



# Healthy Moms Podcast

BY **Wellness Mama**<sup>®</sup>  
simple answers for healthier families

Episode 121: Cookware Problems: Understanding  
What's Hiding in Most Cookware

Child: Welcome to my Mommy's podcast.

Katie: Hi, and welcome to the "Healthy Moms Podcast," I'm Katie from [wellnessmama.com](http://wellnessmama.com). And I'm here today, to delve into the world of cookware, and what's safe and what's not, with Rich Bergstrom of Ceramcor. And this is a product I have been using in my home for a really long time, but there's a lot of misinformation in the cookware world, and so I wanted to bring Rich on to clear them up.

He owns a Cookware company called Ceramcor, and the thing I love about them is they show their laboratory testing results for all of their products, which no other company that I know of does. They believe in accountability and safe cookware, and I can't wait to delve in. So Rich, welcome and thanks for being here.

Rich: Thank you very much Katie. It's an honor to be on your podcast.

Katie: It's gonna be a fun conversation. So there's a lot of misinformation in the cookware world, it's pretty much generally understood now that Teflon isn't the best option but there's a lot of different opinions beyond that. So let's start with really basics, what should consumers look for in their pots and pans?

Rich: Okay. The biggest misconception about cookware which has been going on for hundreds of years and basically it's...metal cookware has one function and it's durable. It's a material that can withstand a tremendous amount of abuse, and having worked in the restaurant business in the back end, I understand that. So that's basically was its function, but going back, you know, 8,000 years, all the cooking was done in clay pots, and that continued for many, many, many years. And then you had the Bronze Age and the Iron Age and then metal came about.

So really metal cookware was designed for the durability aspect mainly for restaurants and then also for homes. And from that, there came an array of different types of metal cookware, and every particular manufacturer in the world would shout that their metal would cook food better, yet they would never be able to quantify that, and they would never be able to prove that, and they would never be able to prove that their cookware would make their food taste better.

So I knew that there was material going back in time that was used before metal, that was far superior. And I then started to do some heavy investigating in 2004 to find out what is the difference between a ceramic material versus metal, and that was the process that got me involved in founding the company called Ceramcor. Because prior to that for the 23 years, Katie, I had a...I worked for Corning Consumer Products which is famous for making CorningWare, Corelle, Pyrex, and Visions Cookware.

That was a glass ceramic cookware company. So I was very familiar with glass and ceramics. I grew up in that. I fully understood that. And in 2002, they unfortunately decided to stop making CorningWare in United States, and they closed the factory. So at that time, I said, "You know, this is an opportunity for me to be an entrepreneur and start a business that we can make a better product that was more ceramic than glass," because ceramic has better properties than glass for cooking.

So it was a four-year odyssey in trying to come up with a ceramic material that would work on top of the stove

as well as metal cookware. So that's how we navigated our way into this industry, and I guess what the tipping point, what made the difference in 2008, I had the opportunity to make a sales call to Dr. Mercola. I know you know Dr. Mercola. I know you made a list of the top 100 influential health people in the United States and Dr. Mercola was on that list.

And I looked at his cookware and he was selling a U.S.A.-made manufactured cast iron cookware. So I, being a salesperson and owner of the company, I had this new ceramic cookware, I said, "You know, I would like to see if I can get an appointment with Dr. Mercola," but I said, "Before I'm gonna do that, I'm going to do something that nobody's ever done before. I'm going to take 25 different brands of cookware, name brand cookware made in United States or made in China, and I'm gonna take any type of ceramic and glass cookware that I can find. And I'm gonna take my money invest it. I'm gonna find that third-party testing lab, BCS Lab which is in Pennsylvania, and I'm gonna use what they call as the California Prop 65 testing standards. Which is the most stringent testing standards that is used in United States for testing lead and cadmium and heavy metals."

So not knowing what to expect, I sent all of this cookware to this laboratory. I waited for a month, and then lo and behold, I get all of this documentation and now I had to start to decipher it. And I called the head of the laboratory. He explains to me and then it was this magical moment, and I said, "Now I know why I'm supposed to make the cookware that we're making. Because all of the cookware results that I got from metal cookware showed tremendous amounts of metal toxicity verses the Xtrema cookware that we make."

