

EPISODE 314

The Surprising Benefits of Helping Others & The Truth About Thirst – With Guest Scott Harrison

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, building an excellent life and building excellent health isn't just about the food we eat, it isn't just about the exercise we do, or the stress management practices, or our sleep.

There are certain things that are outside of the realm of conventional understanding about what health really entails that can absolutely transform our lives.

And one of those things that I want to highlight today has to do with service. Now check out this study.

Now this was a study that was done on older individuals who volunteered for at least 200 hours a year, which were found to decrease their risk of hypertension by a whopping 40%.

Decreased their risk of hypertension by 40% from volunteering. That's incredible.

Alright, here's another study. This study found that activities regarding service were found to improve health in ways that can lengthen your lifespan.

Volunteers showed an improved ability to manage stress and stave off disease as well as reduce rates of depression, and an increased sense of life satisfaction when they were performing charitable activities on a regular basis.

Absolutely fascinating. So again, this is outside of the realm of what we commonly consider to be things that add life to our years and years to our lives.

And I want to make sure that we have this kind of information, and also that we're utilizing it for our own benefit, and also for the benefit of the world around us because we are really a one-world family.

We are here as a human species together on this planet and in many ways we're kind of like cells of the same body. You know? So doing this good, doing this service does something really powerful for all of us.

And just to expand on that a little bit more, check this out, this was really, really fascinating.

A study published in the Journal of Behavioral Medicine had researchers conducting a series of fMRI neuroimaging tests to explore the neuro-mechanisms of how specific brain areas were affected by giving versus receiving social support.

They found that giving ultimately had greater brain benefits than receiving. Now isn't this interesting that our brains are actually wired to be rewarded more for generosity, and for giving, and for selflessness than for meanness and selfishness?

That's really powerful to understand and to start to apply this more consciously in our own lives.

So I wanted to share this research with you, and to kind of get a preview of what's to come, and the incredible way that my guest today has found of service in the world, and the millions of lives that he's impacting, and it started off as anything but about service, anything but about being selfless, you know?

And his story is just going to knock your socks off when you find out where he's come from and the impact that he's making today.

And celebrities like Will Smith, and Blake Shelton, and so many others have gotten on board, and of course many everyday folks, and people who are doing incredible things as well in their own lives, and people who are just getting by and managing things still contributing because of this story.

And I think it's really going to have a big impact on you. And also this episode today is about redemption, and understanding that no matter what you've been through, no matter how many wrong decisions you feel you have made, today things can be changed.

It's never too late, and you can be made anew. Your life can be renewed no matter what. And so I think it's going to be a really powerful story for you guys, and also lots of insights, and again, taking action on these things is how you really get the benefit and express the benefit in the world around you. Alright?

So with that said, we do of course still want to keep in mind that we're taking care of our own nutrition and our own health so we can continue to show up better for everyone else.

And so a big part of that is just having the energy, you know? Having the energy to exercise, and having that extra edge, especially when we need it, you know?

A lot of things can stress us out, and pull us down, and pull energy from us, and what we tend to do is turn to stimulants like a Frappa Mocha Smoka Latte or whatever it is,

just this crazy concoction, triple espresso, whatever. Like these very strong nervous system stimulants, right?

Good organic coffee, tons of benefit. I'm not talking about that stuff, and I literally have worked with people who are drinking twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen cups of coffee a day. Alright?

They've got muscle spasms and all these different issues coming into my office, and I just get them on a detox from the coffee, and their symptoms go away, and then I'm like the guru, right? I'm like the smart one.

You're drinking fifteen cups, you know? Just like- so it's just understanding it's a very strong nervous system stimulant, but there are far more options that we have access to that a lot of us just don't know about.

One of those that's been utilized for literally thousands of years, documented history in systems like Chinese medicine, for example, it's one of like the top five to ten things that's prescribed, especially regarding energy, longevity, and that is cordyceps.

And our modern science today, clinical studies are proving the efficacy of it. Check this out.

The Journal of Ethnopharmacology found that cordyceps supplementation with or without exercise improves exercise endurance by activating your skeletal muscles' metabolic regulators, and also creates a coordinated antioxidant response.

You get a benefit to your endurance without exercise. So your ability to exercise longer and better, you get an improvement there without even doing the exercise. Totally nuts, right?

But of course this is not saying just take cordyceps and don't exercise, alright? This is going to help you to do that and do it better.

And so what I utilize, especially when I need that extra edge, is Shroom Tech Sport from Onnit, and here's why. They did a twelve-week clinical trial, double blind placebo controlled study, this is the gold standard of studies, to see if their cordyceps product Shroom Tech Sport actually had benefit.

So here's what they found in this double blind placebo controlled study. Taking cordyceps versus a placebo was found to increase bench press reps by 12%. That's huge. That's an incredible benefit.

Also it was found to increase combined bench press and back squat reps by 7%. So if you're doing the supersets, you're on the superset jump-offs, 7% increase.

Also shown to increase cardio performance by 8.8%. So in clinical trials, Shroom Tech Sport does work. If you need that pre-workout or pre-life, Shroom Tech is definitely a go-to, alright?

It's from earth grown nutrients, we have methylated form of B12 from, again, earth grown nutrients, that can help to meet that need as well, alright?

So definitely check it out. It's www.Onnit.com/model. That's www.Onnit.com/model and guess what? You get 10% off everything that they carry, alright? www.Onnit.com/model, and get yourself some Shroom Tech Sport.

It's one of my favorite things, I travel with it as well, definitely gives me that extra edge, alright? So pop over there, check them out, www.Onnit.com/model. And now let's get to the iTunes review of the week.

iTunes Review: Another five-star review titled, 'Family,' by MorganLKelly.

"Shawn, when I'm feeling homesick or alone, I turn on your show. It brings me back to why, and I begin to relax. This podcast was a huge catalyst to beginning my journey.

I started transforming areas of my life, body, heart, mind, and soul, not just diet. I gained an understanding that my thoughts are just as important as what I put in my mouth.

Every time I listen, I am inspired and intrigued. I want to learn more. Thank you so much for bringing great content, understanding, and encouragement every single show. We are all blessed to have you here in this space with us."

Shawn Stevenson: Wow. Wow, that is just mind-blowing. That's one of the most incredible compliments, and I'm speechless. That is- thank you. Thank you so much for sharing that.

And this is what it's about, it's about changing the paradigm, and it just means a lot. Thank you so much for sharing that. And everybody, thank you for popping over to Apple Podcasts and leaving reviews for the show.

I appreciate it so very much, so if you've yet to do so, please pop over and leave a review. And on that note, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day.

My guest today is the incredible Scott Harrison. His story starts off kind of average, run-of-the-mill life, then he takes a pretty big trip to the dark side, alright? I'm talking like he's friends with Darth Vader.

And then from there, he basically becomes a Jedi knight and saves the world, alright? That's where the story is headed right now, and you get to hear all about that

in this incredible story today with my friend, Scott Harrison. What's up, man? How are you doing?

Scott Harrison: Thanks for having me, man. It's an honor to be here.

Shawn Stevenson: My pleasure, man. My pleasure.

Scott Harrison: I've never quite been introduced like that before.

Shawn Stevenson: Hey, we're keeping it cryptic, you know? Keeping it cryptic.

Scott Harrison: It's awesome.

Shawn Stevenson: So man, let's just start from the beginning. Let's talk about your story, man. Let's talk about your superhero origin story. Right? Where you came from, and what kind of led you into that crazy night life that you were living.

