

EPISODE 288

## Redefining What it Means to Be Fit & Healthy – With Guest Lita Lewis

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**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.

Listen, today is a very, very special episode because we're talking about something that I'm really passionate about, and through this venture that I've had over the past decade and a half, being a strength and conditioning coach, a nutritionist, author, all these incredible things- having the number one rated health podcast, it's really brought me to this important conclusion, and I've come to finally understand that everybody's journey is unique, and we really need to get out of this perpetual state of comparison that can fall into, especially in the Internet age.

And I'm not saying that we don't need things to inspire us, but we can get caught up- and there's this very important statement that I love that says, "When you compare me, you negate me," and you miss out on how valuable and unique you really are, and our goal here is to really become the very best version of you, and not trying to be somebody else, you know?

Be you, because everybody else is taken. Alright? Now with that said, how do we go about that? How do we really embrace our uniqueness? How do we really tap into becoming the best version of who we are? And that's one of the things we're going to talk about today.

And somebody who's really kind of brought to the forefront a nice category for people to embrace their uniqueness, and even my wife, she's the first person who introduced my special guest to me, because she found out about her and it was really liberating for her, you know?

To think, "Wow, like this is speaking to me, this speaks to who I am, who I feel like I want to be. I want to be the best version of this person."

And so with that said, listen, get your notebook ready, listen with your inner ears because there's going to be some good stuff.

Before we do that though, I've got to tell you, you know I'm on the road right now, and I'm traveling all over the place bouncing around, and I brought my son with me, my youngest son Braden. And so he's been sitting in the backseat, we've been driving around Los Angeles, and now this is his first experience with L.A. traffic, alright?

So he's been harnessing his superhero power. We just read this book called, 'My Secret Superpower,' by CJ Quiney. We'll put that in the show notes, by the way. And at the end of the book it asks what your secret superpower is.

And so I asked my son, "So what is your power?" And he went and got a pen to write it down in the book, and he's six years old, and he was like, "All of them. All the powers. Alright? That's my power." And I was like, "Really?" That's pretty audacious but that's what he went with.

And so for him, in the backseat of the car, he started tapping into his Professor X. He was like literally holding his temples and like making the traffic move. You know? Like that's what he's been doing, and like working on his qi doing this stuff in the backseat.

I've never seen- I don't know where this came from, but I thought it was really cool. So we've been traveling around, but also when we're on the road I want to make sure that we're getting our nutritional bases covered.

And so my little guy, I'm making sure that I'm getting some greens into his body, getting him some green superfood blends, but also for myself and my wife - and I also mix it into his smoothies as well - we make sure to get these medicinal mushrooms in.

And today, since I hit the gym, I had cordyceps. Alright? And so here's a study, this was published in 'Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise,' it took thirty healthy athletes for six weeks to record the effects of cordyceps on their performance.

The group that added cordyceps to their daily regimen had twice the oxygen uptake of the control group, and this oxygen by the way is essential for supplying nutrients to your muscles, for preventing fatigue, and the build-up of lactate.

And so here's what they found, this was the actual at the end of the study, they found that there was an overall 9% increase in their aerobic activity, alright? Simply by taking cordyceps.

So they got 9% improvement by utilizing this one clinically proven medicinal mushroom that's actually been used for thousands of years. This wasn't invented by Vinny in the back alley somewhere like last week.

This is legit that's been around for thousands of years. This is something that our ancestors utilized. And I use the cordyceps from Four Sigmatic because it's dual extracted, alright? So you're not just getting the hot water extract or the alcohol extract.

They're doing both, and plus here's the kicker guys, they mix it with coffee, alright? So I had cordyceps coffee today, alright? And that's what I use for my pre-workout with some healthy fats, and I feel like a million dollars.

Alright? So also organic coffee so you're not getting a hot cup of pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides, genocide, suicide, alright? Cide means to kill, alright? Be aware of that, alright? But we think, "Oh it's not going to affect me," but we know that for example many pesticides are either estrogenic or neurogenic, so they literally work on deteriorating your nervous system and your brain. Alright?

That's what they do to the pests and they bioaccumulate in our tissues, alright? So get organic stuff. That's what Four Sigmatic uses, and they also have these incredible mushroom blends.

So they've got cordyceps elixir by itself if you don't dig the coffee, which what are you doing? Alright? I didn't drink coffee until about a year ago. I was missing out my whole life on something very special, alright?

But the caffeine construct, by the way, is much more balanced because of the medicinal mushrooms. Alright so head over there, check them out. It's [www.FourSigmatic.com/model](http://www.FourSigmatic.com/model). That's [www.FourSigmatic.com/model](http://www.FourSigmatic.com/model) and you get 15% off all of their incredible products.

I take it with me- it's like the Visa commercial, never leave home without it, alright? So make sure to check them out. And on that note, let's get to our iTunes review of the week.

**iTunes Review:** Another five-star review titled, 'Having FORO, Fear Of Running Out Of Shawn's Podcast,' by Michelle Quinn.

"Can't believe I haven't already written a review, because I can't recommend this podcast enough. I love that Shawn talks about all aspects of health and wellness, not just exercising, even though that was the primary reason I started listening.

It has opened my eyes to this entire world of wellness, and I feel so much more knowledgeable and understand health topics on a much deeper level. Tuning in has become the highlight of my day. I am so addicted that I'm starting to listen to two podcasts a day. I'm scared to run out.

Love Shawn's sense of humor and the thoughtful questions that he asks his guests on the show. The love he shows his wife and children is also so touching. Can't recommend this podcast enough."

**Shawn Stevenson:** Alright thank you so much for leaving me that review. I appreciate it immensely. And listen guys, please keep them coming. If you've yet to

leave a review, please pop over to iTunes and leave me that review for the show. It truly does mean the world to me.

And on that note, let's get to our special guest and our topic of the day. Our guest today is the one and only Lita Lewis, and she's a fitness expert and instructor specializing in group training and online programs that aim to transform people's mind, body, and spirit.

And her motivational posts have attracted a massive loyal fanbase, and her Instagram channel by the way, make sure you follow her like yesterday. Alright? @FollowTheLita. Alright?

So that's @FollowTheLita, and she is the epitome of strength, positivity, determination, and just a really, really incredible individual that I'd like to introduce to you today, and welcome to *The Model Health Show*, Lita. How are you doing?

**Lita Lewis:** I am doing well. Thank you for having me, Shawn.

**Shawn Stevenson:** It's totally my pleasure. So happy to hang out with you today. I would love to just really dive in and talk about your story.

**Lita Lewis:** Let's do it.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Because it's pretty unique, right? So you grew up in Australia, is that right?

**Lita Lewis:** I did, I was actually born in Los Angeles though.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Okay.

**Lita Lewis:** My parents met and married and stayed out here for a while, and then I think my mom got homesick, and so a majority of her family were back in New Zealand and Australia, so we moved to Australia when I was two.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Got it. Got it. You don't know this, but when I searched around doing some research on you, apparently you won an Olympic medal?

**Lita Lewis:** That is so funny you found that.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Talk about that.

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah, it was- I mean I was born in '83. 1984 Los Angeles Olympics were held here obviously, and I was all but one year old, and outside of the stadium, because I believe my parents had been kind of walking around the Olympics stadium, and the track at that time they were holding what they were calling the Baby Olympics.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Okay.

