



Episode 315: Mindfulness for Moms With Ziva
Meditation's Emily Fletcher

Child: Welcome to my Mommy's podcast.

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Katie: Hello and welcome to the Wellness Mama Podcast. I'm Katie with wellnessmama.com and I'm here with Emily Fletcher, who is the founder of Ziva Meditation and world renown expert on meditation as a path to extraordinary performance. Her book, "Stress Less, Accomplish More" is a must read and one of the best books out there if you are looking to detox emotionally and mentally. She has taught more than 20,000 students around the world, including leaders at Apple, Google and Harvard Business school.

And she's also helped this very Type-A Mom to learn how to meditate as well. And I love how her approach is that we meditate not to get better at meditation, but to get better at life. And we talk about that and so much more today and I know that you will enjoy this episode as much as I did. Without further ado, let's join Emily.

Emily, welcome. Thanks for being here.

Emily: What a joy to get to be here. Thank you for having me.

Katie: I am so excited to chat with you. I first met you or knew of you at an event a couple of years ago when you spoke, and one of the things that you said that really resonated with me was that we meditate to get good at life, not to get good at meditation. And that's when I started paying attention to you actually because I had never been great at meditating and the idea of, like, clearing my mind was not something that was ever gonna

happen to me. And so I think, like, when you said that, I started listening to what you were saying and realized you had this whole different approach. So, I wanted to start there. Why is that such an important distinction when we start talking about meditation?

Emily: Because so many people are exactly like you in that they've tried meditation. They felt like a failure because they couldn't clear their mind. They assume that it's just not for them, and then they potentially rob themselves of a lifetime of more productivity, more energy, more happiness because they're judging themselves based on misinformation. So many people are trying to clear their mind because some yoga teacher somewhere said, "Just let your thoughts go." And so, it's we have a world full of ex-meditators when this doesn't have to be the case because the point is not to clear the mind. The point really is to be happier, to have more energy, to have better sleep, to have a better immune system, and to be kinder with your kids. Like, that's why we do this stuff. No one cares if you're good at meditation.

Katie: Yeah, that's I think such an important point. Most of us are not trying to reach, like, monk level of, you know, meditation in our daily lives. We want it to be practical, and that makes so much sense when you explain it. I feel like meditation has had such a time in the sun that most people probably are really familiar with it. But I also feel like there's a lot of misconceptions. So, to get really basic for a second, walk us through what actually is the definition of meditation. What does that mean?

Emily: So, the simplest definition would be a stress-relieving tool, but that definition I think is too vague because if that's your only criteria, then so is a bottle of wine, so is bingeing on Netflix, you know, so is smoking pot. And it's funny. When I tell people I'm a meditation teacher, they're like, "Oh, cool, exercise is my meditation," or, "Cooking is my meditation." I'm like, "Y'all cooking is called cooking, and exercise is called exercise, and meditation is called meditation. That's why they have their own words." So, I think a stress-relieving tool is not quite specific enough. Now, what we teach at Ziva, which is the name of my company, we teach a type of meditation that's giving your body rest that's five times deeper than sleep, and I'm gonna say that again because I think especially for moms, that's a really exciting factor. This style of meditation is giving your body rest that is five times deeper than sleep.

So, it's kind of like a supercharged power nap that you can do in 15 minutes without the sleep hangover, but on the other side, you're even more awake. And the other really important point here is that in this style of meditation, you're not only handling your stress from today, you're also going in and healing all your stress from the past. And this is really important because most of what people are calling meditation, meaning most of the free apps out there, most of the guided things on YouTube, most of the drop-in studios, are actually teaching what I would call mindfulness. And mindfulness and meditation are oftentimes being used as synonyms, but they are not the same thing. And so, the big distinguishing factor between the two is that mindfulness is all about focusing, and it's very good at dealing with your stress in the now. So, let's say you have a crazy day with your kids. You go to work. You come home. Your kids are out of control. You're really stressed. You do 10 minutes of headspace or calm or something. And it handles your stress in the now like a state change, like taking an aspirin if you have a headache.

