



**Episode 261: Practical Tips and Mom Hacks From
Physical Kitchness Chrissa Benson**

Child: Welcome to my Mommy's podcast.

This episode is brought to you by one of my favorite people, Isa Herrera, and her Pelvic Pain relief system. Let's be real for a second... having kids can be tough on your pelvic floor health. And even if you haven't had a child, there are many things that can cause pelvic dysfunction or discomfort. If you've ever leaked urine as you laugh, cough, sneeze or jump, it may be a sign that your pelvis could use some help. The good news is that these types of problems can be helped and that is exactly what Isa helps women with! In fact, I can say that after carrying six babies, I can jump on the trampoline with them or run around to play capture the flag (or sneeze when they bring home a cold) without worrying about leaking, but I know many women who struggle with these activities. If you ever have, you've got to check out Isa's free masterclass which teaches things like: How to stop the extra bathroom trips, improve your posture, and put the fire back into your sexy and bring back your libido with a super easy stretch (that you can do in just 30 seconds, anywhere, anytime).and Why Kegels might be causing leaking or making your pelvic pressure and pain worse, how to know if this is the case, and what to do instead. Even your doctor won't be able to share this with you. Isa has helped almost 15,000 women to find relief and freedom. Claim your spot at her incredible free masterclass all about it at pelvicpainrelief.com/healing

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Katie: Hello, and welcome to the "Wellness Mama Podcast." I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com. And I'm here today with Chrissa Benson, who is the founder of Physical Kitchness, which is an online health and wellness one-stop shop, dedicated to helping busy women reduce the overwhelm that we all have and living our best healthiest lives. Her mission is simple. It's to motivate women to take care of themselves so that they can take care of their families. And she has so much great advice for this because we all know we're supposed to do those things, but it's so hard to actually make it happen when you're a mom. And I love her blog because she has such a unique mix of her truth talk, mom life humor, which she's amazing at, and then things like, simple recipes, meal planning hacks, which she's amazing at, and effective home workouts. She has two boys, ages two and four, and she's married to an active duty marine. In fact, we're gonna talk about it, but she raised them for an entire year while he was deployed. She loves pretending that she's a backup dancer for Bruno Mars and is a master of stepping on Legos that her kids leave on the floor, and owns too many yoga pants to count. And I share both of those last two points with you, Chrissa. Welcome, and thanks for being here.

Chrissa: Thanks so much for having me, Katie. It is an honor to be on your podcast.

Katie: I am so excited to have you here. And I love that you are, like, in the trenches real-life giving helpful tips for moms because I think you're so right. There's so much overwhelm. And moms these days, we have so much on our plates, and it feels sometimes like things just keep getting added. And I know that a big part of your mission is to empower moms to take care of themselves. And I also know as a mom, that's one of the hardest things to do. So, I would love to hear your take on that. What does that look like for you in a world where everyone says you need to have self-care, but there's also so much pressure on us all the time to do things for our family and our spouse, and the community, and just everything?

Chrissa: Right. I mean, the biggest, I think, setback for moms with self-care, it's universal, we just don't have all the time in the day to do that. So, although we really wanna make this self-care thing a priority, the problem is, we just don't have the extra 20, 30, 40 minutes in a day. And we all know we really need it, especially I'm so glad that people are advocating for it more, but there's just seems to be no space in the day when we have to fulfill the needs within our families. But I think the real problem is when we don't reallocate our time for doing something that serves us, we get really burnt out. And for me, personally, I get short with my kids or my spouse, and my anxiety will shoot through the roof. And often times, you can feel this, like, pang of this funk or this gloom, even though we have these great lives and these great kids. So, I think since we can't add more time in our day, it really does circle back to reconfiguring that allocation of time, even if it's letting something go so we can have that just 10 minutes. And when I talk about self-care, I really think of it more as, like, Soul Food.

I mean, we can traditionally think it as, like, the bubble bath or the massage or reading, which is all great and it can do wonders to boost our mood. I really think self-care is doing more about something that lights your soul, because when you're really in that kind of state, you can refresh, kind of, who you are, aside from just being mom all the time or serving everyone else. And so, I really think it's about finding a passion or purpose aside from our daily duties, because we love our kids and we love this gifted role that we have to be their mom. But I found that it wasn't until I started fulfilling a passion that I love to do, that was totally nonrelatable to my purpose as a mom, is when I felt like I was really taking care of myself because my soul was full of the creativity and accomplishment that I needed to be more Chrissa, than mom. So, I think giving ourselves the utmost priority to do that just makes us better for our partner and our kids so we aren't showing up on empty. And it doesn't have to be this long, extreme thing every day. It could just be 5, 10 minutes just to do something that fulfills you a little bit more.