**Lita Lewis:** The Baby Olympics was ages three to five I think, and they were running little obstacles, and little sprint races, and things of that nature.

If my mother was here, she'd tell you over and over again that had it not been for my dad, she would have had one child, and one child only, and that would be me because I was so full of energy, and she spent most of my childhood racing after me.

So even though I didn't make the age requirement, my mother said, "No, she can do this." I was in a race, and blitzed everyone. I was three to five years old and so I won the Baby Olympics.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Wow.

**Lita Lewis:** It's funny, I still have the gold medal. They gave us a gold medal. It's a little ancient gold medal chain and medallion.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Medallion, yeah.

**Lita Lewis:** Medallion, I'm sorry, that I think my dad has.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Awesome. It's a preview of things to come I guess.

**Lita Lewis:** I guess so, which is kind of crazy because I definitely grew up and ran track throughout my teens.

**Shawn Stevenson:** And so this was in Australia?

**Lita Lewis:** All Australia, yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Got it, got it. So track, and did you do anything else?

**Lita Lewis:** Track was big. I lived for track, and then from track I used my speed on the football field. So rugby is our football game in Australia, and for those that have parents- for women I should say, that have parents that do not want them to tackle, we have the touch football league which is huge amongst women, and men as well.

So after track I played touch football, and I guess played the winger position and just used my track speed to catch balls, and just sprint up the side, and get a touchdown, I guess is what you call it.

**Shawn Stevenson:** That's awesome. So you know, this is like we're talking about your superhero origin story, because I really do think you're an exceptional superhero out here in this age where we've got Internet stars, you know?

But people who are standing for something really positive, which I want to shift gears in a minute, but I want to know how did you get from Australia to the States. Like what inspired that?

**Lita Lewis:** I mean to put it really simply- good question. I think in my teens I became very, very sensitive to the fact that I was a black kid amongst all white or all other. And not sensitive in a negative perspective, by no means.

I had a great childhood. If anything my sisters and I, and a very small group of friends, were just like the token black kids. But we were also the athletes, and all these sort of great things that were prized.

But I think I started getting really curious. I knew nothing about civil rights, knew nothing about the movement, or the culture of black people, and I could often turn to my dad and be like, "Why haven't we ever gone back to visit the fam?"

And my dad grew up in Kentucky, a very small country town, and I believe that he was so- just a very tenacious and very intelligent kid that was trying to get out. And very much the black sheep of his family, too.

So he joined the Air Force, and that's how he kind of met my little Polynesian mother. But I don't think he had much desire to ever go back, and therefore it was never a priority to take his kids back.

Because of that, we starved for representation, starved for something that we could identify with outside of our father.

So in my teens I just knew I was going to finish high school, save as much money as I could working my little part-time job, which was called Big W, very equivalent to a Walmart, and then after graduating from high school I had planned to put a backpack on my back and just travel the world.

So to answer your question, I think the reason why I moved to the United States is because I wanted to be just more centrally located in the world so I could travel, and that's essentially what I did.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Wow, cool. So how old were you when you made that jump?

**Lita Lewis:** So it wasn't at seventeen or eighteen that I moved because my parents convinced me that university or college was the way to go first and foremost, and pretty much begged me to go so I could be that role model for my sisters, because I'm the oldest of three.

And so I did, got my education, and then grabbed a job right out of college, and I was very lucky to get it, saved some money, and then I was out. So at that age I was twenty-three. Twenty-three years old.

**Shawn Stevenson:** And so then when you moved to the States- so where did you move and what did you do when you got there?

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah, I moved to New York City. I had never been, never like visited, I didn't know a soul. I moved out there without a job, without a place to stay. I had two suitcases and a laptop. And why? I think I was really hungry for challenge. I was that person.

Adventure, a challenge, and I think I was just kind of born with, or it was instilled inside of me that I really could do anything that I put my heart to, and I credit my parents for that.

I had family in Los Angeles, I had family in Wisconsin, my dad's family all in Kentucky, Tennessee, but I really wanted to do something on my own.

So instead of choosing L.A., because it was very safe, I was very close to my aunt that lives here in L.A., I chose New York City. And I thought it was perfect because being on the East coast, very, very close to Europe, and I could then travel the States, the islands, so New York City was my choice.

Probably a very naive choice, but I made it work.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah. They say- well, mainly Puffy today, or P. Diddy.

**Lita Lewis:** Whatever he goes by.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Or Brother Love. If you can make it there, you can make it anywhere.

**Lita Lewis:** That's what they say.

**Shawn Stevenson:** He's brought it up now, I know that probably Frank Sinatra or whatever said that back in the day, but you know- yeah, and that's what- you know my wife being from Kenya, she thought that the Big Apple was like when she comes to, she was twelve, that this was what it was going to be like.

And then she landed in the Midwest like, "This isn't it at all!"

**Lita Lewis:** This isn't it.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Like you know, so that's a really cool story. And so did you jump right into the fitness world when you got here?

**Lita Lewis:** No, my degree is in- it's a double major in finance and design. I was a super creative kid, and always making things with my hands, so I knew that if I had to go to university I wanted to do something in the arts, stay super creative.

And so when I moved to New York I was looking for roles that allowed me to be- or remain creative. So I jumped into a corporate role only because the role that I was in that was slightly creative I should say, it was- everybody's familiar with Getty Images?

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah.

**Lita Lewis:** So I worked for a company that basically sold licensed video content. So we would work with people that were placing together or creating indie films, like local commercials that needed b-roll kind of footage to do so, and we would own that library, and then license it out.

So I was an inside sales executive licensing video, but also because a lot of the accounts that I had were very indie, I would also help them envision a small spot commercial, or a school project, and things of that nature.

And I worked for this particular company for a whole year before I decided that it was just not for me. And not because I didn't hate it, but just because it was my first taste of the fact that Americans were born to work. That's what it felt like.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Interesting, yeah.

**Lita Lewis:** I was working crazy hours, and it was very normal. It wasn't because I chose to be there, I just noticed everybody would get in at 8:00 and not leave until 7:30 or 8:00, and I was like, "Oh no, as a twenty-three year old, I didn't come to the other side of the world to work my life away." It just wasn't happening.

**Shawn Stevenson:** That's really- I've never heard this before. I've never even thought about it. So would you say the culture from Australia is a little bit different as far as- you said Americans being born to work?

**Lita Lewis:** I literally used to be so upset the fact that this was the norm, and speak to my parents like, "Yo, everybody works crazy hours." And this idea- I think when I first signed my contract with my job, I think it included literally like six days of annual leave, and I thought maybe there was a one or a two missing from the front.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Missing.

**Lita Lewis:** I didn't even understand- like what? I didn't understand it.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah.



**Lita Lewis:** You know, back home in Australia there's a minimum of four weeks annual leave. Minimum. So I just realized right off the bat that, "Okay this is a lot of hours," but I was fresh, I was new, it was my first job, getting my life together, and I'll take anything.

It was just the most grueling thing because again I had itchy feet to want to do and see everything, and with the little savings that I had, I just couldn't. There was just no time.

And I noticed that was very normal. I don't know if it was because I was in New York City, but it was a huge transition and very vast difference from Australian culture as far as a work life, professional life, than it was to that New York City vibe that I was just not used to.

