



Episode 223: Mindset for Moms: Tips to Get More Done & Stress Less This Year

Child: Welcome to my Mommy's podcast.

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This episode is sponsored by Crunchy Betty products. Here's a secret- while I have a post about making my own deodorant, I haven't actually done that in a couple of years because I found Crunchy Betty Kokomo cream deodorant and realized it works just as well, it doesn't cause irritation and is made by a small family business that I love to support. It smells like the tropics and one small jar of this deodorant lasts for months! I love that it uses minimal (recyclable) packaging and because it lasts so long, there's virtually no waste! For me, this deodorant completely stops any odor and keeps me fresh all day, even when working out! So many natural deodorants cause irritation and this one doesn't. If you love tropical smells and if you're looking for a new deodorant, check it out on at etsy.com/shop/crunchybetty or grab it on Amazon at crunchybetty.com/wellnessmama.

Katie: Hello, and welcome to the "Wellness Mama Podcast." I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com.

Heather: And I'm Heather from wellnessmama.com. And this episode is all about the New Year and getting more done with less stress in this bright big New Year.

Katie: Yeah. Which is super exciting. I know I've got a few personal goals for the year and I've shared before how I don't really do resolutions, but I try to do goals and experiments, and break them down into manageable chunks. And I wanna hear yours, too. A couple of mine. So right now I'm in the middle of a water fast. So I'm not eating anything, but when I finish this thing, which cannot come soon enough, one of my goals is to eat more protein which is at the suggestion of our friend, Ari Whitten, who is one of the most brilliant researchers I know. And definitely would encourage you guys to check out his work. But basically, he explained that for a lot of people, your hormones can really struggle if you're not getting enough protein. And so, I'm naturally a vegetable eater. I love vegetables and I was eating a really small amount of protein. So, now I'm trying to consciously add back in really clean sources of protein, both plant based and animal proteins. And

that's one of my resolutions, or not resolutions, but goals for the year, is to make sure that happens more regularly.

Also most of my goals for the New Year center around a new company that we're both involved in, which we can't share too much about yet other than it's gonna have some awesome, completely natural and really effective products for you guys, that also we're really excited about. Because we've been making them for a long time and we'd rather not make them anymore. And then also things like I wanna do a handstand because all of my kids can currently kick my butt at that. And finish the book I'm working on. And mainly spend more time with my kids despite all the travel I have scheduled for next year. But I'd love to hear your goals, Heather.

Heather: Well, first of all, I love your goal approach. I know you wrote a post about why you are doing experiments instead of goals. And I love that because I'm one of those people who, if I set out to do something, I will check it off my list even if it doesn't make any sense anymore. Even if life has kinda taken a different direction, I will still wanna check it off my list just because that's who I am. So looking at it as an experiment gives me...is a way of looking at it that allows me to sort of adjust and shift over time just in a dynamic way because life changes. And so, love that. I would say I've got a few. One of them is that I've been doing a lot of research on essential oils from like a component blending standpoint and a chemistry standpoint. And one of the things that I haven't done before is actually visit an essential oil distillery. And so, I'd love to do that this year, somewhere in the U.S. because there actually are some great small distilleries here. And I wanna take my daughter because she is so into this kind of stuff. She loves cooking. She loves natural remedies. And I just think it would be a really fun mother-daughter trip. So, and my husband's totally not interested. So, I'm excited to have someone that will be interested with me.

I also wanna teach my eight year old to cook. I mean, he already can to some degree, but he's at that developmental stage where he's showing signs that he's like sort of ready to level up. And I just love this stage because it is an investment to teach kids to cook, but it's worth it. Because all of a sudden, you're like sitting, you know, at the table sipping your coffee and your kids are making breakfast. It's just amazing. And so, on that note, if you are wanting to do the same thing, I totally recommend Katie Kimball's course, "Kids Cook Real Food." It has been amazing for us and it just gets easier with each kid and faster. So it's worth it just to go ahead and to start with wherever you are and whatever time you have. Even just a little progress that you can make, it kinda snowballs faster than you would think. It's totally awesome.

Gosh, what other ones? Okay, so a few months ago when Hurricane Michael happened, one of my big things that was stressful for me is that there were some things in storage that I couldn't get to because we had very little time to sort of to evacuate. And one of the things that was in there was a book of poetry that my dad wrote before he died. And he passed away when I was young. It's one of the reasons that I'm so invested in living a holistic and healthy lifestyle because I know the lifestyle affects certain genetic predispositions that we have and my dad passed away really young from cancer. And so, one of the things that really hit me hard during that evacuation was that I realized that that book was in storage but I definitely didn't want it to get damaged and I actually went and got it after. And it's funny because I felt so strongly about it, but I couldn't truly open it and read it because it's connected to a lot of emotions for me that I didn't realize until that exact moment where I thought I might lose it, are unprocessed.

