



1080: Healing with the Sun and Transformation From Grief
With Nat Collier

Child: Welcome to my mommy's podcast!

Katie: This podcast is brought to you by Just Thrive. And you guys know I don't share products that I don't personally believe in and take, and Just Thrive Probiotic is one of my absolute go-to. I've been taking it consistently for years, and I have noticed a huge difference in digestion, energy, and really how I feel day to day.

It wasn't an overnight dramatic change, but it's one I notice when I don't have. And I really respect this company and the products they make and their values, so when I had a chance to negotiate something special for you guys, I jumped at the chance. And here is the very special offer that I was able to lock in that's not available anywhere else, which is if you buy a ninety-day supply of Just Thrive Probiotic, you get three full months of their digestive bitters completely free, and these are awesome.

I use them occasionally with meals. They help digestion. I notice a difference in my digestion with them. And this is a ninety-dollar value added at no cost just for being a Wellness Mama listener. It's a tremendously good deal. You save a lot, and here's why I love this pair. The probiotic works by surviving the journey to your gut.

Most probiotics don't. They die before they get there. But their spore based formula is clinically proven to arrive a hundred percent alive, so it can actually do something, and the digestive bitters are the perfect complement. I take them before meals to help my body break down food more efficiently, and I notice that I don't have that sluggish feeling post meals, and they help your body's enzyme production.

So together, they cover the full picture of gut health, and ninety days is the sweet spot where a lot of people really say they start to see the difference really tangibly. So that's why I am encouraging you to try this for the full ninety days and made this offer where you are able to get both for ninety days.

Give it the time it needs. They back every order with their money back guarantee. There's genuinely no risk. And you can use this link to get this personalized deal that's not available on their main website, which is get.justthrivehealth.com/pages/wellnessmama. I know that's long. This will be linked in the show notes as well.

This episode is sponsored by BON CHARGE, and specifically one of my favorite things that they have, which is their PEMF mini mat. If you are new to PEMF, this stands for pulsed electromagnetic field, which is magnetic energy that's being sent into the body via this mat. And these energy waves are fascinating.

They work with your body's natural magnetic field to elevate your wellbeing in a multitude of ways. Similar effect that we would have from being in direct contact with the earth, which I

also think is an amazing thing to do daily. I love PEMF mats to improve sleep, to ground me, to increase calmness.

I often say that sitting on one of these mats, I feel like a cat in the sunshine and just, like, so calm and cozy. Some of the reasons I personally like this particular mini mat, it is small enough to fit in any room, and it's easy to move from room to room. I also have a larger one, but that one is more difficult to move around.

There are different settings, so you can find what works best for you, and it's low EMF. Some of these are not. I feel like this is an important thing to pay attention to. Some easy ways that you can use a mini mat like this: it's great on an office chair or on a sofa or on the floor, wherever you are sitting and reading, meditating, working, et cetera.

I love to use it before bedtime or after a workout or I'm actually doing yoga teacher training. I'll often use it during restorative classes or when you need kind of like a creative boost or a brain reset. And like I said, I love how portable this one is. You can find out more about it and get a discount by using the code wellnessmama at wellnessmama.com/go/boncharge

Hello, and welcome to the Wellness Mama podcast. I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com. And today's episode with-- is with someone who I consider a new friend. I actually found her on Instagram, instantly resonated with not just her message, but her personality, and was so excited to have her on. And fair warning, we talk a lot about some topics I have not really covered here before.

We even talk about the topic of grief and a lot of, kind of deeper angles of things that I have shared publicly before. Her main topic that I-- you have heard me talk about before, but she gives such beautiful insight on, is the importance of sunshine, healing with the sun, how she personally reversed her autoimmunity.

We have a very similar story, through circadian alignment and more sunshine, how this completely changed her life. She lost sixty-five pounds. She now helps people do the same. She's developed a supplement that I actually love. It's a drink. It's called Sun Scoops. I'll link to a bunch of stuff in the show notes if you're listening on the go.

But I am overwhelmingly excited to share this conversation. We talk about her experience with homesteading. We talk about her recovery from autoimmune disease, why we are circadian beings, and why light is at the forefront. We talk about no no maxing and living like Italian grandmas. We talk about intuition.

We talk about grief. We talk about morning light being non-negotiable, why melanin is important, and why a tan is not skin damage. We talk about maybe why these things have been actively suppressed and why we've been taught to fear the sun, and so much more. I

am so excited and overjoyed to share this conversation with you, with Nat Collier, also known online as Sun Whore, and I will link to her website, her info in the show notes.

Let's join her now. Nat, welcome. Thank you so much for being here. I am outrageously excited for this conversation.

Nat: Yay, I'm so excited to be here. Thank you.

Katie: So I found you on Instagram, and I'm gonna link to your profile, 'cause you are so much fun to follow. And I have loved following you since I found you. And as I was researching for this episode and following you there, I realized we have so many fun things in common.

You've also homeschooled, and you've done the homestead thing, which I am in the thick of right now. I decided to, like, uproot my entire yard and plant only edibles, and I have quail, and chickens, and bunnies, and all the things, and bees. So it's getting, like, pretty wild. And also you have a love of reptiles, and I had...

Nat: Oh, yeah.

Katie... snake and chameleon, and I was like, "Oh, I feel like we would be such good friends."

Nat: Yeah.

Katie: And if there's anything on homesteading or that you wanna talk about, just as, like, a quick intro, because I'm, like, all on team, like, let's encourage people to plant pollinator-friendly edible things.

Nat: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, so I moved from a homestead in Georgia. We were first-generation homesteaders, and now we live in the Northwest in a tiny little lot in an urban setting. But we had 12 acres, and about three of it was cultivated, and I'm obsessed with that lifestyle. By the time I left, I had planted over 1,000 natives.

Natives are a whole deep dive. If y'all don't know what natives are, they basically hold the ecosystem of your local area, and I didn't realize, like, invasives can suffocate that. And just tumbled down the rabbit hole. It started with chickens. It's the gateway drug for everybody. That's so real. And we had a little garden, and then chickens turned into turkeys, and then there were goats for just a moment.

And we had pigs, and we did hugelkultur, and we rotationally grazed our pigs, and it was one of my favorite life seasons, and taught me so much, and kind of, sort of introed me into this circadian lifestyle.

Katie: I love that. And I'll put some links for anybody interested. I know that's a whole side topic, but plant some native plants in your area.

The bees will be so happy that you did. And your kids will be so happy that you did. But what I am most excited to talk to you about is that circadian health piece, because I have done solo podcast on this. I think I wrote a post 15 years ago called Eat Your Sunscreen, which you have a way better solution for than I did back then.

But I just keep getting on this soapbox because I experienced all the years of doing all the protocols, the supplements, the whatever, and it wasn't until I dealt with light and trauma that anything changed for me. And it sounds like we have some similarities in our story, so I would love to hear yours because I think it's a beautiful transformation, and that your experience illustrates some really important foundational pieces.

Nat: We really do have so much in common because I'm with you. Like, I've been on the health train... It's really been since my first kid was born, which he's 21 now, and that's when I really first heard, like, organic and, "Oh, there's chemicals in my food," and kind of went down the classic American, you know, let's be honest, green-washed rabbit trail.

We don't know better. We're doing the best we can. But I w- I had all of those things in place, like eating organic and taking a thousand supplements, and I found myself, about six years ago, the sickest I had ever been. I had Hashimoto's antibodies, like thyroid antibodies in the tens of thousands.

Like, the naturopath I was working with was like, "this, this number looks like a typo. Like, I've never seen it this high." I had already tried all of the things that conventional medicine would say, and the Synthroid, and the pork-derived, desiccated thyroid, and nothing was working. I had a bald spot on my head.