**Shawn Stevenson:** I want to talk about that, and that's why I wanted to kind of highlight this, is that we become indoctrinated in the culture that we're in. So we believe that things are normal just because it's just our way of life, it's what we've seen.

And a lot of people don't realize this, but our ancestors, if we're talking even 1,000 years ago, they would work on average maybe fifteen hours a week as far as 'work,' and the rest of the time was spent in leisure, you know?

Like learning, writing, reading books, teaching kids, playing games, preparing things, plays, and just more creative faculties to develop.

Today that is- I mean it's changing now, but that kind of stuff is a little bit more frowned upon. You know? Like you can have a hobby, right? But that can't really be like something you put a significant amount of time into.

You know? So I'm really glad that you brought that up, because I never thought about it being so different in this culture, and just really brought it to the forefront because here it's like hustle your face off.

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah, I knew to some degree that New York City was definitely going to be a hustle. You know, like you said, you hear this if you can make it in New York, you can make it anywhere, and I was well aware from my family, especially from the West coast that said, "Why New York? It's a crazy grueling city."

And I was attracted to it for those things, but when I thought about the reason why or my purpose of situating myself and planting my roots in New York, it conflicted.

So I only lasted a year. Actually I could have quit after four or five months, but I figured, "Let me put a year in so I could at least kind of list that down on my CV a solid year."

So I kind of battled it out for at least twelve months and then things got crazy because I was so miserable that I considered joining the Marine Corps. And the building in which we worked in-

**Shawn Stevenson:** Is this why you got the fatigue song?

**Lita Lewis:** You know, it may be. Maybe.

**Shawn Stevenson:** See? This was meant to get this story out today.

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah, no but that transition there after a year at that job kind of messed with my head a little bit. You know?

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah.

**Lita Lewis:** And one of my good friends that worked in the same building was a recruiter for the Marines. And he said, "You know what? If you want to quit this job, you should just join me." Because I was an active kind of person, he saw that I was very vibrant, and always looking for a challenge.

He said, "Why don't you join CSC- or CS-something training." He was like, "Look, we'll pay you. You'll be in Virginia, like six weeks," I think, or something of that nature. And he was like, "You get this challenge, and adventure, and you can still pay your rent in New York."

I was like, "Wow, maybe I'll do that." And so I went through the process, and I got all the way to the end after being checked out by their docs, and paperwork- my mom sent paperwork from Australia, and medical records. And then when my father found out, he called me and he said, "If you join the Marine Corps, I will come out there myself."

Mind you he still lived in Australia, "and kill you myself," is basically what he said. I said, "What? What's going on?" I was like, "No, Dad. Don't worry, it's not like you go through the training and you have to join. It's just a training. If I get through, they'll invite me in, and I get a choice. I can say no, I will say no because I don't want to join the Marine Corps, I want to do other things, I just want to do the training."

And he says, "Are you stupid?" He said, "No, no, no." Basically explains this idea of kind of brainwashing- and by all means, I think if anybody serves and is in our military, by no means do I think you're brainwashed, or anything of that nature.

I think it was my father having served in the Air Force knew basically the training techniques, not just physically, but mentally. And he said, "No, when you get through the training," and I was like, "If I get through." He was like, "You're my baby, you're going to get through that training, then you're going to want to and desire to join."

There will be a sisterhood, a community there, and I know you're going to want to. So I'm going to stop you from doing that."

And so because my dad rarely- at age twenty-three of course, put any type of stipulation or any rule over my life, I knew he was serious, and I could tell in his voice that he would absolutely fly out to New York.

**Shawn Stevenson:** And take you out like Liam Neeson.

**Lita Lewis:** Literally. He'd be that guy, too. So I didn't do that.

**Shawn Stevenson:** "I will find you, and I will-" So from that- wow, I mean even going through that kind of training, that kind of boot camp style training. So was that something that sparked this-

**Lita Lewis:** Probably. I was just so- I don't know how to describe myself in my early twenties. I was very, very naive. I was very- everything excited me. Looking up at the buildings, at the skyscrapers in New York City excited me.

Conversations with people, foreigners, excited me. Riding in a taxi excited me. I was just open and ready for life. So this idea of doing six weeks of a grueling physically and mentally challenging process excited me.

But in hindsight now, I'm so glad that my dad sort of averted that, because it sort of landed me in another position which I worked in like for five years right before I quit the corporate world to pursue fitness.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Got it.

**Lita Lewis:** And that was very, very unexpected.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Interesting. So that's what I want to talk about now.

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Is that pivot into the fitness world. So was this just something that was like a passion for you at that point? Why did you make that decision to get into fitness?

**Lita Lewis:** Really loaded question. So no more Marine Corps, no more Marine training. I then signed up to an employment agency who basically were sort of feeding me out to different types of roles because I was die-hard ready to get out of my job.

They put me in front of this gentleman, they said, "It's not really your thing, but this guy is super cool, and has a small company, and he's growing, needs some help."

So I go, "I'll meet with him." I'm like, "I'll take anything," I said in the interview immediately. We get along, I see and recognize that he's a very unconventional kind of guy, and he basically hires me on the spot. I'd become very quickly his EA, his PA, his office wife, and all these great things, so I thought.

By no means- again that role, the second corporate job that is, did I hate it. It was again a whole lot, and I often compare it to *The Devil Wears Prada* situation. But it was certainly not my calling, not my purpose, and I found again I was working crazy hours, even more so than the first job with a lot more perks and a higher salary, so I would stack money aside.

After five years- within that five years I started to date my then best friend. We had been friends for years.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Oh, he got out the friend zone.

**Lita Lewis:** Got out the friend zone.

**Shawn Stevenson:** It is possible.

**Lita Lewis:** It is possible, yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** So listen up.

**Lita Lewis:** Definitely is possible. And he is an amazing person, and I quickly fell in love with him. What I was most attracted to him was his family dynamic. So how his family moved was very, very similar to how my family moved in Australia.

Now having moved to Australia, my mother's family being our Polynesian side, so the Samoan side is who raised my sisters and I. So we have very much a spirit, and a soul, and a heart from our Polynesian culture and roots.

So when I met- his name is Ryan, his family being Native Americans, I saw something very familiar, and I really loved it.

So very quickly his friends became my friends, his family were my family, and we were very much a unit. In my mind, made certain plans, future, marriage, kids, that I thought we were aligned with.

However, a lot of our relationship was long-distance because he also played in the NFL, and so he played not in New York but in Wisconsin, and life happens, and sadly he wasn't committed to the relationship as much as I was, and so- I hate to use the word 'cheat,' but I suppose it is that, right?

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah.

**Lita Lewis:** I say that because I tiptoe around this a lot, because he now is one of my biggest supporters and greatest friends, so I never want to feel like I'm throwing him- pushing him under the bus. I get that wrong every time, what is the expression?

**Shawn Stevenson:** Throwing under the bus.

**Lita Lewis:** Throwing, alright.

**Shawn Stevenson:** You can throw or push.

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah my boyfriend is always like, "You're so Aussie, you always get these things wrong."

But because of that, after the relationship dissolves, I go into a really, really bad place. My job at that time is presenting itself as something too much, more than I could handle.

My boss becomes very demanding, and I was doing things at work that I feel like were just morally not right as far as dealing with my boss' personal life, and handling certain things for him that I just didn't feel comfortable doing, and then I just came crashing down.

