



Episode 283: A Whole-Person Approach to Health
With Naturopath Razi Berry

Child: Welcome to my Mommy's podcast.

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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 a dear friend, Razi Berry, who is the founder and publisher of the journal, "Naturopathic Doctor News & Review," which has been in print since 2005 and the premier consumer-based website of Naturopathic Medicine, NaturalPath. You have to check it out. The link will be in the show notes. She's also the host of The Natural Cancer Prevention Summit and The Heart Revolution-Heal, Empower and Follow Your Heart, as well as the ever-popular 10 Week Sugar-Free Summer Program. And we're going to talk about her story today. But from a near-death experience as a young girl that healed her heart to later overcoming infertility, chronic fatigue, and fibromyalgia through Naturopathic Medicine, she has lived this mind-body healing paradigm and now works to educate the world about it. Welcome, Razi, and thanks for being here.

Razi: Hi, Katie. It's a lot of fun to be here. Thank you.

Katie: And I feel like I can't drop a line like that in the bio without asking you to share your story. What was your near-death experience as a child if you don't mind sharing?

Razi: Yeah, it is quite an amazing story. And it's funny because I learned even more about it as an adult. So let me start. I'll give the truncated version. But basically, when I was 14 years old, I was in the hospital in Phoenix Children's Hospital and I was dying of heart failure. There's really nothing that the doctors could do. And so my family brought in our family priest, Dr. Father McGuire, to do the last rites ceremony. And so for those of you that aren't familiar with the last rites ceremony, it's in the Catholic tradition. It's kind of like baptism is the sacrament when you're born and last rites is a sacrament when you're dying. So, you know, it was a really difficult time in our lives.

And the day after the sacrament was given, my mother was with my four-year-old brother in the room. Basically, they were coming to have some final moments with me. And one of the doctors was in the room. And he said to my mother, "This is a shame, Mrs. Berry, because she's doing it to herself." And when I heard that it was kind of in and out of consciousness. And when I heard that I suddenly...I felt so much shame, Katie, and a really strange thing happened. I didn't really understand until years later, as I suddenly was looking down on the doctor when he said that. And I was looking down on my mother and down on my brother as if it was from the top of the room. And the shame that I felt when he said that was because it was true. I was doing it to myself. I had an eating disorder. I had anorexia nervosa and that was the cause of the heart failure.

Heart failure is one of the leading causes of death in severe eating disorders. And so he was right. And something in my psyche and my body just wanted to escape that shame. And then suddenly I was in, you know, just another place. And it seemed like it lasted forever. According to the nurse and the doctor and the family that was around me, it was minutes. I call it the near-death experience back then, my family said that God healed you. But what happened is after I "came back into my body," I was healed. I ended up leaving the hospital without an eating disorder, without any medications, and with a healed heart.

So that the experience of what happened like what did I...a lot of people want to know like, "What did you hear? What did you see?" And, you know, I heard things and I felt things and I saw things. But none of that was really as important as what happened when I came back in my body because what I realized, Katie, is I had been so dissociated from myself, right? You have to be in a complete state of dissociation to not feed yourself properly, to not nourish yourself. And as I have grown and been involved in naturopathic medicine and in health in general, you know, it's really clear to me that, that is really the cause of many diseases is this dissociative state where we're not fully connected within our bodies. We're not listening to the messages and the signals our body gives us.

So, I now look at it as a great gift because prior to that, whenever I was sick, my mom took us to the doctor and they gave us a shot or some medicine. But this time the doctors couldn't do anything. So then I thought, "Well, what healed me then? If the doctor didn't heal me where does healing come from?" And it was kind of a gift in the beginning of just this journey of just discovering, you know, what is healing?

Katie: Wow. And I bet that has had far-reaching effects throughout your entire life. That's amazing.

Razi: Yeah, it definitely did. And then there were times where I was sick and I didn't spontaneously heal, right? So it caused further questions and further investigation.

