



Episode 192: How to Avoid Rushing Woman Syndrome and Balance Hormones With Dr. Sonya Jensen

Child: Welcome to my Mommy's podcast.

This podcast is brought to you by Furo Health, a leading provider of cold plunge tubs and where I personally purchased mine. Cold therapy has a long history of benefits. In Finland, for instance, they've been plunging into icy lakes for centuries, but since I live in a warm climate I had to get a little creative. Now I have a cold water tub that stays at anywhere between 42 and 58 degrees, depending on what I set it, all the time. So I can get cold whenever I want. Now don't get me wrong I used to hate the cold and I still kind of do. But I love the benefits and I've gotten used to being in cold water and even started to look forward to it. Cold therapy has many benefits including reducing muscle soreness, speeding recovery after exercise, increasing circulation and lymph flow, boosting skin and hair health and even boosting hormones like testosterone. Most immediately noticeably it also drastically increases my energy and focus and I find I'm so much more productive on the days that I get cold. You can check out the tub that I bought at [furohealth.com](http://furohealth.com). It's super easy to install and plugs into a normal 110 volt outlet so it truly can go anywhere.

This episode is brought to you by Teeter. We all know that parenting can be an exhausting job, and it takes its toll on your body, especially for us Moms, from pregnancy and child birth to the constant lifting, carrying or sitting to nurse, there's a good reason that back pain is so common in Moms. Lately, I've been using inversion as a way to remedy this and I'm loving it. The Teeter inversion table I have in my house uses gravity and your own body weight to decompress the spine and release tension in the shoulders, neck and joints, where is exactly where I store tension, between working on the computer, homeschooling the kids and carrying babies all the time. It only takes a few minutes a day and it's one of the most relaxing things I do for my health each day. The company that I chose to get my table from, called Teeter, has been the best known name in inversion since 1981 and over 3 million people have trusted them to improve their health. Teeter has an amazing offer exclusively for you guys. For a limited time, you can get \$100 off their brand new premium model, the Teeter Fitspine LX9 inversion table with upgraded features like the medical grade easy reach ankle closure, large inversion assist handles and the boarding platform base. Plus \$150 worth of accessories including the new Teeter tracker, which is a wireless gage that syncs with the app for guided coaching and more. There's a limited quantity available so don't wait. You can save \$100 today on the Teeter Fitspine LX9 at [teeter.com/wellnessmama](http://teeter.com/wellnessmama). Teeter also offers free shipping and a 60-day money back guarantee and free returns, so it's truly risk free to try it out. Go to [teeter.com/wellnessmama](http://teeter.com/wellnessmama)

Katie: Hello, and welcome to the Wellness Mama podcast. I'm Katie from [wellnessmama.com](http://wellnessmama.com), and I'm here today with Dr. Sonya Jensen who is a naturopathic doctor who strives to help women live free and balanced lives. We're gonna go deep on a lot of aspects of that today especially hormones, and her work with women has taken her to places like Haiti where she assisted a group of naturopathic doctor students in an organization called MamaBaby Haiti to provide maternal and pediatric healthcare at a birth center there and this experience really solidified for her that her passion lies in working with women and their families. And she now runs monthly workshops for women to support them in all aspects of life, and like I said, we're gonna delve into all of that today, but Dr. Sonya, welcome and thanks for being here.

Sonya: Oh, thank you for having me. It's such an honor. Thank you.

Katie: I'm so excited to chat with you and I think it's no secret, unfortunately, that women are facing a lot of health problems in today's world and we are definitely seeing a rise of all kinds of problems across the board, but as a practicing doctor, I'm curious if there is a theme in your practice that you're seeing a lot especially right now.

Sonya: Yeah, absolutely. I find women coming in with a lot of overwhelm, and that overwhelm kind of shows up in their body in different ways, whether it's anxiety or depression or it's hot flushes or it's PMS or there's something else going on in their physical body because we're just so busy, right? We're living in a culture where we're on the go all the time and there's not a lot of time to rest and reset ourselves. So over time, the body starts to kind of scream at us and that's usually when they end up coming in and asking for some support and aid.

Katie: Got you. And do you feel like this is part of a cascade that's leading to other health problems as well? Do you feel like this is more of the root and then we're seeing... Like, for me, it was autoimmune disease, for some women, it's mental health struggles. Is this kind of the cascade?

Sonya: Yeah, absolutely, and the thing with when it comes to hormonal health specifically because that's what I work with a lot is people think that's the after effect, but really what that is...or they think that's the root cause actually and it's not necessarily the root cause, it's the after effect of the body kind of compiling all these toxins and compiling all these things in our bodies so then it results in our symptoms showing up in different ways, whether it's autoimmunity, whether it's depression or anxiety or some of these things that I was speaking to. So what I really want to make clear for women today that are listening is that yes, we have these hormonal issues, but they've started somewhere else. It's things that have usually started maybe a decade before or two decades before, but our body is always trying its hardest to keep us in balance. So it's gonna do everything and anything that it can, and until we reach this point of having these symptoms, that's usually when we kind of wake up and be like, "Okay. What can I do differently so that my body isn't responding like this?"

