



**Episode 191: Understanding How Gaming Disorder
& Gaming Addiction Are Affecting Our Kids**

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Katie: Hello and welcome to the Wellness Mama Podcast. I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com. And this episode is going to be super important for parents, but actually, surprisingly, not just for parents because I am here with Dr. Sam Shay who is a chiropractor focusing on functional nutrition and functional testing, but who has walked his own journey to overcome a 25-year addiction to video games, a 15-year addiction to sugar, as well as overcoming insomnia, gut problems, and mood issues.

And those are all things I get a ton of questions about, but especially the gaming side because that's, obviously, a very popular thing in today's world and a lot of moms email me with questions related to that. And Dr. Shay helps gamers and those with gaming disorder unplug from their screens and get back into their lives. And he also coaches concerned families and friends of problem gamers on how to support them. So I think it's gonna be a fascinating episode. I cannot wait to dive in. Dr. Shay, welcome. And thanks for being here.

Dr. Shay: Thanks for having me, Katie. I really appreciate the opportunity. I know there's a lot of concerned parents out there around problem gaming. And as someone who was a gamer starting at age, you know, 8, 9, and had it for 25 years, I can speak to kind of the whole life cycle of video games from the perspective as a child, all the way up through an adult. And I'm happy to really share kind of the insights of what's going on inside the mind of the gamer and also how to get out of that particular digital trap.

Katie: I cannot wait because my brother was a gamer, is a gamer. I don't think he's ever struggled with addiction, but it wasn't something I was ever that attracted to. So it's not something I understand well, but now that I have kids, I realize it's something they may have an interest in at some point. And I know a lot of people who are very interested in gaming, but to start with, I'd love to hear your story because I don't think I can drop a line like, "A 25-year addiction to video games," without asking you to give us some context on that. So can you, if you don't mind sharing your personal story?

Dr. Shay: Sure. The condensed version is that my gaming started as a means to escape stress and escape boredom. So my parents had a pretty terrible divorce when I was six years old. It was so bad that one of my sisters ended up in a hospital with a bleeding stress ulcer. And my other sisters dealt with the divorce in different ways. I dealt with it by having one hand on the remote controller, soon to be game controller, and the other hand in a bag of sugar, whether it was Kit Kats or Hershey's or, you know, breakfast cereal, which is basically glorified sugar. And so to make the connection early, the cross-pollination of sugar use and video game use literally go hand in hand for me and for a lot of other people. And I used video games. I got exposed to video games when I was, like, eight or nine. And I used it to escape from the troubles of the divorce, as well as dealing with bullying and social isolation and rejection at school. So I would come home and just numb out in front of a screen.

And I also used it to get out of boredom because I found school very boring when it wasn't emotionally harrowing. And there may be parents who are listening that say, "Well, my kid has a great home life. They love school, but they still play video games. They're not stressed at all." Well, one of the most sinister stressful thoughts I believe on the planet is, "I'm bored." And the reason why I say it's sinister is because people don't realize that, "I am bored," is a very stressful state to be in. And people look to avoid that feeling of boredom. And video games are literally the most plug-and-play way to escape boredom, at least in today's society.

So what happened was that, I mean, I started playing video games, you know, very... This is, like, Second Master system, NES, and then later on the Game Boy and Second Genesis. I mean, some of these consoles, people may not be familiar with because they're so old, but just basically walking through the whole oric of playing consoles to portables to computer games. And then I started internet gaming actually in the early '90s. This was before Ethernet. So this was all dial-up when it was just, like, letters and numbers representing what you were doing. I played one game called Medivia where it was text only.

If you didn't type fast enough, you know, if you were, like, you know, you're out there in the world and there's, you know, the basilisk fires a fireball at you. If you don't type, "Attack basilisk," fast enough, you're gonna die as your digital character. So people talk about, "Oh, all the benefits of video gaming." I said, "Well, I can point to at least one benefit is I learned how to type really fast. I'm not sure if it was worth the 25 years, but, you know, it's something. So I played online games, online internet games, social games. And I even begged my sister at one point in, like, '95 for money to buy a digital character. So the idea of spending money on digital gaming, I did that as early as 1995.

And it's just kind of increased from there in terms of world-wide, you know, pay to play or spending a lot of money on it. And then I got involved in another game called ADOM, which took about two years of my life. And then in college, this is when Ethernet was first available. And this is where games like EverQuest and Counter-Strike and Unreal Tournament were really popular. And I would witness fellow members of my dorm, like, just spend eight hours a day playing EverQuest and, like, actually do shifts eight hours and then have another person do an eight-hour shift. And, like, they'd actually do shifts to farm various equipment and loot and whatnot.

And then when I went into chiropractic school, I was still playing ADOM and kind of solo games during university. And then in chiropractic school, that introduced to the online free what were called flash games, which were basically and Nintendo and Sega Master System quality games from the late '80s, early '90s, that

are available for free now by the hundreds and thousands online. And they just make their revenue through advertising, the advertising columns on the side. And I decided in April 2014 to stop gaming. And what happened was that there was a women's expo that I was gonna present at.

And I was gonna talk on video game addiction. And it was a 5,000-person expo in New Zealand. And it didn't really sit right for me to be playing video games, yet talk about video game addiction. So I stopped. And at the expo, it was really interesting. I had one of the best booths where everyone had to pass by not only to get in, but also to get out. And I had a big banner that says, "Help your child's video game addiction." And what was really interesting is that... Katie, can you guess how many of the 5,000 mothers and grandmothers and aunts that came through proactively came up to my booth to seek help for their child's video game addiction?

Katie: I don't know. I would guess a decent number, just because I hear from a lot of moms who are concerned about this though.

Dr. Shay: Three.

Katie: No way.

Dr. Shay: Three, only three. And the rest looked at the sign, the "Help Your Child's Video Game Addiction," and got really, like, had this really interesting expression of kind of, like, shock and fear and, like, quickly turned and walked away or others came up to me and were defiant just with no warm-up. They just came up to me and started defending their... I didn't say anything. They just came up and started verbally arguing with me or the parents would say, "Oh, they're fine. They'll grow out of it. They're fine." And I actually wrote a 4,000-word article on my blog on the five ways parents use video games as parenting tools, how they work, and how they backfire. And by the way, I had both my parents and two of my sisters read this article before I published it because I said, "I want this to be fair, not an attack piece." And they read it and said, "It's fine. Please publish it."