Now, what I'm teaching at Ziva is not only handling your stress from the now, but it's also getting rid of all your stress from the past. It's going in and healing things cellularly, and now we even know it's healing things on an epigenetic level, which is what we've inherited from our parents and what we pass onto our children. And this is big because it's ultimately eradication of the backlog of stresses that we have in ourselves. If we do that, this is what gives us a return on the time investment. So, for 15 minutes invested in your meditation because you're getting rid of the stress that you've been storing in your body, that stuff that's making us all stupid, sick, and slow, and you start to have more time in your day because your brain gets faster. Your immune system is stronger. Your creativity is more tuned in. Your intuition is stronger.

And so, this is why I find especially with Ziva that the ROI is just higher. And this is, I think maybe it takes me to the other misconception around meditation is that it's not... The first is people think they can't clear their mind, which we can talk about more, but the other is that people think that they're too busy, and we're all too busy to waste our time. None of us have time to waste. And if you're just doing 10 minutes and then getting yourself out of triage, but ultimately not healing the root cause, then I would say that's not a really great investment of your time. But if you're going in and not only feeling better in the now but actually handling the very root cause, the cause of the anxiety, the cause of the insomnia, the cause of the overwhelm, then this becomes a very productive and valuable investment of your time.

Katie: That makes sense. And honestly, if I think back even a couple of years ago, I think I would have still been a lot more skeptical of just how dramatically something like that can impact your biology until I had an experience myself actually because I had trauma in high school. And I thought I had dealt with it and I had done all the talk therapy. And I thought I was totally fine. And then I had a type of bodywork combined with just being in a situation that got me out of my comfort zone. And, like, I had this entirely different type of emotional release happen to the point that literally, like, my body shook for an hour. It was like when you see an animal almost get killed, and then they're fine, and all that adrenaline has to come out.

It was like a decade of adrenaline, just, like, shaking out of my body. And that alone, my body has changed so much in the past few months with my diet, lifestyle, everything staying exactly the same. So, I'm definitely now much more of a believer of just how drastically our mental state and our emotions can really, really impact our physiology, like dramatically impact us. I'm a nerd, though, so I'd love to go a little deeper, and can you explain, like, biochemically and physiologically what's happening in the body when we meditate? Like what are some of the pathways that we're activating? Are we going into parasympathetic or what are some of the ways it's affecting us?

Emily: Yes. Thank you for asking that. And also, thank you for illustrating so beautifully the difference between what I would call a software upgrade and a hardware upgrade. So, you know, not all of us, but a lot of us have done the talk therapy for years, and I would call that a software upgrade. You know, it's you changing your operating system. It's changing the lens through which you see the world. But this meditation work and that somatic work or energy work and bodywork, it is oftentimes healing things on a cellular level. It's changing your nervous system, so it's giving you a hardware upgrade. It's like upgrading your computer, and then, ultimately, you can run more elegant software if you have a more advanced computer. And so, at the end of

the day, we're gonna have to do both. We're going to have to uplevel the hard drive and the software. So, thank you for illustrating that so beautifully.

Okay, so let's dive down the nerdy science rabbit hole. So, when the body launches into fight or flight, then we go into sympathetic, which is the body is basically preparing for a predatory attack. This comes out of, you know, millions of years of evolution of protecting us from tigers, and lions, and bears. So, let's say you're in the woods, and a tiger jumps out at you with the intent to kill. Your body will launch into a series of chemical reactions. The first thing that happens is your digestion will flood with acid because we need to shut down digestion because we can't waste any of that digestive energy.

We need all that energy to fight or flee the tiger. That same acid will seep onto your skin so that you don't taste too good if you get bitten into by the tiger. Your bladder and bowels evacuate so you can be light on your feet. Blood thickens and coagulates so that if you get bitten into, you don't bleed to death. Your vision will narrow. Your immune system goes to the back burner because who cares if you're going to get cancer if you're about to be killed by a tiger? Like, again, we need all hands on deck.

So, this series of chemical reactions is very useful if your demands are predatory attacks, but if your daily demands are kids, and in-laws, and deadlines, and school projects, and emails, and traffic, the fight or flight thing has become maladaptive. It's disallowing us from performing at the top of our game. This backlog of accumulated stresses is making us stupid, sick, and slow as a species. And so, when we start meditating, what happens is we go in, and within 30 to 45 seconds, we de-excite the nervous system, which means that metabolic rate decreases, which doesn't mean you're going to gain weight. This is the rate with which the body consumes oxygen.