Katie: I love that you brought that up, the idea of, kind of, getting lost in being a mom, because I think it's so easy to do, and especially when you have really young children, which I know you still have pretty young ones. They demand so much time rightfully, that they need so much, but you can kind of, like, forget yourself in that and just be, like, everything you do is just revolving around being a mom. And that's something I used to have conversations even with my grandmother about before she passed away. Just the changes that had happened even in a couple of generations, when it came to motherhood and how when she had young kids, certainly, there's still all of the work that goes with babies and toddlers, but there's just a different societal perception about, you know, kids being eventually able to go play on their own, and not needing constant entertainment and supervision. And she had these things that fulfilled her as a person, not just as a mom. And, you know, back then they had, like, dinner parties and they went out on dates a lot more than I know a lot of us do

today. But she also had hobbies, and she would, you know, build things. She had things that lit her up, that didn't just revolve around her kids. And I think that's so key. I love that you have found that as well. So, I would guess your blog is part of that outlet for you, but, like, talk a little bit about how you learned that and what that journey was like.

Chrissa: The blog is most definitely the outlet, but what my passion was, eventually led to my business, and I feel so blessed that I can do what I love and what lights me up. But I found that after I had our first baby, we moved to a new city, I had a baby and I was really excited to quit my corporate job and be stay at home mom, I was so, like, "This is such a dream." And I loved it, but part of me felt like, "Okay, what else can I do during the day?" Like, I felt something like I needed more and I needed this other outlet aside from being mom and changing diapers. And I love to cook, and so I continuously just tried to make great meals, and found that that was a creative outlet for me. But what ended up happening is, I was experimenting in cooking and balancing the mom chores and stuff, and my husband would come home and I was so excited because that was, like, my accomplishment that I had done for the day. I made this great meal and he would lovingly eat it and go, "Yeah, it was good." And I'm like, "What do you mean it was good?"

Like, I slaved over this meal. It was, like, my outlet and I needed kind of more validation and it wasn't even him, it was me that just, like, craved more. And so I quickly realized that I needed to put it in a blog. I needed to chronicle my journey of cooking and healthy eating. And so, I felt like I had something I could put out to the world and feel accomplished, and I wasn't relying on, like, my husband's praise for dinner every night. And that's how it really evolved. I had found my passion through that. I went to Bible studies within my church and we were talking about using your gifts that you were given, and it was really hard for me to try to figure that out. And eventually, it came to me that cooking and living healthy, and balancing the duties of a mom, especially for us, as we move all over the country, and I don't really have a tribe because we're constantly relocating, it was important to me to share that and to hopefully, help other women do the same.

Katie: Yeah, I think that's amazing. And I don't wanna project on you, so I'm gonna ask it as a question. But I know, for me, in that time, when I was in the throes of the toddler years and motherhood was kind of all-consuming, I also had that desire for something that was just mine, that was outside of motherhood, but I also felt really guilty about that. Like, as if motherhood alone should be fulfilling enough. And I'm curious if you ran into that as well. I think a lot of women, at least I can speak for myself, felt that. And I think that is also kind of specific to our generation a little bit. Like, I don't think past generations worried about like, "Oh, why am I not completely fulfilled by just being a mom?" But I'm curious if that was your experiences at all as well.

Chrissa: Yeah, absolutely. I think social media is so great and it connects us. I think it can also give us false perception of what we should feel, and there's no really, one size fits all. I think some moms are fantastic at raising their kids and being stay at home moms, and they are fulfilled by that. And some people need something else along with it. And that's okay because we're not all the same. And I feel like we're in this generation of like, we have to do these Pinterest style birthday parties, and we have to be fulfilled, and we have to self-care. And there's all these, like, keywords and all these terms. But like I said, there's no one size fits all approach. And so, I'm really vulnerable sharing that on my social media because I realized once I started, like kind of sharing the things that I feared I would be judged for, that I think everyone fears they might be judged for, I received such an influx of messages and just thoughts from other moms that were like, "Yes, thank you for saying the things that I feel, but it's taboo to say." And so, I'm really all about, like, a non-

judgmental approach to how you parent, and how you live your life because everyone needs different things, just like our kids need different things. And our kids are totally different people. It's the same thing with motherhood.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. I think, yeah, you said it perfectly. And thanks to things like social media, I remember for so many years, I would see everyone on social media who looked like they had it all together and it was isolating because I felt like, "I think I'm the only mom who's not figured this out." Like, "Why am I failing at this and everyone else has like, their kids in their perfect clothing, who smile for photos and like, their house looks clean?" And I think people like you, that kind of break that open and be like, "Look, it's real life. None of it's perfect." And of course, we all put our best foot forward quite often on social media. But I think it's so empowering to see other women being real. And speaking of being real, I think you are also uniquely qualified to speak to this because your husband, I mentioned was an active duty marine, and I met you actually when he was deployed to Afghanistan, and that was, I believe, a 13-month deployment. And so, you raised a one-year-old and a three-year-old on your own and you didn't have like, a huge community of family support near you. So, I think you have figured out the systems because you survived that. So, share what that year looked like for you, and how you were able to find some kind of balance between everything you had to juggle during that time.

