



Episode 184: Meta Learning, Speed Reading, and
How to Learn Anything Faster with Jim Kwik

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Katie: Hello and welcome to "The Wellness Mama Podcast." I am so excited to be here with you today and to share with you one of my dear personal friends who is also one of the smartest and kindest people I know. Jim Kwik is a widely recognized expert in speed reading, memory improvement, brain performance, and accelerated learning. And he teaches techniques you will not learn in school. I've taken some of his courses and they are fascinating and so much fun. And for over two decades, he has served as a brain coach to people all over the world. But the reason I am so excited to talk to him with you guys here today is his own life and his own experience.

So after a childhood brain injury left him learning challenged, he created strategies to dramatically enhance his mental performance and he has since dedicated his life to helping others unleash their true genius and brainpower and learn anything faster and to live a life of greater power, productivity, and purpose. And I know that Jim and I share a passion, especially for helping children. And I know that this episode is going to be helpful to all of us as adults, but also in being able to teach our children effectively to learn and to love learning. So, Jim, welcome and thanks for being here.

Jim: Katie, this is a real pleasure. I've been looking forward to this so much and thank you, everyone, who's joining us for this conversation.

Katie: I have been looking forward to this, as well. And as we get started, I have to brag on you a little bit because when I first met you, my memory of meeting you is so vivid because I saw you memorize on the spot a series of, if I'm remembering correctly, 80 numbers and then recite them back forwards and backwards. And I think that's an amazing feat, obviously, in its own right. But even more so once I heard your personal story. So I'd love to start there because I think there's incredible power in a story, and I think yours illustrates that it's

so possible to overcome things that seem very difficult or insurmountable in life. So can you tell us how you became a memory expert and kind of delve into, were you born with this perfect brain or how did you get there?

Jim: Well, it's interesting when people see me do those demonstrations, whether it's memorizing all those numbers or long lists of words, or 100 people I have stand up in an audience and memorize their names. And I always tell people afterwards, "I don't do this to impress you. I really do this to express to you what's really possible." Because the truth is every single person who's listening to this could do that and a whole lot more, meaning you could do it, your spouse can do it, your team could do it, your children can do it. It's just we weren't taught. If anything, I feel like we were taught somehow unconsciously or we were taught some kind of lie that somehow that our intelligence, our potential, our learning ability, our memory is somehow fixed like our shoe size.

And you know this, Katie, that we've discovered more about the human brain, more in the past, maybe, 10 years than the previous thousand years. And what we found is that we're grossly underestimating our own capabilities. And I know that because my inspiration really was my desperation. As you mentioned, I grew up with learning challenges. I was put in special classes and one of the inflection points was when I was five years old, I had a bad accident, head trauma and brain injury. And so, I had these learning difficulties. And so how did it manifest? It manifested where teachers would have to repeat themselves three or four times in order for me to understand things. And often, I didn't really understand. I would pretend I understood. I had very bad focus. I had a very poor memory. It actually took me an extra three, almost four years longer to learn how to read. And that was a very difficult time. And at the age of nine, I remember a teacher pointing to me, talking to another adult thinking I wasn't paying attention, saying, "That's the boy with the broken brain."

And it's interesting because parents and adults have to be very careful with their external words because your external words become a child's internal words. And that became my inner self talk. I remember every single time that I would do badly on a test or a quiz, or a report, or not picked for the soccer team, I would always say, "Oh, it's because I have the broken brain." And you have to be very careful because your mind is always eavesdropping on your self talk. And often people are always saying, "Oh, I'm so forgetful," or "I'm getting older," or whatever. And I tell people, "If you fight for your limitations, you get to keep them," right? "If you argue for your limits, they're yours." And so, you know, Dr. Daniel Amen, who I know you know, he refers to them as "ANTs," automatic negative thoughts, and you have to squelch those ANTs.

And so, I grew up with these difficulties all through school whether it was through elementary school and middle school, junior high and high school. And, you know, I talk about superpowers a lot because I actually taught myself how to read by reading comic books late at night when my parents thought I was sleeping. And I like the metaphor of a superhero. I find that like, I feel like you're a superhero. Every time I see you, I feel like you're wearing this cape, because a superhero is, for me, is somebody who's discovered and developed their superpowers. And I don't mean somebody who could fly across buildings and shoot lasers out of their eyes. I mean, they found their unique talent, or unique ability, their strengths and, but just having a superpower doesn't make you a superhero. You have to use it, like you have, to make the world a better place.

And, but when we're talking about superpowers, I think growing up, my superpower growing up was being invisible, you know, being, when you feel like you're broken, you don't really feel like connecting to people. You don't feel like you have a lot to offer. So I became painfully shy. Like, I would... I remember one time I was doing a book report, the teacher gave, called my parents in for a special meeting because I was not doing well

in school for English and gave me a second chance that I can do a book report on and get some extra credit. And so, I did one on Einstein and da Vinci. But I remember I spent two months working on this and I was so proud. I had it professionally bound, and it was like the most I've ever put into a project.

But the day I had to turn it in, I remember the teacher at the end of class saying, "We have a surprise for everybody. Jim, come to the front of the class and tell us about your book report." And I was frozen because I was not just introverted, but again, I was painfully shy and I was phobic of public speaking, and I was so scared. And I put my whole life into like, felt like my whole life into this book report. And I lied. I said I didn't do it. And I took a zero. And I remember being the last one in that class when it let out, and I ended up throwing it in the garbage and when I did that, I felt like I was also throwing out a part of my potential or my dreams. Anyway, so that was me in school in a nutshell.

But at the age of 18, I was lucky enough to get into a university and I wanted to make a fresh start and I actually did worse, you know. I was so determined to show myself and make my parents proud, show the world that I could do something and I could amount to something. But I actually, college was so much more difficult and I was ready to quit when I was telling a friend of mine that he was like, "Hey, why don't you come home with me this weekend? I'm gonna visit my family and get some perspective." And I find that when it comes to learning and it comes to your life, perspective is so important. You know, a change of place, or a change of people, you know, change of environment really helps you to have new ideas and a more refreshed take on things.

And I went there, and the family was pretty well off. And I remember the father was walking me around his property right before dinner and asked me a very innocent question and says, "Jim, how's school?" Which pretty much, Katie, is the worst question you could ask me at the time. And I just break down and I just tell him my whole story about school, and the broken brain and how I just wasn't smart enough. And he says, "Jim, why are you in school?" And it's kind of interesting when it comes to our potential and learning faster that questions, I find, really are the answer, that I never asked myself that question before. And I was like, "What do you mean?" He's like, "Well, why are you in school? What do you wanna be, do, have, share?" And I go to answer him and he pauses. He says, "Stop." And he takes out a journal out of his back pocket. And I noticed another quality of just successful individuals, is they keep diaries or they keep a place where they have their notes and they reflect on things.

And he makes me write it down. He tears out a couple of sheets of paper, and it became like a bucket list, you know, all the things that I wanted to be, do, have and share in my life. And when I was done, I take the pieces of paper to fold it up to put it in my pocket, and he takes it right out of my hands. And it really freaks me out because I wasn't expecting him to see what I was writing down. I mean, these are my intimate thoughts and my goals, and my dreams. And he starts reading them. And I don't know how much time goes by, but he looks at me, he says, "Jim, you are this close to everything on this list." And he spreads his index fingers about maybe 10 inches. And I'm thinking, "There's no way. You know, give me 10 lifetimes, I'm not gonna crack this list." And he takes his fingers and he puts them to the side of my head, meaning that what was in between, which was my brain, if you will, was really the key. And he takes me into a room of his home that I've never seen before. It was, you'd love it. It's wall-to-wall, ceiling to floor covered in books.

I mean, can you imagine? I've never been in, like, a library in somebody's house before and, remember, I'm phobic of books. I've never read a book cover to cover. I'm a very poor reader. And it's like walking into a room of snakes, but what makes it worse is he starts grabbing snakes off the shelf and hands them to me. And

I started looking at the titles and they were these biographies of some incredible men and women in history, and also some very early personal growth books. I mean, Norman Vincent Peale, "The Power of Positive Thinking." You know, Napoleon Hill, Dale Carnegie, you know, all these classics. And he says, "Jim, I want you to read one book a week." And I'm thinking, "Oh, my goodness. I can't." And I'm fighting for my limitations again, and I tell him, "I can't do that. You heard my story and then I have all this schoolwork." And he looks at me and says, "Jim, don't let school get in the way of your education."

And this was over 25 years ago. I didn't realize it was a Mark Twain quote. I was like, "That's really powerful and yet I can't commit to doing that because it's not possible." And then he reaches into his pocket and he takes out my bucket list, which he still has, and he has the audacity to read every single one of my dreams out loud. And I don't know if you can imagine, you know, I'm 18 years old, very insecure and this person who's obviously pretty successful to hear your dreams in another person's voice being said and incanted out in the universe really messed with my mind, my heart, my soul something really fierce.