And our cookware was the only cookware that was 100% pure and leached no heavy metals whatsoever. So I said, "Okay, that's an interesting point." I then called Dr. Mercola and it took me three months to finally get an appointment him. And I flew out to his office in Chicago. I sat face to face with Dr. Mercola and it was a very simple process. I said, "Dr. Mercola, I have your cookware and I have mine," and I gave him the testing results of all of the metal cookware that was being sold in United States, and I presented that to him in a fashion that he could understand.

And he's a very brilliant man so he knows a lot about toxicity, but he was not aware of the metal toxicity that could be presented by cookware. Once I showed him the reports of the metal leaching on cookware, he turned to the people in his company and he said we will immediately stop selling our cast iron cookware and we will bring in this Xtrema product. And that happened in 2008, and he and I have been doing business together since 2008. It's 2017 and we continue to have a very good business relationship.

And he really was the person who got behind our product and fully understood the benefits of this new ceramic material, because he got involved with other health practitioners and he fully understood what the toxicity, or what they call metallosis where your body gets overload of metals in your body and undermines your immune system. And then he said you know what, he started to do his own research and then he has his website, and he has a lot of detail, a lot of information on that as well.

So we work together, we make the cookware for him it's called Mercola Healthy Cookware. He supports us, we support him, and we work very well together. So that's basically was the catalyst that moved me from being a seller of just cookware as opposed to being a seller of cookware that would make a difference from a healthy standpoint. So we are the only alternative to metal cookware, and that is our mantra, that is what drives our engine. We are all about health and we're about making the cooking process as healthy as it possibly can, and also we believe that we are the most versatile cookware out there because of all different

applications that our ceramic material can do.

And actually, we have proven that actually when you cook with ceramics, you enhance the flavor of the food. And there is no documentation that we can find anywhere that will support that cooking in any metal vessel is going to make your food taste better. So that was the short version of four-year odyssey of how we ended up getting in the healthy end of the Xtrema cookware business. And there's only about two or three companies in the world that make a product like ours, it's us, it's a company called Emile Henry out of France. They make a comparable product, and then there's Vision which is a glass ceramic product which is not at all like ours because that's a glass.

Glass is a reflector of heat. It's not an absorber. So our ceramic material is designed so it absorbs energy from the burners where there's gas and electric, and that enables the...they have a positive cooking experience where glass is designed to reflect heat. So that's why CorningWare always had problems with vision with food sticking. So we don't have that issue because our cookware is designed to work and function just like high-quality metal cookware.

Katie; Okay. So I wanna delve deeper on some of those and talk about the pros and cons. So start with nonstick. I think that there are recent awareness about this but why is nonstick not an optimum choice?

Rich: Okay. And that's an outstanding question and this goes back to the days of the pot when they made Teflon. And Teflon as a coating and for what it's used for many applications is a pretty unique material. I'm not an advocate of using any kind of coating on any kind of cookware, because it's a polymer, it has a synthetic plastic. So when you put that type of material, any kind of coating on metal and you heat it, at some temperature, that polymer is going to break down. Whether it's Teflon, whether it's these new chemically synthetic coatings that they're putting on metal cookware.

Basically, when you heat them to between 500 and 800 degrees Fahrenheit, which typical burners get can go from 750 to 1,250 degrees Fahrenheit depending on your stove, it starts to break down the coating. And that coating then emits toxicity, because the plastics, the polymers they're made with chemicals, and that then gets transmitted into your food.

But people say, "Well, you know, this whole nonstick genre came about because it was promoted as being for the consumer who didn't wanna spend a lot of time cooking, and they didn't wanna spend a lot of time cleaning, which goes against healthy cooking and healthy eating." And I grew up in the '50s, '60s, and '70s. So I grew up with an era when we would have family dinners that were long involved and we would have a meal that would last for an hour and a half. And it was slow cooking, it was natural foods, there was no pesticides, so that's the environment I grew up in.