Chrissa: Balance, yeah, it's still a hard thing for me to master. It was then, it still is now, I'm still trying to figure it out. You know, my mind goes, I think, 120 miles per hour most of the day as many of ours do. But during that time when he was deployed, I just remember so many moments of feeling overwhelmed, raising my kids and running the business, and managing the household, and we don't have family nearby. I really don't have a lot of close friends, since we, like I said, constantly move. So, I would wake up with these, like, great intentions, like, "Today, I'm gonna be super patient, I'm not gonna raise my voice," and literally, 12 minutes later, my kids would be up screaming and fighting, and I'd be barely out of bed myself and I was losing my cool already. Then, I feel guilt and then I'd hustle through the day, and then by 3 pm, I was exhausted. It was just kind of nuts. And so, after a few months, right after my husband left, I was really struggling. And so, I realized I really had to prioritize my time in buckets, so that I could have like, kind of a mental vision of how my life was playing out, and I could feel more at ease with how I was spending my time, and what I was saying yes, and what I was saying no to. And so, I do this now. Like, every so often, I write down my three core values in terms of how I spend my time because that's like, the lack I think in most of our lives is mostly time.

And so, every kind of phase, it might be changing a little bit, but it always usually revolves around family, my work, which is my passion, and wellness. And so, when I was solo parenting, my values were, one was pursuing joy, two was my career calling, and three was our health. And so, when I broke that down, I just thought, "Okay. These kids are really demanding, I'm struggling, so I need to find something to pursue joy." And so, that meant I let go of literally all expectations. I left the house dirtier than I've ever left it before. I said no to a lot of obligations. And I honestly just really stopped caring as much how I looked or how I went on public, truth be told. And I just found ways to enjoy my kids in those hard ages that they were, because they were one and three at the time. So, it meant spending evenings at the beach and not caring if my car was gonna be a pit of sand afterwards or, you know, not battling when they were wearing mismatched clothes or shoes on the wrong feet. Because those are things I would maybe prior have judged a mom before, not as a mom, but maybe prior to being a mom, I would think, "Gosh, your kids look so disheveled." But then I realized it just wasn't worth it. I needed to pick my battles and decide what were teaching moments, and what wasn't worth it.

So, I really had to make sure I made time for joy, even if it was messy. And the second part of that core value is fulfilling my career passion. And just doing something that, of course, lit my soul and made me feel accomplished when I needed that little boost in the moments of despair I felt often, and creating healthy recipes and workouts for mom's 'cause that just fulfilled my purpose. And then the last part of it was health because that's really, really important to me. It's really important to me that I'm staying active and working out, and that we're eating well. And so, I always made time to put a little work to plan ahead so that I was cooking nutritious meals, and it had just become ingrained in me that this was a core value, this is not negotiable, that staying active and eating well was a part of the deal. It's a part of our life. And so, I will say, it meant that I said no to a lot. I said no to a lot of work travel opportunities. I said no to a lot of girlfriend gatherings. And I know that's also really important for self-care and connection, but I knew I had to prioritize. I couldn't spread myself too thin. So, I said a no to a lot of asks that I usually feel guilty about. But I knew what I had to do to realistically take on what was priority to me, without burning out. And I think that's really, really important.

Katie: Yeah, that is so key. And so much of what you just said, I was sitting here like, "Yes, absolutely." And it took me probably more like four or five kids to learn this, but about picking the battles and really, like, prioritizing what hills I was willing to die on. And I came to the exact same realization, I was like, "You know what? My number six was like, if she can dress herself, I am not going to care what it looks like because she dressed herself." And also, that's not a battle I'm gonna fight even as they get older. My husband and I had those conversations of like, "What are the things that are truly actually important to us that we get across to them or things that are part of our family culture or family values that do matter and the battles we are gonna fight?" And it wasn't things like what they wear or how they want their hair. So far, sons wanna grow their hair out long, one of them is doing that right now. Then, I'm not gonna fight that because it's his hair and he's almost 13. Or if you know, my girls wanna dye the tips of their hair purple, like, that's not a battle that I'm gonna fight. Another key, for me, was learning not to do things for them that they could do themselves because especially, in those toddler years, it was just so much easier to do everything because they're slow and they would break dishes or, like, it was just a clumsy process.

And so, for a long time, I was trying to do everything for everybody. And one of those key moments, for me, was making that switch to, I'm not gonna do things for them once they're capable of doing it themselves, which means that most of them now, do their own laundry, they do a lot in the kitchen, they help around the house. And that was also a game changer for me as they started getting older. And I think you also highlighted such an important thing about saying no. And it's so hard to say no, especially to those girlfriend trips or when people in your community ask you to do things, or to help. But that's so smart to prioritize your family, and your mental health, and to know. And you mentioned that eating healthy is a huge priority for you. And I'd love if you could share some practical tips for moms on making healthy eating a priority and how you actually balance that with kids, especially when things are so busy.