And so, one of the things I'm doing this year is focusing on emotionally processing those words that he wrote because if I'm gonna be really honest and vulnerable, I haven't read it since I was about 12 because I read through it once and it was really hard. And I haven't been able to get through the first few pages ever since then. So, I'm using some emotional techniques to process through that. And actually my goal this year is to read it, not to rush it, but to actually really read it and let it filter through my experience now. And to get on the other side of it and to be at peace with it.

Katie: That's awesome. And I think also something you're doing really a great job at right now that we could learn from is just learning to prioritize self care a little bit. I think that's the hardest thing for moms. And if we're talking about productivity and getting things done or especially stressing less, I think that's a huge needle mover, but it's also maybe like the hardest thing to actually start doing because as moms, we wanna make sure everybody else is taken care of, and the kids are okay, and our husbands are okay. And it's hard to... We feel selfish when we take time for ourselves. And so I love that you have started making that a priority and I know that's been an inspiration to me in trying to prioritize that. And to that point, one thing we wanted to make sure we mentioned briefly, something that's a stress relief for both of us I know is sauna use, and we also both love red light therapy. And I know we both get a lot of questions about both of those, specifically how are they different and how are they the same, which I think is an awesome question. And I'd love to hear your explanation of this because it's so good and so timely because when you guys are listening to this, I am preparing to get on a plane to fly to Finland, Northern Finland.

So funny story about this really quick. Tero Isokauppila, who founded Four Sigmatic, who is a dear friend. I was talking to him in the summer and he mentioned they were gonna do a trip to Finland and actually see the mushrooms and see where they come from. And I was in flip flops, it was hot, I was like, "Oh, that's awesome. That's a great plan. I would love to go." And then the details started coming in and I realized I was going to Finland in January when it is like negative 20 degrees. There's no daylight because it's so close to the North Pole that the sun doesn't shine for more than an hour a day. And it's gonna be extremely cold and dark, which are not my favorite things. And we're doing things like getting in a freezing cold lake and sleeping in igloos. So actually, I'm super excited about the trip, but the part I'm most excited about is being able to get in a sauna there, like an old extremely hot sauna because I have a feeling that's the only time I'm gonna be warm for the next couple of weeks. But to that note, can you walk us through to answer that question that so many people have. What's the difference between red light therapy and sauna use?

Heather: Okay. So first of all, we're sharing a mic today and what you guys have got to know is that I am sitting over here laughing so hard. I am crying because this is so great. And I know you're gonna have an amazing time and I cannot wait to see the photos, but also, whoa. Yeah, I think this is such an interesting question and they're so similar in a lot of ways. Like, they both impact metabolism in beneficial ways. They both support detoxification, although in different ways. They are beneficial for skin and they... Oh, gosh. They do a lot of... Excuse me, sorry. A lot of similar things. But what I think is maybe the... They're very complimentary and the mechanism of action between them is very different even though what they do in the body a lot of times is they have very similar effects in some ways and they have some different effects, too.

So, for red light therapy, what it essentially does is that it increases or it supports the body in increasing ATP production. So, when our bodies get bogged down, we have nitric oxide in our bodies that binds with something called cytochrome c oxidase. And when those two things are stuck together like that, then our body can't make ATP. And ATP is cellular energy. It's what we need to make hormones. It's what we need for metabolism to burn fat, to, you know, do all kinds of things. To create collagen, to repair skin and to recover after workouts. All those things. And the light is interesting because it helps the body break that bond. And so then it frees up that cytochrome c oxidase to make ATP. So, just like a nourishing diet is really important to overall health, our bodies can digest food and our bodies also in this really weird way, it can digest light. And so that's kinda what it's doing. It's very, very nourishing.

Sauna therapy is a little different. I would say it's kinda more like exercise in that it's hormetic stress. It's beneficial stress that turns on all of these genes that make us stronger and stimulate repair and all of these things. So, it triggers cleanup mode and can do a lot of other things too. Like, it engages that fight or flight response in a beneficial way. So it gives us sort of like short term stress, but then it lowers stress levels overall. Like, cortisol levels, they did a study where they were doing...some people did sauna sessions in the morning, some in the evenings. And the people who had sauna sessions in the evenings, they had higher fat metabolism. And they were trying to figure out how that was working. And it looked like basically what it was doing is, it was affecting cortisol levels at night. And somehow that beneficial supportive effect on the body's hormones had like an overall effect. So, they do a lot of similar things, but one is doing it by nourishing the body and one is doing it by challenging the body in a way that makes the body respond and be stronger.

Katie: Yeah. I think that's such a good explanation and it's one of those things where I don't know that I could pick a favorite. I think they, like you said, they're so complementary and they're both such a part of my life now. And I feel the difference from them. And I wish I could just, you know, give everybody a sauna and a red light. But I know also we always get the questions of which ones specifically do we use. So I'll just mention a few and of course, I'll link to them in the show notes as well. We both have a Joovv Light and there's now a little one that's much cheaper. It's called the Joovv Go. So I'll put a link for that in the show notes. And then we've both over the years tried various kinds of saunas. And between the two of us and just in our community, we pretty much have access to all the kinds of saunas. But both Clearlight and Sunlight, and both now have an infrared sauna that also has red light therapy attached. It's kernel therapy. So it's not gonna be quite as intense as like a Joovv Light. It's not gonna have quite the same benefits, but you'll still get some of the benefits from that. And they've put those in the saunas.

