

EPISODE 290

Gaining Strength from Adversity & Overcoming Self-Doubt – With Guest Andrea Navedo

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 been on a pretty long road trip, and it's not done yet, alright? I've been on the hustle, but the great thing is I'm in a space where I get to bring my family with me a lot of times.

So I'm on the road right now with my wife and my youngest son, Braden, who's really the superstar behind all this stuff, and recently we were just kind of out hanging out over this trip-

And by the way, so cut to tomorrow, I'm heading out to NYC to do something special with Dr. Oz that I'm going to be having coming up for you guys. So keep your eye out for that. Alright?

But my youngest son, being on the road for two weeks, this little guy is going to be on the road hanging out with big fellas and big ladies. I got him some things to bring along with us, plus us as well.

It's exposed me to a whole new world, guys. I didn't know about Firesticks, guys. I didn't know that the Firestick could do so much, right? We've got instant entertainment anywhere, and I got to use the Firestick to actually watch my guest today's show while I was on the road.

So shout-out to everybody with a Firestick. I don't even know if it's legal, to be honest, alright? This is probably illegal, but it's okay because we can get it at Target, so it's probably all good, but it's just been a great experience, just finding out how to do this stuff with my kid along the way, and exposing him to these new environments.

And I just want to throw it out there for you as well, because I love the statement, 'If we can't see it, we can't be it.' And so giving our children- even if you don't have kids yet, maybe your younger brother, or your nieces and nephews, give them an opportunity to see what you're doing, you know?

Take them to the gym with you, or work out with them in the garage, or wherever- go to the park. Let them see the stuff that you're doing so they get an imprint or an exposure to all the good stuff.

Because I know if you're a fan of *The Model Health Show*, you're getting some workouts in, you're eating healthy. Expose them to that stuff, let them help prepare food, and all that good stuff as well so they can make smart choices.

And one of the choices that my little guy makes is having his Organifi, alright? When we're on the road I bring along my little Go-Packs, and here's why. Listen to this.

A lot of folks would ask me, even coming to my clinic like, "Should I take a multi-vitamin? Should I take a multi-vitamin?" And my general impromptu answer would be no, absolutely not. And this is because most multi-vitamins are from synthetic sources.

So these are highly processed synthetic nutrients, and the reality is like we think that something made in a laboratory can mimic what nature made, and it's just a fallacy really because when it comes in food, it's packaged with other co-factors that actually enable your body to utilize the vitamin B12, or the vitamin A, or the chromium, or the boron, whatever the case might be.

But getting these isolated nutrients from synthetic sources and throwing it together in some pill is not necessarily the way to go. Alright?

So I utilize Organifi to make sure we're meeting our micronutrient needs, and here's why. So one of the ingredients- just one of the ingredients is moringa, alright?

Moringa has seven times more vitamin C than oranges, seven times more potassium than bananas, two times the amount of protein that's contained in milk. And also of course milk is considered to be like a super high source of calcium, but moringa has four times more calcium than milk. Alright?

Shout-out to those who are lactose intolerant, I feel you. This is a better source for you. We don't want the gas and blast, alright?

They also contain four times more vitamin A, AKA beta carotene than carrots. You know that's supposed to be a super source of beta carotene. And also twenty-five times the amount of iron in spinach.

So folks out there who get a little cold, might have a little anemia going on borderline, iron is super important. Alright? So moringa is a great source for that. So that's just one of the ingredients, moringa.

They also have spirulina, they have chlorella, alright? Chlorella chlorophyll, highest chlorophyll food that we know about, alright? Potent blood builder, detoxifier.

So it's a superfood green blend all from real food sources, cold-processed so you actually get the nutrients in it that you're looking for, alright? It's not heat-blasted,

toasted, roasted, freak-a-seed, and you're not actually getting the stuff that you think you're getting.

You're getting the good stuff in Organifi, and it actually tastes good, that's the key. Because my little guy will drink it, so kid-test, *Model Health Show* approved. Alright?

So head over, check them out. It's www.Organifi.com/model. That's www.Organifi.com/model and you get 20% off- 20% off, guys. That's a dub. You get 20% off everything from Organifi, alright? All the time. So head over, check them out, www.Organifi.com/model, and now let's get to the iTunes review of the week.

iTunes Review: Another five-star review titled, 'You've changed my life, man,' by DonnyWonny.

"I've been listening to your podcast for a couple of months, and I've already learned more about my body and my health in that two months than what I've learned throughout my entire life. Like I'm pretty sure that I was lied to about everything in regard to health since I was a baby, LOL.

Thank you for having your passion to help people understand what it truly means to take your health into your own hands, or into your gut. I'm on the hunt for a mentor / coach now, thanks to you. Keep it up, Donovan."

Shawn Stevenson: Wow, thank you so much for leaving me that review. That means so much to me. I truly, truly appreciate you sharing that, and sharing a little bit of your story.

Guys, please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave me a review if you've yet to do so. I truly do appreciate it. Alright? And by the way, if you've been waiting to do it like, "I'll leave him a review," you can pause this, and I'll be here when you get back. Alright?

So just head over, leave me that review, and I truly, truly will appreciate that. Alright, now on that note, let's get to our special guest and our topic of the day.

Our guest today is Andrea Navedo, and she began her career on daytime soap operas *One Life to Live* and *Guiding Light*, and in later years had her landing, a costarring role in the hit TV show *Jane the Virgin*, which is so unbelievably good. Like I'm so hooked on this show now.

And I personally first saw her steal the scene in the movie *Bright* with Will Smith, alright? Shout-out to the Firestick again, alright? And that's on Netflix, so make sure to check that out.

And most importantly, she's a dedicated wife and mom of two awesome kids, and she's passionate about health and fitness, and has been working like so many of us

to uncover what works best for us in this busy world. And I'd like to welcome to *The Model Health Show*, my friend, Andrea. What's going on?

Andrea Navedo: Thank you, what's going on? Thank you so much for having me. You know I'm a fan, so I'm very honored to be here.

Shawn Stevenson: Oh it's totally my pleasure. You're the best. I just love hanging out with you and getting to know you more, and you're just a really special human.

Andrea Navedo: Really? Thank you.

Shawn Stevenson: Oh no, thank you. Thank you. So I want to talk about that, and a little bit of your story. So you know we do superhero origin stories here, because you are a superhero.

Andrea Navedo: Thank you. Wow, okay.

Shawn Stevenson: Took the cape off when you came in, off you go. So let's talk about it. So of course getting into acting happened a little bit later. First let's talk about where you grew up. Let's start there.

Andrea Navedo: Sure. Well I was born and raised in the Bronx. I'm of Puerto Rican heritage. I grew up in adverse conditions, particularly in the South Bronx, we were on welfare for a time. My mother was in a marriage with my stepfather that was very volatile and violent, and wasn't good for me or my sister to see or witness, so that was challenging.

And I was also sexually abused as well, so that was not a great thing either, but I will never rewind time because I feel like I've taken an experience that was very painful and I've turned it into my strength.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah.

Andrea Navedo: So I use that to like power through a lot of challenges that come up in my life. I feel like it's just made me a stronger person, so I'm grateful for that.

And you know, I just got the opportunity to see my mom leave a bad marriage. I got the opportunity to witness a woman who was dependent on a man to bring in money, who was dependent on the government to bring in money, and pick herself up by the bootstraps and say, "No, I don't want to live like this anymore. There's more out there. There's a better life."

And I witnessed my mom go back to school, educate herself, get a job working for Merrill Lynch at the World Trade Center.

I mean what a great example that my mother set for me in terms of work ethic and doing homework, because I was in school, at the time I didn't like school. I was not a good student.

I'm going to admit right now, I was not a good student. But seeing my mother model that, model being a student, and then having results oriented from that, going and getting a job at Merrill Lynch, and working her way up the ladder- corporate ladder, and moving us, and witnessing her write a sort of 'Dear John' letter to my stepfather, and pack us all up, and move us out, and never looking back twice.

And that was a turning point in my life, and thank God that my mother was strong enough to do that. And I think I was telling you yesterday at dinner that I think my mom has some guilt about the way things went down, and she even admitted to me that when I was twelve she apologized to me, and she said, "Andrea, I'm sorry. I didn't protect you. I was the mother and I should have protected you, and I'm sorry."

You know, and that was so healing for me that she said that. I mean so many people would not admit that to their own kid, you know? They would just prefer to like not sit in the pain, and not confront it.