Katie: Got you. And I feel like it's a tough problem. It's a conversation I've had with many of my female friends. It's just in today's world, there are so many benefits for women but also we still have so many responsibilities and all of these new things have just added more responsibilities to our plate, I feel like. And I think of how most women, a lot of us, work or at least are working from home or have a career of some kind but we're also still juggling home life and children and trying to be a good spouse if we're married and there's just so many things on women, and unfortunately, I don't think there's a pill for that, but I'm curious, your approach. So when someone comes in with hormonal imbalance that's lead to something like anxiety, for instance, where do you start with them?

Sonya: Yeah, that's a great question because just like you said, we have the ability to do it all but it doesn't mean that we should. So I love this term that Dr. Libby Weaver has coined. It's called the Rushing Woman Syndrome and that's usually what I address right away. I educate the women that are coming in about what's happening because until a woman starts to feel better, she's not gonna hear everything that I say, right? So if somebody's coming in with, you know, really painful fibroids or if they're coming in with painful periods or irregular periods, irritability, short-term memory loss, all these things are kind of taking a hold of her, I first

have to create awareness that, A, it's not in your head, because a lot of times, they would go to their practitioners and the practitioner will tell them that, "Oh, it's just a sign of getting older," or, "It's just in your head," especially when it comes to anxiety or depression.

So I educate them on what the body is actually doing and one of the main things that occurs is when we're under stress or when we're on the go, we're basically in a survival state. So the body is doing everything and anything to survive and one of our main hormones for survival is cortisol. It basically keeps us in that state to help us get through that experience and that cortisol comes from a hormone called progesterone which is needed for us to thrive. Progesterone is very anti-anxiety and it also kind of creates that calm over our body and it regulates our system. So if we're continuously pouring that progesterone into cortisol, we don't have enough reserve left over for us to thrive because we will survive before we do that. Our brain is wired for survival. So the first thing I do is educate them that this is what's going on in your body after doing a series of testing, that this is the result of something deeper. So maybe the stress is coming from your home life. Maybe it's coming from a belief system that was passed down to you. Maybe it's generational toxicity. Maybe you have high heavy metals. Maybe there was an infection when you were young or maybe your microbiome is off. So there's various different ways of looking at it, but first and foremost, I sit there and I listen because we all have our own individual stories, right? So it isn't until the woman feels heard and is validated in how she feels that that is when we can actually move forward.

Katie: Yeah, and I think as someone who's been through, like I mentioned, Hashimoto's, that alone is so empowering because it's so deflating to hear from doctors that nothing's really wrong and it's all in your head when you can feel in your body that something is actually wrong and you just wanna find answers. So I would imagine for women coming to you that just you listening to them and actually seeing them that that probably makes a tremendous difference. And so I just wanna speak to that for my own herd of women who are there that you are not alone and there are brilliant practitioners like you who can listen and understand and who won't tell you it's all in your head because I just know firsthand how disempowering that is. And I love that you talked about progesterone and I'm curious if we can go deeper on this because I think it's a misunderstood hormone and I think, like you said, it's really important, but can you kind of delve into progesterone a little bit more and then how you work with women to remedy that?

Sonya: Yeah, absolutely. So progesterone, essentially for those of you that have been pregnant, that glow that we get is because of that high progesterone in our body. So progesterone is secreted by our ovaries and also our adrenal glands and we release about 40 to 60 milligrams per day, and essentially, the reason for that is to regulate our cycle throughout the month. So our first half of our cycle, we won't show a lot of progesterone but as soon as we release an egg, our progesterone rises to basically get the body ready for pregnancy, whether you get pregnant or not. And as soon as those two weeks are over and there's no pregnancy, the progesterone drops and it basically tells your body to shed. So that rhythm that progesterone creates is basically creating more balance in the system. It's creating more of an environment where, again, we can thrive or we can heal. We actually have more receptors in our brain for progesterone than anywhere else in the body, so that's why it's going to be more of an anti-anxiety hormone in the body.

So many women today, unfortunately, are stuck in an estrogen-dominant state. So what that means is that estrogen, an also very important hormone that we need for our cardiovascular system. We need it for our bone health and also regulating our cycle, but unfortunately, estrogen, it's everywhere. It's in our food supply

because the pesticides that are getting sprayed onto our foods, they mimic estrogen in its chemical components. Other toxins that are coming in from the environment, so things that we're putting onto our bodies like our makeup and our hair products or body products. It's also coming in through our water supply because of birth control. So there's many different things that will throw our progesterone off. So if we have too much estrogen, it basically tells progesterone to take a back seat. If we have too much cortisol which is our stress hormone, again, it's telling our progesterone, "Take a back seat."

And then also tied together with that is our sleep. So something as simple as sleep. If we're not sleeping on time and getting those, you know, six to eight hours...I'm gonna say eight hours, and as moms, I know that can feel like an impossibility especially when the kids are young. So when we're not sleeping, our cortisol, again, is high and our progesterone is diminished. So the way to remedy progesterone, it's multi-faceted. So one, we're going to look at foods that are gonna help support your body. We're going to look at the triggers that might be diminishing your progesterone. So supporting your liver. We also want to look at any heavy metals that are maybe blocking the receptors on your cells that are helping the progesterone communicate with the rest of your body as well, and we're also going to look at mindset. So again, the reason why we look at mindset and our belief systems is because we need to control how we adapt to stress so that we can thrive with this hormone, progesterone.