Scott Harrison: Yeah, man. So I was born in Philadelphia into a middle class family. My dad was a business guy, mom was a writer at the local newspaper, and when I was four, we moved to a drab, gray house in South Jersey to get closer to his new job.

I remember the commute was twenty-two minutes, so he was trying to take it from an hour to twenty-two minutes, spend more time with me as I was growing up.

And what we didn't know at the time was that the house had a carbon monoxide gas leak, and this was before those detectors were invented, you know? Now you can go to Home Depot and buy the blister packs. This is almost forty years ago.

And we moved into this house, it's the dead of winter, all the windows are closed, and we all start to develop these symptoms, start to get a little sick.

And on New Year's Day, my mom walks across the bedroom, she collapses on the floor unconscious. And we run a series of blood tests, and the doctors find massive amounts of carbon monoxide in her bloodstream.

So she is never the same from this. She doesn't die, but she's never the same again, and her immune system is irreparably destroyed; it's compromised forever.

My dad's friend actually rips the gas furnace out and they find the cracks themselves. He throws it out on the sidewalk, and my dad and I start to get better so we recover, we bounce back.

We were only sleeping in the house at night, but Mom from this point on begins to live the most bizarre existence you could even imagine.

So she's wearing charcoal masks, she's walking around with oxygen tanks, basically everything chemical from this point makes her sick. So perfume makes her sick, soap makes her sick, car fumes, fabric softener. I remember the ink from books would make her sick.

So as a writer, she used to love to read, but the print- that new print smell would make her sick.

So I remember my dad and I would actually bake her books in the oven. We'd pull down the oven, we'd throw it in on low temperature trying to get the smell out. Sometimes we would lay them all out in the sun.

So I found this picture in a childhood photo album of fifty books lying out on the grass in the sun as we're changing the pages. And then once her book was treated or out-gassed, as we would say, I could march it up to her room which was a tile-covered bathroom that was then covered in aluminum foil, and she slept on an Army cot that had been washed in baking soda twenty times in between the tub and the sink.

And then Mom would open the door quickly, take the book from me wearing gloves, put the book in a cellophane bag, and then with her mask on she could read. So it was just weird. So that was life as a four-year-old.

Shawn Stevenson: I'm sure you weren't like, "Hey, can Timmy come over and play?"

Scott Harrison: Yeah, no Mom was not like other moms. I mean, I will say my parents did the best to give me as normal a childhood as possible. So I would play outside with my friends in the backyard, but people were not allowed in the house. There was a big sign outside. People were contaminated. We had to get pure.

In fact, as I grew up living through this illness, if I went to school and came back with any fragrance on me, all the clothes would have to be ditched in the garage, and there would have to be a new set waiting for me that had been washed in baking soda.

So family planning stops after the accident, I grow up an only child. My parents were Christians, they were non-denominational Christians, and they decided not to sue the gas company.

Shawn Stevenson: Interesting.

Scott Harrison: I think they could have gotten millions, and this was a negligent act. I think they took a \$1,250 check as, "Sorry we poisoned your family." And they just didn't want to become bitter.

So I remember going to church as a kid, and helping to take care of mom doing the cooking, doing the cleaning. I wanted to be a doctor when I was a kid to help sick people like her.

Shawn Stevenson: Right.

Scott Harrison: So life was certainly not normal, but I was a pretty normal kid growing up, and if anything, I had a lot of responsibility. So I was needed in the household, I was needed by my mom, by my dad.

At eighteen, things changed a little bit. So I discovered New York City and joined a band. I grow my hair down to my shoulders, which was a terrible idea, and I moved to New York City, now it's my turn.

So if the first chapter of my life was looking after mom, was playing by the rules, not smoking, not drinking, not cursing, not sleeping around like the good church kid.

Now it was my time to explore, and the band moves to New York City. We were actually pretty good, we were playing CBGB's and some of these legendary clubs, and a couple months later we break up because we hated each other, and everybody was doing drugs.

And I learned that there's this job- there's this extraordinary job in New York City where if one wanted to rebel, you can rebel in style, and actually get paid to drink alcohol. It's called a nightclub promoter.

So you get paid to party, and all you have to do is get the most beautiful people inside the right nightclubs. And if you do that, you can charge people astronomical amounts for booze.

People will pay \$20 for a cocktail, they'll pay \$700 or \$800 for a bottle of champagne that cost \$50 just to be with the right people in the right scene.

So I start climbing up New York's club social life. I want to be the top nightclub promoter in New York City, and over the next ten years, I pick up slowly at first and then quickly, pick up all the vices that you might imagine would come with the territory, and all the things I was never allowed to do as a kid, and actually said I would never do.

So it begins with smoking, that goes to two and a half packs a day, drinking, then heavily, start with marijuana, then coke, ecstasy, MDMA, Special K.

A little pornography at first, then tons of pornography, strip clubs, gambling. I mean all of it except heroin. All of it.

Shawn Stevenson: It's a full movie at this point. Full crazy movie.

Scott Harrison: Yeah, I mean kind of. And our life looked so glamorous from the outside, you know? I was dating girls that were on the cover of Elle and Vogue Europe, and we were jumping into the back of limos, and we're going to the nicest restaurants, and the nicest clubs, and flying around the world to Fashion Week.

You know, on the outside it looks- there's two VIPs to get to us but on the inside I'm slowly rotting because I'm betraying the spirituality that I'd been brought up with, I'm betraying the morality that I'd been brought up with.

I know that this stuff is wrong, but I'm doing it.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, and something took you in, it was something with maybe your nervous system or something. You were having an issue with your body.

Scott Harrison: Yeah I actually- I go numb. Half my body just goes numb inexplicably one day, and I start seeing neurologists, I'm getting brain scans, I'm getting wires hooked up to my arms.

I have no idea but it was- I could have banged on my hammer and not felt anything. I remember going up and turning scalding water on and putting my hand under scalding water and not feeling anything and pulling it off realizing I'm actually going to burn my flesh off.

So that was- I think what that did for me was in some ways I was living like I was immortal, right? I mean nothing could touch us. I remember there was a scene once where I was- I knocked down a plate glass window that was a story high just trying to bang to someone on the other side.

I was on ecstasy at the time, I was on the way to the club, and just shards of glass come raining down. I've got glass sticking to my face, and my body, and just bleeding all over, jump in a cab, go to the emergency room.

They just start stitching us up, and bandaging us, and then I go straight to the club and work for the next three hours. Just that was like the life on top of the world.

So this numbness over half my body-

Shawn Stevenson: But when you went to the doctor, they ask you those questions, but you didn't answer them I'm assuming.

Scott Harrison: Yeah, well when you go in for a visit, they ask you, "Do you do any drugs?" I could never answer that truthfully, right? I mean they'd think I was some kind of degenerate.

So there's a wakeup call, "Well maybe I'm not immortal, and what would happen if I died?" So I start questioning like Heaven and Hell, and like do I still believe the things that I was brought up with?

Because if there's a Heaven and a Hell, I'm pretty sure which door I'd be opening after the last ten years.

And I go to South America on this amazing vacation in Punta del Este, and I just remember at that moment I had collected the things that I thought would make me happy.

I drove a BMW, my girlfriend was a top model making hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars in fashion, I had a Rolex watch, I had a grand piano in my New York apartment, and I remember spending \$1,000 on fireworks the night before New Year's Eve just to blow up in our backyard.

Massive amounts of Dom Perignon. I mean, this was the scene. There were servants waiting on us on this compound, and I realized that not only was I morally bankrupt, not only was I spiritually bankrupt, not only was I the worst person that I knew at the time; there would never be enough.

