks like madness from the outside. When I see people give into that- so like I didn't have my first drink until I was 26, I never did drugs, like just peer pressure is just not my shtick.

So that never resonated with me. Like when you want something- the people that don't want something, that's where I get scared because if there's nothing that's pulling you, if there's nothing that generates that energy in your life, then I get it. Like you're more likely to be swayed by the tide.

But man, create something in your life- and I say create on purpose, but create something in your life that is exciting for you, that you get amped up about. And whether that's video games-

In fact I'll just answer the question very simply. Go all in on something. Like once you're all in man, and you go through the process of really falling in love.

I don't believe that it's an archeological dig to find passion. I believe that it's constructing, you build it. You build the passion, you create it. It starts as an interest, and you build it into a passion by gaining mastery.

So whatever it is that you're going to give yourself over to, give yourself fully to it man, commit to it, get great at it, get so good that you can't be ignored.

And like so in video games- I love video games, by the way. And in video games there's a derogatory term for somebody that really wants to get good, they call them try-hards.

Now that is utter madness to me. I am a try-hard. In everything that I care about I'm a try-hard. Why wouldn't you be?

Like it is so crazy to me that people give other people a hard time about being a try-hard. Like if I'm going to do something, I am going to try to get great or I'm not going to spend time at it.

So man, that for me is the answer. Like there are people around you, and they're heckling you, and maybe they love you. In fact, let's make it hard. They love you, they want something good for you, and they're heckling you because they think you're going to fail.

So now it's really hard because you can't doubt their motives, right? Like these are the people in your life, like they've been there for you, they've supported you, but at the end of the day if I know what I want and you can't see the vision, I'm not going to wait for you to catch up to that.

With all the empathy and compassion in the world I'm going to say, 'Look, I totally hear you. I get that you want something good for me, but just so you know, this thing gives me energy. And so I'm going to be doing that thing. I'm going to pour myself into it. And if I fail, I'll learn. Like I'm not worried about the failure, the failure doesn't reflect bad on you. I'm going to learn from it so I'm not going to have emotional

damage from the failure. So like, hey enjoy it. Like if I fall and you find that at least amusing, then you know hey, like have fun.'

But to me then, if people are trying to be vampiric and they're trying to like really stop you from doing something, you just can't spend time with them. And that is- I get it, for most people that's really, really hard but you have one life to live, this is it.

Whatever that thing is that you're going to be all in on, don't let anybody stop you or slow you down.

Shawn Stevenson: Love it. Love it. Man, this just reminds me of something really profound that with this neuroplasticity, your mind really does stretch especially when you get outside of your comfort zone.

And it's very difficult, if not impossible, to go back to the way things were. So once you do that, you're already increased- on the scale of human potential, you've already moved yourself up.

You can always go back and do that lower scale work, but you're bigger, and that container is bigger now. So I love that, man.

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

What's the model you're creating for other people with how you're living your life personally?

Tom Bilyeu: You can do anything you set your mind to without limitation. Like that's it. You just have to be willing to go through the hard work to acquire those skills.

And I know that's a lie, I know there are limits, but it doesn't do any good to focus on the limits. Like blind yourself to them and just go after it as if as long as you put in the work, it's going to pan out.

Like yeah, man that's it. I want people to see that. I want them to see that you really can have impact on a global scale if you're willing to actually figure out what it takes, and then to actually get the skills to be good at that, and then to actually get up and execute on it.

Shawn Stevenson: Tom, you are a phenomenal human being, and your energy is contagious, and I just want you to- and I know you're going to do this anyways, but please don't stop. Just keep doing what you're doing because you're impacting a lot of lives.

And it's just you already know there's a trickledown effect to that, and we need folks like you like right now- like yesterday, alright? So thank you so much for being who you are, man.

Tom Bilyeu: Thanks for having me on, dude. This was awesome.

Shawn Stevenson: My pleasure. Can you let everybody know where they can connect with you, where they can find your show, and all that good stuff?

Tom Bilyeu: Absolutely. You can find me anywhere across all socials at @TomBilyeu. My name is unfortunately spelled a little bit weird. It's Bilyeu. You can follow me literally Facebook, Instagram, Twitter.

All of my content goes out on YouTube, so /TomBilyeu. And if there are any movie fans out there, TV fans, comic book fans, I have a secondary channel called Impact Theory Studios on YouTube. Check that out.

We just started and we're doing reviews and things all from an empowering mindset perspective. So the whole idea of Impact Theory the studio, which is ultimately what I'm here to build, is about creating one type of content, and that is to tell stories of empowerment over, and over, and over.

So you'll hear us dissect movies, and TV shows, and comics, and all that stuff from the mindset perspective.

Shawn Stevenson: Love it. Tom Bilyeu, thank you so much.

Tom Bilyeu: There it is. Thanks for having me, man.

Shawn Stevenson: Everybody, thank you so much for tuning into the show today. I hope you got a lot of value out of this, and if anything I think that this is just a call to action to put yourself in motion because I truly believe that in order for you to find that thing that you're going to focus on with giving your gift and the impact that you're going to make, it's probably going to be in the process of doing, and taking action, and growing yourself, and focusing on- as Tom talked about today, just getting better.

That's really the goal here, and it's never about perfection, it's just about progress, and in that progress I guarantee you're going to find your gift if you don't already know what it is.

If you do know what it is, like I was talking with Tom, like yesterday we need you so start taking action, and I truly, truly do appreciate you immensely.

Make sure to stay tuned. We've got some amazing guests coming up and some amazing show topics, and I appreciate you immensely. 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.

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.