

A sunburst graphic with numerous thin, light gray lines radiating from a central point behind the text.

# Healthy Moms Podcast

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

Episode 167: Lessons We Can Learn from Europe  
and Natural Wines (With Heather!)

Child: Welcome to my Mommy's podcast.

Katie: Hello and welcome to "The Healthy Mom's Podcast". I'm Katie from [wellnessmama.com](http://wellnessmama.com).

Heather: And I'm Heather with [mommypotamus.com](http://mommypotamus.com)

Katie: And this is gonna be a fun episode because we're gonna recount...basically we're gonna talk about wine and Europe, which are two amazing and fun topics. But first, I have a small ask of all of you guys. If you could take literally two minutes or less and go to iTunes, or Stitcher, or whatever you listen to podcast, and leave an honest rating or review, that would drastically help us to be able to understand what you like, what you don't like, and what you wanna hear in the future. And to make it fun, we are gonna do a small giveaway, and I'm gonna give away a Myobuddy to anybody who comments in the next two weeks, but the key is you have to use the keyword "wellness" somewhere in your review, so that we know that you heard this, and that you're in on the giveaway. So, go to wherever you listen to podcasts, leave an honest rating or review that includes the word "wellness," and I will pick one winner in two weeks for a giveaway.

Heather: Fun. Can I enter?

Katie: Totally. And then from there, so I think if any of you follow me on Instagram, you may have seen that I was in Italy recently with Dry Farm Wines, and I got so many questions on Instagram, I feel like I should clear up the fact that no I don't actually work for Dry Farm Wines. They're just good friends. And I basically had the opportunity to tag along and visit vineyards and see how natural wines are made and sourced and tested, and of course, I jumped at the opportunity because who wouldn't? And really, it totally blew my mind. But I also got a lot of questions from you guys about wine in general and is it healthy and is it not? And so, people brought up a really valid point which is that drinking too much every night is actually not good for us. And I wanted to address that and to start with talking about wine and alcohol in general, and basically what to look for, and if it is actually healthy or it's not. I know it's something that, like, is a part of my life and Heather, I think you as well?

Heather: Mm-hm.

Katie: Yeah, we're both fans of wine. But the reason that I have become such a fan of Dry Farm Wines, especially after this trip, is realizing the difference in really what separates their wines. Because for a long time, even I thought, "Well, maybe it's just, kind of like, organic wines. They're just sourcing them better, or it's awesome, because it shows up at your door," which is amazing. But after seeing the process that they go through to actually find these wines, I'm completely blown away. One of the wine makers and growers that we went and visited his vineyard, he had a quote that I loved. He said, "In wine, you have to work in subtraction, not addition. When you take everything out, you find good wine." And that's kind of the governing idea behind what they do, and I didn't fully realize the extent of that until this trip.

So, basically to answer the commenters on Instagram, yes, alcohol is actually toxic. In fact, Dry Farm Wines founder Todd White says this. He said this on my podcast a year ago, that alcohol is actually toxic. But at the same time, we know that every blue zone in the world, they drink wine in moderation daily. So there has to be a balance there, because we know the healthiest, longest living people in the world consume alcohol. But yet

we know that alcohol at high concentrations is toxic. So I do think that there's a balancing act. I don't think anyone should be drinking, like, huge amounts of wine or any alcohol every night certainly, that's not what I'm advocating. But I do think that wine can lend itself to community and to friendship and just like, enjoying times together, and that it does actually have some health benefits when it's from the right sourcing.

So if you guys are familiar with Dry Farm Wines, you may know that they have a lot of criteria that they use to source it, but I didn't quite understand how in-depth this goes. So, in order for them to even consider a wine, it has to meet a bunch of criteria. And some of those are, it has to be completely dry farmed, which means they never water the grapes, period. Which, having visited Italy now is amazing to me, because it's not exactly a very wet region. It was super dry. Other plants would die and they would not water the grapes. And the idea was that then, the grapes can't search for water on the surface, so they have to send their roots very deep into the soil and they reach different layers of the soil where there's more water, but there's also more minerals, and then what they call "terroir," which is like, the whole microbiome mineral composition of the deeper soil.

And that's what gives these wines a different taste, but also it lends itself to lower sugar and lower alcohol, because they're not getting excess water. When there's a lot of water, they make more sugar, then it becomes more alcohol. And they basically explained, look, when you water grapes, if you ever water them, the roots stay at the surface looking for water, and so they never have to go deep and they also get totally different minerals, so, it's just a completely different grape. Beyond that, in order to meet their criteria, all wine has to be completely beyond organic. Some of these wine makers, they were amazing, family-owned vineyards. And if you had just called them organic or bio-dynamic, they would have been really offended, because what they do is so far beyond that. Because to them, you could still spray with organic pesticides or use organic fertilizers if you were just organic. And they don't do any of that. They work with the entire vineyard as almost like a complex organism, and they nurture the soil, they nurture the environment, the air. They purposely bring in herbs and flowers into the vineyard instead of clearing underneath it, so that there's more yeast and fragrances and everything in the vineyard in general.