It was that realization that I'd been chasing all the wrong things, and someone would always have a better looking girlfriend, someone would always have a better car, a better watch, a better apartment.

It was this insatiable pursuit of hedonism, of selfishness, of more, and it would have no end. It would never come to an end.

And you know, I started to pray again, I started to try and find my way back to a very lost faith, and morality. In some ways, remember that- there's a parable in the Bible, the prodigal son, who basically asks his father for his inheritance prematurely, and his father gives it to him, and then he runs off across the world, sleeps with prostitutes, he squanders all the money, and he winds up years later in this kind of pig sty.

And he says, "I'd rather come home. Like I'd rather come home and be a servant in my father's house than be where my life took me."

And it was just this sense of wanting to come home, wanting to come back to it all, wanting to start over, wanting to live a life in a very different direction.

I realized that my legacy at this point would be meaningless, you know? I would- my tombstone was going to read, 'Here lies a man who got a million people drunk,' and I didn't want that on my tombstone.

So that was really an awakening. It was kind of this cathartic awakening that happened New Year's Eve, and I'm twenty-eight at the time.

Shawn Stevenson: Man, there were so many moments in that story where it's just like- again, from the outside looking in, this would be the thing that people are chasing after.

And when you said this insight about like it's never going to be enough, I think we- even if people of course are not going that far down the rabbit hole, but so many places in our lives, we think that achieving and getting these things is going to fulfill us, and it can't be further from the truth oftentimes.

And so- but in this experience, and kind of having this revelation, something took place where you decided you're going to not only stop what you're doing, but like completely make a 180- like everything that you're doing now, "Let me do the opposite," and I've never heard of anybody doing anything like that.

Scott Harrison: Yeah, it took about six months of floundering, and I talk about this in the book. There was this moment in night life that just gave me a couple weeks to get out of the city in perspective.

And I asked myself that exact question that you said, "What would the exact opposite of my life look like? What would the- not the forty-five degree turn or the ninety degree turn, what would the 180 degree turn look like? What would the about face look like?"

And you know, I start praying again, I'm like, "What would a life of spirituality, of virtue, of service to others look like?" I mean, I had served only myself for ten years. It was a sole pursuit of hedonism.

So I wind up selling everything I own. I remember putting up 2,000 DVDs in a single collection on eBay, and I start applying to the humanitarian organizations I had heard of, the big charities.

And my idea was I'm going to do one year of volunteer service, I don't want to be paid, kind of as a- maybe almost as a penance for the ten years that I had wasted, and let's see where this takes me.

Could I quit all the crap in my life, and could I give that all up, and could I go serve others for one year?

So I take the first step, which is liquidating my life. I put in all these applications, and then I'm denied by every organization. Like no one will actually take me because I'm a nightclub promoter, and they're serious humanitarians, you know, wearing suits and with degrees.

So I'm so frustrated because- I mean imagine actually changing your life-

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, and nobody's accepting you.

Scott Harrison: No one will accept- and of course this makes sense on paper, I'm a terrible bet, right? This could have felt like a fad or a gimmick.

So I was fortunate, one organization writes me back and says, "Well, Scott, if you're willing to go live in post-war Liberia," which this is a country, Shawn, I'd never even heard of. Like you know, Africa was like a big country to me, not made of fifty-four countries.

So they said, "You've got to go live in Liberia and you have to pay us \$500 a month, and then you can volunteer."

Shawn Stevenson: You pay them.

Scott Harrison: I pay them.

Shawn Stevenson: That's funny.

Scott Harrison: But this is perfect because I was looking for an opposite, so what's more opposite than not only volunteering, but paying to volunteer and then actually going to the poorest country in the world?

So I had learned very quickly that Liberia had just exited a fourteen-year civil war, a decade and a half civil war, waged by child soldiers.

A guy named Charles Taylor had decimated this country, and we were going to go in with a humanitarian mission of doctors and surgeons to pick up the pieces, to provide much needed medical care to people who had no access over a decade and a half.

Shawn Stevenson: So powerful.

Scott Harrison: So this happened in weeks. Weeks later-

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, I'm saying- but what's so baffling is the fact that- and I'm just thinking about how other people who might run businesses have some interns pay them to show how serious you are.

But also I think it kind of was divine timing because they needed a little bit of money I think.

Scott Harrison: So that's the business model. So there were- as I later learned, there were 350 of us on the crew all paying. So we were all raising our support, so effectively we were all fundraising for the organization. It's a brilliant model.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah.

Scott Harrison: And at the time, I had never heard of anything like that, right? It sounds crazy.

Shawn Stevenson: Man, there's so much I want to ask you about.

Scott Harrison: It's not like, "I want your time for free." It's like, "I want you to pay me to then give me your time."

Shawn Stevenson: Exactly.

Scott Harrison: And still for free.

Shawn Stevenson: Exactly, oh man. And so this landed you obviously in this area, in these conditions, and you saw things that you'd obviously never seen before.

And it started off you were on a boat. You got landed on a boat.

Scott Harrison: Yeah, it was a hospital boat, this giant cruise liner that had been gutted and turned into a state-of-the-art hospital. It was a group called Mercy Ships, and the idea was very simple.

Just sail this huge hospital ship up and down the coast of Africa, pull into port, and help as many people as possible who couldn't afford to access medical care.

Or as I learned in the places where we were working, there just wasn't any. Liberia had one doctor for every 50,000 citizens.

Shawn Stevenson: That's incredible.

Scott Harrison: And I think our number here in America is one for 200 of us. Like for every 200 of us, there's a doctor. Well in Liberia, for every 50,000 people.

I remember there were two surgeons- two surgeons in a country of a few million, but nowhere to operate. There was no working hospital, no working clinic.

So if you got sick, you were completely- you were up the creek. So that was the idea of the ship; beautiful medical conditions, state-of-the-art facilities, operating theatres. It was the only CT scan, Shawn, in five neighboring countries.

Right? People listening to this, like CT scans are just a common diagnostic- the only one in five countries when we pulled into this port.

So I saw, as you said, things that I didn't even know existed. I mean, leprosy, right? Maybe that's something I read about in like some college textbook, but when you visit a leprosy colony, when you see hundreds of people deformed through this terrible malady.

I saw kids suffocating to death on their face with benign tumors. Choking, gasping for air because these pink fleshy tumors had grown so large over four years, over eight years, that they were having a hard time eating.

I saw people who were blind who just needed a twenty minute cataract surgery to restore their sight.

So the cool thing was I had this instant redemption of the past when I sailed in on this ship to Africa. My role was going to be the volunteer photo journalist.

So even though I was working at the clubs, I had gotten a degree at NYU - New York University - in communications that I just never used. But I went because my dad saved up, I was an only child, and it was easy.

So I dusted off this degree and that was actually my role, was going to be a storyteller on the ship, and the cool thing is I had 15,000 emails. All those people I had gotten drunk for ten years. And email open rates back then were like 100%, right?

So they went from getting emails inviting them to the Prada party, the opening of a mega store, or some Fashion Week party, to weeks later getting pictures of leprosy or cleft lips and cleft palates and flesh-eating disease.

Some people were like, "Please take me off this list." You know?

Shawn Stevenson: "I didn't sign up for this."

Scott Harrison: "I did not sign up for the poverty." But that was the rare response. The most common response was one of deep compassion and empathy from people who I wouldn't have even thought would be compassionate and empathetic.

And people would write back and say, "I never knew this kind of suffering existed in the world. I didn't know that there were these doctors who gave up their vacation time, and these doctors could be in the Maldives, they could be in the Caribbean, and they decided to use their skills for free in the service of others. How do I help? How do I give money to the ship? How do I sponsor a surgery?"

