

the dots

a podcast about connecting.

Shawn Anderson Transcript

Announcer: [00:00:04] Welcome to the Dots. A podcast about connecting. The Dots is a series of conversations with artists, community leaders, entrepreneurs, and change makers who talk about how they connect the dots and bring things together for their communities, companies, and themselves for a better life. And now you're host, Digital Strategist, speaker, and entrepreneur, Kathleen Buczko.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:00:30] Shawn Anderson is a six time motivational author, international keynote speaker, and results producing, people builder. His "go the extra mile" philosophy and ability to produce winning results have been praised by political leaders, Olympic gold medalists, and world record holders. And not to mention media outlets throughout the world. An entrepreneur since the age of 10 when he started selling worms to fishermen, Shawn continued by building businesses and organizing events that make people think and make a difference. Shawn, welcome to The Dots.

Shawn Anderson: [00:01:03] It is awesome to be here. How are you today.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:01:06] I'm good. Tell me where did you grow up.

Shawn Anderson: [00:01:11] I grew up in a little state just west of California called Nevada and I remember growing up in a town called Reno. There's a sign in downtown Reno says the biggest little city in the world and I always thought man I'm the luckiest kid in the world to grow up in Reno. I mean this is the biggest little city in the world. I'm so lucky. And since then I've made my home in California.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:01:33] Why? Why worms to fisherman?

Shawn Anderson: [00:01:37] Well when you're 10 years old, you have a passion for baseball cards. And I learned a general rule that the more worms that I could sell, and the more fishermen I could attract to my worm biz, the more baseball card packs, with that hard plastic bubble gum, I could buy. So man on Friday nights and I was out there, flooding the parents backyard, pulling the worms. Putting them into huge barrels. Running ads in the paper of the Reno Evening Gazette back then. And on Saturdays and Sunday mornings I would be sitting in the front yard and back then you could put your address in the paper without too much fear.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:02:19] That's true.

Shawn Anderson: [00:02:19] And the fishermen, the fishermen would come by and they would see worms by the dozen and so worms equal baseball cards. And I loved it.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:02:28] So it was your love of the card that started you on your journey of entrepreneurship.

Shawn Anderson: [00:02:32] It was just my, it was the beginning of really being able to understand that, you know, we've got the power. We've got the ability to create what we want and oftentimes to get what we want we've got to create a vehicle that takes us there. And you know for

me at that point I realize you know Uncle Happy's. That was a toy shop that I bought my baseball cards in. They charged money for those in order to get money. The only thing I really knew that I could do well and do a lot of it was sell these worms. And so that's that's how it works. And ever since that early lesson it's continued throughout my life. I start with a vision. What is it that I want? Where is it that I want to go? And then you start with the vehicle to get to that destination.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:03:11] Was that self-determination or was it your parents or grandparents? What example did you have?

Shawn Anderson: [00:03:16] You know. No, you know that was just a desire to get a Hank Aaron baseball card. You know it had nothing to do with Mom or Dad or anything like that. It was just it was just realizing that you know I needed to come up with the quarters to be able to buy the cards and to get the quarters I had to do something for it. I had to work for it. Mom and Dad just weren't going to give the quarters to you. That's not how the game worked. The game is that you had to be creative, you had to be resourceful, you had to go out, and you had to find those quarters yourself. Well that's what I did.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:03:47] So you were creative and you were resourceful but your parents didn't hand it to you either right.

Shawn Anderson: [00:03:55] Oh no no no no no. You know my parents you know when you're when you're in first grade and you want to get an A on your paper your parents aren't sitting there next to you helping you you know get an A and your spelling test. Or being able to draw on those big huge lines or all your perfect letters. No I learned that a young age that you know if it's going to be it's up to me. I've got to study the lessons. I've got to do the work. I've got to and the more that I studied. And the more that I did the work, better chance I had of doing something well. You know. So it was just it was just the desire to be to be good. At that age that's all you really think and it's not much more than that. You want to you want to get the A. The A symbolizes something great. And as we get older, you know if that that feeling of just not wanting to be average. Of maybe wanting to be good or if you're already good you want to be great. It's that inner desire just to want more for yourself. I call it being the best version of you and too often in life people settle for the second best version of me. I just never have that desire.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:04:56] How do you know what the best version is?

