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Healthy Moms Podcast

BY **Wellness Mama**[®]
simple answers for healthier families

Episode 11: How to Foster Success in Your Children

Katie: Hi and welcome to episode 11 of the "Wellness Mama Podcast" where we provide simple answers for healthier families. I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com and I could not be more excited about today's guest. I'll be honest. When I first met him and first heard him speak, I wasn't quite sure what to think and I wasn't really excited about hearing him, to be really honest, because I didn't think I'd be able to relate to him and he absolutely blew me away. And I wanted to have him here to give that same...his insight and amazing story to you guys.

His name is Bo Eason, and I think he would agree that his most important qualifications are that he's a husband and father, and from everything I've heard and from him, he seems like an amazing husband and father. He also played professional football for both the Houston Oilers and the San Francisco 49ers. And more recently, he's created and performed in his own play called "Run to the Litter," and I've never met someone who has seen it and does not rave about it. So if you ever get the chance, I'd highly encourage you to see it. It opened to amazing reviews in New York, which is hard to do. Even more recently than that, he's now a coach on various aspects of business and life, and I was absolutely blown away when I heard him speak. So Bo, thank you so much for being here.

Bo: You're welcome, Katie. It's great to be here. I remember when you came up to me after I spoke there in Connecticut and you said, "Hey, I have this thing called the 'Wellness Mama,'" and I was like, "That sounds cool. That sounds like a perfect group." So thank you for inviting me.

Katie: I'm so honored you're here. And as I mentioned, when I first heard you were speaking, I saw your bio in the itinerary and I was like, "Huh? A football player." Like, "What am I...I'm not sure if I'm gonna learn anything from him." I figured maybe he'll just be inspirational or something, and like I said, I was blown out of the water. So to start, can you tell us your story and how you went from being the self-proclaimed "Run to the Litter" to a professional football player, and now one of the top motivational speakers in the country?

Bo: Yeah, you know, it all starts when I was nine. And I must have been a strange little kid because I took some crayon and some school paper when I was 9 years old and I drew up a 20-year plan. And I still obviously have that plan, Katie, you got to see it that day, it's 44 years old now, and that plan was to be the best safety in the whole world, and safety is a position in football. And so, I'm the youngest of six kids, so all my older brothers and sisters, they were really good athletes and obviously were much bigger than me because I was the smallest. And I just was trying to hang in to this family and trying to find my way, so I drew up this plan, I followed it for 20 years, and it never really looked like it was ever going to happen until the very end.

And as, you know, fate would have it, it did work out. I did become the best safety in the NFL and the first safety drafted in 1984 into the NFL. And after I played for several years in pro football, after I had 7 knee surgeries, I said, "Man, you know, I'm just gonna do the same thing that I did when I was 9, but now I'm 29 and I'm gonna take another 20-year plan and I'm gonna draw it up," and that one turned in to be a play of all things, you know, like a Broadway play. And that was "Run to the Litter," and I'd never written anything up to that point, but I knew that I had...I knew I had a story that I wanted to tell, and that only I knew because my eyes saw it.

And so I wrote that, and that became my next 20 years. And then after that was complete, I've been performing that play for, I think, going on 16 years now. I just started anew, I love these 20-year plans, and that's what I do. That's what I...actually that's what I have and my kids do too. They have their 20-year plans, and that's the only way I know how to be the best in the world at a thing. So whether it'd be playwriting or

performing, or whether it'd be playing that position called safety, or whether it'd be being the best ballet dancer in the world, or being the best writer, the only way I know how to do it is to spend 20 years doing it, and that's what I'm teaching my kids.

Katie: That's awesome. And I know...I loved your story that I heard you tell about your own family and not being willing to settle for mediocrity with your children and I love that. And so this question's kinda two-part. I think a lot as a mom about how do I best encourage my children to follow their goals and their dreams, but at the same time, to give them like realistic expectations for life. So for a two-part question, what would be the things that your parents did that were the most influential in your ability to achieve your own goals, and then secondly, what things are you and your wife doing with your own children to foster that in them?