Katie: Are you a fan of using any of the creams or bioidentical hormones at all or do you prefer to support the body naturally in creating those hormones?

Sonya: I actually love bioidentical progesterone. I don't use it all the time. So personally, I know after my second child, I was very deficient. So any women out there that, you know, you just have that day where all of a sudden you feel completely not like yourself, you're irritable, you're reacting to things that, you know, before you wouldn't react to, you're not sleeping well, you're feeling more anxious about situations that you wouldn't originally. I was kind of in that state after my second and I used the cream for I would say about six months to help me regulate my system, but I know I also needed to look at some underlying causes, and for me, it was heavy metals. So what I do is I use the bioidentical to help women feel better in that moment because it will make you feel better very quickly, but then I also educate at the same time that there's these underlying things that we have to look at so we can have longer lasting effects.

Katie: That makes sense and I think you're right. Unfortunately, we're seeing an uptick in heavy metals and plastics which I want to circle back to plastics in a minute, but I'm curious how you recommend dealing with heavy metals and obviously, of course, work with the practitioner and it's case by case, but I think this is a growing problem and I worry that even in our children as they start hitting adulthood, they're really gonna start seeing the effects of this. So I'm curious your approach specifically with heavy metals.

Sonya: Yeah. So what I do is I test them first. I'll do a urine challenge test to see which metals are high and I'm really glad that you brought up children because they actually can get the toxicity in the womb. So as women if say, for instance, we're high in lead, the lead is gonna go into our bones and into our tissues. So this has the ability to cross the placenta and also get into the system of the child. So there's also that generational toxicity that occurs that we need to address before a woman hopefully gets pregnant or address once she is after

she's given birth and after she's finished nursing. So what I do is I test them and then we do a detox program to help detoxify the heavy metals.

So there's different types of detoxification out there. You know, you can detox the liver. You could detox the kidneys, the lymphatic system which are all great because they're opening up the emunctories or opening up all these pathways of elimination, but what we do is we go into our cells because these heavy metals have embedded themselves now into our brains. They've embedded themselves into our tissues and into ourselves which are gonna slowly start slowing things down and creating more havoc in our other systems like our hormones. So then we do a lengthy three to six month detox to help detoxify this out and that's not only for women but also for children. We do, like, at a slow rate. We detoxify them and we noticed huge results just by doing that and I've actually seen a really big link between high mercury levels and fibroids in a lot of women too.

Katie: That's fascinating and I'm so glad that you take a long term approach because I feel like this is one area that's so dangerous that if you find you have heavy metals, you should definitely not try to do everything all at once and get them out as quickly as you can because at least from my understanding, there are detox pathways in the body that we need to support very carefully in removing these metals because if not, they can just be activated and then mobile in the body and actually create more problems. But is that your experience as well?

Sonya: Yes, absolutely. If we're not careful, they will...it's like, you know, our mentor, Dr. Pompa, he uses analogy of a street sweeper. So if you have a street sweeper that's like sweeping the street and the dust is going up, the dust has to go somewhere. So if we start cleaning things up, that dust is gonna go into our cells. It's gonna go into our tissues and create even more havoc. So it is a long term approach but it's an approach that's gonna create long-lasting results, and what I always say to my patients is it's a journey and it's something that we're always learning on together. Like, I've been on this journey for many years now, over a decade, and I'm still constantly learning and constantly working on my body because we change and we evolve. Our environment changes. Our life changes. Our kids are growing. Our stresses are gonna change, so, you know, there's always something to kind of dive in deeper, but when it comes to specifically detoxification, it's a gentle approach and it's a longer lasting approach.

Katie: Got it. And a little bit of a deviation but I'm curious of your take...obviously, I wouldn't recommend it for children, but I have seen some research recently on saunaing, like using a sauna, and the ability to help support detox like a heavy metal detox or that it can actually help remove BPA and other plastic chemicals from the body as well when it's done correctly. I'm curious if you have any thoughts on that.

Sonya: Yeah, if you can use a good full spectrum infrared sauna, it's amazing, and again, it's slow and steady with that too, right? You start off with those 15 minutes. You see how your body responds to it and you keep going with that along with doing the other work, along with making sure that everything is open because we can be saunaing but if our emunctories aren't open, we're not gonna be releasing the toxins like we need to. So I think it's key part of our daily lifestyle. It's unfortunate and fortunate at the same time that we have all these tools because what's happened is we are living in the most toxic time in the history of human kind. So

we have to implement these kinds of things into our daily practice really so that we can eliminate these toxins that are coming in continuously through the environment.

Katie: Yeah, I say that all the time, unfortunately, that previous generations and especially our grandparents and great grandparents and before that, they had a lot more leeway in that they could kind of just be moderate in a lot of things and maintain the status quo and get some movement and eat some decent foods and be okay. And we don't have that luxury anymore unfortunately because like you said, there are so many more negative inputs that we're getting constantly into our bodies and that actually brings up one that is a huge soap box for me which is plastics. If you look at the numbers, I know you know, but we have created over half of the plastic that's ever been created since the year 2000 and we're only ramping up that amount of production. Very little of it is getting recycled and a lot of it is getting into our water supply in fact. We now know that we have found plastic residue and chemicals and endocrine disruptors under 30 feet of ice in the Antarctic. So we have thoroughly saturated our planet of plastics and I would love to hear you, any thoughts you have on plastic. I just personally think this is such a big issue especially with children but I would love your thoughts.