I had gained 65 pounds. My brain fog was through the roof. It did not matter if I slept five hours or 10, I woke up completely exhausted, and I was just desperate. I was taking care of my mom at the time. She had Lewy body dementia that we found out was brought on by severe mold toxicity. And it was just this really dark, low time where I was like, "I don't know what my body needs.

I thought I'm giving it the best that I can." Like, we lived on a homestead. We were growing a lot of our food, like all these things that people would say are so healthy, and my body just wasn't responding. And I found this self-published corny-looking little book with one of those 1989 covers, you know, where, like, this came from the original WordPress, free backgrounds.

And I love that kind of book, and it was called Heal Yourself With Sunlight. And I was like, "Well, I know I love the sun. I'm just, I'm just desperate." So I read it, and the basic premise was that we are circadian beings, that almost every cell in our body has a light receptor and has to know what time of day it is to produce the proper hormones for metabolic function, for everything that I felt like I was super ill with.

So I just started doing what it said, and the... It was wake up with the sun, get that morning infrared light in your eyes. That's the most important light of the day. And that all throughout the day, our body is looking for signals. That was a word in my organic journey that I'd never thought of. Like, what is a signal?

It was just not even in my vernacular. So it was like all day you're giving yourself these improper signals with blue light, with blue light after dark, with no morning light, and then blue light. And so I just started waking up with the sun. I would get out there and ground in the middle of the day. I would watch the sunrise when I could, and then really limit, if not completely cut out blue light after dark.

And very quickly, like within the first few weeks, I was out there with my little bird feeders, 'cause I'm a 90-year-old in my heart, and I was like, "I feel better." Like, the energy feels different. And so I was just more drawn to it. I got my husband out there. And I realized, too, during that time, like, I had been having coffee on an empty stomach.

That that was, like, a huge dysregulator, a huge cortisol spike. So I took that out and added some protein for breakfast. And very quickly, I started feeling better. It took a while for the weight to come off, but then all of the things that I was so sick with just began to turn, and I knew... Like, just when something resonates so deeply true, it was like, "Oh, my God.

This, this, this is it. This is the thing. This is our disconnect." And the most surprising thing, the book did not really illuminate this as much as my lived experience. It was my intuition emerged, and it was like the first time in my adult life that loud and clear, not just from this article or this random propaganda on the internet, but, like, in my body I could hear my own intuition saying, "This is what you need."

Like, "You're made for the light." And it changed my entire life.

Katie: I love that. I was a slower learner than you. I think I didn't find that book early on. I just slowly over time started piecing that together. And like I said it was one of my missing pieces. Even when I was doing, quote-unquote, "everything else right" and I think it illustrates what you said is, like, those signals don't just matter. They're actually primary and foundational, and it doesn't matter what else you're putting down line. If that signal is broken, the body is confused. And people are probably tired of hearing me say this by now,

but we are each our own primary healthcare provider, and the body perfectly knows how to heal.

So if it isn't, it's a clue that we're either not giving it something it needs or we're... it's getting too much of something it doesn't need, in the case of mold or toxins or whatever. And I feel like you're such a beautiful example of that because like, for now, are you on any medications or is your thyroid...

Nat: None.

...considered resolved and you're good?

Nat: Yeah, yeah. No medication. Thyroid is doing great. Hormones have gone up. Libido is back in the chat. All the things. I'm sleeping well. My brain fog was, like, a 10, and now it's, like, a three, four. That's more my ADHD probably from early childhood trauma. Whole other topic.

But, but remarkably better, and I just, I feel so good, and I have now watched it with clients. Like, it meets... The light meets them wherever they are. And like you said, it's like we have what we need to heal, but society teaches us that it's some external source. And to learn and experience your body respond to light- And then that kind of pulls the string of living in cycles with nature and how we've become completely divorced from nature, and when did that happen?

And then you pull further and you go into, you know, hospitals used to have heliotherapy, where there was a light deck on hospitals because they knew sunlight was the most potent medicine. And it just became this beautiful rabbit hole that I fell in and now abide in. And, and began... You know, I was, I was working with life coach clients at the time, and I would lay outside.

And in Georgia we call it ass naked. Not everybody does, but I chose to call it that. And we lived on the end of a one-way kind of road. And after us there was just miles of nothing, and so I could lay out there. And so friends and clients would be like, "Hey, what are you up to?" And I'm like, "I'm healing with sun."

And I started calling myself a sun whore. And then they started calling themselves a sun whore. And then they would send me pictures laying outside, feeling better. And when I was like, "I really want to... Like, this feels like my medicine for the world. I want to wake the world up to their intuition through sunlight," all my friends were like, "Nat, you have to call it this." So that's, that's the day we decided just Sun Whore, one word, and, and we've just gone with it ever since.

Katie: I love that. And like you, I'm a grandma at heart. I love there's this trend going around called Nonna maxing, where we like- Yes ... all are like Italian grandmas. I'm like, "Yes, let's do that." and I also think of, I don't know if, you've heard of the cookbook called Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat. But it's like the four elements of cooking. And I'm like, it actually works for health, too, if you consider heat the light part. Like salt, fat

Nat: Yeah

Katie... acid, heat. Like, getting your stomach acid right, getting the right healthy fats, getting your electrolytes right. I'm like, this is actually a prescription for health. You just didn't know it. But I really wanna also double click on something you just said, because you... When people asked you, you said you were healing with the sun. And another piece for me was learning to audit my inner language and... change how I was talking to myself. And it, it was this shift from I'm sick or my body's attacking itself into that language of I'm healing, I'm getting better every day. And I feel like that's overlooked because it seems so simple or just, like, kind of surface level, and I actually think, like, that inner language piece is massive. And for me that also got easier as, like you explained it better than I have, like, that intuition starts to wake up from the sun.

Like, there is a light component there that goes beyond just the physical surface level so much.

Nat: 100%, and I'm so glad you said that, 'cause I would've forgotten that during that time, one thing that I remember journaling was my heart began to have more space to hold the grief. And so I was walking through grief losing my mom, and then I lost her, and I realized my capacity to grieve and to experience the full range of the emotion grew with my intuition, with the light.

And it just, again, it was that resonance. That word, I didn't grow up... I grew up in a very Southern Bible Belt kind of home, and the word, like resonance, dissonance, intuition, these were not part of our language. But realizing, like, it was so deeply true. It resonated so, so far in my soul of like, "Oh, this, this is, this is what we're made to do."

And even, I love what you just said about the salt, light, and all of that with even thinking of, like, with Christianity. Th- th- there's so much of that is about light, and we're children of light. And, like, that is literal. It is metaphysical. It is quantum. It is spiritual. It's all the things. And to know that that's why I see it always plant a seed of truth in somebody, it's...

But I just, I feel so confident in it. Like, people ask me, like, "How are you so sold?" And I'm like, "'Cause I've never seen it not meet someone where they are so far. Literally, never."

Katie: Love that. And, and also on the note of, like, the salt, fat, acid, heat, I feel like those are f- some areas where we got some really intense mis-marketing and propaganda around the dangers of things that actually turns out are essential for health. And so at the risk of, like, diving deeply into the conspiracy theory territory here, I would love to actually talk about, because I don't think, like you, I'm guessing, that this was just, like, an unintentional mis- like, oversight in science that we're like, "Oh, the sun's not important.

Wear sunscreen every day." I think there was actually probably, like, an undercurrent of intent that went through this. And I've said so many times on here, like, almost all problems are nature deficit disorder. We need harmony with nature to live in our best alignment. Whatever, in whatever is going on in our body, we need nature to get better.

