



Episode 243: Using an Adrenal ReCode to Calm the Nervous System With Christa Orecchio

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Katie: Hello, and welcome to the "Wellness Mama Podcast." I'm Katie from [wellnessmama.com](https://wellnessmama.com). And I'm here today with a dear friend, Christa Orecchio, who is a clinical and holistic nutritionist and founder of The Whole Journey. She has helped thousands and thousands of people and she helps them to discover their root cause using food as medicine and a mind body spirit approach to health. She's truly one of the happiest, calmest, most joyful people I know as well as being a bestselling author, a TV show host, a mom of adorable little boy, and she's super passionate about helping everyone to heal their adrenals, their thyroid, and their nervous system in the most holistic way. And we're going to deep dive especially in the last part of that, the nervous system, today. So, Christa, welcome and thanks for being here.

Christa: Oh, thank you for that warm welcome, Katie. I always love being with you.

Katie: Likewise. You have so much to teach and I love this new...I've gotten a little bit of a preview and I want to go deep on it today...this whole new area that you've been really deep diving into. And you say that the majority of us are living off of stress hormones, and we're not even aware of it. So first of all, how do we know

if that's us and explain to us what these stress hormones are and what's happening in our body in that situation?

Christa: Sure. Yeah. You know, well, so many times that we've talked, I've said, "All disease begins in the gut," you know, over and over again. But now my research over these last three or four years really shows that the nervous system is the foundation of all health. It's like the foundation of our house and everything else is built upon that. And so there's overt signs that we're living off of stress hormones, and the biggest sign is chronic anxiety and insomnia, feelings of being governed by fear and overwhelmed. Those are telltale signs that we're living off the stress hormones. So if you wake up between 1:00 and 4:00 a.m. and your heart is pounding, are you ready to start the day or you wake up very early in the morning with your heart pounding, that's a sign. But exhaustion can also be a sign and thyroid issues.

I mean, if you have any manner of thyroid issues whatsoever, the nervous system is off. Things like losing your memory, you know, because the brain is so affected and really losing even sensation because the nervous system, it's everywhere, it's connected. So those are overt symptoms. But then the other ways we could know that we're living off of stress hormones, which it isn't, you know, obvious, like anxiety is really the inability to lose weight no matter what we do, especially around the middle and depression. Those are kind of telltale signs when you've been living in this way for a really long time. And the vast majority what I've done over my research, you know, through all of these interviews and we did a beta group for this new program we have and what we've figured out is like 80% of people are living in this state.

And so it might not be because of something that happened now, it could be a stressor or trauma that happened in childhood. You know, this can be 30 or 40 years ago that you flipped into living in your stress, adaptive nervous system. And that became your way of living. Some people inadvertently put themselves into that state by doing overdoing it with intermittent fasting or staying on a ketogenic diet for a really long time. Because what happens is, when we're stressed, we release stress hormone. We release adrenaline first and cortisol second. And the job of the stress hormone is to mobilize energy in the form of glycogen. So we have backup energy stores like generators of glycogen in our liver and our muscle tissue for times when there's no available energy reserve. So if we were stranded on a deserted island and there wasn't much food, your body is going to start to use the ketones, and fat first and protein second, and it's going to use whatever stored glycogen has been in the liver and the muscle tissues.

And so when you burn through that, which most people have no backup, their generators are long gone from decades ago, now the body begins releasing excess cortisol. So now you're in that state, your body doesn't know you're not stranded on a deserted island, and food is available but now it's breaking protein into fatty acids. And it's trying to convert glucose for energy. And so in the in the short-term, this is helpful and it's necessary. It's a stress adaptive, normal survival mechanism. But the problem starts is because when we make this our day-to-day function. And then the only way the body is able to use fat and protein as energy is through the release of stress hormones. It's the conversion process. So that's going to keep us locked in this vicious cycle of chronic breakdown and inflammation. Make sense?

Katie: Yeah, it does make sense. And yeah, I think you're so right. I feel like all of those factors were pretty much like in the modern world, or any of us ever getting out of that sympathetic nervous state or getting into parasympathetic. We are just like, go, go, go all the time.

Christa: Yeah, yeah. And so right. It's also our modern society. And it's, you know, one of the questions on our questionnaires is do you have more than one child and have you had...you know, it takes two years for the adrenal is to recover in between birthing a child. That's the greatest journey your body ever goes through, is to create a human life and, you know, when you've had multiple children and now you're dealing with businesses and modern life is like technology, we're connected 24/7 and it just keeps us living in that state. So to your point, we have to become countercultural to live a balanced life in today's world.

Katie: That makes sense. So when you started really delving into this, what were you starting to uncover some of the ways we can start unpacking and dealing with these stress hormones?