Shawn Anderson: [00:05:00] You know I asked you. Are you happy in your relationship you live in? Do you have the best relationship you could have? Are you happy with your health or are you totally happy with your fitness? Every time you look in the mirror are you going 'oh wow I'm looking good'. Are you happy with your job? Or are you happy with your bank account? Or are you happy with where your vacation plans are this year.? Because if any of those areas if you're not happy in it, you're not really living the best version of yourself. The best version of yourself is that small whisper inside you that says you know that's what I want to do. That's what I want to do. Then find a way to go do that. That's your best version.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:05:36] I appreciate that. You know finding that that inner voice, that desire you created.

Shawn Anderson: [00:05:47] It's that inner voice. The inner voice is uniqueness of who we are. That there are voices that whisper that that blends all of our talents and our skills and our qualities together and says "wow this is what you're interested in. This is what you want to learn. This is what you want to do". And the more we learn and listen to that inner voice, the greater and more passionate and purposeful our lives become. But the moment that we start to turn the volume down

and we don't follow through. I think the inner voice starts to slip away a little bit.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:06:19] And I think that that's what people look at their lives and feel as if they can't quite connect the dots' because they've forgotten what the sound of their own voice is. And so that within that spectrum of listening and understanding, what would you tell people who are you know kind of facing that challenge? That that fear how to push through that fear of... if I change my job I can't pay my mortgage? I can't put my kid in school the way I want to put my kid in school? or heaven forbid the people that I associate with will think something different of me. How would you tell people to push through that fear to face that fear to live their best life?

Shawn Anderson: [00:07:06] You know as a ultra positive person. As a motivator. As a person who lives the life that he wants to live, I don't have the power to make your fear go away. I don't have the power to even make my fear go away. But what I do have the ability and what I do have the power to do. And Kathy what you have the ability and you have the power to do and what every listener has the ability and power to do: is make the dream of what you want bigger than the fear that you feel. Because when the vision is bigger, when the desire, the goal the passion is deeper and bigger, we can get past the fear. As an example I just returned from walking across the country of England and Ireland. Now these are these are foreign countries. I don't know where I'm sleeping at night. I just got a backpack on my shoulders. I don't know where I'm going to eat. You don't think that I'm not afraid of that? But what what gets me to take the first step. What even gets me on the plane. And what gets me to even the finish line. And how I cross those countries is because man, I just wanted to. I wanted to see what it was like. The adventure. The excitement. The journey. Having done that, that was so much bigger than the fear because once you start walking.

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Shawn Anderson: [00:08:46] The fear slowly disappears. And so if you're feeling the fear, just walk. It'll go away.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:08:56] Where'd you go to school, Shawn?

Shawn Anderson: [00:08:59] Where'd I go to college?

Kathleen Buczko: [00:09:02] High school, college?

Shawn Anderson: [00:09:04] Oh I went to college at University California at Berkeley. And I spent my first couple of years in high school in Reno Nevada where I'd grown up where I had mentioned earlier and then I finished in a little town called Auburn California. I finished my junior year and senior at Placer High School.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:09:24] Just outside of Placerville?

Shawn Anderson: [00:09:26] A little town called Auburn which is just right outside of Sacramento.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:09:31] OK. I've seen it on the map. I've never been there. How did those small town roots though, ground you in your current adventure and life of pushing through fear, of doing things that aren't within the traditional mold?