Chrissa: Yeah, I think that meal prep can be, like this term that people automatically in their brains go bing. Okay, it means hours of weekend batch cooking and cute little Tupperwares with their section of meals, and that's not realistic to me. Weekends are family time, which is one of, of course, my core values, so that's 110% family. So I don't do a ton of meal prepping. What I do instead is, I allocate, like, 10 to 15 minutes in the evening to do something that sets me up for clean cooking success the next day. So my kids will go to bed around 7:30, 8:00, this is just my time, it could be any time of the day really. But that's when I, like, chop up

veggies, or put together a marinade, or I'll pre-make a breakfast or whatever. Because even just that 10 minutes, already puts you in a mode of planning ahead, so you're not stuck the next day, or dreading what you're gonna make for dinner. And making that kind of the same ritual, for me every evening, it turns into a habit and it's just what you do. It's just what you're more likely to identify in you. And it's what you are as a mom, so that you can take care of your family's health, and what they're putting in their body.

And it doesn't feel like a chore when it just becomes so natural. And I don't think meal prep needs to be complicated. And so often we think like, "I'm dealing with the kids, and I have work, and I have all this stuff." It can be just like throwing together a side for dinner, or making a quick sauce, or some random basics, like pre-making rice or sauteing veggie bases, like I do shredded brussels sprouts or rice cauliflower. Just having, like, bases or sides can make a big difference because then you can throw together meals on the fly, which just becomes easier and easier the more you do it. And so, it's those make-ahead components I try to include in my life. And I include a lot of, like, tips in my recipes and my meal planning guides, because it really does help to shave off so much time when you're cooking these real meals at home. And it can really lessen the overwhelm when you're managing your kids and your life, and you don't wanna make cooking this, like, big bear that you have to tackle every night

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. I'm curious for more specifics on your food approach, especially with toddlers because that does seem to be such a pivotal age for, like, teaching them how to eat healthy, but also a time when you tend to run into them saying no quite a bit. So, what are some ways that you've gotten your kids to be on board with eating real food?

Chrissa: I really started right away, and I kind of have this approach of, it's maybe hard-knocks some would call it, but this is what I give you, and there's, I'm not making separate meals. And there's a little bit of leeway where I'll, you know, make things that I know that kids will like, but generally, we eat together as a family and my kids learned, kind of, the ground rules right away. But I know, it can be easy to say that and it's really hard to execute. You have to be so consistent. And it can be really concerning if your kids don't eat anything on their plates and you're, like, ripping your hair out, or if you have older kids that you maybe didn't start right away when they were in those toddler years. And so, I have a few tricks that I've learned because my youngest was a notoriously picky eater to start. So, it took a lot of trial and error. But eventually, I started to see a pattern when I'd make meals and the kids liked those meals. And one simple way, to get them to eat veggies per se, was I would roast the veggies or make them into small teeny-tiny amount of natural sweetener in the oil that I used to roast them. So, like, I'd use a little pure maple syrup or raw honey. And it was, like, a really good trick to encourage my kids to eat their veggies as opposed to hiding them in everything, because I don't believe you should hide the foods to get your kids eat great food. But those kind of, like that little sweet kick kind of made their tastes buds more apt to trying it, and then eventually, I just wean off of that as they matured.

Another hack I have for picky kids is to add fruit to protein. So I have a recipe on my website, it's this five-ingredient Hawaiian chicken burgers. And they have pineapple tidbits incorporated into the ground chicken. And so, the kids, it's a little sweet, they get their protein. I'll do this with, like, Chinese inspired dishes, with mandarin oranges in the stir fry and broccoli and veggies, or I have a turkey meatball recipe in this picky eater blueprint I have, that has, like, blueberries folded into the meat. And it's just those extra little nudges that'll help them get more experimental. And sometimes mom will say, "Well, they'll pick out all the veggies and they

only eat the fruit." And that can be really frustrating. The key is they were exposed to the meal in its entirety. You didn't hide the veggies, you didn't take them out, because you knew they wouldn't like them. They're exposed, and that exposure is really important for familiarity and making these meals that have the components of protein, and healthy fats, and veggies, and that's the norm that they'll continue to see on their plates. And one last tip that I give my kids if like, all other methods have failed is, I give them dips or sauces for dunking because, I don't know, my kids just love finger food, right? They like to play in it and get in it. And so, having healthy options for sauces and dips can help kids get really experimental, or at least try something new. And so, I have a lot of these tips in a meal hacking playbook, which is a free guide that I have in my website, to just make meal prepping easier and healthier, and it includes these like, kid-friendly tips too.