Christa: Yeah. What you have to what you have to do is you have to address all of the same time because the...we know, functional medicine the body is this one systemic interconnected unit and so the thyroid and the adrenals are a team. And what's happening is when your body gets put in this state of adrenal insufficiency, the release of stress hormones increase. It shuts down the function of your thyroid, telling it to lower metabolism and it leaves us stuck in this no zone, so to speak. And now you're just living in what's called sympathetic dominance. So fight, flight or freeze dominance. And so to be able, what we have to do is we have to shut off the fight, flight or freeze nervous system and click people over into parasympathetic, which is rest, digest and heal. And so we have a six pillar Adrenal ReCode philosophy, if you will, six pillar approach and we really have to do, in this approach, we essentially do for your body what it's unable to do for itself and that's regulate blood sugar and produce and convert energy.

And we know the thyroid and the adrenal are so responsible for that. And that provides, you know, this constant safe healing within the nervous system and gets the brain working again. So what we do is we provide the body with easy to digest proteins, we call them metabolic proteins. And so if you're going to eat muscle meat, then we have to have a little bit of broth or some collagen and to help digest muscle meat because people that are in this compromised nervous system place, they're not going to be able they're going to find muscle meats are going to be a little bit inflammatory to them. So having the broth or having the called in with muscle meat is going to cut down the inflammatory potential and it's going to be easy to digest, but we really rather favor if you can tolerate them, eggs and shellfish and low-fat white fish. These are some of the easiest proteins to digest as well as organ meats, which are just straight energy for the body if you can palate them.

And then we're using carbohydrates and fats to provide the body first the sugar it needs to quiet down those adrenal glands. And so many people are not eating enough of the right types of carbs. And we've been trained to be afraid of carbs, that they're going to cause weight gain, but you cannot heal and you cannot get out of the state unless you are eating roots and fruits. Those are the two carbohydrates that we want people to focus on to be able to shut off that nervous system response and feed the thyroid instantly. So now you're taking

care of the adrenals and thyroid so you can click over into that sympathetic nervous system. And then we use fat to slow down the breakdown of carbohydrates. And what we're finding and we're taking a large group through this process now is that most people, if you ask them, they think, "Oh, yeah, I don't need that much fat," but now we're having everybody track it and they realize it 50% to 70% of their calories are coming from fat and it's completely inadvertent, right? And so, helping them find the balance is helping them regulate blood sugar, increasing their body's ability to produce and convert energy. So those are the two things that we really want to focus on.

Katie: I think that's so important, especially for women, because there's been right now. There's this huge surge in popularity about keto or very low carb paleo, and I'm very much I believe we can learn from something from every approach. And there's wisdom in like, pieces of wisdom you can pull from almost anything in life. But I think this is an important thing, especially for women, because so many of the people listening just, like you said, are in childbearing age. So either they're, you know, having monthly hormone fluctuations due to just their menstrual cycle, or they're pregnant or breastfeeding or have been and are still recovering from that and I think that's so important. Like can you go a little bit deeper on that and just explaining why like is there a time and a place for low carb for women or is it...do we really need to make sure we're cognizant of just the right kinds of carbs and getting them in the right amounts?

Christa: Yeah, I actually don't think there is a place for low carb with women, especially of childbearing age. And, you know, what we'll talk about. We're doing real time assessments, meal to meal assessments for each individual so they can see how the foods are working for or against them. And this is the only program I've ever done where you can fully execute it being pregnant or nursing, which is great. And what we're finding is, you know, they need to eat almost 50% carbs, 25% protein, 25% fat in order to meet the needs of the cell, right? Because being of childbearing age and having children, in order to generate cellular energy, you need three things inside of your cell, you need glucose, you need oxygen, and you need thyroid hormone. And what the problem is a lot of women and I know you've talked about thyroid so much as they're not able to convert T4 into T3, inactive thyroid hormone into active thyroid hormone. It's like, okay, so we have to help them. Carbohydrate is going to help them do the conversion and then kind of rev the energy in the cell and boost mitochondria. So it's going to be really important to work with synergistic foods, you know, that really kind of all work together. Does that answer your question?

Katie: It does. And I found something like related to this that I was surprised even in myself. Like I'm constantly in the health data and research. And when I actually met with like a coach and a nutritionist, I realized I was actually not eating enough, which I think is another trap that women can fall into that I was like so busy that I just actually wasn't getting enough calories every day, which also sends stress signals to the body, especially if you're not getting enough protein. You mentioned metabolic proteins, but can you speak to that a little bit because I feel like so many women fall in that trap of they want to lose weight, so they just eat less and less and less and less and what that does to the body?

Christa: Yeah, it's a terrible thing you can do for your body that's working so hard for you and it's like that's another one of our major pillars is food frequency. And so people, they're not eating enough food, but they're also not eating frequently enough. There's this trend towards eating only a few times a day. And so if you

think about what's happened, this chaotic hormonal whirlpool that is just you're leaching your body of vitamins and minerals, and it's this crazy...like it's a whirlpool, right? It's got a life of its own. The only way to get you out of it is to constantly interrupt that pattern. And so using food frequency is the only way to cause a pattern interrupt to slowly start shifting that, you know, ferocious water and start getting it back the other way. And yes, we're finding that women are vastly under-eating protein.