Sonya: Yeah, I agree not only on the body level or the micro level but the macro level of our environment and our coming generations. I think, you know, when we kind of go down this path, the bigger goal here like even with me working with women is like to look at our global community and not just ourselves because I feel, you know, as women, we're the center of our community. So if we can start planting seeds about these kinds of issues especially with plastics because there's just so much of it and it is a complete hormonal disruptor and I see a lot of children using plastic bottles and their lunches are in plastic lunch box, or whatever it is that you're using it for, be really aware of the long term effects because they are hormone disruptors. Little girls as young as seven years old, right, starting to get their menstrual cycles.

You know, young boys are getting estrogen issues. Most of the prostate issues that men are suffering with is because of estrogen. So this estrogen is coming from these plastics and when you see those images of all that plastic in the ocean, can you see the ocean life getting affected and our ecosystem being affected? We are not just living for ourselves but we are living for the generations to come, so I feel it's our responsibility to shift that.

Katie: I absolutely agree and I think it's one of those things, unfortunately, we can never completely avoid but we can drastically reduce our exposure through easy things like you said using safer metal options for...stainless steel options for water bottles for our kids or for lunch boxes or just removing plastic especially in the kitchen as much as possible and not using plastic wrap or plastic storage containers.

I recently spoke to a doctor who specializes in testosterone in men and he said like the statistics, we know that men today have a third of the testosterone that their grandparents did at the same age which in and of itself is a tremendous drop in two generations, but on top of that, I was like, "Why do you think we're seeing such a problem?" And he said, "There's a lot of factors but mainly try to go one whole day without touching plastic. It's literally impossible in today's world." And so I think it's really important that like you me and so many people are raising awareness on this issue because like you said, we're living for future generations here too. It's not just us and we have to be forward thinking especially for our children and their children. But as we talk

about hormones, I'm also curious of your thoughts on hormonal contraceptives. I know that's a little bit of a controversial topic but I've done some research into this and things like post-birth-control syndrome and women having really bad hormonal imbalances coming off of the pill which is interesting because the pill is kind of marketed as a fix for hormonal problems, but I'd love to get your take on that as well.

Sonya: Yeah, I love that topic and I have this discussion all the time with young women and older women that come into the office too, and when you look at a hormone...so the analogy that I use is like say you hire someone to start cleaning your home, right? And then all of a sudden, that person leaves. I don't think you're going to right away have that routine that you may have had before where you can clean up and cover the ground that you may have before hiring someone else to do your job. So essentially when we start taking hormones that are synthetic, your body's ability to produce its own hormones starts to get diminished. So the hormones that are used in the pills, they look completely differently. Like the chemical compound looks completely different than what your body actually produces.

So when we're ingesting these hormones, the ovaries and the adrenals are like, "Okay, well, I can take a backseat. I don't really need to do anything." And at the same time, what's happening is we're depleting our system of many vital nutrients like magnesium, like zinc, all our B vitamins. We're also increasing yeast in our bodies or altering the microbiome as well. And when it comes to...so the question that I get a lot, well, there's IUDs and then there's the oral contraceptives and when it comes to the IUDs and we were just touching on plastic, there's actually plastic material in the IUDs specifically the Mirena. And when you look at the copper IUD, the main goal of the copper IUD is to create an inflammatory process within the uterus so that the sperm can't get through and it can't implant itself. The egg can't implant into the uterine wall.

So it's such a tricky because I get young women coming and they're at the stage in their life where they just cannot get pregnant. So what I do is I educate them on each method, what it's gonna do to the body and how we can support it if they choose to go on it because at the end of the day, choice is the most important thing. My job is to give them the information and then once they have the information, they make the choice and then I just try to support them as much as I can, and I always tell women, "Take breaks." So if you're on the pill after a few months, take some breaks to reboot the body because the body is amazing. It will adapt very quickly if you allow it to, so just take the breaks.

Katie: That's a good tip and one I have not heard before and I can only speak to my own experience with fertility tracking. I've been tracking my cycle for 13 years now and it's amazing how much insight I feel like we can get into our bodies just by knowing and understanding our monthly hormones. I feel like of all the challenges women face that men don't, that's actually one of the few gifts that we get, is that we have this insight and if stuff starts going wrong with our cycle and we're tracking it, we kind of get an early insight that something's going on. So that would be my encouragement that we now with technology have so many great resources that are not just the rhythm method. So anybody who's willing to can put that little bit of extra effort and really learn about the body versus just taking a hormone. There are other options now. So I love that you kind of speak to that as well. I'm curious as well...so back to cortisol. You mentioned the progesterone-cortisol depletion cycle and how important progesterone is which makes perfect sense for women. I'm curious if you have any other lifestyle factors that we can do to help really optimize our cortisol levels. I know, for instance, from my research things like sleep, of course, are super important but also getting

sunlight or getting outside at certain times of day to signal the body, but I'm curious your take and any suggestions you would have.