And basically, what I got from that experience was parents use video games, again, not maliciously or anything. It's just, like, video games are a way to have an instant reward structure. You know, you do good, you can play. It's an instant punishment structure. If you don't do this, they'll take it away. It's a way to give a time out. Like, it's cheap reliable babysitter. So you can put the kids in front of a video game and just give yourself as a parent a break, either long or short-term. And then the other reason that was given was one parent bragged to me. He says, "You know, I want my kids to play video games because I can track them wherever they are because I put tracking software on their iPhone. And I know my son always has his... I know where he is at all times because he always has his iPhone on because he loves his video games."

And the parents also said that, "Well, I'd rather that my children play video games instead of get into drugs, risky behavior, gangs, or other high-risk behavior." So he said, "Video games is... You know, I know where they are at all times. They're indoors. They're safe. This is the lesser evil. And I'm confident I'll grow out of it." So that was their reasoning, which I can understand the logic. And that's what the article goes into more depth about, where it works and where it backfires, but the three women who came up to me who said yes, they have a problem with their kids and the video games and want help, is they all had the three exact same scenarios, their kids that were boomeranged.

They came from college or university, had no job, had no real social life or romantic life, and were just staying

in the house playing video games all day, not going anywhere, and got very reactive and verbally abusive towards their mothers when the mothers tried to exact discipline on them to take the video games away. And one woman even expressed concerns that her son would get physical, if she tried to take the video games away. So it was very startling to have that contrast of where the state was of video games and parenting. Now granted, this was over four years ago. And I think the culture has shifted since then. And so more recognition of this is a problem, particularly with the meteoric rise of games like Fortnite, League of Legends, OverWatch, and other kind of more online massive social gaming.

Katie: Wow. There's so much I want to unpack about what you just said, but first, I want to establish a little context. So again, as someone who never really understood video games or never thought they were interesting I guess, I never really tried them much, even as a kid, can you explain psychologically and also just from a behavioral standpoint what makes them so addictive. Because I don't have first-hand experience. And lot of moms listening maybe don't, but those weren't around as much when we were kids. We had the old school NES, I think. And I never played it, but what is it about them, especially the new ones, that makes them so addictive?

Dr. Shay: Well, there's six major reasons. Number one is that they're interactive, is that they're actually engaging. And so there's a participatory nature of it. I mean, video games are...they're a subset of screen-based behaviors. And I categorize them into interactive, passive, and mixed. So interactive are things like video games. You're actually engaging with it actively. Passive are things like watching movies and television. And mixed is social media where you can either be passive or proactive in your consumption. So video games, they are fundamentally interactive. Otherwise, you're just watching someone game.

The other reasons that they're immediate is that literally you can start a video game with the push of a button. And they are integrated and accessible, which would be the third reason why. You can immediately jump in, but you're also accessible from... Every piece of technology has had a video game capability moving into it. And there's also exclusive technologies. You know, like there's consoles, but you've got iPhones now that have video games woven into it, watches, even... There are VR, like, glasses, computers. Every piece of technology has video games woven into it. So they are everywhere.

The other reason why they're so addictive is that they're repeatable. Either you play it the same way or you can play it with different strategies or different methods. These so-called, like, open worlds like Legend of Zelda was I think the first open world game where you can just wander around and do stuff without...in a nonlinear fashion. Like, you can just repeat the same game in different ways. They're also novel, meaning that there's always new games being put out onto the market. Now, I know the comparison of video games to recreational drugs is a land mine, a mine field rather, but, you know, it takes years and decades for a new street drug to hit, but it takes a month or two for the next new game to come out. So there's always new material and better and better material as technology and graphics advance and only just get more interesting.

And then the other reason why they're so addictive is actually neurological. There is a reflex in the brain wired through the eyes and ears called the tectospinal reflex. The tecto refers to the portion of the midbrain where there's some special circuitry to pay attention to rapid changes in color, light density, and movement. So think of a police siren. Like, everyone will immediately target with their eyes the flashing police lights because it's moving. It's alternating colors red and blue. And the brightness of the lights is getting brighter as the light goes towards you and dimmer as it goes away. And that's intentional because the eye will automatically get drawn

to that. And that's a hard-wired reflex from as hunter-gatherers.

If you're walking in the bush and you see a flash of orange out of the corner of your eye, it's out of the corner of your eye. You're not actually focusing on it, but if you see it out of the corner of your eye, your eyes will dart immediately to that side. You don't know what that was, but your eyes will automatically target that, you know, rapid movement, the color orange, or the shadow. The change in light density and brightness just kinda moved. That's a hard-wired genetic reflex to protect you from eminent emergency danger. So when you look at a video game. What is a video game? It's rapid changes in movement, rapid changes in color, and rapid changes in brightness.

And that's why you can have people, kids, adults, whatever, literally glued to the screen because that reflex is constantly being fired to stare at something that's rapidly changing because your body interprets it as a potential danger. And then on top of that, you have the layered interest and excitement and novelty and accessibility and repeatability of the video game itself. So it's, like, this neurological reflex is layered on it, as well. So those are the six major reasons why video games are so addictive.

Katie: Wow. That makes so much sense when you explain it like that. And I'm curious, too. I feel like you touched on this a little bit, but I feel like the societal perception is that there is maybe these teenage boys that are really sucked into video games. And that's the main demographic. And it's usually these, like, shooter games or, like I said, it is not my first-hand things. I don't even know much about it, but is that who you're seeing who's actually at risk or are there other segments of the population that are equally at risk of video game addiction?

Dr. Shay: Yeah. So the stereotype you're referring to is the stereotype of under 18 males who play war games, shooters, and fighting games. And what will shock a lot of your listeners is that according to the Electronic Software Association's 2018 statistics, we're talking this year, under 18 males who game is only 17% of the gaming population. So for a contrast, females over 18 comprise 33% of gamers, which is almost double the number of male gamers under 18. Now, people over 50 comprise 23% of the gaming population. Some of your listeners may be very confused by these statistics because when the issue of video games comes up, we conjure in our minds the stereotypical male playing fighters, war games, and shooters and so on, but it's the genre that's different.

