



Episode 313: The Tapping Solution to Reduce Anxiety, Stress and Pain With Nick Ortner

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Katie: Hello, and welcome to "The Wellness Mama Podcast." I'm Katie from [wellnessmama.com](https://www.wellnessmama.com). And I'm here today with Nick Ortner, who is the CEO of The Tapping Solution, a company with a mission to bring to the mainstream, a simple, effective, natural healing method known as emotional freedom technique or tapping. We're gonna go really deep on it in this episode and we even provide a step by step walkthrough. And you can do it with us in the episode and try it for yourself. But tapping is a healing modality that combines ancient Chinese acupressure and modern psychology. Nick explains how it works in this episode and the many benefits it can have, including the many things it can work to help reduce. Nick is also "The New York Times" bestselling author of multiple books about tapping and the producer of a breakthrough documentary called "The Tapping Solution."

Those are all linked in the show notes. And he recently released an app as well called The Tapping Solution, which I have on my phone. And it has very simple tapping exercises that you can walk through for everything from stress to sleep, to pain, to emotional eating, to learning to, like, exercise, literally everything, fear of flying. Definitely check that out. But I think you'll really enjoy this episode for all the many ways that tapping can influence both our psychology and our physiology. And without further ado, let's jump in. Nick, welcome and thanks for being here.

Nick: My pleasure.

Katie: I am so excited to have you here because I think this is a really helpful and important topic, especially for moms, which the majority of our audience are moms who are listening. And I think that this can also be really beneficial for families. And I have so many questions I wanna ask you today. But to start, I feel like a lot of people are familiar with tapping and it's become much more well-known.. I mean, the work that you do has really helped with that. But for anyone who isn't familiar, let's start off really broad and can you explain what tapping is?

Nick: Yeah, absolutely. So tapping or EFT, emotional freedom technique, we call it tapping because we are literally physically tapping on endpoints of meridians of our body. And what the latest research shows is that when we tap on these endpoints of meridians, while focusing on the stress, the anxiety, the overwhelm, whatever's going on in our lives, we send a calming signal to the amygdala in the brain. And many of your listeners will know that the amygdala is that almond-shaped fight or flight or freeze response that are in the brain. So, when you're stressed, when you're anxious, when you're overwhelmed, that is a part of our brain that is firing. And what the tapping does is it sends that calming signal. You know, I joke that I still wake up every morning and say, "Wait, we're doing what? Like, why are we tapping on ourselves?" But I know you've had experiences with it. And anybody that's tried it, it's one of those things that once you try it, you go, "Wow. There's something happening here. Like, I was stressed and now I'm not. I was anxious and now I'm not. I was holding on to something. You know, there's so many things in our lives. And it feels like in this modern day with all the social media and everything that we have going on, there's so many things that we just hang onto and it feels like we can't let go of. The tapping helps to break that bond to release that stress in a really deep way.

Katie: Absolutely. And this is definitely not a perfect analogy, but I feel like tapping often gets thrown in the category of things, like you can't really directly, like, measure the immediate effect of, and that people sometimes doubt that it's gonna be helpful. Like, for instance, I'm very anti-plastic. I'm always encouraging people to get rid of as much plastic as possible in their daily lives. And often I get pushback from people because they don't feel like they can see a difference from it or, like, you can't see BPA specifically. So it's not that big of a deal. And I know you actually can feel an immediate difference from tapping at times, but I feel like people sometimes tend to try to write it off as, like, I don't understand it or it's woo or it's energy. So can you explain a little deeper on, like, what's actually going on, on all those levels in the body, both physiologically, and emotionally, and energetically?

Nick: Yeah, absolutely. Well, so there's a couple of components that I think make the tapping really magical. So we have, you know, the physical component. And when we start tapping, we start tapping on the outside of the hand that's called the karate chop point, the side of the hand. And we start by bringing forward what we're stressed about, what we're anxious about, what we're overwhelmed about. Now, one of the things that's different about tapping as a general sort of philosophy, let's say, to other positive thinking stuff, which I believe in positive thinking, I'm all about it, but with tapping, we always start on the negative or the truth of

what we're feeling. And I get two responses from people, first, when I share that with them. Sometimes they go, "Oh my gosh, I'm so into positive thinking that I'm scared to speak anything negative or I'm scared to, you know, amplify it or, you know, law of attraction it with anything negative. So you get that resistance or what you get eventually is, "It feels so good to just say the truth about how I feel." So, anger, for example, like, something happened to you in your day and you're really angry about it. And if we're in this world of self-help, if we're trying to be better people, we might go, "Okay. You know, that person really offended me or they said something that made me angry, or whatever it is, but I just need to let it go.

So I'm gonna try to let it go." And what people usually do is they bury it, right? So the letting go is the swallowing it down. Now, what tapping allows us to do is to go... You know, like, tapping on the side of the hand. Even though I'm so angry, I choose to relax now. So we give a voice to it. We bring it forward. We speak our truth about it. And then when we're doing that, so we're bringing it to mind, we can think about our brain, you know, all the circuits in our brain firing with that anger, it's thinking about it. Then we are tapping. So we're sending that calming signal to the amygdala. We're calming the body. We're sort of sending that counteracting signal. And we do that a couple of rounds. And we can actually do some tapping together later in the podcast so people can actually experience it. We send that calming signal. We speak the truth about how we feel. Oftentimes, we find that as we're giving a voice to it, we say, we're angry, "Well, I'm so angry. I can't believe they did that," and then all of a sudden the anger transitions to sadness or hurt. "Well, I'm not that angry anymore, I'm hurt. I don't know how this happened." And then we progress through these stages of emotion and of letting go.