I fell into a really deep depression, but no one would know because I would leave my apartment with a big smile on my face, and then something happened. After losing thirty pounds, and not recognizing myself, I said, "I need to go home. I need to go home."

I had this 'great job,' with this great salary, and I certainly had the means to do what I want and live how I want, but I was hurting so bad inside.

And so it came to a point where my work was at a high time- a peak of frustration, I'm super depressed, I don't recognize myself, not even mentally but just also physically, and then I decide it's time to go home.

For me, if anybody knows me, especially my sisters who essentially I live for, knows I'm a very prideful person. Meaning the idea of going home based on heartbreak is just devastating on its own just to think about.

So I said, "Right before I really make this transition to leave, what can I do to make myself feel better?"

The only thing I could think of was just thinking about movement, active, something challenging. Again it ties back into this younger Lita of adventure and physical activity, track days, football.

And so I took the day off work - which never happened because it's almost as if my boss couldn't scratch his own ass without me being in the office - and I'd go to the gym. I'd go to the gym, I'd put in four hours which is madness, right?

I was like probably doing Olympic lifting, or something crazy, something I shouldn't have been doing. And then right after that workout, I was like, "Holy smokes, I'm hungry again."

I wasn't losing weight, or didn't drop thirty pounds because I became bulimic or anorexic, I just didn't eat because I had no appetite. But after that workout, it changed everything. All of a sudden I was hungry.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Wow.

**Lita Lewis:** And I knew better. Having been a former athlete, eat right. So that became a pattern. Every day after work, I would go in, spend no less than three hours in the gym, training like a maniac, and be hungry so I would eat, and then very quickly my body started to transform.

And then to fast-track this part of the conversation, somebody introduced me to Instagram, and I was like, "I don't know what this is." They were like, "Oh, just share photos."

At the time my life was very much about saving my own life. So I'd had barely any followers, and those that followed me were family and cousins back in Australia, so I was just using it as an open diary, and just organically posting workouts, food, quotes. I started traveling on my own, reading.

I became that person with vision boards. Post positive affirmations around my apartment, and these are the things I would share on Instagram, and then something happened.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, something did happen.

**Lita Lewis:** A following, yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** It just like took off, you know?

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah, unintentionally. I had no intent for it. I just chose to share it, and people started following me, and liking, and commenting or whatever. I didn't care for it, I had no purpose for that, it was for me.

**Shawn Stevenson:** And so also just to take a small step back- and by the way, this story is fascinating. There are so many things that I'm going to pull together here that are just- you're speaking to so many different people's stories, you know?

Of breakups, and working in jobs that are tearing them apart, and being away from family, you know? It's just- it's really powerful.

So when you were posting, was it just you? Or you were working with people at this point, doing like some group training as well?

**Lita Lewis:** No, at the very, very beginning, like I said there was no intention. It was really just me just posting parts of my life, and all of my life at that point outside of work was just this fitness or this active life.

So at first it was not, and then one day at the gym, a gentleman came up to me and said, "Oh hey, sorry to interrupt you, like what are you training for?" And I looked at him, and I said, "Excuse me? For life."

**Shawn Stevenson:** For life, yeah I've said that.

**Lita Lewis:** And ironically essentially I was. I was really training to save my life. I was like, "Just for life." And he said, "Oh my bad, I thought you were one of those competitive girls. Like I thought you did a show, like you compete for shows." I said, "Shows?"

But he triggered something, a complete stranger. I went home that night and I Googled, and the sport of body building came up, and I saw images of these women, and immediately I was like, "Oh, I want to do that." And so I started a whole other journey of getting ready for- to compete as women's figure on the bodybuilding stage.

And that was a whole other phase of my transition into fitness, now with intent. So at first it was just whatever, now it is I have a full training schedule, full diet, great coach, and all these things that I began to share. Again that pulled in another kind of group- a demographic of people that were fitness enthusiasts and things of this nature.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Interesting. Interesting, and so you did compete.

**Lita Lewis:** I did.

**Shawn Stevenson:** You went through that process.

**Lita Lewis:** I did, crazy.

**Shawn Stevenson:** And if you could, like what are two lessons that you gained from that process of bodybuilding?

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah, great question. Absolutely number one lesson is that the sport of bodybuilding, or the art form of bodybuilding has- to me, I should say, little to do with

my physical transformation because it took all of my mental strength to build what I had physically.

So instead of this idea of transforming my body, I learned quickly that I had to first transform my mind and to build mental stamina, mental strength, resilience, perseverance. That took everything- the tools that took to build the body.

So that, because I think a lot of people- where I think a lot of people get misconstrued with this idea of just like building a body. I'm like, "The rest of- your mind needs to be strong."

And number two, the sport of bodybuilding messed me up mentally and emotionally because post-competing, my body yo-yo'd crazy. Crazy. I put on twenty pounds in like ten days.

**Shawn Stevenson:** You're speaking to so many people's experience right now.

**Lita Lewis:** So I get a lot of women like ask a lot of questions about the competing life, and the world, what it takes, if it's for them. And I never discourage anyone, however I think there's a lot of people that don't share the real truth.

And not just this idea of your physical body, what it costs, the finances involved, the time commitment. You get single mothers of three that want to do this, and the idea is that there's morning workouts, evening workouts, and how you balance that in your everyday life. You really have to assess everything.

So I think for me, I learned that post-competition, my body yo-yo'd so much, and I had gained so much weight. Yeah a lot of it's water, and things of that nature, but it changed my whole body, right?

I had been working so hard, and for a whole year I competed- a year and a half, and after that I decided it was no longer for me, and then after X amount of months as my body kind of morphed into drinking water again and having salt back in my diet, it became this, right? And I didn't recognize it, right?

And then I had this social media kind of following or audience that were like, "What's going on? Are you going to compete again?" And I was like, "Oh no, that norm of competing is not a lifestyle. Absolutely not a lifestyle."

I would then say, "No, the sport of bodybuilding is an extreme sport," and for me it was not something for longevity. It was not going to be a lifestyle.

This is what it is as a lifestyle for me, and now this is what my body looks like as a result. So I had to drop this idea of being super lean, I had to drop this idea of strict dieting.



I realized, "I don't want to eat out of Tupperware every day. I don't necessarily want to prep every Sunday. So what does that look like?"

And it looked like this, and I was presenting that to social media, and then I noticed women were like, "Oh that makes sense for me, I can do that," and I think that was the messaging that I was sharing that were attracting an audience as well.

Redefining what it looked like to be fit and strong, and as a woman, beautiful, sensual, like and curvy, and it's okay.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Right.

**Lita Lewis:** So- and I really pride myself on that because I've found that there's a huge audience of women that want to know what it is to live a healthy active lifestyle, but not necessarily be super lean, slim. So I gave them that balance, or I gave them a choice, I think.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, and that's exactly what I started to show with my wife, for example, and her resonating with you and your message, and I just thought it was so refreshing because I had never seen your kind of moniker, thick fit, right?

**Lita Lewis:** Right, I started using that.

**Shawn Stevenson:** And so I saw this and I'm like, "I like that. That's what I like personally as well," you know? And just like I'm so happy there's somebody saying this, like give people permission to be that. You know?

Because there's a lot of different flavors of healthy, you know?