So my mother, a retired medical doctor, I mean, she would play for hours. You know, she's well beyond 50. Like, she would play for hours Boggle on her iPad or Scrabble or other type of digitized board games. So it's the genre that differs. For the females between 35 and 50, the genre is the micro-games like Candy Crush, Diner Dash, Angry Birds, and so on. And then the other age groups and genders, there's just different types of genres that people play from small apps to consoles to computers to whatever it is. So the stereotypical gamer is not the male under 18. That's just the stereotype. And I think when we think of someone who has a gaming disorder, we have to broaden our perspective on who those people might actually be.

Katie: That is fascinating. And yeah, again, it makes so much sense. So can you also explain because this is something that came up with reader questions, this whole vicarious gaming thing or, like, I know people who watch other people play video games even online. Can you kind of explain what that is and why that's become so popular?

Dr. Shay: Sure. So the vicarious gaming is also called surrogate gaming. It's gaming by proxy or bystander

gaming. There's a lot of different terms for it or secondary gaming. Basically, it's watching some other people play. Now, there's some, like, late-night hosts like Jimmy Kimmel who thinks it's absurd. And he's been public about this. And I can understand where he's coming from, but, you know, people watch people playing chess. Like, people watch people playing sports. And there is this disconnect, particularly amongst the older generation, of how can watching someone play a video game be as impressive as someone watching someone play chess or sports or anything else? And the answer is that if people realized the amount of skill that went into these world-class gamers, they would appreciate how difficult it actually is, but I'm not defending vicarious gaming.

I'm just, like, giving some perspective as to why these world-class gamers are world-class. It actually is very difficult to get to that level. The reason why it's so interesting from a vicarious gaming... And I call vicarious gaming the dubious nicotine patch for video game disorder because when I stopped gaming in 2014, I started watching a lot more gaming on YouTube. And I realized very quickly it's like, "Whoa. Wait a minute. I'm using this as a nicotine patch. And it's become its own problem." The appeal to watching games on YouTube or Twitch or wherever is, number one, it may lead to additional gaming. Like, that's how I got started on a game called ADOM is I watched my friend, Ira, play it. And I was, like, so interested I really wanted to play it. And then I lost two years of my life playing this game.

The other issue is that you can watch it from a very analytical standpoint of how different players approach the same puzzle or boss fight or whatever in very different ways. So you can actually learn and see different strategies play out. If you're trying to play a different way, you can use it as study material. The other danger of vicarious gaming is watching "epic clips" because there's some... I mean, it speaks to why it's so appealing. So there's some video games that are generally more interesting than most major movies. I mean, some games have bigger budgets than most movie films. I mean, for example, the God of War series has, like, some of the most incredible what you would call boss fights between known mythological creatures like the Greek gods.

Like, you see a full-on colossal-size battle between the anti-hero Kratos and the god Poseidon or Hades or Zeus or whatever. And it's a very engaging thing to watch, particularly when there's multiple strategies to employ. And then vicarious gaming, watching on YouTube, you can also use it to scout different games you may or may not be interested in. So you can use YouTube to check to see if you want to get into a series or if you don't, you've finished a series or one section of it, but you want to see how the sequels are turning out, you can just flick on YouTube and watch, you know, two, three hours of someone play the expansions or the sequels or the downloadable content known as DLC and see if it's worth engaging in, actually buying and playing it.

The other is that you can get really engaged with the personalities of the online streamers. And to give people some concepts, like, how can you connect with an online video gamer, well, just think of America's Got Talent. Half of the show's appeal is not the talent. It's the four judges and their, shall we say, idiosyncrasies and the drama that unfolds between them. So too in vicarious gaming, you can get really interested in the personality and history and, you know, engagement with the person you're streaming with. Like, you've got the guy named Ninja who's now a household name amongst the families who have kids who play Fortnite. You had PewDiePie who is arguably the first real world-wide video gamer who rocketed to fame. And people just get engaged with the people who are playing because then they become almost like an extended friend in some sense because you've begun to learn about them and know them.

There's also the appeal of trailer surfing, that video games, like with the movie budgets, they are also making extremely high-end, very appealing, very engaging, video game trailers. If you don't believe me, just go... I'm

not saying you don't believe me, but it's, like to listeners, like, if you want to see what I'm talking about, just go onto YouTube and put in, "Video game trailers." And watch some of them. And you will be absolutely gobsmacked by how high-end some of these trailers are, better than most movie trailers. So the whole world of vicarious gaming is its own world. And it's problematic because of how engaging it is for its own separate set of reasons, even if you're not playing. And that's why I call it a dubious nicotine patch because it, in and of itself, can become problematic.

Katie: Wow. I'm so fascinated by the idea of this. And as you were talking, I'm also wondering. So you've mentioned that for especially, like, younger children, but for anyone, this can be a remedy for boredom or it's a way to find, it sounds like, kind of a connection because they feel connected to the game or to other players or they are kind of wrapped up in this world. Do you think this is also partially symptomatic of modern society and that lack of connection that so many of us have or... Like, I'm curious if you have any remedies to the parents listening that you would suggest to kind of address those two things, especially the boredom that happens and also needing that connection because that's obviously a very normal and healthy desire, especially in childhood, is to connect, but in a video game, that definitely isn't the most natural way that it would normally happen. So any advice to parents who may be seeing those changes in their kids?

Dr. Shay: Well, I think yeah, lots of things I can recommend. And the first one is to actually understand the signs of a gaming disorder. And, like, actually having a checklist to see is there a problem here or a potential problem here? So the first one is... Like, there's nine major signs that have been detailed by the American Psychology Association, nine signs of potential gaming disorder. So there's nine of those, which I'll cover, but then there's three additional ones that I've come up with that I modeled after the CDC's definition of heavy and binge drinking. And, again, the connection between video game use and drinking is kind of a mine field, but you'll see in a moment, but there's things you've really got to, as a parent, is there a problem here or is this just casual gaming that's just fun and it's not actually problematic?

So the first of the nine signs to look for according to the APA, preoccupation. Like, is a person, whether it's yourself or a child, just constantly thinking and planning what the next gaming session? Now, I definitely went through this in my throes of video game addiction just always thinking about gaming all the time. The second sign is withdrawal, meaning signs of discomfort or side effects, if you stop. I absolutely had major anxiety and would dive further into my sugar use, if I had my video game privileges taken away. The third sign is tolerance, meaning, like, you need more stimulation. Like, you just get used to it. Like, for example, with...the old games of NES back in the early '90s are now viewed as campy or retro and not as engaging or thrilling as they used to be, you know, 20-plus years ago. So you need more stimulation, more faster, better graphics and so on.