But I know you've researched this too. So what have you found as to, like, wh- why did this happen? Why did we stop getting in the light? Why do we fear the sun? Like let's talk about the metaphysical aspects of that to begin with, but, like, what have you found on that?

Nat: I love this. So a lot, it was interesting, like my journey started a little bit after the COVID, what do we wanna call it? What do we wanna call that? The, the, the COVID movement, the COVID plague, I don't know. but it started around then, and we had already been very much, like we wanted to live off the land, and we were already very, not, not fans of the government or the institutions.

And when you look back, sunlight cannot be profited on. Like these abundant things in nature can- they're free, and nature continues to be kind and give them to us, and so there's not money there. And when you pull all the strings of herbalism, and when Rockefeller decided to call all of this, you know, witchy, and let's pull the sun away, and let's pull living off the land, and, and nurturing ourselves with nature. And you look at the rise of autoimmune disease and heart disease, and like I remember my grandmother had I Can't Believe It's Not Butter, you know, and she was telling me, and I'm like, "Oh my God, we were rubbing inflammatory seed oil on our body, on our food every day, three times a day."

Like, you look at this propaganda. Cholesterol in general, like I eat three raw eggs every morning in my coffee. I've done that for years. I feel so good, and knowing that that would have been just, "Ugh, we can't do this." And knowing now what I know about statins versus cholesterol, and you just start to see this giant picture of it has been purposely done to us that we would be sick and have a low vibration, like a low life force.

If vibration feels too woo-woo, just the idea of we all have vitality and we know that science and all quantum things, science woo-woo, it all agrees that we hold energy, we hold life force, a plant holds life, food can hold life force. That is so much lower when we are living in dissonance with light, and if it is lower, then propaganda can be introduced much easier.

Because as we know, if there's healthy, fertile soil, then a weed comes in, it gets taken care of or it works alongside. If the soil is not, if our minds are being indoctrinated and the vibration is so low, you can put any lie you want in there, and then I will buy your thing and I will stay diseased and I will stay tired and I won't question.

And it's all kind of one thing in my mind, and that's why I feel so passionate about it. I'm like intuition, and like you just said about belief, like thoughts are things, and the idea that a thought has resonance, a thought carries energy, and we get in these narratives and we watch the, all the commercials saying, you know, "You need this and you need this," and because we're all so sick and we're all like, "We're so sick," and everybody...

Like it's, it is brainwashing, and nobody likes to hear that they've been brainwashed. It's very uncomfortable. I understand that. But the idea, you have a choice. You can humble yourself in your own mind and say, "Yeah, I've, I've been sold. I didn't mean to be, but I have been brainwashed," or you can pretend you're not and carry on down that path and see what bears fruit there.

Like, see where that leads. It's, I mean, it is a choice, and it's a willful choice, and I see some people, like during COVID we had some really sad loss with friends, and it was like they could not handle the idea that their reality was built on lies. Our reality, our American reality. And it was, for them, they did not want to pull that string, and that was their choice, but we like...

It was a really sad loss of friendship. They could not handle that we were pulling that string and questioning. And I'm like, "Okay, if you choose that, then you have to know what you're choosing. You're choosing that life that is brought to you by old Uncle Sam and all his pills." Like, okay, that's your choice. But it is a choice.

Katie: Absolutely. And I think, I mean, this could be a whole other podcast topic, but that process of questioning is, I think, such an important one for self-development and for learning agency, and eventually getting to what I'm finding is a very controversial viewpoint. But as we are 100% responsible for everything in our lives, and on some level, we actually chose those things.

And I didn't wanna admit that for a long time. Like, I wanted it to be that this happened to me, and like I was very attached to my victim story, and then I was very attached to my villain story. And then the really tough one was I was so attached to my savior story. And it was like, as you start questioning and you clear those layers, like you get to these different levels of agency and you see things so differently.

And I love your point about the light energy, and if people want the, like the scientific word for that, let's talk about mitochondria, 'cause we know they work better in the sun. Like we-

there's... Not that we probably needed this, but there are studies that show when we get proper light inputs, our mitochondria function better.

And we have all this research showing every health problem down the line is influenced, at least, if not caused, by mitochondria issues.

Nat: Yes.

Katie: So the more mitochondrial energy we have, typically the better we feel and the more health that we have. So this is like a free tool, and I think that's what's been cool in my, like almost 20 years in health and wellness.

Sounds like you've been there as well. I've come so full circle. Like, I got into all the deep research and all the, like, really fancy nuanced supplementation and all the genetic stuff, and the MTHFR, and all the expensive bio hacks, and it has come full circle to it's the free foundational things like getting outside, getting the right amount of sleep, curating our environment, our light, our relationships. So many of those things matter so much more than all the expensive stuff. And if you wanna do that stuff, great, but do the foundational things first because –

Nat: Right

Katie: - it's gonna work better. And I'd love to talk about some of the actual pillars, because I would guess there are people listening who are maybe realizing, "Okay, I don't have this piece dialed in."

And you mentioned morning sunlight, and then, like, the light signals throughout the day. I'm curious what your routine looks like and looked like, and what if someone wants to jump in, like what does that rhythm look like when you adopt it?

Nat: I think for everyone the... It's like my, my number one session one with clients is you gotta get that morning light.

That is the most important thing of the day. There is not a workaround. There is not a quick bio hack. There is not a mimic available for that, and it changes throughout the year. Again, I didn't know this. I feel ignorant. I didn't realize the sun goes up way earlier in the summer, especially where I am now.

It's like 5:28, and it was down to like 5:18, and I was like, "Oh, my God." You know, in the winter it's like around 8:00. But you gotta get that morning light before you look at your phone, before anything, 'cause cortisol naturally spikes in the morning, but blue light spikes it in a different way that's more of a fight or flight nervous system dysregulation.

So you get that morning light, even five minutes of just being outside. You don't have to stare directly at it, but just to allow the light information, that full infrared, to be on your face and on as much skin as possible. Throughout the day, if you can get out there and ground, exchange electrons with the earth, lower inflammation, boost mitochondrial function.

That's a wonderful thing to do. It's not a have to, but you will tell a quicker difference if you do that. And then at night, if you can see the sunset, wonderful. If you can't, it's not a deal breaker, but making it dark after dark. That's one of the biggest things is we just live so divorced from the cycles that we carry on.

A lot of people think they're night owls. I definitely thought I was, but it was because the sun went down, I'm immediately on my blue light for hours, and like, "I'm not tired." Well, right, 'cause that blue light is telling your body it's noon. Like, let's do everything. It's noon. And I didn't know that sunlight has blue light present, but it's never isolated.

So it's, it's this artificial information and signal for our mind, and our body, and all of our cells, and hormone functions. So doing those things very quickly, I feel everyone so far that I've worked with, they have more increased energy. They're like, "I feel like my, my cognition's a little bit sharper."

Those are things you'll tell quick. As far as immediate weight loss, I don't ever tout that because everybody's different. Like, my body needed months and months of those safety signals to begin to let go of weight. And you were talking about... I just love what you said about belief and holding onto that.

I think excess weight is often trapped energy. And for me, I was so traumatized by the loss of my mom and all of the stuff that I walked through, my body was terrified to let go of it. It was like my little shell of protection, so I had to continually nurture my nervous system for it to finally let go.

But then when it did, I've lost 65 pounds without meds, no GLP-1s, no starving, no macro counting, because my body was safe enough to heal.

Katie: Yeah, I love that. I, one thing I say a lot is the, our body's always on our side.