Bo: Yeah, it's a great question. And it's funny, the things that my wife that we're doing with our kids today. So I have a daughter who's five named Lyla, I have a son named Axel who's seven, and I have a daughter, Eloise, who's nine. And you know, my wife and I are very driven people, you know, very...we want great things. We want a great home. We want the best for our kids. We wanna have a great income. We wanna have influence in the world. We think of ourselves as leaders of the community. So we have big desires for ourselves and for our kids. I think what happens a lot of times is people...you know, you brought up mediocrity. The world around us whether it'd be media or Hollywood or print or publishing, even teaching, like, think of the educational system and think of all the influences that our kids have. You know, people talking to them and indoctrinating them on what they should be doing or shouldn't be doing or what's realistic or what's unrealistic.

I've always said, you know, I don't want my kids indoctrinated that way and I can't shield them from everything. Because I know that my wife and my voice is the most powerful voice in their lives, so we're gonna be the ones to set that up. So I always tell my kids...for one, my dad woke my sisters and my brother and me up every morning by rubbing our backs and he would wake...that's how he would wake us up. He'd rub us on the back right through the covers and he would go like this, "You're the best..." He would always cuss, every sentence, every...he would end every sentence with a cuss word, that's kinda who he was, you know. He was like this ranch or cowboy guy who didn't talk a lot, but when he talked, he usually end his...he'd end his sentences with cuss words. I won't repeat them here but he would...this would be the first part of the sentence. He would say, "You're the best in there, gosh, darn it. You just keep moving, partner. You're the best in there."

And that's how we would be woken up, and I'm not kidding you. My dad just died a few years ago, and to the day he died, he was 80, I must have been in my mid-40s, late 40s, he was still rubbing my back, still telling me I was the best. And he did it to my kids, he does it to my wife, he did it to all my brothers and sisters, and all of their kids. It's very funny. This word "the best," I know it brings up a lot of issues for people, because people go, "Well, that's bragging. Well, that's conceited." And I say, "No, it's actually not. It's actually not. You were born in this world against all odds. You know, you're already the best." I always think of it this way, Katie. I always ask people, I go, "Do you remember the day that you were conceived?" And people normally go, "Well, no." I did have a couple of ladies actually say yes, they did remember the day of conception, which is I'd like to get a bigger...deeper story on that. But imagine the day that you were conceived and imagine 300 million sperm and you, you were one of them.

So 300 million sperm cells are released on the day of your conception. So that means the odds of you being here on Earth today are 300 million to 1, and guess who won that race? I mean guess who won that race?

You're the champion of all champions. You have already beaten every odd. And so, I say, "We're already born the best." We're already the ultimate Olympic champion. 300 million to 1 odds, and you're the one standing here. You're the one with this life. And so you're gonna argue against me that the best that you already are is conceited or bragging? It is not. It is who you were born to be.

So I am constantly waking my kids up that same way. "You're the best, you're the best." I want them to have the vision of them being the best at whatever they do, regardless of what it is. And so my wife and I have really carried on that tradition, and it's not like our kids go around bragging they're the best, they have dreams of being the best. They have aspirations to be the best dancer or the best... My five-year old wants to be a flying dentist, which I've never heard of, so I'm like, "Okay, so if we're gonna be the best flying dentist, what do we gotta do to be the best at that?" And then she dreams up her dreams. She makes her plans, and we start supporting that and going toward that. That's what I've repeated from my parents, and there's one more thing that I'd like to say about parenting in this way. My mom and dad were so protective, vigilant, almost predatorial toward not only my dreams but my sisters and my brother's dreams. They would...if you casually got in the way of our dreams or casually said, "Oh, you know what, I don't think Bo's ever gonna make it in Pro Football. Look at him, he's kind of small."