Shawn Anderson: [00:09:50] Well I never thought you know I never thought when I went to Reno

High School. To me you know I Reno was the second largest city in Nevada. It was somewhat sizable and my high school was big and even a Placer high school, I believe that I had a graduating class of over 500 kids 2000 kids in the school. So you know, there were outlying towns like Lincoln in Roseville and Folsom that had the small school so I just felt like I was in a bigger school. So I can say though that as I came from my particular school, then I went to Berkeley which was a much bigger school. I think maybe it had a population of 40000. You know the biggest surprise in high school I could be the biggest fish in the small pond that I might not have known that. But at Berkeley, you know you were in there with a whole bunch of other big fish. And so that transition just you know I didn't look at that as something to hold me back but I just I look at people that are doing excellent. Or I look at people that are that are that are superior. And I don't look at them as people that I want to beat. I look at them examples of what can be done. Of what you can achieve. You know it's like when Jim Ryan broke the four minute mile that back then they thought that the body couldn't do that. The body couldn't push past four minutes. But once Jim Ryan and set the bar for other people, then everybody started breaking that four minute mile. So I you know I looked at as I started going through life and then Berkeley and then back into the really really really big world. I never felt the competition of others. I just always, it always made me think - Wow if they can go there. That's possible. That's possible for me to do there. I always look at people not as competitors but as examples.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:11:28] So the world is your example not your family not just limited to your small town but the world is your example.

Shawn Anderson: [00:11:36] Yeah. You know absolutely. My mentors in life are absolutely people that I've never even met. My mentors in life are the people who I'm who I read about in books. One of the first books, two books really quickly that just inspired me so tremendously one was by a guy named Benjamin Franklin. You might have heard of him. Benjamin Franklin's autobiography was one of the most influential books I've ever read because of his accountability system and how he achieves the excellence that he wanted to achieve. Another book was by an author named Og Mandino, The Greatest Miracle in the World. Again I never met Og Mandino and yet we can look at others and life, they don't have to be people we know to be our mentors. We can they can be examples in society. They can be examples in history. They can be examples in books. You know so I always just looked at people not in a jealous fashion or not in a fashion of wow I wish I had what she had or what he had. I just looked at it and go, Man Shawn, if you keep dreaming, if your vision is big enough, and if you keep taking awesome amounts of massive action. Who knows what you might be able to do?

Kathleen Buczko: [00:12:45] And I think that that's what's so important about your Extra Mile America initiatives. Tell us a little bit about that and how you're bringing people together to recognize that capacity of positivity?

Shawn Anderson: [00:13:01] Well in 2009, I decided to use my small voice and create something called the Extra Mile America Tour. The Extra Mile America tour was a reminder that if you really want to create positive change in life you don't look to the government or to the boss or your spouse and say what are you going to do to make my world better. But it's about the man and the woman in the mirror. And you can't keep doing Kathleen what you're doing now if you want to create positive change. You've got to do more. You got to be more. You got to give more. You've got to go the extra mile. So I created this in a forrest gump sort of way. I took my non bicyclist's body, 4000 miles across the United States. Coast to coast. And along the way my staff created events in 21 cities where we had pre identified over 200 people who had gone the extra mile. Either in volunteerism or service to make the community better. And were just chasing a massive dream that has benefited so many people. At the end of the ride, I gave away \$10000 of my own money. I wanted to keep that whole mission alive. That extra mile mission. So we created a day called extra

mile day. It was a day that mayors would make a declaration for their city and they would recognize the volunteer heroes, the extra mile heroes, who are doing amazing things in volunteerism and service. In 2009, When I started that on November 1st, I was jumping up and down all over when 23 mayors joined the declaration. It's continued to grow. Last year November 1st, 2016, I'm humbled to say five hundred and sixty mayors in cities across the United States recognized a thousand plus people who were going the extra mile to make the world a better place.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:14:46] That's some amazing results. How do you showcase those people so that, like you, they can learn from the community?

Shawn Anderson: [00:14:53] Well there's a couple of ways. One we really hope that in each town and we were encouraging the mayors to give shout outs to local papers those people get recognized locally. We really give a shout out in each city where there's a small events where the clap for. But then also just on a national level at our web site at Extra Mile America dot org, we highlight many of the great stories. We try to put their picture up there with a story about what they're doing. What kind of amazing things that's happening in their community. Just because they're not willing to talk about change but they're willing to create the change that they were talking about.