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah.

Scott Harrison: So I had this immediate, "Wow, the whole ten years are not necessarily going to be lost because I can start raising awareness and money on day one for this new work."

Shawn Stevenson: That is so powerful. So powerful. And I think one of the things that really struck me in just knowing your story is when you realized that even with this ship, and pulling into a port, there were still thousands of people that weren't going to get access, and you found out that there were people traveling for weeks to try to get to this ship.

Scott Harrison: Months even.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, can you talk about that?

Scott Harrison: People coming from neighboring countries. So day three of my set foot in Africa experience is the patient screening. It's when we would triage all the sick people that would come and see who we could schedule for surgery and who we could help.

So I should have known when the government gives us the football arena, the soccer stadium in the center of town- and this was kind of decrepit, but it was a huge space.

I should have known that a lot of people were going to come, and I knew that we had 1,500 surgery slots. That's a lot of people. We were going to be able to help 1,500 people.

I'll never forget, my third day on this mission, I grabbed my cameras, it's 5:30 in the morning, I jump into hospital scrubs, I jump into a convoy of Land Rovers, and we start heading towards the stadium.

And as we turn the corner, there are 5,000 people standing outside in the parking lot waiting for the doors to open to be seen by doctors.

And it just hit me. I remembered just beginning to weep. It hit me, you know? We're going to send 3,000 people home with no hope. We have no answer for them.

We don't have enough doctors, we don't have enough resources. And that's what we did.

Shawn Stevenson: And some of them walked for weeks to get there.

Scott Harrison: Imagine that. Some of them with their kids- some of them came from neighboring countries with the hope of seeing a doctor, and we weren't able to help them.

So then I really tried to focus on the people we were able to help, focusing on the hope, and focusing on the 1,500 people that we were able to bring on the ship, and operate on, and release with transformed lives.

I mean, there are so many kind of interesting visuals in this. There's a 522-foot ship. I should say that before I joined the mission, I quit everything, but I went out with a bang.

So I got fantastically drunk the night before I got on the ship, and I smoked like three packs of cigarettes, you know? I knew that this would be my last hurrah.

I knew that I would have to leave all those vices like on land, walk up the gangway, I can picture the gangway being pulled up, and then sail to my new life. Like sail away.

It was the same thing as these- and that's true, I mean, I never gambled again, I never touched coke again, I haven't had a cigarette in fifteen years. I haven't looked at a pornographic image in a decade and a half.

Like I just walked away from all of that stuff, and just believed that I had to fully commit to start over. You know? To live a new story of my life, I just had to leave all that on the shore.

And that was what was happening with the patients. They would walk up dying in front of us, and they would walk up the gangway, and they would go into the hospital ward, and a couple days later, they would walk down with a completely new face.

Seeing- I never really talk about this, but there's this memory of a woman named Marguerite, and she was in her twenties, and she had gone blind with cataracts.

And it was just exposure to the equatorial sun, they don't have UV protection. And she had- imagine having your sight for twenty years, and then going blind.

So she knew what it was like to see her whole life, and then was completely blind. You could see these cataracts, they were like white saucers.

And I remember documenting her surgery with my cameras, and it felt like I could do it. I mean it was a little slit, just tweezers, pull out the cataract, put in a new lens, same thing on both eyes.

And I was there the next day when they removed the patches, and she could see for the first time, and it was amazing. She started laughing, and screaming, and dancing.

She tackled me. So I've got the camera in my lap, she tackles the nurses, her sister was there, and this cost like \$150 and twenty minutes. Maybe twenty minutes per eye, a forty-minute surgery.

So it was an amazing place of miracles and hope, and I'm sharing these stories with the people back home.

The year ends, I'd taken 50,000 photos that first year, and I don't know what's next. So I go back on the ship, so I sign up for another tour to Liberia, and on that second tour is when I start to figure out what's actually making so many of these people sick.

And I get off the ship, I get out of Monrovia, which is the city, and I start heading into the rural areas, and the deeper I get, I see the water that people are drinking.

And it's the dirtiest water I've ever seen in my life. They're drinking from swamps, they're drinking from brown rivers. You're talking about coffee, they're drinking water that looks like coffee.

It's viscous, you know? Like imagine coffee with heavy cream in it, and it's like slush.

Shawn Stevenson: And parasites.

Scott Harrison: And parasites, and I later begin to learn about all of the diseases associated with this bad water.

But I had never seen a human being drink dirty water before. I mean, we sold bottled water for \$10 in our clubs. It was called Vos. Do you want sparkling or still?

Shawn Stevenson: Right.

Scott Harrison: In the giant bottle.

Shawn Stevenson: Fancy.

Scott Harrison: You know, and people would come, and they'd order ten bottles, and they wouldn't even open the water. They're drinking champagne or vodka.

So it shocked me to learn that half of the country- 50% of the country was drinking dirty, disgusting water. So no wonder thousands of people are turning up sick, you know? No wonder things are growing on people's faces.

So I'm sharing these images that I'm taking in the far-flung areas with the doctors on the ship, and they're all like, "Yeah, duh. Yeah, we know. We know water is making people sick."

And they just encouraged me to work on it. They said, "Why don't you go work on this problem? If you really care about making people well, go address the root cause of so much of the sickness," right?

Shawn Stevenson: Right.

Scott Harrison: Don't help us fund the next ship necessarily, or more surgeries. Go and actually prevent people from getting sick.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah.

Scott Harrison: So that was the story of how I discovered water as this issue, and at the time, a billion people on the planet didn't have clean water. One out of every six human beings alive was drinking dirty water.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah. One of the things that I learned from you that really hit my heart is 400 kids are dying each day.

Scott Harrison: No, it was 4,000.

Shawn Stevenson: I'm sorry, 4,000.

Scott Harrison: Were dying every day.

Shawn Stevenson: Oh man.

Scott Harrison: That's incredible, right? And it's that kids are most vulnerable under five, right? So the adults are just sick all the time, you've got diarrhea, you've got dysentery, you've got worms and parasites.

But it actually kills the kids and they die of diarrhea, right? We've got kids, like our kids get sick, we go buy the purple stuff at the Duane Reade or the Walgreens, and we rehydrate our kids, and to rehydrate a child, you need clean water.

So what happens is the kids get sick from the water, they get dehydrated, they get diarrhea, they get more bad water, and it begins this cycle and spiral into death.

And you've got mothers holding children that are three or four in their arms because they got diarrhea, and they died, but there was no clean water to save them.

Shawn Stevenson: I think- and what was so powerful for me is I had the insight in how we really do take water for granted, you know? Like we're more likely to- we pee in it, we've got fountains just rolling.

Like we're so hyper exposed to it, clean water, that we take- we really do take it for granted, and this is literally the most important nutrient besides oxygen in life.

Scott Harrison: Water is life. We hear it in every country that we travel to. Water is life. I mean, think about. Think about what- I mean people tweet at me when their building's water gets shut down for two hours.

They're like, "Thinking about Charity Water today." I'm like, "Dude, two hours? Like try your whole life. Try walking five hours."

So I come back, and I've got my issue. Like I have my mission. I'm completely broke at the time because- it was actually worse. Not only were nightclub promoters, as you can guess, probably not good at saving money.

We were great at spending money. I'd given all my money to Mercy Ships, the people that I'd met in a country that I wanted to help.

And you know, I come back to New York, Shawn, and I find that my club partner has not dissolved our company, nor paid his taxes. So I'm like \$30,000 in debt.