The fourth sign is you can't stop or can't reduce. Like, if people try to stop, but can't, that was certainly me. I tried to quit, but then I'd just go back. Especially if there was a new stressor that emerged in my life, I just jumped back into video games as the known anesthesia. The fifth sign is if you or a child are giving up activities for video games like not wanting to socialize, not coming to dinners, eating at the family dinner table, not wanting to be on vacation or if you're on vacation, all you're doing is playing video games. The sixth sign is continuing despite problems, whether it's physical pain in the wrists or the neck or missing sleep. There's even a condition called Wii-itis, like the Nintendo Wii with the little hand control you wave around. People got repetitive stress injuries from that.

The seventh one is deception and covering up, hiding or lying about your gaming. Like, I would actually tuck a towel under the bottom of the door to mask the glow of the computer in the late nights so my mother

wouldn't see me gaming from the light coming underneath the door, lying about, "Well, I'm just gonna do homework," but actually it's going to play games or, "I'm just going to sleep," and then they take their iPad or their gaming device underneath the covers, which definitely happens. That's what I did.

Eighth is escaping adverse moods, which was using video games to cope with anxiety, depression, anger, resentment, or any other type of negative emotion. I include boredom in there, as well, because I view boredom as a negative emotion that people don't recognize as a negative emotion. And the ninth sign by the APA is risking and losing relationships and opportunities. So has gaming become so problematic that it's sabotaged, like, whether that's grades or job opportunities or family events or anything else? Has it actually caused damage? So those are the nine signs according to the APA.

My three signs are a bit more measurable because I wanted something that any parent or any person could actually sit down and calculate, is there a potential problem here? So the three signs are one, do you or your child or family member or friend game more hours than you sleep on any given day in a month's period? So like, "Oh, I slept eight hours," but you gamed nine hours. That's a problem. "Oh, I only gamed for five," but you slept for four. So no matter how you slice it, if you compare the hours of sleep to the hours of gaming, that is an absolute measurable sign that there may be a problem.

The other sign is based off of the CDC or the Center for Disease Control's definition of heavy drinking. So according to the CDC, and you can look this up on the CDC's website, heavy drinking for males is defined as over 14 drinks a week or on average, more than two drinks per day. So I just replaced the term "standard drink" with "standard hour" of gaming. So in my book, anyone who games over 14 hours a week is a "heavy gamer." It doesn't mean they're addicted. It means that they're a heavy gamer. Just like if someone drinks over 14 drinks a week, it doesn't necessarily mean that they're an alcoholic. It just means that they're a heavier drinker and you need to have another look to see if, you know, there's other nine signs at play.

The third sign, as I scrolled up to the definition of binge drinking on the exact same page on the CDC website, and binge drinking defined for males is over four drinks within a two-hour period. So I just translated that to gaming for at least four hours straight without any two-hour break within those four hours to "detox." So if someone games for four hours straight, that's "binge gaming" or if they game for two, have a one-hour break, and then game for another two, that's still binge gaming because there wasn't at least a two-hour break to "detox."

So those are the three measurable signs to look for a gaming disorder, gaming more hours than you sleep, over 14 hours of gaming a week, and going 4 hours straight without at least a 2-hour break in between. And if any number of those signs are at play, then you have to look at then the other nine signs that the APA has put out, if there is actual gaming disorder going on. So that's the first thing I would recommend to parents is to just really have a look to see if you, a family member, or your child or a friend actually has a sign of a gaming disorder.

In regards to other things that parents can do, number one is to remove all gaming devices from the bedroom. That is absolutely required because the risk and temptation of people gaming late at night, hiding the devices under the sheets and playing, or getting up as I did and just playing on the computer and tucking a towel under the door, that's very real. And if people's sleep get ruined by gaming, then it becomes a vicious circle because people then wake up feeling tired and exhausted and cranky. Then you're feeling more emotionally anxious or whatever and therefore, wanting to game more to numb out from the lower emotional resiliency

because you're just more emotionally vulnerable, if you're sleep-deprived. So it becomes a vicious cycle.

The other way is to not game after 8:00 p.m. or ideally even earlier because that same tectospinal reflex that keeps the nervous system engaged triggers a stress response, which makes total sense. If you see a flash of orange out of the corner of your eye, you know, several thousands of years ago, you want your stress response system, your adrenal system, your sympathetic nervous system, to fire, just in case it is an actual tiger that's about to jump on you. You want to be ready to go and to sprint away as fast as you can. Those same reflexes trigger the stress response in the human body when you're playing a video game. So it's actually amping up the stress system making it harder for people to go to sleep. Now, people may fall asleep, you know, due to sheer exhaustion, but their stress system is getting amped up.

The other thing is to not play alone. Like, I have an article on my website, you know, The Holiday Survival Guide or The Weekend Survival Guide for Gaming Disorder, where you can actually tier how many hours you or your friend or your child or whoever plays. And so if, say, you have a maximum of four hours or three hours a day of gaming on a weekend, it's, like, three hours solo gaming, but if you're playing with someone online, that's kinda somewhat social. Then you can give them four hours or if someone's come over to the house and they're playing together in the same room, you can give them five hours. So you can scale the amount of time they game based on the level of social engagement as a way to try to somehow bake in human interaction as a compromise.

The other way is to simply just cut one day of video games a week. That's like a digital fast, so to speak. There is also apps that you used to block WiFi or block games or block websites. The other that is a bit more cognitive is to kind of, like, chart out one's future. Like, where am I gonna be in five years, if I play this level of gaming every day for the next five years? Where am I gonna be in my professional life, my social life, my personal life, my family life, and so on? Another way is just simply to ask for help, whether it's social support from family or from others, coaching, training, e-books, articles and so on, just to get better educated on how to deal with any gaming disorder, whether it's your own or a family member or friends.

And the last thing, you talked about connection, that the urge to connect is very real. And this is another reason why vicarious gaming is so appealing is because you can connect to not only the activity the person is doing, but the person who's doing it, like Ninja or PewDiePie or whoever, but the drive to connect is very deep. I mean, human beings are social creatures. I mean, I recommend anyone who's listening just to read Sebastian Junger's book, "Tribe" to really get a deep, deep sense of the need and the drive for human beings to connect. And if you're asking me, "Well, how can we, you know, bring in a real connection to replace video games?" That's not a very easy answer.