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Kathleen Buczko: [00:16:18] So Shawn what advice, I know you don't like to give advice, but what advice would you give someone who is facing some challenges?

Shawn Anderson: [00:16:26] You know if you really want to create positive change in your life. Never give up on you. You've got all the power in the world to create whatever change you want but just keep tweaking your plan. Don't keep doing what you're doing, over and over and over. We don't. We don't get. We don't create change. We don't get what we want to when we do that. But you just gotta do a little bit more. If you're not doing well in your work and you're a sales person. Why not just make an extra three calls a day? That's all I'm asking you. Just try to do three phone calls a day to create some new biz. If you're not feeling really healthy. All I'm asking you is just to go walk an extra 10 minutes a day to start. That's all that's called going the extra mile. If your relationship at home is not what you want, man I just challenge you for today for no reason at all, to do something sweet, kind, gracious for your person. Bring them flowers. Write them a note. Do something special. You know it's when we become heroes for other people in life instead of looking for heroes to fill our own needs. That's when all of a sudden we find that we have the power not only to be someone else's hero but also to be our own hero. So if you're struggling in life, man you've got an imaginary hero badge on you. Make sure you read that and then go be who you are.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:17:36] Shawn, you just finished walking across England and Ireland what's next?

Shawn Anderson: [00:17:42] Well actually that's the fifth country that I've now done. I've done. I've walked across Spain. I've walked across Portugal I've walked 750 miles on Shikoku Japan. I'm not quite sure what's next? I got November 1st on my plate right now, so we're trying. We're

definitely trying to ramp that up and we're trying to work with cities across the country. You know in 2015, I did an awesome speaking tour in the Philippines. I'm really passionate about going to a third world country again this year. We spoke to 20000 people then. I'm just I'm just. It doesn't matter where you are in life. It doesn't matter where you're starting right and it doesn't it doesn't matter. I don't care about your past or your present. It's what you want and you know I just want to keep planting the seeds that our lives are what we create. And you know I'm just going to keep using my voice is powerfully and positively as I can to remind people that life is truly what we create.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:18:33] One more question for small town boy. And the biggest little.

Shawn Anderson: [00:18:38] Can we change my name to extra mile guy.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:18:40] There you go. Extra Mile guy.

Shawn Anderson: [00:18:42] Extra mile guy.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:18:44] Extra mile guy, what do you do in a grassroots way for your community? You have these amazing large things that you've created. What do you do to touch your community every day?

Shawn Anderson: [00:18:56] Do you want me to go in the most basic grassroots way we can.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:18:59] Yeah.

Shawn Anderson: [00:19:00] You want me to show you something that you probably never even considered about how to go the grassroots every single day.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:19:05] Yeah.

Shawn Anderson: [00:19:06] This morning I had to go to the grocery store. When when I was at the cashier I made sure to smile really big and I said "you know how are you doing today? And I really appreciate your smile". And I guarantee you when we start making small grass roots conversations with people and tell them that they're valued, and appreciated, and honored that changes the world. So if you want to do something grassroots and you don't have the mojo when you call the local dog adoption place or you don't have the mojo in you to want to go down out and help feed people on Skid Row. Why not just being super kind to every person you meet? the person in the elevator. the person in the grocery store. The person in line next to you at the post office. Why don't we start a huge grassroots campaign on just kindness? Because I can assure you that if you use your power, and I use my power, and Rena Marie uses her power, and and everyone listening uses their power. I think the world is not going to be about building walls it's going to be about building bridges and that is where the world becomes truly more awesome.

Shawn Anderson: [00:20:10] Thank you Shawn. Thank you for sharing your positivity, your kindness, and your vision to use everyone in the world is an example of achievement because we are all doing what we can do to make this place a better life. And thank you for joining us on The Dots.

Shawn Anderson: [00:20:27] This is a small town guy very happy to be with a big town girl. Thank you so much.

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