Katie: Well, yeah. And I feel like that brings up so much interesting things to think about, about that mind-body connection. I know this is something that you've talked about quite a bit. But it also feels like something that people can be, including me, like so skeptical of at times. Like realizing that we might actually have the power to do that. Like why do you think that moment or that particular thing, like what changed in that for you that made that possible?

Razi: So, yes, I understand this skepticism that even I had for a really long time about the whole idea of mind-body healing. And I think it's because we focus so much on the mind or this ethereal other-world aspect. What I really think healed me was this integration that I had been kind of living without my body. I hadn't really been listening and been in tune to my body signals which, you know, we all are born with. I believe that we're all born and designed with this perfect ability to get information from the natural world around us and always know the right decisions to make. And then if we don't make the right decision for ourselves, then our body, mind gives us other clues, whether it's a feeling, a sensation, a symptom that can bring us back. So I believe that we're all really born with everything that we need to know. And I think that it was the actual coming back into my body.

After that experience, I became so keenly aware of my body's messages of feelings and my body. And I think that was the gift. But the amazing thing is, and I've been studying this for years now, is that you don't have to have a near-death experience to get really more in body to get really back in touch. But that was what I think the gift was. I think it was the actual just something thrust me back into that visceral phenomenological experience of living, of what it's like to be inside a body. I mean, our mind is in our body, right? The chemicals that our body produces to think cognition, feeling emotion, these are all neurotransmitters and peptides. Candace Pert called them molecules of emotion. And she who was a pharmacologist who believed that it was these thoughts and feelings, these chemical messengers that were kind of the mediator between our lived experience of the physiology of our body and the greater world around us that we are don't necessarily see.

Katie: And from the sounds of your bio, your story definitely doesn't stop there either because it also says you overcame infertility, chronic fatigue, and fibromyalgia. Was that a similar process or was that a different part of the journey for you?

Razi: So it's funny because sometimes I think you have questions and then life definitely gives you a way to figure out the answer for that, right? So I had been really interested in learning about how the body heals and how the mind and body are connected. And I felt though a lot of information was just really whoo-who, it was all based on just like, you know, another worldly psychic phenomenon, and not necessarily something that was like conscious and physiological together. And so, in my mid-20s, I got really sick. At that point, you know, this was, what, 16 years ago, the doctors didn't really have a diagnosis for fibromyalgia. So I was just in severe chronic pain. And I ended up at the Mayo Clinic after seeing several doctors who said, "Oh, it's the flu," or, "You must be pregnant."

At one time that pain was so bad that actually remember crawling across the floor to go to the bathroom. So the Mayo Clinic had some amazing diagnostics, but they had me on so many medications and some even like chemotherapeutic type medication. So my hair was falling out. And I just went to the doctor one day and I was

like, "This just isn't what I want." And they said, "You know, I'm sorry. You just need to go on disability." So at that moment I fired my doctor, and I just went to... Similar to your story, Katie, I just decided to take it by the reins and find a doctor that would really listen to me.

So there was a lot of deep pain in those years, physical pain and then the pain from having five miscarriages in six years. It was a really dark period. But I tried to just remember what I had been learning about the principles of naturopathy, which I hope we get to talk about, and also, from what I learned in my past experience with healing that healing happens in your body and not just, you know, in your mind. A lot of times the doctors just wanted to give me something that would control my mind like help me sleep or help me wake up or deal with depression and the anxiety that ensued. And so the healing happened when I really started to pay attention again to what is my body telling me? What are the messages that these symptoms mean? Because really, when we kind of turn it around, symptoms which seems so painful and so horrible, they actually are a dear part of ourselves. They love us so much that they're really asking us for something.

Katie: Yeah. And I love that you shared your story of your five miscarriages. And if you're comfortable talking about it, I'd actually love to talk about that for a minute because I think we as a society have gotten so much better about talking about so many aspects of motherhood and of life experience. And that's one that's still so guarded and so painful I think for so many people but yet I've had a miscarriage. You've had miscarriages. I think it's something that's actually extremely common but yet there's still so much pain and shame hidden around that. So if you're comfortable sharing I'd love to hear a little bit of what your inner process has been in healing from that.