And so really making sure that you use that protein. Like, you really should just always focus that you should never eat a meal that doesn't have proteins, carbs, and fats, like a meal or a snack. And so if you can make sure every time you eat that you're never just going to have a piece of fruit or a piece of chicken or an avocado, right? You may have to make sure that you have them all together because of the way that they work synergistically. And we work with people to help them customize. Okay, yes, maybe you're under eating protein, but by how much? Like how can your own body tell us the exact amount you need now to heal? And, you know, we start off using higher amounts of carbs to heal. And especially the more children you've had, the more stress you're under. You know, sugar is the antidote to stress, so to speak, in like crazy simplification terms. We don't want people eating the white stuff. But the more stress you're under, the more healthy carbs you need to shut off the stress response and create a safety within the body. So it's this constant interruption of, okay, let's interrupt the pattern by doing more food frequency, and it's wherever you are now.

So you can't take someone who's been intermittent fasting and on keto and they're eating once or twice a day and have them eat six times a day, they'll gain a ton of weight, right? So it's got to be really slow. And so, okay, let's just add one extra meal. And it could be a smaller meal. So you're not increasing the food quantity, so to speak, but you're increasing the frequency. And you've got to really work with the body and let it tell you how to start to make this shift. And if you haven't been eating any carbs for a while, you start with two tablespoons, and then you work up to four tablespoons with every time you're eating. Because so many people, their bodies have completely forgotten how to metabolize carbs. So they come into a strategy like this and they say, "Oh, I ate according to, you know, your meal plan and I gained weight, so I'm going to quit. It must not work for me."

No, it means it's exactly what you need because your body has no idea what to do with carbohydrates anymore, and we have to heal it and teach it that these are healthy foods. It's the only way we're going to refill those glycogen stores. And that's the only way you're going to create resilience to stress because we're kind of walking around in this world full of fragile people that have no resilience and no reserves. And this is a way to build those reserves. Now, all of a sudden, the things that used to really stress you out, right, your children and the job and the things around the house, finances, all of that, those, you start to realize, those are targets of stress but they're not the actual stressor. Because when you can heal and quiet the nervous system and build up reserves, you're much better able to handle the targets of stress, so to speak.

Katie: Yeah, it makes sense. And I think you're right, as long as you focus on the right types of carbs. It may be like...I know we've talked about this on a previous podcast, but why women crave, for instance, chocolate when they're stressed, because there are the natural carbs, there's also antioxidants, and then there's magnesium which are all things that are part of that equation. But what about the weight loss aspect though? Because I know that is a concern for a lot of women and women don't want to gain weight. So is this

something that over time has a net positive effect? Is it possible to heal the body in a way that it then let's go of weight as well?

Christa: Oh, yeah, 1,000%. And we've got people that have lost to 12 to 15 pounds within the first week of being on the Adrenal ReCode, or within the first two weeks. And then we've got, you know, people who are coming in underweight, afraid to lose weight. But the beautiful thing is you know, you give the body what it needs it will heal itself. So if you need to lose weight, you lose it. If you need to gain weight, you will gain it because this is a complete metabolic reset and we let the body do what it needs to do to create balance.

And so, you know, we're hearing myriad things from people who, you know, they've been on keto for years and they couldn't lose that stubborn belly fat. Well, how could you because you're keeping yourself locked in fight or flight and now their bodies finally safe enough to release that weight. And then there's the opposite end of people who have had other issues and they're afraid to lose weight, they're able to gain it in the right way, in the healthy way. And that's just, you know, by having the thyroid come back online. It's the metabolic regulator of the body and it's gonna regulate your weight up or down however you need it.

Katie: Got it. And are there some foods that...I know you mentioned a few already...but that are especially synergistic and hopeful for the nervous system specifically that women can you know think about and focus on when they're trying to do this rehabilitation?

Christa: Yeah, for sure. And so when we think about the symptoms that are associated with the nervous system we think anxiety, frustration, the inability to recover from stress and so there's micronutrients that are needed in higher amounts and for the nervous system and that's like foods that are high in alpha lipoic acid, electrolytes, iron, lecithin, manganese, melatonin, phosphatidylserine is just amazing. That's a supplement I recommend for most people healing because it does amazing things to help remyelinate the myelin sheath which is the electrical insulator out of our nerve cells. Lot of us, that's frayed. We've been living in this way for a while. And then all you need foods that are higher in all your fat soluble vitamins A, D, E and K, vitamin C and zinc.