**Lita Lewis:** Absolutely. Well a lot of people don't know there's different flavors. Now I say in my own journey, especially when I was competing, I would look to examples or people that I could aspire to, or be inspired by, and I found as a black woman in the United States that there wasn't many people. There wasn't many examples.

And then also ironically, I love and admire so much the Serena Williams, who is literally the best in the world at what she does. As a black woman, I identify, right? On multiple levels; athlete, black, muscular.

And then when you look at mass media you see that she is damned, she is told that she's too masculine, too manly, unattractive, all these things and I was like, "Holy smokes." Unfair because as a woman of color, we will never be- and it's not part of our genetic code to be super skinny, super lean, it's just not.

And I said, "Holy- no. No." Instead of looking for someone to be inspired by Serena Williams or whatnot, I decided that I was going to be that because there was an

audience that I was now familiar with that saw me as that. So I decided, "Okay, I'm going to be that."

And so therefore, as Gandhi, "Be the change you want to see in the world," I believe. I adopted that kind of mantra, and now it's very much part of who I am, and my brand, and I'm super proud that I can be that person for a body of women, and not just black.

You know, because if you look at- especially in the United States, there are more women of curves, of fuller figures, than there are the super lean and skinny. And again, not to throw shade on super skinny, it's that I don't identify with it and neither does the majority of my audience.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, I love that so much. You know, it's a shade-free zone here. Alright?

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah, cool.

**Shawn Stevenson:** There's no shade in this room, but I think it's really important for us to understand, again there's many flavors of fit, and to have more examples, you know?

Because for everybody, even *The Model Health Show* family that's listening right now, there are so many different body types, there are so many different stages that people are at even in their journey. And for us to have a model of what's possible, but at the same time, embracing our own individual journey, and our own individual uniqueness, I think that that's really something that you brought forth, and that you share consistently.

And I've been diving into your world here big time, you know, just in preparation, and I'm so grateful that you said, "You know what? I'm going to do it. Like I'm going to step into this role."

Because for me even starting this show, it's very similar, you know? I was listening to podcasts and I was like, "Man there's some great, great information, you know? But some of it's just too dry. Like it's so boring. Who's going to listen?"

I will because I'm a nerd, but you know, let's provide this in a way that makes sense for people that's fun to listen to, that people can identify with as like, "Man this is just a cool person, this is somebody who cares about me, somebody who wants me to come out the other side being smarter having listened to this versus I feel like I can't figure it out and they're the smart person." You know?

And so I totally appreciate and identify, and I just want to give you huge props for stepping into that, because you've changed so many people's lives.

**Lita Lewis:** Thank you so much, yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, thank you. Thank you.

**Lita Lewis:** Given where I've come from, like I say, I truly am one of the most blessed people to do what I love, and be honest while doing it, and then have an audience that appreciates and recognizes me for it.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, there you go.

**Lita Lewis:** Thank you.

**Shawn Stevenson:** So the real goal here is- you know, it's something I've even done an episode on my show about this, in the difference between fitness and health. Alright? There's a difference between those two things because I was a very fit person when I was a teenager, but I was not healthy.

**Lita Lewis:** Gotcha, me too.

**Shawn Stevenson:** To the degree like I was breaking down inside, you know? But we want to embrace all of that, so what is health- what health is for one person is different, what fitness is for one person is different.

**Lita Lewis:** I agree.

**Shawn Stevenson:** And there are thin folks listening, there are people who are just getting started in their fitness journey and they've got quite a bit of weight to lose. Maybe it's 100 pounds, but their goal is to get healthier.

I don't care what your physical shape looks like as long as you're living a lifestyle where you're taking care of your health.

**Lita Lewis:** I love that.

**Shawn Stevenson:** That's what's most important, and giving people permission to truly be themselves, you know? Whatever shape that's in, and- but again, there's a big difference though when we talk about somebody who is- there's a big movement too with talking about body shaming.

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Right? And I just had Andy Frisella on the show, I don't know if you know Andy.

**Lita Lewis:** I feel like I should know these people.

**Shawn Stevenson:** It's all good, it's all good.

**Lita Lewis:** My head is in the sand.

**Shawn Stevenson:** So Andy's got an incredible story, he's lost 100 pounds, he's the CEO of 1st Phorm.

**Lita Lewis:** I'm familiar with 1st Phorm.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah.

**Lita Lewis:** Okay, he's the CEO?

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah.

**Lita Lewis:** And he lost how much?

**Shawn Stevenson:** 100 pounds himself.

**Lita Lewis:** Wow, okay that's crazy.

**Shawn Stevenson:** You know? And it was while building this company he gained all this weight.

**Lita Lewis:** Oh.

**Shawn Stevenson:** And he's a bigger guy, just kind of like a thicker frame guy, so he kind of can 'hide it well' is what he shared.

**Lita Lewis:** Oh.

**Shawn Stevenson:** And he was just being clear like he doesn't want people to prop up and say, "We're not body shaming when you're not actually taking care of your health," if that makes sense.

So as long as you're taking care of you, we want to make sure that you feel good about you, you know? That you feel good in your clothes, that you feel good in your skin, and I again just want to thank you for helping people to feel that way.

**Lita Lewis:** Thank you.

**Shawn Stevenson:** So I want to ask you about the title of 'thick fit.' You've got the 'love thighself.' 'Thighself.'

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** And so where did that concept come from?

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah, I mean the concept of thick fit, to address that, was literally just a hashtag that I started to use. There was no thought behind it. It's funny, I started with no intention.

So I just started using it because I was trying to identify with being fit, or in the fitness space, and I was a thick girl. And so a lot of people would be like, "She ain't fit." I get that all the time, "Man, she ain't fit, she's just thick."

I'm like, "I am, I'm definitely thick. I come from African American and Polynesian genetics." Half my family is from the islands, New Zealand, Australia, like brick houses. But proud. We are proud to be thick people.

We use our bodies for performance. Like half my family are pure athletes, you know? So I was like, "I'm not going to shame away." When I was competing, my coach used to say, "Baby girl, we're just going to have to fight those genetics, lean the thighs, lean the thighs."

When I was done, I was like, "I don't want to fight my genetics no more. I'm actually proud of being exactly who I am, and that's how I was raised." All grace and credit to my mother.

So it's like for me, the identifying with fit, I had to kind of define that for myself first.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah.

**Lita Lewis:** Walk in my own truth and make that look like the shit, you know? And then when I did that and owned it, I realized other women were doing this, "Oh me too, me too, girl. I have got thighs. But you can't tell me that I don't eat right. I'm in the gym."

So I was like, "Yeah whatever that is for you girl, you are fit as well. You are thick fit." So it became a thing that I just started using, and then a lot of people just started using it as well.

Sadly though, as kind of a side note, I had to stop using it or selling it or like legally, because sadly and unfortunately somebody came after me and said they kind of- it was too close to something they were using that was already trademarked. Best now to trademark your stuff, lesson learned.

But I did transform that into what I call now Thick Athletics and I have really cool little stuff like this, like 'Love Thighself,' and 'Thick Thighs Save Lives.'

**Shawn Stevenson:** They do indeed.

**Lita Lewis:** Yes, we think so- so that I'm known for. But it was something that I had to define for myself first and foremost, and kind of share that with the world in a very, very prideful, loving way.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, oh man that is such a good story. We're going to take a quick break, and we'll be right back.