So what my mom did that day was really put me on a journey of self-healing, and it's made me a better mother and a better person. And like just modeling that, you know, owning up to something that you did, a failing, a shortcoming, whatever it is.

I now am the type of person that will- I'll apologize to my kids. Like I'm not going to have an ego about apologizing to my kids. Some people can't do that, you know? Because they feel like, "Oh I'm the parent. I'm supposed to be the authority, so no matter what I say whether it's right or wrong, I don't have to apologize."

No, I apologize to my kids because I want my kids to be the people that also apologize, too.

Shawn Stevenson: Right.

Andrea Navedo: That also are willing to look at their ugly, and own up to it, and then be willing to change.

So my mom did that for me, and that was really, really important. Of course I got lost a little once I hit my teen years, I went off the deep end. Met a guy.

Shawn Stevenson: That's how it starts.

Andrea Navedo: Oh man, it was not good. It was not good, but it was good, you know? I was fourteen, met a guy, he was my boyfriend for thirteen- wait, I was fourteen and he was my boyfriend for three years.

Could you imagine at that age, fourteen to seventeen having a boyfriend? It just blows my mind. But I think coming from an abusive background, part of what happens when someone has been abused- sexually abused, is that they make up- they get mixed up with what love is, and what sex is.

Shawn Stevenson: Right, yeah.

Andrea Navedo: And so for me, I just wanted to be close with a guy who I thought was going to love me, and had to involve that. I didn't know I was going to talk about all this. Is this okay?

Shawn Stevenson: No, this is great.

Andrea Navedo: Oh, okay.

Shawn Stevenson: This is absolutely-

Andrea Navedo: I had no intention of this.

Shawn Stevenson: No, please because there are people listening right now who need to hear this that feel the same way. There are people- there are parents who have guilt, and they feel like they haven't protected their child in some form or fashion.

Or they feel like their parent didn't protect them. This is the realness of you and what I admire so much.

Andrea Navedo: Okay, good. So you know, it's like you can't rewind time. Like my mom can't undo what happened, right? But she did so much just by owning up and just by apologizing, and it really closed a gap between the two of us, so that was really, really important.

But back to the boyfriend thing. So with this guy, I'm not doing the right thing, oh my God. I was so lost, I hated school, I stopped going to school for one year. I just like-

You know on your report card you've got like As, Bs, Cs, Ds? I had a Z.

Shawn Stevenson: What the-? What is a Z?

Andrea Navedo: My report card was like Z, Z, Z, Z, Z all the way down, and that was because I just didn't go.

Shawn Stevenson: Man they was like, "What's the last alphabet letter?"

Andrea Navedo: Exactly.

Shawn Stevenson: "Let's give her a Z."

Andrea Navedo: Exactly.

Shawn Stevenson: That's crazy.

Andrea Navedo: So it took me five years to graduate high school. But here's the deal, like I was just like sleepwalking, I really wasn't aware, I don't know what I was doing. And actually it was a violent relationship as well.

So on top of everything else, he used to hit me, and I thought to myself, "Well that's normal. That's what happens in relationships," because that's what I grew up seeing.

And one day, I don't know, the switch in my head flipped, and probably because I saw my mom leave, and I said, "No, I want better than this. I want to go to college. I want to do something with my life. Like what the fuck am I doing?"

And it was also after one episode one day, where he- I don't know, we got into some sort of argument, some sort of fight, and he had two pit bulls. One was a friendly one and one wasn't, and he was holding the dog on a leash, and he was sort of antagonizing me with the dog and sort of siccing the dog on me.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow, that's crazy.

Andrea Navedo: And I'm sitting on the sofa, and I'm scared, you know? Because I'm afraid- I know that dog, I know that dog might bite me, and I had to be smarter.

So I said, "What the fuck am I going to do?" So I said to him, "You're such a tough man. You need your dog to put your woman in place, huh? Wow, you're just so tough." And all I could think was, "I've got to get this dog away from me."

And so then he says, "I'll put the dog away." And I'm like, "Yeah, you put the dog away. Yeah, put the dog away." I was like, "I've got to get this dog away from me."

And so then he puts the dog away, and then he comes back. What am I going to do now? So he starts poking me in the head, "Whatcha going to do now? Whatcha going to do now?"

And I lost my shit. I literally attacked him. I attacked him, we were fighting like there was a ball of people on the floor fighting.

I mean I was punching as hard as I could, kicking, whatever the f- I could do. I had so much pent up rage inside of me, and I took it all out in that moment to the point where he had to pull a knife on me to get me to stop, because I would not stop.

And then I was like, "Okay now I've got a knife on me, what's happening?" I had to talk him out of that one, too. "Oh, you need a knife? You're such a tough guy." And he put the knife away, and shortly after that I broke up with him. This is- isn't that crazy?

Shawn Stevenson: That is, yeah.

Andrea Navedo: I can't even believe- like I can't even imagine my daughter, who's thirteen, going through something like that. You know?

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah.

Andrea Navedo: But it showed me my strength, and that I could stand up for myself, and I held my own. No, I wasn't necessarily kicking his ass, but he wasn't kicking my ass either. I held my freaking own, and I found my strength in that moment that, "No, I don't need this. There's more out there."

And so I broke up with him pretty quickly after that, and then I started re-focusing on my education, on school. There was a teacher at school who noticed me.

I always used to be quiet, and hold everything in, and I would never raise my hand, and he started like calling on me. And I wasn't even sure if I knew the answers, but I would just try, and I was just always right.

And one day he came up to me and he was like, "Andrea, what are you doing? You know the answers, why don't you raise your hand?" I'm like, "I don't know."

He said, "You've got to raise your hand. I'm going to call on you every time." Oh man, then he started looking at my grades, "What's this? Why are you getting a C here? You shouldn't be getting a C," and he was just holding me accountable.

Shawn Stevenson: That's awesome.

Andrea Navedo: Which was amazing, and that's all it takes is just like one person to say, "Hey you could do better. You are better."

And so I literally turned myself around and became an Honor Student in high school.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow.

Andrea Navedo: Yeah, when I went from Zs to-

Shawn Stevenson: From Zs to-

Andrea Navedo: To an Honor Student.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow.

Andrea Navedo: And I had no idea that I was capable. I really did not. I had no idea I was capable, and I just had dreams. I always wanted to be an actress, but it wasn't like a realistic thing in my mind.

Shawn Stevenson: I want to talk about this and this kind of transition.

Andrea Navedo: Sure.

Shawn Stevenson: But I've just got to thank you so much for sharing that story, because this is something I'm very passionate about myself, because I grew up in a very volatile environment, and sometimes waking up and my mother has a black eye, and just a lot of violence.

Andrea Navedo: Right.

Shawn Stevenson: And you know, it created my character to the degree I kept getting kicked out of school for fighting. I got kicked out of college for fighting. Who does that?

Andrea Navedo: Wow.

Shawn Stevenson: You know? But people that know me today, it's like that's just not my character. You know?

Andrea Navedo: Right.

Shawn Stevenson: I'm a very- like I'm a good person and I just care about people. I'm not into like- I don't want to punch anybody in the face. It's just like- it's not attractive to me, you know?

Andrea Navedo: Yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: But you know, my environment caused me to feel like I always had to defend myself, I always had to prove myself, and this is how we resolve issues is through violence.

And so there are a lot of people who are growing up in that type of atmosphere, but of course there are other people who haven't, but they are also dealing with scars from the way that they grew up.

Maybe it wasn't physical abuse, maybe it was a psychological abuse, you know? But many people- I'm grateful for you sharing this because for other people to know that they're not alone, you know? The things that people have gone through.

And like I literally- I can feel tears right now just kind of walking with you with your story, because I was there. I really felt like I was there with you, and it's just like, "Who is this guy?" Like I'm picturing- the picture though is probably messed up. He's got like a jean jacket with like cutoff sleeves.

Andrea Navedo: You're maybe not far off.

Shawn Stevenson: Alright so this is just how I picture it, you know?

Andrea Navedo: Yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, so you know I just want to thank you for that, and for your courage, and for sharing that. And you know, again, this was like an early chapter of your incredibly story, which all of us go through stuff. You know?

Andrea Navedo: Right.

Shawn Stevenson: But so often- so many people right now, they're not aware that they can turn to the next chapter.

Andrea Navedo: Exactly.

Shawn Stevenson: And because of you sharing your story, giving people permission to do that. So when did you start acting? Like when did this actually take place?

Because you said like you always wanted to, but what was the first step for that? Was it in college?