Now, usually, you'll hear people go, "Well, it took me 10 years to get over that anger," or five years, or a year, or a month where we just held on. I think one of the beautiful things about tapping is that as we give voice to it, as we bring our bodies into it, which we're so used to just ignoring our bodies, as we bring our bodies into it, we let go of things more quickly. We still go through those stages of, I'm angry, I'm hurt, then I'm sad, then I have a higher awareness of it and then maybe I'm ready to forgive. Now, sometimes that can happen in 10 minutes or it can be a couple of sessions, and it can go further. But I think that's part of the magic of the process beyond the physical tapping, which does calm the body. I mean, if you're stressed and overwhelmed, you can just tap through the points. You'll find that it brings some calming energy in. But beyond that, the psychological component, the part of it that says that, "I am angry, I am upset, I am overwhelmed," when we give a voice to that, it's such a relief for ourselves and then we can move forward.

Katie: Yeah, that makes so much sense. And I know both firsthand and from reading the work that you guys have done, how dramatically that can really impact people. But let's talk about some of how it can really rid you of those emotional and physical problems. Like, what are some examples that you guys see in your work with people being able to let go of those things?

Nick: Yeah, great question. So, you know, I made a documentary film about tapping a decade ago. This started my journey here. And originally it was called "Try it On Everything," that was a phrase of one of the originators, Gary Craig used. The movie then changed to "The Tapping Solution," mostly because a lot of people thought "Try it on everything" was some sort of butter spread or...you know, it just wasn't the right branding for us. But I still liked that phrase, "Try it on everything" because when we look at the gamut of what

it can work on, it can work on so many things. And the reason for that is underlying so many of our challenges, underlying, you know, challenges, losing weight, and eating healthy, underlying financial challenges, not making good decisions, not breaking through financially, underlining a lot of chronic pain. There are patterns in the body of stress and anxiety. So really, if you look around your life and you go, "Where are the places that I'm stuck? What are the places where I keep thinking the same thoughts again and again?"

What are the places where I keep running the same patterns, where I do something I don't wanna do, then I beat myself up about it? Then I shame myself into making a change, and then I make a change for a day. And then I fall off again and I run this cycle." Underneath it all are these patterns of stress, these patterns of anxiety, these patterns of overwhelm. So really, wherever in your life you're stuck, you can use the tapping. At the simplest level, anxiety is such a big thing going on in people's lives these days. We have a new tapping solution app, which we can talk about later, but one of the most popular sessions in there is an anxiety meditation. It's 10 minutes. I think we're close to 180,000 individual sessions completed, which gives you a sense for how anxious people are. And we're seeing about a 42% reduction in anxiety in just those 10 minutes. So huge numbers in 10 minutes, half the anxiety gone, just from taking a couple of deep breaths, acknowledging what you're feeling and doing the tapping.

Katie: That's amazing. And I think an important part of that is addressing that emotional side. And like you said, speaking that thing first, actually speaking it out loud and the sense of relief that comes with that. And I think that maybe that's an area we're starting to understand more or starting to at least understand how important that emotional side is and the mental side. And from my own experience, for example, to get vulnerable for a minute, since having... I've had six kids and have Hashimoto's. And so, I feel like I struggled with weight for a long time because of a lot of factors including those. And at the same time, I know my background's in nutrition. I know the things to do and I was eating a really clean diet. I exercised regularly, I got sleep. I knew those things and I was doing them. And it wasn't until I really addressed the emotional side that that changed. And I wasn't even trying to lose weight at that point. I was just trying to become an emotionally healthy person so I could be the best mom for my kids. And so, I really went deep on that emotional side. And tapping was part of that for me. And then my body started reflecting that change without me having to fight it. And it was this big shift of instead of trying to fight that problem, releasing and in just that mindset shift. But let's talk about just how important, I know you've written about this, that emotional side is to physical health.

Nick: Oh, it's so massive. And look, I get the inclination to not ascribe it, the value that it has. Like, the journey that you had, I totally get it. It's a journey that most of us have. I mean, we are so conditioned to think, "Okay. So, if I'm not well, what do I do?" I either, if you go conventional medical route, you take pills, you go to a doctor, like, they do blood tests. It's all these physical things, and then the answer is a white pill, or a blue pill, or a red pill, or whatever it is. Or if you're in the world that you and I live in more, it's okay, well, it's diet, and nutrition, and exercise, and sleep, which are all massive and I'm into them. I care about them every day. But that emotional component, two components to that, both emotional traumas and dramas from the past. So, it's been clinically proven, there's a huge study called the ACE study showing that childhood traumas, adverse childhood experiences, have a direct correlation on cancer, on smoking rates, on all sorts of...on diabetes. Like, all these things where you'd go, "Wait a second, like, heart disease, how is heart disease connected to having

emotional traumas when you're 10 years old?" The connection is there. It's a robust study. It's been replicated and we are seeing that more and more. The challenge is, in our world, we don't see those connections.

It's just a little harder to go, "Okay. If I let go of the anger that I have towards this person, maybe my digestion will be better." But it is absolutely the case. And one way to do it is to just try it out. Like, start looking, like you said. You decided for yourself, "You know what? I'm gonna be an emotionally healthy person," which is a great goal to have. And then you see, "Wow. Look at what's happening with my health." I think there's a couple of things happening with that, just stress, anxiety, overwhelm, the damage that it does to our systems. I know that most of your listeners and your readers are unlikely to pick up a bottle of Diet Coke and drink it down for breakfast. Right? It's like not gonna happen. They're educated enough. You know, they are not gonna have Honey Nut Cheerios for breakfast. They're not gonna have sugar. They're gonna make good choices when it comes to that. But are they waking up angry? Are they waking up stressed? Are they holding onto resentment towards somebody? And it's my belief that if you're holding onto resentment, you're waking up in the morning drinking a Diet Coke. It's just the reality of its impact on your body. We are getting more and more science and research everyday showing that specifically. And I see the stories every day where people go, "I suffered from this for so long and the tapping was the tool that helped me break through it. It helped me, like, open up that space."