So the foods that are high in all of those micronutrients that we really need to heal our nervous system, avocados, bananas, bone broth, carrots, cherries, coconut water, collagen, leafy greens in moderation, and we like you to have them cooked when you're healing versus raw, liver, organ meats, other organ meats, all the mitochondria is in the heart. If you can make a healthy meatloaf out of that, you can focus on oysters, sunflower seeds, salmon. We love the tropical fruits, which so many people stay away from because they're high glycemic but they're actually a wonderfully healing supportive food when combined with protein and fat. They work wonders.

Katie: Got it. It sounds delicious too.

Christa: Yeah. And there are foods that's, you know, a lot of people have already been eating. It's just learning to eat them more strategically, right? I mean, so many of your listeners have been eating healthy for a really long time and this could just be making some subtle shifts.

Katie: Absolutely. And you mentioned also that often people are over eating fats without realizing it. And I think this may be especially problematic right now because keto is so fat heavy. But can you speak more to this of like, what does an ideal fat ratio look like on average? I know everyone is different. But on average for a woman, especially in childbearing years, how much and what kind should we be focusing on?

Christa: Well, okay, I'm going to explain with two pillars because I want people to understand how they can really customize. And so with the fourth pillar of our Adrenal ReCode strategy is the targeted use of saturated fat to protect the nervous system. So we'll use specific types and ratios of saturated fats to heal. So what we are doing to help people heal is using 50% saturated fat, 45% monounsaturated fat, and only 5% polyunsaturated fats. So the saturated fat is exactly what we need to help the cell recover from past trauma and to insulate it against future trauma and that this fat is soluble vitamins. So this is why when we mentioned the organ meats and we mentioned things, let's say, like coconut oil, or ghee, or grass fed butter and, you know, we're focusing on these saturated fats to provide protection and rejuvenation to the nerve cells. We still use them sparingly but by focusing on saturated fat, we can protect fragile nerve cells from toxic invasion. Because when you think of a fat molecule, it's a chain of carbon and it has hydrogen attached on all ends and that's a saturated fat molecule.

But when we move to the mono unsaturated, you have a few...it doesn't have attachments of hydrogen on all ends. And so 45% mono like olive oil, avocados, avocado oil. But when we move to polyunsaturated fats, which are mostly the nuts and the seeds and all those poor oils we get in the restaurant, you know, canola oil, you're really missing a lot of hydrogen bonds there. And so that's creating a lot of instability in an already fragile body. And you can't basically leave empty seats at the table, so to speak, because with the saturated fats, we know exactly what we're getting. It's covered on all sides. And so that's the kind of the whole balance that we need to heal. But in order to tell women how much fat they need to be eating, we use customized real time assessments to help them figure out their specific macro nutrient ratios that they need.

And so when I say that, we're using temperature and pulse. Taking temperature and pulse to see, okay, how much thyroid hormone is available in the cell? Temperature and pulse is going to tell us exactly what's going on with your cortisol rhythms with your inflammation set point. It's going to tell us a lot of these things that is actually better than lab work because lab work is going to be this snapshot in time of what's happening. But using temperature and pulse, you know, obviously, you take your lab work, it's like, great, I totally understand how depleted this person is. But now we use temperature and pulse as real time feedback. So we'll look at temperature and pulse first thing in the morning, 20 minutes after breakfast, 20 minutes after lunch and before bed. And now you're putting together these meals and you're taking your temperature and pulse and you're looking for it to be within a specific range. And if it's not, that's when you say, "Okay, let's look at this. Okay, so you have too much fat, not enough carbohydrates, you weren't able to meet the needs of your cell." So does that make sense how we're manipulating it basically four times a day?

Katie: Yeah, it makes sense. And I love that it's in real time and personalized because I know this is something you and I have talked about personally before. But more and more right now, the more I researched, the more I realized that that seems to very much be the future of health and especially root cause health is figuring out your personalized, customized, what's going to work for you. And I look at so many different approaches in the health world and I've kind of gotten to a point of thinking like, "What if everybody is a little bit right? Like what if everybody found the thing that works for them, but that's necessarily the dogma that didn't need to work for everybody? And how can we learn from the wisdom of each of these people, but find and what works for us and for our own body?" So I think I've become much less dogmatic lately and more definitely trending towards the personalization. So I love this, like, having tools that we can do at home without expensive lab testing that can give us insight into the body.

Christa: Yeah, I completely agree. This is the wave of the future. But you know what else goes with that, Katie? Is the ability to trust the process, to trust your own body and kind of this inner guru, right? And it's interesting because we're taking the large group through this process right now. And so much of it is the mindset because they're looking for someone else to tell them exactly what to do. I want to follow this plan exactly. And it's this constant, you know, thing where we're used to giving away our power to all these different dietary theories or dogmas or practitioners. And so now is kind of hunkering down and turning within and having that self-trust that your body will tell you exactly what it needs. So we're having people tune in.