Andrea Navedo: It was in college, yes. You know, in high school I would see the drama department, it's like a group or a clique, and I would just admire from afar. I would see them in the theatre rehearsing, and there was a pull in my heart like, "I want to be up there. I want to do that, too."

But I was kind of shy and too afraid to like break into the group, and I've always been sort of like an individualist in a sense, and I don't like to be part of cliques or groups, and I tend to shy away, and just be solo. So I wasn't brave enough at that time to try to figure out how to become part of it.

But in college, the only college that accepted me-

Shawn Stevenson: Oh wow.

Andrea Navedo: Which is kind of cool. I mean you know, that's a fun story, too. I mean my teacher, the teacher / mentor that was keeping tabs on me, he said, "Do

you want to go to college?" I said, "Yeah." It was time to apply, but I didn't have the grades- a grade point average.

I had the grades like my senior year, but I didn't have the grade point average.

Shawn Stevenson: Same here, yeah.

Andrea Navedo: And the only school that he got to get attention for me was SUNY College at Old Westbury in Long Island, and so he wrote to them about me, and told the administrator about me.

Shawn Stevenson: Oh that's so awesome.

Andrea Navedo: Yeah, and so then the administrator said, "Well have her write an essay." And so I wrote an essay about why I didn't do well in school, and what happened to me, all of that.

And you know, I had no idea whether I was a good writer or not, I mean I didn't really do so great in school so I had no idea.

But my teacher took me there to do the interview, I met the administrator, and he goes, "I liked your essay." I'm like, "Thank you." And he goes, "Did you write it?" And I was like, "Yeah, I wrote it." And he goes, "It's really good." "Thank you."

And so we talked, we talked some more, and then he goes, "Alright, I'm going to give you a chance. I'm going to let you come to this school." He goes, "But you do not have the grades to get in, but I'm going to let you come." He goes, "If you don't get good grades, you get kicked out. That's the deal."

I was like, "Alright." And thank God. I mean, and I remained an Honor Student the whole time. But cut to first semester freshman year, I promised myself that I was going to try new things, I wanted to explore different subjects, and things like that, and I didn't know what I wanted to major in.

Of course I knew in the back of my head that there was a theatre department, and maybe this was my way, like turning over a new leaf, or a new environment, new people. And I was walking down the hall one day, and I saw an audition sign to audition for this play.

And I'm telling you, literally it was like a romantic movie where the two lovers see each other for the first time, and they make eye contact, and the wind is blowing, and you're just like, "Oh my God," the heart is fluttering, and that's what happened to me when I saw that audition sign.

I was like, "Oh my God, I want to go," and then immediately I started talking myself out of it.

Shawn Stevenson: Right, yeah.

Andrea Navedo: The chatter was like- within five seconds the chatter was, "Well you don't have any acting experience, Andrea. You can't compete against college actors. You're going to fall on your face in the audition." Oh and I already started feeling butterflies in my stomach at that point, and I was like, "True, I can't do it. I shouldn't do it," and then I started talking myself out of it.

But then I made a mental note of when the dates were. It was just so funny, it was like I split myself- my head in two, and I was like, "Okay, that's when the dates are for that audition. But no, no I'm not going to audition."

And so then days went by, and I had it in the back of my head, and then just processing it in my head I said, "Man, I made a promise to myself. I promised myself that I was going to be open-minded and I was going to try new things."

And for me, the lesser of two evils was showing up, because I didn't want to have any regrets. I didn't want to look back, because I already had the regret of not doing well in school. You know?

I had the regret of taking five years to graduate high school. I had the regret of wasting all that time, and I couldn't get it back, and I could only get into one college, and it wasn't even like that great of a college to begin with. You know?

So it was like, "No, I'm going to go." So I made myself go that day, and lo and behold I got a part, and I did the rehearsals, did the performances. I had an amazing time. I was just in my element, I loved it so much, I was just so in love.

And at the end of the production, the theatre teachers asked me if I wanted to become a theatre major.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow.

Andrea Navedo: And I was like, "Yes, I do!" And I wound up graduating with a BA in Theatre with a concentration in Acting, and here I am now.

Shawn Stevenson: That moment, that's so beautiful, is that romantic moment led to you being here today and doing all of these amazing things.

So we were hanging out last night at this restaurant, we'll give them a plug, shout-out True Food Kitchen in San Diego. And you know, just having somebody come up to you, you know?

They're just like, "Excuse me, I don't want to bother you," because of that romantic moment. You know?

Andrea Navedo: Because of that romantic moment, and this is like one of the things- I love to tell the story only because I really want people to follow that gut feeling, you know? The heart flutter.

When it's right, I think it feels light, you know? It doesn't feel heavy. So I like to follow the feeling that I experience that something feels light, and that's kind of how I make my decisions, you know?

If something feels heavy, and I have like hesitation or turmoil, and I can't make a decision right away on it, I know it's not the right thing for me.

Like you know, when you asked me- immediately, when you asked me to do this interview, I mean it was an immediate 'yes,' and it felt extremely light. And then I hesitated, and then I didn't tell you right away because I was like, "I don't want to look desperate."

That's terrible, I'm totally admitting I don't want to look desperate. But it's true, I was thinking that. But that was a side note.

Shawn Stevenson: Oh that's so awesome. And big shout-out to your husband as well, because he's the one who told you about the show.

Andrea Navedo: Yes. Yeah, you know, my husband's introduced me to Tim Ferriss, and I got into him, and his podcast, and his books, and then he also introduced me to your podcast.

And one of the things I love about my husband is that he's willing to work on himself.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, so important.

Andrea Navedo: And we've been together twenty-one years, and he's always been a person who's willing to admit when he was wrong, or to at least like work on himself, and go inside and do some internal work, or read a book, or stuff like that.

And he's been a very good influence on me, and I like to think that I'm a good influence on him, too.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, I love that.

Andrea Navedo: But you know it's like people who- you know how you always hear that saying, the five people you're closest to, and so he's a good influence on me.

So yeah, he introduced me to you, and he's a fan so it's pretty cool.

Shawn Stevenson: Well I just want to thank him for being amazing, and also obviously you're amazing too, so I'm very grateful.

So after- so we got college taken care of, an amazing like epiphany experience takes place. So how do you start- where do these soap operas come into play? Were you coming in- because you know, I've been doing my homework on you.

Andrea Navedo: Yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: And looking at it like you're going to be the girl next door, the person you see yourself to be, but it wasn't really like that. So can you talk about that?

Andrea Navedo: Right, yeah you know, growing up in New York, and just in the era that I was growing up in, there weren't a lot of images of me or people of color on television and film. And if there were, there were some negative ones.

And so as a kid I kind of felt invisible because media is so important. You turn to media every day, it's constantly in your space, in your sphere, your eyes, and in your ears.

And it's supposed to be a reflection of the world, and in some level, way, shape, or form, it's telling you how to live and telling you what's important.

And so for me as a kid, when I didn't see myself, or when I did sort of see myself, it wasn't so positive. And so I had this feeling that I either wasn't good enough because I was a person of color, or I just didn't count, you know?

I felt invisible. So when I decided to become an actress, I knew that I had the chips stacked against me. There's already chips stacked against you when you decide to become an actor, but then just to be an actor of color was even harder.

But to me, I had no other choice, I just had to act. So whether I was successful or not, I was going to do it either way.

And so one of my first professional jobs was with *One Life to Live*, and I had gotten the audition, I was really excited because when I read the scenes that I was auditioning, it was the girl next door.

And I was so excited because I felt like, "Hey I'm the girl next door, and the industry is finally seeing that Latinos and African Americans can be like the girl next door, yeah!"

And so I was super excited for this role, and I show up, and I do the audition, and the casting director- two casting directors are there, and they're looking at me, and they're nodding, they look excited.

And so they say to me, "Can you come back tomorrow?" And I'm like, "Yes I can, I can come back tomorrow." So they said, "Prepare the same scenes, and we'll see you tomorrow, set the date."

I was on cloud nine. The next day I come back, I do my same scenes again for them, and I see them looking at each other nodding their heads smiling, smiling, and then one of them says to me, "So do you want this role?"

And I'm like, "Yes!" And like that was so unheard of because whenever you are offered a role, you usually like do the audition, go home, and then eventually you get a phone call from your agent to say they want you to play this role.

They were like offering it to me in the room, so I said, "Yes. Yes, of course I want the role," and I felt so good about myself.

So they go, "Okay well it starts tomorrow. Can you go for a fitting? It's right around the corner." It was ABC so it was like right around the corner in the Upper West Side. I'm like, "Yes, I can go for the fitting."