Sonya: Yeah, let's say, you know, sleeping, number one, and like you said, getting outside into nature, grounding ourselves barefoot into the sand or into the ocean or into wherever you are getting outside and doing that so that you are getting that natural light, and also, you know, really tuning into our reactions to life, really tuning into our internal environment or internal thoughts, our belief system because most of the beliefs and thoughts that we have been passed down from our families, from our culture, from social media. So really taking moments to realize who you are in all the chaos.

So I'm a huge fan of yoga and meditation. I'm also a yoga mediation teacher, and I always give homework to my patients to do some sort of yoga or meditation in their healing journey because I believe our beliefs about ourselves and our beliefs about the world and the view and perception that we have, have a huge influence on how our body is going to respond. So in order to bring that cortisol down, because cortisol is not a bad thing. I think we've also demonized a little bit stress. I love Kelly McGonigal's work. She's done a lot of work around stress and creating a different perception on it because we need the stress response when we need it, when we're in danger, when we need to survive, when we need that surge of hormones to get us through an experience, but we also need to learn how to come down from that and that's where I think the missing link is. So if we can create tools like yoga and meditation or maybe that's music for somebody else or maybe that's some sort of other movement, whatever that is, that needs to be a daily practice so that we can teach and rewire our system because so much of what we react and what we know has been learned. It's not truly who we are. So taking moments in our days to reflect and do like a gratitude journal, really looking at what's working instead of what's not working I think makes a huge difference in how we're responding to the world.

Katie: I love that. I think those are two things that have been very instrumental for me in my own life, and there is research on this too. They know that, for instance, just six really calm deep breaths can help reduce blood pressure almost instantly and we know that in some parts of the world, for instance, they are very conscious to breath carefully like a box breathing before every meal to put the body into a parasympathetic state and just bring that calmness so that the body can digest better. I love both of those suggestions. Gratitude is something that we do in our home, and for any moms listening, my suggestion is to make it part of either breakfast or dinner, just part of the family meal, is to talk about things you're grateful for and just work that in. So before I set dinner, we ask our kids, "What are you grateful for? What did you fail at today? And what hard question did you ask today?" Just to kind of try to frame their mind to like focus on those things versus just always focusing on the problems, but to see the benefit in them and I love that...I'm sure you've worked that in gratitude with your family as well. You have two children, I believe.

Sonya: I do, yeah. I have a four-year-old and a seven-year-old and we do the same thing. We go around the table and ask, "What are you grateful for?" And I love the part where you ask, "What did you fail at?" Because I think that's so important because we have not learned how to receive "failure" as actual growth. So I love that and we do talk a lot about that and I think it's so important to plant those seeds at such a young age so that they can learn to look at things differently so they are not having these issues in the future for themselves. So I think it's a huge part of a family's growth.

Katie: Absolutely. And on that note, for any moms or parents listening, what are some of the factors that you see that we can do with our children from a young age, like things like that, to really help optimize their health from the beginning on because, like, we've talked about so much already, they're facing even more than we did as kids, they're facing so many negative inputs constantly and we hopefully don't want them to ever have the same hormonal problems we've had over the same autoimmunity. So what would be your suggestions from the clinical side or from the mother side of how we can really optimize health for our children?

Sonya: Yeah, for children, I think it comes down to food. If we can educate them on the right foods for their body, making sure that they're eating organic, making sure they're getting the right portions of vegetables and all, you know, the basic things that sometimes we forget. As moms, we're busy and we're just trying to kind of get through the day a lot of times, but really taking time to educate them along the way because they will have questions and they pick up so much from what you do. I feel like we're the models. I mean, they don't necessarily do what we tell them to do but they do what we do. So they will mimic everything that we do. So if you were taking care of yourself, they will do the same. So when it comes to the clinical stuff, I would say really working on their microbiome and the best way to work on their microbiome is making sure that we're creating diversity and giving them the right foods to feed their microbiome.

If there are signs of toxicity which I'm gonna say 100% of the children today unfortunately do have them, figure out what that is. We do an organic acid test on a lot of children that come into the office. It's a urine test. It's really simple and easy. It will give you an idea of their cell function. It gives you an idea of how their microbiome is doing and how their neurotransmitters are doing. You can also do heavy metal testing with them too when they're a little bit older, but really, you just look at the parent's health especially mom's health and you get a sense of what the child is going through and you're able to treat them through that. So I would...basic things at home is really focusing on the food and then focusing on those things that we were just talking about with the gratitude. Get them involved. Like, my children know that I do yoga every morning. They know that meditation is a part of our life. They know that, you know, travelling and going outside is a big part of what we do as well, so really getting them involved in everything that you do, I think, can make a huge difference when they're growing up so they're educated along the way.

Katie: I agree with you completely and I think it's easy to underestimate how much children can understand and how much they're capable of, even choosing and implementing in their own lives, and for us, we've used a course called Kids Cook Real Food that really teaches you or teaches your kids how to cook in the kitchen with you kind of just supervising versus you having to put all the effort in just by yourself. It's a teacher who teaches knife skills and how to sauté and what all the kitchen terms mean.

Sonya: I love that.