Nat: Yeah.

Katie: And it's always responding exactly appropriately to the inputs it's being given. And so with your example of I was the same way, thinking I was a night owl and realizing, oh, it's my body responding exactly appropriately to thinking it's noon at midnight. Like, of course-

Nat: Yeah

Katie: ... my body is awake. It's actually doing exactly what it's supposed to do-

Nat: Right

Katie ... based on the environment that I'm giving it. So what if I change my environment? And it's that, like, off quoted cliché of, like, when a fish is sick, you don't change the fish, you change the water.

Nat: Yeah. Yes.

Katie: Like, you change the environment. You change what it's in, a- and the fish changes.

Nat: Yes.

Katie: And I feel like we forget that. Like, we're still, like, fancy zoo animals living in cages that are not designed for our health.

And so it's like how do we shift our environment into one that's in alignment with, the way our biology knows to read the signals? One thing that like we're doing with the blue lights and the screens, I've never been one for my kids having a lot of screens, but for the summer we're putting baskets in the kitchen and pretending all the cell phones are landlines. So they have to live in the kitchen.

Nat: Love that.

KatieL And you have to be in the kitchen to use your phone.

Nat: Love that.

Katie: And they're like, "What?" And I'm like, "This is, this is how I was at your age. We didn't even have cell phones."

Nat: Yeah.

Katie: But I think people underestimate those things. Like, shift your lighting at night. It's not expensive to get circadian friendly bulbs, and to go to, like, amber lights in lamps at sunset. And you'll feel the difference. Kids will actually feel it faster. Like,

Nat: Yes

Katie: ... when we made that switch, my kids were like, "I don't like this light. I'm tired." I'm like, "Exactly." Exactly. "That's what's supposed to happen."

Yes. And as a mom I'm like, "Yes, you wanna go to bed."

Nat: Yes

Katie: And I feel like this is a good segue into something else, because I've, like, become addicted to this. But you have a supplement called Sun Scoops which I love. I wrote a post years ago about eating your sunscreen, and ways we can, like, support our body's natural interaction with the sun through what goes in our body.

And of course avoiding the things that are inflammatory that can make us less, tolerant of natural sun exposure. But I didn't know about Sun Scoops or the, the components in it, and I love the taste of it, and I love how I feel on it. But I would guess most people have never even heard of its primary ingredient.

So walk us through -

Nat: Yes

Katie: ... Sun Scoops, how you formulated this, how you found out about it, and what it does.

Nat: Yeah, so when I was back in Georgia and started healing, I was like you. I was heavy supplements. I mean, the drawer was full, like embarrassingly so, and I knew, I knew exactly what everything was supposed to do.

Felt like this little illusion of control. But I had heard about algae and that it was this, like, wonderfully mineral-rich thing, and I had long ago, just like you, stopped taking vitamins. I'm like, "Our body's not gonna absorb this if we're not... The right minerals, it's not gonna happen." So I was like, "All right, this algae."

And I love obscure products, so like this seems weird. Let's take algae. So I would just mix it. I had, like, a little potion drawer, and I would just put, you know, fruit powders and weird things to make it palatable. And I felt like it helped, but it was one of those, yeah, this is great, but I almost just use it like a multivitamin.

Then when I moved to Oregon, I got in the fine print on the little Health Force Foods bottle, and it was like, "Sourced in Klamath Lake, Oregon." And I was like, "Oh, my God. This is, like, my home state now. Oh, my God, this is crazy." And Klamath Lake is, is... It formed around volcanoes, and it's the only lake in the world that has that particular algae, the way that it blooms, the way that the minerals are in it.

And anything like that that's one of a kind in nature I'm super enamored with. I just treasure. So I did a deep dive. I, I've joked about making a supplement for 20 years, but it was one of those things that it's like, again, my capacity to create and to dream grew along with my circadian alignment, and I had space in my heart and in my mind to put energy towards it.

So I started researching. I actually have my... I, I'm, like, very old school, and I didn't mean to do this, but I just needed... It was... This is, this is the kind of research we're doing. Like, it's, it's just old school, lots and lots of pages of what, what a supplement would need to have if it was going to support sunlight and melanin production.

And we can get into the melanin if you would like. But I came up with 16 nutrients that I was like, "I wanna make a supplement that has all of these." And from what I researched, all of these would help your body produce optimal melanin. And the high- or the biggest one was tyrosine. That is an amino acid that your body makes that it needs to create the tan, and a tan is like an energy grid on your body.

Again, we can nerd out as, as far or as little as you would like. But I'm like, "Okay, okay, I got my 16. It's gotta be high in tyrosine," and sure enough, the Klamath Lake algae was through the roof in all 16 of them. I was like, "Okay, this is serendipitous. This is what it's gonna be." So I wanted it to be clean.

I wanted there to be no weird fillers and, like, we even had, organic tapioca starch in it in the beginning, and then we were able to formulate it where we didn't. And people are like, "What is your, you know, what is your industrial kitchen?" I'm like, "It looks like a l- a living room. It looks like a kitchen table right now, is what it is, with some unbleached parchment paper.

This is what we're learning." So we decided to make... It's called Sun Scoops, and I love it because it also is a ritual. Like, people are drinking it in the sunlight, and they're going outside with it. But I did a little biohacking experiment last winter, and I drank it three to five times a week through the winter, and I was able to keep my tan, and the UVB had completely gone away.

So I was like, "Okay, okay. We can, we can birth the baby." And we get organic raspberry powder, and the raspberries are harvested at their peak ripeness, so it's had the highest antioxidant polyphenol content of anything you could get. We ordered this bag, and it was, like, bright neon magenta straight from the earth.

Like, I was s- you know how it is. But I was so pleased. I was like, "Oh, my God, this is so beautiful." And so it is a raspberry lemonade flavor. We use organic lemons. Like, no... Again, no fillers in any of the fruit powders, and I love it, and I'm obsessed with it, and it helps that melanin production, and also it has so many minerals.

So it's kind of, again, one of those things. It detoxes heavy metals. It creates more mitochondrial function. It helps deepen your melanin production. And now it's just my non-negotiable.

Katie: And for anybody listening who is thinking like, "Algae probably doesn't taste good," I will say, like, I was skeptical at first 'cause I have drank-

Nat: Oh, yeah

Katie: - pure spirulina before, and it's not great.

Nat: No, it's not

Katie: ... but this actually tastes delicious. Like, I have to throttle myself from drinking too much, 'cause I just wanna drink it all the time. It's delicious.

Nat: I'm so glad. I'm so glad. Yeah, most people that, that love it, they're like, "I do have to admit I had a very low expectation.

Algae, I'm thinking slime, I'm thinking sludge." It's delicious, guys. My children drink it. My kids actually drink this.

Katie: It is so good. And I save the bottles and then I make skincare in them 'cause they're so pretty.

Nat: Oh, I'm so glad.

Katie: But you mentioned melanin, and we've talked about sunlight, but I feel like another important thing I really wanna dispel, like people have probably heard from dermatologists that any amount of tan is skin damage, which I blatantly disagree with.

Nat: Okay.

Katie: However, once at a conference, I got into way too light of an, late of a non-circadian aligned conversation with this physicist, quantum physicist, who was talking about melanin as a quantum signaling molecule. And it, some of it was like way over my head. but he basically talked about like the light storage capacity of melanin and how it increases like energy throughout the body, and how it's so much more than a pigment. And like why essentially, like kind of this is vital for many of the things we want to happen in life. But I wanna dispel the myth of is all melanin bad? Like is a tan a sign that you are, like ruining your skin forever? And why is melanin important?