And honestly, Katie, a lot of things on that list were things I wanted to do for my family. Things that they can never afford or would never do for themselves. And with that motivation, and I think motivation is another, you know, we're talking about a lot of key concepts we really could go into in this conversation, perspective, the power of questions, the power of writing things down. But motivation really is key. You know, a lot of us know what to do. We know we should meditate, we know we should eat right, we know we should move, we know we should do deep breathing and journaling, and all these things. But we don't always do what we know, and it comes down to a lot of motivation, which, you know, whether you're a teacher, you're a parent working with kids is really understanding what gets them to do things, right? Because common sense is not always common practice. And so, with this leverage of wanting to help my family, I agreed to read one book a week.

So fast forward, I'm in school and I'm sitting at my desk, and I have a pile of books that I have to read for midterms. But then I also have a pile of new books that I promised to read for my own personal growth. And I couldn't even keep up with one of those piles. So where do I get the time? I don't eat, I don't sleep, I don't spend time with friends. I don't work out. I don't do anything that's really good for me, you know, in terms of self-care and I just live in the library. And I'm there for, like, weeks and weeks, pulling all these all-nighters, and skipping meals, and, you know, it's not very sustainable.

And I end up passing out one night, and I remember I fell down a flight of stairs in the library. I hit my head again and I woke up two days later in the hospital. And at this point, I've lost all this weight because I wasn't eating and I was down to 117 pounds. I woke up, hooked up to all these IVs, and, you know, I was malnourished, dehydrated, and I thought, "There has to be a better way." And it was the darkest time in my life. You know, I've never experienced so much depression, so much despair. And I thought, "There has to be a better way." And when I had that thought, the nurse came in with a mug of tea, and on it was a picture of Albert Einstein. Now it's so interesting because that was my book report, right? Like, and there were these words on the mug of tea that, there was a quote that we've all heard before in some different form, in some iteration, it said, "The same level of thinking that's created your problem won't solve your problem." The same level of thinking that's created the problem won't solve it.

And I was thinking, "What's my problem?" That has to do, going back to the power of questions and thought, "Wow, I'm a really slow learner." And I was like, "Well, how do I think differently about this problem? Plus maybe I can learn how to learn faster, right? And maybe I could learn how to learn." And when I had that new idea, I was like, "Okay, well, where do I learn how to learn?" And I was like, "Well, where do I learn anything?"

In school." So I asked the nurse to bring me a course bulletin with the courses for next semester. And when I get it, I looked through all the pages and I look at all these different classes that I could take. And all of the classes were classes on what to learn, you know, important subjects like math, history, science, Spanish. But there were zero classes on how to learn. For example, how to think. How to solve problems. How to focus and concentrate. How to listen better. How to read faster. How to remember more. I always thought that should have been the fourth "R" in school. You know, you have reading, writing, arithmetic. But what about retention? What about recall? What about remembering, right? Socrates says, "Learning is remembering." Because why study if you can't recall this information. Right?

And so, I put my studies aside in school and I start focusing on this thing called meta-learning. I wanted to solve this riddle, this puzzle, if you will, that, you know, I wanted to solve this puzzle thing like, "How does my brain work so I could work my brain? How does my memory work so I could work my memory?" And I started studying adult learning theory. I started studying multiple intelligence theory. I started studying speed reading and mnemonics, and all these different things, a little about brain science.

And after about 60 days of intensive study, a light switch went on. And for the first time in my life, I started to understand things. For the first time in my life, I started to have better focus. For the first time in my life, I started to retain information from my textbooks and my grades went up, but not only my grades, but it's just as my grades improved, my life really improved. And that's when I realized that it's possible to work smarter and not just harder. And what put me on this path is, I actually got really angry. I got really upset that these skills and these abilities, what I thought was fixed with like your IQ or your intelligence wasn't. And I was thinking, "Why wasn't this taught to me in school?" Simple techniques or tools, resources on how I could just level up my learning and level up my life.

And so I started to be more of an evangelist. I started to help my friends. I started to tutor. And one of my very first students, she was a freshman in college. She read, get this, Katie, she read 30 books in 30 days. I mean, can you imagine? like, going online and picking up 30 books on anything, Mandarin and marketing, music, you know, martial art, or whatever, and she read it, not skimmed it, but really retained and was applying it. And I wanted to find out not how, because I know how she did it, I wanted to know, going back to motivation, I wanted to know the power of why.

And I found out that by asking her that her mother was dying of terminal cancer. Doctors gave her only two months to live. So the book she was reading were books on health and wellness, alternative medicine, energy, a lot of things that you could blog about, because she was determined to save her mom's life. And I found out, I get a call from her six months later and she's crying and crying and crying and I find out they're tears of joy, that her mother not only survived but is really getting better. Doctors don't know how. They don't know why. They called it a miracle, but her mother had attributed 100% to the great advice she got from her daughter who learned it from all these books. And that's, in that moment, I realized that if knowledge is power, learning is our superpower. That if knowledge is power, learning is our superpower and it's a superpower available for all of us, for us, for our children, you know, for our teams. And I think it's so important that people learn how to learn. So I've dedicated the past quarter of a century and more just to help people build better, brighter brains with easy, easy tools, easy techniques that we should have learned back in school. And my mission really is, "No brain left behind."

Katie: I love so much of what you just said and it reminds me, too, of my own childhood and it actually, like, triggered some pain points for me in a good way in that I think so often, and this is part of life, so often those

struggles end up becoming, like you said, our superpower because you said you were the boy with the broken brain, and I was the girl with the broken body. So I had strep throat pretty much constantly. The first five years of my life, I had dozens of rounds of antibiotics. Eventually had surgery that took out my tonsils and my adenoids and got tubes. And I was in somewhat good health after that, other than that I had had so many rounds of antibiotics which now I can look back and see the early roots of autoimmune disease, and I had that mindset for so long that my brain or my body was broken and it didn't work right and it wasn't ever gonna do what it was supposed to do.

And that's something that, even as an adult, I've had to really consciously learn to let go of. And it really came up for me in becoming a mother and during pregnancy and even in my first delivery with my first son, fighting that mindset that my body was broken and it wasn't gonna do it right, and I wasn't going to be able to have a baby, and just how deeply those childhood experiences can affect us for our whole life. But I also love that, and I know this is a core tenet for you and a core part of your life, that you really equate success and superpowers, like you said, not to money or achievement, but to helping others and changing the world. And I think that's why I was so drawn to your approach and why I love the work that you do.

And so, I'd love to go a little deeper on the concepts you've talked about because I know there's a lot of parents listening, and I know that many of them have heard from teachers or from school professionals that their kids are maybe not good learners in certain ways, or that they don't have enough focus or they're not good at certain subjects. And I feel like the school system in general, it tends to grade our deficiencies, not what we're good at. Like they count off points for mistakes, but you don't, you know, you don't get points for being creative for or for thinking outside the box or for having a unique genius that maybe doesn't show up on a test.

So I would love to hear you speak to that a little bit. Like, to these parents who think that maybe their kids don't quite have what it takes, or like maybe their child is like you were as a kid and how they can approach that differently so that, because as parents, none of us want to pass on, obviously, anything negative to our kids. And I'd love to hear your take on that from having seen that as a child yourself.

Jim: Absolutely. And I honor what you were saying because it's so interesting that through your struggles, you've gained so much strength and be able to share that, even when we're talking about superpowers and superheroes with so many millions of people. And so, I would say that for the parents listening or anyone who has a relationship with a child that there are a few ideas that I think we understand as common sense, but how do we put it into common practice? So, like I would say, for example, when we're talking about intelligence, I don't believe that, like you, I believe that intelligence and potential is not fixed, that it's fluid. One of my favorite books is "Mindset," you know, all about, you know, by Carol Dweck, which I know you're familiar with and that there's a difference between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset.

And one of the disservices we do sometimes with children is we reward, you know, an identity around them being a, you know, gifted or, or somehow a genius. But what, really, we need to be reinforcing is their, their work ethic, right? They're developing their grit and believing that having to work hard... Sometimes when people have a fixed mindset, you know, they're concerned about more about looking smart, like children looking smart and they regard less for learning. And it's more something they either have or they don't have, and so negative views towards effort or believing they have to work hard at something was assigned of more lower status or lower ability and the thought that a person with talent or intelligence did not need to work as hard. And we know that it's not true, that we should be rewarding people for children and others, you know,

in our care, whether we're leading them in a business or any otherwise proper praise is how do we transmit that growth mindset to children.