What also happens, I think especially, it's like, I'm so grateful for the internet, so grateful for the information we have because we can learn things that the mainstream medical, you know, empire doesn't teach us. The flip side is it can be so overwhelming. So it's like, "Oh my gosh, you know, okay, I've been diagnosed with Hashimoto's. Now I have to read, you know, 18,000 different articles that probably contradict each other in some way, shape, or form. I'm trying to make a good diet choice. And then I read someone telling me that that diet choice was the wrong choice so now I'm stressed out about that." And the number of people that I see, and I'm sure you see them all the time too, Katie, who are just, like, "I don't know what to do anymore. Like, what am I supposed to eat? You know, what am I supposed to do? Like, how do I make decisions about it?" When we think about our emotional wellness, when we think about the stress and anxiety, when we think about the overwhelm in our lives and we address that first, then we get a clarity as to what to do. Then we can actually listen to our intuition and go, "Well, you know what? When I ate this, I felt better. And when I ate that, I didn't." So maybe that's a sign. Maybe that's something that I should listen to in order to continue to create that healing journey.

Katie: That's such a good point. I think we're very... You're right, we're in that age of information overload where you can become paralyzed because there's so much conflicting information and then you have this weight of all the things you're not doing that you now know you should be doing, and all of the emotions that get tied up with that. And I know in "The Tapping Solution" book, you also talk about how, like, all these different types of emotional things that we've talked about can manifest physically. And how there are examples of people using tapping and having actually very noticeable, profound physical changes, including things like back pain. So, can you walk through what some people see when they start adding tapping and how that manifests physically?

Nick: Yeah, absolutely. So pain... My second book was "The Tapping Solution for Pain Relief" and I went that direction in part because the results that I saw for pain were just unbelievable. To give you a couple of examples, I was speaking at Hay House maybe six or seven years ago. We're in Washington, D.C. It's one of those big conference center, a couple of thousand people in there. And I teach the basics of tapping and then say, "Okay. Anybody out here in pain, raise your hand." And I don't know anybody, I don't know how long they've been in pain, what they're doing. A bunch of people raised their hands. I mean, usually, about 20% of the audience raises their hands, which is just so devastating and so sad that people are in so much pain. But called up a couple of ladies, and one of them, the ones that came up, she was in the front row, her name was Kathy, and I said, "What's going on?" And she said, "I have a toothache and it's at a level 9 or 10 out of 10, and I've had it for 3 years, and I've had root canals, and taken 18 courses of antibiotics and this, that, and the other and all of these things." So, you know, in that situation you go, "Okay. Well, she has an infected tooth." And what was actually interesting about it is that she'd gotten an x-ray of her tooth about a week before this event and it was clearly infected. So, we started digging around and we did some tapping on the pain itself.

That's always the easiest thing to do, even though I have this pain, just acknowledging it. And then I asked her, "When did this pain start?" She paused for a moment and thought about it. And she said, "Wow. I've never made this connection. It started when my mother died." She said, "It was a traumatic event. We were in Las Vegas for our family trip. I believe she had a heart attack. It was just an awful, awful experience." Then she realized that's when her toothache started. So, we did some tapping on that experience. I mean, you can imagine the trauma that comes with that, the grief that comes with that, the emotional toll of the body that comes with that. Her pain in that 15 minutes we did together, went down to a two or three. So, there was a huge shift right there. And then she went home. I gave her a copy of my book, and she got into the tapping, went further, did the internal work, did the emotional work, dealt more with that issue, and then her toothache went away. So it was, like, pain-free. Now, what's really cool about the story is that she happened to go back to the dentist a couple of weeks later, did another x-ray, the infection is gone. Now, people say, "Okay. Well, wait, so does tapping on endpoints of meridians cure an infection?" And the answer is no. But what happened was she had this emotional overload. She had this stress.

She had this anxiety. The tapping helped calmed down the body. It helped release that grief and that sadness, and I'm sure the anger that was in there, everything that was going on, and it allowed her body to heal. So this is why, no matter what you're dealing with, this can be a great adjunct to allow your body to heal. It's not a cure for Lyme, it's not a cure for Hashimoto's, it's not a cure for an autoimmune condition, but it can help the body move into that healing state. Pain relief stories... I mean, like, you know, that was a toothache. I also can tell you about John, who was a Vietnam veteran, 30 years of chronic back pain, multiple surgeries, on medications. He's actually in that documentary film that I mentioned earlier, that I filmed 10 years ago...or well, 12 years ago now. And he came to us. We filmed him beforehand in his house in Minnesota. He's in terrible pain. He came to an event, we tapped with him, tapped on some of the trauma from the war, tapped on the anger afterwards, tapped on all of his experiences since then. And he woke up the second morning pain-free for the first time in 30 years. I see these things again and again and again.

Now, sometimes people take some more work. It's not gonna be a five minute or a one-day miracle, but pointing again to the new science and research when it comes to chronic pain, showing that it can often be brain-related. Yes, we have... You know, maybe there's original trauma, or injury, or damage to the body, but

the question is why isn't it healing? You know, if I scrape my knee this afternoon, then I'm gonna put a Band-Aid on it and a couple of days from now, it's gonna look better and it's gonna scab up, and a week from now or 10 days, it's gone. That skin healed, the body healed. You can say the same thing about pulling a muscle, in time, it'll heal. If you break a leg, okay, give it a splint and then it will heal. So, when we look at chronic pain for 20, 30, 40 years, what's going on that the body isn't healing? What's going on in the brain, that you get that same pain message again and again? And the tapping can help to interrupt that message to calm the body and then to move towards that healing state.