So with your posts, recently I saw one where you talked about this being a really now, now, now culture. Right?

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Right? And how that can- and by the way, that's great. We've got Uber Eats, alright? We've got- true story, just rented a car, nice family vehicle for the trip, and it wouldn't- all our luggage wouldn't fit into it. Well, mostly my wife's luggage wouldn't fit into one utility vehicle, so we got to a different one. And unfortunately, I had the key to the other one still, the one we shifted over from.

We were at the car dealership- I mean the rental car place, put all our stuff into the next vehicle, out of one vehicle because it wouldn't shift, but I had the keys to the one that we left. And we get thirty minutes away, and we get the call, and I'm like, "Don't answer it."

Because I realized right before they called, and I'm just like, "How am I going to get it back?" Because this was apparently their only key, which is a failure on their part, by the way.

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah, that seems kind of crazy.

**Shawn Stevenson:** But I was able to use like TaskRabbit or somebody to come grab the keys-

**Lita Lewis:** Oh yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Take them over, it was a pretty small fee for the process, because I was already like- we'd been traveling for six hours.

**Lita Lewis:** You didn't want to drive back.

**Shawn Stevenson:** You know? Yeah, so that convenience and that now thing, it is beneficial but this can also get us off track.

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** With something specific. And you talked about this.

**Lita Lewis:** Yes. Yes, listen I'm big on making life more convenient, definitely. So when it comes to examples like you've just mentioned, and Uber Eats, and all this type of stuff, more power to it.

I love the fact that I can use an ATM in my own car- the drive-thru ATMs, they have a lot of those in L.A. I love it. Starbucks, right from the window in your car, awesome.

What I think- especially because social media is such a key force in our lives as far as information, finding inspiration and all these things, there is people like myself, I certainly don't exclude myself, that may give off this idea that results and gains or change or transformation happens like this. And I'm very quick to be like, "No. Oh no, that is not real, that is not honest."

So I like to speak to that because I'm really all about just trying to move from a very honest place.

The uprise of social media has changed the game for a lot of things, and I don't want to be or fall into the trap of promoting, advertising, or sharing messages that are just simply not true.

As long as they are true to myself, I feel very confident sharing with my audience. And so when people say, "I want to get legs like yours," this idea of like, "You're body goals, I want to be like you," makes me very kind of uncomfortable.

Number one, you'll never be like me, because I am me and you are you. Two different genetic codes, two different lifestyles, et cetera, et cetera.

So the now, now, now speaks to those that see images, and they could be my own, or certain transformations that are truly a lifestyle or a lifetime of muscle- you know, keeping a lean body.

The average person or the average woman is somebody that works- this is my audience that is, works 9:00 to 5:00, may have 2.5 kid situation, that doesn't have the time to spend an hour doing cardio in the morning before work, getting a lift in, in the afternoon, and doing some more cardio at night.

But the transformation that you see, that person absolutely has that time to do that. So don't compare your six weeks to her six weeks. I find that's common sense, but maybe because I've been on that side of the world- on that part of the industry where I know what it takes.

A lot of time, a lot of dedication, an extremely strict diet, and time. So it's hard to sell that to somebody else for me and think that they're going to get similar results.

I'm just really big on sharing a message of lifestyle, something that you enjoy, that is honest to how you move, and your schedule. So again, for me personally, I don't like

to diet hard, and I don't want to eat out of Tupperware because it doesn't make sense for my lifestyle. It's fool stuff.

So I try to promote the idea of finding something that you actually enjoy, that is obtainable daily, that you can do on a consistent basis that then becomes your lifestyle patent.

In longevity is where you'll find true change, and not just physically, but also mentally, that can be then adopted by your children, that helps a community. You know?

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah.

**Lita Lewis:** So that is my thing, is not this idea of extreme, or the extremities of a lifestyle that you should adopt or change. For my audience, it's all about longevity and promoting that type of lifestyle.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Love that. And also something you mentioned was that this nature, this kind of culture that we have today, the very nature of that, having the now, now, now access, and kids growing up in that, not really having to develop the muscle perseverance.

**Lita Lewis:** Oh sure, yeah. Definitely, that post was definitely about that as well. The era is- I mean I'm in my mid-thirties so things have definitely changed. We probably grew up playing on the street, and playing street basketball, and spending a lot of time outdoors, whereas these days kids are playing video games, and on their iPads, et cetera, et cetera.

I don't know how to- it's kind of common sense, right? This idea that if you want something, you work hard for it, and it typically doesn't happen overnight. Makes sense to me. Maybe that's how I was raised, right?

This idea now, especially when I speak to my younger cousins, or even my kid sister who's twenty-three, I'm very- I'm usually the first person to say, "Set a goal, understand that goal is going to take a lot of time, patience, and resilience." You know?

Only because that's just been my walk in life. So what I share is truly just a reflection of what I've been through, because it's honest.

But changing mentality of generations- of a new generation that are very much in a now, now, now, comes with some hard knocks, and hard lessons, because they soon will find out that nothing does happen overnight, and that when you do get knocked down, you need the mental strength to get back up. You know?



And it's okay to fail, oh my gosh. One of my mentors says, "Fail fast, move on, because you're going to do it often. Fail. Fail fast, and then get up and move on." And that's stuck with me and has helped me be resilient as well personally.

**Shawn Stevenson:** I love that so much. Fail forward is another thing.

**Lita Lewis:** Yes, fail forward, fail fast.

**Shawn Stevenson:** You know what? This is so important because like having so many people like being indoctrinated into the culture today, like growing up, like the cell phone is right there, all this access today.

And I think it's important for us to consciously put ourselves in situations where we have to figure things out, and also do that for our kids as well, you know?

We don't necessarily- it's kind of this weird thing of like, "Do I give them the world? Do I help cater everything to them so they can express their uniqueness? Or do I give them challenge? Do I put them in situations where they have to figure things out and understand that everything is figure-outable?" You know?

So I think that's so important, and something I just thought about, when we talk about patience, if you want to know how somebody really is under pressure, like somebody you might be interested in maybe dating or whatever, see what happens when they've got slow Internet. Alright?

Like really pay attention to their behavior when the Wi-Fi is slow, like you can really see somebody's dark side, you know?

So yeah, but this is something that I think is just going to even grow this conversation about, this is going to grow even more.

I want to take a step back really quickly, and I want to ask- because you've mentioned several people along the way in your journey, but I want to know who inspires you, you know? Who inspires you to keep doing what you're doing right now?

**Lita Lewis:** That's a really good question. I think it's recently evolved and changed just very recently. When I was asked that question, I would say my two sisters. We have a very special bond, and the whole 'Follow the Lita' came from my two parents that made me that example.

They kind of conned me into going to college right after high school, because you are the big sister, you are the role model.

And so what always inspired me to be better, do better, was to live a life that I'd want to see my sisters kind of follow in their light, in their own world. But to pick the right thing to do, to do things with integrity and love.

And so I would say it is them, you know? However, recently- not recently, I met the love of my life a couple years ago, and very quickly we started to build a life together.

He comes with four amazing kids, he has four boys, and they are young; eleven, eight, eight, and five. And I find that my world very quickly changed from being like this super independent woman of the world, that traveled wherever I wanted, whenever I wanted, and made decisions for myself, and all of a sudden now I'm sharing life with not just my boyfriend, but now these kids who I feel just as committed and responsible for.