And we know that one way is really reinforcing and telling stories around achievements that came from hard work, that somebody is not just a genius at music or a genius at math, but it's these people, you know, fell in love with these subjects and they practiced every single day. That it's possible that you can actually grow your brain. That IQ, standardized tests, you think about school, like even SATs, when I took, I remember taking the SATs and it was like verbal and mathematical. But we know through all the research that there's not just two forms of intelligence and not only is it not fixed, that it's not the way we're rating with individuals, it's not fine, meaning it's not narrow, but it's far-reaching. And so it's, you know, for example, it's somebody is not great at verbal and math, but if they don't do well on those tests, they feel like they don't have something to offer or they're not smart.

But what about people who have great visual, spatial intelligence, right? And you're talking about like the graphic artists and the architects. What about people who have children who have great interpersonal skills, meaning that they're great with people? I mean, that's such an important, that EQ, if you will, is so important in today's society where maybe it's not interpersonal, self to others. Maybe self to self, like intrapersonal intelligence. People who really understand human psychology. What about people who are great with music? You know, musical intelligence. You have all the entertainers and the singers, the composers. What about kinesthetic intelligence? People who have children who are great or adults great with their body, you have your athletes, you have your dancers. And there's so many different forms of this, of these intelligence, but I find...and Howard Gardner is really credited, out of Harvard University, is really expanding this multiple intelligence theory.

And so I would say that talking to parents that intelligence is not fixed. It's fluid, it could grow and you wanna reinforce that with your children, hard work. Also, intelligence is not just fixed, but it's not fixed and it's also not fine or narrow. It's far-reaching and that it's... There's a huge spectrum of genius, if you will, that it's not how smart somebody is, not how smart you are. It's not how smart your children are, but it's another question. It's not how smart they are. It's how are they smart?

And so we all have this genius that we wanted... With children, you know, you give them a broad experience base and then you could see where their interests go naturally. And then you help them to be able to develop them. And the third thing I would say besides intelligence is not fixed and that it's also something that is far-reaching, I would say a third thing is that there's no such thing as a good or bad student. There's no such thing as a good or bad student anymore than there is a such thing as a good or bad memory. There's just a trained student and an untrained student. And just like with a memory, there's no such thing as a good or bad memory. There's just a trained memory and an untrained memory. And what I would say is something practical, when you're working with yourself or your team or your family, is to take nouns and turn them into verbs. What do I mean by that? I often hear people on social media, they'll message me and saying, "Oh, Jim. I don't have a good memory." Or, "My children don't have focus." Or, "I don't have motivation." Or, you know, "My child doesn't have creativity."

These are things you have like nouns. You don't have focus, you do focus. You don't have concentration, you do concentration. You don't have energy, you do energy. You don't have creativity, you do creativity. Just like you don't have a memory, you actually do a memory. And the benefit of turning it into a verb is it becomes an action and it becomes a process. And so, in our podcast, for instance, you know, every week we give tips on

how to remember names, how to read faster, how to be an effective listener, how to take notes. It's always focusing on the how, because it becomes like a recipe. Like if you wanted to bake a cake, you know, a gluten-free, sugar-free, organic, natural cake, you know, there are steps and you have to do those steps in order. Well, there are steps on how to learn a language, how to read a textbook, how to change your habits.

But these things are often, you know, people feel like they have habits, you know, or they have intelligence. But I feel like that when we make it active, it's something that we could act on, and we can be responsible or able to respond for it. And really, that's the focus of my work is to show people the tools, the tactics, and the actions that they could take, little simple things like their daily routines, or how they approach studying or the environment, or the foods that they eat to really optimize their greatest asset, you know, and their children's greatest asset, which is found between their ears, which is their brain. Because right now, children, yourself, and it's kind of fa-... And we live in this very fast-paced world where really, we have autonomous electric cars and spaceships that are being built to go to Mars.

But when it comes to learning, our vehicle of choice for education is like a horse and buggy. And I don't mean that as a slight against teachers. You know, my mother became a special education teacher because she didn't know how to help me with all my struggles growing up as a child. But it's more of a system issue. They say if Rip Van Winkle, he's the guy that slept for decades. If he woke up today, the only thing he would recognize are our schools. And it's really a systemic issue because our world has evolved so quickly. We live in this digital age where you have these digital super villains, like digital overload, and digital distraction, a new term called digital dementia where we're losing... We're so absent-minded right now because our mind is like a muscle. It grows stronger with use, but we're so dependent on our smart devices, so we can't even remember a simple phone number anymore.

You know? I mean, you remember growing up, you and I, we used to know like how many phone numbers, like all these phone numbers. But how many phone numbers do we remember now? Right? Maybe one or two or three. And it's not that I wanna memorize hundreds of phone numbers, but we've lost the ability just to remember one or a simple passcode, or a simple conversation we had with somebody, or our room number or something, you know, someone we just met. And I think memory lapses for your children, for yourself. Two of the most costly words are "I forgot." You know, "I forgot to do it. I forgot to bring it. I forgot that meeting. I forgot that conversation. I forgot that name." And so, you know, we live in this digital world, but we had...if you're struggling right now or your kids are struggling, it's not your fault. It's just we weren't prepared.

You know, they say that the average graduate right now, somebody graduating school is going to have anywhere from 8 to 14 different careers, I read recently. I mean, that's crazy. It's not different jobs, different careers because the world is changing so rapidly. And in a world of rapid change, the most important skill to have, in my opinion, is your ability to learn just as fast. It's just we weren't taught how to do that. And so, my message to everyone who's listening, is that your children, your intelligence is not fixed. It's fluid, that, you know, that standardized tests do a sub-optimal job of of your IQ, saying it's fixed from the age of five or six to whatever. That's not true because we know that it could grow because I could teach anybody listening to this on how to do better on that because they're just strategies. And then I would also say there's no such thing as a good or bad student, or a good or bad memory, or good or bad focus. There's just a trained student and an untrained student. It's just we weren't taught how to do these things. So one of the ways of overcoming is to take these nouns and turn them into verbs, and it gives you the power to be able to affect positive change.

Katie: I think that's such a brilliant tip. And I hear you say that about trained students and untrained students

and I look back and realize I was such a good trained student. That was my forte. I could do school, I could do tests. I aced the ACT and SAT, and it turns out that's actually like a completely worthless life skill, and that doing really well on this test doesn't serve anyone else. It doesn't help you necessarily in life. It's a metric and it's... I basically learned how to take tests well. And that's one of my frustrations now as a parent and as a homeschooling mom, is that I feel like we are, we're in an education system that was designed for a different age, but yet our children are the ones who are suffering with this because we're not giving them the tools they're gonna need. Like you said, they're going to have multiple careers. And on top of that, we need children who become adults who can think outside the box and connect the dots and solve some really big problems because our kids are going to face some doozies as adults.

So I'm curious, if you have any tips. Let's see how I can phrase this question, maybe two part. First of all, how do we maintain that love of learning in our children and kind of teach them from an early age what you learned older in life to love learning and to be able to learn quickly, but also for those of us who homeschool, is there a way that we can adapt even how we're teaching to really cater to that more easily?

Jim: Well, I know you and I can geek out about this for hours in terms of people stepping into the best version of themselves. And so, let's deconstruct this a little bit. I would say that I honor what you're saying about kids, you know, in this world and not being prepared and not teaching them how to be creative or to solve problems. Right now, just a sign of the times, everything right now, you know, in terms of jobs is moving in a certain direction and they call them the three As. A is artificial intelligence. So, more jobs are being taken by computers that could do a similar job through artificial intelligence. Also the second A is automation, right? Because an assembly line, just like we had assembly line education, we have everything being automated online also for people and that's taking away careers and opportunities.

The third A is Asia, which really signifies that things are being outsourced overseas. And so, these jobs are available overseas for a fraction of the cost. So what can't be outsourced to a computer? Well, I would say three of the superpowers you really want to encourage with kids are creativity, right? The idea, their ability to transcend traditional ideas and rules and patterns and relationships, or the like to be able to create meaningful new ideas, forms, interpretations, methods, because a computer's not going to be able to do that anytime soon.

The second superpower I would say to encourage with children is this superpower of imagination. We do an annual event for... It's really interesting where our audience is almost as interesting as the people who are on stage. We had the founder of WordPress and I remember we had Quincy Jones in our last, you know, sitting in the audience, we had Don Miguel Ruiz who wrote "The Four Agreements," one of my very, very favorite books of all time.

And I remember pulling Don Miguel Ruiz on stage. And I said, you know, "What's your superpower?" And he looked at the audience and he says, "My superpower is like everybody's superpower here. It's the superpower of imagination." Because, really, knowledge is what is, but imagination is what could be. You know, this ability to form mental images and concepts and that's not actually present in our senses. I would say that ability to take the invisible of what's in a child's mind or an inventor's mind or an author's mind and make it visible is really, leadership is taking the invisible and making it visible.