My mom and dad would literally throw you out of the house. That's how vigilant they were about protecting the dreams of their children, and I think that is a lost art. In fact, a lot of times I'll get done speaking and people will come up to me like a mother or a father with their daughter or their son in tow, with their arm around their kid, their 12-year old kid and they'll go, "Bo, I really liked what you talked about today. This is my little son Billy, and he has dreams of being the best ballet dancer in the world, but look at him, he'll never make it." That's what they actually say to me, and I'm like thinking, "What were you just listening to that has you discredit and devalue everything that your kid is dreaming of?" I say that as in our responsibility as parents and as coaches and as teachers, is to fight, actually proactively fight for their dreams. Not just, you know, passively support. I'm talking about fight for their dreams. Because if you think about it, Katie, their dream came from somewhere. It didn't just appear out of the ethers. It came from somewhere, so that dream is legitimate and it needs to be nurtured and it needs to be taken into your hands like the most precious little commodity that could ever be, and it's your job as a parent to shepherd that thing through and show them the way.

Katie: That's awesome, and I love the flying dentist thing. And maybe in 10 years, we'll see this new rise of concierge flying dentistry, and I'll know like if she's the head of it. I love it.

Bo: I could see my little Lyla, the little flying dentist. I don't know where she came up with that one but we didn't argue. We said, "Okay, I think you can do it. We're with you. Let's see if we can do it."

Katie: Yeah, that's awesome. Well, you talk a lot about storytelling, and I know that you talked a lot about that in the presentation I heard from you and, to be honest, even though I have now this blog that I believe has grown because the message is so important and I share a lot of, you know, recipes and health advice across the board and I always feel confident in sharing that because of all the research that went into it, but even myself, I still was like, "Why would anyone wanna hear my story? Why would anyone wanna hear that?" And after hearing you, it's totally flipped out on its head. So I would love for you to talk about why is storytelling so important and how do you start from scratch? Maybe if you've never told your story or you have that same feeling I had of why would anyone wanna hear my story?

Bo: Yeah, well, the first thing you have to do, the very first action you have to take about your story is surrender and resolve yourself to the fact that your story, Katie, and everyone listening to this right now, their story, their personal story is the most valuable thing that they've got, bar none, and nothing's even close. The problem with most people is they devalue their story. Look, you are a one-time phenomenon. You're a one-time phenomenon born into this world. So we have seven billion people, over seven billion on this planet, and you are...your DNA, your brain chemistry is made up in such a way that it will never be repeated again. So let's think back for a second. Everyone on this podcast, let's think back of when the first human footprint was put on this Earth. That could have been a million years ago, that might have been six million years. So the very first human footprint that was put on this earth will never be repeated again. Same with you, same with your story.

Katie, you've seen things with your eyes. You've walked miles in your shoes that no one else has and no one else ever will. So if you're not the one to share that, then shame on you because that is a one-time phenomenon that you saw that you have a chance to express yourself and share with the world how to progress, how to evolve, how to be better parents, how to see things in a different way. Only you've got that control.

The shame of it is, is society and culture has told us for years to don't talk about yourself, to don't share yourself. Well, that world is upside down. That's the only thing we've got to talk about. The only way that you and I can impact each other is our perspective. I've seen the world in a certain way and you've seen it in a maybe a different way. Well, that's how our two stories merge together. And Katie, the people that follow you on your podcast and our fans and follow your website, and follow you, they're only doing that because they're merging with your story. Your story represents something to them, and it connects their connective tissue of their story with yours, and that's how communities are built, and that's how movements are made, and that's how every leader who's ever been elected, who's ever done anything, has used that story to connect with each other.

In fact, there's this study that, you know, they've done the study going all the way back to the leader Julius Caesar, all the way back to the Roman Empire until today. And these analytics come up with three things that leaders have to have, ranging all the way back then, all the way until now. And the first one, the very first ability that all these leaders have to have, and I'm not just talking about political leaders, I'm talking about Lady Gaga was a part of this study. I'm talking about Osama bin Laden, of all people, was a part of this study because they wanted to know why people followed other people. Well, the number one ability that all those leaders had to have all the way back to the Roman Empire was they have to have the ability to share their own story. And if they don't, if they don't, they cannot lead.