Katie: Yeah, exactly. I think what you said is so important that this is not a cure for any of these things. And I know you and I both, being in this world, we're very careful not to ever claim anything is a cure. But at least from what I've read, there's really no downside to trying tapping. There's no really risk associated with it. It's not harmful. It's not like taking a drug that could have a side effect that could be, you know, dangerous. But I wanna make sure I'm correct on that. So, are there any potential downsides to tapping that you're aware of?

Nick: Yeah. I mean, the only thing I would say is that if you are dealing with a serious mental condition, so, bipolar, schizophrenia, if you're dealing with very serious trauma, so if you are dealing with PTSD right now, go reach out to a practitioner who uses tapping. And there's coaches, and trained psychologists, and trained psychiatrists who bring it into their practice because they see how effective it is. That's the place on those bigger, more complicated issues that you want to have professional help, that you want that guidance from someone who can take you through the process. And the other caveat I would say is that if you're in pain right now and you haven't gone to see a doctor, well, go get a checkup first. Like, pain can be a tumor, right? Pain can be a very serious, real thing. But if you've been to a doctor and you've had multiple surgeries and, you know, they know what's going on, or they have an idea of what's going on, or they don't know what's going on, then give this a shot. There's absolutely no harm in going, you know, tapping for 5, 10, 15, 20 minutes and just seeing how you feel.

Katie: Awesome. And definitely, I love trying to understand the science of these kinds of things. And I know you guys have written quite a bit about this as well. But you mentioned the amygdala and you mentioned calming the stress response in the body. So, I'd love a little bit more explanation on is it helping the body, for instance, get in parasympathetic? Do you see changes in heart rate variability, for instance? That's what I've personally seen. So, I noticed when I started tapping, I saw a big increase in my heart rate variability and I can tell a difference when I do and don't tap. But I was curious if that's just an anecdotal thing that I'm noticing or if you guys see this in other people as well.

Nick: I love that you said that because I have also noticed it anecdotally to the point where, you know, when I measured it actively with, like, heart mass...HRV monitor, it's like I see the HRV shoot up during the tapping session. I have not beyond my personal experiments because I'm sort of into it and I haven't done stuff, one of the things that, you know...it's probably the next level of data that we'll be able to get from the app is HRV. Because, you know, there's the technology there to hook it up and sync it up. I would be very excited about that. Like I said to you, we have 0 to 10 scale measurements on the over 1 million sessions complete in the app now. So, we've got data points. Every time someone opened up the app and said, "I was anxious" or "I'm in pain," or, you know, whatever physical symptoms going on, they say 0 to 10, they might say, "My headache is

at a seven or an eight," and then at the end, they say it's at a three or a four or gone. So, we have all that 0 to 10 data. I think the next phase is that HRV, is that heartbeat data. I know more, again, anecdotally I see a lot in Facebook groups, people say tapping for blood pressure and they go, "My blood pressure's gone way down." If they're dealing with high blood pressure, it's in a normal range. So, some of those specific symptoms that people have and those issues, they see a big difference with. But I will definitely let you know when we have HRV data because I think that that's the next phase to go, "Wow. Look at what it's doing to calm the body, to put it into that parasympathetic state."

Katie: Yeah, that makes so much sense to me that when you're...even if it's just as simple as you're addressing stress, you're gonna see blood pressure go down. You're gonna see resting heart rate go down. You're going to see sleep improve. And I just have been so fascinated lately with really tracking and seeing what affects heart rate variability. And for anyone not familiar, just a very broad level, heart rate variability, as the name suggests, is basically the distance, the variation, and the distance between heartbeats. A lot of people think heartbeats are very measured in almost, like, a metronome, but that's actually not the case. And you want a lot of variability because that means that your heart is able to adapt. And so, I think you're right. I think this is gonna be an emerging area of research and one that gives us a lot of insight into health and longevity, and I think it is tied to stress. So, I'm pretty confident we'll see data on that in the future. Before we move on to some more granular uses for tapping, I'd love just a little history as well. Where did tapping first originate?

Nick: Yeah, great question. So, the roots of it is sort of modern incarnation. There was a psychologist in, right around 1980 by the name of Roger Callahan. He passed away a couple of years ago. And he was a traditional psychotherapist working with clients in his home office. And he had one client in particular by the name of Mary, who had a terrible water phobia. So, not just swimming, like, scared to shower, drink water. It was just a full-blown water phobia. You know, nervous system, reacting, overacting, freaking out around water. And they had worked together for about a year, done the traditional things that psychotherapy would do, like exposure therapy. "Hey, let's look at the water and talk about how we feel, and look at childhood stuff. Did something happen when you were eight, you know? Did you have a bad experience with water," etc.? And they just weren't getting anywhere. And he was frustrated, as you can imagine. You're trying to help someone who's got this debilitating phobia that affects all aspects of her life. And it just so happened that they were working together one day at his home office doing some exposure therapy, so looking at the pool and saying, "Okay. What do you feel? Like, what do you sense in your body?" And she said, "When I look at the pool, I get butterflies in the pit of my stomach."

And he had been reading up on the Chinese meridian system and had read that the stomach meridian ends underneath the eye. So, on a whim, on inspiration, on, you know, who knows what, that light bulb went off and he said, "Why don't you try tapping underneath the eye to stimulate that meridian?" And she did so, and in that moment, 30 seconds of tapping, that phobia went away completely. It was one of those one-minute miracles, something happened, something switched in the firing of her brain. It previously thought water was dangerous. She had that encoding in her brain. The tapping while looking at it unlocked it. He got excited about it, as you can imagine, and went on to develop TFT, thought field therapy. And what he did through muscle testing and a couple of different things as he had different sequences for different things, so if you were angry, you would do a certain sequence of points. And if you were dealing with a phobia, you would do another sequence. One of his students by the name of Gary Craig, took his philosophy and really simplified it,

and modified it. So he said, "Instead of trying to figure out, you know, what to do for anger and what to do for anxiety or phobias, let's do all the main points every single time, you know, under this umbrella." And that's EFT. That's what I learned almost 18 years ago now and what I've been sharing with the world ever since.