And so, creativity and imagination. And I would say a third area to really, to focus on with children, to really prepare them to live their best life is yes, you want them to be creative. Yes, you want them to harness their

imagination, which is like a muscle and the strategies for all of these is really that third thing I just said, is strategy. You know, a plan for success. I believe that when you see somebody successful, that genius leaves clues and, meaning that if somebody is successful in music, or in art, or in some physical form, or they're a great accountant, or they have great relationships, they're great with finances and they're doing certain things that there's always a method behind the magic. When people see me on stage memorize names or words or numbers or, you know, they know I read a book a day or whatever, I always tell people, "Genius is learned," it completely is. There's always a method behind the magic. When you see somebody pick up a musical instrument faster, or you see a child being able to focus, they're doing certain things that other people aren't, and it looks like magic. It's just we weren't taught how to do that.

And so, I would say those are three superpowers. In terms of children falling in love with learning... It's so interesting, children, I'm very concerned with the world we live in. I have a video just came out just like a month ago and it has over, we have over 31 million views and it's just me and my friend Simon Sinek talking about the dangers of some of the social media, where social media depression and distraction and these things, these forces, these super villains. Were talking about superheroes and superpowers, but these are the super villains that are holding us back in a lot of ways. Being reactive, picking up our phone first thing in the morning when we really should be focused, instead of reacting to the world and fighting fires, we should be creating a vision for our life. And these dopamine hits that we get with every like and comment and share and cat video that we watch, you know, it's training, it's rewiring our brain for distraction.

And so, I would say with children, one of the important things is if you wanna boost their self esteem, teach them about their own brains. I mean, you can improve their self esteem overnight just understanding how their brain works because it's like the most magnificent device on the planet, you know, and in the whole universe, right? But it's not user friendly, and it doesn't come with an owner's manual. And so that's why we do these videos and we do our podcast because we wanna educate people about how they work so they could have that confidence and that self esteem.

But the other thing I would say is how people fall in love with learning is to bring joy and fun into, you know, back into education. And I know this is a priority for you and it's a focus with you when you're working with your children. It's, I feel like that, you know, and I know you do, a lot of the wellness you talk about is about optimal health and anti-aging and even as you... Actually, I follow your work so much. I have like my Viome test here, I have on my desk, my NanoVi and everything. I use all these resources and those are so important.

And I would say as people think, for example, children are the fastest learners on the planet, which they are, right? They can pick up a musical instrument, they can pick up languages faster. And one of the reasons why is they play. But when I say this to audiences, they often say, "Oh, no, I stopped playing because I grew older." But I don't actually think that's accurate. I don't think you stopped playing because you grew older. I think it's the opposite. I think you grew older because you stopped playing. And I feel like that at some point in our life, maybe when as children, it was like, "Oh, I wanna to go out and play," or they ask their friends like, "Hey, do you wanna go out and play?" But later on it's like, "Oh, do you wanna go hang out?" And we started changing that language.

But I feel like when we're playing in a natural state, when we had that sense of wonder, and when do we ever feel those feelings? I believe all learning is state-dependent. All learning is state-dependent. That if you wanna know one of the keys to having a long term memory, information itself is very boring. It's forgettable. But information tied to emotion becomes a long-term memory, because we all know this, right, from personal

experience. There could be a song that can take you back to when you were a kid, there can be a food that takes you back to when you were a child. There could be a fragrance that could take you back to when you were a child, because information is forgettable, but information combined with emotion becomes a long-term memory.

So all learning is state-dependent. And so that's why I love play because in that state of wonder, right, one of my favorite poets, Rumi, has this quote that said, "Sell your cleverness for bewilderment. Sell your cleverness for bewilderment." I mean, when's the last time you felt bewildered about something? Or curious about something or fascinated? It's just like children are so engaged with the process and they're not afraid to fail. Even children, as you watch them learning how to walk, you know, they don't try like three times and like, "Oh, I failed at this. I'm never gonna try this again." Right? That would be ludicrous. But adults do this all the time.

You know, adults would take a dance class, or they'll take a voice class, or they'll take a programming, coding class, and they're not good at it first. And they'll be like, "Oh," you know, they don't want to look bad. And they're always concerned about everyone else's opinions and their expectations. And here's the thing, you can go broke buying into the opinions and expectations of others. I was working years ago with Jim Carrey. I help a lot of actors speed read scripts, have better focus on set, remember their lines in a fraction of the time.

And I remember we were in his kitchen, we were making guacamole, and I was like, "Jim, why do you do what you do? What drives you?" And he was like, "Jim, the reason why I played all these characters and they're very extreme and I act like a fool is because I wanna give people permission to be themselves." And he's like, he really, his mission really is to free people from the concerns of others so they can really be themselves. And I feel like as adults, and I don't mean when growing older, I don't really mean chronological age, I mean the age of our minds, the age of our hearts, the age of our spirits, if you will.

Like, I know somebody who just turned 95 years old and he's like the youngest oldest person, and he still goes to work Monday through Friday and he loves telling stories because that's his job, and he learns so quickly because it's a mindset, right? But I also know somebody who's nine years old and he's going on like, you know, 59. And he's so in, and then this child is nine, but he's so old, right? So it's really a mindset. So I would say integrating play and experimentation in our learning, you know, taking things because everybody has different learning styles. We, you know, we talked about that it's not how smart somebody is, but it's really how are they smart, that if I asked everybody here to write their names on a piece of paper and you can do this with your children. You write your first and last name, and then I asked you to switch hands and with your opposite hand, write below it your first and last name. The second time you did it, I would hallucinate. It would take longer, it would feel more uncomfortable and the quality wouldn't be quite as good.

And it's kind of like learning. Maybe you or your child, you're really interested in the subject and you go to a class on it, even. But for some reason, even though you're interested in it, you're just not getting it because the way the teacher prefers to teach is different than the way that the child prefers to learn, and it's like two ships in the night and you pass each other in the dark and you don't even realize the other one is there and you don't even connect. And so, that's a big challenge. And so, you know, these learning styles are important and it goes way beyond just visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning.

There's different ways, you know, we process information and to be able to honor that, it's like you're trying to learn it with the opposite hand so it takes longer, it feels uncomfortable or weird, and the quality is not

quite as good. And so, you know, I remember going back to an initial conversation about questions being the answer is asking questions, like, "How can I bring more joy into this? How can I make learning fun?" You might hear some children in the background right now because I'm in a house full of kids right now with their friends. But it's just like, even now, like they're yelling and they're playing and they're everywhere, but that's how they engage. Right? And so I feel like the reason why we could have children or adults read two or three times faster with better comprehension, how they can retain the periodic table, you know, in minutes... I put a video on Instagram the other day. I took all these six-year-olds and taught them how to memorize the first 20 elements on the periodic table and learn how to count to 10 in Japanese. Literally I did all that in nine minutes. You know, and it's not that because I'm so great, it's just there's genius in all of these children and it's really showing them how to be able to access that.

And so, creativity, imagination, strategy, remembering that one of the keys to learning faster is all learning is state-dependent. And that if somebody learned something in traditional education, you know, if you were to remember what school was like for the most part, knowing that emotion plays such an important role, what's the primary emotion most people feel in traditional education and 90% of an audience will always say they were bored. And on a scale of 0 to 10, boredom is like a 0. And anything, information times emotion becomes a long-term memory, but if the emotional level is zero, anything times zero is what? Is zero.

And you wonder why you forget these things. Besides the fact that a lot of children, when they're learning something, even as adults, if they don't see the relevance of sine, cosine, the tangent of x , they won't retain it because they don't have context. And if content is king, you know, which we often hear, right? We put on a lot of content, then context really is the kingdom, and it's so very important for people to have context when it comes to learning. And so, those are a lot of the focal points besides all the things that you blog about and share in your shows about self-care, because I also feel on the other side of it is people don't realize, but one third of your potential, when it comes to your brain, your memory and so on is pre-determined by genetics and biology.

That's what science is saying. Now, some people say you have 100% control, but that leaves two-thirds in your control, right? But some people say with epigenetics and everything, you actually have even more influence than science is saying, that some of the science is saying, but that means you have a lot more input in taking care of this hardware. You know, we're talking about things like a good brain diet. We're talking about things like getting rid of negative, you know, self-talk and we talk about things like exercise, movement because primarily, we have a brain to control our movements and as a child's body moves, their brain grooves. Literally as people move, they create brain derived neurotrophic factors. It's like fertilizer for neurogenesis and neuroplasticity. These are terms a lot of people have heard before. That neurogenesis means that you could create new brain cells to the day you die. And neuroplasticity is saying your brain is like plastic in a positive way. Meaning it's very malleable. That Einstein's brain wasn't bigger than any of ours, it was actually smaller. But he had certain parts of his brain, when they analyzed it, they were highly dense because there were so many connections because he would do these thought experiments and really, you know, where every single thought you have changes your neurology.