Well, everyone who's listening today is the leader of their own domain. They're leader of their community and their family. You have to be able to share yourself to be able to lead, so that people have connective tissue to latch on to you so they know how to follow you, and your story is the quickest, best way there.

Katie: Yeah, that's such a great analogy, and I loved hearing your own story and hearing that. And I know that you talked a lot about some of the struggles that you had with your children and maybe their friends, where you used to live, and things like that. And I ask this question to a lot of people, and usually it's more focused on the health side, but I think your insight is gonna be really valuable, which is, what do you think is gonna be the biggest struggle that our children face that the next generation has to face and overcome?

Bo: Man, you know what I think it is, Katie, I think what they're really up against is this powerful, powerful

movement and message, and indoctrination of mediocrity, of average being as good as you can...as high as you should ever think to go. And I call that the enemy, I call that our nemesis. So if you're thinking about like you and me have a nemesis, we have a rival. We have an enemy that is really well-funded, and they outnumber you and me. They're bigger than us, they have more money than us, and they have the air waves right now. They have the media, they have Washington, D.C., they have Hollywood, they have all these messaging. They have the book publishing world. They kind of own those worlds, and their biggest message to the world is, "Hey, don't be too big for your bridges, just be average and be happy with that." And you can see it, it's very insidious and it's very...it's like they're faceless and they operate in the dark of night. And they just keep kinda slicing away at greatness, at dreams, at an honorable, noble life.

In fact, if they heard me, like the enemy, if they heard me say words like "honorable" or "noble," they would laugh and they would make fun of the actual world like it means nothing. They would call me conceited or braggadocious. So that's what they do. They do that so that you...not too big for your bridges so that you're easier to lead. They wanna lead, and the only way they can lead, because they're weak and they're wrong, they may be well-funded. They may have big numbers, but they're weak and they're wrong. Well, you and me were born the best 300 million to 1 odds. We're put on this earth. I don't take that lightly why we're here. We're here to fulfill the message that we were given, the dreams that are ingrained in our DNA, it is our job to achieve those dreams and to make sure that our kids achieve those dreams and our spouses achieve their dreams.

We're not here to be average. That's not why we were born here. You know, if you were average, would you beat all those other sperm cells 300 million. You beat them all. If you were average, if you were mediocre, would you have beat them? No, you would have come in medium place. You would have come in what, a hundred million place, that would have been your spot. But you didn't, you were number one and you're here for a reason, and I'm just...that is the arc...my kids are up against it too. I feel them. They'll come home and they'll go, "Well, dad, why are you always talking about us being the best? You know, maybe it's just good just not to be the best," and I'm like, "Actually, that's not why we're here. We're not here to be not the best. We're here to be the best. That's what we have to give to this world. We have to show other people that that is the only way to go that we have dreams of going to the top of our field no matter what the field."

So now, so say my son, he wants to be an NBA player, he wants to be the only player to play Pro basketball and Pro Football. So all his friends and they're all seven and eight, nine, and they're all coming over and they're going, "You can't do that, Axel. You'll never do that. You can't do that." And then I have to say to him, "Axel, they're not speaking to you, they're speaking about their own abilities, not yours. We're here to make that dream come true, to make that dream come alive." So that's gonna take super human effort on Axel's part and the whole family's part for him to achieve that dream, isn't it? I mean the dedication and the commitment that that's going to take is going to be off the charts.

Well, what do you think that's going to mean to Axel when he's 42 years old and he's married and has two kids? That kind of commitment is gonna kick into gear when the marriage isn't going so great, when the kids are acting up and everything's not rosy. The commitment to his life will then kick into gear. My brother and I used to catch 1,000 balls a day. Every day he would throw me a thousand and I would catch a thousand. I equate the success in my marriage and the success of my parenting and the success of my businesses on those thousand balls.