So, your breathing slows, your heart rate slows, your body temperature cools. And then within less than a minute, your brain is producing dopamine and serotonin, which are alkaline in nature. And they are basically nature's antidote to cortisol and adrenaline, which are stress hormones and those are acidic by nature. And if you've ever studied Ayurvedic medicine, acid equals inflammation. And inflammation we know is the basis of all chronic disease. And so, if we are chronically inflamed, if we're chronically stressed, then the body is just a little bit too acidic or a little bit too hot.

And so, when we start meditating, not only do we clear out the adrenaline and cortisol, we start flooding the body with dopamine and serotonin, which are alkaline in nature. And this is why, according to Tufts and... I forget the name of the other university, but there's two universities who have done studies on how meditation can reverse your body age. Tufts says eight years. And I think it's Wake Forest, actually, says somewhere up to 15 that you can reverse your body age by somewhere between 8 to 15 years with meditation. And there was another study that came out, so just saying that you can reverse your brain age, that the average meditator at 50 has the brain of a 25-year-old.

And this is based on neurogenesis, neuroplasticity, and also the strengthening of something called the corpus callosum, which is the thin white strip that connects the right and left hemispheres of the brain. So, I mean, this all sounds too good to be true, and people are like, "What do you mean? Meditation can do this, this, this, and this?" But really the question we should be asking is, you know, "How is stress messing so many things up?" Because according to Harvard Medical School, stress is responsible for 90% of all doctor's visits, and scientists are calling it the black plague of our century. And the cool thing here is that stress is not an incurable illness. We have a cure to it. It's called meditation. We all just think we're too busy to meditate.

Katie: Yeah, I think you're so right about that. And, I mean, you explain it so well, all the neuroscience about meditation and how many benefits that has. And like I said, it's had its time in the sun. There's enough really successful people saying it's a huge part of the reason they're so successful that I think people are paying attention. But why do you think that so many of us still... Like, I even still am guilty of saying, like, "I can't... I'm not good at meditating, and I can't quiet my mind." Like, why are people still saying that when obviously it's so important?

Emily: I think people are saying that, "I don't have time, and I can't clear my mind," because of the misconception between mindfulness and meditation. So, you know, like I was saying a moment ago, most of the free "meditation apps" are actually teaching what I would call mindfulness. Anytime someone is guiding you through, like a guided YouTube video or if you go to a drop-in studio and someone is telling you to imagine a waterfall or count your breaths or focus on your chakras, anytime you're directing your focus, I'm putting that in the category of mindfulness. And mindfulness, like I said, is very good at dealing with your stress in the now, but because it's not ultimately getting rid of the root cause, because it's not healing the backlog of stresses from your past, then it's creating a state change versus meditation is creating a trait change. It's actually altering yourselves. It's altering your genes and going after the root cause.

So, what I have found is that with meditation, and specifically with Ziva, the return on time investment is exponential. It's basically... We've done the math. Fifteen minutes twice a day is 2% of your day. So, the question is, are you willing to invest 2% of your day to make the other 98% more effective, more productive, more happy, more present? Versus with mindfulness, while you might feel better in the now, for a lot of people, they report that it's not giving them that same ROI. They don't feel more productive later. It's more of a triage like, "I feel like I'm having an anxiety attack, so let me do this app right now," or, "I already have insomnia, so let me listen to this guided meditation thing to help me fall asleep." But we're ultimately not treating what caused the insomnia to begin with.

And so, I think that this is the timepiece. It's like whatever time investment you're making, you need to be getting more time back in your day. I had the good fortune of teaching Dr. Mark Hyman to meditate, who's the founder of the Functional Medicine Center at the Cleveland Clinic, and I'd say, like, one of the world's, like, leading doctors and certainly in functional medicine. And he says for the two meditations that he does a day, he gets back about three hours in his day. He's like, "I have three more hours of productivity, three more hours of fun, three more hours of energy to go out dancing or to be with my wife or my friends." And that to me is the special sauce because, again, none of us have time to waste.