So they give me the directions, I show up, I get to the fitting room with the costume designer, and so she starts pulling clothes from the rack, and she pulls out like a mini skirt.

I'm like, "Okay, mini skirt, cool." You know, put the mini skirt on, then she hands me a pair of combat boots. And I'm like, "Girl next door wearing combat boots? Okay, cool. Cool."

Then she hands me a midriff shirt and some like ghetto fabulous gold hoop earrings. And I'm like, "Why is she giving me these clothes, these hoop earrings? Like it doesn't make sense."

So I said to her, I said, "I don't get why this character would wear these clothes. Like what is this about?" And she goes, "Oh well you're playing the girlfriend of the gang leader."

And I was like, "What? No, that's not- those are not the sides that I read." And she goes, "Oh honey, those sides, that's a character that's already been on the air. That already aired, they just probably didn't have a scene for you to read, so they just gave you something so they could hear you."

And I was like, "Oh my God." I was so crestfallen. I was kind of semi in shock and devastated in that moment, and I went home pretty sad, and I didn't know what to do because I knew that as a Latina it was important for me to make sure that I approached all of my roles with integrity, and with the awareness that I was representing my community.

With the awareness that there was a younger generation that was coming up and would be seeing me and modeling after me and seeing themselves in me.

And so I had a bit of a dilemma because at the same time, I had to pay my rent.

Shawn Stevenson: Right, you've got to eat.

Andrea Navedo: Yeah, I had to eat, I wanted to get my health insurance through SAG. What do I do? I wanted to get ahead in my career, I needed to build like a video reel for my demo reel to represent myself. Because every time they say, "Well can we see her demo reel?" You know?

I needed something that was legitimate. I was really torn and I was debating, "Do I take it? Do I not take it?"

At the end of the day - and it was really hard for me - I had to like swallow my pride and take that role. But I decided that when I was going to play that role, I wasn't going to play it as it was written on the page.

Yeah, I'll wear your ghetto fabulous hoop earrings. Yeah, I'll wear them, but that doesn't mean I'm going to bring in the attitude. I'm not going to bring in that like stereotype that people want to see us in, that people think we are, because I know that's not who I am and that's not who most of my people are.

And so you know, if I got directed to have more- be tougher, kind of like be sassy, or chew some gum, I wouldn't do it and I would just nod my head yeah. "Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. Sure, I heard you," and then I would do what I wanted.

And eventually- the role was supposed to last four months, it lasted two and a half years.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow.

Andrea Navedo: And I truly believe that if I had played the stereotype that was written on the page, it would not have lasted that long because it would have been one note, it would have been boring, it would have been one-dimensional, and it would have been damaging to my psyche and the people who are watching the show.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah.

Andrea Navedo: And so eventually the character started to have a little bit of a conscience, and have more of an interesting story line where she found herself in some dilemmas, and caught in between good and bad, and all this other stuff.

And eventually I got paired with like one of the lead characters on the show, and all this other stuff, and I truly believe that if I hadn't- if I catered to that stereotype, it wouldn't have lasted that long.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah.

Andrea Navedo: I'm grateful that I did it because you know, it paid the rent, and it gave me some credibility.

Shawn Stevenson: Right. The 'foot in the door.'

Andrea Navedo: Foot in the door, exactly.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, and a lot of times- first of all, it's really amazing and I'm seeing this now, you know even with folks listening to the show, the younger audience, and how much awareness that they have.

Like you had this awareness about like, "This is bigger than just me."

Andrea Navedo: Exactly.

Shawn Stevenson: "And how I'm portraying myself." And having that awareness at such a young age, and approaching your career with that is just really, really powerful.

Andrea Navedo: Yeah, you know. I mean here's another awareness, I'll just throw it out there. You know, when I got started in the business, and I was nineteen, there were some opportunities that came across my way with some names- named men in the business that I could have had an intimate relationship with.

But I decided at age nineteen when I decided to become an actor, when I made it my major in college, I was like, "You know what? I'm going to get ahead in this world. I'm going to get ahead on my merit, on my talent, and my hard work."

There's no way that I'm going to get ahead and be the girl that someone can say when I walk into an audition or anything like that, and someone whisper about me, "Oh yeah, I did her." No, that's not going to happen with me.

And so I was in some situations, and I never went there, I didn't allow to go there, and I had that conviction early on. No matter what, I was going to get ahead on my merit.

Shawn Stevenson: And that's much- of course that's easier said than done, and a lot of people don't think about the real world situations. You know?

Andrea Navedo: I mean, I'll be real honest. I mean, I was attracted to some of these people, like for sure. You know, you're good looking, you're hot, whatever. I'm a young woman, you're a good looking guy, whatever.

If they weren't famous maybe I would have been like, "Yeah, let's hang out." You know? But no, they were famous so I was like, "No, I'm sorry. You're famous, I can't. I already decided, so you know, my answer is done."

Shawn Stevenson: That standard. We were just talking last night, my wife shared with you in how we met. You know, we have so many similarities.

And by the way, so in high school, when I got kicked out of high school for fighting for my entire junior- I was there my junior year maybe like a month, and then I got kicked out.

My mom didn't withdraw me from the school records like she should have, and so I ended up getting straight Fs for that semester.

Andrea Navedo: Oh wow.

Shawn Stevenson: And it dropped- like I was a good student, you know? I think maybe like 3.8 or whatever and it went down to like 2.9 or something like that.

And so my senior year, I had to go to zero hour. You know, you have first, second, third hour?

Andrea Navedo: Yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: It was a zero hour.

Andrea Navedo: There was a zero hour.

Shawn Stevenson: So I'm like the only senior on the bus with the lower classmen, you know? Going to school at like six in the morning or something crazy.

Andrea Navedo: Oh man.

Shawn Stevenson: And I was also taking correspondence courses at home, like I was doing whatever it took, you know? So I ended up graduating in three years of high school, you know?

Andrea Navedo: Oh, wow.

Shawn Stevenson: And you know, me getting into college, same thing. You know? Teachers taking an interest in me, and I needed those letters of recommendation big time.

Andrea Navedo: Yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: And so I was fortunate, like I got to pick what school I went to. I didn't necessarily go to the ideal school for me, I got kicked out of that school as well.

Andrea Navedo: Oh man.

Shawn Stevenson: You know? But just having that experience. And so my wife, last night sharing with you, she was in a bad relationship, it was seeing this pattern of behavior, like you saw.

You know, you had your step-father, and then we tend to attract what we know.

Andrea Navedo: Exactly.

Shawn Stevenson: And this is why it's so important to have other examples. And so seeing that situation in her household growing up with violence, and then as she got a little bit older in her teenage years, and getting- I don't acknowledge that she had a boyfriend prior to me.

Andrea Navedo: I know, you said that last night and you were like, "Who? No, that person is a no-name person."

Shawn Stevenson: No-name person.

Andrea Navedo: No face, no name.

Shawn Stevenson: But you know, so when she finally had the strength to get out of it, some time went by and she was just sharing last night, she was really happy about being single.

Like being by herself, and just like being free, because she never had that experience.

Andrea Navedo: Right.

Shawn Stevenson: And also coming from another country, you know? When she moved here it was just kind of like really kind of sheltered in a way.

And so she said it last night, a couple weeks before she met me, she had for whatever reason decided to write out the things that she wanted in a man, you know? In her boyfriend or the next person that she was with.

And when she met me- and this wasn't until like awhile later, she came across the paper, and she was like, "He's all these things," you know?

Andrea Navedo: Right, it's amazing how you can manifest something.

Shawn Stevenson: That clarity, right?

Andrea Navedo: Yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: But also she had her standards on what she wasn't going to accept.

Andrea Navedo: Exactly.

Shawn Stevenson: You know? And it can be- sometimes the standards can be finessed. Like for example, when I met her, I had two kids. You know? I had a little boy and a little girl, you know? And when she met me, that was one of her things, "He doesn't have kids."

So what I told her, and I was very- she shared it last night, I was very upfront about it. Like this is my world, and if you're going to be a part of it, this is how it is. You know?

And of course then I waited even a while before I even introduced them just to make sure she was going to be around, because prior to meeting her, I wasn't the best. You know?

Andrea Navedo: Right, yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: And so a lot of people never saw my kids, it was just me and them, you know? I'd have them, and then whenever they're not with me, then I'd be doing the jean jacket ripped off thing, minus hitting people.

Andrea Navedo: Minus hitting- that's good.

Shawn Stevenson: You know, but definitely like not being a great guy.

Andrea Navedo: Right.