So this is not a great time to start a charity, you know? To do anything about it, right? You would argue, "Well, go get a job. Like go back in the clubs even. Go pay that off and then start."

But I was just- I was hell-bent on trying to immediately start getting human beings clean drinking water to stop them from dying.

There was a responsibility to do something about what I'd seen. Like I couldn't just see that and then go move on.

So I was running around telling everybody in New York City that I was going to end the water crisis in my lifetime, and I was going to work for the rest of my days to see a day on Earth where no human - simply because of the conditions they were born into that they didn't get to choose - no human was drinking bad water.

Shawn Stevenson: And you actually did something really profound. Using your experience as a club promoter, that actually kind of worked in your favor again. All of the crazy stuff you went through, and bringing a different model.

Because first thing is people don't trust charities really, you know? And that's one thing that really jumped out at me because it's like where is your money going?

So you started to look at some of these issues as you went along, but let's talk about the beginning, the inception of Charity Water.

Scott Harrison: Yeah.

Shawn Stevenson: How did that start?

Scott Harrison: So ground zero, so I'm back in New York. My old club partner takes me in, he's like, "Sorry I didn't pay the bills, but you can live with me for free," which was worth something.

So I'm sleeping on a walk-in closet floor of a loft in Soho in New York City. He donates his living room, it was just a couple couches. He said, "This can be your makeshift office in the beginning."

And what I realized as I was running around telling friends my passion for ending the water crisis, I realized - just like you said - they didn't trust charities.

They were like, "Man, I don't give to charities. I don't know where my money goes. I don't know how much of my money will actually get to the people that they're claiming my money is going to help."

And again, I had the advantage of just knowing everyday people, right? I wasn't hanging out with philanthropists, I wasn't hanging out with people in the charitable system. I was hanging out with people who went to clubs, and bought drinks, and worked in fashion and entertainment.

So I realized, "Okay, this is going to be really hard." Raising the kind of money to make a dent in the water crisis, these people weren't going to give it to me.

Everyday people weren't going to give it to our charity, so we needed to completely re-imagine the charitable experience for them.

We needed to create a new business model that would speak to some of those objections, that would speak to the cynicism, that would speak to the skeptics out there.

And as I started to talk to people, I realized, "Well if we could create a pure flow of money, that would be like 80% of the challenge."

So I wondered, "Was there a way where I could send 100% of every donation we would ever take in directly to build water projects across the world and directly to give people clean water?" So no overhead, alright?

The public's money would never pay for my salary, or anybody else's salary, or our office, or our copy machine, or our phone bills, or our flights.

Could we create a pure vehicle for giving where it was 100%? So I didn't know how we would do this, but just on faith I opened up two bank accounts, and said, "Alright that's it. We're never going to touch the public's money. That goes straight."

And somehow in this overhead bank account, we're going to go find a small group of people to get passionate about funding those overhead costs, right? Funding those non-sexy costs.

And that was kind of big idea number one, and my friends were like, "Yeah, if I knew where 100% of my money was going, I'd give."

So then we just realized, "Okay, well with two separate bank accounts, we could actually use technology to prove to people what we did with their money."

So we could take it farther, not just tell you, "Hey Shawn, 100% of your \$1,000, or \$100, or \$10 went to Malawi." We could actually show you the well in Malawi, or the rain water harvesting system in India that was built with your money, because we didn't touch it. 100% went straight out.

So the second pillar really became proof; this idea of just showing people where their money is going, being accountable, being the most hyper transparent charity the world had ever seen.

I mean we were thinking this big, and a lot of it was good timing. So I met the Google Earth founder, and Google Earth was just building Google Earth, Google Maps, and I realized that they'd given us this free place where we could geo-locate every charity water project we would ever build within ten feet.

You'd even be able to see satellite images of these projects as they were built. You could see Shawn's family's well as it went in, and know exactly where your money went.

So the second pillar was proof, and the third was I wanted to build this beautiful, and imaginative, and inspiring brand.

I'd come across a quote in the New York Times by a columnist, and he said he was lamenting the state of charities, and he said toothpaste these days is being pedaled with more sophistication than all of the world's lifesaving causes.

Crest and Colgate are out-marketing people who are saving lives with water, or ending hunger, or providing shelter to refugees. Like this is broken.

And it was true, right? If you think back ten years ago, and even to some degree today, charities often have anemic brands. Their websites aren't very sophisticated.

I mean they still send out non-mobile optimized emails. Like how is that possible that you could press send on 500,000 emails, and like not build it for mobile, which is 60% of your opens.

So there was just this kind of poverty mentality through so much of the sector, and there was this guilt and shame left over. I mean, you're old enough to remember the Sally Struthers commercials, right?

We were growing up, and the kids with the flies landing on their forehead, and everything was in slow motion, and they would look up, and they would lock eyes

with the camera, and then the 800 number would start to slowly crawl across the screen.

It would say, "Hey these children in need," and it would make you feel so terrible that people would give, but you would never want to talk about that charity. You would never wear that charity's tee shirt that made you feel like that.

Shame and guilt was not how the best brands marketed, right? Apple launched the Think Different campaign. Nike doesn't tell people that they're fat and lazy to go for a jog, you know?

"Turn off the TV, America. You're fat, you're ugly, you're lazy. Put away the Fritos and go for a run." They don't do that.

Nike for years has told stories of people overcoming adversity.

Shawn Stevenson: Right.

Scott Harrison: Finding the greatness within you. Like they've said, "We believe, no matter what you've been through, that you can do it. Like there's greatness within you," and then people rise to the challenge.

So why weren't charities marketing like that? Why weren't they using messages of invitation, and hope, and inspiration to invite people into their movements?

So that was kind of the brand piece.

Shawn Stevenson: And that makes sense, because I'm thinking like you're right in the sad music and drawing on people's guilt and feeling bad.

Scott Harrison: Guilt and shame.

Shawn Stevenson: That will- I'm saying that will invoke some action, but to become something that's inspiring.

Scott Harrison: It's not a movement if it doesn't invoke a movement.

Shawn Stevenson: There you go, yeah.

Scott Harrison: And even the language, Shawn, giving back. Everybody listening has heard 'giving back. "Our company is giving back." Even that language is terrible, you know?

If I steal this phone from you, you're going to say, "Give it back."

Shawn Stevenson: Give it back.

Scott Harrison: I just took it from you, right?

Shawn Stevenson: Give it back.

Scott Harrison: Why not build a culture of giving? Just drop back, right? Giving back- it's like giving out of debt and out of obligation. People should talk about giving. Let's frame giving in the positive.

"Hey, my company has a culture of giving, of generosity. We give our time, we give our talent, we give our money to serve others." "My family has a culture of giving."

It's not giving back because we pillaged and plundered to such a degree that it's finally time to throw a few scraps to the poor.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, that's what it sounds like and feels like, you know?

Scott Harrison: So we try to just do that differently.

Shawn Stevenson: Absolutely.

Scott Harrison: So 100% proof brand, and then we would always work through local partners. I just believed no one with my skin color had any business running around Africa or Asia or India digging or drilling wells.

Our role could be to raise awareness, to raise funds for this issue, but the work had to be led by the locals. It had to be led by the locals in the countries.

The people of Ethiopia leading their communities forward, leading their country forward. They would be the heroes. They would get all the credit.

Shawn Stevenson: So you're not coming in, "I'm the superhero that saved everybody."

Scott Harrison: People don't need to know who we are.

Shawn Stevenson: That's a barrier right there in and of itself for people to invest and also for people to take responsibility in the community, to see faces like them. That's so brilliant.