And that lends itself to another criteria, which is natural yeast. So, basically, like Heather, I know you're familiar with this from the idea of like, fermentations. How you could make like, sauerkraut, kombucha, etc. Like you're not adding a yeast. Can you kind of explain that process of how the yeast happens there?

Heather: Well, usually like, if you're fermenting Apple Cider Vinegar, then there's a yeast that naturally occurs on the outside of the apple. And so, when you're, kind of, putting it all in there, then that yeast gets the fermentation going.

Katie: Yeah, exactly. So exactly the same thing with wine, and I didn't realize this, they wouldn't accept any wine that is using any kind of commercial yeast, even an organic one, because they want the native yeast of the vineyard where the grapes were. And that's one of the things that lends to like, that more natural taste, but also then, these wines are still alive. So when you get them, they have up to 2,000 different types of beneficial yeasts and bacteria. So in that sense, they're almost more like a kombucha or fermented food than just like, an alcoholic product. And in the blue zones where wine has been linked to these people, it's one of the factors where people live to be 100 or more. They do make these wines like Sardinia's, for instance, a blue zone. And Sardinian wines are well-known for their health promoting benefits. They're sought out and they're made this way.

So super fascinating to learn that. Also they're low alcohol. So like I mentioned, alcohol is toxic. We shouldn't drink a lot of it. So, for Dry Farm, they won't even consider a wine that's above 12.5% alcohol, which is a very small number of wines. And the idea is, then you can still get most of the benefits of the wine without as much

of an alcohol hit. And that's one of those factors that probably also comes into play in blue zones. And then from there, they test dozens of different metrics, but sugar and sulfites are two more. The sugar has to be extremely low. So, all the wines are essentially keto-friendly, and there can only be small amounts of naturally occurring sulfites that occur in grapes. And so, like I saw them turn away 70% of the wines that we saw just based on the criteria. And then beyond there, it still has to pass their pretty rigorous taste test. Because they would try wines and I would try it and I'd be like, "This is great." And they're like, "There's a little too much breadiness, or all these things." So the majority of wines that they try, they turn down. So I was just shocked.

Heather: And then they lab-test it after that, right?

Katie: Exactly. So they also travel with test tubes in their backpack. I love that. All these nerdy friends.

Heather: Ultimate nerds right there.

Katie: Yes. And if a wine meets all of those criteria, they've like, interviewed the winemaker, it meets all of those, because the winemakers also test these things, and it tastes good, then they'll take a sample to an independent lab to verify all of that before they'll buy it. So, just, I was fascinated to see what the difference is and how much effort they put into choosing these, and sadly, also, how many wines they have to turn away that to me tasted like, perfectly great, but they didn't meet one criteria.

Heather: So going back to the "wine is toxic" thing, I'm not a wine expert. I was, like, waking up every morning and checking Instagram to see what you were up to. So jealous, because the vineyards looked gorgeous, not really jealous, but excited for you and wanting to visit some day. But going back to the wine is toxic thing, you know, I've been sort of on a journey with that with this whole thing where at first I was like, "Yeah, wine is good for you." Because I read all the studies, but, you know, studies can, sort of, they can be designed to, sort of, say whatever a researcher wants to say. So it's a lot harder once you start digging into how studies are constructed in the quality of them. You start developing opinions or maybe more skepticism about what you're initially told. So, you know, this has been a journey for me. And so, I went from, "Wine is really great for you," to like, "maybe wine is not so great for you." But one of the things that I feel like helped me sort of frame how wine fits into my life is the idea that stress is toxic, but small amounts of stress are actually beneficial. We call it hermetic stress, beneficial stress. So I create stress in my life. Heat shot proteins from sauna therapy, like that's a stress, but it benefits the body because it makes it stronger.

And, you know, even exercise is a stress, and those things, but it's a lot different than chronic stress. And I feel like what I've done is, wine, I love. I love it with a meal, and it is... There was a study recently. I don't know if you saw it, and if I had known we were gonna dive into this, maybe I would have grabbed it, but where they talked about how wine actually improves like, cleaning of the brain. And they even studied it against, I believe, a control that just was doing nothing at all, so like maybe water or whatever. But that it does in small amounts induce beneficial changes where you're cleaning the brain. But we're talking about really small amounts, just like we're talking about small amounts of, you know, heat therapy or exercise. Like no amount of... Well, if you exercise all day long, and you never give your body time to rest and repair, then you're not doing your body any favors.

And so, I really embrace it as part of my life, but it's also not just because it has physiological, like benefits, but also because I feel like it has social and emotional benefits. When you're with other families and you're enjoying something together, like we share meals and stuff like that, there's that benefit there too of how it brings people together. But just a thought on toxicity. You know, I think we hear the word toxic, and it's a scary word, but, you know, so is stress. And yet stress, it can be our friend, and you know, even water, not that I'm making a comparison that you need to drink wine, because you really don't. But, you know, even water

can be toxic at some level. So I think there's, like, that spectrum for just so many things in our life. Like, there are different types of foods that, you know, you can do well on in small amounts, but maybe should not make 90% of your diet, and those kinds of things.