So basically, the body temperature and pulse, those are objective assessments, but we're having them really log, logging since oxygen is 33% of this whole thing, right? We need oxygen, glucose, and thyroid hormone in the cell. We're having them doing metabolic breathing. We're having them say, "Okay, how did that meal settle with them? What was going on? How did you feel?" And through the tuning in, you know, they're finally starting to realize, "Oh, okay, I had this really stressful afternoon. So if I had had more carbs, I would have gotten through that with more grace." And that's the beauty because I think we've given too much power in general to the objective, right? But we also need the subjective. And when you pair objective and subjective assessments together, that creates the whole picture. Like we need art and science to coexist peacefully, right?

Katie: Absolutely. And I think, yeah, you're speaking to something so deep and core to women, especially in the modern world is this feeling at odds with our bodies. And we're constantly being told by pretty much every marketing message out there that our bodies are wrong in some way. And so it's really difficult not to develop this idea that our bodies are not enough or they're too much of something or they don't fit the mold. And so I think so many women and myself included throughout a lot of my life feel like we're fighting our bodies. And how can you be at peace and heal when you're fighting the very thing that you are. And I think that's such a core deep, deep thing for so, so many women, especially if there's trauma, but even if there's not just this constant message of not being enough. And so I think you're so right to speak to that both physically giving the body what it needs to nourish and heal and actually not have those stress hormones so we can feel more at peace in our bodies, but then also to realize that that's what we're facing and to get to a place of love of our own body and realizing what it can do versus fighting it and constantly feeling like it's not good enough.

Christa: Exactly, yes, the self-love is just so required. So the Adrenal ReCode this whole process, part one is all of this physiological re-patterning and the healing at the cellular level and the nourishing of the cells in the thyroid and the nervous system. But part two is this emotional re-patterning because if you can't complete the healing unless you do the emotional re-patterning, right, because it's the same thing. We're stuck in this habit, whether it's some kind of self-loathing or judgment of our body or any...you name it, right? You name the belief system I don't feel X enough, whatever that is. And so it's like we can do all the physical healing. But if we don't do this mental emotional re-patterning because we know science has fully proven that our thoughts create our emotions and our emotions directly reflect our biology, you know, they directly affect it so you can, with your thoughts and your emotions, right, put yourself right back in this state. So we work too emotionally re-pattern as well, you know, dismantling limiting belief systems and kind of going through that whole thing. So I find that that's what's most important for comprehensive healing.

Katie: You've also mentioned breath in passing, and I'd love to go deeper on this pillar of the idea of breath and movement because I think another thing that's gotten so disordered for a lot of us is just movement in general and thinking it always has to be exercised and it always has to be depleting and we have to go, go, go. And this was something that really struck home for me for the first time I think in my adult life. Recently, I was on a trip to Finland actually with a group and one of them, one of the people there is in the fitness world, but his whole focus is getting people back to like play into movement that's actually fun. And I realized I hadn't thought of movement like that in 15 years. And it was really starting to realize. And so I'd love for you to speak to how both breath and movement can nourish the body versus being something we need to like do on a checklist to stay in shape, but how those interact with our nervous system and our hormones.

Christa: For sure. Yes. So if we could just have that permission slip to go have fun, right? This is like we all need that. The breath is so important. I mean, the breath is the remote control of the brain and the nervous system and it's always with us and it's one of our best tools. But clinically, you know, oxygen is food for your cells. You need oxygen, glucose, and thyroid hormone in order to create and produce and convert energy, and so it's not really like an option. It's a necessity that we start to deep breathe a little deeper. And so it's also the most gentle detoxifying. And so those of us that are in adrenal fatigue, we've got compromised thyroid function, we need more oxygen in order to be able to convert our food into fuel and, you know, to be able to create energy. We're often too fragile to do these crazy detoxes. It's just oxygen that we need to help us detoxify gently and safely.

So we say if we can ReCode the way that we breathe, and this is in I call them parasympathetic moments, you know, throughout the day, but we also use metabolic breathing and diaphragmatic breathing and alternate nostril breathing. I don't know if you've ever heard of that. It's a yogic breath that it's just five minutes, you know, with alternate nostrils. Five minutes of that can just click you right into your parasympathetic nervous system, get the left and right-hand hemisphere of the brain, calm and quiet everything. It's the single best breathing technique for anxiety and breathing is one of the best things you can do for energy levels, mood digestion, you know, in a sense of peace. So we really underutilize it. But then this oversitting problem that we have, you know, creates hip flexors and a tight psoas. And so we call the hips and the psoas the junk drawers of emotional storage and so you get those really tight. And so if you have a tight hip flexors and tight psoas, it forces the reverberatory effects in the breath. It causes shallow breathing even if you're not trying to, it re-patterns your breathing to an unhealthy way that keeps you stuck in sympathetic nervous system.

So we have to move but really I'm a huge fan of yoga. I used to teach it and practice for over 20 years. There's so many different kinds and types to really open up and free the body and help the cerebral spinal fluid flow easier so it can nourish the nervous system. And so we're with our recorders, so to speak. You know, we're having them do yoga and just walking and foam rolling. It's one of the best things that you can do for yourself to release the fascia and help the energy flow within your body. So I don't think we need to do all this super hardcore exercise. You just have to know.