Shawn Stevenson: And so- but having that clarity on what you want, and really sticking to that despite the temptation, despite the seductive thing. If it's like nine out of ten amazing things on your list, that's probably good.

Andrea Navedo: Exactly. Yeah, I mean what do they say? Aim for the stars, and you might land on the moon, or whatever. You just have to aim-

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, something like that.

Andrea Navedo: I know that's totally wrong.

Shawn Stevenson: Shoot for the moon, land in the stars.

Andrea Navedo: Land in the stars? Is that it? Why did I even try?

Shawn Stevenson: I don't know.

Andrea Navedo: Why did I even try to do it?

Shawn Stevenson: Wait, let's get it. So it's, "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll still land amongst the stars."

Andrea Navedo: Oh my God, thank you.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, I got those- they're always there.

Andrea Navedo: I'm like- I'm so bad with sayings, and I try them anyway.

Shawn Stevenson: I love that. That's why you and my wife get along. It's not her cup of tea.

Andrea Navedo: It's like saying- I don't even know. Hitting the nail on the head or whatever, hit the head on the nail. You're going to say it backwards. Anyways, whatever.

So I don't know, where were we?

Shawn Stevenson: We were talking about standards, and you know, having that list- like for you, your standard was, "Regardless, I'm not going to hook up with guys that are in this field because I don't want my career to be based in any way, shape, or form on that."

Andrea Navedo: Exactly. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So there was *One Life to Live*. Let's see.

Shawn Stevenson: And then- so there was another soap opera too, right?

Andrea Navedo: Yes, I was on *Guiding Light* for a year as well.

Shawn Stevenson: *Guiding Light*. So- but eventually, and this is what we want to really talk about, which is how I know you now.

Andrea Navedo: Yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: How did *Jane* come about?

Andrea Navedo: Well *Jane* is a really interesting story, because most people probably think that I just showed up, and I auditioned, and got the role, but it didn't quite happen that way.

You know, I've been acting, I want to say for over twenty-seven years including college. And it's been a long road, and it's been a long road of growth and self-discovery because I had challenges of mindset challenges.

So you know, a lot of insecurities which I still have, I'm still working on, I don't they 100% go away, but I am very proactive in them, and I like to talk about them because I feel like it's like shedding a light on it and not letting it stay in the dark, because then when it's in the dark and it's hidden, it rules you, and I want to be the one in charge.

So I like to talk about my insecurities, especially because I want people to know that they see me on a television show and they think, "Oh she's got the perfect life," and you look at social media and it looks so ideal.

And yeah, I'm doing fun, and cool, and wonderful things, but you know, I'm walking around with insecurities. I really am, and I'm working on myself, and it's one of the reasons why I love your podcast because I feel like the things that you share, the things that you share with your audience is to make us better people, and that's my M.O. I want to be a better person inside and out.

So anyway, *Jane*. So I've been with my husband for twenty-one years. As you can imagine, a lot of water under the bridge, and you know, I think your significant other is your teacher.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, definitely.

Andrea Navedo: Your significant other is your spiritual teacher. Let's be even more specific, it's your spiritual teacher.

So Richard and I have had a lot of ups and downs, and there have been many times where I really thought that I was going to leave him, and I was going to divorce.

We have two kids, right now they're age eleven and thirteen, and you know, for a while there I was really unhappy. My manager, his name is Norman Aladjem, by the way. I love that name, Norman Aladjem.

He wasn't my manager at the time, I had only agents, and he said that one day he was sitting on the sofa with his wife, his wife was a big fan of *Law and Order: SVU*.

And he said three nights in a row I appeared on his television. And he's like, "Wow," like the third day that I appeared on his TV set, he was like, "Who's this girl? I've never seen her before."

And so he looks me up, and he's like, "Huh, she should be working more." So he reaches out to my agent at the time, who didn't let me know immediately that had contacted me.

Shawn Stevenson: Of course.

Andrea Navedo: So he waited awhile, and then eventually he reached out to me through Facebook, and he sent me this beautiful eloquent message apologizing right away for reaching out to me through Facebook because it wasn't the proper avenue. It wasn't the most professional, but that he had tried through my agents and didn't hear.

But that he saw me on SVU and he was really interested in representing me.

So this wasn't the first time that people had reached out to me through Facebook who wanted to be my manager so I'm like, "Please." I started getting New York.

"Please, you just want my 10%." You know? I ain't giving up my 10%, you know? And so then I'm like, "What kind of name is Norman Aladjem anyway? That is a weird name." So I said, "Let me Google this guy."

So I started Googling him, and then I started to find out that he was one of the founders of Writers and Artists Group, which went on to become Paradigm, which is a big talent agency now.

He was the Head of Talent for ten years at Paradigm. He represented Laurence Fishburne, Sharon Stone, Katherine Heigl, like the list went on and I was like, "Hm, well maybe I want to talk to this Norman Aladjem dude." Thank God for Google.

Shawn Stevenson: Right.

Andrea Navedo: Right? Then he also- I discovered this blog that he had started called 'Letters to Mackenzie,' and he had decided that he wanted to write a letter to his daughter, who was probably like nine or ten at the time, a letter every week for one year to her explaining his love for her, talking about the funny things she did that week, life lessons, things like that.

And he did that for a whole year with the intention of her seeing it when she turned eighteen. And I read a lot of the letters and I'm like, "Oh my God, these are so beautiful." They were so well-written, so eloquent, so endearing.

I said, "Wow, what kind of person would do that? This is a quality person. This is the type of person I want in my sphere."

I only want people who are just connected on a spiritual level, who are willing to be vulnerable, who are willing to just love, you know?

And he is like a business man in L.A. doing this, and so I decided that I wanted to work with him, but I didn't tell him that. I put him through the wringer, I grilled him for about an hour on the phone.

We met in person in New York as well, I loved his energy, I'm all about energies with people, and then I had an independent film that was coming out in L.A. in a film festival starring Paul Sorvino, so I told him I'm coming up to L.A. so you know, yeah, let's start working.

And so I literally landed that day, he had an audition for me the next day which was for a film called *Super-Fast*, and it was a spoof on *The Fast and the Furious*, so I got to play Michelle Rodriguez and do my little comedy.

So that was the first thing he sent me out on, I booked it, and then the second thing he sent me to was a general meeting with the different networks, and one of them being the CW Network, which is what *Jane the Virgin* is on.

So when I show up, I'm in the waiting room to meet with the casting directors there. It's not an audition, it's just like a general meeting, and I'm sitting there and there were monitors in the room- in the waiting room that have all the trailers for the shows that were currently on the air at the time.

And so as I'm sitting there, I'm looking, I'm looking at all these young, beautiful people and I'm going, "Where are the brown people? Why am I here?"

And I'm literally sitting there thinking, "Oh my God, they're not going to give me a job. They don't have any shows that I would be on. They wouldn't cast me in anything."

And so I'm thinking that to myself, I'm going, "Andrea, you can't be thinking like that. You're about to meet with these people." I'm like, "Don't say anything."

Okay, so I made a decision with myself not to say anything. So the ladies come out, they bring me to the office. We're sitting there, we're shooting the shit, we're having a great time talking. It's flowing, the conversation is so good, I'm having a great time.

And the next thing you know, I hear myself saying, "You know, I was sitting out in the waiting room, and I noticed that you don't have a lot of people of color in your shows."

And then there was another part of me going, "Andrea, what are you doing? You're ruining this meeting." And the other part is like, "Well you ain't going to get a part anyways." So I'm like just going back and forth in my head about this.

It was like the two devils- well devil and an angel on each shoulder. And so their reaction was a little shocked- like they were a little shocked when I said it, and they

got slightly defensive, and they go, "Well, well, well no, well there's this show that has this," but they are not main characters.

My Superman characters. I didn't say that. But anyways, so she goes, "Well there is this show called *Jane the Virgin*, it's a pilot that we're going to be auditioning in a couple of months' time, and you would be great for the mother."

And I'm like, "Really? Okay, cool." And it didn't stick in my head at all, that the title or the character was kind of like a weird thing. I went back home, when I got home, my in-laws at the time were in their mid- to late-eighties.

Shortly after I got back, my father-in-law died of cancer. He was diagnosed with cancer, and ten days later, he died. He passed. And my mother-in-law was in the hospital, and she had always been sickly with diabetes and congestive heart, and all these things.

So I was a new client with Norman Aladjem, and he had always been saying to me from the beginning, "You've got to come out to L.A. for pilot season," and pilot season is like January to February, meanwhile this was December. I knew that was on the horizon.