Katie: I think that's an amazing point, that yeah, it's the dosage that really makes it whether it's toxic or not. And that applies to almost every food we eat, like you said, to stress, to even water. You can drink too much water and make yourself really sick. And certainly, I respect anyone who has chosen not to drink wine for any, like religious reason, or health reason, or has had a struggle certainly with alcoholism, and I'm not trying to say that everyone should drink wine either by any means. We're definitely, I know neither one of us is on that page. But I do think that for a lot of people, it can be a great thing and a great addition to life.

And one thing I noticed too is a difference. Is, in the U.S. it seems like often, not everyone, but a lot of times alcohol is an escape. It's like your life is so stressful that you're going to go escape on the weekend by drinking wine or drinking beer or hanging out with your friends. And, certainly, the community aspect of that is great. But I think it's a little bit dangerous, and a little bit of a slippery slope to view alcohol as an escape. And if that's why you're turning to alcohol, then maybe it would also be more important to address the source of that before incorporating alcohol into your life. Because I noticed in Europe, they're so family-centered and community-centered, that they would all come together at night and drink wine, but it was just one small part of this community gathering. And the focus was the community, and that was their stress relief. So I think that's a great point that you made about obviously the amounts, keeping it low, and anything in extreme amounts, especially alcohol can be very dangerous. But when it's in the right setting with community, with people, then I think it can have its place.

Heather: And everybody's different in what they respond to best. Like, I personally don't love cryotherapy. I'll do it if I want to relieve stress, because it does. It releases all those endorphins, it feels great. But physiologically, I'm hardwired to more enjoy sauna therapy. I prefer heat. And I think some people...this is gonna be something that benefits some people or that they feel good, and then some people just flat out don't feel great when they drink any kind of wine or alcohol, because that's their physiological, you know, way that they're made. And that's fine.

Katie: Totally. And as a wrapping up note, before we move on to other things about Europe, I just wanna say for anyone who thinks that it's the sulfites in wine that are causing the problem, because I actually thought that for a long time too, that's worth researching more if that's what you think your reaction to wine is. Because I thought I did worse with red wine and I thought it was because of the sulfites. And it turns out that red wine naturally, actually has less sulfites than white wine, and that red wine, most commercially made red wine, has the addition of food dyes that can cause the same reactions that you think sulfites are causing. Or it's the excess sugar. Some of the wines that were at these fairs, because they had to publish all the results... Like we went to a couple of wine fairs, and they had to list their sugar and alcohol content and all that. Some of them had more sugar than Coca-Cola. Like, yeah, if I drink six glasses of that in one night, I would feel terrible no matter what it was, like alcohol or not. So that's just another encouragement I would say is, if you think you're reacting to sulfites and it's in red wine, it may actually be food dyes. And that might be wine or not, another good clue to look at for your own health.

Heather: Did you find out if there's a difference in polyphenol content between red and white? I mean, I've always heard that red is more rich in polyphenols. But is that true? Did you...

Katie: So, sort of. So, I'm gonna probably butcher...I can never pronounce this word, but resveratrol? Okay, I said it right, is high...

Heather: I have no idea. I just read it.

Katie: This is the curse of the blogger. We can read the big words, but then we have to say them in public and then we get embarrassed. Red wine has a higher concentration of that, but white wine has other types of polyphenols that are also antioxidant. So, they balance each other out, and it's really a spectrum too. Red wines typically, the skin stays in longer, so then you get a higher concentration from the skin. White wines, most of them, so they stay white and not get an orange color, the skins are only in there for like one to seven days. But there's also orange wines, which are new, which I had never heard of until Dry Farm sent some in my box, they're kind of in the middle. So they're white wines but the skins are left on longer so they get an orange color and a little bit more complex taste so they would compare more to a red wine.

Heather: Okay, cool.

Katie: So from there, let's talk about Europe, because I had never been... I had been briefly but not for this long, and I like, totally wanna go back right now.

Heather: Yeah. So, one of the first things you told me when you got back was that there are a lot of things that they do differently in Europe that you think that we could learn something from here. So what were those things? Let's start with just one. What was the top thing that you noticed?

Katie: Totally. So, like I told you, I was keeping a note in my phone of, I'm like, "Oh, I'm gonna do a blog post about things we can learn from Europe." And it started off as like, "Oh, seven things we can learn from Europe." Then I came home, it was like, "35 things you can learn from Europe." And not that it's a fantasy. I know place is a fantasy, but they do a lot of amazing things. To preface, I will also say there's maybe a few things they could learn from us, like not having a child go on your back while driving a motorcycle.

Heather: Whoa.

Katie: Just saying. But, there's a lot of amazing things. Probably if I had to say the top one would be the community and the sense of family. Just, I was blown away with how much that was the focus of their life and how you could tell that just from your initial conversations with them or seeing them. Like, it's almost hard to describe, because I feel like our lives are so busy, and perhaps, that's why it's easier for them, is that they're living in smaller, more isolated communities, at least where we visited. And they have to depend on each other more for daily life and just interaction, but also, they're less hectic than we are. I feel like in America, at least where I live, it's so easy for people to, they just, go, go, go, go, go, and it's kids' activities and adult activities and it's just...nobody's ever home.