Literally, when we're having this conversation, you and I and people are listening to it, you're getting smarter and it's not just something ethereal, it's your brain is actually changing that right now. You have hundreds of millions of neurons, brain cells that are lit up right now. And they say that Oliver Wendell Holmes said that, "Once a person's mind is stretched by a new idea, it never regains its original dimensions." And people don't realize that your thoughts are things, that they're, you know, as you've heard, there's a biology to belief, if you

will, that if people realized how powerful their minds were, they wouldn't say anything to themselves they didn't want to be true.

And I can't overstate this enough when I'm talking about negative self-talk. I remember I was preparing to run a marathon. And I was reading this book. With a name like "Kwik," there's a lot of pressure. I was reading this book on how to mentally train for a marathon and it said, in one of the chapters, it said this word for word, verbatim, because I'm a memory expert and it said, "Your brain is like a super-computer and your self-talk is a program that will run. So if you're telling yourself you're not good at remembering names, you will not remember the name of the next person you meet because you programmed your super-computer not to." And that's what I mean when people are saying, "Oh, I'm not smart enough. I'm not good enough. I have horrible focus. I have, you know, a bad memory," or whatever it is. You have to change that.

And there are a number of ways you could do that, right? Anything from self-hypnosis to tapping, EFT or even adding a simple word like "yet" at the end of the sentence, "I don't have a great memory yet." Or, "I'm not a great student yet." Little things like that open up the possibility of something greater because the other thing I would say when it comes to your negative self-talk is your mind is always eavesdropping on your self-talk. Your mind is always eavesdropping on your self-talk. So you have your good brain diet, right, with your avocados and your blueberries. I call them "brainberries" and all those, you know, the wild salmon, if that's allowed in your diet and the turmeric and all these great things. You have your, you know, get rid of negative thoughts. You have your movement, but other things are important, too, brain nutrients, right?

There's certain brain supplements, if you're not getting it, if you do a full spectrum blood analysis on food allergies and nutrient profiles, some people are just lacking. If you lack in vitamin B, if you lack in DHA, which is such an important nutrient, your brain's not going to operate at optimal function no matter what strategy you're using. I would say another thing is a positive peer group. You know, who your kids or you spend time with, they are really who you become. You know, they say if you spend time with nine broke people, you are gonna be the tenth and there's actually a science to this even when, you know, with the kids that, your children, their friends that they hang out with because all of us, no matter what our ages, the reason why is because we had these things called mirror neurons and mirror neurons is what allows you to feel empathy when you watch a sporting, a game, sports and you could feel what the players are feeling kind of move, or you're watching a scary movie and you could feel you get that empathy. Those are mirror neurons.

And so mirror neurons really start... The reason why you have to be careful who you spend time with, your positive peer group, is because if you start adopting their beliefs, you start adopting their habits. You start adopting their behaviors. You know, we did an interview with Dr. Mark Hyman on our podcast and we're talking about how it's not just your biological networks or your neurological networks. And just as important, if not more important, are your social networks. That whether or not your child ends up smoking has less to do with their biology, it has more to do with whether or not their friends smoke because that has a greater influence. And so who you spend time with is who you become. Another thing when it comes to your kids, when it comes to the self-care, these are the 10 things that I talk about when it comes to unlocking what I call your "Kwik Brain."

Number six, I would say, are clean environments. You know, when you're telling your kids to clean their room and be organized, your external world is a reflection of your internal world and you know this because when you clean your desktop on your laptop, your office, don't you have clarity of thought?

Number seven, I would say in terms of optimizing your child's brain performance and your own is sleep, and this is a huge epidemic for all ages. And you know, like when you get a bad night's sleep, how does your brain perform the next day? I mean, how do you make decisions? How is the quality of your thinking? How are you able to solve problems? How's your focus the next day? How's your recall the next day? And so many children are pulling all-nighters in school and you think that's helping them, but it doesn't.

You need to sleep because of three things. I would really say three things cognitively that most people don't think of. Number one, when you sleep or your child sleeps, that's where they consolidate short to long-term memory. And that's why it's important to sleep is because that's actually where a lot of learning takes place.

Number two, those all-nighters definitely do not help. Number two, it's where you clean out plaque in your brain, when you sleep, that's when your sewage system really is operating and that can lead to dementia and other brain aging challenges. And then the third reason why you want to sleep, and this is something, I mean, there are many more reasons than this, but I would put in there is when you dream, right? If you're not getting the REM sleep, you're not going to dream, and you're thinking, "What does dreaming have to do with performance?" And people don't realize this, but when you're learning or your children are learning all day, your brain does not shut off at night. If anything, it's more active, it's more active at night and in the form of dreams.

And when you're dreaming, I mean, have you ever studied something or, you know, with your business or anything otherwise, and you start dreaming and start thinking about it? And so many people don't realize that so many things in our reality in our world and culture and literature and film and music came from dream states. So, for example, Mary Shelley came up with Frankenstein in her dream. Paul McCartney came up with the song "Yesterday" in his dream. Inventions like the sewing machine came to Elias Howe in his dream. The periodic table came to a chemist in his dream.

So what are we dreaming about? What are our children dreaming about, you know, late at night? But that requires, you know, you get the sleep. And so we did a whole... But the other thing is that you remember your dreams, you know, in the morning, a lot of times you wake up, you remember your dreams, but then you forget it shortly afterwards. So one of our most popular podcast episodes we did was like how to remember your dreams, which is the first thing I do every morning. Everybody has their morning routine and I have mine, you know, 10 things I do and what makes mine a little bit different than other people's, like Tim Ferriss or Oprah's or Tony Robbins' or whatever's. Each of mine is all about activating your brain. Jumpstarting your brain in the first hour of the day so you can win the rest of the day. But remember, your dreams are the first thing I do, so that requires sleep.

Eight, I would say is brain protection, meaning that with your kids, you have to protect their brain. I had, and this is, where, for me, I had a number of traumatic brain injuries. And so your brain is very resilient, but it's also very fragile. And so I've had my brain scanned a number of times by Dr. Daniel Amen, who wrote "Change Your Brain, Change Your Life." He raised over \$40 million on PBS. He has clinics across America, but I mean your brain really, you know, with concussions and damages like that can lead to some learning challenges, which I had, so protect your brain. I don't just mean from physical trauma either. I mean from EMFs. You know, electromagnetic fields because I didn't realize I was doing a podcast episode and doing research like the over 90% of kids sleep with their phones underneath their pillows.

Not even on, we're not even talking about on airplane mode. So we don't know that having that device so

close to the human brain, the human brain didn't have this, you know, throughout all of human history. It's only just obviously recently. So we don't know the effect that has on our brains. And then that's number eight, is brain protection. Number 9 and 10 really simply is 9 is new learnings, that if you want your children to be at their best, at peak, it's not just about mental intelligence, it's about mental fitness. And one of the ways to keep your brain fit to create neurogenesis, neuroplasticity, two things, novelty and nutrition. Science says that if you want to create new brain cells or new connections between brain cells, it's just like building physical muscles. If you wanna build your physical muscles, you have to give a novelty, like a workout, and then you have to feed it with nutrition.

Same thing with your mental muscles, and so you need to give it novelty in the form of new learnings, a stimulus, and then you have to give it the nutrition through your diet and supplementation. And then also there was a study on... I don't know if you saw it. It was a longevity study done on these group of nuns. They wanted to find out, I call them "super nuns." It was on the cover of "Time" magazine. They wanted to find out how this group of women were living well into their 80s, 90s and above, and they weren't just living longer, they were living well, and they found out half of it had to do with their gratitude and emotional faith. But the other half of it had to do with they were lifelong learners, and because they were lifelong learners, that added years to their life, but not only years to their life, but also life to the years.

And then finally, the 10th thing I would recommend for parents with their children and for anybody listening to this at any age is stress management. And this is always the invisible thing because people don't realize how much stress you're under, chronic stress and the damages it has on your nervous system and then particularly your brain, meaning chronic stress actually reduces your brain size. And when you're constantly creating cortisol and adrenaline, it's fight or flight which could equate to, you know, physical activity. But stress does not help if you need to study for a test, if you need to prepare to take a test, if you need to give a speech in front of your classmates or at work, or something like that. And so I would say monitor your stress. And when I say that, I would say that we aren't aware of how much stress we're under on a day to day basis, physical stress, emotional stress, financial stress, relationship stress and, you know, environmental stresses and the like, because it's like fish in water, fish don't see the water because it's there all the time and a lot of people don't realize how much stress they're under until they're getting a massage, or they're on a beach somewhere on vacation. They don't realize what normal really is.

And it's so important to disconnect, to reconnect to ourself because self-love and self-care is not selfish and I think we need to prioritize this on a regular basis, which is why I'm such a fan and admirer of your work because you're teaching people how to be their best self and, you know, with a wellness approach. And these are all things that I really wish that all the things that you wrote about and you reported on was taught in school. Much like I feel like, you know, the content that I teach in terms of learning is available because how much easier and more fulfilling can people's lives be?