And this is we're using temperature and pulse. "Okay, well, does it work for you?" We've got a lot of people in the Adrenal ReCode, they say, "I'm a marathon runner," or, "I'm a triathlete. Can I still keep up this high level of intense exercise?" And we say...so, again, we're putting it back on them. Your logs will tell us if this is keeping you locked in stress or not. And you know how to adjust your diet accordingly. And so I think you're really onto it when it's like listen to your body and do the movement where you feel good after. If you exercise and you feel like you need to sit on the couch for a couple of hours after, it's way too intense and it's keeping you locked in that that fight or flight state.

Katie: Yeah, that's a good barometer. And for so many women, that might be like they can run triathlons just fine, if that's what they're used to and their body can handle it. Whereas for others, you're right, it may start with something very, very gentle like just gentle movement. You'll go walking, etc., and breathing. And how often we underestimate those simple things like just the power of calm breathing? I know I saw one study that even just six deep breaths in a row that are intentional and slow, could reduce blood pressure, reduce stress hormones, and have a noticeable change in the brain. And it's free and often do we ignore that.

Christa: Right. It's easy. It's free. It's always with you. And it's like it's nice to just put little sticky notes around it or to remind yourself in your car, in your office, on your bathroom mirror just breath. It just works wonders.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely and I love that. I feel like the physical part is so important. But it's also like, you've said before, it's only such a small part of the equation in some ways.

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Katie: And you and I have talked about in person a lot, but the emotional side and how to keep that part in check. And I feel like for so many people, especially maybe for women, the emotions are truly the battle. And I heard about this recently that like it's for me, like my own stress or my own self-doubt or some of the toughest opponents I've ever had to face. So yeah, I'd love to talk about the emotional side and what that's about how we can let go of some of these emotional layers so that we can give our body a chance to heal.

Christa: Yes, exactly. Thank you so much for bringing that up. I would like to kind of, you know, preface this of creating. This was kind of a necessity, as the mother of invention thing for me. A lot of people have been through a lot in their lives and through, you know, opening up the Adrenal ReCode we've heard some really wild stories. And I went through an intense experience which you know all about in that I filed for divorce and also a restraining order when I was about a month pregnant and it was the most stressful situation I had ever been in. And I had to find a way though we know how bad it is for developing fetus to incubate in a body full of stress hormones. So there was no way I was gonna let my son incubate that way. Like I had to find a way to elevate above the emotion emotionally and to be able to live in my parasympathetic nervous system because my external experience of life wasn't going to change anytime soon, right?

You don't just get divorced in a month. It takes a while. The whole thing takes a while and there's so many people that have been through so many different types of circumstances. You name it. Whether it's childhood trauma or grief or loss or divorce or relationship troubles, troubles with their children, financial hardship. You know, these are the things where they're not going to change maybe anytime soon but so we want to be able to heal the physical aspect and now the emotional aspect. We have to be able to emotionally ReCode and build resilience there so that we can really respond to life from the current situation that's happening instead of react out of past trauma or react out of the story. And so part two of the Adrenal ReCode, the beginning, module four, is we identify limiting belief systems and we help to start examining them or dismantling them.

And so a limiting belief or belief in general, it's just something that we know with certainty and we all develop beliefs between the age of one and seven, and we are egocentric at this stage, right? We don't know anything except for the world evolving around us, so we think whatever happens, we make meaning out of it specific to us. And so, let's say, such a simple thing, right? Like, your dad comes home after work every day and he plays with you. And one day, maybe he got fired, and he comes home, and he doesn't come right into play with you. He's upset. He's talking with your mother. All of a sudden, you create a belief that there's something wrong with you. Like that's how easy and quick it can happen and it happens to every single human that we develop a belief, you know, in our own deficiency by the age of seven.

And then what we do is we go...we look for ways to create meaning out of it. It's kind of like a table top. Okay, well, a table needs legs. So we just start looking for situations within the world to prove this belief true. And we may develop that as a compensation skill. We may need it but if we take this all the way through to our adult life, it's going to have a lot of effects on our life that, you know, they're not helpful. And so what we do is we take you through this process to really start to identify what these limiting beliefs are. And Tony Robbins goes through the six human needs. It's like love, connection, safety, belonging, self-esteem. These are things every human being has a need for and we all develop deficiencies in them. And we kind of carry them throughout life and we ignore them. We're not conscious of them. We don't know that this is a computer program that's running us. And so what we have to do first is bring awareness to them, be able to identify these limiting beliefs and then we can start to ask, "Okay, are they really true?" Are you with me so far?

Katie: Yeah. Absolutely.