And to them, like the community aspect and family dinner time is completely non-negotiable. It's like, not even a question. It's just so assumed that it's gonna happen every night. And they spend three hours eating dinner slowly, like multiple courses, but they're small courses. And they're talking, they're laughing, they're drinking wine, but they're just spending time together. And I felt like there was such a richness in how much they knew each other, and like how close they were, and especially to see, it was so neat, multiple generations. In most of these vineyards, there are multiple generations living in the same place. And to see, like, even how involved the grandparents and the aunts and uncles were with each other's kids. And like I truly think in America and Europe there's nothing quite so precious as grandparents and grandkids. It's adorable, but they just make it such a priority. And I love that. Like, that was the part that really stole my heart.

Heather: There was a book I read recently, and I think you've read too, "How to Raise an Adult." And my favorite takeaway from the book was how liberated I felt with respect to time. It really argued that kids need

more unstructured time, and that we're really doing them a favor by focusing on community over activities, and not that I really needed a huge nudge in that direction, but what it encouraged me to do was to reach out to the people in my life that I see regularly, but wasn't really trying to build bonds with, because I sort of felt like they were busy and I didn't want to impose.

And then I really started seeing how much of a benefit it is to just be able to recognize and to really talk to people and get to know their stories a little bit more. And it's made such a difference for me, because, you know, we're new to the area, and of course we have close friends already that are local, but this is different. And I think a lot of that comes from this same kind of mindset, where you value just the knowledge, the getting to know each other even if you don't have as much in common maybe, because you're not, like, maybe traveling to a place where you're all united around one goal, and we're choosing not to be united around like proximity, because they're in our neighborhood, or something like that. It's been an interesting shift, and something that I think my whole family has benefited from. And it's stretching us in ways. Like, it's allowing us to grow in ways where we're connecting with people over way different things than what...that are usually our interests or passions.

Katie: Yeah. That's an amazing point too. I think it's a hard thing in today's world. There's so much pressure to, like, put all the kids in all the activities and to make sure they're performing at the top of their game and for even adults to do all these activities and to be at the top of our games. And I think that's one thing I think we definitely can learn from Europe, is just, like, to slow down a little, like you said, and have that community. And that's something new for us too since our move. And just seeing the kids in that free play and how much they learn from that is shocking. Like, as parents we try so hard to make sure our kids learn all these life lessons and learn how to be nice to others and learn how to include, and you stick them out in a group of 30 kids and they learn that really fast, because if they're mean no one includes them. Or if they call names, they get pushed out of the group for the day. And they learn how to, like, watch out for each other and to work through things and to not have parents jumping in and fixing the problems.

And I feel like at least mine are thriving without the same structure and without having structured activities as much. And yeah, they may never be world class violin players, but they're running 10 miles a day and climbing trees and making lifelong friendships, so I'm happy with that trade-off.

Heather: Yeah. Same for us.

Katie: So, a couple other things, random things. I'm just gonna go through a few random ones. They don't...at least with the areas we were, they did not use clothes dryers. And so, we would drive through places and everybody would have clothes hanging out on the side of their house, or on their balcony, or in their front yard. I just thought like, it's amazing how much of a stark contrast that is to where I live. Because where we are, like, most people, the HOA won't let you even have a clothesline even if you wanted one, which is bizarre to me. But it makes so much sense, because I know some of you guys have gotten onto me before when I've talked about putting clothes in the dryer. Like, "Why do you have a dryer? It's not energy efficient." And that's so true. And they just are so much better about that. I feel like they also probably use more natural laundry stuff, because one time we washed clothes, they handed me a bucket of this white powdery stuff that they had made that had like no smell and no, and so I'm guessing it was like probably washing soda and borax or something.

Heather: That's really cool. So are they even doing this in small, like, apartment settings, or is it hanging from balconies, or...?

Katie: Yeah. Even, we drove through...where was it? Naples, which is a very crowded city, like lots of high rises.

And I don't know if it was just like, laundry day, or this is every day, but almost every balcony had like five or six pieces of clothing like clothespinned onto the balcony.

Heather: Nice.

Katie: Which I'm like, it's actually great, because we both know, if you've used toxic laundry stuff in the past, the sun helps pull all of it out of the clothing, or if it's clothing with flame retardants or pesticides in the cotton or whatever, the sun really helps mitigate that. And they're drying their clothes in the sun all time. So, super cool and free trip.

Also, they are so good about recycling there. Like, I would go open a cabinet to throw something away and there's, like, five bins. And there was, like, the littlest one was for waste, and then there was glass, and metal, and paper. Most of them didn't even have a plastic bin, because there's so little plastic there. That really shocked me as well.

Heather: Yeah, I know. There are several countries, and I can't remember which one that I was reading about, but they just have so little waste, because they found ways to reuse everything. And that's an infrastructure thing that I think that we as a nation could benefit from trying to drive things toward more infrastructure, to actually foster recycling. Because I know where we are, we have limited options in terms of what we can even recycle.

Katie: Yeah. Like, I know both of us, we'd have to drive an hour out of the way to take everything to recycling, but also, I think we could all limit even more than we do, with the amount of plastic that we encounter. Because like, we don't have any plastic in our home, but I think about the number of things that come into our house from the store that are in plastic. And there, they don't...so if you go to the grocery store, not only do they not have in most places, plastic grocery bags at all, or if they have them you have to pay for them. And it was like anywhere between, the equivalent of like, 25 cents to a dollar per bag. So they bring their own bags, which is awesome. They don't really have produce bags. They were using like, pillow case-looking cloth bags for that, and most of the...even the things on the shelves were glass, or they were just different packaging.