That's one of the most powerful things that I've picked up from you was that, and I was just like, "How did he know? That is so profound." It's a trickle-down.

Scott Harrison: I mean success looks for us that we would invest \$50 million in a country and build thousands of water projects, and the Charity Water team would go, and they'd have no idea who we were.

But they would celebrate our local team of 400 people who had been out there digging the wells, and drilling the hydraulics, the technicians, the drivers, the accountants.

They were the ones that would be the heroes. They would be the ones that would be celebrated.

Shawn Stevenson: I want to talk a little bit more about why this matters, and kind of the dire situation that a lot of people- we don't realize that this is going on.

And there was a story that you shared of a thirteen-year-old girl, and it just struck me. Like I couldn't- I had to stop what I was doing. Yeah, can you share that?

Scott Harrison: Yeah, well okay so if you don't have water- the problem is now today as we're recording this, 663 million people. So over the last twelve years, a lot of progress has been made.

Now it's one out of every ten people alive. Way too many, okay? 660 million people today drinking bad water. So if you don't have clean water, it impacts your health.

52% of all disease throughout the developing world, throughout what some people might call the third world, half the disease is caused by bad water, lack of sanitation and hygiene.

So half the sick people you could make well. So water and health, water and education.

One out of every three schools on the planet doesn't have clean water or a toilet, okay? I'm sure there's many people listening that are deeply passionate about education, that believe the only way forward is proper education, okay?

One out of three schools, no water, no toilets. Now think about what happens for a teenage girl when she hits puberty, alright? She stays home one week every single month if her school has no water and no toilet.

She falls behind in her studies. There's already enormous social pressure on so many of these girls to be educated, because they're so useful at home getting the firewood, getting the water, cooking, helping out. Right?

So this is one of the top reasons why girls drop out of school; no water and no toilets in school. And then just it impacts the local economy.

And women in Africa alone spend forty billion hours walking for water. Forty billion hours. It adds up to more than the entire global work force of France.

Every single human being working in a calendar year in France does not add up to forty billion hours.

So you have this huge wasted economy, and unrealized economy of time, and women back and forth five or six hours every day seven days a week.

It's not like Monday through Friday, and you take the weekends off. You take the weekends off, you don't drink water, you don't cook.

So it's a huge issue. Again, I think when you talk about 663 million people or one in ten people can't connect to statistics, right? You just go numb. I don't know what 663 million anything looks like, let alone people without water.

So it's really been the stories that have connected me to this over the years, and the one that you were referring to, I didn't even think it was a true story.

I had heard on a trip to Ethiopia- I've been there thirty times now since starting Charity Water, and this was maybe six or seven trips ago.

And I was sitting in a crappy \$5 a night hotel room, and the owner of the hotel recognizes me, and the local team that we were with and he said, "Hey, you're the water people. You're doing good work. Here, let me tell you a story."

He says, "Well I come from a faraway village that's called Mayda." He said, "When I was growing up, the women would walk eight hours for water."

And he said, "One day there was this woman in the village, and at the end of her journey, right before she got home, she slipped and fell and she spilled her water, and she had a clay pot. Her clay pot smashed."

And he said, "She didn't go back for more water, she didn't go get another pot. She hung herself from a tree in the middle of my village." And he said the village elders found her body swinging from a tree.

And he let that sit with our group for dramatic purposes, and then he said, "The work you're doing is important," and he walked back into the kitchen.

I remember thinking, "No way. No way. Tell the international donors and our group a shocking story to make us feel good about the work and the investment."

But it just nagged at me. And I wound up writing an email to Ethiopia and said, "Hey, could you go to this guy's village? Can you ask around? Can you see if this is true?"

A couple weeks later, I get an email back, and they said, "Yeah, it is true. It was a woman named Leda Kira Saelu [sp] and we verified the story was true."

And I said, "I want to go there. I want to go and live there for a week, and I want to learn more about her story, and I want to walk in her footsteps, and I want to see the tree myself. I want to see the tree where they found her body."

And our partners were trying to talk me out of it, "No, no it's too far. It's too dangerous, it's off the grid." I'm like, "No. No, I'm going."

So I got a pass from my wife because it was really off the grid, there would be no cell service or anything like that. It would be a day's hike to the nearest town.

And I did, I flew down as I flew up to the north, I drove five hours, the road ended, I rented a donkey, threw my sleeping bag on the donkey's back with some water, and then hiked nine hours to reach this village.

And I found 2,800 people living in the village of Mayda, and I met Leda Kira Saelu's [sp] mom, I walked in her footsteps, I met her best friend who walked with her that day, saw her grave, I saw the church where they gave her funeral, and then at the end of the week they took me to this tree.

And it was a small frail tree, and what I didn't know before I walked a day to get to this village, was that she was thirteen when she died.

In my mind, I'd imagined a sixty or seventy-year-old woman, tired from a lifetime of walking. It was a teenage girl. And I asked her best friend, I said, "Why do you think she did it? Why take your own life over spilled water?"

And her friend said, "Well, shame." This was all through a translator. She said, "Shame, because she would have felt so ashamed she'd let her family down, that her clumsiness would cause her family to go without water that night.

And she had broken the clay pot, which was a valuable asset. It could be a couple days wages. But the shame of facing them because of her carelessness would have been too much."

And she tied a rope around her neck, climbed a tree, and jumped.

So I left that week, I was angry. I mean, I came back really angry at just the injustice. The fact that a kid like me could be born into a middle class world in Philadelphia and not ever know what it's like to walk for water, or drink dirty water.

To this day, I'm forty-three, I've never had dirty water. I've been to sixty-nine countries but I bring water or I bring a filter because I can afford it.

And the thought that a thirteen-year-old girl, just because of where she was born, and because of a slip- slipping on a rock, would take her own life. Something was wrong and I needed to fight faster.

I needed to go faster and harder, and tell the story, and hope that that might break some people out of apathy.

You know, it's so easy to embrace apathy when it comes to any of these huge global issues; world hunger, the water crisis, right? The refugee crisis.

But you know, it was just this sense of, "Not on my watch. Like not on my watch are thirteen-year-old kids hanging themselves from trees because they don't have water, and whatever I can do to go faster, to get on more stages, to get on more flights, I'm going to do it."

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, and man, did you. I'm going to- man, that story is really profound, and that's just one of the stories.

And I'm going to shift gears a little bit because I want to talk a little bit about how you did this, because the impact that you've had is outrageous, and all of the people who've come on board in service of this mission.

But before we get to that though- well actually, let's talk a little bit about that, and then I want to talk about kind of a dark spot you hit with your organization.

But we're going to do that right after this quick break. You're going to find out something profound that can be applied to your life right now, something that you can execute on, and help to uplift yourself and others right after this quick break, so sit tight, we'll be right back.

Alright, we are back and we're talking with Scott Harrison about his incredible organization, and also by the way, there's a new book. It's called, 'Thirst,' alright? Pick it up. If you're thirsty, pick it up.

Man, before the break I mentioned you literally creating something that has transformed the game, and so I want to talk a little bit about how you were able to do that because this was something- right now- so I believe it's somewhere around \$330 million have gone to these water projects.

I mean that is 100% of the money taken in from the different donors. And so let's talk a little bit about that. So how did you get there?

Scott Harrison: Well I'll give you kind of the stats. So in total for- on the overhead side to run the business and the water projects, we're at about \$320 million so far.

We've used that now to fund 29,000 water projects across twenty-six countries, so 29,000 villages for about 8.4 million people.