Razi: Yes, and I know that, you know, all types of relationships, even motherhood, there's a spectrum, right? Some people feel extremely maternal. Some people less so. And I don't have any judgment there. But I happen to be just a very maternal leaning. So when I had my first two miscarriages, the doctors were like, "Oh, this is, you know, common." Even that was really difficult for me, Katie, because myself and I think a lot of women like as soon as I found out that I was pregnant, I began to form a relationship with my unborn child, right?

Like you talk and sing to your child. You dream about what the future is going to bring. And you prepare, not just for their birth, but for the life that you want to help them develop. So I felt like there weren't a lot of resources for me to really mourn the loss, even when the pregnancies were early. I felt when the pregnancies were a little bit further along, there was more, you know, kind of sympathy, I guess. But I felt like there was a real lack of ability to find resources and I feel like I really had to mourn it alone. I got to a point like after about my fourth miscarriages, my friends stopped inviting me to baby showers, not to be unkind, but because they just didn't know how to deal with it, especially because some of them had known, you know, I was pregnant for, you know, few months and they just didn't know how to deal with it. So, I really had to turn to, you know, my family, my spirituality.

I wish that I had like a really wonderful way to share. But one thing that I have learned after living some more years on this Earth is the best way that I've learned to deal with things like loss are not so much to focus on my thought patterns because, you know, the reason we ruminate and psychology will tell us the reason that we think over and over again sometimes about things is because we so badly want a solution out of something

painful and sometimes there's not necessarily a solution. And so what I found is when you really take good care of your body, the mind...I'm not saying mindset isn't important, but when you really listen into what is your body asking you, like if you're in a time of grief after miscarriage and you feel tired all the time, or you can't sleep or you just hungry all the time or you're not hungry at all, you know, these are different messages our body is giving us. And I think if... We don't ever want to get stuck in a rut, but if we take some time and just allow our body to express themselves and then nourish and nurture our bodies according to those messages, for me, that was always the way out of grief or loss.

Katie: Yeah, I love that. And I found for me even just, yeah, being able to speak it and talk to others too also it felt like that gave credibility to that life and also just really helped to work through the process. And I love that you share so vulnerable your story with a desire to help other people. And I know also as part of your desire to help others you have been so involved in the naturopath community and in naturopathic medicine for years. And so, for anyone listening who's not familiar, I'd love if you could walk us through your process with this and your publication and what you've learned through all of those years of that deep involvement with naturopathic medicine.

Razi: Yes. So first, I want to say that I am a fan of all types of health practitioners and all health healing paradigms. I think there's a place for all of them. And I think that each person individually needs to choose which is the best for them. I tend to feel inclined and I believe most all people should have a naturopathic doctor on their health care team and a couple of reasons why. So when we look at what naturopathic medicine is, it's a very unique paradigm of medicine. So when we look at a doctoral level of medical training, we basically have three main schools of that. There's osteopathy, which is a DO, a medical doctor, which is an MD and a naturopathic doctor, which is an ND. All of them have very similar education as far as the number of hours, the number of pharmacology they need to take, and things like that.

And where naturopathic medicine is a little different, is when they get a lot of nutrition, of course, the whole like Hippocratic food is medicine. But there's also these six principles that underlie naturopathic medicine that are all framed around a therapeutic order, which makes it so unique. So the principles, I'll go through them very quickly. One is, first, do no harm, which all doctors really take that oath that, you know, you do the least toxic, least forceful treatment first. Then is the healing power of nature. And in Latin, this is called the vis medicatrix naturea. And the vis or the vise is that innate life force that all living beings have. So plants, animals, humans. There is this life force. Some people call it God. Some people call it universe. In naturopathy, it is called the vis. And it's just that thing that propels us towards homeostasis that allows us to experience allostasis where we're constantly our bodies are constantly changing to adapt to our environment. And we believe that that is really the natural state of all of us to be able to self-heal.