Katie: Yeah, that's so awesome. And I'll make sure we link to that in the show notes so people can find it. It's so good. And all of your recipes that I've ever tried are so good also. And I think you highlighted some really important points when it comes to getting kids to eat. And especially the idea that like, you provide the healthy food, but also you're not like, overly concerned with how much they eat or then finishing what's on the plate. But more about them like, trying it and developing this healthy palate over time. I think that's something that's really hard, and that I had to kind of break that habit, because both my family and my husband's family came from this like, you have to finish the food on your plate type mentality or like, and then you can have dessert, which was like the bribe. And with our kids, we've shifted to being more like, in our kitchen there's a division of responsibility. And my responsibility is that I make sure we have healthy food in the house, or just food in the house, we don't have unhealthy food, and then I cook it. And your responsibility, as your ages, is to listen to your body and know when you're hungry, and to eat when you're hungry. And if you're truly actually not hungry at a meal, I'm not gonna stress or if you don't like the food, and you're gonna pretend you're not hungry, I'm not gonna stress about that because it's one meal. You're not gonna starve in five hours and there's gonna be another meal with healthy options in a few hours that you can choose from. And I think that's just such, like a mental load off to not be concerned or neurotic about, like making sure they get enough bites of everything at any given time, and especially with kids.

I think that balance is like, over the long-term. They're not gonna ever at any meal, eat a perfect ratio of proteins, fats, and carbs, and get, like, every veggie they need. But they might, like, eat a ton of veggies at one meal, and then the next day, they just want a ton of protein. And over time, it all balances out. And I think that's like, what you're doing is so important, about keeping them in touch with their body, and actually listening to it, and not force-feeding anything. And as they get older, your's probably aren't quite at these ages yet, but I've also found getting them involved in the actual cooking and not just like helping, but them actually cooking, was a huge key for us. So, our kids know what the breakfast options are and they make breakfast every day on their own, and they are so much more likely to eat it when they made it. But now, even the older ones can prepare dinner on their own, which was, like a game changer. That was a wonderful day in our house when that started happening. So, I love that you're building those building blocks early with your guys. I had to kind of shift back into that with my older ones, because I didn't know that when they were little. So you're doing it the right way from the start and I love that. And to circle back, so we talked a little bit about self-care earlier, and you mentioned, like, those practices that, like, fill you up that are soul food. And then, you know, things like bubble baths and massages are great, but they're also really hard to fit in. So, can you give some tips for some simple and maybe not so long self-care routines that can be worked in or how that works for you?

Chrissa: Yeah, I love this topic. And I love what you've shared about not stressing about the food, it is so not worth the stress. Let's take out all the little tiny things we don't need to stress about out of our lives like, please, it will just make things so much easier. But along with that, you have 5 to 10 minutes self-care routines because we talked about this earlier, that it doesn't have to be this long, lengthy process. So, one of the things I discovered in working with women and clients in my membership is that no one is really looking at self-care as a component for health and wellness. Like everyone was really focused on getting in their workouts, and planning healthy breakfasts. and dinners, and trying to say no to sweets, and lessen their sugar intake, and all that stuff. And that's great, but no one was really putting the effort to like, give their soul that food and fuel. And so, I understand it can be something that doesn't seem as pressing as everything else in life, but it's still very, very important for our mental health. So, I really promote, and do this myself. I created this, like, 5, 10, 15 framework for them to start. And it's really just 5 minutes of self-care, and then 10 minutes of activity, and 15 minutes of meal prep like, three to four days a week, that's where we kind of start because it's a really easy, quick thing to follow. So, eventually, we increase the time in the repetition, but it's really just used as a base to start and get into a groove. So in that 5 minutes of self-care, eventually leading to 10 minutes is just a simple soul food way not to get lost in the hustle and bustle.

So for me, that means waking up 15 minutes earlier than everyone else cause that's really the only time I can get it in during the day. And so lately actually, I wake up way earlier than my family, because I've gotten so used to that 5, 10 minutes self-care in the morning, that I've loved it so much, and it's become such a part of me. But that 5 to 10 minutes isn't overly ambitious, because we needed to make it small enough to stick to so that you can create the habit. And it's in that super small window of time in the morning. I'll do anything that I feel called to do, that anything that I really need just to de-stress, so maybe it's, like, a daily devotional or I'll journal. Often times, for me lately, I'll just brain dump everything that is in my brain, I just throw it on a piece of paper, so I don't feel so anxious throughout the day. Sometimes if it's nice, I'll sit outside on the patio and just have coffee in peace, which is amazing for your soul just to have a cup of coffee listening to the birds. But it's just that few minutes in a day, that can completely change your outlook on the day and on your life. And that mindset piece of just kind of putting your brain at rest is so important for how you show up in the world, and how you show up for your kids, and how you really view yourself, and what you're doing in your life. And it's easy not just to reflect because we are so busy like, living in the now. But I've realized, especially in that year that my husband was gone, like that reflection and that kind of inner peace, was 110% a game changer for me. So, it's really important, even if it's just 5 to 10 minutes to fit into that self-care routine.