Now, the clearing of the mind piece. I think people are confusing the results for the technique because if you sit down and meditate, chances are afterwards you are gonna feel more clear. You are gonna be more present. You are gonna be more intuitive. You won't be so mired with, you know, stress and anxiety. However, just because clarity of mind is a result of meditation, that does not mean that it is the practice of meditation. So, if you sit down and close your eyes and try to clear the mind, you're always gonna feel like you're failing because the mind thinks involuntarily, just like the heart beats involuntarily. So, trying to give your brain a command to shut up is as impactful as trying to give your heart a command to stop beating. It does not work. And yet this is what everybody is trying to do, and this is why everybody thinks it's hard because we're judging ourselves based on an impossible criteria.

And this is because a lot of the mindfulness practices that people are adopting are derivations of things that were originally made for monks. Like even if you think about Headspace, Andy was a monk. You know, the biggest personal brand on Facebook, Jay Shetty, was a monk. And so, mindfulness... We almost fetishize monks a little bit in the West, and we think, "Well, whatever monks are doing must be more powerful. They must be vibrating or levitating." But it's the other way around. If you have a job, and kids, and stuff to do, then you have less time in your day with which to meditate. So, you actually need a practice that is more powerful. You need a practice that you can go in, do, and then come out with more energy on the other side. And so, the meditation portion of the Ziva technique is based on something that's 6,000 years old, but it was made for people like us. It was made for people with busy minds and busy lives. So, it's just you go in, you get out. It's not about meditating all day, which is what monks are doing. That is their contribution to society. They can afford to do something that's a little bit gentler.

Katie: That makes perfect sense. And I know Dr. Hyman as well, and that's really drastic. I had not heard him say that. That's amazing that he feels like he gets that big of a return for meditating. And it reminds me a little bit of that quote. I believe maybe it was Saint Francis or somebody who said it, like, "Pray for half an hour a day unless you're too busy and then pray for an hour a day." Like, the people who are the most busy are the ones that most need this. On the nerdy note for a second again, I'm curious. Are there any studies or any data that you've seen between a regular meditation practice like this and changes in heart rate variability? Because I've been tracking that just as a pet project lately, and I'm curious if there's anything that shows data on that.

Emily: Yes. And so, people will put the heart rate variability training... They'll even call that meditation, which I think that that is really valuable and a great thing to do, but it's much more active. And whereas Ziva is kind of, like, the lazy man's meditation, it's more like taking a nap sitting up. But ultimately, what we're doing with Ziva is that we're getting rid of the stress in the body. And so, when you're not meditating, you're not as stressed, you're just at a normal homeostasis. And the whole gig with heart rate variability, the reason why we want ourselves to be more variable, is so that if a tiger comes, you're ready to launch into fight or flight. If it's time to go to sleep, you can down-regulate. You can go to sleep really quickly.

It's like we want to be variable. We want to be adaptive to whatever the circumstances of life are calling upon, and that's the whole point of meditation. You're increasing your ability to adapt versus someone who is

chronically stressed, who has chronic amounts of cortisol and adrenaline, and their heart rate is very, very high all the time, that person can't down-regulate when it's appropriate. That person sometimes can't up-regulate when it's appropriate because at some point their adrenals get shot and their adrenaline... Like, it's almost, like, it expires because you're always on guard even when it's not appropriate. So, let's say you got into a car accident. And if your adrenals are already shot, your body is not able to produce the appropriate amount of adrenaline when it needs it. So, we want to be variable. You know, we want to be able to up-regulate, down-regulate, and the less stress you have in your body, the easier it is for you to do that.

Katie: That makes sense. And as you are saying this, I'm also thinking, as a mom, my life would be tremendously easier if my kids also had the ability to do this. I know that you have a child, as well. I'm curious, is this something that can be integrated as a formula or that we can encourage our children to do that also will have benefits for them? Because I've heard so many adults who we learned this as adults after we were already stressed and burned out and everything else. Can we teach this to our kids from early ages and give them a foundation so hopefully they never have to do that?

Emily: Yes. And this is something I feel really passionate about, especially as a new mom myself. My son is only 15 months old, but even with him at night... You know, he's still nursing, and so at night right when we turn the lights out, I mean, you know, cozy up. And assume... Our ritual now is that as soon as he starts nursing, I started taking some really deep breaths and I do it in an audible way. And then he mimics me, you know, so I'll go (breathe in, breathe out) and then it's almost like a game. And then he does his breath and then I do my breath and he does his breath. And he's smiling while he's doing it because I think it feels good for him, but it's also a fun little game that we're playing. And he can't even talk yet. And so, I think the earlier we can introduce these tools, the better. And children are always learning by your example, not what you say. They're gonna do what we do. They're not gonna do what we say. And so, if you're running around overwhelmed, stressed, not sleeping, living your life as a martyr, you know, always in overwhelm, always feeling behind schedule, they're gonna see that and mirror that and it's ultimately gonna stress them out.