And then there are also traditional saunas, which get up to much higher temperatures potentially. Some can get over 200 degrees Fahrenheit. And all of those activate heat shock proteins, but most of the studies are actually on the old school traditional Finnish, ironically, saunas. Tero is fond of saying that the word sauna is one of the only words that comes from the Finnish language originally and they truly are the inventors of saunas. So, cool story there and that was a really helpful explanation I think on the breakdown. Another thing, we both are big readers and I know we've both been putting in a lot of time reading lately over the holidays, with a little more time to read and just over the last few months. And I think we both have a few books that I would recommend for mindset and productivity. So on the note of trying to be more productive and less stressed. And I would love for you to go first on this one because I love the book you read and I actually personally wanna hear so much more about it.

Heather: Okay. So this book is for nerds. I'll just say that. It starts a little slow, but along the lines of really what I was talking about with working...trying to work through the book of poetry that my dad wrote. I went back and read "The Biology of Belief" by Bruce Lipton. He's a cell biologist who did research at Stanford. So, not an underachiever. And he has been doing epigenetic research for literally decades. And the thing that I walked away with when it comes to this book is an understanding of, you know, we've always been told that our emotions affect our physiology, but he really breaks it down at how our emotions affect our genetic expression. Like, our epigenetic expression in the world. And it was an incredibly transformative read for me that really challenged me. And some of the things that we take for granted, you know, a lot of times, I don't wake up every morning and have to walk myself through how to make coffee. And when I get in the car, I don't sit there and stare at the ignition and try to remember how to do it. Because once our body learns something, once our subconscious mind learns something, it creates a routine that we can sort of outsource to our subconscious, so that we can focus our conscious thought on more interesting things.

Unfortunately, we all kind of come into the world, you know, when we're really young, and we lay down patterns or understandings of the world that aren't conscious at all but continue running even long after they're not serving us. And so, this "Biology of Belief" book really helped me understand like at a physical level, what that looks like. How it expects effects DNA expression. And it challenged me to really look at emotions differently as not something that I can consciously change just by wanting to change them or even not even sometimes being aware of them. But it challenged me to look at things differently. And then at the end of the book, he makes recommendations that really are about helping your subconscious routines shift if they need to. And one of the recommendations, he has several at the end of the book, but one of them was tapping, which I've got to be honest with you, I'm always like, "Could there just be a less weird looking way to work through emotions?"

And so I did read a book on tapping and there is solid research behind it. And it actually has some pretty interesting roots in research and good stuff. But I have started doing it and it's been an interesting journey. And I think you have experience with that too. But yeah, it's been an interesting book and it motivated me to do work that I think is right for this season of my life.

Katie: Yeah. I think that's why it's so amazing for moms and I share your skepticism. For many years, it was one of those things I just pretty much avoided partially because it looks a little ridiculous, to be fair, and also it seemed kind of woo. And I've always joked that I'm allergic to woo. But when I started really delving into it, there's actually, like you said, a lot of research about it. And more importantly, when I tried it, it brought up stuff that years of talk therapy didn't get through. And I'm not a crier. Like, I don't cry when I have babies and I cried like a baby when I did tapping. And I know there's a couple good practitioners that I would recommend or the tapping solution I think is a book you read and I've read it also, and we'll link to that. There's also an app by the same name that kind of walks you through it. And then Brittney Watkins has an amazing program, especially for anyone who thinks they might have emotional issues related to food or trauma that need to be released. So I'll make sure to link to her program as well.

But I think the key point there that you made so well was that, as moms, we don't even often have times to think about our emotions or certainly not to work through them. But doing that and going through that process can really help our stress level logically just because we're working through emotions that are holding us back in so many ways. And also just they can help to increase productivity because we don't have to give that even subconscious bandwidth every day to those patterns and those emotions. And I do think that moms are some of the busiest people on the planet which can sometimes mean the most stressed out people on the planet. So, the good thing about tapping is it doesn't take a lot of time and it's really like free once you learn how to do it. But it can be a big stress reliever and it's also something... I know the tapping solution now has tools for kids. So if your kids are struggling and you're seeing these things early on in your kids of anxiety or those kind of struggles, you can start to teach your kids the tools early on to deal with those without having to hopefully get those patterns that so many of us experience as adults.

Heather: Totally. And that is a great book and it goes into the research that, like you said, I mean, it really is there which is surprising, but amazing. So tell me about the book or books that you've been reading lately that you love.