Katie: Amazing. And I wanna go through some specific use cases. And I think you actually just brought up the perfect place to start, which is fears and phobias. I'm really curious, some ways that people have had that help them and especially I have a couple of people I'm very close to who, for instance, have a fear of flying. Is that something that you have seen tapping help?

Nick: I have seen it help. I think we've taken it to the next level with the app because people, that was the first... I'd made three meditations in the app for fear of flying. And I have a dear friend who flies all the time for work and she hates flying. So, I have made it for her. It's a girl I went to high school with who lives around here. And what makes me so happy about it is that three times already, while she's been on a plane, she's had people come up to her and say, "Oh, I use the tapping for flying too" because she's so terrified of flying that she just does it on the plane. She doesn't care what she looks like. You know, there it is. Now, what she is doing, the more she does it, she's calming down the nervous system. She's conditioning the body. And the way to approach the fear of flying and any fears and phobias, really, there's a couple of different approaches. One is, all right, you're scared of flying, you didn't do the preparatory work before or you didn't overcome the fear in a session. You're on the plane, you're freaking out. It's really simple. Go through the tapping points, tap and breathe, tap and breathe, and calm the nervous system. Calm the body. That can work really well. Now, the ideal thing is you're going to fly a month from now and you know that, and you're feeling a little bit of that stress, and that anxiety, so you do some deeper tapping before you're actually on the plane. What you can do there is ask yourself questions like, "When did this fear of flying start? How does flying make me feel? What is it triggering in me?" You can tap on your own. You can also tap with a therapist or you can tap with the app.

One of the great things about tapping is that you can do so much on your own. Just like, okay, learn the points. I'm stressed, off we go. But if you work with a therapist, if you use a guided process, if you use a tapping script, it can help bring out other things because a lot of people will get stuck and say, "I don't know when it started or what I'm scared of," and these other adjuncts can help sort of eliciting that response. But for fears and phobias, I've seen it work time and again. I mean, if we go back to that amygdala, why is it that someone can get on a plane, and have a happy experience, and no stress, and another person is, you know, clawing at the seat in front of them? Now, there's a conditioned response. There's something that happened to them. There's meaning that they're ascribing to the situation. Lack of control, you know, the inability to get out. What if this flight is like that other horrible flight I had where we dropped 10 feet? And that's all it takes. You know, you have 1 bad flight and you drop 10 feet in the air, like, boom, fear of flying is in place because the nervous system, the body, the brain, everything is going, "That was a dangerous situation. We need to stay safe. We need to get out of this." And I think that point where we see it highlighted so clearly with fear of flying is one that's important to look at all aspects of our lives. If there's a place where we're stuck, if there's a place where we have fear, it's just our body trying to keep us safe. There's nothing wrong with us. We're not broken. You know, if you have a terrible fear of public speaking, you're not a lesser person. For some reason, your body has decided, your brain, your system, that speaking in front of a thousand people is terrifying. It's dangerous. It's like you're being attacked by a tiger or chased by a lion. This is why that amygdala's firing and what the tapping does is it allows us to acknowledge these feelings and let them go.

Katie: Got it. And I'll give an example from my own life. Recently, I don't have a fear of flying, but ever since having kids, I don't actually know what specifically caused it, I am terrified of roller coasters, which is funny because I used to skydive. I used to ride motorcycles, no problem. But there's something in my brain since having kids that says, "This is a stupid idea and you're going to die." And we were recently at a theme park for my son's birthday and we're big on experiences instead of gifts. And so, he wanted to go ride these rides for his birthday. And his thing was he wanted to ride it with me. And we also have a motto in our family that you were made to do hard things. And so, like, he wanted me to go, everything, and he was like, "No, don't go." And like, "Mom, you're made to do hard things." And I was nervous enough to the point that I literally threw up. Like, I was having anxiety over, logically, it's a roller coaster. I was not actually going to die, but I remembered thankfully tapping. And also, thankfully there was, like, an hour-long line to get on this thing and it was... I mean, it was a legit coaster. It went 60 something miles an hour. There's 100-foot drop. It was a pretty big roller coaster, but I got to tap for an hour beforehand. And truly by the time I got on it, I felt like I had gotten in a much calmer place and I was actually able to enjoy it a little bit, and be in that moment with my son versus like, "I'm gonna die, I'm gonna die, I'm gonna die." So obviously not as... I know people who have fears of flying, that's a much more extreme fear and it can be, you know, really hard to overcome. But I noticed, even in that short amount of time, I'm so glad I thought to tap and I noticed I could see a huge change in my emotional response even in just that hour of tapping. So, I think it's really amazing when you remember it and when you can do it, the change that you can see even in the day like that.

Nick: I love that. And you know what I love about that story, which is just underlying all of tapping is that you knew this tool and then you were in control. Like, you were able to do something for yourself. I think part of a challenge for so many of us is that feeling of not being in control. You know, one of the underlying components of feeling stress is the feeling of not being in control, not being able to change our outcomes and circumstances. You know, the opposite is feeling empowered in whatever we're doing. Oh, I can make a choice to do something different. I can change my career. I can change my relationship. I can change my body. I can do these things, and that releases stress. When we don't feel like we're in control, we feel stressed. So, in that moment, even if it didn't go and it wasn't like, okay, everything was perfect, you were in control. You were able to control your body to make that shift. And I think that applies to so many aspects of our lives. It's a theme I see time and again with people, they'll use words, especially when they've been struggling for a long time with emotional challenges or physical ones. The first thing I hear when they start tapping is, "I feel hope for the first time" because it unlocked something within them. Just that shift from going, "Okay. My back hurts at a 10 and I've been struggling with this for 20 years and every doctor has failed me, and nothing seems to be working. And I did this tapping. And even if it goes to an 8 out of 10 or 7 out of 10, even if it still hurts like crazy, it's like wait a second, there's hope. I was able to make that shift. I was able to take that power back for myself." And I think that's such a huge part of this whole process.