I have people come to me all the time asking for a kid's meditation training, and the first question I ask is, "Are you meditating?" And they're like, "No, I don't have time, but I want my kids to do it." And it's like, "Honey, guess what? Your stress is influencing your kid's stress." And so, the really exciting news here is that our big project for 2020 is where we're launching Ziva Kids. And I'm so excited about we're about to go into development for it. And it's ultimately gonna be about 80% teaching the parents, and then 20% is gonna be modules for the kids based on how old they are and what they're dealing with, which I'm thrilled about. But don't wait for that. Don't wait for me. I think that you can start introducing these tools and techniques to your kids soon.

But I really think that step one is you have to develop your own practice because you have to understand what it's like yourself to be able to help guide your kids through it. Because any meditation practice worth its salt is usually gonna create some form of a detoxification. And this is something that no one is talking about, no one is warning anyone, about because we think, "Oh, when I start meditating, I should just be vibrating on a cloud of bliss, and I'll never be sad again." So that's not how it works. You're still a human. You still have feelings. And in the beginning, because most of us have all that stuff stored in our body, there's a period of, like,

physical and emotional release. And so, people can be very sad, and very anxious, and very angry, and very tired for the first few days and sometimes even weeks. And so, again, I think it's important that the parent experiences that and knows how to get through it before helping their kids through it.

Now, obviously, kids, hopefully, don't have as much stored stress as we do, but there still can be some even for kids because they're so tapped into the collective. So, the answer is yes, and I can say mindfulness is a great thing to start kids on. And you could do breathwork. You could do even a few gentle yoga poses. You could have them imagine, you know, their favorite place. It's any tools you can have to start bringing their attention inward to teach them that healing can happen on the inside, that when they're feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or angry, that they can actually go inside and start to change their state internally, I think these are really valuable tools to share with our kids early on.

And I do... A lot of my training when I teach adults is that I tell them how to talk to their kids about it because a lot of people will use the excuse, "Well, I can't meditate because I have kids." And, you know, I just launched a book and a baby in the same year, and so it is possible and I was nursing every three hours the whole time. So, it's intense, but it is possible. You just have to be strategic, and you have to make it a non-negotiable priority, and you can't let perfect be the enemy of good. But I think that... My joke that I say to parents is, "Tell your kids that you're training to be a Jedi." They're like, "Mommy is training to be a Jedi right now, so don't interrupt me," or, "If there's bones or blood, then please interrupt mommy's meditation. And if there's no bones or no blood, then it can wait for 15 minutes."

Katie: I love that. And yeah, I love that, "Mommy is training to be a Jedi." That's a great one. Especially, my kids are huge "Star Wars" fans, but I think you nailed it with the best way to teach kids anything because I say that about whether it's nutrition or lifestyle stuff as well, good luck teaching them unless you're doing it too. And the inverse of that is if you're doing it, you really don't have to do as much to teach them because they're gonna naturally follow you. And I actually saw this happen in a different realm recently. Like for years, I had always thought like, "Oh, maybe one of my kids will want to take voice lessons, and then I'll kind of, like, learn while they're there," because I had always wanted to take voice lessons. And then finally, I was like, "Wait, why don't I just do it and not wait for my kids to be interested?" And I did, and now they're all interested in voice lessons. And so...

Emily: Good for you. That's awesome.

Katie: It's terrifying because I had, like, never sang in public, but it's also amazing. I'm like, "Good, they're seeing me get out of my comfort zone. They're seeing me be bad at something first and get better." Like, those are such important lessons in life, but I think you are so right. Our kids pay so much attention to what we do, and that's the easiest way to pass on anything. And I could see meditation becoming, like, a really good part of a morning routine as a family, maybe before school or as a bedtime routine. I think it could be a cool just like touchpoint with the family if you're doing it with them versus just trying to get them to do it. But I want to circle back because you said something I have not heard before when it comes to meditation, and that was about the detox effect. So, explain that a little bit more because I definitely did not know that was a thing.