Katie: Yeah. So I had a... Another funny story, we actually. I had a moment at the end of the year where I found in my notes on my phone, my list of experiments that I was gonna do this year and realized I had a couple that I had not finished yet. And I realized this, I think, nine days before the end of the year. And so in nine days, I had 12 books to read and I had to take the Mensa Practice Test. I don't even think I've told you this story yet. So my grandfather was a Mensa. My grandmother basically passed every practice test, but refused to take the test because she said that my grandfather already thought she was the smartest person alive. And so she had nothing to lose by not taking it, but if she proved him wrong, then she had a lot to lose. So she would never take the test, but I have no doubt that she would have been a Mensa if she tried. But basically it's just a society. It's ridiculous basically. But it's a society of people who have really high IQs, but it kind of runs in my family. So it's been like a family goal and I had forgotten that I had put that on my list to actually take the real test last year. But it turns out there were no test between nine days before the end of the year and the end of the year. So the best I could do was to take an online timed practice test. So, that was pretty much the last part of my year.

But some of the books that I read in the last part of the year that I thought were really good, one of them I've mentioned before, but these are the three ones specifically I feel like could help with the productivity and stress issues. And the first is, "Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less." And the name kind of explains it pretty well. But it just helps you actually walk through, in your life, the things that you can let go of, or systematize, or get more efficient with to kind of let go of...and it really delves into so many things we think are so important that are not. And there have been people like Tim Ferriss and many others who have talked about trying to 80/20 our lives and figure out the things we do that are the most effective. And this was just another one that I think really does a good job of explaining that. Another was "Atomic Habits," which I interviewed him on the podcast as well this year. And it was a really fascinating interview. We'll link to that in the show notes as well. So at the start of a new year, it kind of delves into rather than like resolutions or these big lofty plans, how little tiny, like, very tiny habits can actually add up and create big change over time. And he gave some really good practices and examples of that.

And then another one somewhat related to the emotional side is called "Deep Work." And I'll link to all three of those in the show notes. But those are the three that I'm still mulling over to some degree, but I feel like have had the biggest noticeable difference on my mindset this year.

Let's see. Oh and the next thing we're gonna talk about. So, on the note of productivity and stressing less, we were gonna both share a couple of our best time and stress savers lately. And I'll say mine is kind of ridiculous, but it's been seriously one of the best things we've done recently which is, I hung a bunch of things from my kids' ceilings. Mainly, yoga swings, gymnastics rings, aerial silks, and those little sensory pods that they use for like sensory disorders in my toddler's room just because it keeps her so busy. So, each of our three kid's rooms, there's two kids per room and they all have a couple things hanging from their ceiling, and those are basically their Christmas gifts. But it has been amazing because they are sleeping better, even when it's raining outside, which it has been a lot here lately. They're getting a lot of exercise. But it's not just an entertainment either, there's a lot of benefits for the limbic system. And I think you can actually...and the vestibular system. And you can explain this, I think, better than I can.

Heather: So, first of all, my daughter came over and was using, I don't know, what is this the one that you had the... It's not actually a swing. What is it?

Katie: It's the aerial silks that they use for like acrobatics and Cirque du Soleil and that kind of stuff.

Heather: Okay. So, the girls are doing that and I have never seen my daughter sleep that hard. It was fantastic and it was great. Yeah, they have amazing benefits for the vestibular system. So, I always thought that the ear was just for hearing, but actually, it has a complete non-auditory function that it also performs. And that is that it gives us our sense of gravity safety. I'm trying to think of the right word for that. But basically, the vestibular system is linked to our central nervous system and all of our five senses. Sight, sound, taste, touch, you know, smell, hearing. And it's also linked to our limbic system, which is our emotions and our gut reactions. And what it does is that helps us make sense of whether or not we're safe in the world. And for children, this used to be an automatic process because we would get on merry-go-rounds and we would do like seesaws and jump on trampolines and stuff. And when we do those things, it actually integrates our central nervous system with our limbic system, and helps us sort of regularly integrate our emotions.

But when we don't have the ability to move and to have sort of the mediation between the two, and I actually read... There was an interesting article where they're actually starting to measure limbic function, like signaling, as a way of diagnosing early sort of emotional issues like diagnosable issues because there is such a strong connection. But the vestibular system is really essential for emotional integration. And now because we have been sort of afraid of like, kids getting hurt as much on the playground, swings don't swing as high and there aren't merry-go-rounds anymore. And so we have to work harder to get our kids that rolling tumbling interaction. But when they don't have it, their bodies don't get the strong sense of how to be...that they are safe in space. With an underdeveloped vestibular system, their sense of being safe in gravity, in space, is

diminished and it can lead to things like sometimes they have to focus harder. Some children, when their vestibular function isn't functioning, they become more reactive to external stimuli and some become less reactive.