My father-in-law just passed away, my mother-in-law in the hospital, super, super fragile. My children, young, and my manager is telling me, "You've got to come out to L.A., and you've got to come out for at least a month."

Shawn Stevenson: And also your marriage as well.

Andrea Navedo: Yeah, you know, so now I'm thinking, "Oh my God, how am I going to break this to Richard? He's going to think I'm a terrible wife. What are people going to think of me that I leave him in this condition with this loss, and handling his mother in the hospital, running a business, and my young children? How can I leave? What kind of person would I be if I left?"

And so I was holding it in, holding it in, and I didn't say anything to him. And then my managers kept calling me, "Andrea, are you coming out?" "Yeah, yeah I'm coming out. Yeah, yeah, yeah I'm coming out."

"Okay, so then when? When are you coming?" And finally one day, I got brave enough and I said to Richard, "Hey, you know, my managers really think I should go to L.A. for pilot season. It's going to make all the difference."

And he goes, "Go. Go." And I'm like, "Really?" "Yeah, go." And I didn't believe him. Like, "Oh, he's just testing me. He wants to see if I really love him. This is a test."

And so I tortured myself for two more weeks. "Oh my God, what kind of person would I be if I leave my children, and my husband, and the state?"

And then finally I was like, "I've got to go. I know in my heart I have to go." And so I went up to him again, I'm like, "Richard, really I have to go to L.A." And he goes, "I told you to go. I've got this, don't worry about it. Just go."

And once he said that, I was like, "If I don't do something about this right away, it's never going to happen." I ran to my computer, I ordered plane tickets. I had to solidify this thing because if I left any crack in the window of backing out, I would have done it, and so I had to solidify it.

Got the planet tickets, got on the phone with my best friend Dahlia, "I need a place to stay." She lives in Studio City, she was like, "You've got a place to stay, no problem."

Called Norman Aladjem, "Norman Aladjem, I'm finally coming to L.A., but I need a car." He was like, "I've got a car for you. I just bought a new one, you can have my old car until I sell it." "Alright, cool." Got the car in place, I managed to find babysitting easily, I mean everything just fell into place. It was like the stars were aligned.

I had no resistance whatsoever. The only resistance that I experienced was in myself. I got on that plane and all of a sudden I just had this peace inside me come over me, and I just knew that I was in the right place. I knew that that was what I was supposed to be doing.

And I had a lot of time to reflect, you know? Six hour flight on the way to L.A., and I thought about why did I have such trouble with this? Why was I experiencing so much turmoil to make this decision?

And I had to be honest with myself, and I realized that, "No, I can't use my husband as an excuse. I can't use my kids as an excuse. You know? They'll all survive. It's just one month. It's just a blip on the screen of all of our lives. One month."

The real reason why I had such turmoil and resistance to going was because I was scared that if I left them in that condition, in the worst time to leave for an entire month, and came back with no job, I would feel like a failure.

I would feel like I wasn't good enough. I didn't make the cut. And it would be so embarrassing, and so heartbreaking for me.

And happy to say, three days later after I landed in L.A., my first audition was for *Jane the Virgin*, and as soon as I walked out of the office, they called my managers and said, "We want to put her on hold," and thus began the wild rollercoaster ride of being put on hold for a series regular role, and I had to do three more audition, screen tests in front of all the execs at CW, and chemistry reads with Gina Rodriguez, and I came home with a freakin' role.

I came home a month later, I came home a winner. I came home and I showed my husband and my kids that I was willing to take a bet on myself, that I was willing to say that I count, that I have a voice, that I'm important, and that your dreams are worth pursuing.

And you can't use your kids as an excuse, you can't use other situations as an excuse. At the end of the day, it's you. You're responsible for everything that happens in your life, and so I was able to model to my kids, and even my husband, and even myself that you have to dare to dream, dare to get outside of the box, dare to get outside of your comfort zone, dare to face your fears, because that's where the magic lies, on the other side of that.

You stay in that comfort zone, ain't nothing going to happen. And so I'm so glad that my kids have gotten to witness me be scared and do something anyways, and it's been a blessing because the kids got to be out here for two years, no school, and live in California by the beach, and come watch me work, and watch me- again, be scared for certain situations, and put myself on the line at events, and interviews, and all kinds of stuff.

So they got an opportunity to see that, they got an opportunity to see me and my husband make something work that is not a traditional ideal way that a family could or should be functioning, and disregarding the 'should,' and saying, "Hey, no excuses. We're going to make this work."

And so it's been a great experience, but challenging for sure.

Shawn Stevenson: Oh wow, I just am so grateful for you sharing that about- because a lot of people might see you, and they don't see the fact that you have - and you shared this with me before - you have insecurities as well.

Andrea Navedo: Yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: And for you to have these fears, and for you to continue to push forward anyways. We actually just did an episode recently with my really good friend CJ Quinney, who is kind of like the mastermind behind Eric Thomas, the number one motivational speaker in the world, and he just talked about-

Because also like guys in this power position, for him to come out and say, "I have fears all the time." You know?

Andrea Navedo: Right.

Shawn Stevenson: And the difference between folks who are struggling to really step into their greatness, and folks who are succeeding at the highest levels, is that

they still have fears, you know? Just like, you know, you still have your fears. But we just go through it anyways. We just move through it anyways.

Andrea Navedo: Right.

Shawn Stevenson: And for me, I kind of had this switch. I don't even label it the same. Of course I just spoke on stage at this event, you know? Was it yesterday? It's kind of all running together.

Andrea Navedo: Yes, yesterday. I know, it's all one big day.

Shawn Stevenson: And you were there, which was so cool to have you there, but you know, there are all these people that are kind of counting on me to deliver a message, and to give them something of value.

So of course there's a concern there. I can label it as fear. For me, I just label it differently as I'm really excited to share this, but there's fear there. I have fears. Everybody has fears, but that doesn't mean that there's something wrong with you.

And at some point, there's this grandiose idea, "I'm going to be fearless." That doesn't exist. Like if you're fearless, you're not even here. You know?

So it's just I'm just so grateful for you sharing that, and also if you could talk a little bit more about that. You know? Having insecurities, because there are so many people that feel the same way, and they look to somebody like yourself who you seem like you have so much, it would be like, "What insecurities does she have?"

Andrea Navedo: Right. Yeah, I mean you know, if you grow up in a violent household, and you've been sexually abused as a child, how do you not have insecurities? You know?

It's just my lot in life, you know? No one goes through life unscathed, and so you know, I've had to take the message of not being- you're not important enough to be protected, and revered, and endeared, and all that stuff, and I have to turn it around on itself and say, "No, I love me. I have to make choices that are loving to myself."

So like when I decided to leave my boyfriend, that was a choice of me picking me, and loving myself, instead of turning to external circumstances to find love and validation. I have to turn around and love myself and make the choices that are good for me, that help me.

And so that's what I do when it comes to fear. Like you said, everyone has them, and I have probably my own customized Andrea fears that probably is different- there's probably like a fingerprint for everybody, you know? We all have our triggers.

And I just every day make a conscious effort to see what it is, to talk about it, to shed light on it, to take it out of the shadows, to disempower it, and empower myself through meditation, through exercise, through nutrition, through reading, educating myself, just trying to be the best person that I can be.

I mean I have to love myself, and that's how I conquer my fears.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow. I would love to talk about- because *Jane the Virgin*, the show itself is amazing, but I would like to talk about what it means at a deeper level. The things that have come about as a result of you saying yes, and the right person coming along with the writers, and the script, and the production.

It's changed the landscape for a lot of us, and I'm going to do that right after this quick break. So sit tight, we'll be right back.

Alright we're back and we're talking with my superstar superhero friend, Andrea Navedo.

Andrea Navedo: Oh, that's was good.

Shawn Stevenson: And just before the break, I was just talking about how *Jane the Virgin* itself has really kind of transformed culture in a way, and it's just like this huge- like you were talking about things that chip away. So can you talk about that?

Andrea Navedo: Yeah, I mean there have been a lot of people like Rita Moreno, Jennifer Lopez, Eva Mendes. The list goes on of Latino performers throughout the years that have been picking themselves, saying they're important, saying, "I have a voice," saying that, "I count by showing up."

And so all of us have been contributing to making sure that we are seen and heard and chipping away, but it's never been like enough, always in my opinion.

But I feel like *Jane the Virgin* has been a one big wallop instead of a chip in terms of showing Hollywood that people of color will make them money, people of color are important, people of color are entertaining, and people of color have something important to say, something to contribute.