Katie: Yeah, for sure.

This episode is brought to you by one of my favorite people, Isa Herrera, and her Pelvic Pain relief system. Let's be real for a second... having kids can be tough on your pelvic floor health. And even if you haven't had a child, there are many things that can cause pelvic dysfunction or discomfort. If you've ever leaked urine as you laugh, cough, sneeze or jump, it may be a sign that your pelvis could use some help. The good news is that these types of problems can be helped and that is exactly what Isa helps women with! In fact, I can say that after carrying six babies, I can jump on the trampoline with them or run around to play capture the flag (or sneeze when they bring home a cold) without worrying about leaking, but I know many women who struggle with these activities. If you ever have, you've got to check out Isa's free masterclass which teaches things like: How to stop the extra bathroom trips, improve your posture, and put the fire back into your sexy and bring back your libido with a super easy stretch (that you can do in just 30 seconds, anywhere, anytime).and Why Kegels might be causing leaking or making your pelvic pressure and pain worse, how to know if this is the case,

and what to do instead. Even your doctor won't be able to share this with you. Isa has helped almost 15,000 women to find relief and freedom. Claim your spot at her incredible free masterclass all about it at pelvicpainrelief.com/healing

This episode is brought to you by ButcherBox, which has been my source for high quality meat for years. ButcherBox delivers healthy 100% grass-fed and finished beef, free-range organic chicken, and Heritage breed pork directly to your door on a monthly basis. All their products are humanely raised and NEVER EVER given antibiotics or hormones. It's hard to find high quality meat you can trust. ButcherBox is changing that. And they offer FREE shipping anywhere in the 48 States. Right now, they have a special mystery offer just for Wellness Mama podcast listeners that is so good I can't even tell you what it is publicly. When you go to butcherbox.com/wellnessmama you save \$20 on your first box plus you get a special mystery deal that you can only unlock at that link. ButcherBox carries high quality organic, pastured and grass fed meats and their bacon is a favorite with my kids! I usually create my meal plans around our monthly box by adding tons of fresh veggies from our local farmers market.

Katie: You also recently had a blog post about how things like cravings and emotional, or stress eating is related to one thing, and it kind of ties them with that. So, can you talk a little bit more about that and kind of walk us through that blog post, and how we as moms can get a handle on that? Which I think is something we all struggle with.

Chrissa: Yeah, I think we all do struggle with it. And it's one of the biggest hurdles, I feel like it comes with healthy living. It's like, handling these stress eating and cravings and trying to eat cleaner, and it all circles back to that mindset piece. I really believe that because cravings are so often either a response to an emotion, or they're just autopilot habits. Like, opening the bag of chips and just eating them without really turning your brain on to think about what you're doing or why you're doing it. And so, I tell women that they have to first identify the why of the craving. So, maybe it's stress, maybe you're PMSing, maybe you're disappointed or you're bored, and that could really lead into this like, mindless habit they form for really no apparent reason. So figuring out that why will really help the strategy to turn your brain on like, turn that brain chip on and force yourself to answer a few questions before you engage in things that you might later be like, "Why did I do that?"

So I talk about, like maybe it's a pattern interrupt, maybe it's doing something completely different than you're used to, your typical, like go-to routine when it comes to indulging on a craving or mindless eating. It's also figuring out your why. So you can create like, a queue or redirect to execute that pattern interrupts you, you can get to a place where you're making more mindful choices that are aligned with your goals. So it can be really, really easy to say like, "Well, don't have the junk food in the house," or, you know, "Just say no." But I think it's more about like, just turning the brain on, getting some really queues going and really starting to tune into like, "What do I want and am I going to be okay with this decision?" And if you are, I believe that. I believe you should because it's not about restricting. It's just about turning that portion of our brain and being mindful of the choices that you're making, so that you can really show up in the next best way when you're trying to achieve a health or wellness goal.

Katie: That's so great. And I also wanna talk a little bit about the fitness side, because you mentioned earlier that's a big priority for you as well. And I know you in real life, and I know that you maintain an amazing level of fitness, like at all times. And I think that's also a struggle for a lot of moms. So, I'd love if you could change how you, balance that, especially after having kids, especially essentially working full-time. What are some practical ways that you get that in and then maintain your fitness?