Katie: And our kids have really thrived by learning and being able to be empowered to not just have to go find a snack that's in a box. They can actually make something healthy which makes them so much more likely to eat it, and the same when it comes to movement, exactly like you said. If you're the example, they're naturally going to wanna do it. In fact, how many moms have tried to do some kind of exercise program on the floor in their house and had like three kids climbing on top of them? It's like goat yoga but with children. So they'll

naturally do it or even better, make movement a family thing. Go on a hike or play a game, play capture the flag.

So that actually happened in our neighborhood last week. All the neighborhood kids challenged the neighborhood adults to capture the flag and we all learned that our kids have a much higher VO2 max apparently than we do because we were sucking wind and they were, like, just...they kept running forever, but I feel like we just have to make it part of a fun daily life versus being...it doesn't always have to be this separate thing that we do. Kids are so...they're so intuitive and they're so creative and they naturally want to move and to learn and if we just, like, kind of tune into that, they will thrive, I feel like.

Sonya: And also telling them that we're not perfect. You know, I think it's so important to show them our vulnerability and show them this side of us that we too are still learning so it makes it part of, like, the family's growth if you're all growing together and then they don't feel so much pressure to be perfect either because I think that's a huge thing that a lot of kids are facing in today with anxiety that they're just feeling like they have to be a certain way. But if you show them your vulnerabilities, then there's no reason for them to feel scared or feel like they have to be a certain way.

Katie: Such a great point. I've often thought that maybe one of the most empowering things we can say to our kids once in a while when they ask a question is, "I don't know. Well, let's figure it out together." Or, yeah, like you said, admit something we're not good at and let it be something we all work on and that goes back to the failure question as well, reframing failure as a good thing because we learn...I think we learn more from failure than from success sometimes. So I love all of those tips. Okay, so I would love to go a little deeper specifically on gut health. So you mentioned the microbiome especially with children. We're obviously seeing rampant rates of gut dysbiosis and leaky gut and I know there's many factors that can cause that even the ones we've mentioned, stress and plastic and additives in food and all kinds of stuff, but do you have any kind of general guidelines that you recommend for both children and adults in safeguarding gut health?

Sonya: Absolutely. So first thing you wanna do is look at how the child was born, right? So one out of three births today are via C-section. And so when a child is born by a C-section, they're first exposed to the skin microbiome rather than the vaginal. So their gut's not getting that hit of bacteria that it needs to start developing. So if a child has been born via C-section, A, I know a lot of hospitals now in Europe have been swabbing the vaginal tract and rubbing it on top of the babies skin so that they are getting exposed to the microbiome. So skin to skin is the first thing, right? So probiotics can be very helpful but some probiotics can also throw the body off in certain directions. So what you wanna do is when it comes to older children, is feed them great prebiotics and that's, you know, fiber, vegetables, and fruits, and making sure that sugar content is, like, none to low so that we're not building up any yeast issues in the body. So introducing fermented foods is a great way to do that too. So sauerkraut is something that we use in our family a lot. Kimchi. There's lots of different ways that you can add fermented foods. Yogurt, you can make at home. I just got a instant pot, so I'm gonna be experimenting with some coconut yogurt hopefully soon, and just, you know working with food, and like you said, decreasing stress and making sure that we're detoxifying so the heavy metals aren't creating a burden on the gut as well are the key things that we can focus on when it comes to microbiome health.

Katie: Got it.

This podcast is brought to you by Furo Health, a leading provider of cold plunge tubs and where I personally purchased mine. Cold therapy has a long history of benefits. In Finland, for instance, they've been plunging into icy lakes for centuries, but since I live in a warm climate I had to get a little creative. Now I have a cold water tub that stays at anywhere between 42 and 58 degrees, depending on what I set it, all the time. So I can get cold whenever I want. Now don't get me wrong I used to hate the cold and I still kind of do. But I love the benefits and I've gotten used to being in cold water and even started to look forward to it. Cold therapy has many benefits including reducing muscle soreness, speeding recovery after exercise, increasing circulation and lymph flow, boosting skin and hair health and even boosting hormones like testosterone. Most immediately noticeably it also drastically increases my energy and focus and I find I'm so much more productive on the days that I get cold. You can check out the tub that I bought at [furohealth.com](http://furohealth.com). It's super easy to install and plugs into a normal 110 volt outlet so it truly can go anywhere.

This episode is brought to you by Teeter. We all know that parenting can be an exhausting job, and it takes its toll on your body, especially for us Moms, from pregnancy and child birth to the constant lifting, carrying or sitting to nurse, there's a good reason that back pain is so common in Moms. Lately, I've been using inversion as a way to remedy this and I'm loving it. The Teeter inversion table I have in my house uses gravity and your own body weight to decompress the spine and release tension in the shoulders, neck and joints, where is exactly where I store tension, between working on the computer, homeschooling the kids and carrying babies all the time. It only takes a few minutes a day and it's one of the most relaxing things I do for my health each day. The company that I chose to get my table from, called Teeter, has been the best known name in inversion since 1981 and over 3 million people have trusted them to improve their health. Teeter has an amazing offer exclusively for you guys. For a limited time, you can get \$100 off their brand new premium model, the Teeter Fitspine LX9 inversion table with upgraded features like the medical grade easy reach ankle closure, large inversion assist handles and the boarding platform base. Plus \$150 worth of accessories including the new Teeter tracker, which is a wireless gage that syncs with the app for guided coaching and more. There's a limited quantity available so don't wait. You can save \$100 today on the Teeter Fitspine LX9 at [teeter.com/wellnessmama](http://teeter.com/wellnessmama). Teeter also offers free shipping and a 60-day money back guarantee and free returns, so it's truly risk free to try it out. Go to [teeter.com/wellnessmama](http://teeter.com/wellnessmama)