And even in like, the little towns especially, they had...like you said, they were their own infrastructure. They had to like, be kind of self-sufficient in these little towns. So there would be a butcher that made all the meat for the town and a pasta maker that made all the pasta for the town, and people were going in there with like, glass jars or glass containers and getting stuff directly into that, instead of in plastic.

Heather: Were there are a lot of gardens too? Because I'm imagining that if you get the basics, you've got like, your pasta and you've got your butcher, and then you go into the store for a few things that you, sort of, supplement with like herbs and stuff locally?

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. Everybody had a garden of some kind. And one of the places, it was called Casa Duval, it was my favorite vineyard that we visited. It was the smallest, but it was just the family aspect and how self-sufficient they were. So the parents were in their 80s, I think. Their five kids all lived out there with their spouses and their grandkids all in their own little houses on this vineyard, and they have olives and they grow their own garden. And they said that everything that they eat is grown on their farm with the exception of they buy coffee, sugar, and organic flour to make pasta at the store, that's it. Everything else they grow.

Heather: Wait, wait, wait. Coffee, sugar and flour?

Katie: That's it. They said, like, they have a cow and they make their own mozzarella cheese and they grow

olives and they make their own olive oil. And that was a common thing, too. Everybody has olive trees. And, at least somebody in the community has an olive press, and so, that time of year when the olives are harvested, they would all take their olives to that place, and just press them and have olives for the next year, olive oil.

Heather: Wow.

Katie: But they... This family was so sweet. Like, the mom keeps up with the chickens in the garden, and the grandkids, and even helps in the vineyard. And they told the story of how they started off when they first got married, and they didn't have much money, and they found this land, and so he had gotten a mortgage from the bank. It took him 30 years to pay it off, but now they actually finally own it, as of like probably 30 years ago now, for they've been married so long. But how proud they were of owning this little farm that they had, and making these wines, small scale natural wines. But just seeing the family aspect was just, absolutely incredible and how they all came together for dinner every day, how the grandkids all, like, rode their bikes around through the grapevines all day, and just so cool to see. But yeah, they definitely grow their own food. I was shocked.

Heather: You know, I have lived on 40 acres and I've lived on a whole lot less than 40 acres, and you really don't need that much space to grow a substantial amount. And it doesn't actually have to be hard, especially if you're growing things like herbs, or if you're Canadian, herbs. We're always teasing our friends that call it herbs. I still can't say it. But you know, you really don't need a lot of space, especially in that, because they're low maintenance and they're not hard and I just... And it's so much fun for kids to be involved. Like, my daughter really loves to help out with a garden and, you know, we have very little space now compared to what we used to have, and yet it's still totally doable. So, you don't need a huge place, a huge, like, vineyard to grow a whole lot on.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. Even the places where we visited that, it was all grapes, except for their very direct house, they all had a tiny garden, but they would just grow stuff all year. So, so cool to see. And on the plastic note too, I wondered. Because that was a question I had in my head going in, was like, "Why are so many places in Europe so much healthier than the U.S.?" Like, "What's actually contributing to that?" And I think a lot of these things, obviously like the community aspect alone, like we know, that's so important, having good friendships, and family bonds, and social structures. Like that alone, is more important than exercise. It's more important than quitting smoking. It's super important. I think they also have overall lower stress levels.

But I think that so many of these things also really contribute, especially the plastics. Just, I mean I know we both talk about this, and write about this but just, how many problems come from plastic overuse. And seeing boys and girls going through puberty earlier, and boys having such low testosterone during puberty, which is unheard of, and having too much estrogen. And just, I really, I do worry seeing our kids and seeing the problems that so many kids in this generation are gonna face from that, and it was drastic to me. They are at least the areas where we were. And granted, we were more in the country most of the time, and even kids at that time, they pitch in from the age that they're able, they're very active. But I did not see a single overweight kid the entire time we were there.

Heather: Wow. You know, I was in the airport recently, not too recently, but this year, and I happened to sit next to pharmaceutical rep who was on the phone with her mom. And she was talking about how they're developing a drug that blocks puberty in small children, because it's becoming so much more common. And I was just sitting there, you know, like, kind of sort of sinking into my seat, just because the thought of how much things are shifting is just... It's so sad, but there are things that we can do. I mean we really can limit our use and it does make a huge difference.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. And I feel like as moms it's...that's another one of those that seems almost insurmountable, because in the U.S., plastic truly is everywhere. But I think even if we just make the basic easy switches of like, our dishes in our kitchen, and our cups that we drink out of, and certainly anything that touches heated food or that we store food in for long amounts of times. That can help, or anything like that food's heating, because I know most of the meat we buy still comes in some form of plastic.

Heather: Right.