And it's also not necessarily a very comfortable answer because that would require A, some really strong discipline and rules around video gaming engagement to which parents listening to this may get some very serious blow-back from their kids of restricting video games. The other thing is that it may require some real personal introspection on the part of the family to see, "Are we actually engaging enough as a family or are we all just living our individual lives under the social construct of being called a family? Is everyone doing their own thing or are we actually coming together regularly, whether it's for an evening dinner or weekend outings," or whatever it is?

And then, that's a question of looking at, "Am I, as a parent or as a family member or as a friend, really carving out time to do things with this other person in a meaningful way?" And a lot of times that's also very

challenging because a lot of parents work jobs or both parents work jobs or one family parent is absent either totally or partially, just as my father was. I only saw my father every other weekend. And most of that was based around video games. And it requires, you know... My father and I have discussed this. Like, he admits he dropped the ball on not engaging with me enough, instead just kinda putting me in front of the video games.

So it's not a very easy answer, particularly when kids our age and adults our age are becoming more and more digitized. And for some people, it may not even be video games. It may just be social media. And they think, "Oh, well, I'm being social. I'm on social media. I'm not playing video games," but they're still engaging in a screen with something digital as opposed to another human being in front of them. So that question of connection is really complicated and can be, frankly, really uncomfortable for people to address because it requires some pretty firm introspection. So I think that's a longer, more difficult conversation in some ways.

Katie: Yeah, I think you're so right. How many times in life is the best thing perhaps not the easiest thing or requires a lot of work on our part, but I see that having a digital business myself, but I see that we're so connected sort of digitally, but we are also increasingly less connected with actual people. And that does take some more work. And it takes time. And there is no app for that. You have to just put in the work and put in the time. And for us, that's meant creating a family culture that, hopefully, our kids want to continue to be a part of, that we do things adventurous or we do things that prevent boredom together. And we'll see. We don't have any teenagers yet.

So I'll definitely keep everybody posted as they grow older. And I hope this is not opening a can of worms, but I really want to get your take on this. And I got some reader questions about this too, which is do you see any connection with gaming or gaming disorder and leading to other risky behaviors because you always hear that argument made of, like, especially first-person shooter games and leading to violent behavior or is there even a connection between just that obsessive behavior and engulfing so much in one activity and other risky behaviors like a drug addiction or you mentioned a sugar addiction? What do you think of that connection? And is it something to worry about?

Dr. Shay: Oh, okay. So that is a can of worms, but I'm quite comfortable with opening cans of worms. So to me, there are direct activities that are immediately associated with screens that are immediately yoked or I should say potentially yoked together at the hip or at hand. And the first of that is sugar and because... I didn't quite interview because we didn't actually record it or which we did, but I spoke with a professional gamer. She was part of a championship gamer for a shooting game. They were called the Frag Dolls, which is a very clever pun on a name of a group of female gamers, but she said the gaming profession became way less fun as soon as Adderall entered the professional gaming world. So there's actually a doping issue in the gaming world from professionals.

Connected to that is there's an immediate connection to sugar because you're using sugar to get quick energy to keep gaming and be excited. And you don't have to deal with the "inconvenience of cooking", which is apropos, especially if you're... I send my patients to your website all of the time to the recipe section. Like, I say, "If you want recipes that are time tested and field tested, go to wellnessmama.com and go to the recipe section. So, you know, for your listeners obviously who know... I mean, I plug your website all the time to my patients because of the recipes. And it's a bit ironic that I'm talking about video game addiction because the last thing a hardcore gamer wants to do is cook, because it takes away time from gaming. So they reach for sugar, candies, cereals, anything in a wrapper, these God-awful energy drinks. So there is that. It's not necessarily that they are "addicted" to sugar, but they are yoked. And it becomes its own problem.

The other thing that is related can be a quick jump into pornography, particularly because of some of the ways that female characters in particular are depicted in video games. There can be an arousal response to and fetishization of some of the characters. In fact, it's quite overt in certain games like Soulcalibur where they intentionally make incredibly suggestive female characters as part of their marketing. And it's not that hard nowadays with high-speed internet to look at something online and then quietly switch to a private browser to look at pornography very quickly. And so it's not an immediate and guaranteed association. I want to make that very clear, but the potential because it's literally within reach from a click away makes it a lot easier to yoke those two activities.

In regards to violence in the real world when we're talking about video game violence in the digital world, I think statistically there's not really a connection to be made because if you look at the popularity of Fortnite, and we're talking a company that made almost \$240 million, like, last month or the month before, and you're talking about the most popular games like League of Legends. It's a violent-based game. You've got tournaments with Injustice League and even with unreal tournaments, there's shooters and all the rest of it.

Statistically, you don't have hundreds of millions of children running out into the street and shooting people. It's just not statistically bear out. It just doesn't. And when you look at the people, the kids, who do become shooters, and there's many people who have written on this and have published on this, there's so many other factors going on, like this social isolation that they feel outside the digital world, which is one reason they're going into the digital world. I certainly felt the pressure of the social isolation and the urge to play.

There's social isolation. There's rejection by whether it's families or the opposite sex or the gender you're attracted to or whoever. There is that rejection. And you're feeling like, "Oh, God." Then it becomes, like, this nihilism. And then there's the unspoken issue of pharmaceuticals that are in I think nearly 100% of school shootings that no one wants to talk about, these SSRIs where they're either just got on them or rapidly changed their dose or rapidly came off of it, which affected their impulse control mechanisms and their mood. And I am just stunned by the lack of honest discourse about that influence on people who choose to engage in shooting violence. And you've got all of these other factors that play.

And to blame video games... And look, I'm not supporting that yes, we should have as bloody as possible a video game and it's all fun. I'm not saying that. It's just, but to blame video games is I think really simplistic thinking and not willing to look at real issues like the lack of connectedness, going back to what you said before and to the nihilistic violence. In fact, Sebastian... If people really want to read about this nature of lone wolf violence, please, please, please read Sebastian Junger's book on tribe. It's called "Tribe."

He talks about school shootings in depth from anthropological perspective and how when you have a member of the tribe who is isolated and separated and feels unconnected and disconnected, they will act out in a nihilistic destructive way against everybody because they feel so disconnected. And this happened well before school shootings, you know, this type of behavior. It's just on a much smaller scale. And the shooting, you know, the weapons, people have access to now makes the scale much riskier, but this type of behavior of nihilistic violence against your own tribe pre-dated video games and pre-dated guns. So I think the conversation's way more nuanced and way more complicated than simply blaming video games. And this is coming from someone who had a 25-year addiction to video games and violent video games, I should add.