So I was nine years old, I decided to catch a thousand balls a day. So I didn't skip any days. So what does that

mean to my marriage? And what does that mean to my commitment to my clients? And what does that mean to the commitment to my kids and their lives? It's everything. It's everything. The only reason I'm a good husband is because of those thousand balls. It taught me to show up day in and day out, rain or snow, or sleet, or sickness, or surgeries. It didn't matter. You just show up, you show up. Commitment is all our kids are facing a world that's uncommitted, which is why you have the marriages you do, which is why you know, everyone's like, "Well, just kinda just do this, but if it doesn't work out, just quit." I think that is an insidious crime that they're up against and I'm totally not for that. I'm fighting the fight that says, "No, we're gonna stay committed. We're gonna stay powerful. We're gonna actually shoot for our dreams. And then if our heart gets broken, so be it."

Katie: Yeah, I love that and I think you're right. It's very widespread and definitely an uphill battle that we're fighting, but you're right, we already are the best, so we have that in our favor to begin with. And the three questions I always end with, the first one is, what is one piece of advice that you wish someone had given you earlier in life? It sound like you had a lot of great advice from your parents, but what's one thing you wish you could tell yourself earlier in life?

Bo: Wow, that's a really good question. You know what, often my friends will come up to me, Katie, and people today too when they know my story about my dad and how he woke us up, and how they fought for our dreams and how they spoke to us. People often say to me, "I wish I had your dad," or, "I wish I had that element in my life." So I think you're right. I mean the advice that I had was, "You're the best," and I didn't believe in it first. I mean, you know, for the first 30 years I was like going, you know, me and my brother, we were embarrassed that my dad was saying that to us because he'd say it right in front of people. And we'd be like, I'll go in on a double date, me and my brother with these two girls and he would say, "You're the best," and the girls would look at us like my dad was weird and we were embarrassed.

But you know what, eventually, we lived in to what he saw. And I think that is the key for us as parents is...and not only parents but just your community at large, you know, the people that are going to follow you. If you're going to lead, you know, people are gonna follow you and you have to see greatness in them and you have to point it out. And then you watch them live into the greatness that you see. That is the best advice...and I was given that advice so I'm kinda just turning the question on its head. I was given that advice, or that was an example that I grew up with, is you have to see greatness in people and you have to speak them into existence. And that's your job.

Katie: I love that and I think that's absolutely important for any of us who are parents, is to make sure that what we're telling our children, we're just very careful of how we address them because I think you're right. We are the main influences in their lives and we can break them down so easily and we can build them up easily as well.

And so maybe can you give us an action step that listeners can take right for maybe both themselves but also for their children that they can start doing right now that would improve their lives in some way, maybe help them get in touch with their story or get in touch with their greatness?

Bo: Yeah, the first place I would start with your story is, you know, most people wanna start with their story at the top of the mountain like their successes and I always say, "No, that's not really a good story." What a great story, just like every great movie that you've ever seen or a book, or a TV show that's been great always starts at the bottom of the mountain. So if you and I were gonna start a story about Mount Everest or we would

start at the bottom of that mountain, looking up going, "There's no way we can do it." And then throughout the story, we will achieve, we will end up at the top. And once we're at the top, that's the end of the story.

So think right now, everyone think right now of your proudest, most greatest moment that you ever had in your whole life. Okay, everybody got it. So that's not a great story. Now, I want you to do this, think of the lowest moment in your life, the moment where you looked around and there were no answers. It usually happens between the ages of 9 and 12. And usually, you got cut from some team or dumped, you know, from the prom by somebody, or you were heartbroken, and you looked around and there were no answers. That is an excellent place to start your story because now we get to see what you're made of. Now we watch you climb that mountain which is all human beings are interested in.