Because I love that this helps the body create its own endogenous melanin. Like I know there are peptides that help exogenously, but this is endogenous melanin production, and why is that important?

Nat: Okay. Yes, I'm with you. We all grew up with the propaganda, put on the cancer-causing sunscreen and stay away from that heated ball of disease, you know?

And it's so funny, like all, all of the unlearning. I'm still unlearning every day and realizing how programmed that my own mind can be. So a tan in general, it is neuroprotective. It's immune protective. Melanin itself forms what would be like- A tiny energy grid on the entire body. They find melanin in the brain, like dark black deposits of melanin.

When people get off of an airplane and they're a little bit more pale, m- most people have experienced that, where you just get off and you're like, "I'm- I don't look so great. Do we need water?" That is the melanin going deep into your body to protect you high up from EMF waves. Like, it is this, like you said, it's this active thing in your body, and it's why people feel so good in the summer.

They're rich in melanin, oftentimes at the beach, which we know the ocean and the minerals in the ocean, along with the energy of the ocean, it is one lovely little life vitality package. But in general, I- it's so funny, and it's not funny. That's, that's a gracious word. It's ridiculous that we are taught, you know, put on this cancer-causing sunscreen that mutates cells in real time, that inhibits your body from making melanin in real time, and then the sunscreen itself actually dulls your body's biological innate response to too much sun.

So people ask me, like, "Oh, what, so you just go out in the sun for eight hours?" No. I build up a solar callus. That's a whole other, you know, circadian practice. I tell people early spring, low UV, build up a solar callus. Your skin needs to work out and be conditioned to handle more sunlight. I get sun in the middle of the day, and when you get that tingly feeling, that is your biology saying you've had enough.

Same way we wouldn't take a whole jar of Sun Scoops or vitamins at one time. It's too much of a good thing. So the sun is healer. The sun is the ultimate life force. But you can have too much of a good thing, and so when you feel that little tingle, that's your body saying, "We're good here." But the more melanin that you have, the longer you can stay out.

And I went to Kauai last year, and again, I love to biohack on myself. Sobriety, you know, we have plenty of time to just, just explore things. And I was like, "I'm not gonna wear sunscreen the whole trip." And I went to Kauai, and the UV got up to 10 or 11. I spent... I got the morning sunrise every morning. I was out for a few hours in the middle of the day, and when I felt tingly, I would seek shade.

I did not peel. I did not burn. With no sunscreen. Like, it can be done, and again, we're taught, and like you said, the messages we say. I've met so many people that are like, "Well, I don't, I can't get a tan." It's like, "Where did you hear that?" "Well, I just always burn." "Well,

what do you mean by that?" "Well, you know, I, I really avoid the sun, and then I, you know, when I go on vacation, I, you know, I put sunscreen on.

I burn." Like, of course you do. Like, there's an actual biological scientific reason why you do that. But you have been told, and you've told yourself, you cannot get sun. You always burn. You... Like, it, it's, it's amazing. And, and we don't realize th- those are all lie- Like, I, I follow a guy that I love, and I call him Georgie's Gardens like he's my friend.

Georgie, if you're ever watching this, we should be friends. Your last name is Gardens in my heart. But he's, like, the most fair-skinned you can be on the Fitzpatrick skin scale. He is the, the fairest one, and he has a tan. And he's like, "The, people like me can get a tan." Now, is it as dark as a Black person?

No, it's not. But it's a tan. And he's like, "It's just, you know, you have to activate these processes in your body." And then tell me how good you feel. If you're a fair-skinned person that builds up a solar callus and then has healthy amount of sun in the summer, let me know how good you feel compared to a summer where you avoid the sun, put on your sunscreen, and burn like lobster. You tell me.

Katie: Absolutely. Like, I'm an example of that as well. My, a lot of my heritage is Scottish. I grew up with that story. Like, I thought I couldn't tan. I definitely did the horrible things, like put on all those horrible things on my skin, and then-

Nat: Yeah

Katie ... burned myself many times.

Nat: Yes.

Katie: But had that story that I can't tan, and it turns out, like, I absolutely can. And now living-

Nat: Yeah

Katie: ... in Florida, I have not worn sunscreen in almost 10 years.

Nat: Yes.

Katie: And I don't burn as long as I do these things right. If I don't get morning light, if I don't get a solar callus-

Nat: Yeah

Katie... I still burn because the body-

Nat: Yeah

Katie: ... is intelligent. It knows exactly-

Nat: Yes

Katie ... what it's doing. And I think also it's, like, interesting to look at the data when you graph it.

There's more melanoma in states that get less sunshine. Like, Vermont has more-

Nat: Yes

Katie:... melanoma than Texas and Florida. And you also are more likely to get melanoma in an area that you don't typically get in the sun, like under where your undergarments would be.. And so it's one of those things of like back to the questioning, why is that?

Could there be a different story than what we've been told? And I think also, like, the sunscreen conversation is worth having because we were told that's protecting us, and now we know a lot of wavelengths can still get through, including the ones-

Nat: Yes

Katie ... that are damaging but not the ones that are protective.

Nat: Yeah.

Katie: And it's not actually protecting from damage, it's protecting from the visible signs of burning. And so

Nat: Yes

Katie: ... now people are, like, slather... I mean, I hear that so often of, like, women who just put on sunscreen on rainy days under their makeup all the time no matter what.

Nat: Yes.

Katie: And I'm like, "There is a side effect to this. You are putting non-native chemicals-

Nat: Yeah

Katie: ... on your s- on your skin that the body is reading signals from-

Nat: Yeah

Katie: ... and getting a response from to avoid the thing that might actually fix the problem that you're trying to avoid.

Nat: Yes. Everything you just said, I was like, "Amen, yes." And, and how come those rates are...Like, melanoma rates are highest in cloudier places, lowest around the equator, with

the only caveat being Australia. But look at the indigenous, their skin, versus it was colonized by white folks. That's where the melanoma is high, because white folks are living in a very high UV place and not doing the circadian alignment practices.

They're slathering on cell-mutating, cancer-causing sunscreen, and they're like, "Skin cancer's through the roof, y'all." I'm like, "Wonder why." Ask the indigenous if it's, through the roof for them. Like, it just... Girl, everything you just said. And you have a beautiful tan. Like, I genuinely would not have thought that you were the Fitzpatrick one.

Katie: Yeah, it's been wild. And I, like you, I'm starting to keep my tan through the winter now.

Nat: Yeah.

Katie: And so then when I start solar callusing in Florida in like February or March, it like comes back very quickly.

Nat: Yeah.

Katie: And that like euphoric feeling, I... like can't be-

Nat: Yeah.

Katie: ... quantified, but I challenge people, like you said, if you have not done this wake up with the sun for 30 days. Get little snacks of sunshine throughout the day. And keep notes, and see if you don't feel drastically different. Because you can't take this in a pill. There is not a replacement-

Nat: Right

Katie: ... for this. It's free.

Nat: Yeah.

Katie: And like, yes, all the questions that come, like if you live in a place that gets very little sunlight, like adapt to your environment.

Nat: Right.

Katie: Of course it depends on your environment, and I know there are people who live in the Arctic Circle who have a different experience of this-

Nat: Right

Katie: ... of course. But for most of us who live where the sun shines on a daily basis for a consistent amount of time, experiment with that. See what happens. Be your own N of 1, and see if you don't feel drastically better in a month.

Nat: Yes.

Katie: And experiment.

Nat: And even that, I... Like so we lived in Georgia all of our life. So I was down there with you, you know, hardiness zone 7B, tons of sun, UVB doesn't leave. We moved to Oregon, and I didn't realize that the UVB, which is how your body produces vitamin D, just goes away for months, and I was like, "Oh, God."