We live in a culture now where everybody wants to be able to make their eggs in 35 seconds, they want...they'll open up a plastic bag and microwave it. Everything is gotta be fast, as opposed to sitting down and enjoying the meal like other cultures do, which we used to do, which we don't now. And so our cookware is more for the customer who wants to get back to that style of cooking, where it'll enhance the flavor of the food, where...that will not happen when you use Teflon-coated pan, that will not happen if you use a ceramic-coated pan whether it's on stainless steel, anodized aluminum, cast aluminum, cast iron.

It just is not gonna be advantageous to the cooking process, it may help the pan be easy to clean, but I believe

that there's...I believe that why buy cookware, because it's easy to clean. You wanna buy cookware that's gonna make your food taste better. And there's no metal cookware and there's no nonstick cookware out there that can make that statement and prove that their cookware will make their food taste better.

To go another step further, there's no cookware company out there that will actually tell you what their composition of their coating is made of. So there's very little transparency so you really kinda left to believe that the manufacturer is telling you the truth, and that might be true. I don't wanna undermine there's very good manufacturers out there, but I also believe in accountability. And it's a very simple process. We use the same testing standards, we do...I just tell consumers just ask...if you're gonna buy a metal cookware, just ask for the same reports that we print, we publish on our website, and ask them for that documentation.

If they willingly give that documentation and then they prove that they don't leach, then you're dealing with a reputable company. But we have...the biggest disconnect is our customers tell us that we're the only people that provide that information, so it's difficult because we are a small player in a very big world where metal cookware dominates.

And the world is run by metal cookware manufacturers and the people just don't understand what can happen to your body when you get metal toxicities. And I know if somebody had a thyroid or parathyroid problem, have autoimmune disease, or Crohn's disease, they have Alzheimer's, have colitis. I know the medical field very well. I deal with a lot of medical practitioners, and they always come back when your immune system is compromised, there is absolutely no value of having any metal into your system because it's gonna further complicate your health system getting better. It causes metallosis and then you have to deal with metal toxicity.

So we're really trying to get the word out, and podcasts like this hopefully will help consumers understand the difference between what the benefits of ceramic are, what the difference is between a Teflon coating and cast iron cookware, why cast iron cookware, I believe, is the worst cookware that you would ever wanna cook with, because it's made of...there's two kinds of iron, Katie, there's ferric, and there's ferrous iron.

Ferrous iron we get in our vegetables, in the foods that we eat. Ferric iron is from manufactured metal, manufactured cast iron. Well, doctors think that if a woman is going through a menstrual cycle and she's losing blood and they're anemic, they say, "Well, you need to cook at a cast iron," which is the biggest fallacy. It's a legend and it's a mistruth. It actually will cause more toxicity because it's not bio-available.

And I know you know a lot about that because you know a lot about health, but when somebody says, "Rich, what does bio-available mean?" It means it's of no value to you at the cellular level. So when you ingest something that is toxic to your body, it's not absorbed by your cells, so it's get passed through and then your body expels it. But if your immune system is compromised, what happens is whatever illness you're fighting, now you have to worry about the metal toxicity.

And that does not happen with ceramics. We use no metals of any kind in any of our ceramic clay, water, our minerals. There are no metal compounds and no lead. There's no cadmium. So there's no leaching of any kind because our product is 100% pure ceramic, which is verified when you go to our restaurant, Katie, and I'll ask you. When you go to a restaurant, have you ever been served a meal on a metal plate?

Katie: Yeah, I have.

Rich: Now, have you ever gone to your family's home and relatives and had a dinner where they served their food on aluminum or stainless steel plates?

Katie: Yup.

Rich: But the restaurant business, everything they do is they cook in the backend of the kitchen, everything with stainless steel and cast iron. But they serve all of their food on ceramic porcelain dinnerware because it's a pure inert property and it's very attractive, and it's very functional. And that's why, so you have the cooks who are making this wonderful food in metal, which is leaching, yet they serve all of their food on beautiful ceramic dinnerware.