The next one is to identify and treat the cause. This has become really popular in many paradigms in medicine now and I'm so glad that to look at the root cause. And in naturopathy, we're always kind of peeling that onion a little bit more. So it doesn't just stop at like, "Okay, well, here's the thyroid hormones." It's like, "Well, why is the thyroid behaving this way?" And then you just kind of you keep looking back until you can really find the root cause. And part of that or my favorite parts of that is called removing the obstacle to cure. So it's not just looking at the cause as a deficiency, but also looking at the cause of some sort of excess or something unnecessary that needs to be stripped away.

The next one is docere, which is the root of the word doctor, which means to teach. And it says that your doctor is really a teacher. The doctor doesn't trump your self-knowledge. The doctor is your guide to help you self-heal. Treat the whole person is number five. I think again, that's not as obscure as it once was. But it's looking at the integrated whole of the body, all of its physical and spiritual and its energetic dimensions and how you sort of move through space, how you move through the world. What are your relationships like? What is your work environment? What is your home environment? And the last one is prevention, which, of course, prevention is the best cure if we could get back to this idea that we want to prevent disease instead of waiting. Doctors really try... Naturopathic medicine tries to really teach those. So those are the principles. And if I can for a second, Katie, just kind of explain how they fit into this really unique framework. It's called the therapeutic order. Can I do that?

Katie: Yeah, absolutely.

Razi: So the therapeutic order, if you imagine a pyramid, and the very bottom of the pyramid is the foundation. And that foundation is to establish the foundation for optimal health. So that's where you kind of identify what the cause is, you know, beyond what a lab would show. You know, let's look at lifestyle. Let's look at attitudes. Let's look at all the different moving parts in your life and even from your past. And then you assess the determinants of health. What does this person need in order to restore health? So this is the foundation. So this is before supplements are given. This is before nutrition is given. First, that's determined. Then you stimulate the self-healing mechanism. So sometimes a naturopathic doctor will say, "Yeah, you need thyroid medication, but you're not ready for it yet. Your vitality isn't quite there yet."

So maybe there's another area. Maybe they need to strengthen something with your pituitary. And they will kind of stimulate the body's kind of vitality so it's ready for treatment. Then, it's when you look to support and restore weakened systems. And this is where a lot of medical paradigms begin and there's nothing wrong with that. But as you see in naturopathy, there's a few steps that come before that. So this is where you kind of aid in like the regeneration of damaged organ systems or organs. And then the next step on top of that is address the physical alignment. So what's the structural integrity of the bones, the muscles, sometimes even posture? You know, we've kind of gotten so excited about new neat hacks that we forget about simple things like hydration and posture for health.

Then above that is natural symptom control. So the doctor first starts in these first steps... I'm talking about before we use natural substances to sort of palliate symptoms. And this is where the doctor says, "You know, the symptom is the message." But in some cases just to give the patient some relief or to allow the vitality to strengthen, we will control these symptoms and we first try it with natural substances. Above that on this pyramid is the synthetic relief of symptoms. Sometimes drugs are needed to palliate a symptom to help the person. Again, it's not to cure them. It's to kind of support the vital force, kind of free up the body's energy so it can do its own self-healing. And then the very tip is the high-force interventions. Sometimes they're needed. They never begin there. And that's where you sometimes suppress pathology. It's never the first choice, as it often can be in, you know, kind of traditional medicine. And that is the therapeutic order.

Katie: I love that. It's so practical and it's such a solid framework. And I think, you know, it addresses some of the potential deficiencies of conventional medicine. But I'm also curious. I mean, I know that that's the more

common paradigm in the U.S. So how do you see naturopathic medicine and conventional medicine working together if they can or, like, how do you view those two?

Razi: Yeah, so I think they're wonderful complements to each other. And I think this is really where I love the idea of patient choice because, really, there's so many different ways that you can treat a disease. You can treat it through homeopathy, through herbs, through medications, and no one is really going to know that except for together with your relationship with your doctor. So some people choose to do just conventional medicine. Some people choose to do really old school nature care where it's like hot and cold water therapy, energetic, you know, structural alignment, and things like that. And some people like a blend of the two.