Chrissa: There is some tricks. I mean, I certainly don't have the time to head to the gym whenever I wanted to or go to a jog just because it's nice outside, because now there's other people in the picture to care for. And that's okay, because it's changed. And we can still fit in working out without having to go somewhere or carve out like an hour for that fitness class. Often times, it's just about really being super insanely resourceful and identifying the opportunities for activity. And that changes I think as your kids are from babies, to toddlers, to growing up, and you could do it with them. You can do it while they're doing their own thing. And so, it's changed, for me, like when my little ones were little newborn babies and they were in those carriers, you know, and you're constantly bouncing them, I really thought, "I need to fit in activity here, not only just so I can feel good about my body, and stay active, and stay strong, but really like good for my mind." Because it's so good to produce those endorphins and feel great. And so, when they were in carriers, I would lunge down the hallway of our living room and bounce them, and I just felt like, I'm doing something for me too. And it was just a part of my duty as a mom, but it's finding that mix of like, "Okay, I identified an opportunity here, I'm gonna do it." I do a lot of living room workouts when my kids are napping, or when they're playing because often times, I get more of a workout doing these, like, compound routines in the living room. Meaning, like, multiple muscle groups with zero equipment, than I do going to the gym, and doing a warm-up, and getting instruction, and cooling down, like it's all about getting like, in and out for me. So, I've been a group fitness instructor and I teach bar, and I love those workouts.

So I just created combos on my own and I do those in a fraction of time than I would at a class. And these are the kind of workouts that I offer in my membership site because I really do believe that we can bust out these killer effective workouts in 10 to 20 minutes, like with or without kids. And I'll also tell people that there are ways you can incorporate your kids in workouts. You can play games with your kids. You can find treasures, going on a hike, or you can play hide-and-seek, and you really kind of, like execute yourself when you're playing these hide-and-seek things. It's just these silly things that you can multi-task in the time that you have that fit into those core values. So when my kids are taking a bath, I'll do tricep dips on the tub. Like I said, it seems really silly, but it's a way that I feel like, "Okay, I've checked the box, I've taken care of my body. I'm building my strength and doing things that are for me. But I'm still also being a mom and I'm still being fully present." And so, you can really do both, it's just about finding that and getting really creative with the time that you have.

Katie: Yeah, for sure. And I think that, at home component, makes it so much more doable, because you're right, like, how many of us actually have a couple of extra hours to go to a gym every single day and do, like a very structured workout? But we can all fit in those little things while we're bathing the kids, or, cooking dinner, or whatever. And that makes it doable. And those things do count. Like you said, I think that's so important to remember. And I'd also like to circle back and talk about being real online, because like I said, that was a struggle for me, for so long, of thinking everyone else had it all figured out, because that's what it looks like online. And I think you do such a great job of sharing the real actual aspect of real life and not in the humblebrag, like, "Oh, my house is perfectly clean except for this one basket of laundry," but, like, the actual real life side of that. But I also know, from my own experience, that social media can be cruel and there can

sometimes be, like, backlash from stuff. So, I'd love to hear kind of your experience with being vulnerable online, and if you've had any of that backlash or what you've learned from sharing that, because I would love to see a movement of moms, like, everyone listening, being more authentically real on social media and giving each other permission to do that.

Chrissa: Oh my gosh, wouldn't that be amazing? I agree. Let's rally for that, because we need it. And I learned this, very organically, how much we needed it. So, it was crazy. When my husband was gone, I felt these like deep depths of isolation really, and a lot of parenting hurdles. And so, it really propelled me to get really vulnerable and share my struggles. And now, it's really just kind of how I run my business. I just show the real life because it's so important. I'm pretty active on Instagram as it is and as it was, but I remember one day just feeling like, "I mean, I'll get real here." I had totally lost my cool on my kids. And they are little, they are one and three, so you feel this like, at anytime, I think you lose your cool, you feel this immense guilt. But I'm just like, "They're just babies," but my cup was just so empty. And I remember just sitting in my kitchen for tears and I just felt so many raw feelings that I don't think you ever want to feel, but you certainly didn't expect to feel as a mom. You didn't expect to feel these, like, kind of negative feelings.

You think it's gonna be all rosy and rainbows, like social media kind of portrays it. And I was really not enjoying my days at all. I was just feeling, like, this overwhelm and intense guilt, and I felt really lost in the season. And so, out of desperation, because, again felt so isolated, I just word vomited on Instagram stories. I needed to expel that emotion, because I felt like I was losing my mind. And I you know, shared how I was struggling and that I feel like a monster mom, and wasn't enjoying the season, I felt like I should. And to my surprise, I was flooded with literally, hundreds of direct messages within minutes of posting that story. And they were from other women saying that they felt the same way, but they were too scared to share it.

And the light bulb went off in my head and I was like, "Why aren't we talking about this?" And it doesn't mean we're not insanely grateful about you know, these wonderful lives and these kids that we have, but feeling these normal type of feelings and holding them in is really, really toxic. And so, now I share the great times in life and I share the not so great times because that is real life. And I feel like if we can be open enough to get vulnerable and to not fear being judged, we can all help each other out. And we can be okay with not having it all together, because that is the reality of it all, right?