Katie: Yeah, I agree. And I think that also like segues into the next point I'd love to talk about because I think anxiety is a big problem for a lot of women. I hear from a lot of women at least who really struggle with anxiety in some form and overwhelmed, certainly with everything moms have on their plates in the modern world. So, how can people use tapping to help address anxiety?

Nick: Yeah. So, the basics is just like doing the tapping, tapping on the side of the hand, you know, giving a voice. And, Katie, do you want to, you know, do a quick demonstration that way for people who are like...? I feel like anxiety is something everyone's dealing with and maybe we can do a couple of rounds so we bring it to life for people and they can have an experience.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. And for you guys listening, also, make sure you check out the show notes, because I know you guys have done videos on this. I'll make sure we link to those as well. But absolutely, let's go through it.

Nick: Great. So, with whatever we're tapping on... And if you're not feeling anxious in this moment, you can pick something else to work on. You can pick something you're angry about or some pain or tension in your body. When we tap, we start by deciding, "Okay. What is it that we are working on?" So when you were going on the roller coaster, clearly it's like anxiety about the roller coaster, all these fears. So, like, you knew what it was. So, take a moment to tune in and decide what it is that you wanna work on. And then as you tune in, so let's say it's anxiety, just notice where it is in your body. So you might feel it in your chest, or your stomach, or your throat. And then also give it a number of intensity on a scale of 0 to 10. So, 10 would be the most anxious, like you're having a panic attack right now and you put on "The Wellness Mama Podcast" to calm you down. And here was your answer right in the middle. So, give it a number, 0 to 10 in intensity. And then we'll start tapping. And I'll describe the points to you. Again, the show notes. We'll have links to our app where you can see all the points there, and videos, and everything else. But you should be able to follow along. Don't worry about getting it perfect. So, we start by tapping on the side of the hand. It's called the karate chop point. And you take four fingers with one hand, tap on the outside of the other hand below the pinky. You're just tapping gently, almost, like, drumming on the table, focusing on that anxiety.

Now, I'm gonna say a couple of phrases and just repeat after me, either in your mind or out loud. So still tapping on the side of the hand. "Even though I have all of this anxiety, I choose to relax and feel safe now." We're gonna do that two more times, staying on the side of the hand, still on the karate chop point. "Even though I have all this stress in my body, it's safe to feel it and let it go now." And one more time still on the side of the hand. "Even though I have all this stress and anxiety and I don't know how to let it go, I choose to release it now." Now, we'll tap through the points. The first point is the eyebrow point. It's on the inside of the eyebrow, right where the hair ends and it meets the nose. You can take two fingers of one hand, the other hand or both hands. The meridians run down both sides of the body and we're just tapping gently focusing on these feelings in our body so you're focusing on the anxiety, the stress, the overwhelm. And moving to the side of the eye. It's not at the temple, a little further in right on the bone. Again, one side or both sides. Tapping gently focusing on these feelings in your body, what are you anxious about? What's going on under the eye? Again, one side or both sides, tapping gently, breathing gently. All of this anxiety, feeling it in your body, letting it go. Under the nose, tapping gently. Think the thoughts that cause this anxiety. What have you been worried about? What are the things that you've been saying to yourself?

Under the mouth, it's above the chin, below the lip, and that little crease there, tapping gently, breathing gently, letting go. We've got three points left. For the collarbone point, just feel for the two little bones of the collarbone and just go down about an inch, all 10 fingers, both hands, tapping gently, tuning into that anxiety.

Where are you holding onto it in your body? Notice the tension in your body. Notice the emotions associated with this anxiety, letting them go. Under the arm, three inches underneath the armpit, either side of the body, right on the bra line for women, tapping gently, breathing gently, noticing these feelings. The last point right at the top of the head on the crown. Be present to this anxiety in your body. We'll do one more quick round, starting with the eyebrows. Just repeat after me, tapping on the eyebrow, "It's safe to let this go." Start with the eye, "I acknowledge this anxiety." Under the eye, "And I begin to let it go." Under the nose, "It's safe to relax." Under the mouth, "I don't have to be on high alert." Collarbone, "I can release this anxiety." Under the arm, "And still be productive." Top of the head, "Letting go now." And now, you can gently stop tapping, and take a breath in, and let it go. And then we tune back in. So, see how you feel and check back in on that original number of anxiety. So, you might say, "It was an eight and now it's a six or a five or a four." And the tapping process is just repeating that, giving voice to it, seeing what comes out, seeing how things develop, and using it to move forward.

Katie: I love it. And I definitely feel very relaxed now. I'm glad we did that. A question I had from a reader is, "How do you know if you're tapping on the right points?" And I know you have an app that makes it really easy, but, like, how important is it to get the point exactly right and how can you know if you're on it?

Nick: Yeah, you know, it's not like microscopic. If you're using the two fingers or three fingers, you're gonna hit the point. I think it's good to look at the chart and know that you're in the right area, and you'll be good to go. So, you know, you don't wanna be tapping on the ear when it's on the side of the eye. If you're a little further over, that'll be fine. And, you know, a lot of people ask too, "Well, do you have to use all the points? What if I skip a point?" It is not a perfect magic science that if you don't go in that order, it all falls apart. A lot of times, I'll tell people, especially when they're in public, so let's say they're on the plane and they're not as bold as my friend, Sarah, who just taps through all the points happily on the plane, you can just tap on the collarbone point or on the plane too, you can press on the points. So you're stimulating those points and you're calming the body without, you know, being so obvious. Now, what's funny on a plane, everyone does their own thing. You could really get away with a lot without people noticing but, you know, tapping gently on one point or pressing is a way you can do it in public.