So this idea of like what inspires me stems far beyond professionally because I feel like I can only be as great professionally if personally I'm taking care of myself.

And so therefore to answer your question, what inspires me now is to be somebody that these one day, soon-to-be officially stepkids can look to as not only a friend, but somebody that can inspire them too to be better people.

To choose decisions that are not sort of status quo, or very conventional, but to look at life, especially professional life a little differently, and to build and create for their own because myself and their father are certainly trying to build our own little empire for our family.

And so I am now really inspired to be a great partner, and also a great stepmom.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Wow, see these are the small things that a lot of people might not necessarily know about you, and seeing the things that you're doing, but just knowing what you've been through, and dealing with depression, dealing with being the person who was having their heart broken. You know?

And dealing with *The Devil Wears Prada*, *Adam Eve Wears Nada*. Shout-out to Kanye sort of.

**Lita Lewis:** Right.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Hope you're alright out there.

**Lita Lewis:** I know.

**Shawn Stevenson:** But you know, just your story wasn't this kind of just easy path, and this is a consistent thing with the real superheroes, you know? Like they've gone through stuff to really develop that character and that muscle, and so I just want

people to understand like whatever you're going through, there's a gift on the other side of it.

**Lita Lewis:** Always, oh my gosh, always. In fact I really encourage people that if they find themselves in a really dark place or a hard time, they have to know without a shadow of a doubt it never lasts, right?

And then I really encourage that if you can, find a moment to stay still within that storm that you're enduring. Change your perspective just slightly.

You may see the reason why life, or God, or the universe is putting you through that slump. If you are lucky, and you have that little bright light within, you may find the reason, therefore it makes it a little bit more easier to endure that storm.

But one, know that it never lasts. And two, there is absolutely a reason why life has dealt you that card for the better.

So I've gone through those storms multiple times in my life, and without a doubt, every single time because I've had that minute to be still and realize, "It's okay, because I will gain X, Y, Z afterwards. It would then put me in a position to do X, Y, Z." It puts me on top of the mountain every time.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Wow, that's so powerful. Wow, you know this is something- I just want to share this with everybody really quickly, whenever I get a chance, I want people to- that's such a great exercise in the moment especially when stuff is going crazy.

**Lita Lewis:** In the moment it's tough, yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** It's tough, but if you can even ask, "What is this trying to teach me? Or what gift is trying to emerge in my life as a result of this?" It immediately- if you can just have the courage to do that and listen, be still enough- she just said it, to be still enough to listen, it can really help to push forward and give you some new energy to understand this too shall pass, but also I'm going to come out a better person.

Wow, so good. So one of the last things I wanted to cover with you, we've got to talk about a little fitness, alright?

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Because this is what you do.

**Lita Lewis:** I love it.

**Shawn Stevenson:** So if people are like- somebody's going to go to the gym today, and right now they're watching YouTube to see- they're watching like ten different styles of donkey kicks to go to the gym and waste their time. Alright?

**Lita Lewis:** Donkey kicks.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Alright, so what is your approach for fitness for folks? Like is it more like strength training? Should people be doing like cardio every day? Like what is the main- like give me three major pieces for people to really not just for their fitness but also their functionality. Three things.

**Lita Lewis:** For me, it is- three things, if I have to pick three things, it is absolutely strength, right? I would not have been able to sort of build or maintain a body had I not been around some heavy stuff that I can pick up, right?

Movement. I'm big on movement. Having come from like track, like it's great to lift weights, but if you don't move your body functionally, like for me, I love to hit the track, I love to do stadium work, change up my movement where there is just body weighted movement. Key.

And three, I'm a toss between stretch and sleep. Right?

**Shawn Stevenson:** So you don't even know this. You don't even know this. My international bestselling book, 'Sleep Smarter.'

**Lita Lewis:** 'Sleep Smarter?'

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yes, I'm all about the sleep, too. So yeah, that's good.

**Lita Lewis:** Yes, and I learned that lesson myself. There was a time where I was training, no joke, six hours a day, while I was working corporate. So my hours were crazy, and getting maybe four and a half hours of sleep, five if I was lucky.

And after months of doing that, completely burned out, like so flabbergasted as to why I was not seeing the results after everything I was putting in. And then I said, "Idiot, you're not allowing your body to rest and recover and replenish and repair."

**Shawn Stevenson:** Congratulations, you played yourself.

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah, oh big time. You look back like, "What a wasted three months of my life."

**Shawn Stevenson:** That's when DJ Khaled pops in.

**Lita Lewis:** He's so right for that. Played myself. So yeah, sleep. But you know, stretching too. Maybe because I'm a little older these days, I'm finding great value in a good stretch.

So strength, got to move the body, sleep, stretch in there too.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Oh my goodness, so good and it's so simple, you know? If people would get this. These are the big- those three things are the big hormonal movers of our bodies, you know? Especially with the strength training, that lists so much anabolic activity.

Like you get so much more bang for your buck. The movement in and of itself is really geared towards like balancing you out, you know? Muscle imbalances, calming your nervous system, getting you more parasympathetic when you need to, especially if you're doing some walking, and then of course the rest and recovery.

**Lita Lewis:** Absolutely.

**Shawn Stevenson:** That's when we produce the most human growth hormone is during sleep. It keeps you young.

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah, and I think people- it's like a very missed part of the equation. People overlook it all the time, it's very underrated.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Lita Lewis:** I'm like, "Yo folks, you've got to sleep. You've got to rest."

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, that's what I'm talking about with Dr. Oz. Depending on-

**Lita Lewis:** So awesome, I'm excited to see that one.

**Shawn Stevenson:** But that specific thing is- I think so many people glance past just how much sleep impacts your body composition. You know? During sleep- and here's something crazy, too by the way, is melatonin. People talk about this glorified sleep hormone. It actually helps your body burn fat, and the thing is you don't produce much melatonin if you don't have a normal sleep cycle, and if you're not exposed to darkness.

You know? And so a lot of folks, they're doing the Netflix and no chill a lot, and you know, just not really getting that ample time to produce enough melatonin, and wonder why they're struggling to get those last couple pounds off, or whatever the case might be.

So it's just stacking conditions in your favor. The book is called 'Sleep Smarter,' not 'Sleep More.'

**Lita Lewis:** Okay, that's smart.

**Shawn Stevenson:** So it's just sleeping better with the sleep you are getting. But so, so awesome that you shared those things.

You know, there's so many things I want to ask you about, but I think especially with your mission, and your kind of inspiration that you're sharing with everybody, being in the fitness domain.

So I would love if you could share, just kind of take me through what a day might look like for you, as far as like are you exercising in the morning? Or are you just kind of getting it in wherever you can? Like what does your day kind of look like?

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah, of late slightly changed these days because of my work schedule. But a typical day for me starts around- early for me, 7:00 AM I get some morning cardio in, which I do fasted.

Lately I'm like forcing my boyfriend out of bed, too. So we're running the streets together, which is kind of cool.

Then I'm a full schedule of morning clients that usually take me no later than noon. Because of that reason, sometimes- and not intentionally anymore, but I'll fast. So I won't eat until about noon.