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. And I still, I go back to that quote that you mentioned about if we realized how powerful our brains were, we would never want to tell them anything that wasn't true, and I think of also, as parents, how much power we have and how much we need to be aware of that power in the words that we say to our children. And listening to everything you just said, I think kids are so naturally born with imagination and creativity and a two-year-old's brain is this wonderful mixture of the two of those things. And I feel like we as parents and as educators, we have to kind of adapt to this new world of technology because in a sense, I look back to high school and, like, I would get fed up with calculus and classes that I just, like you mentioned, I was bored by them and I was like, "When am I ever gonna need to know this?"

And the teacher would say things like, "Well, you're not always going to have a calculator. You're not always going to have whatever tool." And now I look at it and I'm like, "Well, actually we do, we have our phones and we have the entirety of knowledge available at our fingertips through technology." And so like you said, I think that being able to adapt and learn quickly and think critically, those are the skills that computers can't do and that are so important, I don't even think we have to teach them. Like you said, I don't think we have to teach kids this. I think we just have to preserve that innate, amazing creativity that they have already. And so as a somewhat selfish question, I'd love to know if you were going to design a school or a learning environment, not even to call it a school, what it might look like and how it might be structured. Because this is something, as a homeschooling mom, I obviously have to do on a daily basis and we try to, for instance, keep like a very Socratic method and be very question-based and hands-on. Our whole classroom is movement-based. So we have balance boards and trampolines and swings and things. But I'd love any tips that you can throw my way or any other homeschooling parent's way when it comes to that.

Jim: Okay. I wish I was homeschooled by you. That just seems like such an incredible advantage because you're... The reason why you can get these kind of results is it's not even... You know, when we work with our students, it's because it's not even just about whole brain learning. It's about whole self learning, right? Where it's not just left brain, right brain, but it's all their intelligences and it's their triune brain, there are three different brains where you're appealing to the reptilian brain and these different parts, their amygdala and all these things. We're talking about their conscious and their non-conscious, their unconscious. We're talking about their diet and their sleep, and their stress management and their peer group and nutrition and all these different things.

And so, all of these play a role. And a lot of people, they just want the magic bullet, right? And they want this for their health all the time. They want the silver bullet. The magic bullet. "What's the one thing I could do, the one thing that just makes everything better?" And unfortunately the one thing is like all these things. And what I would say is, but there are certain things that move the needle and that's what I like to focus on. I just did a podcast about the difference between working smart and working hard and everyone talks about it, but what is it functionally? And I opened up with a story because I happened to be in this power plant in Estonia and I was doing this talk to a bunch of teachers in from Finland and across Europe. And when I was there, I recorded this podcast episode and I was walking through this power plant and the story opens like this, that there was a power plant and we're very, very active. And one day, it just shuts down. Out of nowhere, it just shuts down. Dead silence.

And, you know, the employees are freaking out. The operations manager doesn't know what to do. They try to fix it for a few hours and no resolve. So finally, operations manager picks up the phone, tracks down a local technician, the engineer comes down and he says, "You gotta help me, you know, we're losing all this business. This is very dangerous and so on. Please help me." And the technician walks around the floor of the power plant and you see all these beams everywhere and he goes to one specific beam and there is, you know, it has a number of electrical boxes on it. He goes to one specific box and he puts an x on it, and he opens up the box and inside are what you expect, all these bolts and wires and screws. He goes to one screw and he turns it clockwise, just about a quarter of an inch and all of a sudden, bam. The entire power plant turns back on.

And the operations manager's floored, he's like, "Thank you so much. You saved the day." He was like, "Thank you." He's like, "How much do I owe you?" And the technician looks at him and he says, "That will be

\$10,000." And then just enthusiastically, the operations manager was like, "What? Are you crazy? You were here for all of 5 minutes, 10 minutes, you know, all you did was turn a screw. Anyone could have done that." And he's like, "Give me an itemized bill." And the technician, he reaches into his back pocket, takes out a piece of paper, a note pad and writes something down quick. He hands it to the operations manager, the operations manager looks at it and says, "I understand."

And then immediately takes out a check and writes a check for \$10,000 and gives it to the technician. When you look at that piece of paper for the itemized bill, it says something very simple, it says, "turning a screw, \$1, knowing what screw to turn, \$9,999." And the lesson here is not that, you know, we have a screw loose, right? The lesson here are two things, that in today's economy, knowledge is not only power, it's profit, right? The reason why we want to teach children to learn faster is because the faster you can learn, the faster you can earn. And I don't just mean financially, that's obvious, right? But I mean all the treasures of your life, even this young woman who helped save her mom's life by reading 30 books in 30 days, you know, it helped boost the treasure of health and wellness, right?

And so, in a book, that's why I love reading and teaching kids how to read and making reading a habit every single day because leaders are readers. That's the best exercise, I find, for the brain where the children develop and, or even for adults, especially if he can learn how to read, how to read faster. But the other lesson besides knowledge is power and profit is that there are certain, what they call force multipliers in the military. Not that I subscribe to this, but it's just specifically to violence is up, but it's more that certain input, you can get much more output.

And so, these focal points, if you will, or like that x on the box or the screw, in what, in your children's life or in your own life, what are the key ingredients that's going to give the positive change that's going to turn everything else on? You know, some people would refer to it as the first domino, that like the first domino that you hit and then all these other dominoes get hit because of it.

And so I like to focus on those 10 areas of self-care. Those are very specific leverage points that give you what, you know, more, more return, more output for this, for similar input, if you will. But outside of that in terms of what education could look like besides whole self, you know, like wellness, because I think people could learn how to read faster or remember names or learn languages fast like we teach, but they also have to treat the hardware. So that's what a lot of those 10 things do. It affects the... You know, I teach people the software, the strategies, but the hardware is your brain. So that's why sleep and good diet and stress management, all of that affects the hardware.

Outside of that, we know that classrooms today aren't limited by four walls, right? Right now, you can learn anything on podcasts, on YouTube and everything, and kids are growing up, you know, one swipe away. They're growing up on joysticks. And what's sometimes difficult is when we sit them down and just lecture to them. And here's the thing with the human brain, the human brain doesn't learn by consuming information. It doesn't learn through consumption. It learns through creation, especially co-creation. It's not this model of being lectured to and sitting quietly by yourself. This assembly line education, you know, one size fits all because that geared us...because if you're stressed right now, the reason why adults are stressed is because we all grew up with a 20th century education, and the 20th century education at the turn of the century prepared us for a 20th century world which was, on the turn of the century, it was working in factories and farms. We had to be able to follow simple orders, right? We didn't need to be able to think for ourselves and do all these different things.

So what I'm thinking is education right now, we have access to the greatest minds on the planet, right? We have more access through the internet, whether it's on our phone or a laptop or whatever, our smart devices than, you know, than the leaders of this world had 20 years ago, you know, with all the access that we have. And so we have great access. And so I'm thinking exactly what you're saying is that, you know, we become facilitators, we become coaches. We'd be able to reinforce experiments. We're exposing children to diverse experiences. When a child exhibits strong interest in something, they develop certain talents. We provide them opportunities to be able to develop them. We support their brain health, we support their intellectual needs. We support their emotional needs, which is really important because, you know, children right now with social media.

And again, I don't say technology is bad, I just feel like it's a tool that, you know, I love it, that we can learn all these different things, that we could stay in touch with our friends and our family. But, you know, when you hear about Facebook depression and distraction, all of these things where people feel like they're less than because they're comparing their life to their friend's life and everyone posts, everyone's posting pretty pictures of, "There's this beautiful life," and people feel like, you know, fear of missing out. They feel like they're not enough. And I really feel that's our biggest fear, whether as a child or as an adult, is that we're not enough, because if we're not enough, we're not going to be loved and we're not going to be taken care of and we won't survive. I think preserving and fostering that growth mindset by not praising so much ability and a talent, but praising effort is so important in this process.

I think, getting them to study and really read and research where, you know, you give access to books is a big predictor to success because it stimulates the mind, it helps make new connections. I think being wary of when we're talking to kids about giving them labels, like because identities are like "genius" or whatever, or "gifted," or whatever could lead to an emotional strain in some cases. I think it's important also just to have your kids not tested, but more like, as in like IQ, but have them assessed to find out where their natural talents lie. Also just to test for things we know, whether it's EDD or dyslexia and stuff like that.

I would also say that if people are having a sticking point, let's say, in terms of managing their behavior, children, right? A lot of people try even with themselves to try to struggle using willpower or motivation and get a child to read every day or to study every day. Or even with yourself as you're listening to this. "So I want to change a behavior. I want to stop smoking," or, "I want to stop procrastinating," whatever that is, that you don't just treat the behavior, that there's a much more enriched view, if you will, if you pull back a little bit from just behavior that if you're, we've all suffered and struggled through from self-sabotage, right? But I think everyone can identify with procrastinating, putting things off. Why do we do that? Why do our kids do that? Right?