Christa: Okay. So since I started with my personal story, I'll say that I had the belief. My brother was pretty sick as a child. He had meningitis when he was five and it damaged the frontal lobe of his brain, and that led to, you know, epileptic seizures and all kinds of tubal ear infections and things like that, and later drug and alcohol addiction and criminal activity. And so as a child, you know, as I'm witnessing this, he was my older brother. It's not like anyone told me but I got the message, "Okay. I'm on my own. I have to do everything by myself and I better just be the good one and be the people pleaser, because there's really no extra space, you know, I can't cause any trouble here." And so I don't know that I have this belief system right. And then I'm living my whole life kind of going through that, and then I later prove it true in my adult life. I end up marrying an addict and this whole cycle, I recreate the cycle of chaos that I had in my home every six weeks. And end up, okay, now I'm going to have to be a full time single mom and sole provider and you end up proving it true because it's a belief system. That's how powerful these things can be that we don't even realize.

So now, so I've done this work myself to be able to dismantle that limiting belief, like, is it really true? No. And it can start to look and see all the ways that we're supported. And if you can start to see how the opposite can be true, you start attracting all of the opposite, the love and the support and all of those things. So we take people through a process to identify their limiting beliefs and be able to revolve them and dismantle them. And the next step after that is taking radical personal accountability and responsibility for our entire experience of life.

And I know one of the questions you want to ask me is what was one of my favorite books of all time and the most influential? So I'm going to answer that now and say that it was "The Four Agreements" by Don Miguel Ruiz. And he talks in that book of, you know, it's all about personal accountability and responsibility of speaking with integrity, not making assumptions, not taking things personally. And this is everything that we teach with a life coach, Tony Robbins life coach, and an emotional mastery coach as well as myself, kind of, taking people through this process because when you understand that personal accountability is a spectrum, right? Like impasse attracts narcissists, and people pleasers attract manipulators. And this whole thing, you realize that you don't want to be on either side of the spectrum. You want to be in the center line where you can have, you can take right personal accountability to where you don't have to create and attract the opposite experience anymore. You can set firm boundaries and it's a different expression of integrity that you can live with. And so kind of going from there once we start to understand that and practice that. It's another pattern interrupt as we're practicing it in our day to day life, and I think a lot of women need that.

And I say like, how many of us, you know, somebody bumps into us in the grocery store, and we say we're sorry? And these are ways. It's like, no, okay. Taking that right accountability is a lot of women were trained to be these people pleasers, but it's coming more to the midline and then when we can do that, it pulls us out of victim consciousness, or martyrdom or anything where we feel sorry for ourselves instead of compassion. They're completely different energy. And then from there, we release, we somatically release trapped negative emotions from the body. Because I think you have to do it somatically, which is releasing them from the body versus talking about them with mind. And so when you can do that, then you're really ready to move into forgiveness. True, authentic, real forgiveness and that's when you can after that, claim your power and revolve your story and really kind of supplant these empowering beliefs, and have a new future going forward.

And that's kind of the entirety of the ReCode. That's why we call it recoding because you really are. You're physically re-coding, teaching your body completely different way to exist on the cellular level, which you're emotionally re-coding. Learning how to respond as your true present best-self versus, you know, the past self, the memorized habitual self that you maybe didn't even realize, you know, you had this faulty computer program.

Katie: Oh, echo your recommendation of "The Four Agreements". I think it's so good. And we actually have "The Four Agreements" themselves written out in our house, and it is something we talked through with our kids when they're upset or ourselves when as our parents were upset. And I love that you keep going back to resilient. I think that's so key in today's world where we can constantly, like there's so many triggers in our society, things we might not agree with or that can be upsetting or just stressful and everything in the news is always stressful. And getting to a place where we're not just at the mercy of the inputs that we are constantly exposed to but we can choose our response, which I think is very much an expression of freedom to be able to get to that point where we get to choose how we respond in those situations and now that you get to forgiveness, too, is the ultimate thing. That was something for me as an adult that I had to work through because of some past experiences that were really difficult. And I wanted to hold on to that anger and just that grudge for so long. And it was not until I realized, not to step through that forgiveness but I realized how

much freedom is there. And I read the quote that really resonated with me that forgiveness is "When you set a prisoner free and realize that the prisoner was yourself."

Christa: A 100%. You just gave me chills. Yeah, or we call it "The free yourself forgiveness exercise." It's exactly what it is. And it doesn't mean that you need to let a former perpetrator in your life or anything like that. It's just means I no longer choose to carry around pain in response to your actions or someone else's actions or behaviors, yeah. It's so freeing and there's also a self-forgiveness process that needs to happen. A lot of us are allowing ourselves to be treated a certain way and these types of things and then, you know, we have a daily, kind of, just daily forgiveness after that. Just like, you know, you brush your teeth at night and just kind of daily cleanup.