And there's a reason for that because it's a nontoxic very durable product and very attractive. And that's why I always ask people in the restaurant industry that you don't get it, you don't understand, you're using metal and you're preparing your food, yet you're serving on ceramic. Why wouldn't you use ceramic? And then they come back and say, "Well, you know, ceramic can break," and that is an issue. I know that's probably one of the question you're gonna ask me.

Ceramic is a material that has fabulous qualities but it is breakable, but we don't have a lot of breaking problems with our cookware, because it's designed, it's very durable. It's 100% non-scratch, you cannot scratch it. And people who use our cookware, I would have to...very educated, they're very health conscious, and they are very good cooks.

We really deal with a group of people who...researchers who really know how to cook and far better than I do, because they...and it's from different cultures. And we get calls from all over the world and it's really exciting to learn about this, and why they find our ceramic cookware to be so valuable, as opposed to metal.

It's a long-winded answer to a simple question, but I'm anti-metal. I don't believe in using metal in the cooking. I don't believe in putting a coating on any cookware. I'm against that. I don't believe in putting chemicals on any cookware. I see no value in that. I believe that the cooking experience should be enjoyable and pleasurable and as healthy as possible, and I think the only material personally that I believe in our reports will bear that mine is ceramic, is their ceramic material.

Katie: Yeah, that makes sense. So I wanna talk a little bit about stainless, especially because stainless is a very common cookware, as you mentioned. What are some of the metals that you are seeing, specifically in the testing and is it too in the heating that's the problem? Because I know using stainless steel in the kitchen in other ways but not heating, is it heating that's the specific problem?

Rich: The first issue that has to be addressed and it's something that caused a lot of...I don't know if you remember, you're much younger than me, but in the '60s and '70s, there was a big campaign about cleaning up the rivers in United States from the pulp industry with factories and foundries that were making iron ore and coal fired plants. So the rivers were very polluted in this country and the water system was very polluted. And there's an article when I was...back in 2004 when I was researching metal and what that toxicity is.

And these are not my words, this is by a woman by the name Vanessa Vadim, and she works for a company called an MNN Holdings. I found this on a website this is her words, she says, "Metals carry a heavy burden of

resource extraction, processing and manufacturing. Mining is a dirty and destructive process in the manufacturing of complex, multiple, metal cookware is energy intensive. In 2004 the metal mining industry was ranked as the nation's and worst toxic polluter by the EPA Environmental Protection Agency. Most metals can be recycled by mixing of elements, stainless-coated copper, for example, can negate that quality, coatings and nonstick linings breakdown with use in time, so these pans are short-lived and are not recommended."

Now this from a woman who was ahead of the game way before I was. So there's two issues that we have to deal with. Number one, we have a lot of metal cookware companies that put a ceramic coating on their cookware and they say, "Our cookware is green." Well, that would be like me going down to my local town which has a landfill and I put a bamboo fence around my landfill and I tell the mayor of my town that we now have a green landfill, because I have a bamboo fence which is the inert product and it makes the land fill green. Which is basically what these metal cookware companies do when they say they put a ceramic coating on a stainless steel product.

Now stainless steel was designed because it's very durable, the nickel and chromium give it that durability and that luster. But it's not a very good conductor of heat. So what they do with stainless steel is they put aluminum disk on the bottom. That makes stainless steel...the heat conductivity by the aluminum then works very well with stainless steel. The problem is that if you are allergic to nickel and chromium, and if you have a healthy immune system, and you never get sick, then that's not gonna be a problem.

And there are people who use metal cookware and they never get sick, and God bless them that they have a healthy immune system, and they take care of themselves. However, there are a lot of people who do get sick. And there are a lot of people who find out when they do hair samples or urinalysis, they do blood work, and they do extensive testing through a laboratory, they find out there's all this toxicity in the body, and then find out, whoa, they're allergic to nickel. And then they're allergic to chromium and that really can cause...and I'm not an expert on all of different illnesses that are associated with nickel and chromium, but anybody can Google that and they could see. There's no value of having chromium and nickel in your body that comes from metal.