Katie: Got it. If you're worried about looking ridiculous on a plane. Let's compare, maybe I'm wearing, like, blue blockers and usually have compression socks, and have some form of a device on me because I'm stuck there anyway so you definitely won't get looks from me. Is there any particular way you're supposed to breathe while you're tapping?

Nick: No. And, you know, I think what's more important is to notice the breath. And what people will find is that their breath deepens and relaxes as they do the tapping. We've got an anxiety in the breath meditation in the app specifically because when we connect the breath and we pay attention to it and the anxiety that we store in it, it opens up our lungs. And you could see that people's breathing deepens and relaxes, another, you know, very concrete and obvious, you know, connection to our physical health. Like, how much more likely are you to heal from whatever you're dealing with if you have a full, open, relaxed breath, if you're not breathing from the top of your lungs, if your breathing isn't shallow and anxious all day long? So, I think that's some of

the corollary effects that we talked about earlier, where it just helps the body heal because we're deepening that breath and relaxing the body.

Katie: Absolutely. And I know in the app, I definitely would recommend it. I have it on my phone and you guys have them for so many different things, everything from motivation, for exercise, or for work, to sleep. There are several related to sleep that I have found really helpful, or for headaches, or to quiet your mind or, like, of releasing body image stuff. There's a lot of different ones you can tackle in there. And I know we don't have time to go through all of those today.

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I am so excited to finally be able to share a top secret project I've been working on for years because this episode is sponsored by Wellnesse, a new company I co-founded to create safe, natural and obsessively tested products for families. You've heard that much of what you put on your body gets absorbed and goes into your body. We turned this idea on its head, creating products that aren't just safe to put on your hair, skin and in your mouth, but that are beneficial because they contain things that your body needs. We started with the toughest first, creating the first of its kind natural toothpaste that is free of fluoride and glycerin and that contains ingredients like green tea, neem and hydroxyapatite to support the mouth. Our haircare is free of harmful ingredients and contains ingredients like lavender and nettle to support healthy hair! Be the first to try it at Wellnesse.com

Katie: I think another use of tapping that's really important to the audience is how can we use tapping with our kids. I'll say my kids love it, especially before bedtime and I'll do it with them sometimes. But are there kind of best practices for doing this with our kids? As well as moms, of course, we wanna have our kids not have to face the problems that we faced and not have to get to the point where they have these problems. So can we use tapping to give our kids a good foundation?

Nick: Oh, for sure. For sure. And there's two components. So the first one I would say is that whenever you're dealing with any challenge that your kid is having, they, you know, aren't listening well, aren't eating well, aren't sleeping, or driving you crazy, throwing tantrums, whatever it is you're dealing with, step one is to do

tapping yourself on the issue. I've just seen it time and again, where people go, "My child was throwing tantrums and then I did the tapping on my anger around it, and my stress, and all this stuff. And then their behavior changed. It's like magic." So, that's the easiest thing that you can absolutely control is your experience, your reaction to it. And then beyond that, kids are so age-dependent obviously and they change dramatically from, like, three to four. My daughter, June, is four-and-a-half. She'll do a little bit of tapping here and there. We have read her our kids' book, it's actually my brother, Alex, wrote a kids' book called "Gorilla Thumps and Bear Hugs." And that's a little story that takes you through the points, that bring the points to life with animals. So, you know, you have the lion cry point and the gorilla thumb point. It's actually quite helpful. I've had adults tell me that they remember the points better now from the kids' books and the animals. So, that's one thing to do, passively before bed. "Hey, let's read this story" so it's not, you know, do this weird thing.

Similar to my first point about doing the tapping yourself. I mean, and you know this. Like, if you want your kids to do something, model the behavior. So, if the kids see you tapping, they'll ask about it and you could share, "Oh, well, I was stressed and overwhelmed and I tapped." Or if your kids are struggling with nightmares, you can say, "Oh, I do my tapping before bed, that way I don't have nightmares. Do you wanna do it too?" Every age is different. As they get older, that modeling becomes very important because you're not gonna tell a 16-year-old what to do. And if you tell him to tap, it's likely gonna make things worse. But if they've seen it along the way or if they see you do it, they might be open to it. One of the things, I remember this story so clearly that a lady told me a couple of years ago about how she was doing all this tapping. Her daughter was really struggling. Her daughter didn't wanna tap, but she just kept doing her own work. She came home from school one day, her 16-year-old daughter and said, "Mom, can we tap about something? I'm just upset about it. I don't wanna talk about it. I don't wanna tell you what it is, but I just wanna tap on it," which makes sense, right? Like, you're 16 years old, it's like, "Oh, you want help, but I don't wanna tell my mom or dad, you know, what happened." And they did the tapping without giving a voice to it, which is pretty cool that you... All her daughter had to do was think about the issue and her mom lead her through it. "Okay. Well, what are you stressed about?"

Just think about it. You don't have to tell me what it is. You don't have to share that secret per se." They did the tapping, released the stress, released that anxiety. And then, sure enough, the daughter then felt safe, grounded, comfortable enough to talk to her mom about it and say it was boy problems. There were things happening. And then, they talked about it. But then I just loved that story because it showed how we can use this as a passive tool to help our kids open up, that when we help them relax their bodies... You know, I've done tapping with kids as young as five or six on really nasty issues, bad stuff they witnessed, bad stuff that went through and we didn't talk about it. We just tapped and we showed them this thing, and then they began to open up. And even if they didn't open up, even if they were more pre-verbal on some of those more complicated issues so they couldn't explain how they felt about seeing this horrible thing, they are still bringing it to mind, doing the tapping, helping release some of that trauma. The same thing applies with veterans with PTSD who might be 30 years old, where they don't wanna talk about it. It's too hard to give a voice to the thing that they saw. They don't have to. They can just bring it to mind. "Okay. Just think about what you saw. Do it safely, do the tapping, begin to let it go."