I think that like naturopaths are trained to work with conventional medical doctors and they get some of the same training. They understand pharmacology and, in fact, they have to take more continuing ed and pharmacology than MDs and DOs, which is sort of ironic. But I think they fit together so perfectly because having a naturopathic doctor can kind of just...you know, the office visits are a little bit longer and they just ask different questions. And so you can use it alone or you can just kind of pick and choose. Like there's certain things in my life that I use different types of naturopathic doctors for, right? So like if I am in a period of stress and I have a flare-up of my fibromyalgia, then I have a doctor, a naturopath, that I've been working with for a long time and I really, really know and trust her.

But last October I had this just random...well, nothing is random, but this intestinal infection that happened overnight and it ended me in the hospital going into sepsis. And, of course, I needed conventional medical care because what I needed at that time was at the very top of the pyramid. I needed a high-force intervention to get rid of that so that my body could then heal. So what I did is I went to the hospital. I was there for a week, sadly, needing antibiotics, which I never really want to use unless I have to. But then I had my naturopathic doctor to help me recover from that. So they work together beautifully.

Katie: Yeah, I absolutely agree. And I think, you know, you often hear it said that for any kind of trauma or like acute thing we truly are in the best place in the entire world when it comes to that. And I definitely never want to discount what conventional medicine and what emergency medicine physicians can do because it's truly amazing and they absolutely do save lives. Like for me, that was my third baby had placenta previa. He was born C-section. Without that, we both would have died. My husband's appendix ruptured. Definitely, a time for conventional medicine. But I love that with the two of them together, you're able to then for things that aren't an acute problem or something that's more chronic, you're able to go to the root cause. Even if you do... Like you said, even if you need conventional medicine too, in the beginning, to get to the point where you can actually heal and then you use naturopathic medicine to work through it, I think there's a beauty there in having access to all of these approaches now. And it's just so amazing that we now have this. It's incredible.

Razi: I know. It is beautiful that we have so many options now. And I'm really grateful for that.

Katie: And I know that you've...So through publishing the "Naturopathic Doctor News and Review" you have written for well over a decade, 14 years now, thousands of cases. I'm curious if there's any takeaways or

commonalities that you've noticed through all of those articles and that experience and learning from all of those.

Razi: Yeah, so I don't write the cases. The doctors submit the cases based on an editorial calendar that I put together every year. So I have just been able to read and publish, you know, over 2,000 cases. And what I found to be really an underlying theme and this isn't, you know, anything new but that in reading all the SOAP notes that the doctor sends in and what the care is and what the patient's sort of homework is, I found that there's really an emotional aspect to pretty much every state of disease. There's always an emotional aspect to it. And my dream is, and I think it's happening more and more that, a world where all doctors are sort of trained to look for that and help the patient discover that through self-awareness. The whole idea of *docere, doctor is teacher*.

In my own life, I know that the way I manifest stress is through my gut. And so now knowing that and being mindful of it, you know, when I have things that I can do or ways I can change my diet or different self-care practices I can do it under times of stress to help kind of prevent a flare-up in that case. So, yeah, so it's not any, like amazing like biomarker that I found out, although I've seen a lot of really neat things like that, but it's just that, you know, we are such emotional beings. And whether we allow that to flow freely through us or we block those that really can be a determinant of health.

Katie: Yeah, I think that's a perfect segue. I want to make sure we mention it. You have both a podcast and a project called Love is Medicine. Like that is a perfect name for the segment of your work with talking about the emotional side of it. So kind of give us an overview of what that is and where people can find it?

Razi: Thanks, Katie. Love is Medicine really started back when I had that near-death experience as a child. Again, I don't know exactly what it was, all I know it was an experience that I had. It was a transformative experience and we all have them. Sometimes it's just holding one of our children and having this intense feeling of oneness, right, with everything or with God. Sometimes it's climbing a mountain or being in nature. But there was kind of a message in there. The message was that, you know, I was loved. There was love all around me. And the way that the Earth is sort of designed, if I can use that word, is to love us. The sun, you know, rises every morning and the Earth biofield is giving, you know, is an antioxidant for us and there's food growing from the Earth. And there's people around us to commune with. And there's just love all around us. And I believe that love is the healing elixir for everything.