So stainless steel is a very durable product. It cleans up very nicely. It's used in all of the industrial kitchens, in all the restaurants because it's very inert. It's easy to clean. It's bacteria resistant, I understand that, I get that. But once you scratch the cookware, if you use metal utensil and you're turning over your eggs or you're turning over your hamburger, and if that stainless steel gets scratched and a deep gouge and, well, what happens is you broke the seal and now you have the potential of leaching nickel and chromium.

Now, you have to ask yourself this question too, what quality of stainless steel am I working with? Am I working with surgical stainless steel which is used in hospitals, that surgeons use when they perform operations? Am I using 18/8 stainless steel which is a better quality, but not as quality of surgical stainless steel, and then the drop-off happens very quickly. And the lower the price that you pay for cookware, the lower the quality of material that is used. That's just the way manufacturing is made.

So if you buy a pan that costs \$9.99, there's a reason why the pan is \$9.99 cents, it's because it's poorly made inferior materials and not of the highest quality and will not last very long. So stainless steel was supposed to be the next best thing in cookware, but they're finding out that the leaching of nickel and chromium is presenting a problem, but not so much of a problem as aluminum and iron. Those are more of a concern to the consumer, leaching of iron and aluminum, than it would be nickel and chromium in stainless steel.

So stainless steel would be...if somebody said I'm gonna use metal cookware, stainless steel would be one that I would say, if you get the highest quality, there is a company United States that makes a very high quality, very high in stainless steel cookware, very expensive and very high quality, I would say that would be acceptable if I had to make a choice there. The only other cookware, Katie, that would be higher than that would be titanium.

Titanium is now used in hip transplants, is replacing all the stainless steel. Hip transplants because they found that the stainless steel was leaching nickel and chromium. There' major lawsuits about that people are having recalls. They're using two materials. Now they're using titanium which the purest metal known to mankind, I would recommend that if you can afford \$2,000 set of titanium cookware, then go for it. It's a wonderful material.

And then they're also using ceramics now in hip transplants with knees, and we know that ceramics are very influential and important in the whole dentist industry. They're replacing a lot of the amalgams, the mercury, but now with ceramic composite. So that just shows you that slowly but surely, they're starting to fix some of the errors that were made years ago when they were using metal for surgical...using stainless steel and various metals when they were doing these operations.

So stainless steel, it would be my only other alternative to our cookware. And then the other one would be if you...is a very high quality cookware called Le Creuset. They make a wonderful cookware of cast iron. I don't like the cast iron. I don't like that part, but they were smart enough to put a glass enamel cooking surface coating on their cookware, which now protects the consumer from the leaching of the cast iron.

And that's why they have a very good reputation for making very high-quality cast iron cookware, only because they were smart enough to put a high-quality glass enamel coating on the inside. But one thing you have to realize is that glass enamel coating can only withstand temperatures up to about 600 degrees Fahrenheit. So after that, that glass enamel is...you can undermine that coating and if it does get scratched, then you gotta worry about the toxicity and the leaching of iron into your food. But that is if your cast iron is coated with glass enamel, I would consider that a safe product.

Katie: That's makes sense. So to make sure I understand, obviously you guys are the most inert and safe. But I have a Le Creuset that my mom's french, and so it's a one-piece that I have that I love from them. I use it for low and slow not for high temperatures and I'm careful not to scratch it. It's good to know like if I have those, don't throw them away, they're amazing but you guys made a better option, and the same with stainless, you would want it to be with quality and for using it not on high temperatures, it seems like that would be a safer use, anyway.

Rich: Temperature is not so much a problem with metal because the...it is the food that is cooked in a metal that acidic food. The more acidic food is you get into tomatoes and you being a better cook than me know more about the different types of acidic foods out there that we eat. But anything that is acidic in nature is gonna draw out the metal from the cookware. So that happens when you use a slow cooking Le Creuset glass enamel, you're not gonna have that problem with the leaching because it's protected by the glass. And glass is a very, very safe material, and I know that because I was in the glass business for 23 years, so I know that. But when you're dealing with any other type of metal, it's not so much the temperature that's gonna undermine and cause the leaching, it's the food that you're cooking that's gonna extract that metal into your food, and

that's basically acidic food.