Katie: I think that point you just made is so important for every aspect of parenthood and especially this, but that to model it and not to force it. And I think that also applies to marital relationships. Like, I hear from women who can't get their husbands to wanna make the health changes that they're trying to really implement in their family or they can't get their kids to wanna get on board. And that's always my first advice is, "Don't force it," especially with your husband, don't force it. Model it. And I see that time and time again and I see it in my own life. Like, we've made the health changes years ago, but in the last year, I started taking voice lessons and I started trying different kinds of workouts. And because I did it, my kids wanted to do it, whereas for years, I had asked them like, "Do you wanna take voice lessons?" Because I always wished I could sing. And modeling that behavior made them all want to, or if I sit down and draw at the kitchen table after dinner, they all come sit down with me and draw. And it's the modeling. And I think that's such an underestimated tool as a parent, as a spouse, even as a friend, is rather than trying to push something which carries a whole different kind of energy, is to just be a model and let it work, and be calm, and let it be effective in your own life, and then be willing to help someone else if they wanted and if they're ready rather than pushing it. So, I love that you said that.

Nick: Yeah, I learned my lessons. You know, if I think about my 20s when I found a lot of this stuff and, you know, I first went to a Tony Robbins event when I was 24, and got all excited, and pumped. I spent my 20s trying to convince people, like, "You gotta do this. You gotta try this." I can't imagine how annoying I was during that time. And then as maturity settled into my 30s and now my early 40s, it's like, "Hey, I'm just gonna put it out there and if you wanna learn more about it, I will help you. I will teach you, I will show you everything you need, but I'm gonna model it first." So, I think that's huge. And I'm curious, Katie, tell me more about your kids using tapping. Like, how have they experienced it and what are they seeing with it?

Katie: Yeah, they all have kind of their own use cases. And again, I don't push it on them, so some use it more than others. The three-year-old loves it to help her fall asleep. So, she and I will do it together before bedtime. And then I'll sing her her favorite lullaby. And we'll just have, like, calm. And it really does seem to make a dramatic impact on her sleep and for me as well. Others I have that do it to just calm down stress. Like, they're very focused and intense like I am. And so, it helps them get into a calmer state. My daughter is in pole vaulting and is pretty much competitive, at this point. And so, she'll use it to kind of break through if she's, like, having this, like, "I don't know if I can hit this height," or, "I'm afraid of it," she'll use it to kind of break through that. So, we've kind of used it in a case by case basis a lot of different ways. And thankfully, like, none of my kids have any major health problems or specific issues so it's much more proactive and much more stress-related. But if there's, you know, fighting or there's anger, we try to use it at times like that.

Nick: I love it. I love it. That's so fantastic. And what a tool that you've given them this early on that they're gonna have for their lives. I mean, we all found this late and we're trying to fix things from the past, but to have this tool early is just huge.

Katie: I absolutely agree. I think that's my hope in my nutrition side as well and bringing guests like you on the podcast is obviously we want to all of us as adults become the best that we can, but also to be able to give our kids the gift of not having to ever get to that point, and then work out of it is just...to give them the foundation, to start from a better place, and to be better parents, and to have better health. And, like, all

these things we wanna pass on to them as adults. And I think tapping, like I said, I think it's a very low risk, potentially extremely high benefit way to do that. And I can't believe our time has actually flown by so quickly, but I wanna make sure we talk about a little bit more tangibly, how can people get started, if this is resonating with them? If they wanna try it for anxiety, or they have a phobia, or they wanna help their kids have more calm and control, where is the best place to start?

Nick: Yeah. I mean, you know, a couple of years ago, I would've said the books. And there's a lot of books, like "The Tapping Solution" book that they can pick up in any bookstore. And there's one for pain relief and weight loss. I really think the easiest way to get started right now is the app because it's free to download. There's 15 to 20 free meditations in there that they can use immediately and forever at no cost. There's a special section for teachers that's through our foundation, and for military and veterans support, which is always free. And like you mentioned, there's 150 different things in there. So, to me, that's the easiest way to get started because you can just pull it up on your phone. I knew the app was gonna be a success when I was using my own app with my own voice to do tapping because I found it useful. And I'm not a big fan of listening to myself. I'm not a big fan of, like, rewatching videos or talks. But I think it's just so helpful to have the guide. You know, 10 minutes you're dealing with whatever's going on. You've got a headache, there's one on headaches. You're anxious, there's one on anxiety. You're angry, you know, there's one on that. So, 150 of them. And in 2020, I mean, speaking of parents and kids, we'll be rolling out tapping specifically for kids and parents to do together within the app. So I would look out for that as well.

Katie: Amazing. And of course, I'll make sure that the link to the app as well as to your books, and to the documentary, and your website, all of those will be in the show notes. For those of you listening while you exercise or drive, please don't worry about writing them down, just go to wellnessmama.fm. They will all be linked there so you can find them along with the link to the ACE study that we mentioned, and the YouTube videos, and all kinds of things. You guys can go deeper on that. But Nick, thank you so much for all the work that you do in spreading the message about tapping and for helping so many people, and especially, I know you guys work with children now. I'm so grateful for your time and being here, and I hope that our time today helps a lot of you guys who have listened.

Nick: Katie, thank you so much.

Katie: And thanks as always to all of you for sharing one of your most valuable assets, your time, with both of us today. We're so grateful that you did. And as always, I hope that you will join me again on the next episode of "The Wellness Mama Podcast."

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