And I would say that if you imagined behavior as being one line of one level of transformation, if you will, a lot of people try to just motivate themselves or use willpower to change that behavior, but that rarely works. What I would say is look right above that level of behavior into this level of capability. "Capability" meaning your training. So for example, let's say you want to train a child to behave. They want them to read every day or to study every day. But the capability, they're not doing it. Maybe they weren't taught the capability of how to study or how to read faster, or how to, you know, we just did a whole program on how to teach kids how to study. We did a podcast episode. They put it on the front page of the "L.A. Times" for high school students and such, because it was such an important topic and it was just like, you know, they weren't capabilities. So some people don't study, for example, the behavior, kids don't study, but you can't force them to study.

Maybe if they had greater capability, they were trained how to study in psychology. They have something called the competence/confidence loop, meaning that a lot of people, when you get more competent at something, let's say it's studying or reading or playing golf or whatever it is, you become more confident at that. And because you're more confident at playing golf, for example, you're going to do it more often, which is going to increase your competence or your ability and it becomes a positive cycle of momentum, right? So it's a competence/confidence loop. So you train capability.

But if the child's still not doing the behavior, then you look above capability and look at this thing called beliefs and values. These things called beliefs and values, meaning that maybe the behavior you're looking to teach is teach somebody, I do this with businesses all the time, how to remember names, but maybe they don't have the capability, they weren't taught how to remember someone's name, or even if they're taught the level above that, beliefs and values, maybe they believe they have a horrible memory and all behavior is belief-driven, right?

So you have to analyze those beliefs or maybe it's not their belief. Maybe it's their values, maybe it's their values, meaning that maybe they don't value remembering somebody's name. It's not important to them, so is that gonna affect their behavior? It could explain their behavior or lack thereof, but let's say they have that in line. Look at the highest level above beliefs and values for your children or yourself, and that's the level of identity. Identity. And what's an identity? An identity, simplest way I can think of, of putting it is you've all heard, you've heard that the two most powerful words in the English language are also the shortest. "I am," because whatever you put after that becomes your life, right? It becomes your destiny, if you will.

And so let's say the behavior is you want your child to stop procrastinating or you want to stop procrastinating, right? But your identity is, "I am a procrastinator." You wonder why it'd be difficult to be able to get the person to...or let's say the behavior is, "I want to stop smoking," but their identity is, "I am a smoker." What I'm articulating here is for people to be sensitive, so to make us a better teacher, to make us a better parent or human being, a manager of our teams for work or what have you or coworkers is you don't take things personally because once you want to have these distinctions, you could see where people are stuck because it's not, it's very rarely the level of behavior when you can't get somebody to do what they need to do or you can get yourself to do what you need to do. Look at the other levels and that's, that's a more of a whole self approach towards transformation.

I would add there one more level. I would look right below behavior. Right below behavior is this level called environment. Environment. And we're, again, we're talking about these five levels of transformation, if you will. That environmental level, let's say the behavior, you want your child to read every single day. But the environment is it's dark or the environment is they don't have their, they didn't bring their book home from school or whatever. That could affect the behavior, right? Because environment plays a big role in terms of our habits. And so, we know, for example, first, you create your habits and then your habits create you. So one of the things I'd be doing with children is encourage any of their habits of thought, the questions that they're always asking themselves. Questions like, "How can I use this? How does this relate to what I already know? How can I teach this to somebody else?" Right?

And so, you ingrained these habits and also habits of feeling, right, habits of play, habits of fascination, habits of confidence, if you will, showing them how to use their physiology. You know, when that physiology affects your psychology and changing your posture and your breathing affects your level of attention, you know, for

example. But once you know these different levels, we know we opened this conversation with saying that, "Yes, it's important to have perspective." And one of the things that changes our perspective is changing the questions that we use. We know questions are the answer, that if a child reads a page in a book, or you read a page in a book, get to the end and forget what you just read, you know, you wonder where it is and you just re-read it and you still don't know what you just read, most people aren't asking questions about it.

Even when it comes to a test, right? Like standardized tests, you'll have pages and pages of reading comprehension, and then you have 10 questions at the end. And when kids get to those questions, most of them will be like, you know, "Oh, I didn't know that's what they're looking for." Why not look at the questions first? And then when you're reading something, you're like, "Oh, there's an answer. There's an answer. There's an answer." Because you're activating that part of your brain they call the reticular activating system, RAS, because your brain at any given time could focus on 1 to 2 billion different stimulus, but it doesn't because you would go crazy, right? Primarily, your brain is a deletion device. It tries to keep all that out and you can only focus on a certain amount, a finite amount of information.

So what determines what you focus on, one of the things are your questions. So questions really are the answer. And going back to school, there was six primary questions, right? Five Ws and the H, right? And so, going to look at these logical levels of transformation, if you will, these levels of transformation, the identity level, the top level answers the question of who, right? The beliefs and values answers the question of why. The capability level answers the question of how. How do you remember names? How do you study a textbook? How do you learn a language, right? All this stuff that we do shows on. The fourth level, behavior, answers the question of what. That's the behavior is trying to change with your kids or for yourself, or your spouse, or your team, whatever. And then, the final level is the level of environment. And that answers the question of when and where, right?

Because it's not just, "where" is very important because context, we talked about context is the kingdom. And that when you forget someone's name, one of the first questions you ask yourself is, "Where do I know this person from?" Right? The "where" is very important. And the "where" of optimizing. We do, we have a whole program online for students, like a 30-day program that they get, you know, study skills, speed reading, memory, and part of it is designing your perfect learning environment from the temperature to best lighting to the best seating, to the best, you know, environment and how to hold the book and everything else like that for optimizing your eye, you know, to be able to process more information and so on with your peripheral vision. But it's also the power of when. Like we did a whole show on, it's not just how to do things or what to do it, or even starting with why, it's also the when you do something, you know, based on your chronotype which is the four different body types determine, like, when you actually check your email, when's the best time to study, based on your body type, when's the best time to go to sleep.

And, you know, according to your body type, maybe as an adult, when's the best time to ask for a raise or whatever. There's certain times, based on your hormones, when you're gonna get the best result. So, it's so much more when we're thinking about education and learning and personal growth, you know, it's this full spectrum here. And ultimately, the reason why I focused, even I went through these five levels is because ultimately, you want a change of behavior because nothing changes unless a behavior changes, right? Because the formula I follow is be, do, have, share, right? Be, do, have, and that's intact in that order. And it has to happen in that order in terms of who you're gonna be, identity and your beliefs, and then doing in terms of your capabilities and your behaviors.

Then you get to have, right? A lot of people, and we know this, right? Somebody wins the lottery. They jump right to the "have" part, they have millions of dollars. But what happens? We know that historically, all the data shows that somebody wins a lottery, has millions of dollars, after a certain amount of time, they not only lose all that money, but they actually go below what they had to begin with, because they got to the "have" stage and they were given millions of dollars, but they were never at the "be" stage, right? They were never being a millionaire. And so, all behavior is belief-driven. And then there's interventions at all of these different levels. You know, many that you're aware of, Katie, that could help people to change their identity, to help them change their state, to help them change their habits, right? To help them change their negative self-talk, to help them to be able to train them in the capabilities.

But if people don't have the distinctions, then nothing changes unless you take this unconscious and you make it conscious, right? Otherwise, people just treat everything in life as like fate, and they don't have any control over it because they haven't had these distinctions. And these are the kinds of things I feel like educators and parents and also students really deserve to know, because otherwise, really it's the difference between being a thermometer and a thermostat. This, you know, part of learning with children is we use metaphors, right? Parables. It's one of the things that if a child is struggling with something, I ask them the question like, "How do you compare this to an apple?" Right? Because all learning is taking something you don't know and comparing it and linking it to something you already know, because so many times where people lose children when they're teaching is they try to connect two unknowns and they're not connecting it to something they already know, and it stays outside of themselves.

But learning is taking something unknown and connecting it to something that is known on the inside. And metaphors allow you to do that. So I use this metaphor, very simply, of a thermometer versus a thermostat, that you want your kids and you yourself wanna identify more as a thermostat, not a thermometer. Because what's a thermometer do? The primary function of a thermometer is it reacts to the environment, literally immediately just reacts to the environment, whatever the environment is giving it. And human beings and children, adults, we are occasionally thermometers. We react to our environment, we react to the weather. We react to the economy. We react to politics. We react to how a client or customer treats us, right?