The only time you've gotta really worry about high temperatures if you're using any kind of nonstick cookware, you can really undermine that coating very quickly in a very short period of time. And then what's gonna happen is that high temperature, those coatings only last a year, maybe two years if you just use it to make eggs. But eventually, that coating is gonna break down and then now you're gonna have that coating is gonna flake off into your food, you're not gonna see it it's gonna be a slow process. And now you've gotta worry about that chemical being passed through your immune system and you gotta purge it out of your body. And I'm not saying that is an issue for everybody, but I see no benefit of having anything that is on your cookware coming off and being absorbed by your body. I see no nutritional value in that process.

Katie: Gotcha. So let's talk about a couple of the common questions and problems with ceramic which are the breaking. Obviously you addressed that a little bit, but let's talk about that more. And also you don't claim to be nonstick but non-scratch. Can you talk about that differentiation as well?

Rich: Yes, the biggest obstacle we had to overcome if you're selling any kind of ceramic product dinnerware whether it's stoneware, dinnerware, or porcelain is the breakability. If you take ceramics, nobody has ever been able to invent unbreakable ceramic. If I was able to do that, Katie, I would be the next Bill Gates and I would be Warren Buffett and I'd be my own chalet somewhere in the Swiss Alps, that's not the case.

So this whole process here, is that when you make ceramics, you have to make it so it can absorb the heat. And by doing so, it has thermal expansion so it's a technical term and I don't wanna get too technical here. But if you make ceramics, so it's 100% nonporous, which porcelain is, high quality dinnerware made of porcelain coming out of China and in Japan is 100% nonporous, means it's, it does not absorb or lose any food just like glass. But the problem is if you heat that to 500 degrees because it's 100% nonporous it's gonna crack, because it doesn't have any thermal expansion.

So over the years, in the testing of our material that we use, we have been able to develop a material with just enough expansion of about 2%, so we're 98% nonporous. Which means that 2% porosity means that our cookware when heated can expand just enough so it won't crack when it's heated, to very high temperatures well over 1,250 degrees Fahrenheit. So that was the biggest thing we had to overcome the biggest obstacle, because that became advantageous for us because now we were able to use our cookware on top of the stove. And then use it under the broiler and then use it in the oven, use it on the toaster oven, in a steamer oven, on a microwave oven on a barbecue grill.

So it made our cookware very versatile and being ceramic in nature and the way we designed it, we designed it so it would also look attractive on the kitchen table. Now, there are customers out there who are not familiar with using ceramic cookware. The customers who are familiar with using CorningWare, which is a glass cookware, they were very familiar how to handle glass cookware, which is very similar to handling our Xtrema cookware.

Those people have no problem and we don't have any breakages issues with that type of customer because they're used to dealing with glass and cooking with glass or ceramic type material. The biggest problem we have with a customer who is a cast iron user, just using cast iron very heavy but very durable cast iron, you can literally drive over it with your car and it's not gonna bend or break, that's the single advantage of cast iron. So if there's a customer out there who's used to using very heavy durable, chunky, clunky, cookware and then

they deal with our cookware, and they think that it's gonna take the abuse of cast iron, that's gonna be a problem.

So our way around that is we have a warranty against any kind of heat breakage if you're using it on top of a stove, and it should crack that's fully replaceable by us at no charge. If a customer drops our Xtrema cookware on a floor and it cracks, we offer them a 45% discount on a replacement. And a lot of companies don't do that. We believe that we love our customers. We know it's a learning process. We do tell them, in the warranty this is ceramic, you have to treat it like it's dinnerware, and if you do, you're not gonna have any problem.