Katie: But if it's frozen, and you're getting the meat out, and before it's heated, like that's still going to be a lower exposure than if you're heating it in anything that's plastic. And I think that those small steps can make a big difference over time, and along with avoiding, like, really harsh fragrances in cleaning products. And a lot of those can have phytoestrogens as well, so that's...yeah. And another thing, so they also... This could also contribute to it. They walk everywhere. So, we were there for under 2 weeks and we walked over 75 miles.

Heather: Whoa. And you're not just talking about like, flat miles, right? This is not just level ground.

Katie: Right. Yeah, no. Like a lot of that was up stairs, we were up hills, or up mountains. And the amazing part is, like the elderly people, the kids in these villages and towns, they were doing it faster than we were. They were just like mountain goats. They could just scale these things, it was amazing.

Heather: Wow.

Katie: And just thinking like, we'll all hop in the car to go somewhere a mile away. And we could totally walk there, and just how, like, they wouldn't even dream of getting in the car to go a mile away. They would just walk there. And certainly, there's differences. And it's harder some places there because it's more compact, and historical, the streets aren't as big, they don't have parking garages. It would be harder for them to drive there. Like, we can pretty much park everywhere, but it's harder for them, but they wouldn't even think of getting in their car.

Heather: You know, I will find it for you, but I read a book recently, that was talking about this with kids. It's called, "Playborhood." It was a really good book. But he was talking about walkability of areas, and I know that not all of us can just uproot and move right away. But when there is a time where you're buying a new house or whatever, one thing you can do, and I'll get you the URL, is you can enter the neighborhood you're looking at into a website and it'll give you a walkability score. Like, "Can you get to a store from here? Can you, you know...is there like a playground nearby?" And it's a really interesting thing because, you know, walkability is not a cultural priority yet, but I feel like we're moving in that direction. And especially for some families, it is more of a priority. And so, you can, sort of, as you're looking for a new place to live or whatever, use that as one of your criteria, for looking.

Katie: That's really cool. Yeah, we'll find that and put that in the show notes. And that's another point that I love that you touched on, because I think that's something that has become so much more important to both of us in the last couple of years, is that community aspect, and the outdoor aspect, and the kids having other kids and friendships, and us having friendships with people close to us. That's partially why we both made moves, like pretty big moves recently, to be in areas where our kids can play outside and it feels like the 1950s, and they can ride their bikes. And I truly think that, I mean, I know we write about health most of the time. I think we underestimate, as a society and even individually, how much that goes towards fixing so many problems in our health, and in society. And personally, I truly believe if we could go back too, and start, all of us, making conscious decisions to move into areas like that, or create areas like that, that would solve and cure so many of the problems that we're seeing in society.

Heather: "Playborhood" has some good ideas too for creating community. And I would recommend that you might wanna put a link to that book in the show notes, because it definitely...we can transform communities, and communities have done it. They have just transformed places that would have kind of been considered, sort of like, social deserts into little areas that really worked for that group of people, and it's pretty cool.

Katie: Yeah, I love that. We'll definitely include a link in the show notes. And also on that note, like Europeans, if it's too far to walk, they'll ride a bike way before they'll drive a car, because it's easier and we would be stuck in traffic sometimes, trying to go to the next place and all these bikes would just be like, whizing past us. And I was like, "I get it." Like, they're so much better about that, and they would have their backpack and they would be coming and going from the grocery store or wherever. And even those of us not close enough to a store to walk, we could probably bike to a grocery store. I know where are it'd be a little bit of a hike, but we could do it. We'd get a workout in. And that was the other interesting thing. They didn't care about working out, and they were all overall, like, fit and healthy. And I think it's just because they move. They don't have to exercise, they just move, and that's something for sure we could all learn from. Yeah, and they also have a nap time. So, this is another one that I loved. Like I had read about this, that in Europe, they have siesta in Italy. Like, at 2:00 everybody takes a nap, but they literally actually do. Like you can't go to a coffee shop at 2 p.m. because everybody's taking a nap.

Heather: What?

Katie: Yeah. It's amazing, and it's a huge part of their culture. I know this is in other countries besides Italy as well. It wasn't so much in Austria, but in Italy, that's how it was. And they would literally just take a couple hours and rest in the afternoon. I think the tradition comes from it being so hot, and a lot of places there still don't have air conditioning, but they would rest in the hottest part of the day, and just cool down, and nap. And I was like, "How wonderful is that?" Like, we all know we don't get enough sleep, and kids need naps, but I love that that's a part of their culture. And I wonder too, and maybe you could speak to this with like the heat shot proteins and the temperature variability, that since a lot of them still don't have air conditioning, do you think that could contribute to why they're healthier as well, because they have to deal with extreme temperatures so much more that we do?

Heather: Oh, yeah. Both ways. I mean if they...because I mean, in certain places, in certain climates, it can get really cold at night even if it's really hot during the day. Definitely that's challenging the body, and sort of causing it to need to adapt more. And that's that beneficial stress we're talking about. But my question is, do they have a more extended night period? Like do they socialize later into the evening than most of us do because they're getting that break? I'm just curious if they're breaking up the day or they still go to bed pretty early too?

Katie: That's a good question. So they do, I think they stay up later than, like Americans probably shouldn't stay up to be healthy. Like they stay up 'til 11 to 11:30 or 12 seemed to be the average. They did take that two-hour nap in the afternoon, and then they slept at least where we were, until about sevenish. They were still getting, like, overall good amount of sleep.