But what was so, again, like you said, there's always a reason in nature. What was so fascinating is that when you press in and honor those circadian cycles in your body, as the UVB goes away and you're pressing into dark, your body begins to increase melatonin production. Melatonin behaves very similar to the antioxidant vitamin D in the body in the winter to carry us through, and you press into the red light.

You're supposed to go into the dark. Like we are cyclical beings living in a society that pretends it's an evergreen summer, and that is not... That's not how a cell works under a microscope. That's not how a creature in nature behaves. Nowhere else in the created order are, do creatures behave the same way or does nature behave the same way all the time.

And we're taught to do that, and we wonder why we're so chronically depleted and chronically ill. It's like, no, you're supposed to rest and repair in the winter. You're supposed to have more melatonin in the winter. But instead, we shower with blue light, so we lose that melatonin in the winter. The signal, again, is confused.

We feel like shit, and we do it all again. And we behave in December just like we do in July, and our body doesn't have that time to repair and restore that nature shows us everywhere, like this is the way of things.

Katie: I love that, and that brings up another point that I often suggest to people is, like, and you say this too, only eat when the sun is out.

Nat: Yes.

Katie: Which means you are eating in a shorter window in the winter.

Nat: Yes.

Katie: And they're like, "That's too hard in the winter." I'm like, "That's kind of the point." Like you said, if you wanna put the science to it, in the summer we're more predominantly in mTOR. We're, like, in a growth... The signaling is for growth, for all of the beauty of that.

And in the winter we move more into, like, an AMPK pathway which is cellular regeneration and cleanup, and really important things there. So when we have a longer window of not eating at night, our body can do cellular repair. Autophagy happens. We clean up all the things that our body needs to deal with, and that depends on more sleep.

And I also think it's, at least my opinion, that that's a reason not to take vitamin D supplements. I don't take them at all, but, like-

Nat: Yeah, me neither

Katie: ... in the winter. Because melatonin is doing that work, and we can actually interrupt that signaling by taking a summer molecule in the winter.

Nat: Yes.

Katie: Purely anecdotal, but I don't ever take vitamin D orally anymore. I used to. It didn't do anything for my levels and I felt terrible. I never take it now, and my vitamin D stays in the 80s because I live in-

Nat: Yeah

Katie ... a sunny climate-

Nat: Yeah

Katie ... from getting sun. Like, who knew the body's natural response works. What?

Nat: Yeah. Yes. Yeah, I don't take it either. And when I found out, like, oh, the, even the most high-quality vitamin D, it isn't, does not look the same to the body- as vitamin D our body produces.

It just does not. And realizing that, again, something we're sold. We're sold these things over and over again, and they... I, I just realized, too, on this journey how much of it is externalized knowing. Oh, you know? Oh, you know? Oh, this box knows. This box of pills knows. The expert knows. Like, you are your own expert.

You are the lifelong student of yourself, and that's such a joyful honor, like, to learn yourself, to know yourself, to feel in touch with what you need. It's not out here. It's, it's look at nature. See how it is. And like you said, like, try it. Just try it. Like, I'm totally confident in it because I'm like, "Yeah, if you actually try it, you will be different, period."

Like, it's impossible not to. It's, like, actually impossible.

Katie: Yeah, and I think that's an important point, too, and I did that so much in the past, was, like, outsourcing that authority and those answers externally, and I was for years with the thyroid stuff looking for someone to give me the silver bullet the, the protocol, the answer to, like, to fix me. And then I realized over time it's an inside job. Like, I am 100% responsible for everything in my life, including this. And I can work with people who have more knowledge than me, certainly, and that's wonderful to do.

Nat: Yes.

Katie: But I hold that responsibility. And when we come from that place of responsibility, like you said, it's a gift, it's a joy to learn, and it's a place of empowerment.

Nat: Yeah.

Katie: Because if we're responsible for it, we can shift it. And I wanna circle back-

Nat: Yeah

Katie:... 'cause another thing we have in common, you mentioned sobriety. And I didn't do this intentionally. Like, I didn't have a problem with alcohol. I just a couple years ago realized, like, it didn't... It wasn't in alignment for me anymore, and so I haven't had alcohol in a couple of years now, and I don't miss it at all. –

Nat: Yeah

Katie ... but I'm curious what your journey was with that as well. Also, just peripherally, alcohol makes you more sensitive to the sun. Like, it's inflammatory. So if you're drinking-

Nat: Yeah

Katie: ... pina coladas in the sun, you might be more likely to burn, just so you know.

Nat: Yeah. Yeah, that is true. So I have been sober. I call it Cali-sober 'cause I still have edibles here and there. But I have been sober from alcohol for six and a half years, and for me, it was more..

I always... Like, I'm, I'm an Enneagram 7, and Enneagram 7s tend towards addiction. We're the highest level of addicts. It's just, I'm like, "I'd rather be addicted to sunlight than something else." So if I'm an addict, I'm an addict for nature. There it is. But I just... It was the biggest source of shame in my adult life.

Like, it was one of those things that it's so socially acceptable that it was hard for me to walk away from. I was not a daily drinker, not even a weekly drinker, but half the time I

would have it, I would have way too much. And it, I, now that I look back, I'm like, that was again just divorcing me from intuition, and then it was that thought belief cycle of, "God, I'm so ridiculous.

I feel so ashamed of this." Round and round we go. And if I tell myself I'm the worst, then I'm probably gonna behave in a way that reflects that reality. If I tell myself the loving truth, which is how I, the language I use with my children, like, tell yourself the loving truth about that. You're having a problem?

Look yourself in the mirror. Like, facing yourself, we are s- we avoid it, and all of the illusion of this matrix teaches us to avoid at all cost that kind of self-loving self-reflection. But it was like, I love myself too much for this. Like, why, why would I keep having this on the table? I am an all or nothing girl.

I'm in or I'm out. And I was like, "I'm just out." And it was, it's the best no of my adult life. It was... I mean, for some people it's hard, but I, I get real dramatic with it, and I actually just told my boys this story last night, my 19 and 21-year-old. But I had a night that, we had friends over, and I had way too much to drink.

There was not, like, an inciting incident. No one was realizing that I had way too much to drink, and I drove to a store have, having had way too much to drink on a country road. Before that night, I would've told you I would never have done that. But in that moment, like, it was, like, something honestly, like, long ago, ancestral programming in me, kind of.

It was, it was scary. Like, it was like I was just on a mission. I went to the store. I got more. I've never shared this on a podcast, by the way. But I cracked open a bottle of wine in a parking lot in the country- Drank it on the way home. Like, could've killed someone. Could k- Like, it was, it was so out of character for me that the next morning, I, it w- I needed that kind of dramatic story to really take it seriously.

I was like, "Oh my God." W- Like, I was, I was almost out of body, like the way that I just continued with it, and I had lied to a friend of mine. I... And lying is like, I'm a truth-teller to a fault. People don't love it. I'm not for everybody. But I had lied to a friend of mine on a polo heading to the store, and was like, "I'm going to get pizza."

And I called her, and I was like, "I lied to you last night. Like, I was drinking and I lied to you." I called my therapist, and I'm like, "I have a problem with this." I asked her to hook me up with an AA. I was trying to kind of scare myself in a loving way. Like, "Hey, you need to take this seriously." So I forced myself to go to AA meetings to hear scary stories of people that, like, I remember one woman was like, "I drank my son's childhood, and then he drank and he's dead now."