**Shawn Stevenson:** It's intermittent fasting.

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah I'm not strict on it anymore, even though I was last year, but for the most part-

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, you just miss-

**Lita Lewis:** I'm not having my- exactly. Kind of is in my schedule.

**Shawn Stevenson:** And that's okay.

**Lita Lewis:** It's okay. So I'm not hungry either, I never like starve myself, which is a big part of my never do's.

But so then I come home, I'll eat. So mid-day which would be probably breakfast, and then laptop work. I'm definitely one of these people, right? As you would know, a whole bunch of emails to get back to, people to respond to, deals to close, and all that kind of fun stuff.

I also run an online business so it's like shipments, and packages, and parcels, and customer service, and all that stuff.

Then somewhere in between, I'm eating again. Sometimes if I have the time, I'll accompany one of the kids to like a baseball practice.

**Shawn Stevenson:** That's where you're coming from today. Was there a game today?

**Lita Lewis:** Yes, on Saturdays is a bunch of games for the kids. They're in the mix of things. These days I'm helping to do homework when we've got the kids over. Cooking meals, which again I've gone from me and myself. My boyfriend and I, when we're together, it's like eat out.

So you know, that is a new part of my life. And then I'll go back to the gym and I take on evening clients that have in the gym until about 9:00 or 9:30. However, I've eaten my last meal before that though.

And then when I get home, it's shower, unwind. I'm a big meditator and candle burner too, so I like to unwind by starting there. I mean doing that before bed, but usually, I'm not going to lie, I carry the laptop into the bed and I'm still finishing off some work. But if I'm lucky, I'm out by 11:00.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Okay.

**Lita Lewis:** That's pretty boring, right?

**Shawn Stevenson:** No. No.

**Lita Lewis:** That's a typical day. It can get more exciting if there's a plane somewhere.

**Shawn Stevenson:** I'm sure. I'm sure, you're doing like boot camps across the country, and things like that.

**Lita Lewis:** Yes.

**Shawn Stevenson:** So yeah, I mean the reason I wanted to ask you that is just for people to get a glimpse and see how normal their lives are as well, you know? Like there's not necessarily something exceptional, but there is a consistency most likely and some structure.

And also leaving room for flexibility, you know, for things to happen, like you said. I'm not going to talk about you with the laptop in bed, being the extra partner there with you, but it's not about being perfect, it's about progress, and it's about doing what works for you.

And so with that said, again there's so many things I want to ask you about, but in closing I want to ask you about something that I saw on your Instagram page, which is a statement that says, "Seek to be worth knowing rather than to be known."

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah, for sure.

**Shawn Stevenson:** What does that mean for you?

**Lita Lewis:** I think- again social media, this era, we can all become our own celebrities, and even to this day I'm so humble. Like so like ecstatic as somebody- I'll be out grocery shopping or something, and somebody will tap me on the shoulder and introduce themselves, and tell me they follow me, and use the words like 'idol,' and 'body goals,' and like 'celebrity.' Like to me, it's so foreign. So foreign.

I don't share what I share because I want to be known, I want this type of celebrity clout. As cliché as that sounds, I'm really not even for it. I don't care.

I started in this because I was trying to save my life and put myself on a healthier journey not just physically but mentally and emotionally and spiritually.

And so the idea of being recognized as somebody that one can identify with, because I lacked that in my own journey, and being told that that helps them in any type of way, is what I value so much.

So with these titles of celebrity and things of that nature, or this idea of being known for no reason outside of my- as my boyfriend calls, these half naked bikini shots on my Instagram, is one thing. But when someone says, "I really love what you wrote. That really helped me, and because of it, I was able to be a better mother." Or, "Because of it, my husband and I now-" just whatever.

That is what I value, and that's what I believe that post for me is about really.

**Shawn Stevenson:** What you're saying just rings true, and I think everybody can really feel that.

**Lita Lewis:** I hope so.

**Shawn Stevenson:** You know, that this is- it's genuine, and the status is super bonus but it's deserved because you are- you're amazing. You're a superhero.

**Lita Lewis:** Thank you very much.

**Shawn Stevenson:** So thank you for sharing your incredible story, and a couple of insights here or there that can be straight up game changing.



But if you can let everybody know again, so where can they find you online and connect with you?

**Lita Lewis:** Yeah, thank you. I think for the most part, a lot of things live right on my website, which is my name, [www.LitaLewis.com](http://www.LitaLewis.com). And on social media I carry the handle @FollowTheLita on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook for the most part. Yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Perfect, perfect. Lita, you are- again, you're a superhero, and thank you for saying 'yes.' Thank you for persevering through all the craziness, and I'm so happy for you right now in your life. You really seem very grounded and happy with where you are.

**Lita Lewis:** I am.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Even though it's not easy, let's be clear.

**Lita Lewis:** No.

**Shawn Stevenson:** But you know, you're just- I'm very grateful for your path, and I'm happy for your happiness.

**Lita Lewis:** Thank you. I appreciate you being a person that is sharing such knowledge with the community, and allow me to share my story with you and your audience. I thank you so much for having me.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Oh it's totally my pleasure. Thank you.

Everybody, thank you so much for tuning into the show today. I hope you got a lot of value out of this.

Wow, this is just another reason, follow the Lita, alright? She's the real deal, and you know, this is a great opportunity for us to- there are so many great takeaways, but one thing that's jumping out for me is to fail fast, and keep it moving, alright?

Fail fast and move on. So many times we're not taking the action step necessary because we're worried about falling flat on our face. And here's the thing, you will. You will fail, and that's okay. Everybody, I think it's so important that some of the great leaders out here today are sharing how much they fail, and how hard things have been throughout their process.

Nobody gets there easy, nobody gets there and everybody's just making great decisions along the way. People are failing their way to it, and it's okay to make mistakes with your nutrition. It's okay to make mistakes with the relationship that you might be in. It's okay, but learn the lesson, alright?

Because each of those failures has a valuable nugget, a packet of wisdom, a packet of insight, and a gift for you that you can look back. It might be next year, ten years, twenty years from now you're going to be able to look back and be like, "Man that thing literally changed my life. I'm so grateful for that failure."

Alright? So fail fast, move on. Alright? That's one of the big takeaways from today. And also just embracing our uniqueness, you know?

Thick thighs do indeed save lives, but so do thin thighs, alright? So do muscular thighs, alright? There's all kinds of thighs, and that's okay, you know? It's really just embracing your uniqueness.

There are pale thighs, there are super hairy thighs out there, alright? And that's okay. Be you, embrace that because the right people are going to love you for who you are.

But regardless, this is still about being healthy. Be the healthy version of you. Make sure you're taking care of that amazing body that's taking care of you. That's the only place you've got to live in this world. You don't own anything else.

You might think you do, that's temporary because the crazy thing is somebody's going to be living in your house at some point, you know? It's kind of creepy and weird to think about it, but that's the truth.

You're not going to be here in 250 years, you know? You've got to think about that stuff. But your body is the one thing that you have ownership over. It's your house, it's housing your spirit. It's pretty important, you know? So take good care of it and embrace the uniqueness that you are because you are special, you're unique, and you deserve it.

Alright? So I appreciate you immensely for tuning into the show today. Make sure to share this out with your friends on social media. Tag Lita, tag me, let us know what you thought about the show.

And listen, I've got some incredible, incredible episodes coming up for you, so make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day, and I'll talk with you soon.

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

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