It's kind of like, "Okay, is there anything I need to forgive anyone for today or forgive myself for?" It is freeing. But it's almost like an excavation. I feel I kind of relate the second part of the Adrenal ReCode like a surgery. There's like the first cut because you don't even realize that you have these limiting beliefs and then there's the personal accountability piece that can be really hard for a lot of people that's like removing the tumor, so to speak, and removing the trapped negative emotions. And then it's sealing it up with forgiveness and the soothing balm and then starting to work on the positive. And then the empowering belief is the stitches and the healing and all that, so that you can then move forward really completely free. It's amazing. It gives you a completely different experience of life. And I'm definitely a testament to that and, yeah, I think it's a process for every human to go through.

Katie: Absolutely. And that was one of the reasons I was so excited to have you on today and chat with you because I think that, like I said, I think we can learn something from almost any situation, any modality, any teacher, but I also think that often there's like an incomplete picture and especially for women and especially anyone who has any kind of trauma. Even not have to be, you know, very extreme trauma, but just these childhood traumas like you mentioned in the beginning or beliefs that were not enough. And so I've seen so many programs that are brilliant and they focus on the physical but they don't get in touch with the emotional which is so important, or therapist and people who delve into the emotional but then they're not really tapping into the fact that we still actually need to nourish our body, especially if we're going through emotional process, which is an increased physical demand as well.

And so I love that you have seamlessly married the two in a way that really especially can reach anyone, but especially women. Because I fully believe and I know that you do too, but that women and especially mothers are the most powerful force on the planet, especially when they're not overwhelmed and stressed, and when they can come from a place of calm and love. And I think that when we give women those tools, we can change the world exponentially. So I love that you are uniting those two things and really helping people on a very core deep level. And for people who are listening who maybe this resonated with them, how can they find out more and start to go deeper? I know we'll have the link in the show notes. Of course, you guys can find that at [wellnessmama.fm](http://wellnessmama.fm). But talk a little bit more about the program and how it works.

Christa: Yeah, sure. So the Adrenal ReCode program is an eight-week program, and the first, you know, you come into it and we're just working physically. And I just want to echo everything you say about women being the most powerful force in the world. But first, you've got to be able to calm and quiet the nervous system and get some of that physical healing. Start to feel your energy coming back, start to feel your weight coming in balance, you know, "Oh, all of a sudden, that would have frustrated me, but I don't feel frustrated." You start to build that physical resilience and build the self-trust within the body. And that kind of really sets the tenor for you to be able to then go into the emotional work and to be able to do the emotional re-patterning with much more power and much more grace.

So, yeah, we give you basically everything that you need to set you up for success. And we've got a team of clinicians just like I've done with other programs in Gut Thrive. But this is so unique that there's not a lot of people even understand how to practice this way. So we've hired and trained. I've got a clinical partner who's all she does is just work for the last 15 years. And then we hired and trained a team, three other clinicians, integrative clinicians that can help with reviewing food logs and really supporting, you know, giving you this turnaround time within 48 hours to help you understand the program. We give you baseline meals, but it's different than any program that I've ever done before because they're all baselines, the meals, the snacks, the sample meal plan. But how your body is responding is that that's the key. That's how you start to adjust. And within the Adrenal ReCode program, we've done an algorithmic like assessment.

So we kind of distilled and we worked on a beta group with this where you come in and we have to identify the sensitivity of your nervous system. So you'll come in and you'll take this algorithmic like assessment and you'll be put in either a tier one or tier two. Tier two people have a more sensitive nervous system and so their foods are going to be a little bit more restrictive the first month because they can't digest them. Because we know, the first thing that happens when we get nervous is digestion goes on the fritz, and so we have to just calm and quiet and tonify their digestive system so that they can handle foods. And then after month, they should be able to start eating more foods.

And so it's really slow and steady, and we kind of train you that there's so many people they want to do it perfectly right away. You know, some of our recoders. They say, "I feel like this is a type A recovery program." And it's like that's exactly what it is because if you implement everything right away, hey, you may feel awful and you may gain weight or you may...But if you've listened to your body and you do a good job tuning in, your body is going to tell you how fast or slow to go. And so in the beginning, we help you pace that out and then it's beautiful. People really are starting to get it now that they're almost a month in and you really start to notice change. And then now we're moving into the emotional re-patterning portion where you get supported by a different set of clinicians. And that's it. It's an eight-week program. It doesn't mean you're going to be healed completely in eight weeks, but you will have the hang of it so well in eight weeks that you'll understand how to eat for the rest of your life to be able to manage stress no matter what life brings.

Katie: I love it. And of course, like I said, there will be a link at [wellnessmama.fm](http://wellnessmama.fm). You guys can find that and connect with Christa. And also definitely check out her main site and her blog "The Whole Journey" which has a wealth of information. Christa, I know how busy you are both in the work that you do and now as a mom, and I appreciate you taking the time today to share and to teach.

Christa: Thank you. It's such a pleasure to be here.

Katie: And thanks to all of you for sharing your most valuable asset of your time with us today. We appreciate that and don't take it lightly, and I hope that you will join me again on the next episode of the "Wellness Mama Podcast."

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