And when I say love, I don't really mean necessarily, you know, a love relationship. But it's how we move through our world. It's how we relate to each other. It's how we perceive ourselves. It's how we move through our day, how we take care of our body, how we take care of the people that we love. That to me is medicine. And I think there's more and more research to show that. You know, I'm sure you've had, you know, many, many guests talk about loneliness is more detrimental than cigarette smoking and feelings of isolation. Even if it's self-reported can be, you know, real cause for like heart disease and even cancer. So love is medicine. It's about just kind of that self-awareness of coming back into this idea that you have all the answers inside you and how you eat, breathe, move, speak, think, and relate to the world around you and people around you affect every cell in your body. And to me, that's what Love is Medicine is.

Katie: That's awesome. And I'll make sure links are in the show notes so people can find you on that.

This episode is brought to you by Four Sigmatic, creator of all things superfood mushrooms and founded by my favorite Finnish Fun guys. I love all of their products, and in fact, I'm sipping their Reishi hot cocoa as I record this. These superfood mushrooms are always a part of my daily routine with their coffee plus lions mane or coffee plus cordyceps in the morning for energy and focus without as much caffeine as coffee to their chaga and cordyceps in the afternoon for antioxidants and immunity and the Reishi elixir at night for improved sleep. They also just released skin care that is so clean you not only can eat it.... But it's encouraged. Their charcoal mask has activated charcoal to clarify, chaga and cacao for an antioxidant boost and other herbal and superfood ingredients. It's so clean that it can literally be made into a cup of hot cocoa as well! Their superfood serum contains a blend of avocado and olive oils with Reishi and herbs for a hydrating skin boost and it works so well. As a listener of this podcast, you can save 15% with the code wellness mama at foursigmatic.com/wellnessmama.

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Katie: Are there any other tips or exercises that you would give us for those of us learning to connect to that kind of inner wisdom or to work through that inner emotional side?

Razi: Yes. I'm actually writing a book right now that but it won't be out for a year on really how to reconnect. And there's a couple of simple tips. One way to really reconnect with your body and this introspective sensitivity that we have... Interception is this physiological process of understanding our inner body. For instance, have you ever heard of the term Mittelschmerz, Katie?

Katie: I haven't.

Razi: Okay, Mittelschmerz is a German name for middle pain and it's a word that gets used when women can feel themselves ovulate. And so being able to kind of understand like be sensitive to your heart rate variability, changes in blood pressure, and really being in tune with your bodies is called interception. They found that people like on the autism spectrum have less ability with people with eating disorders, have less ability to really listen to these internal body signals. And there was one study that showed that when you do power posing, it can help strengthen your interceptive sensitivity, being more aware of them. And I think it's fun because it's so simple and so like something I never would have thought of. But power poses or things like

this. Like you can sit back in a chair in front of a desk or a table and put your feet up, put your hands behind your head, kind of like, "Yeah, I've got this. I'm the boss here." And it's a power pose. And a power pose like that is a body movement that sort of translates into a deeper understanding of your body.

Another power pose is standing up tall with your feet about, you know, hip-width apart and putting your two hands on your hips and just kind of standing tall. And I like to put like a facial like a smile or kind of unknowing grin on my face whenever I do this power pose. And I teach my kids to do it too. They're a lot of fun. If they're trying to make a decision, I'll say, "Well, do some power posing and really get connected with your body." So those are some really fun ways that you can get in touch. Another thing that I love is I'm so fascinated by the way our olfactory sense is connected to cognition. And cognition is a really important part of our intuition because truly, we think with every cell in our body. We've got immunological memory, cellular memory. Our immune system has a memory.