Emily: So, it's not dissimilar to how when you had that energetic work of a somatic experience, and then your body started shaking. Like, that's a very acute dramatic example of it where you did something, it created a level of cellular healing, and then there was a catharsis. There was a release of that trauma that had been in your body for a long time. And so, what's happening with Ziva is that we're going in and we're giving our body this rest that's five times deeper than sleep. And when you give your body the rest that it needs, it knows how to heal itself. And the cool thing here is it's not only healing stress from today, but it's also healing all that stress from our past. And so, even if you've done the talk therapy, even if you've read the self-help books, that stuff has been stored in your cellular memory, and when you start a meditation practice, it has to come up and out. It has to go somewhere.

And so, oftentimes as the stress is leaving, it can have a bit of the same flavor on the way out as it did on the way in. So, if you have some sadness inside, you might have a little sad-flavored stress coming up and out. If you haven't slept in 10 years, well, guess what? You might be a little sleepy in the beginning, and this happens a lot with like young women. You know, anger is not really a part of our archetype, and so in the beginning of the first few weeks, sometimes they get very, very angry. And that's honestly a big part of my job. And I think it's why it's important that you do have a meditation teacher because that's when my job is a job in that I've been through it myself and I've helped over 20,000 people through it.

So, I see some patterns, you know, and it doesn't scare me, versus if you just start meditating and you think it's all sunshine and roses and you should never have a feeling again, and then suddenly you're being confronted by the entirety of your life's trauma with no guidance, no warning, and no support through that, that's another reason why a lot of people quit. Now, they just tell themselves they're too busy, but in reality, they don't want to feel that because we've got billions of dollars of industry. Those don't help in ensuring that we never have to feel our feelings. And now the meditation goes in and wrings you out. It makes the feeling non-negotiable. And so, I think it's really important you have a community, that you have the intellectual framework and understanding of what's happening, and you have the proper support through that so that you can get through to the other side and reap the rewards.

Katie: That makes sense. And it's good to know, you know, if you're starting this, and you're new to make sure that you're supporting your body through that and you have a practice of, you know, being prepared for that detox and making sure you're getting enough rest and that you're being supported through that. You've mentioned... Well, before we move to your book, I was gonna say there is a link to the Ziva technique in the show notes at wellnessmama.fm. So, if any of you guys are running or driving, don't worry about writing it down, but do check out the show notes so you can learn more about it. But you also mentioned your book a couple of times. I would love to hear what was the impetus for the book and walk us through what the book does.

Emily: Sure. This book is called "Stress Less, Accomplish More," and the subtitle is "Meditation for Extraordinary Performance," which goes back to the first concept we talked about, which is that we meditate to get good at life, not to get good at meditation. And really the promise is in the title. What I'm promising you

is that if you do this, you're gonna stress less, and you'll be able to accomplish more because stress is wasting our time and energy. And in the book, what I do is that there's... It's really broken into three parts. The first third is what I call the selfish reasons that we come to meditation. So, there's a whole chapter on the science behind why it can help you have better sex. There's a whole chapter on why it can reverse your body age. There's a chapter on why it can improve your immune function. There's a chapter on why it can increase your performance and productivity.

And then there's also... I don't know how many folks in here are dealing with fertility stuff, but we have crazy case studies around fertility. Like, that just was a bit of a surprise benefit for me. And then also jet lag. So, the first seven chapters are the selfish reasons that people come to meditation. And then, in part two, I teach a gentle version of the Ziva technique. It's a bit gentler for the reason that I just said in that, you know, we've had over 42,000 people buy the book so far. And there's only one of me, and I do think it's important that you have the proper guidance. And so, anyone who buys the book can join our Facebook group. It's called the Ziva Tribe. So, there is some level of support. I'm in there. My other teachers are in there. The guides are in there. But it's still not super-specialized in a super-personalized guidance, so I made the book technique a little bit gentler than what people can learn online or in person. So, that's part two of the book.

And then the third part of the book is we pull the lens way out, and we start to look at the ripple effect. It's like, "Okay, well, how does you selfishly improving yourself, how does this impact your kids? How does this impact your relationship? How does it impact your coworkers, your town, your community, and then ultimately humanity itself?" Because at the end of the day, as we heal ourselves, we help to heal the collective. If we have 8 billion stressed out people, what do we think this world is going to look and feel like? If we have 8 billion people meditating every day, you know, what kind of ingenuity, what type of creativity, what type of generosity do you think we're dealing with collectively at that point?