We're not interest in anybody who's on top, we're only interested in the story of how they got there. So always start at your lowest moment, and then end at the moment that you are now, which is your life, your success of your family, your life, your business, that kind of thing. So that's the best place to start with your story. And the one piece of advice I would give everybody is just to be really vigilant about who's around you, who's around you and who's around your family, and surround yourself with excellence, and you must be willing...and this might sound harsh to some of you, but think about this for your life. You must be willing to eliminate all that is not excellent in your life. So think about that. You must be willing to eliminate all that is not excellent, and that means people, that means distractions, that might mean food or TV. It might mean bad influences that are around you. Get rid of all the distraction and only have the best of the best around you. And those people also see the best in you and you see the best in them and you grow together. I think that's really...I've been really vigilant about that with my family here lately and I'm just seeing the benefits of that.

Katie: Yeah, I love that advice. And lastly, I can't believe we're already to the end of our time but what is one great resource, maybe besides your own site which I'm gonna link to in the show notes, but what's one maybe book or website or even movie that really had an impact on you that you would encourage others to read or watch or learn?

Bo: Oh, you know what, there's a couple of great books that I really love, and these are the kind of books that I read over and over and over and over and over again. And one is a little red...it's called the "The Little Red Book of Talent," and it's written by a guy named Daniel Coyle. He also wrote a book called "The Talent Code," but this little book, it's just like a little red book of talent. I read this to my kids because what this guy did was study talent hotbeds throughout the world, like there's this one school in Northern California that creates all these mathematic geniuses, and then there's this one tennis club that creates more women tennis players ever in the world, and then it's in Russia. And then there's this one swimming pool that has kicked out more gold medalists than any other pool, and the pool's in North Baltimore and it's crummy and the locker room's bad.

And I love these talent hotbeds and the study of them because you can create your own little talent hotbed just by following the same rules and tips that they use in your own life. So I love that and my kids love hearing the stories of, you know, these South Korean women golfers who all of a sudden are dominating all the Pro golfing tour just because one girl did in 1998, and I love that. That's a great book.

There's also a book that I read almost every day and for the last 15 years and it's called, "The War of Art." Not "The Art of War," "The War of Art," written by a guy named Steven Pressfield, and it is...he's a writer. He writes screenplays. He wrote "The Legend of Bagger Vance," if anyone ever saw that golf movie with Matt

Damon and Will Smith. But what he talks about this is...what he talks about in here is the resistance that we all feel toward our art, toward the expression of our art. And that we are our biggest enemy, we're our biggest battler because we're always, you know, bumping up against this resistance. And that book, I promise you, I pick up that thing every day, just open to a page, and read a little page or a paragraph, and then it kind of just rights my ship. It kind of just gets my ship going in the right direction again when I'm constantly off. And so those two books I constantly pick up and constantly look at and read.

Katie: Awesome, thank you so much. I'm gonna pick those both up myself and check them out. Bo, where can people find you if they wanna find out more about you?

Bo: Yeah, my website is boeason.com, so that's B-O, and the last name is Eason, eason.com, and you know, I train people like, I know Katie, you and I talked about you coming to one of my events where I train people. I put people in a theater because that's where i was trained and I put business people and entrepreneurs and coaches, and I put them in a theater like a grand Broadway style house out here in California. And we, for three days, you're trained by me and the team that trained me on how to not only capture your personal story, the best one, and also physicalizing it, actually putting it into your molecule so that story is telling all over the place.

It's expressing itself through your body at all times, which is really the key. And then the art of performance, the art of like letting that story out and sharing it with people because my belief is that is the piece that is your most valuable asset because only you have it. And because only you have it, there is no competition. You're alone out there with the story. The challenge is we've got to get this body of yours and this voice of yours to be able to tell it in a great way, and that is where the attraction comes in. That's where people start to pay you. That's where people start to follow you. And so that's what I do. So if you wanna go to boeason.com, I'd love to have you and there's a lot of resources on there, so come see more.

Katie: Awesome, Bo. Thank you so, so much for being here. I loved chatting with you and I loved hearing you speak. I hope anyone who has the chance will come find you speak if they can at some point.

And thank you for listening to episode 11 of "The Wellness Mama Podcast." And until next time, have the healthier week.