Katie: And I know we started the episode by talking about overwhelm and moms and Rushing Woman Syndrome and I also know we just detailed a lot of things that we need to optimize in our lives and with our children. So I'd love to circle back to where we started and go a little bit deeper on, like, ways you have found in your own life as a mom and also just in working with your clients on, are there systems that help to, like, calm that stress and the overwhelm or is it about self-care? What are some practical ways that moms can start implementing ways to reduce that stress and that overwhelm?

Sonya: Yeah, absolutely. For me personally, it's been self-care. So putting yourself first, and it's such a hard thing to do as a mom because all we want to do is give to our children, and as we should, but we can't give to them unless our cup is full. So for me, it's daily movement. It's reading. It's, you know, getting in touch with music again, and what's really worked for me is retreating. I once a year go to a yoga retreat where I get to go and fill my cup up again and I come back completely different and I had a really deep experience of that when my youngest was two years old and I was finding it really challenging having a two-year-old and a five-year-old and, you know, two businesses and we had a big loss in our family. So everything was just...I was at that overwhelm point and I kind of plucked myself out, put myself in that retreat, and just worked on me and just

focused on me for those five, six days, and there was a huge shift not only inside of me but in my entire unit because I feel as soon as we shift, the unit shifts.

My two-year-old was a completely different kid when I came back and it wasn't that he changed, really, it was me. It was my responses and how I was viewing everything all of a sudden shifted just by doing that. So, I mean, that's something that you can pluck yourself away maybe once or twice a year, but daily, what I would recommend is give yourself some time to breath, you know, before bed if you can give yourself five minutes to do some stretching, some breathing exercising, some journaling, same thing in the morning. The moment we do that, we start this ripple effect inside ourselves that, okay, we are important. We are enough. We are worth it, because these are things that we're not taught so we have to consciously teach ourselves so that we can teach the children.

Katie: I think you're right and I think that's also one of the most difficult things for moms is just that guilt in stepping away and taking time for ourselves. It's something I think that we really have to consciously reframe and make an effort to do, and for me, I understand 100% the benefits and it's so hard to take that time and to leave the kids even for work or even for especially relaxation, just that guilt. Do you have any tips on working through that or is it just rip the Band-Aid off and do it?

Sonya: I don't know if you can ever rip the Band-Aid off guilt. I think it's been embedded from generation to generation, so I do think it's a bit of a progress that we have to go through, but I think if you do those simple acts and then when you see the results of it too. Like, do maybe like a two-day something or go away for one night and see what response you get in your body and see the response that happens in the family too because that will give you that positive reinforcement that this is...because it's not just for you. I mean, really, when you're going away, you're not going away just for you. You're going away for the unit. So I think the more self-love we give to ourselves, the more self-care, the easier it is to rewire that. I mean, there's specific meditations or things that we can do to help rewire that old patterning that we have or old belief system that we're not worth that because we so are. I mean, human kind would not be here without women, right? Humanity cannot go forward without women, so if we're not taking care of ourselves, nothing's gonna shift.

Katie: Exactly, and I would say it doesn't even have to be anything...especially if budget's an issue, it doesn't have to be anything super fancy. One of the most impactful things I ever did was start a moms' night out where I lived before, and just one night a month, we would get together without the kids and just have a few hours of like support and just talking and kind of recharging. And then like you said, once a year, we would try to take just a very short...even if it was a couple of days, and it didn't have to be somewhere tropical. It didn't have to be expensive. We could just even do a stay-cation and go to a hotel somewhere local but just to get that break and that sleep that's uninterrupted is so so important.

Sonya: A meal without somebody hovering over your plate can make a huge difference. So I do women's workshops every month for that reason, just to give those few hours of, like, blissful state of just being in you so that you can go back home, you know, to the family and be more grounded in yourself.

Katie: For sure. And it's not as probably popular of a viewpoint but I would say I really encourage women who are married to make sure that you make the space for your husband to do the same as well because modern life affects all of us. And one thing that's really suffered...I know you work mainly with women but I also know that you're married and I feel like men have also suffered a lot in our current modern world and they also are picking up more responsibilities. And unlike women, we kind of are built for community and we naturally gravitate towards that and we find relationships and our society doesn't make that easy for guys, unfortunately,

Sonya: Yeah, at 100% agree. My husband, he actually goes to a men's camp once a year. It's a similar camp to the one I go to. It's a yoga camp and they do exactly that. It's like this conscious group of men coming together, supporting each other, doing things that's gonna help support them so that they can come back. And I tell you he comes back with a twinkle in his eye every single time, so it's so needed not only for women but for men too, so I totally agree.