So current state, 8.4 million out of 663 million. It's about 1/78th of the problem. So 8.4 million is a lot, it's actually now more than New York City, which is cool. It's stadiums full of people. It's like 400 Madison Square Gardens.

And as I'm trying to encourage myself, I do think about the progress, and today we're going to get 3,500 new people clean water for the first time in their life, and then tomorrow another 3,500. So that's our KPI.

But bro, it's 1.3%. Like there's so much more to do, you know? We're at the very beginning of this journey, and in some ways we're twelve- we just turned twelve last Friday.

And you know, a lot of times people will say, "Man, did you ever think you'd be able to do so much? \$300 million for millions of people around the world. That feels like so much."

I'm like, "I thought it would be infinitely more by this point." That is a fraction of what I believed was possible and still believe is possible.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah.

Scott Harrison: Right? The trillions of dollars sitting latent in bank accounts helping no one, we have only been able to move \$320 million or so to this issue, to support Charity Water, and clean water projects. So I think the best is yet to come- I hope.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, I definitely- you could feel it. I feel it, and the first thing is- and just for everybody listening, I want you to start thinking bigger, right?

When you're talking, like it literally starts to open my mind of like how limited my perspective can be sometimes in the impact that we can make.

You just said it, \$330 million in service of this, and that's just one portion, because there's another side we'll talk about in a minute.

And you were already thinking like, "It should be way more than this, and I've only scratched the surface." So where are we in our own minds limiting ourselves in what we're capable of?

For transforming our lives because your story in and of itself to take this- because we feel like we can't get redemption because of whatever story we've been through, and to completely turn it around and to devote your life to service like you have is incredible.

And so I just want to plant that seed really quickly, and now from there let's talk about- let's talk about some of this impact that was brought on, where these funds are coming from.

Scott Harrison: Yeah, we talked about the birthdays.

Shawn Stevenson: Because you just said you had your twelfth birthday, so let's talk about that, which is such a good idea.

Scott Harrison: Yeah, so Charity Water started, day one was my birthday party in a nightclub. I mean you talk about like- I didn't even realize the symbolism I think of the redemptive turn there.

But from ten years of partying hard in these nightclubs, two years on the Mercy Ship- almost two years with them, and then day one was a party in a nightclub, and I asked all my friends to come out.

I gave them open bar to make it easy for them to come, 700 people came and I said, "On your way in, instead of paying a cover, I want you to donate \$20 and I want you to put it in a big plexi box."

And I remember people were coming in, tossing \$20, going in, going straight to the bar. It was a good DJ that night who had donated his time, and I made this promise; 100% of whatever is in this box tonight is going straight to help people get clean water.

I remember that night, a weed dealer walked in, put \$500 in the box, and he said, "This is the first charitable gift I have ever made in my life, but I know where this money is going."

I'm like, "We're onto something." I mean this is not going to be our market, but like come on, there's no one more cynical than this guy, and he just made his first charitable gift. He was in his thirties.

So we raised \$15,000 that night, we immediately took the money to a refugee camp in northern Uganda where 31,638 people were living.

And we wished we could have done way more projects, but we did our first few projects, and then we sent the photos and the GPS back to those 700 people, we said, "You did this. Here is the proof. Here's the satellite images, here's the video of clean water flowing because you came to a party and you dropped \$20."

And people were blown away. I mean it felt like all 700 people wrote me back and said, "This is amazing. I never expected to hear from the charity again. Being able to see this, it's real to me. When's the next party? Like when can we do this again?"

And you know, what I learned in that moment was we were fundamentally onto just a very big but simple idea; just close the loop with people. Tell them what we did with their money.

You know? It's almost like an investment, right? If you make an investment, you just want communication. Like what are you doing? What are you building? How are you growing that investment?

And a year later, on our one-year anniversary, I thought, "Well I can't really scale the club idea, but what if I donated my birthday? Because I don't need any more crap, and I certainly don't need a party in a nightclub."

And I liked the idea of asking for my age in dollars. Age in dollar donation. So I'm like, "\$32 bucks for my thirty-second birthday." Everyone has \$32, they would have spent that on tax season tip of the party anyway. Right? And knowing that 100% goes.

So to my surprise, I raised \$59,000 as this birthday idea spreads. So four times the opening night. And then this seven-year-old kid in Texas starts knocking on doors asking for \$7 for his seventh birthday, and he raises \$22,000.

And we're like, "Hold on, we've got the tiger by the tail here. We have a big idea." No one needs more crap for their birthday, no one needs a party celebrating them, especially when a tenth of the planet is drinking bad water.

What if we could create a movement of birthdays? Of these redemptive generous birthdays where we donate them in the service of others, and our birthdays actually help kids live to their fifth birthday? Right?

Help people achieve more birthdays, help them grow older, grow healthier. So this movement of birthdays just starts to spring up all around the world.

And tech CEOs like Jack Dorsey donate their birthday, and the Spotify founder donates his birthday. Will and Jada Smith not only donate their birthdays, they come with me to Ethiopia to actually see the impact their birthdays have made.

And it's just- it's super cool, but the movement was then- was really built by six-year-olds, and sixteen-year-olds, and eighty-nine-year-olds.

There was- I'll never forget, Nonna Weam [sp], eighty-ninth birthday, and she writes on her website, she said, "I'm eighty-nine and I'd like more people to have that chance."

And she just got it, you know? I'd like to make that possible for more people. Her birthday could help people have more birthdays.

So tens and tens of thousands of people start donating their birthdays all around the world. They are bringing people into their campaigns.

They are telling their friends about it because it's a joyful thing. It's an easy message to spread. "Hey, I'm turning thirty-one," "Hey, I'm turning seventeen," "Hey, I'm turning fifty. I've been blessed. All I want for my fiftieth birthday is for people to have clean water. Will you join me?"

So we get a lot of people clean water through this.

Shawn Stevenson: Those stories, again, on this side of the equation as well, with people- it became a movement. And watching one of your talks, and seeing the video that you played, there was an especially powerful-

Scott Harrison: Yeah, there's a little girl.

Shawn Stevenson: Moment with this little girl.

Scott Harrison: Yeah, so one of the most moving birthdays was a nine-year-old girl in Seattle, and her church had raised money for Charity Water by throwing a keg party for the town.

The pastor wanted to show the town, "Look, we're not too religious. We're going to throw a big party for clean water," and they actually picked us because we weren't a religious organization. So the church picked us because he's like, "This is no strings. We just want people to have water."

And she was in that church, and I went out to thank them, and at the end I just asked everybody to donate their birthday. She donates her ninth birthday which was coming up, and she raises \$220, which was short of her goal. She wanted to raise \$300.

So she was disappointed so she tells her mom, "I feel like I let Charity Water down, and the people around the world. I'm going to try harder next year."

So right after her birthday she's killed. There was a terrible car crash, there's a twenty-car pileup on the interstate. She's the only fatality as a tractor trailer just smashes the car that her mom was driving.

And I was in the Central African Republic at the time, and I remember landing, turning on my Blackberry, and getting the call, and the family wanted to re-open the campaign because this was her last wish.

So to honor Rachel's memory, allow other people to give \$9 in her honor, and I remember the pastor said, "My church is going to blow this up. I'm going to have everybody give \$9."

So this starts growing from \$220 to \$300 to \$500 to \$1,000 to \$10,000. It starts spreading through the Seattle community, it starts spreading across the country, it starts spreading to Europe, it starts spreading down into Africa.

Shawn, I kid you not, people in Africa were donating \$9 on this Seattle girl's fundraising page, and she winds up raising \$1.3 million. She inspires over 32,000 complete strangers to give who were so taken by the purity of heart.