Heather: Right. So like, eight hours at night plus a rest period during the day.

Katie: Yeah. And I think that's just because it's so much more...at least the time of year for us being there in June, it's so much more tolerable to hang out in the evening when it's cooler and the breeze is there and it's gorgeous, than in the heat of the day. So, they just...

Heather: I know we assume that our one sleep pattern is, like, the only way to do it, you know, where you block sleep. But there's...or you have, like, a large block of sleep. But there's historical precedent for breaking it up, even in the middle of the night, which I think is crazy. Like, I don't wanna get up at 2 a.m. and go visit people. But you know what I'm talking about? Like these historical...

Katie: Yeah. Like the biphasic sleep that people used to do. Like, they would wake up, they'd have like two, four-hour sleep periods instead of an eight-hour sleep period. And they'd, like, hang out for an hour in the middle of night or, yeah. But there's also... I will try to find the study for the show notes. I saw one recently about how nap-time could actually be more beneficial than a longer sleep at night. Just because of the same thing. You're in and out of sleep cycles. So the body is, like, having more hormonal changes, so you have more time to adapt. So I don't think there's, like, too much evidence on that yet. But there's definitely a lot of anecdotal evidence from Europe, for they've been doing this for hundreds and hundreds of years.

Heather: Now, in Italy, when does their workday end? Because it sounds like what they could be doing partly is, if their workday is ending close to the same time as ours, then they are prioritizing relationships and rest a little bit more, because they're taking some of that work day and setting aside for rest. Or are they just working later?

Katie: They work a little later. Things seem to be open to, like, 6 or 6:30. Restaurants were, like, later than that. But versus the kind of 5:00 is the usual ending time in the U.S. But then, it went straight into social time. Like, especially in these little towns and villages, which were, like, so quaint and amazing, they would work, and then they would all kind of gather at these local restaurants or at their homes, and they would cook dinner together, and they would hang out for, like, several hours, and then head home and do it again. And just... Yeah. I think that they definitely do prioritize the relationships in the community more.

And just, it was so fascinating to me because it's a totally different...like, it was hard for me to adapt the idea of nap time. I'm like, "Can't we just go hang out at the coffee shop?" Also, on another random note, I was shocked. They drink coffee, like, all day long, pretty much, but it's a different kind. So they would only ever order a cappuccino in the morning, because that's like the morning drink. And then there's like several other kinds of coffee that could be ordered during the day. But they'd order espresso at night after dinner and dessert. It's like a teeny-tiny cup of espresso as part of dessert. And I was like, "I will be up all night if I drink espresso at 10:30 at night." But they can do it just fine. And one of them explained to me, it's like, you drink the coffee, and then the key coffee which, is like the apéritif, like the liqueur that brings you back down from the caffeine to balance each other out. So, not sure about the health benefits of that one. But I was just amazed by their caffeine tolerance.

Heather: Yeah. Going back to the work schedule, you know, I think we assume that you're gonna get more out of a person, like, if you have eight solid hours and you, sort of push them against it. But that idea of having a rest... I know a lot of times, there's that concept of I need to sleep on it. You know, that there is that whole something that we're doing at night when we're sleeping where our brain is consolidating ideas, filtering out what's not important, and then applying creative approaches to what is important trying to solve those problems. So it's interesting to me that they would step away from work, get some rest, and then come back to it. I bet that last hour and a half of their workday is way more productive than the typical American last hour and a half of the workday, where you're just exhausted and you, like, push through as about as hard as you can. Would you agree with that?

Katie: Yeah. And it made me think when you said that. Like, how many people talk about that, like, 2 p.m. slump or, like, the afternoon slump after lunch?

Heather: Right. And... It's like a physiological thing.

Katie: Right. It's like, so maybe there is something to it. Maybe we are designed to have a little bit of a break there, and then come back more refreshed. And yeah. That's a great point. Let's see. I think we've talked about most of the big ones. I'm definitely going to be writing more about it soon. But like I said, I don't want to glamorize any culture, because every culture has their problems. And I know somebody we talked to, they pay 60% in tax which I don't envy. But I think, like anything, I truly believe in life and everywhere we can learn something from everywhere and everyone. And I definitely learned a lot on this trip. I'm normally pretty talkative and I was almost silent the whole trip just because I was in awe and, like, somewhat overstimulated from all of it.

We started out in Rome. When I had... I studied a lot of European history when I was younger, and so to me it was like walking through a history book. And I just, like, couldn't even take it all in and so I was still processing that. And then to see these families and just the community. And I wish I could adequately put into words just how incredible it was and how much of a goal that's gonna be for me now to create that for our families. Because I'm also not a very emotional person. Like, I don't cry easily. I don't even cry when I have a baby. I'm just, like, super happy and I don't cry.

Heather: I cry.

Katie: It brought me to tears. Some of these families, just how sweet it was. And how, like, they were so kind and generous. And they were, like, making the best of everything they had for us and just share. That they were so generous, and so sharing, and so giving. And all about community. And just the level of love that they had that you could immediately just tell when you met them was incredible. And even though there was a language barrier, I got a little bit better at Italian by the end, but there was a language barrier in a lot of places, but we still could communicate pretty well and just... But that came across so clearly, the sense of community.