And so our olfactory sense is so connected to all these. In fact, it was recently discovered that we have olfactory receptors in our kidneys that help "sniff out" like what the constituents of your blood are in your blood and help control like blood pressure and other like chemical regulation of the bloodstream. So one of the things that I really like to do to get really in tune is a sensory detox. And one of the ones is with our olfactory, our sense of smell. So what I ask people to do is for two weeks get rid of anything scented in their environment, even natural scents. So that means no essential oils, no perfumes, no deodorants, nothing scented, and kind of get used to and aware of the scents that are all around you, even this scents that are coming from your own body, your breath, your armpits, just the skin, your hair, because we take in chemo signals 24/7. When we're asleep, when we're awake, we're taking in these chemicals from the world around us.

Sometimes they're pheromones, but there's so many more that we're just learning about. And this is data that gives our body information. In fact, there are some rat studies that showed you can breed a rat for several generations in total sterility. So they haven't seen any other animals, no predators, or anything for several generations. And then what they did is they...I want to say generations. Rats don't live a very long time. So it's not like hundreds of years. But then what they do is they introduce body fluids from different other animals.

And through posture and new behavior, the rats could tell through the just these natural chemicals coming from other animals bodies and humans too, they could tell if it was a predator, male or female, if it was in heat. Like they could introduce a scent of like a young female rat, and then the male rat would have no sexual posturing. But if it was like an older female rat if it was of... I don't know if you'd say childbearing age in a rat, but then that animal had like sexual posturing. So we've learned so much about the world around us through this chemo sense of olfaction. And I think it's a really great way to start getting in tune with your body.

Katie: That is so fascinating. I've never heard that before about the kidneys having the olfactory sensors. That's amazing.

And it makes sense too. The body, I think... I mean, I still feel like we're only barely starting to understand and touch on the wisdom of the body. I think we're still going to learn so much. And I wonder...so like being in this

health world myself, it's like there's so much information and we've learned so much data of all the things that we should be doing. I'm curious for you having, you know, 14 years of exposure to this experience, what are the things that actually stick and that you implement in your daily life? So like in your morning routine or that are part of your daily routine.

Razi: Yeah, so a lot of them I think you've probably heard many times before, but I try to always wake up naturally and have my kids do that too. I feel like that it's just so important. And I noticed just a big difference. Just like they say a child knows when it should be born by giving the mother's signals in a perfect environment, right, I feel like your body just knows when it's time to wake up. So I also do, you know, go outside first. And I always hug trees. It's kind of like I guess a silly geeky thing. But, you know, the trees roots are going so far down into the Earth and they're connected to other tree roots. And I also have some trees in my yard that my late father had planted. So I make a ritual of it every morning to hug some trees. And I just really feel, you know, the effects of the Earth's biofield and the sunlight.

And I also, throughout the day, I take these little self-awareness breaks but I'm not a meditator. Actually, I hate yoga and I hate meditating and I'm always embarrassed to say that but they are two things that I know are so good for you but I just don't like either one of them. So I take the self-awareness breaks during the day. And here's how it's different from meditation. And meditation often says, you know, "Close your eyes and breathe deeply." Well, I say, "Forget that." I say, "Keep your eyes open and breathe normally." I call it sleeping, baby breathing. When you breathe normally, you have, you know, these certain ratios of different chemicals that help your body take in oxygen. And, you know, deep breathing is good too, but to just be aware of where your body really is at that moment. So we keep our eyes open, and we breathe normally. And we keep our body posture wherever it is. Sometimes I send a signal on my phone to do this.

And you guys notice things like what am I hearing right now? Right now on my right ear, I hear the neighbor's lawnmower. And then I also feel like my bra strap is a little bit too tight. I feel like I can feel, you know, what the cold floor feels like on the bottom of my feet. I can feel, you know, that my mouth is a little bit dry, that I probably should be drinking some more water this morning. And I hear and feel the air conditioning kind of brush against my left shoulder coming in from the room. So when I do these simple practices, sometimes I'll do it when I'm cooking, slicing and onion. I notice the deep purple color of the onion. I feel what does the little muscles in my eyes feel like if they begin to tear? I'm open to the slicing sound.