So, if we can rid ourselves from the expectations and the guilt, and start giving permission to say, "What I feel is valid and it's okay, and it's normal, and, you know what? Just getting it off my chest helps, and the feeling like I'm not alone is important." And just say it all and to get it out there, you can feel better, and you can show up better for your kids and improve on yourself. So, it really surprised me that talking about the things I feared most being judged about, were actually the things that connected me most with a lot of people. And of course, I did receive you know, some negative message, honestly, way more positive than negative. But I feel like, I have this gift now of a platform. And if I can use it in a way that helps other women, I'm gonna use it. And if I get negative responses because of it, that's okay because I feel like I'm helping more people than I'm offending. And if those people, you know, maybe don't like my approach to that real life kind of talk then, they don't have to follow me. And so, I just feel really good about kind of just giving that voice of like, "Hey, it's messy, and that's okay." And so, it's really important to me to keep that up. And I really feel like we should all do that and we'll all be better and stronger, and be more connected in this season.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. Like you said, it is a tough thing, but then, it's also very freeing. And I'm trying to get much better about this as well, because for a lot of years, I did kind of censor what went on social media, just because you do wanna put your best foot forward. But I realized over time that it was creating this perception that wasn't completely real, because that's not what life actually looks like all the time. And I'm trying to, like really lean into that and to be much more open and vulnerable about this stuff, especially the hard stuff. And for me even, that's a topic I'll be tackling soon on the podcast in probably a solo episode. I realized with my kids, especially as they're getting older, you know, you have all those talks with them about, you know, like sexual assault, and in knowing their boundaries, and making sure that they are safe in that way. And I realized for me, like to get vulnerable for a minute, I was saying this to my daughters and hoping that it stuck, but I wasn't showing them. Because to your point, I have this platform, which is a tremendous gift, and that I hope is helpful and can help people improve their lives in different ways.

And I wasn't, you know, sharing those things on this platform that I had that could reach other people in realizing things like, one in three women have been a victim of sexual assault, including me and I've never really talked about it publicly. But instead of just telling my daughters like, "It's okay to talk about these things. If you ever feel uncomfortable, if you ever had one of these experiences, come talk to me," and you just show them, and make it okay, like, let's have these conversations. Let's get these things out in the open and make it okay to talk about them. So, whether it's the extreme end of things like that or just the day to day struggles of, yes, motherhood is hard and, like, some days it actually kind of sucks. And some days you're at the end of your rope and, like, you have those thoughts of like, "Oh my gosh. Why was it even a good idea to have kids? This is so hard." And that's real. And so, I love that you do that. And I feel like you are such an inspiration in that way. And I think the more of us who do that, hopefully, we make it okay to have these conversations so that we can all feel a little bit more real in those moments.

Chrissa: Absolutely. It's so important. I love that you share that. And thank you for sharing that because, man, it's impactful. I think it's more impactful than any content that I create. It's just that sense of, like, connection and the more we share, the more we're all empowered, period.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. And I think you're so good at it. And I can't believe our time is flying by so quickly. But a couple of questions I'd love to ask toward the end of our time together, the first being, if there's a book or a couple of books that have really impacted your life. If so, what they are.

Chrissa: I just learned how to read last year, because I felt in that year of having kids and, like, what's a book? I don't even know. But I don't get to read as often as I like. But I do have one book that really kind of impacted me, and that is "Present Over Perfect" by Shauna, I believe her last name is Niequist. And it isn't really any particular moment in the book, it was overall the concept of, "Man, I don't have to be perfect. My house does not have to be perfect. I don't have to look perfect. I just wanna be present. And I wanna remember these times. And I wanna be living this life that I have, enjoying the things I've been given." So, that has just really put a profound impact on my life.

Katie: I love that one. I haven't read it yet, so I'm gonna add that to my list, but I love that, "Present Over Perfect." It's such even a great title. And lastly, is there a piece of advice that you would like to leave with everybody listening today?

Chrissa: I love telling women that like, just because I've been through it, I still experience it, we gotta stop underestimating ourselves. Underestimating yourself is just the number one reason for excuse, discontentment, and getting stuck. And we all go through these trials and tribulations. But the beauty in all that is, that we get this amazing gift of personal growth and resiliency. And the better we understand our ability to adapt and overcome and do great things in our lives, just within our own little life bubble, the easier those times will be and the better lives we create for ourselves, and in return, we create for our kids and our families.

Katie: I love it. Chrissa, this has been such a wonderful episode. And you've mentioned some great resources, I'll make sure we link to them in the show notes and also to your Instagram, so people can find you and connect with you. But thank you for taking time away from your kiddos and from your business to share today. This was wonderful.

Chrissa: Thank you for having me. It was so awesome, Katie.

Katie: And thanks to all of you for listening and I hope that you will join me again on the next episode of the "Wellness Mama Podcast."

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