But they tend to try to work harder to compensate for that lack of development. And when they do, it starts to become stressful, or increases or it produces anxiety. And a lot of times, kids can have meltdowns. Maybe they've been at school all day and they've just tried so hard to focus on, you know, because the vestibular system has to do with eye tracking and all those even fine movements. So maybe they're trying so hard to do the things they know are expected of them, but because of the underdeveloped vestibular system, it's a challenge for them and it takes up a lot of their reserve energy. And then they get home and they're just exhausted, you know, or emotional. So, I've just been really interested in this connection between the emotional regulation and vestibular function. And these swings are just amazing because they're just...they're twisting and going upside down and, you know, it's just great. And there are a lot of other ways to do that at home. You don't necessarily need them. We don't have them. But they've been really wonderful.

Katie: Yeah. I think it's so important. And I look back on my own childhood and my parents were a little bit more cautious than I am as a parent. Like, I'm always telling my kids to go climb trees, and do balance beams, and balance on things, and ride bikes. And I was actually, I was sick a lot as a kid, but I didn't do those things nearly as much as my kids did and I had to overcome as an adult like a fear of heights. And I still don't like, being picked up by other people, and just things I can notice in my own vestibular system that I'm trying to work through. And so to see kids, I think kids have a natural tendency. Like, they wanna go on merry-go-rounds and they want to swing on swings. And they wanna do flips and be upside down. And so it's just basically, in whatever way we can in our own environment, enabling them to do the things they naturally wanna do. And that could be as simple as just letting them play in the backyard or swing at a park, or it could be a balance board. There are so many different ways besides just the swings, but certainly that one's been a huge time and stress saver for me recently just to have those in the house and being used constantly. And I'm trying to get brave enough to use a couple like the gymnastics rings myself. But you also have been doing some things that have helped with your stress recently as well, right?

Heather: Yeah. I think, well, for us at home, we've started stretching in the morning and evenings, just like a 10 minute stretch routine. And it's mostly for me just because I feel like throughout the day, things get tight and I do a daily walk too, but the stretching has been really good. And it's just a few minutes to like breathe and gear up for the day in a way where you sort of hit the ground with a sense of peace and purpose because I use those 10 minutes to kind of breathe and figure out what's important for the day.

Katie: Yeah, I love that. And I would say a couple others that I know we both share as like tips and things that we use or turn to when there's stress. At least for me I know CBD is a big one, especially my favorite brand right now is called Ojai Energetics. And they use a different extraction method that honestly I'm still trying to understand the science of, but it's not oil based and it's not solvent based. So it's different than a lot of other types of CBD. And the first time I tried it, I didn't really expect to feel much because I didn't...it would take a while for me to feel the result of like a liposomal or an oil based one. And within 15 to 20 seconds, I felt a noticeable difference from it and then I was like, "Okay, what's the difference?" And I had to ask. Like, I had to

research and ask a ton of questions. And I've seen the same thing happen with friends who have anxiety or people who are used to taking CBD, but take really large doses that actually respond much more quickly to this one, which means you can use less of it. But that's something I've been using with my kids if they have trouble sleeping or have growing pains.

And then just to echo, I know it's a tip I say every January, but as far as productivity and not being stressed, I can't overstate how much I think meal planning makes a drastic difference. And it is something I know we both do. Some friends of ours founded Real Plans, which is what I use to meal plan. I think you do as well. And it has an app on your phone, so you can meal plan, grocery shop, everything. The recipes are on your phone or your tablet or your computer, if you wanna use a computer. Or you can even print them. But I just find I save so much time by only having to shop once a week and pre-prepping food so I'm not spending hours and hours every day in the kitchen. And I think mealtime can be one of the biggest stresses for moms, just figuring out what to cook every night and then sometimes the kids don't want to eat what you cook, or just all of the stress surrounding food. And so Real Plans has really helped me take the stress out of that. But do you have any thoughts on that?

Heather: I love Real Plans and the only thing I would say is that, one thing I've found really helpful is I print the easy recipes so that we have a little notebook in our kitchen. And that's for my kids because all of my kids are capable at one level or another. So the ones that are really, really simple, making condiments, making dressing, stuff like that, that's in a notebook. So when I'm doing the more complicated stuff, they're taking care of all those little easy things in the kitchen and we get it done as a family. And I think it's made them more interested in the process. Like, they care more about every meal, they take pride in it and also it just gets me in and out faster.

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This episode is sponsored by Crunchy Betty products. Here's a secret- while I have a post about making my own deodorant, I haven't actually done that in a couple of years because I found Crunchy Betty Kokomo cream deodorant and realized it works just as well, it doesn't cause irritation and is made by a small family business

that I love to support. It smells like the tropics and one small jar of this deodorant lasts for months! I love that it uses minimal (recyclable) packaging and because it lasts so long, there's virtually no waste! For me, this deodorant completely stops any odor and keeps me fresh all day, even when working out! So many natural deodorants cause irritation and this one doesn't. If you love tropical smells and if you're looking for a new deodorant, check it out on at etsy.com/shop/crunchybetty or grab it on Amazon at crunchybetty.com/wellnessmama.