Katie: I'm so glad that you put it that way and brought that up because I think you're right. I think we have an

unspoken massive mental health crisis that... And my take is one of the many factors that contributes is that lack of connection and the lack of true community. We used to grow up close to family in neighborhoods surrounded by people who knew us and other people we could trust besides our immediate family. And to some degree, we've largely lost that. And for our family, we recently made a move several states away to a place where there was more community. And we have those types of connections because I truly believe that it's so important, especially for kids.

And as we have kids in our family about to reach the teenage years, that was a priority for us, but as I hear you talk about this... And I'm so glad to hear that hopefully there's not really a correlation directly to really severe risky behaviors and things as severe as school shootings, but as you're just talking about other things, I'm like, "Those are risky behaviors too. Like, the lack of sleep we know from a health perspective how much lack of sleep can change your brain, especially if you are adolescent or going through puberty and also just the screen time because I've done a lot of research on eye health and brain health. And looking at a glowing two-dimensional object for so many hours that's the same distance away, you actually...your eyes aren't engaging.

They're not using all the muscles that they're supposed to. And you can end up with vision problems. And I think also too that you touched on are...especially that social isolation and the lack of movement. Those are big problems. We know that statistically, especially for our children. They're not moving enough. They're not connecting enough. They're not getting enough Vitamin D because they're inside so much. So hearing you talk about this. I am so glad it's not connected to the immediate risky behaviors, but I also hear so many small risky behaviors in there. And as a mom, my gut reaction is to go, "Well, I don't see any benefits to video games." And I made a whole laundry list of potential problems.

And so to me, the easy way is, "Well, let's just avoid video games," but at the same time, having a background in nutrition, I know that when you completely block something out and make it black and white, it can make it more appealing to kids or more of a pull when they're older. So I'd love to hear your take on how you address that and especially is there any way to have healthy moderation? I had one reader say, "Please ask him how to approach gaming in a moderate way," because her point is that she wants her kids to be culturally literate. And part of that is gaming in today's world, but how to encourage moderation when that desire to be engulfed in the game is so strong. So I'd love to hear your take on that.

Dr. Shay: Sure. So there's a couple things you brought up to unpack. So in terms of the risky behavior, so many of the arguments that those 5,000 minus three women gave me at the expo was, "Well, at least they're not doing drugs, risky sex, or gang-related behavior or other criminal mischief because they're playing video games." So video games are used by parents as a legitimate lesser evil. And when I say legitimate, I actually do see their point because the other risky behaviors do have a much higher risk to them. I don't think it's risk-free, as we have been talking about.

And the degradation of sleep, of nutrition, of posture, of movement, of socialization, those are slow-boil risks that accumulate over time, not the immediate kind of cathartic catastrophic risks that are associated with those other behaviors. And I think your point of cultural literacy is very well-taken and extremely relevant. And it's like movies. Like, what movies used to be or television shows used to be, now video games are taking cultural dominance as a requirement for, you know, basic conversation and particularly amongst the generations, you know, 35 and younger who grew up on video games. Katie, was there another question in there that I'm missing aside from how to do moderate gaming? Did I miss something? Is there another question in there or is that the main one?

Katie: That's the main one. Is there a way to do it moderately? And do you see there be any down sides? Especially, like for my kids, they don't really have an interest in gaming. We're just avoiding it all together, at least until it's something that they are even interested in. Like, is there a minimum dose that they need to hit the cultural literacy or can they just avoid it?

Dr. Shay: Okay. What is moderate? Okay. So the concept of moderation is kind of a farce because, well, everything in moderation, does that include moderation, like, because moderation, it's a complete farce because there is no way to compare how we live our life now to how we used to as tribal social human beings back, you know, several thousands and tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of years ago. I mean, what is a moderate amount of cell phone use for a hunter-gatherer? The question is absurd. So it's, like, we have to take moderation compared to what? Moderation compared to 10 years ago, to 20 years ago, to 50 years ago, to 50,000 years ago? So people's definition of moderation is a moving target.

So once people can yolk onto comparing moderation to what, then the conversation can start. And I don't actually have a good starting point because moderate computer use in the '70s was basically isolated to military, government, and academics whereas computer use now is everyone's issue. And prior to that, of course, there wasn't really any computer use of any appreciable amount. So what would be a moderate level for today's standards compared to... I mean, this is the problem, compared to the '90s when it was just dial-up when I was really in online gaming? I don't know. Well, let's just... Do you have a particular era you wanted to compare to? What's your era you're wanting me to compare to for moderation?

Katie: I mean, I guess my only reference point would be... Oh, gosh. I'm gonna sound old, like, over 20 years ago now when my brother had the original classic NES system. And I think he had, like, Mario or something. And ironically, that's the system we still have. And right now, it just collects dust because the kids have really no interest, but we have not the new version of that, but the actual 30-year-old version.

Dr. Shay: Right. Okay. So I'd say for cultural literacy... And then it gets into another subject. Do you allow your kids to watch movies, you know, depending on how you parent and all the rest of it, but there's many different parenting philosophies on this. I mean, even... It's like sugar. My mother's parenting philosophy for good or ill and my experience, it was for ill is you can have one candy bar a day and not more. So that was her idea of moderation. And for me, that was actually pretty destructive because I got hit with all these chemicals and sugars and artificial sweeteners and flavorings and all the rest of it. And that was not good for my particular system nor do I think it's good for anyone's system, but that was her idea of moderation. And in her world, that was moderation. And so I can see her side of it. So that's what we're comparing to, except it's a digital candy bar versus a physical candy bar.

So movies and television shows actually have a lot of cultural references to video games. And in some ways, you can get somewhat literate by watching movies and television. And I'm not saying you should now go watch movies and television to get literate in video games. It's, like, you're trading one thing for another. I think that there are... Okay. So I think the fastest way to get culturally literate... And this is dangerous territory because it can then lead into vicarious gaming. So that's caveat, caveat, asterisk, asterisk, asterisk. You can actually go onto YouTube and look up history of video games. And there is many different channels that have created really brilliant 5, 10, 15, 20-minute synopses of the entire video game history. You can look up, like, history of Zelda and understand the phenomenon of Zelda or its 25-plus-year orc. You can look up the history of video games, the history of online gaming, history of EverQuest, history of Shooters, history of Mortal

Combat.