So I guess to wrap up, that would be my encouragement. I know we touched on it already a little bit, but just something we could all kind of mull over and work on is, how can we all foster community in our own areas? Because maybe our society doesn't make it easy and it doesn't lend itself to that. But I think there are things all of us could do no matter what kind of area we live in and what kind of situation, to make conscious efforts to build that more. And I think that would help, really a lot of us in so many ways more than we could ever know, after seeing just how drastically it impacts their lives.

Heather: I agree. And it doesn't have to be big stuff. Like, recently in our neighborhood, a new family moved in and they were busy and unpacking. And I literally just had time. I left a card with my name, my kids' ages, and my phone number so they can text me if they ever need anything. And they weren't even, I guess, their little ones answered the door and mom was upstairs still unpacking and she was probably not really ready for guests at that moment. But little stuff like that has brought our community together.

And now we have text threads where, you know, when our kids are roaming in our very small little area. We can text and just update if there's anything another parent needs to know. And it's such a small thing but it's just like reconnecting those bonds that...I don't know how they sort of slipped away from us, but it's just easy. Not always, but it can be.

Katie: Yeah. Exactly. And where we lived before this, it was in a great area where the kids could play. But as far as for, like, women and that sense of community, I kind of created that inadvertently just realizing, like, I don't have any friends here yet when we first moved there. I don't know anyone. And so I just saw some other woman at church one day and was like, "Hey, do you wanna go to dinner this week? Like, you are my people, I

choose you. Let's just go to dinner." And we ended up having a mom's night that lasted until I moved, like, several years. And we're still close friends and we still visit. And I think sometimes, like, that would be my advice to people too, is like, go first. Just be willing to put yourself out there. And because it's hard for all of us. It's hard especially in today's world, to just randomly go up to someone and make friends and meet someone new. But you never know. Like, you might end up meeting a new best friend or, you know, like a lifelong friend. And so, I think that's one encouragement. Do that and teach your kids to do that. Just go first, and be the kind one first, and build the community with baby steps. And I think we can all get there.

Heather: And our kids are watching us and we're showing them how to be adults. And we don't want them to grow up, become parents, and then lose all of their social outlets. You know, we want to model that for them. So it's very important, like you said, to reach out to other moms and connect.

Katie: Exactly. And I know this, like, to get scientific again, as kind of my default. But the studies show, like, even people in super strong marriages, women need other women friends, and guys need guy friends. And they need that outlet. And like you said, I think that's so important to model for our kids. Because I've seen friends of mine that get lost in parenthood, and they revolve around their kids. And I get it, because we all love our kids and we want the best for them. But it's hard to not lose yourself in that. And I think community can help balance that as well.

Well. And as always, thanks to you guys for listening. I know Heather and I love to hang out and talk with you. And I have a new idea that I wanted to try with you guys today. So this is something we also did on our Europe trip. Every night at dinner, or a couple nights at dinner, we would go around the table and we would ask each other a question, like, a pretty hard question. Everything from, "What happens when you die," to, "how do you define love," to "what makes a best friend?" All these things. But the caveat is you could only answer in 10 words or less. And because this kind of gives you a lot of insight into someone, but they can't get political, they can't, like, censor, they can't get politically correct and add all these prepositional phrases that make it sound nicer. They have to just kind of answer.

So to try something new, I would love if you guys could, in the comments of this show, the show notes of this post at [wellnessmama.fm](http://wellnessmama.fm), I'm gonna give you a question, and I really truly would love to hear your answer in 10 words or less. And this time, the question I have, kind of based on all of the stuff we talked about is, "Does hardship make people stronger and why?" So I'd love to hear in 10 words or less in the comments.

And also, just a reminder to please leave an honest rating or review. I actually want your honest feedback. I'd love to hear it in iTunes or Stitcher, wherever you listen. Make sure you use the code word "wellness." And in two weeks, I will choose one of you and mention the name on the podcast, so that you guys can, whoever it is, can e-mail me to get a Myobuddy Massager which, is one of my favorite things in the world. Because it's like a deep tissue massage, plus percussive massage, plus infrared heat, it's incredible. So thank you all for listening. It's always a pleasure and I appreciate your time. I know time is your most valuable resource and I appreciate you spending it with us today. And I hope to see you next time on "The Healthy Moms Podcast."

Hey again. It's Katie I just wanted to mention one quick thing that I forgot to tell you during the episode. Dry Farm Wines which we talked about a lot in this episode, they are offering a special offer just for you guys. You can get an extra bottle of wine for just a penny with any order when you try them out. And I have no doubt that you will love these wines as much as I do. I explained the whole process they go through with the testing, the taste testing, the lab testing. It's such an intensive process and now having seen these small family vineyards where these wines comes from, I am even more in love with them than I was before. So I'm so glad that they have a special offer just for you guys in case you wanna to try it. Definitely would give my own personal recommendation and highly encourage you to try them out. And of course, as always, thank you so

much for listening. Your time means so much to me. I know how busy life is and I really appreciate you spending this time with me. And I hope to see you again next week on "The Healthy Moms Podcast."