I mean this is a girl- we expect kids to celebrate their birthdays, right? It's us mature adults maybe that don't like getting older, right? Or we have everything we need.

But a nine-year-old girl, for her to cancel her birthday party and say, "I don't want any gifts. I want kids I've never met across an ocean to have clean water." That disrupted people.

I mean, it shook me, you know? Am I that compassionate? Do I care that much about others?

I got to take her mom and her grandparents - she had a single mom - her mom and her grandparents on the one-year anniversary of her death over to Ethiopia, and it was one of the most extraordinary trips.

That day, 365 days later after her life was taken, being surrounded by thousands of people in villages that had clean water for the very first time because of her. I mean, we just wept all day. It was just- it was extraordinary.

And her legacy- the last thing I'll say about it, what's so cool, because this happened five years ago, we now look back at what the people that gave did, and so many of them donated their birthdays following her lead. They raised another \$2 million.

So this little girl with the vision of helping ten people, has now helped over 100,000 people get clean water. And that's what Charity Water is. There are so many of those stories.

I mean, I could take hours telling you stories of kids in Vancouver doing twelve lemonade stands in a row and getting local bands to perform at their lemonade stands to sell more lemonade.

And there was a guy that listened to Nickelback for seven days to try to raise money for Charity Water. He was like, "I will listen to Nickelback, including while I'm sleeping, if you give money," and he raised \$36,000.

Shawn Stevenson: I like that *Rockstar*. I like that song. Wow.

Scott Harrison: There was one guy who had saved up \$10,000 to propose with a ring, like you do, and at the last minute he decided to not buy the ring and to buy a well in India.

He and his wife were Indian, and he said, "I'd rather start our marriage off with an act of radical generosity, and that's going to be the bedrock of foundation."

So we have so many stories. The beauty is that Charity Water is not about me, it's not about our organization, it's about this vibrant community of over a million people from 100 countries who really are bringing the best of themselves to the movement; their talent, their time, their fundraising, their money, and that's what's allowed this thing to grow so fast.

Shawn Stevenson: I love it, man. And I was going to get into, you know, it wasn't all sunshine and roses in creating this movement because you've got this model where 100% of the money goes to fund these projects.

Scott Harrison: Which is hard.

Shawn Stevenson: How are we taking care of the infrastructure, the payroll?

Scott Harrison: Which is hard.

Shawn Stevenson: You've got that in the book, so we'll let people to see that story, because it's just like- I was immediately like, "How in the world?"

Scott Harrison: Yeah, yeah you were right.

Shawn Stevenson: So definitely check out that part.

Scott Harrison: It sounds so simple but there were a lot of almost didn't make it moments.

Shawn Stevenson: Yeah, but now it's thriving, and it's a beautiful thing, and I'm definitely on to be a part of this as well. That's why I wanted to have you here, and to share your story, because this is- again, this is the- outside of oxygen, the number one nutrient we need, and everybody on this earth has the ability. We are able to provide water for everybody.

Scott Harrison: We know how to solve this problem. It's the beauty of water, there's not a single person alive right now that needs to drink bad water.

It's not like some of these diseases that we simply don't have the cures for, right? There's a cure for dirty water. A lot of different things work.

Wells work, rain water systems work, filters work. We have thirteen different technologies that we use, but no one needs to drink bad water. There's not a single person alive that we don't know how to help, which is what makes it so exciting to work on a solvable problem.

We actually will see a day on Earth when people are going to have clean water. So the last thing- I'll talk about The Spring a little bit. That's probably the easiest way people could join us at the moment.

Certainly people could add their birthday to the movement, but as we hit ten, we said, "You know, we've been able to help so many people, eight and a half million people so far. We want to do more. What if we could create a loyal community of people who would show up for Charity Water the same way they show up for Netflix or the same way they show up for Spotify or for HBO or their magazines?"

What if we could create a community of pure good where people would donate \$10, \$30, \$50, \$100 a month, whatever they could, and 100% of that money would go to help people get clean water?

And we launched a new community called The Spring. I kind of liked the double meaning, you know? Spring is a time of rebirth and new beginning, and it's also literally where water comes from.

And we just invited people, you know? It costs us \$30 to give one person clean water. And this community, again, just started growing as people would write us and say, "I canceled the subscription to this. I didn't need it that much. I want my money to go."

And we have people in their nineties giving their pension. We have kids turning in their allowance to their parents who then go on their credit cards and give that monthly.

So it's been this amazing community that people can learn a little bit more about, and I'd love to invite everybody in. The only way we can do it is through everyday people who just say, "Look, I can do something about this. I can do \$30 a month. I can do \$50 a month. I can do \$10 a month. I could donate a birthday. I could donate one birthday," and that's how it grows.

Shawn Stevenson: Man, I'm just very, very grateful for you and the mission, and let- first of all, let people know where they can do this and take action, alright? We've got a little special page.

Scott Harrison: We've got a page just for you, man, for your community. You have an amazing community.

Shawn Stevenson: Thank you, man. Thank you. It's just passionate, great people. And also let everybody know where they can find the book.

Scott Harrison: Yeah, so just www.CharityWater.org/model. That easy, www.CharityWater.org/model.

Shawn Stevenson: Easy.

Scott Harrison: And they can get information about both The Spring and the book.

Shawn Stevenson: Awesome, man. Thank you so much, man. It's just-

Scott Harrison: And I won't make a penny from the book. I gave away the whole advance, all the proceeds go to Charity Water. I'm hoping that even that, just the story of the organization as it goes out and hopefully touches people both with this message that it isn't too late to change.

I know maybe somebody's listening that has like a wayward kid. It's really never too late. Your past does not define you, and I believe that, and you can redeem the things in your past.

You can take those things that you might be ashamed of and you can use them for good.

Shawn Stevenson: Definitely. Definitely. Scott, again, I'm just grateful for you and for you saying 'yes,' and when they proposed you that mission of going and doing something about it, you really did.

And I think you're an absolute superhero, and I'm just excited- very, very excited and grateful to be a part of this now. And man, we are literally going to change the world with this, man. So thank you.

Scott Harrison: Thanks for having me.

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

Listen, this is a solvable problem, and we've done- it's now been downloaded by a couple million people, this water and hydration master class that we did.

And by the way, aren't you feeling a little thirsty? Alright? Aren't you feeling thirsty? Get yourself hydrated but also do something to help other people to get that same experience.

This is literally what makes up your blood, that made your constitution of your blood, neurotransmitters, hormones moving throughout your system, just making everything operate better.

Your cerebral spinal fluid, your synovial fluid, the juices in your brain, alright? It's so important. It's the number one nutrient outside of oxygen, as I've said multiple times.

Do yourself a favor, take good care of you, and let's do something to take good care of other people as well. Not giving back, just giving.

And so I love that message so very much. Take action, head over to www.CharityWater.org/model, alright? www.CharityWater.org/model and get started. Let's do this all together.

And the great part about this, by the way, again we get to see where it's going and see the change that we're making together with this movement, with this mission, alright?

We've got some incredible shows coming up, but make sure if you got a lot of value out of this and you think this can transform somebody else's life, share this out with your friends and family on social media, Twitter, Instagram, all that good stuff.

What's your social media handle?

Scott Harrison: Just Scott Harrison and Charity Water.

Shawn Stevenson: Tag him, too. Let him know what you thought about the show, alright? I love you guys, I appreciate you so much. Take care, have an amazing day, and I'll talk with you soon.

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

And please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave us a rating to let everybody know that the show is awesome, and I appreciate that so much.

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