I mean, like, horrible stories, but I needed to take it seriously to, to, like, have that be like, "No." And one thing that I talk about a lot is I realize now that I'm 43, I look back on seasons where we just kinda cycled, and I had these dreams to help heal the world, and then I would just be back to the same square one.

I'm like, "God, nothing's taking root," and I think it was my character wasn't ready, and alcohol was a part of that. Like, I want to change the world, and I believe sunlight and circadian alignment can change the world, and I needed to let go of things to be trustworthy with that message, and alcohol was one of the biggest.

So just cycle and stay in the same place, and I had to say no to it, and it just opened so much for me. It was my heart, and I think I needed to show up for me that way. And when you love yourself in these little ways, whether it be sunshine or no to alcohol, again, your heart, your intuition feels safer to step forward and be like, "Okay, what about this?"

And most people are carrying dreams and medicine for the world, that all of those external things are suffocating. And when you begin to pull them away, you have medicine that is only yours. Like, it'll make me cry. It's like everybody has that beautiful thing, and you, you can hear it. Like, you can connect with it again if you just let go.

Like, pull these things that are not serving you. Get in alignment with nature, and so much truth and so much liberation will emerge, and you'll know your thing. You'll know your purpose.

Katie: That's beautiful, and I think it's the perfect segue into the last topic I wanna go into with you today. And I wanna approach this one with gentleness, because I've realized the things I'm even about to say, if someone had said to me when I was in the experience of what I went through, would have not resonated and not felt helpful, and it would've been like, "Well, it's easy for you to say," and all kinds of things.

So I wanna approach this topic with so much gentleness. But that topic is grief, and specifically the invitation to heal and awaken that it offers. And this is one that I was really good at bypassing for a long time.

Nat: Yeah.

Katie: And I've shared a little bit of this. I haven't shared the full story. I will on a podcast soon. But last year cracked me open in ways that I did not think I was capable of holding for a while. Like, there were many, many days I did not think I would make it through, and that is not an exaggeration to say, having been through that lived experience. And it gave me so much more understanding for people who have navigated that, I'm sure in ways far beyond what I did.

But I experienced depths of grief and rage that I didn't know that I was capable of carrying, and I think that I needed to go to, to reintegrate those parts of myself and to befriend parts I had completely shut down. But it was excruciatingly painful. It gave a whole new understanding of that term dark night of the soul, and I'm so grateful for that in hindsight.

And if someone had tried to help me in that moment, they, I would've been completely not helped by all of those words. And I know you also have an experience with grief, and you mentioned your mom. And if you're comfortable sharing, I would love to just kind of go into that delicate topic, because I suspect that many women are carrying a deep grief or a deep rage.

And we're kind of given the idea that those things aren't okay, and we say we're fine, and we shut them down, and we don't experience them. And I think it has real consequences, not just for our psyche, for our bodies as well.

Nat: Yeah. Oof, this is a, this is a good, big one. And, yeah, I didn't want to be a, a grief helper, but I was like, that is just part of what I am now.

I have always loved really big in life in general, and when my mom got sick, I remember having a conversation with myself in the mirror, and in my heart like, "I am going to feel this whole thing." Like, it was a very, ... I, I like these dramatic ritual things. I live for them. That's why I like to get up with the sun.

Like, it's... I just love the, the wonder, the, the bigness of life, and I was like, "I'm gonna feel this whole thing." And so I did, and my mom got sick with Lewy body dementia, and I was her primary caretaker. And it was heartbreaking. And I'm with you. Like, it was, like, so sad, I felt like many times like, "I can't bear this."

But I pushed in and it was, it was intentional little choices, and I did not do it perfectly, but just trying to feel the whole thing. And there was something that I heard ages ago, and it kind of fell out of consciousness and then w- emerged when my mom was sick, this idea that we heal by feeling. Like, we heal by feeling, period.

We can't, like you said, we can't bypass it. And the beauty of it is that grief, rage, those things can be the wisest teacher in your life. They can illuminate what you really care about. They can illuminate who you really are, what you're really made to do to heal yourself and the world, but you have to feel them.

And what I've observed around me in the people that walked through that with me in my extended family that chose not to feel it and chose to push it down and let's just, like you said, bypass it, they also push out the joy. They also push out the meaning. Like, you, you don't just push the grief and the rage away.

You push away the things that make you alive. Like, you cannot... It's a wall, period. A wall is gonna hold it all out. So you're, you're taking, you're robbing yourself of the full human experience of the things that make the grief bearable. Like, grief is not bearable without joy. and I just... It, it was such a profound experience.

And again, with the circadian alignment, it was too much to hold till I figured that piece out, where it was debilitating. It was like I remember going outside and feeling like I, I don't know that I ever won't be heartbroken again. Like, I, I don't think I will ever not be heartbroken again. But you just... I, I too have learned when you allow yourself to grieve, you learn so much about yourself.

Like, you learn who you really are. And, I'm... It's wild. I never thought I would say it, but I'm like, I'm actually grateful for it now. Like, I'm grateful for what it did. Like, another gift of grief that I just would like to invite anybody to imagine I, I am so excited to be alive about 97% of life. Like, people that meet me sometimes are like, "Are you, like, this happy a lot?"

I actually am. I do have a fiery side. I can get down and emo and sad, but grief has heightened just the experience of aliveness. Like, I'm so moved to just be here in this experience. Like, that you and I were born one day. Like, what a miracle. Like, every loss, everything that has gotten us to this moment, like, how precious, how present grief can make you too.

Like, looking at your child, looking at nature, and realizing, like, you're a part of this. And if you, if you push the grief away, you won't feel that. You won't feel the joy. And it's like, it's almost like a continual death. You re-traumatize yourself. The thing about grief and loss and pain, like, if you, if it sits in you unexpressed, it will continue to manifest over and over.

So I see family members of mine that just didn't have it in them to hold it and to feel it. It, their life continues to re-traumatize them, 'cause they didn't pull it into the light. I had a precious therapist, my favorite of my life, tell me during that time, she just said, "This too belongs." And I didn't love it at the moment.

I was like, "I don't want it to belong. It feels like it's everything." But now I see, like, in the order of the human experience, it all belongs. It all... And to this day, like, I'll feel it. I feel it, and I honor it. And every time I feel it, it sends me down this beautiful cycle of continued, like, cherishing being alive, cherishing the experience of just this is today.

Like, this is beautiful. There's a bee outside doing its work. Like, what a, what a, what a thing. We, we live in this magic. And I'm just so grateful for it. But it is... I, I will te- say, like you said, it is, it is the hardest work, I feel like, to, to make peace with grief and loss. It is, it's the hardest work.

But it's one of the most worthy works ever. And I had, the last Mother's Day I had with my mom was the last time I really, like, saw her. Like, she was, like, there. She had dementia, and it was most often she was not there towards the last few months. But I saw her, and it was like a train of grief hit me.

Like, I went to this, assisted living that we ended up having to put her in, and I saw her in her eyes, and it was like that inner child, that wounded little girl in me was like, "Oh my God, my mom. My mom's here." And I could not believe that she was there. And it was that first, like, you're almost afraid of it.

It just feels so enormous. You're like, "Oh, God. Oh, God, this is gonna break my heart today." And I was like, "No, we gotta be all in. We gotta be all in. This is precious." And I had grieved enough to know, like, this is precious. And so I... A- and she knew she was there, like, in her eyes, and she was like, "I'm here today."

It was so sacred, and I was so proud of us that we had already traversed so much grief that we were, like, ready for it. We're like, "Let's, like, live this." And so I was like, "Mom, we're getting out of here." And we left assisted living. We went to a festival, which is her favorite thing. And like we got out of the car, and we were just so present.