And since *Jane the Virgin* came out, critically acclaimed across the board, like not one bad review, Golden Globe nominated. Gina Rodriguez won a Golden Globe for her role, it's just been incredible, and it made such a big dent in this challenge of not having enough diversity in media.

And so the following pilot season, my agents told me, "You know, there are so many roles for people of color now since *Jane* came out. It's just like night and day within one year's time."

And so many of their clients that they couldn't get roles, or couldn't even get them in the door, have something to offer them, and it's been great. It's been a dream come true and I'm very proud to be one of the faces that has been a symbol- symbolic to represent people of color, and Latinos in the media.

Shawn Stevenson: I was telling you this last night, when we were all having dinner, that- and I didn't know if you really like thought about it before, and how you are- you're like a major part of this movement, you know?

It's such a position, like even since you were younger and first getting into acting and carrying that sense of responsibility in how you're portraying roles on television, because it's such a huge impact and a trickle-down effect in giving positive examples.

Which the show- I shared, it just makes me- when I first watched it, I didn't know what to expect, you know? But it made me feel really good inside. It really made me feel like- I felt like I was at home, in a way.

Like I felt like I was watching family, even though slightly different culture, you know? But it just like felt like so right, you know? And I was so proud and so happy to see positive portrayal of, first of all, women.

Andrea Navedo: Women, exactly. Yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: You know? And also women of color, and also integrating with other cultures as well, you know? Nobody's left out, we're all really one big family in a way. We're like eighth cousins, you know?

Andrea Navedo: Eighth cousins, right.

Shawn Stevenson: But seeing that, and seeing the connection, seeing the display of responsibility, and empathy, and overcoming hardships, and just all these beautiful messages.

And by the way, so quick premise of the show, but I'm not going to give it away. Jane, she's a virgin, twenty-something.

Andrea Navedo: Yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: And she was saving herself for marriage. It's such a great story here, how they even set that up, but she accidentally gets pregnant, okay? But she doesn't do it, but she gets pregnant on accident.

So if you don't know, you've got to check it out for yourself, alright? When I saw this, I was like- gasp, right? It's just like I can't believe this is happening. This is like the worst thing ever.

Andrea Navedo: Right.

Shawn Stevenson: And then the drama ensues from there.

Andrea Navedo: Yes.

Shawn Stevenson: And I didn't share this with you too, my wife when she was in Kenya, they would watch some soap operas, but they were like Telemundo soap operas. They were in Spanish, no subtitles.

Andrea Navedo: No subtitles.

Shawn Stevenson: She knew zero what they were saying, obsessed with them.

Andrea Navedo: Oh my God.

Shawn Stevenson: Alright? Obsessed.

Andrea Navedo: That's so funny.

Shawn Stevenson: And so there's a little thread of that energy in this.

Andrea Navedo: Yes.

Shawn Stevenson: But they work for a reason.

Andrea Navedo: Yes. What's great about our show is it's a comedy and a drama at the same time. It has a lot of important messages that are current to our time like abortion rights, and political issues like immigration.

So it's quite intelligent, but it uses comedy and drama, and this thread of a telenovela aspect through all of it.

And what's great about the telenovela aspect is it gives the writers a chance to do crazy twists in the plot, you know? Anywhere from like twins, and somebody's head got chopped off and they come back to life, you know? Like crazy stuff, you know, that you would see maybe in a telenovela so that you're able to buy into what's happening.

So we have an actual real telenovela happening at the same time inside the show, and then the show itself has a telenovela thread going all the way through.

So sort of like an homage to the Latino soap operas. It pays a lot of respect to it, but it pokes fun at it as well. And us as actors get to have a great time because we do comedy and drama within the flip of a dime.

Quickly we turn to comedy and drama, and it's like trying to juggle all the balls in the air, but it's fun.

Shawn Stevenson: Speaking of juggling, you know, first I want to share this quick parallel that when you shared your story, and just like it's probably the most difficult thing, especially for a mom, to be in a situation of leaving her kids for a certain amount of time, especially if she's a good mom, like you are.

Andrea Navedo: I try.

Shawn Stevenson: No, you are. You are a great mom. And my mother-in-law had the same experience, you know? In Kenya, she had to leave her family if she was going to be successful and break the mold, you know?

This was something that was totally unheard of, people were pointing the finger worried about- and she was worried about that stuff, like "What are people going to say about me?" She left her family to go to- you know, she had two young daughters and a husband, and to go to the UK and to study to become an Occupational Therapist.

Which she did, and she became an instructor, and she moved- she picked her family up and moved them to America, which was huge. I mean they literally- their house was as big as this room we're in, you know? And this is not a very big room.

And she was also the catalyst for me being who I am today as well. So if it wasn't for her saying 'yes' to that momentary situation, and all the heartache involved, which now today I've never seen a mother and daughter have a better relationship. Never.

Andrea Navedo: That's awesome.

Shawn Stevenson: Like I would want that. Like that's what I aspire, but I do have it now. Like those are my boo's, right?

Andrea Navedo: That's right.

Shawn Stevenson: So it's really great to see that. And you know, so all the fears, but it was for a greater purpose, and it was just like that was her path and everybody's path is unique.

And so for you, and what I want to talk about, is with juggling. Like I saw you boxing, alright? How are you- like where did the health and fitness kind of like- when did you get an idea that that mattered? And how do you sustain it and take care of yourself with this rigorous schedule and travel?

Andrea Navedo: Yeah, well you know, when I was a kid, my dad put me in tae kwon do. He saw that I was kind of like meek, and shy, and growing up in a tough neighborhood, that don't fly. You know?

So he wanted to toughen me up a little bit. So I was introduced to that for like two years, studying tae kwon do, and I actually really liked it.

And then when I got into my twenties, I studied kung fu, and then I started doing jiu jitsu, and then also in high school when I turned a new leaf, there was a fitness class in high school that I used to admire, and I would see them, what they were doing.

They were working out with weights, and they were running, and they were doing like- you know, it wasn't your regular gym class, and I went up to the teacher, Mr. Wiles, and I asked him, "How do I get in this class?"

And he goes, "Oh well you have to have good grades." And I was like, "I don't have good grades." And he goes, "You don't have good grades? Well you can't get in."

He goes, "But get your grades up, you can get in." So I was motivated at that point, and sure enough like a year later, I had good grades and I went back up to him and I was like, "I got good grades." And he was like, "Well, you can be in my class."

So I started running, it was part like- two days a week we had to run, and that first ten minutes was torture, getting through. But eventually you built up the strength and the stamina to go several miles, and I started doing like half marathons, and stuff like that.

So that's pretty much where my introduction to fitness started, and it's always been there for me. And you know, also being on camera, it's kind of important for me to work out and look good.

But besides that, I want to be like my grandmother. Ninety-five years old, still walking every day. You know, she's got her aches and pains, and her little issues here and there, but you know, she's got a clear mind, more or less sound body, and you know, she has a good quality of life.

So for me, that's really important. I want to be around for my kids, and my kids' kids. I don't want to be debilitated, I don't- whatever I can control, I'm going to try and control. I mean you know, things will happen, you can't control everything, but I certainly don't want to contribute to it so to speak.

So you know, eating right is really important to me. I always feel better about it. I don't know if you know this, but I do have Hashimoto's, which is an autoimmune for thyroid.

And you know, it's a shame, when I was first diagnosed with it, which was like fifteen years ago, I asked my endocrinologist, "Is there anything I can do?" And he goes, "No, all you have to do is take this supplement just to replace your thyroid hormone."

And I was like, "Oh, okay." To be honest, that was convenient for me.

Shawn Stevenson: Right.

Andrea Navedo: And so come to find out years later, my gynecologist tells me that I have Hashimoto's. At the time, they just told me I was low thyroid. I didn't know I had autoimmune.

And so my gynecologist tells me this, and so I'm like, "Well what does that mean?" And she was like, "Well you know, you just have to keep continuing to take your medicine."

And then finally I was like, "I'm going to learn about this." And my husband, who again, I love him, he was like, "There's got to be something you can do. Have you looked it up? You should look it up. There's got to be something. There's got to be more. There's got to be more."

And sure enough, I started looking it up and found out that for my condition, I needed to be gluten-free, I needed to be dairy-free, low-carb, all kinds of things that I found out, which were all great anyway, and as soon as I started eating better, I started feeling better, and I notice the difference if I cheat, you know?