It's when somebody is...when you buy a \$50 bottle of wine and you have this beautiful stemware, people know that when you wash the stemware, you don't put it in the dishwasher. You wash it by hand and you treat it differently than you would if you had it made out of plastic. So it's a mentality and it's an educational process that we're trying to do a better job of on our website, and we have videos and adding information to our warranty. And just giving them little hints and little tricks of the trade of how to protect our cookware.

And we've even developed a line of polyester pot protectors, so now you can...where before we used to say, we don't want you to nest the cookware, but now we designed these polyester pot protectors where you can now put all of our Versa pots and stack them all from five, five and a half quart, three and a half quart, two and a half quart, one and a half quart, one quart, six and you can stack them all together. And they have these polyester pot protectors so it takes up less room.

And that one little that invention, and it's not very expensive, made all the difference in the world as far as people having any kind of breakage, because what they were trying to do is trying to stack the ceramic pots. And I said we have to figure a way to do this, and make it very inexpensive solution. And we did and since that, to be honest with you Katie, if we get 25 complaints about breakage, that would be a lie, that is not an issue.

The biggest issue we have with cooking with ceramic is the customer is used to cooking on very high temperatures, and they have to learn when you cook with ceramic that it's...we tell them low and slow is the way to go. So you cook on a very low temperature because ceramics will retain heat 50% longer than metal cookware. So once you get your temperature up to low and to medium, you don't have to raise the temperature up, if you're cooking food other than you're boiling water.

So I cook my eggs at the very lowest temperature and I use just a little bit of cooking organic or coconut cooking spray, and then I've learned to actually cook my eggs with a tablespoon of water. I put that in and then I make my eggs over easy, and that's how I learned to cook. So it really is not difficult, it's just a learning process, and we try to help the consumer understand that they just have to change the paradigm of cooking that is not gonna be this turn the heat up all the way as high as it can grow, so I can cook my hamburgers or my veal parmesan as quickly as possible, so I can get my dinner served.

That's not what we're about, we're about slow cooking, and we're about making that cooking process more enjoyable, more flavorful and slower. So it's not for the customer who wants to get it done very quickly, it's a slower process when you cook with our Xtrema, but we think the benefits far exceeds the speed that you would get if you used a nonstick cookware pan.

Katie: Yeah, that's really helpful, all the explanation on that. And a question I always love to ask for them that I ask towards the end of an interview is, what are three things about your area of expertise where they've all

been a common misunderstandings, and how do you answer those. And maybe you've already touched on those, but let's just do a round up with that.

Rich: Yeah, I guess the biggest misunderstanding is...and this came about four years ago, and I was involved with many of the coating companies, and I won't mention them. DuPont by the year 2018 had to remove from their Teflon PTFE and POFA, it's chemicals that were in the coating and they had those chemicals had to be removed from Teflon. So a lot of the cookware being sold in the United States at retail, the big retailers and department stores had Teflon coatings.

And one thing about Teflon, it is very durable, and the new Teflon coatings will last many, many years, some in a restaurant industry will last as long as 10 years. Then they removed the PTFE and the POFA to make it more pure, so it would meet the federal standards. Then there were two other coating companies competitors of DuPont that said, "Well, let's see if we can come up with a chemical-based ceramic coating, and that'll get around this word Teflon," because they didn't own a trademark named to Teflon.

So they had to come up with a fancy name to call their coating, so they came up all these fancy kind of ceramic names. And they used a few ceramic minerals, and with that, they mixed a lot of chemicals and synthetics and polymers, and they called their cookware ceramic cookware. So what happened is the consumer now is so befuddled they think...and if you go to QVC and if you go to all these cooking shows and they say, the new ceramic cookware, the latest one with this copper pan, which is some of the worst cookware known to mankind, and was one of the biggest scams. I just can't believe that this product was even allowed to be put in stores.

But consumer was so bamboozled because they were calling this metal cookware ceramic, and all it had was a very thinly applied chemical spray that had some ceramic minerals in it, that they were able to say that our cookware has a ceramic coating which makes it safe. That was an exact rebuttal to what we were doing. So they saw it we were doing and we were making an impact in the ceramic business because we're 100% ceramic, they wanted to capture that market.