It was like, "Look at us," like, "We're here." And she knew it, and I knew it, and it was lasting for hours, which is not normal. We like bought her a bracelet that said Nana, and like I'm just walking around like, "This is unbearably painful and so precious." Like, I cannot believe this moment. And I got her back to assisted living after the most precious day, and I was like, "Oh, just press in again."

Just do it." And I was like, "Do you want me to walk you upstairs?" I normally would just like walk her to the lobby. She's like, "Yeah, I'm tired." And she went upstairs, and all the while it was, it, I had loved myself enough to kind of calm myself through it, but I was just had the inner dialogue of like, I, this is almost too much to hold.

Got her up to her room, and, my mom was not super affectionate when I was little, and it was like the last bastion of healing that she and I, we had done it, but it was still a work for me to be physically affectionate. Like, we had healed so much between us, but my body still had a memory of that with her, and I was like, "Just go."

And so I was like, "Do you want me to lay with you?" And she was like, "Yeah." So I went in the bathroom, and I just like put my head on a towel, just like, I am heartbroken, like you're gonna do it. And I went in there, and I laid with my mom, and I was just looking at her, and it was like the part of me that needed, that full circle physical healing with her.

It was just all of a sudden I was flooded with like the love of God for her. And I just saw her when she was a little girl in my heart, and I saw her as this old lady with silver hair. And my body in that moment felt fully physically healed of that wound that we had, that last bastion of a wound. And I just loved her, and I knew that the grief is what gave birth to that love.

And I was just looking at her and just loving her and like couldn't help but wanna hold her, and it felt so natural. And she apologized to me for like long ago stuff. In her little conscious mind, she was like, "I'm so sorry I yelled at you when I was little, when you were little. I'm sorry." And I didn't need that from her.

Like, I'd already forgiven her for that, but I was able to say, "I forgive you, and I know you were doing the best you could." And I feel like grief gave me that. And so she got to hear my, "You're okay." And we said together like, "Yes, you were doing the best you could." And I just held her, and she was precious, and I got in, after she fell asleep, I got in the elevator and just sobbed but was so aware.

Like, that is the gift of grief. And that was the last time I fully experienced a moment with her that was just straight, and clear, and I will treasure it forever. And to this day, I'm like, "That was, that was the gift of grief." Like, had I not gone in and felt that, I wouldn't have got to that treasure that was like my last real long day with my mom.

Katie: That's so beautiful, and I appreciate you sharing 'cause I know that's, that's always such a, like, beautiful but raw topic to go into when there's been grief. And, like you, like I said, parts of mine are still close to home, but-

Nat: Yeah

Katie: ... I, I love the piece you spoke to about gratitude because-

Nat: Yeah

Katie: ... going into last year, I could look back on my life and realize every hard or painful thing I have ever been through led to such beauty in my life.

Nat: Yeah.

Katie: And so one of my intentions was, like, can I learn to shorten the gratitude gap? Can I learn to find gratitude in the pain, and not wait till I see the good that comes out of it? And I also set an intention I don't recommend for anyone but I said, you know, I want to help be a conduit of transmuting this pain that women collectively have felt for so long.

Like, I want to help, like, change this pain and this grief and this rage of women that have, it's existed forever. And in some ways I felt like that, some days I felt like that was what was being, like, poured into me, which was, like, all this grief and rage.

Nat: Wow.

Katie: And it was unbearable. I think honestly some of the only reason I'm still here is that I had the feeling that it would follow me beyond the physical body.

So if I exited the physical, it wasn't gonna go away, and I, it was a pain that I had to learn to be with. And now I can say I'm grateful. I couldn't say it in the moment.

Nat: Yeah.

Katie: I didn't pass the test-

Nat: Yeah

Katie... of finding it in the moment.

Nat: Yeah.

Katie: But I am so grateful now, and I agree with you. It's, like, such, such potent, intense, bitter, painful medicine, and so, so beautiful.

And I've heard, my friend Emily Fletcher says, "Bliss is any emotion fully felt." And I didn't understand that until last year. I would still in my head be like, "Yeah, but..." And in the, the darkest of the darkness I had this moment of clarity that's almost impossible to explain, but realizing the difference between pain and suffering.

And while pain can happen, the suffering i- in my case was my own unwillingness to look at that grief in the face and to sit with it. It was my resistance that it was actually the suffering, not the pain, and I still had that story. It's, it's outside of me. It's causing this- Yeah ... to me. And in that moment, even though there was still pain, everything shifted, and I, like, held onto that and I understood it for the first time of like, oh, this is what she meant.

Like, bliss is any emotion fully felt.

Nat: Yeah.

Katie: And I suspect, to bring it full circle, as people get more sunlight, and I know a lot of people are already doing that, and as we, like, start to heal these various aspects of our lives in various ways it seems like we get the opportunity to be confronted with those deeper layers.

Nat: Yeah.

Katie: And it can be excruciating, and it can also be-

Nat: Yeah

Katie: ... the most beautiful part of your journey. And I feel like you just shared that so beautifully i- in illustrating, like, it can be, like, unbearably painful-

Nat: Yeah

Katie ... and it can be the most beautiful thing you've ever experienced, and they can be true at the same time.

Nat: Yes. And the, the true at the same time is what I did not understand till I walked into it. and I wanna say too something that I heard about grief that has rang so true, and now it's almost like this sacred treasure, is grief is love left unexpressed. And this idea that the more love we have, the more grief we can hold.

And even what you said about rage, I feel like rage, anger I've learned is a secondary emotion. Under most rage I've experienced in my own heart, probably all, it- there's pain. There's pain that... There's grief that's driving the rage. Whereas rage is, like, here, and then the grief and the pain is here. So if you align yourself with circadian rhythm, you're gonna have the resilience to pull the rage back and to see the grief, and most of us don't have the capacity to hold that.

We are running on such a low life force all day long. It is too much. Like, I would actually agree and testify, yes, that is too much. In the current state that most people are, grief, rage, it is too much. But if you align with what is most true in yourselves and in the universe, it's not too much. It all belongs, and that is so, that's so comforting. It's so comforting.

Katie: And I don't know, like, what I could possibly say to top that. That was, I think, the most beautiful place to wrap up, and I actually really sincerely hope we get to do more rounds of this together someday. For this one, I know we've come so full circle. We talked about so many things.

I will link to your website, to your Instagram, to Sun Scoops, to everything in the show notes. For you guys listening on the go, that's always at wellnessmama.com. Nat, any parting words you wanna leave anyone with today on anything we've talked about, or anywhere you want people especially to come find you and connect with you?

Nat: I would just say that you're made for the light, that everybody's made for the light, and whereas many stories are like, "Well, that's your thing," like, this is just a human thing. And if you're a human being, I just invite you, live in the light, compare it to your current reality, and tell me you don't have more aliveness.

And really, isn't that what we all want? Like, just more aliveness, more, more of this lived experience, the full range of emotions. So I would just say that. Find me at Nat the Sun

Whore on IG, and you can get Sun Scoops online at sunwhore.co, and I'm just... I'm trying to change the world with sunlight, so that's what I'm after.

So you guys are gonna... I'm on a mission.

Katie: I love it. Well, I am so, so, so grateful for your time today. I'm so glad we finally got to connect face to face, and that we got to record this conversation to share. Thank you so, so much for being here.

Nat: Thank you so much.

Katie: And thank you all for listening and sharing your most valuable resources, your time, your energy, and your attention with us today. We're both so grateful that you did, and I hope that you will join me again on the next episode of the Wellness Mama Podcast.

Nat: Yeah.