And I try to just get super aware of it, not just in my head, in my whole body. And what I find is when you practice wherever your body is at, you're kind of training yourself to know what your body needs at all times. Otherwise, when I don't do it, I'm not going working on the computer after talking to you for another hour without drinking water, right, because we're just focused in our mind of what we need to be doing. But when we take these little self-awareness breaks, it trains us to listen to our bodies.

Katie: That's a great tip and that's what I've never heard before. I'm also not a huge fan of meditating. And like I do better with something concrete like you and I have talked about before, like cold water or specific breathing. And like I don't just the idea of meditating but I love those self-awareness check-ins. That's a great idea.

Razi: Thanks, Katie. It's fun too because I think like, "Oh, my gosh like I've been sitting with my legs crossed and my leg's starting to fall asleep. Like how long was I gonna let myself do that, you know?" And that's not a major thing that's a determinant of health. But if you start with the small things, then I think you become more aware of the larger things in your life that your body tells you it needs.

Katie: Yeah, that's such a great point. And our time is flying by so fast because you're so easy to talk to. But a couple questions I'd love to ask toward the end and I know that you're also very well-read. So I'm curious if there is a book or number of books that have really had a dramatic impact on your life, and if so, what they are and why?

Razi: Okay, so one book that I got in high school that I was at like a garage sale, and it's called "The Art of Loving" by Erich Fromm. Have you heard of it?

Katie: I've heard of it. But I have not read it.

Katie: Okay, so Erich Fromm was... I guess he's like a psychoanalyst, a psychotherapist, and also just a social, I guess philosopher, and he was the first person to really talk about love as something worth looking at like in an academic sort of way. And there is a passage I'd like or just a sentence or two I'd like to read from his book that really changed my idea of what love is. And it says this. "Love is not primarily a relationship to a specific person. It is an attitude, an orientation of character, which determines the relatedness the person to the world as a whole, not toward one object of love. If a person loves only one other person and is indifferent to the rest of his fellow-men, this love is not love but a symbiotic attachment."

And when I read that was just, you know, a young girl in high school and I had my first love, my first boyfriend, and all the wonder and kind of angst that goes with that. And I was really kind of astounded by this little book and how it teaches a lot about self-responsibility and that love is actually...like you don't fall in love. You stand in love. And it talks about love as an art so it's called "The Art of Loving" as any other endeavor that we do that we as humans are called even biblically if you're so inclined to love one another. Not from a religious perspective, but it kind of explores what does that look like. And I think if we really follow that and look within and love ourselves and love the people, the world around us, I think it's really a solution to a lot of what ails us.

Katie: I'll make sure I add that in the show notes so people can find that book. That's interesting and, yeah, a new recommendation on here. Lastly, is there any parting advice you would like to leave with the audience today?

Razi: I'm always looking for advice myself and I definitely think that I'm kind of a student of life as well. But I think the best advice I would give is to always be honest with yourself. I think that there's a lot of ways especially looking at social media and stuff that we kind of, you know, badass ourselves out of looking at the truth, that we kind of high five ourselves sometimes in a way that can be actually kind of aggressive or even passive-aggressive. And I think that the best way towards happiness is to always just be honest with yourself in

every situation that you're in, whether it's an illness or joy, raising your family, being in a relationship, what you're eating, a new exercise routine. I think that really being honest with yourself is a way that you can never go wrong.

Katie: I love that. I think it's a perfect place to wrap up. And I will make sure that the links to all of the things we've talked about to naturopath and to your publication and podcasts and everything are in the show notes at wellnessmama.fm. So if you guys are driving or exercising or whatever it may be, you can find those links later at wellnessmama.fm. But, Razi, thank you so much for being here. It's always such a joy to chat with you.

Razi: It was lots of fun. Thanks again, Katie.

Katie: And thanks to all of you for sharing your most valuable asset, your time, with us today. We're both so grateful that you did. And I hope that you will join me again on the next episode of "The Wellness Mama Podcast."

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