Katie: Yeah, that's a great tip. And then lastly, there's a lot of them actually, but things that we think are gonna be trends for this year, especially in the health and wellness world. And there's quite a few of them, but I'm really excited to see some of these. I feel like the tide is starting to turn and we're starting to see a shift in integration of traditional and conventional medicine. By traditional, I mean more like Chinese medicine or ancient traditions of medicine or natural versions. In fact, you actually sent me a study this week that I wrote down a quote from because it was talking about how they're now using traditional Chinese medicine in cancer treatments that are getting clinically studied. And it's really drastic. And I think there's a lot of people the medical world that are skeptical of the natural side. And conversely, there's a lot of people on the natural side who prefer natural alternatives, who are very skeptical of conventional medicine. And I think we'll actually see the best results when we can all work together, and when those two sides can work together.

The quote from this article was, "Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater," said Yung-Chi Cheng, a pharmacology professor at Yale School of Medicine. People forget that one of the oldest cost effective scientifically proven drugs came from traditional medicine, which is aspirin. He said, "The Ancient Egyptians used dried Myrtle leaves to treat aches and pains. And Hippocrates, the 4th Century B.C. Greek physician considered the father of western medicine, prescribed an extract of willow bark for fevers. But it wasn't until the 1800s that European scientists figured out that the active ingredient in both is salicylic acid and synthesized it. And today, aspirin, at pennies a dose, is arguably the world's most cost effective drug." And the article goes on to explain other examples of how, wormwood, which is an ancient Chinese medicine herb, has saved thousands when used as a treatment for malaria in modern medicine. And also this new drug.

Cheng, the researcher they interviewed, he was looking to try to find ways to increase the rates at which people can finish chemotherapy. Because there's actually a high rate at which people don't finish it because of all the side effects, whether it'd be nausea or digestive disturbances were the main ones. So he realized people who finished treatment lived longer, and he figured if he could increase the number of patients who didn't discontinue treatment, then more people would survive. And so he was using traditional Chinese herbs to help these patients just get relief from their nausea and digestive struggles, but he noticed another side effect which was that their cancer shrunk faster than those who weren't using the herbs. Which has led to a whole new world of research. And the working name of the drug they're working on is called PHY906. I'll put the whole article you sent me in the show notes, but I was so fascinated to see that we have researchers at some of the top universities in the country, really actually looking at herbal medicine as like conventional medicine treatments, which is really exciting.

Heather: Yeah. And I think there's a lot of research also going on about mushrooms and, you know, is it glycans? Am I saying it right?

Katie: I think so.

Heather: I never know because I'm always just reading the research papers. But their impact on natural killer cell activity and possible therapeutic applications. So, you know, more and more I feel like we're looking to traditional medicine for ideas on even where to hunt in therapies for people who are really struggling with big things. So, yeah, it's amazing.

Katie: Yeah, and another thing that came up in the news only a few weeks ago is, there's a lot of new research on the placenta because they used to think that a placenta was just kind of a throwaway support organ. And in fact, it literally gets thrown away pretty often. But what they're finding is that they can tell a lot about the baby's health and lifelong health outcomes based on the placenta, which is actually 90% formed by the baby and only 10% formed by the mom. And so they're now using a lot of resources to be able to do early diagnostics on the placenta that will let them do early interventions for health problems that they would see much later in pregnancy. Like even preeclampsia or diabetes, they're looking at this across the board. So, I'm really fascinated that they're finally looking at this thing that we for so many years thought was gross, that you and I have both I think at different times consumed. And they're starting to understand just how amazing and cool it is.

Let's see. Other things that I think will be growing trends for this year would be more knowledge about things like we talked about sauna and light therapy, which are both to some degree traditional therapies that have now found modern methods. But I think there's just more knowledge growing about those. I think CBD is definitely still on the rise as far as...

Heather: On that note, I came across a cardiologist recently who has a sauna for that very reason because of the passive cardio aspect and a cold tub. But I do think that it has hit mainstream because he's a very well respected cardiologist.

Katie: Yeah. And I know Rhonda Patrick, who we'll link to her in the show notes, you and I both love her work and her podcast. But she's really...she's a PhD and she's gone deep on the research on saunas and heat shock proteins. And I think when we have people like that, great minds that are advancing the research and the knowledge about it, we'll continue to see the science for what we already feel when we get in the sauna. And it's true about the cardio benefits too. I don't think people sometimes realize it has many of the same benefits as exercise. You're not gonna get the muscle benefits. Like, you're not gonna gain strength from being in the sauna, but you get the increased heart rate, you sweat, it moves your blood more efficiently. So you actually get some of the same benefits of exercise and that's why we see these statistics.