And so what they did is they made a coating to mimic what ceramic would do, and that has been the biggest boondoggle because it's a scam. I'm gonna say this, some people will say you can't do that but I will absolutely say unequivocally that that is not ceramic cookware, it never is. It's a synthetic applied coating. It's not ceramic cookware. And something should be done about it, because it really is false advertising. And the federal government has not looked into it, they've turned their...for whatever reason, they're not concerned. But you cannot say that that is ceramic cookware by putting a thinly applied ceramic coating on a toxic metal cookware pan.

And that's the biggest disconnect and we have to...it takes so much time to educate the consumer about the misconceptions of what ceramic is and what ceramic isn't. And that's been the biggest obstacle that we've had to overcome, Katie, and if it wasn't for this new discovered ceramic coating that they're touting to be pure ceramic, our business would be far. There would be no confusion, because the customer know that Teflon was not good, but now they think the ceramic coating is gonna be healthy and it's not. It will not last, it's chemically induced, and if you look at some of the materials that are in it, it'll take seven pages to understand the amount of chemicals, and stuff that goes into making this coating.

We will not divulge that. We will not publish that information. I would never do that any of our competitors. I

have access to it, but if I showed that to you, you would say, "You gotta be kidding me. This is not ceramic. This is not ceramic at all, this is chemicals." So that's been the biggest problem we have to overcome is educating the consumer what the difference is between pure ceramic and fake ceramic.

Katie: Gotcha, and I'll make sure to link to some of the resources you have, including your testing results in the show notes. People can obviously find you at [wellnessmama.com/go/xtrema](http://wellnessmama.com/go/xtrema), X-T-R-E-M-A, and there's a discount as well. They'll be able to find out in the show notes. But any final words you wanna leave anyone with when it comes to cookware?

Rich: Yeah, we started this company because we wanted to make a difference. We didn't start this business because we wanted to make money. That was not our plan. I was never a person in all my business that I've owned that was motivated by making money. I believe that God put me on earth here to make a difference. I don't believe in mediocrity. I believe that we work hard and we make a difference. And I felt that by making this cookware that we would be helping people who are really struggling, who have medical conditions, and people who want a better cooking experience.

So that has been an absolute joy and, you know, we just hope that we can continually make our product better, make it more durable, make it function better. And it's through working with people like yourself who is really...if we've done anything right, it is not going through mainstream media and advertising our product, it is going grassroots. We do not sell our cookware at retailers. We wanna deal directly with the consumer. We wanted to be able to have individual conversations, emails, text messages, phone conversation directly with them.

We didn't wanna have somebody in the middle telling us what to do, so we went to the grassroots. I came with the idea this is back in 2008, and said we're gonna contact women bloggers, women know more about cooking. They are our customer. They drive a business. They understand they have the passion. They have the welfare of their children in mind, so they understand health, so that's our consumer. So we went and we contacted as many bloggers as we could, we found you that was a divine intervention, that was a blessing.

You've been very instrumental in getting word out about our cookware, which I'm very thankful for that relationship. And we have a list of other bloggers that believe just like you in healthy alternatives to metal cookware. So that's how we get the word out, and we do that through our website and through social media. So we don't use the big networks or magazine or anything like that. We go the grassroots way, and that seems to be the people who are really health conscious, and highly educated seem to gravitate to that type of, you know, finding us through that type of technology.

So that's how we go about building a business just like you do. You do the same thing, Katie. You do it every day. You work many hours and you know how to do that better than I do. You're more successful at it than I am. And if we had the following that you did, we'd be blessed. That would be a blessing and we just hope to continue to help the consumer the best way we can.

Katie: Rich, thank you so much for being here. You have definitely shed some light on the cookware industry, and I know a lot of people will really learn from this. And thanks to all of you for listening. I'll see you next time on the "Healthy Moms Podcast."

If you're enjoying these interviews, would you please take two minutes to leave a rating or review on iTunes for me? Doing this helps more people to find the podcast, which means even more moms and families could benefit from the information. I really appreciate your time, and thanks as always for listening.