I mean, there's certain key games that were real genre-setters, Super Mario, Zelda, Final Fantasy, God of War, League of Legends, Fortnite. Mortal Combat, of course, was a massive cultural... They even had hearings on Congress over it. Counter-Strike. Doom was a massive one. And it's kind of originator, yet somehow less famous, called Wolfenstein. You can look up, like, history of gaming. There's even, like, charts. There's a wonderful... I want to say wonderful, like, well-done history of gaming charts done by the Electronic Arts Association or other video game websites. There's, like, timelines. And if you just spend, you know, an hour reading over those charts and spend another three hours going over YouTube and the history of video games, you're gonna get a very efficient, very effective cultural education without a lot of investment.

Now, the risk, the real risk, is that it can get people really interested in those games. So it's a trade-off. Do you create cultural literacy at the risk of getting them interested? And that's something, as parents, you need to play off of. So there are very efficient ways to get literate, but there is some risk to that. In terms of moderation, I go back to those three signs that I mentioned before. If your child games longer than they sleep on any given day, that is too much, by every single... No matter how you slice it, that is the single most rock-solid sign of excess that I can think of. Never, ever, ever should the amount of time gaming exceed the amount of time sleeping. I think that's an iron law in my personal book.

Then you're looking at binge gaming is are they gaming more than four hours straight? I think if a parent is concerned about moderation, you should have...keep that in mind as to absolutely avoid over four hours of gaming in one period. And you should absolutely avoid, if you're concerned about moderation, never letting your child's game beyond 14 hours a week at meeting my made-up definition of heavy gaming. Now, if you think about 14 hours, that's between a part-time and a quarter-time job in terms of time. So some people moderate based off of is it a school night? Is it a weekend, the time of day, how many hours? And it's also what's your definition of a video game? Do you include social media as video gaming? So this is, again, the line is a moving target. I categorize video games as active screen activity. Social media as mixed. It could be passive or active.

So as a parent, you have to decide are you counting social media as part of the video game hours or not or are you doing something like I suggested in my Survival Guide for Weekends and Holidays? Are you giving more time based on the degree of social time and physical proximity to the person you're socializing? Are they just over at the computer or are they sitting on the couch next to you gaming or on Facebook or whatever? So I think each parent has to make their own decisions, but if you use those metrics as guideposts, four hours straight for binge gaming, the over 14 hours a week as heavy gaming, and the never sleeping less than the hours you game, and then just calibrate from there, I think that's a very logical platform to start.

Katie: All such good points. And I'll offer just from my personal take on it some advice or some considerations. And one that we've touched on, but I want to specifically mention, is we know based on the research that children's brains are different than adult brains. They're still developing. There's a lot of neuroplasticity there. So I think we do have to be careful of what they are exposed to and at what age. And none of us would argue that, for instance, children should be exposed to porn or that they have to be exposed to fast food to be culturally literate, even though unfortunately those things are very pervasive in society, but I would say at the same time, we do have to educate them about those things and about the risk of those things.

So perhaps that's an important thing is to have those grown-up conversations with your kids, especially if

they're into these more addictive type of games, is just letting them understand that there are risks and also telling them to watch for these signs too instead of just putting it in our court.

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Katie: And I also wonder if there are things like, you know, not letting kids do video games too young or at least until they have established a love of reading and having other hobbies and really strong connections in their actual life. So maybe they aren't as likely to be sucked into the video game world for connection, but also we talked so much about what to look for, which is awesome. I'd love if you could also talk some about what to do for anyone listening who has maybe a teenager, but maybe a husband or even a wife or a parent, who they see these signs of video gaming addiction in. What can we do to help someone, once they've already gone down that road?

Dr. Shay: Okay. So this is an absolute mine field because now if you're talking about an addiction where the behavior is compulsive and destructive. In fact, there's a book I highly recommend called, "It's Not Okay to be a Cannibal." And it's written by two interventionists. And I'm just... I'm blanking on the authors' names, by Andrew Wainwright and Robert Poznanovich. And they replaced the word addict with the term cannibal, meaning that the cannibal eats themselves alive and everything around them. And that's a sign of someone who's really addicted where they're destructive to not only themselves and to those around them.

And the problem is, is that there is a distinction between someone who needs help and someone who wants help, very different, very, very different situations. So if someone needs help but doesn't want the help, that's a problem. And that's where intervention comes in, like, forcibly confronting a person about their behavior to which there is a very high risk of blow-back, which is like those three mothers that came to me in that expo saying that they're afraid of retribution on the part of their adult sons for being confronted about video game use. And that's real. That's a real risk.

Now, with video games, so it's different if it's a parent-child situation because as a parent, you have legal authority to intervene, whether they like it or not. Like, so if your child is underage, you, as a parent, can take it away. And they can kick and scream and cry and sabotage and do whatever they want, but that's not illegal for you to physically intervene on their world because you have a legal right as a parent. It gets a lot trickier, if you are dealing with an adult and you don't have the right to go in and take their personal property away from them for their own good. So there's complexities based on the age of the person who has the problem and their situation.

If someone has a problem, one of the things I'd recommend is number one, you yourself get really educated on the subject matter so you can come at it from a really knowledgeable place, not, "Oh, I think you're playing too many video games. Therefore, you have to stop. And you're ruining your life," and all this. It's, like, there's a level of nuance in the back of your mind to understand all the complexities that go into someone's decision to play a lot of games. I write about this in my e-book and talk about it on my YouTube channel and my articles. Like, I really try to spell it out for people who are not familiar with the video game world what it's actually like and what are the issues at hand?

And that's why I wrote my e-book and made the audios and made the videos and so on to educate people on this because it's very confronting and uncomfortable and, frankly, really unpleasant like it was for me when my sister confronted me and my parents confronted me on it. And they came at it from a very accusatory, angry, self-righteous, and blaming way, which I absolutely pushed back on and gave them the silent treatment and was really rude and nasty to them because I felt like I was being attacked for the very thing that I was seeking...that I used to seek solace from the anxiety at home and the stress and bullying at school. Like, they were taking away the thing that was my personal balm to my consciousness.