I hope I'm remembering it correctly, but even just four sauna sessions per week I think was the minimum dose, people saw a noticeable reduction in cardiovascular risk and some of the risk factors of disease. So, it's one of those things I'm glad we're finding more and more about. A couple of other things just from the research I'm seeing, I think like I said, CBD is going up from the mom side. I think we're gonna see an increase in people being able to take digital detoxes and spend less time on technology. I think we've been in a cycle of technology growing and people loving it, which obviously it's amazing, it integrated in our lives in so many ways. But I think we're also starting to realize the downsides, and more and more people are working on ways to step back and not use technology as much. And to that note, I'll also link to an article about how to make, if you have an iPhone, how to make it work for you versus owning you. It was really helpful for me and I check my phone much less now because truly only like messages and phone calls ping me.

And then as far as just food or remedy based trends, I think elderberries are still on the rise. I've seen so many questions come through on that this year. And then matcha tea also seems to be having a moment in the sun, both Pique Tea and Four Sigmatic have good ones that we can link to in the show notes. And then the last two points, I'll speak to the first one and then I know you can also speak to the second one about sunscreen use. But the first one being, I think we're gonna see, I really hope we're going to see a continuation in the growing movement of reducing plastic. Hopefully, you guys have seen the articles about single use plastic and all the problems associated with that. In fact, some articles are now claiming that single use plastic is as anti-social as smoking. And where we both live near the beach, I know there's been a big push back against plastic straws because living on the beach, you can actually see the damage of plastic. And I recently wrote a post about this, about plastic in the ocean and plastic pollution and single use plastic, but the statistics are really, really, really staggering.

Like, we're talking hundreds of billions of bottles every year that are created. Most are not recycled, most end up in the ocean or in landfills. There is a floating plastic garbage dump between California and Hawaii that's bigger than Texas. It's three times the size of the country of France. And because of that, we're losing 100,000 marine mammals every year. We're losing a million sea birds every year. They have found plastic under several kilometers of ice in the Antarctic, which means it has fully saturated our planet. And most people think, "Oh well, recycling will solve the problem." The problem is it won't because A, we're not doing it enough. But even if we were, it costs more to recycle a ton of plastic than they can sell it for. So there's no financial incentive. And because there's not great sorting because there are so many types of plastic, most things are just recycled into park benches, or rugs, or other things that will eventually like still end up in a landfill or in the ocean. And they're not being recycled into usable plastic bottles, so we're still creating all these new bottles all the time.

And so, my hope this year, and something I'm gonna be talking about quite a bit this year is that we will all be more cognizant of our plastic use. We already know that there's health consequences to plastic exposure, but I think we're really starting to see the ugly head of what it's doing to our planet. And I hope that it's something we can all take on. And that's the reason I wanted to talk about it today with you guys is, I think moms, we have so much power because we buy so many of the products to really start shifting this. And it can be little things like just carrying water bottles instead of buying water bottles, or swearing off of any drink besides water that comes in a bottle because they're not healthy anyway. Or just trying to switch to buying at farmer's markets or bringing our own bags to the grocery store. There's little changes that can add up to such big changes when we all do it and I also hope that we'll start applying some corporate pressure because even if all

of us did all of those things, the large companies are still creating a lot of this plastic waste. And I think we're nearing a point where it's gonna become drastically important to address this.

So, I'll put some more links in the show notes about some practical steps on that, if you guys are interested, but it's something I would really encourage everybody to look into more and to figure out how you can address in your own home. Because not only are there health benefits, but truly, like our kids and our grandkids need us to fix this problem now. And another one along the same note is rethinking sunscreens because most people don't realize these have a planetary effect or health effect. And it's something I know you and I both read about. So I'm gonna let you tackle this one first.

Heather: Yeah. I remember I read a book by a PhD, I can't even remember. It was called, "Sunscreens - Biohazard" and it was years ago. And basically, it was from a scientist who was in Hawaii and noticed that the coral reefs were being affected by chemically based sunscreens. And I didn't know it was a thing at the time, but the chemicals in conventional sunscreen have a negative impact on ocean wildlife and coral reefs. And so they are getting banned. I think they were banned somewhere, where was it recently? In Hawaii. It was Hawaii. So they were banned in Hawaii and we're seeing a shift toward more awareness on that subject. So, you and I both live near the ocean and I actually take a walk every morning by the shore and I pick up the plastic that we see, which is really, you know, it's a long walk. So I come back hauling, you know, whatever I find with me. So it is definitely something that I think about.

But, you know, it's funny because even though we live here, I almost never wear sunscreen. And it's not that I'm getting burned, it's that I'm using other ways to cover up. I use hats. I use long swim shirts, like, I don't even know what they're called, but just... And, you know, I get out of the sun in the middle of the day if I feel like it's, you know, if I've had too much I seek shade. But, you know, I do occasionally use sunscreen, but it's gonna be a natural sunscreen with a Zinc in it, that's a physical barrier that's protecting the skin that doesn't have that same negative impact. But it does seem that there's more awareness about choosing safer options when sunscreen is absolutely required. And then also, you know, finding different ways to avoid excess sun exposure. And also remembering that the sun is good for us.