But in actuality, right, a lot of people have those same kind of external stimuli, but they don't respond the same way because they're more of a thermostat, meaning a thermostat doesn't react to the environment. It gauges what's going on in the environment, but it sets a temperature. Another word for "temperature," it can be a goal, it can be a vision, it can be an intention, and what happens to the environment? It rises and raises to that new vision, if you will. Talking about the power of imagination, creativity, strategy, the stuff we talked about earlier. And so, we know that a thermostat is more proactive,

Katie: I 100% agree with that and that's something I talk about often with my children. And I think it's something that I know I, at least, had to somewhat learn as an adult. And I think that's an important, super important lesson to know from an early age.

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Katie: And I literally could talk to you for hours. In fact, I've done that in real life before, but I wanna make sure I ask the last few parting questions I love to ask. And the first is, this may be a hard question for you, but is there a book or a couple of books that have really impacted your life that you would recommend? I know we've mentioned already several in this podcast. But are there any that really stand out?

Jim: One book for me is like asking like what's, like, the biggest, most important book is like asking what's the most important meal or food I've ever had that's had the greatest impact on my life. I feed my body and my brain daily. I mean, everyone can see my book list if they Google my name. And just recommended books, but I would say one... It's interesting. Remember I told this story about this young lady who read 30 books in 30 days? She sent me one of those books, and in it...well, first of all, the book she was reading at the time, the last book when she told me this story, was that she, as a bookmark she was using. Remember her motivation was her mom, and...well, I get emotional thinking about this.

The photograph she was using as the bookmark was her mom in the hospital, and it reminded me of being in the hospital and, you know, with her coming through it, I kind of went full circle with my own life, because that was me in that hospital bed. But she sent me this book, and it was about quantum physics applied towards health. And I had never heard of anything like this. This was 25 years ago or something. And eventually, I got around to reading it, and it blew my mind. I had never...I didn't even know what quantum physics was, and I didn't really take ownership of my health at that time. But after hearing this, her mother's story, I realized that we have much more influence on our wellness than what I thought, what I was taught.

And so, I read the book, and I was blown away, and I keep a journal, right? Every day, I think that's important. I would recommend everyone to do that. I recommend you teach your children to do that and so on because they do all these...I'm wondering if geniuses, all these geniuses out there, they kept journals. And it's curious like, "Do they keep journals because they're geniuses? Or is it because they're journaling all the time that they become geniuses?" Right? You think about da Vinci's journal and Einstein's journal. I mean, they're priceless, right? Anyway, I wrote in my journal saying, "I wanna meet this author. I'm not ready right now. I'm not smart enough because I wanna have a good conversation with him. But give me two years."

And I wrote this in my journal. Two years later, I am in Boston and I'm giving a talk and I get out of the lecture center, I turn the hallway, and I swear to you, Katie, there's the author. Two years to the date. And this is a book on quantum physics, right? And so, that just blew my mind. And we have this... It's Deepak Chopra,

right? This was 25 years ago. And I tell him the story. I was like, "Oh, you don't know that I read this book two years ago. I wrote it for my journal." And I said the two years and, "Two years later, this is you." And I was just blown away. And we sit down and have this incredible conversation over lunch about Ayurvedic body types and how they correlate to learning styles.

And I remember he said this phrase to me, it's like, "Jim, the average person has..." I was talking about quick thinking, which is like something I'm really big on, teaching people how to make decisions, and solve problems and everything because we're not taught how to make decisions, yet our life is a reflection of all our decisions. He's like, "Jim, the average person has 60,000 thoughts a day." And I'm thinking, "Wow. That's a lot of thoughts." He was like, "Yeah. But the problem is 95% of those thoughts are the same thoughts they had yesterday and the day before that, and the day before that." And we know the power of thoughts are things, and that's why people aren't changing because, you know, they have the same habit of thought, going back to those logical levels of transformation. But the book was, that was the book, it was "Quantum Healing," and it was just one of many of those books, if you will. But it kind of got me really open to the idea that thoughts are things. But since then, I mean, for four and a half years I've been reading a book a day. You know, at least recently, at least five to six books a week. So, I love books. I've never read a book that I just, I didn't get some value out of, just like people. I've never met a person in my life I haven't learned something from.

Katie: Absolutely. I think you're right. The lessons in life are everywhere. And last question and then I wanna make sure people can find you online, but, is there any parting advice or just a single piece of advice that you'd like to leave us with? You've already shared so much and given so much wisdom. But any last parting advice?

Jim: I would say this, that, I have a quote that I get tagged in every single day dozens of times, and it basically says this, it compares your life to an egg. That, "If an egg is broken by an outside force, life ends. But if it's broken by an inside force, life begins." All great things begin on the inside, right? And I believe that you have genius inside of you. You have greatness inside of you. Your kids have greatness inside of them. They have genius inside of them. And that my advice is to remember and to teach them that genius is learned, that genius is learned. It's trained, right? And it's really our work as, whether it's as parents, or as teachers, it's about transcending.

It's about ending the trance. Transcend. End the trance. Ending this mass hypnosis propagated by media or marketing that we're not enough, that somehow we're broken, like, you know, I was the boy with the broken brain. And teaching people the truth, that genius is learned, that through discipline, study, through consistency, if you're persistent, you know, you can get it. And if you're consistent, that you could keep it and it's available to everyone regardless of their age, their background, their career, their education, their financial situation, their gender, their personal history, their IQ, none of that matters. It's available to all of us. And so, having that mindset that we are responsible, that greatness comes from within, and it's available to all of us, that's the advice, is to encourage that.

I believe that, really, my mission is yes, we teach people tools and resources and techniques, but also there's an attitude here, you know, that we stand for. We stand for, all of us collectively who's listening to this, we stand for, you know, our potential, that it's not fixed like our shoe size, that it could grow with intention and through effort and everything is available to us. And the goal to do it is to be able to do it together through community, exactly what you've created and dedicated your life to.

Katie: I love it. And, Jim, where can people find you? I know that you have inspired a lot of people in this episode and they wanna stay in touch with you and keep learning from you. And, of course, the links will be in the show notes, as well. But where can people find you online?

Jim: I would just say two places. People listen to our podcast. When people listen to it, they're short. Every episode is only 10 or 15 minutes long. We don't even have sponsors in it. People could listen to it. There are brain hacks for busy people who wanna learn faster and achieve more. So there's episodes on how to study. There's an episode on how to listen better, how to learn a language, how to change your habits, how to break old habits. There's an episode on my top 10 favorite brain foods. There's an episode actually where I teach the 10 keys that I taught here, but I show you how to memorize it and give a speech without notes. There are episodes of how to remember names and how to read faster and have better focus, and it's all available.

Really, I designed it to be an online portable academy. You start with episode one, download all the episodes, and it's like a mobile mind. So you have it on there and it doesn't take up a lot of room on your phone because it's so short. People can just go to kwikbrain.com and access any of that, K-W-I-K, brain, that's really my last name, .com. And also get some free training on how to teach you how to memorize the periodic table and some really fun stuff and on video form. We make that available for people. And then the last thing, the second thing I would say is on social media. Like you, you know, we're very active on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

And so, what I would suggest everybody does that will accelerate the learning is take a screenshot of this episode, if you will, post it, tag Katie and tag myself so we see it. And I would say that if you... My last tip for everybody is if you wanna learn something faster, learn it with the intention of teaching somebody else, because I want everyone, if they're willing to do this, I challenge you to re-listen to this episode because I know it was dense, take notes. And if you don't know how to take notes, we did a whole episode on our podcast on how to take notes effectively because 98% of the population don't because they're not taught how.

When you listen to it, take notes and share your biggest aha. Learn with the intention of teaching a friend of yours, or your children, or your family, or somebody at work, because when you learn with the intention of teaching, your focus is better. You'll take better notes, you'll ask better questions. And take a screenshot of this episode, tag us both and share with us and your description, whether it's on Facebook or Twitter or Instagram, your biggest aha, your biggest takeaway, because that's you stepping into the role of being a teacher again and owning the information, because I think the best teachers are the best students. And post your biggest aha or takeaways from this episode, and then maybe your question, because I'll definitely see it and do the best I can to answer your burning question you have about it. So I'm just @jimkwik, K-W-I-K, on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and I love to connect with you.

Katie: Wonderful. You're so generous to offer that. And, of course, those links will be in the show notes, as well. Jim, like I said, I could talk to you all day and I think we're gonna have to do a round two. Maybe one day once we get questions in, but I so much appreciate you being here. I know that time is one of our most valuable resources and assets, and I really appreciate you taking the time to be with us today.

Jim: Katie, thank you so much. I appreciate the cape that you wear. And if you're still listening to this right now, like Katie mentioned, your time and your attention is your most valuable asset and it's the one thing you can't get back. And so, I thank you for your time, respect you so much for investing in your growth and your

family's growth. And I wish your days be full of lots of life, lots of love, lots of laughter, and always lots of learning.

Katie: Thanks, Jim, and thanks to all of you for listening. And I hope to see you again next time on "The Wellness Mama Podcast."

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