So I would recommend people get educated as much as they can first. And I've developed a huge number of resources to help people in that regard. The other thing is to possibly find a diplomatic way to share those resources with the people who are concerned. If someone wants help, that's pretty easy. Like, yeah, shameless self-promotion. Why don't you get a copy of Dr. Shay's e-book? Why don't you go onto his website and read his blogs or watch his videos or go to YouTube and watch his videos on video game addiction? Listen to the interviews or even this interview. If they want help, it's very straight-forward to... You don't have to be the expert. You can direct them to the expert, whether it's this interview or my material or someone else's. So there's that way.

If they need help but don't want help, that gets tricky. I have done interventions before with parents and teenagers. And because I know what video game addiction is because of my 25-year history, and I also understand the genres of the games people are playing and I know when a gamer is lying to me about their use because I can read it and I can tell when, you know, they're lying about their usage, like, I know the questions to ask and know how to confront them on it, not from a power over type of way. It's like, "As a fellow gamer, like, come on. Really? Like, let's talk about this for real," like, and be able to engage them in a way that gets them to think about all these different things.

Like, one example is I walk through all 12 of those signs without saying that there were signs of gaming disorder. I just ask, "Are you preoccupied with gaming? Do you ever, like, think about gaming when you're eating, like, at meals? Do you ever miss dinners over gaming? Do you ever..." Like, I just walk through all of the 12 signs. And by the end of it, I say, "Well, do you realize you've answered yes to 10 of the past 12 questions?"

And I say, "Do you know what I was actually asking you?" They're like, "No." This is the actual tone. They go, "No, I don't know." And I said, "Well, these were the 12 signs of gaming disorder. And you answered 10 out of 12 of them as yes. So would you now agree that you might have an issue with video games?"

And he went silent. And then he said, "Well, yeah, maybe." Like, it was the first time he actually admitted, albeit reluctantly, that there might be a problem. And this is what intervention looks like. It's a skillful way of engaging with someone who needs the help, but doesn't want it from someone who's had the experience. And that's difficult. It's not easy. And it's not guaranteed to work, but, you know, you're dealing with the nature of addiction. And it's hard. It's very hard. And I don't envy anyone who has a true addict in their family. I was an addict. And I don't envy what my parents and the rest of my family went through.

Katie: Yeah. That makes sense. And definitely I think you're right, that you have to address it in a compassionate and loving way and share your concern and hope that they want help because that seems like a very difficult situation, if they don't certainly. So I want to hear a random question. And then I have a follow-up question for you to make sure everyone can find your work, but I love to ask people if there's a book that's had a tremendous influence on their life that they would recommend. And I know you've already shared a few books that you would recommend related to this topic, but is there a book perhaps not related to this that's had a big influence on your life?

Dr. Shay: Yeah. I mean, the first book that really put me on the trajectory towards being focused on natural healthcare, I mean, because I thought I was going to be a doctor at age six. Like, I knew I was going to be a doctor. Both my parents are doctors. My grandfather was a very famous doctor. And I knew I was going to be a doctor since a young child. I didn't realize I was going to go into natural medicine until I was a teenager when I read a book by Dr. Bernard Jensen, who's kind of the grandfather of naturopathy in the West, his book, "Dr. Jensen's Guide to Better Bowel care." Now, I read this because I had terrible digestive problems for over 10 years.

And when I read this, it opened my eyes to the first model of holistic health using digestion and bowel care as kind of the focusing point to then incorporate all of these other aspects of holistic health, whether it be movement, exercise, diet, sleep, you know, socialization, stress reduction, but using the gut as the focal point for discussion, but engaging in all of the other aspects of natural healthcare. So that was the book that launched my entire journey into natural medicine. Is it related to video games? Not directly, but it certainly was the biggest influence on my life.

Katie: Awesome. And lastly, I feel like we could still talk about this topic for, you know, hours and share such amazing information, but for anyone listening who this has been an important starting point for them, where can they find you and the resources that you mentioned? And, of course, I'll have links in the show notes at wellnessmama.fm, but how can they find out more about you and about this topic?

Dr. Shay: Sure. My website is drsamshay.com, drsamshay.com. And you can go to just the main website. And you'll see my video game, e-book, my "Unplug from Gaming Disorder" e-book right there, front row and center. If people buy the e-book, I also throw in an audio version and a video walk-through version, as well. And I've also got drsamshay.com/gamingdisorder, which is the collection of my writings on gaming disorder, other interviews from our colleagues in the natural health space on gaming disorder. I also have a two-minute trailer, which explains my history in just two minutes in a high-def...it's just a trailer of like, "This is my journey with gaming disorder."

And you can find the resources there. It's drsamshay.com/gamingdisorder. I also have an online course, which is called flourishoutofaddiction.com. And it's just all one word, flourishoutofaddiction.com. You can find that link to that on my website, as well. And that was a course I designed to go through a modern way, a new paradigm, to treat addictions with the particular focus... The example's woven through the entire course on sugar and video games or subsets of food addiction and screen addiction. Now, the structure and framework that I teach there not only works for sugar and video games, but for food and tech and other addictions, as well, but I use sugar and video games.

Those were the two ones that I went through. It's also two that people can relate to, if they... Because most people can relate to food addiction and some form of screen addiction, whether it's for themselves or watching someone else. So there's a lot of resources that are available. And I'm also available. If people want to chat with me, there's a link to schedule a chat with me, as well. And I'd be very happy to help people in whatever capacity that I can.

Katie: Wonderful. And again, all of those links will be in the show notes at wellnessmama.fm. So if you are jogging or driving, don't worry about writing them down, but Dr. Shay, I feel like this was very educational for me. It's a whole world I really didn't understand. And I think you're doing such important work. This is truly an area our grandparents never had to face. This is a new concern for a lot of people. And you're doing such an amazing job of educating about it. And I really appreciate your time and your work and everything you've shared today.

Dr. Shay: Thank you, Katie. And I really genuinely appreciate your work. Your website has been so, so incredibly helpful for my practice directing people to, at a minimum, just the recipe section. And the amount of work that has spared me in expertise to try and come up with recipes has saved me hours and hours and hours of labor and stress. And so too, I'm more than happy to reciprocate by offering my expertise in this particular arena. And just, you know, what I love about this community of us natural healthcare practitioners is that we're synergistically supporting one another and to help everyone who has a need in the natural health space. And so I thank you for providing such an amazing platform because I know I use it regularly with my practice. So thank you.

Katie: Oh, thank you so much. And thanks to all of you for listening. And I hope to see you again on the Wellness Mama Podcast.

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