Katie: Yeah, that's such a good point too. Like, we went through this phase that I think we're now coming out of where we...it was the sun is always bad type scenario. And then researchers started looking at things like, well, then why are people still getting melanoma at higher rates in places that literally the sun don't shine. Like, under where you would always wear a swimsuit? And we're talking about in America not in Europe, where you don't wear a swimsuit. So people were always wearing swimsuits and they were still getting cancers at higher rates, melanomas at least in some of these areas or under the back of the neck where your hair would always be covering, things like that. And some of that research, there's now people saying that it could be actually these same chemicals that are harming the reefs that are actually leading to problems because what we put on our skin, we do absorb. And so when you're putting these same chemicals on your skin to block the sun, you're also absorbing them and then they're impacting your body, not to mention that most of them are designed to block the rays that cause burning, but other rays are not necessarily blocked. They're not completely full spectrum a lot of the time.

So, other rays are still getting in, including ones that actually may be more likely to cause cancer. And because you're not burning, you're staying out longer, you're getting more exposure to that. So, certainly, I feel like we should say anytime we talk about sunscreen, no one is saying you should get too much sun exposure or certainly that you should ever get burned. But in today's world, we have so many other options besides chemical based sunscreens. You can use the physical barriers and we have recipes for that on site or like you mentioned, just wear a rash guard and a hat or get in the shade. And then you can still spend the time outside without needing to take the time to reapply sunscreen every hour or two hours anyway.

Heather: You know, I read another book, "Blue Zones," recently, and there are a lot of aspects that I really found fascinating, but one of the things that they kept returning to over and over in the book was that these centenarians, this is a book about different people groups around the world that have high populations of people that live to 100. And they talked over and over again how their skin was weathered. Like, it had this sort of weathered feel because one of the common themes between every single population that lived to 100 was that they had a lot of sun and that they had high vitamin D levels. And that seemed to play into, you know, part of the recipe that was creating this environment that supported longevity. And I'm not saying go out and, you know, get all the sun in one day, but they actually... They talked in the book about how over time, that the skin became more tolerant of more sun. So always be aware of that. But, you know, like when I start out in the spring and haven't been out in full, like have my entire body exposed, I start slow and just get a little bit. But over time, I do increase as I see that my skin is handling it well and I make an effort not to get burned. But I know that that vitamin D is doing all kinds of things. It has roles in the body. Like, hormonal roles, it has immune supportive roles. So, yeah, I'm embracing the sun, just not too much of it.

Katie: Yeah, I'm right there with you. And if you guys need more convincing, just Google the relationship between vitamin D deficiency and depression. Vitamin D deficiency and cancer. Vitamin D deficiency and heart disease. Literally, like almost every problem of modern society is at least slightly correlated to vitamin D deficiency. And all of the medical resources agree that we do need vitamin D. It's actually vital. It's a pre-hormone. It's more than just a vitamin. So, our hormones depend on it, our sleep depends on it, and our bodies were designed to get it from the sun. So, of course, be careful in how you do it.

Heather: Yeah. There's a doctor at MIT, Stephanie Seneff, I don't know she's still there, but the last time I took talked with her she was still there. And she believes that vitamin D that is produced by the skin is a different...it's vitamin D sulfate and she believes it's different than oral vitamin D in its biological effect. That's not to say that... I mean, traditionally, a lot of people consumed lard in the winter because it had vitamin D. And I think that they were instinctively compensating for, you know, the winter and the shorter days and all that. But it's, you know, I'm not against all forms of oral vitamin D. I'm definitely like a fan of traditional fats like lard and tallow and they have vitamin D, so does butter. But there may be something to be said for a unique bioavailable form that's made by our skin. Maybe, you know, more research needs to be done, but we may find that out at some point.

Katie: Definitely. We'll put links to those resources as well in the show notes. And then lastly, I think a trend that I think hopefully, we'll lead the charge if no one else is, but I think it's a growing trend even without us. I think hopefully 2019 and beyond will be the time when women really get to like, especially moms, get to like claim their power and become the superheroes they already are in the public eye and realize what an important role we play in the future of society. Because that's something that seems to have gotten a little lost since our grandparents' generation. Motherhood was once considered an extremely important role and now I feel like there's so much pressure on us as moms not just to be moms, but to do everything else too, and to have a career, and to look perfect all the time, and to not be stressed, and to never yell at our kids, and to have hobbies, and to have... So we're supposed to do all of these things, but there's not the support and the same respect for the fact that if just being a mom is an incredibly important job and affecting the next generation has ripples that can literally last for generations. And not only that, but we do control so much of the purchasing power in our country. And if we as moms stepped into that power and start making small changes, over a couple of years, we can have a drastic change.

And how appropriate that my little one is now asking a question. But we'll wrap up on that note and just to say that we love you guys and appreciate all of the work that you do as moms and families, and to change the future of our country. And thanks as always for listening and we hope you'll join us again on the next episode of the "Wellness Mama Podcast."

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