I'm like, "Damn, why did I have that piece of bread? My God, I don't feel good." You know? And so I don't want to continue to hurt myself any further than my body is already doing, and so the nutrition part is really important.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow, I didn't know that that was a catalyst as well underneath the surface. We've done master classes on Hashimoto's. Izabella Wentz was a guest.

Andrea Navedo: Yeah, I remember.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, New York Times bestselling book, and all that good stuff. But I'm so glad like to be a resource, you know?

Andrea Navedo: I'm so glad you're my resource, I've got to tell you. Really, it's important. And the funny thing is, you know, my husband and I talk about nutrition, and things like that, and our kids are kind of like annoyed with us most of the time because maybe we go overboard with all these things, and sometimes when we're on a long car trip or whatever, we're subjecting them to podcasts.

But I like to think that as much as they protest and complain and all this other stuff, I still think some things are getting in.

Shawn Stevenson: Absolutely.

Andrea Navedo: I think- yeah, because you know, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. And so if my husband and I are trying to be the best people that we can be, I feel like, and I hope that my children will do the same.

Here's an interesting example, this is how I know it's working. I went shopping with my daughter, we went food shopping. So we walk up to the cashier, and there's people in front of us, and they have their food on the conveyer belt, and we're putting our food on the conveyer belt.

And then my daughter goes, she goes to me- she elbows me and she goes, "Look. They have Wonderbread on the conveyer belt." And she goes, "Ugh," and it was like a tsk tsk. And she was like, "Oh, they don't know."

Shawn Stevenson: They don't know.

Andrea Navedo: They don't know. And I was like, "Damn, so she has been listening." That was almost like a proud parenting moment for me when that happened because so often she's very rebellious to us about eating healthy, but that was proof to me that something is sinking in. So anyway.

Shawn Stevenson: Wow. I wonder- Wonderbread, wow. That's crazy.

Andrea Navedo: Wonderbread. I was like, "Do they still make that? They still make Wonderbread?"

Shawn Stevenson: They still have that? Right, that's what I thought when you said it. It was like, "Really?"

Andrea Navedo: I didn't even know it still existed.

Shawn Stevenson: It's got staying power. It's that glue. It's that gluten. You know?

Andrea Navedo: Oh man.

Shawn Stevenson: Oh wow, that's such a great story. So you know, just your story is amazing, what you represent is amazing, and I would love- just kind of in parting, one of the last things I want to ask you about.

Your character, you've extracted some things from your personal life. Like you can really like- it seems like there's a lot of you in it, but not like the you who I know, but something close to you.

Andrea Navedo: Right.

Shawn Stevenson: And so for your role on the show as Jane's mother, where did you extract that inspiration from?

Andrea Navedo: Xiomara is a very outgoing, vivacious, energetic, sexy woman. She has no qualms about expressing her sexuality or sensuality, and it's so different from me.

I am just- I like to think I'm the girl next door. I don't know, maybe I'm tooting my own horn, I don't know if that's good. But I am much more conservative, much more reserved, in fact I'm usually an introvert in an extroverted job.

So I have to work to make myself outgoing. But my grandmother, ninety-five years old, back in the day was always this vivacious, sexy woman who had no qualms about expressing it.

And I always remember her with a grass straw hat, the farmer's hat that said 'Puerto Rico' on it, and she had like a Budweiser can in one hand, and she was always dancing and the life of the party.

And I remember like being five years old, and her pulling me to the side while we were dancing Salsa, and she was like, "Mira, Andrea, you are a girl and girls have to be sexy. So you have to shake your hips. Mira, see look, like this. Like this. Shake your hips. Shake your hips."

And I'd be like, "Yes Grandma," and I would shake my hips for her, I was trying to make her happy. But that is Xiomara, it's my grandmother.

Shawn Stevenson: Oh, that's so awesome. And also the role itself, Jane's mom is a single mother as well, and you grew up in that atmosphere with your mother as well. Very strong woman.

Andrea Navedo: Yes, I would say that really Xiomara embodies all of the women that I grew up with; my grandmother, my mother, and my aunts, and they were all of the ones that kept our family together, kept the roof over our heads, food in our bellies, clothes on our backs.

They were the ones that worked really, really hard, and modeled for us how to take care of a family no matter what.

Shawn Stevenson: Love it. Listen, you're one of my favorite people. It's official.

Andrea Navedo: Really?

Shawn Stevenson: Yes.

Andrea Navedo: Alright! You're going to keep me around?

Shawn Stevenson: I love hanging out with you, and I love the energy that you bring, and I love what you stand for. I love that you love your kids, I love that you are embracing just how important what you're doing is, and I think that you're going to do a lot more of that, and so I want to keep people's eyes on you, make sure they're following you.

So can you let everybody know where they can connect with you online, like follow you on Instagram, which I love?

Andrea Navedo: Yes.

Shawn Stevenson: And also let them know where they can find the show.

Andrea Navedo: Yes, so on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, it's @AndreaNavedo. And they can watch *Jane the Virgin* on Netflix, and on the CW Network.

So on Netflix, *Jane the Virgin* has the first four season on, and next Fall, season five, which is yet to be filmed, will start appearing on the CW Network.

Shawn Stevenson: Awesome, and that's where I was watching it, is Netflix, thank goodness.

Andrea Navedo: Yes.

Shawn Stevenson: #Firestick, maybe #Illegal, but you know, all good. So final question, what is the model that you're here to set with the way you live your life personally?

Andrea Navedo: Wow. The model that I'm here to set is to not let excuses hold you back. To be a woman of integrity and to be an example to my children and to be an example to other women in the world that you can be a mom, and you can still pursue your dreams, and be the best person that you can be.

Shawn Stevenson: Love it. Simple and powerful. Thank you so much.

Andrea Navedo: Thank you.

Shawn Stevenson: You're the best.

Andrea Navedo: Thank you.

Shawn Stevenson: Everybody, thank you so much for tuning into the show today. I hope you got a lot of value out of this. There were some incredible insights here, and she's such a great storyteller as well, and I just really felt like I was there with her along this journey.

And make sure of course to check out the show, but most importantly, check her out online and follow her on Instagram, or whatever social media that you're frequenting, because she's just an inspiration figure, and I'm glad to call her a friend now.

So one of the things that she shared with me before was that if it feels light, it feels right, and I love that statement so much. If it feels light, it feels right.

When she took that plane trip in a situation where psychologically in a way she's 'leaving her family' to pursue something that was much bigger than herself, she felt this experience of it feeling light, you know? And just she knew that this was the right thing for her, and that she made the right decision.

Cut to changing culture, to exposing her kids to the most amazing things that many of us dream of as kids, and also as adults, that we can be able to do for our children. And it all came from her moving through that fear.

You know? Because she shared with me that she was terrified of failure. Like that's really the catalyst behind everything, in her like thinking her husband wasn't going to go for her leaving, or the story with leaving her kids, it was really fear of failure.

And when she won, she won big, and I'm just so happy and grateful and proud of her, and proud of all of us for stepping into that- stepping out of our comfort zone.

Because I'll tell you one thing, I remember seeing Chris Rock live, and he had up on the stage in these big letters that comfort is death. You know? So it's just like this is something that literally is going to take you out, alright?

Because if we're living in this comfort zone, we're not growing, and if you're not growing, you're- all of life is moving forward and continuing to grow and evolve, so if you're not growing, you're not just staying the same, you're going backwards. Alright?

So keep that in mind. Get out of the comfort zone, proactively get yourself out of your comfort zone so life doesn't have to do it for you, because it will.

Alright? Stuff is going to happen, but if we can really cultivate ourselves because one of the things that she did, she was qualifying herself for the moment when it came. So start qualifying yourself. This is why we train, you know?

I remember somebody coming up to me when I was training on the track not too long ago and it was a guy a little bit older than me. He came over to me because I was

doing sprints, and I was giving 120. He was like, "What are you training for?" You know? He was like, "What are you training for, buddy?"

And it just literally caught me off guard. I was like, "For life. You know? Training for life. I'm just staying ready for whatever life brings me."

So that's one proactive way we can get into this comfort is training our physical body. But also what about spiritually? What are you doing to get yourself out of your comfort zone with your relationships? What are you doing to get yourself out of your comfort zone with your career? Right?

All these different areas, proactively do those things because it's just going to build you up stronger and make sure that you're ready for when your moment comes, because it will.

Alright, I appreciate you immensely. Make sure to share this out with your friends and family on social media, and of course you can tag me, and you can tag the amazing Andrea as well, and let her know what you thought of the episode.

I appreciate you so much. We've got some incredible stuff coming up, 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. 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.