Katie: I love that and my husband does the same and I know I have one past podcast guest actually who recovered from stage four prostate cancer using a whole variety of treatments that he researched, but he said he thinks one of the most impactful things in his journey was developing a men's group and they get together once a month and they're...it's just a place with no judgement where they can be vulnerable and actually have those deep conversations. And he said that community aspect is so important, and I think you've brought that point up so excellently that that's such an important part. It's built into our humanity and we have to support that part as well.

Sonya: Yeah. We do women's retreats but this year, I decided that's important to do one with women and men. So my husband and I are putting one on next February for that reason because I was starting to realize that, yes, you know, as women, we are the center of communities, and like you said, we're built for community. Like, our feel-good hormone is oxytocin. It's how we thrive, you know, in community, in communication, in talking to other women. But I think we've lost that bit of how we can support the men without feeling, you know...the feminist movement, I feel they did a lot of good for women but it's also created a little bit of confusion. So sometimes when we are supporting our men, we may feel like we're not equal but really finding ways where we can support the men of our community so that they feel supported and they feel grounded in who they are so that they can live to their fullest potential is so important and to find that balance and learning from one another, I think, is so important in that too.

Katie: You said that so eloquently and I think you're so right that true femininity and understanding that side of us, it doesn't take anything away from men, just like men having authentic masculinity and community and supporting that need in themselves. It doesn't take anything away from women if we do it correctly. And I think I 100% agree with you. I think there's been a lot of wonderful advances for women but I also think that men have lost a little bit in that transition and that true balance and true power for women looks at equality and not either gender having "power" over the other but working together, and we face so many problems in society that we need that complementarity and that togetherness to be able to face all of this.

Sonya: Yeah, I fully agree and I think the moment we really understand that, it's going to completely shift the world because right now, I think there are some power struggles happening in relationships because we're not

getting that deep understanding of what is going on. So I think the moment we have that understanding, the world is going to completely shift and so is the next generation.

Katie: I love it. I could literally talk to you all day but I want to be respectful of your time.

Sonya: Me too.

Katie: So another question I love to ask for the end of episodes, are there any favorite books that have been really impactful for your life? I'm an avid reader so I'm always selfishly looking for new book recommendations.

Sonya: Yeah, you know, Brené Brown has been really impactful for me. So her "Daring Greatly" was huge for me, just that vulnerability piece. So it's beautiful that we're tying this in together after our conversation we've just had is that it's not just for women, it's also for men, and bringing out the vulnerability piece inside of us so that we can fully be transparent and share with the world so again people don't feel that they're alone, you know? So that book for me was huge. And another fun book that I really like is called "Love Your Lady Landscape" and that one was just a really fun read for women to get in touch with their monthly cycle and their hormones. So if women want to have a read of that, too, the author is Lisa Lister. So that's another book that I really love.

Katie: Wonderful. I'll put links to those in the show notes [wellnessmama.fm](http://wellnessmama.fm). I love Brené Brown. I love all of her work and her books, I feel like, have been some of the most helpful for me in just...like you mentioned, working through those thoughts and those patterns that are so ingrained along with one called "The Four Agreements." I don't know if you've heard of that one.

Sonya: Yes.

Katie: Yeah, and just...that one, I felt like gave me so much freedom to be able to like take responsibility for so much in your own life but also to release responsibility when you don't because I think as women, we're very good at taking on responsibility.

Sonya: Absolutely. Yeah. You know, one question I always tell women to ask is when a belief comes into their mind or a thought comes in, ask yourself, "Okay, who does this actually belong to? Like, is this mine or is it the culture? Is it social media? Is it my family?" Really ask yourself that one simple question and right away, it turns you into an observer rather than being part of that story or being attached to the story that's coming out for you.

Katie: Exactly, and I think if all we did was shift our mindset, I think that would have tremendous far-reaching effects for us. A past podcast guest, Jim Kwik, he said if we truly understood the power of thoughts, we would

never say to ourselves anything we didn't want to be true just because he said, like, our brain is like a computer and our thoughts are the software. So tuning into that I think is so brilliant and just starting to be cognizant of what those thoughts, those inputs are, we're putting into our lives every single day. I love that tip. And you've mentioned your wellness retreats that you offer and also some of your work. So of course, the links will be in the show notes, but where can people find out more about you and your work?

Sonya: Yeah, so we have a website, [divineelements.ca](http://divineelements.ca). I also have [drsonyajensen.com](http://drsonyajensen.com) and you can find us on Facebook. And I do want to offer any Wellness Mama listeners, we are having that wellness retreat in February. It's down in Baja. I want to give everybody \$200 off. So you'll get a code for Wellness Mama and if anybody is interested or has questions, you can reach out. And then also doing, in October, a webinar series for women on hormones. So you can learn all that you need to know, and again, normally, it's \$597. I want to offer everybody \$200 off of that too because I think it's information that's just needed. I just wanna...we, together, I think, Katie, I think you've done a wonderful job at empowering women. I know I reached out to your website when I was a new mom and it's been so helpful. So really, I just wanna empower every woman out there to be her best version of herself.

Katie: Thank you so much and thank you for your time and being here. I think time is our most valuable asset and I'm so honored that you took the time to be here with us today and just share your wisdom.

Sonya: Thank you. Thank you for having me. It's such an honor.

Katie: And thanks to all of you for listening and I hope to see you again on the next episode of 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.