Katie: I love that. Definitely, I'll make sure there's a link to that as well in the show notes. You guys can check it out. I'm really curious. I will definitely check out the book to find out the full reason, but how can meditation help with sex? Because I hear from a lot of moms, especially new moms, who struggle with that, with changes in their sex life or libido after having kids. So, what are some of the ways it works there?

Emily: Yes. So, I think that, you know, postpartum and post-labor is its own thing. So, this is not like I never want to add to anyone's pressure to feel like the sexiest woman alive and to have sex every day. It's certainly not through postpartum, which is, decidedly, at least for my experience, was not that sexy. My postpartum was pretty intense. However, I think that the big reasons why people aren't having as much sex as they would like are, one, that they're too tired. And I think it's 40% of cohabitating adults in America say that the number one reason they don't have as much sex as they would like to is they're too tired. And so, if you think about it very simply, if Ziva is giving your body rest that's five times deeper than sleep, then for a 15-minute meditation it's equivalent to an hour-long nap. Now, imagine if you can take an hour-long nap at 5:00, you might be a little nicer to your kids at dinner and bath time, and you may even have a little gas left in the tank after bedtime to go and have sex with your partner versus just being exhausted and spent.

Now, the other thing is that stress, if we go back to that tiger attack, and if we look at all of the things that happen in the body when we're in that fight or flight state, if your body thinks it's preparing for a tiger attack, the last thing it's interested in is procreation. All it's interested in is saving this meat suit. You know, it wants to protect this body. The last thing it's worried about is making a new body that thinks it's under attack. So, we have to get out of that fight or flight and get into what I call stay and play. And then once we're there, once we're in that parasympathetic, then all of the endocrine functions, the hormonal functions, all of that stuff starts to even out. And then that's to say nothing of healing the sexual trauma that a lot of people have. You know, I think it's something crazy like three in five women go through some form of sexual abuse or sexual trauma, and that plays into our relationships. And so, if the meditation can go in and start to heal that as well, I think that it allows you to be more present with your partner versus bringing a lifetime of baggage into your relationship.

Katie: That makes sense. And you've used the phrase several times about meditation being five times deeper than sleep. I'd love if we could elaborate on that a little bit more because I think most people kind of use sleep as the gold standard. And so, I'm curious, like what is it doing in the brain differently than sleep? And what are the changes people see in their sleep over time if they make this type of meditation a daily habit?

Emily: Great question. So, to be honest, that statement of that it's five times deeper than sleep is not 100% accurate because it's a different type of rest. I just haven't figured out an easy way to say this in a nutshell, but I'm glad you asked to elaborate on it. So, when we go to sleep at night... And, of course, sleep is considered the gold standard if that is the most restful form of rest that you have, but it's like, "Well, what if there was this other type of rest?" And so, in sleep, our brain is chilling, but the body actually has to be on guard. And this goes back to the same saber-tooth tiger. It goes back to the same protecting us from predators. So, let's say it's 10,000 years ago. You're in your cave. It's bedtime. If you ever watched someone as they're falling asleep or if you watch your kids as they're falling asleep, in the beginning, breathing is normal. But when the brain clicks into sleep, your breathing changes, and suddenly it's (snoring). You start revving quite high, breathing quite deeply because you need your heart and lungs and blood to be oxygenated so that if that tiger comes in, by the time you wake up mentally, your body is oxygenated and prepared to launch into fight or flight.

Now, the exact opposite is happening in Ziva. In Ziva, your body is getting this deep rest, meaning that metabolic rate decreases, so this means your breathing is going to slow precipitously. Your heart rate slows. Your body temperature cools. Now here's the trick. Nature will not let you rest that deeply physically and be in blackout sleep mentally at the same time because, at that point, you're in evolutionary liability. If that tiger comes in and by the time you wake up out of blackout sleep and then your breathing speeds up, in order to launch into fight or flight, you would be tiger sacks. So, one or the other has to be on guard. When we're sleeping, the brain is chilling, the body is on guard. When we're meditating, the body is chilling, the brain is on guard. So, it's almost the opposite of everything you've heard about meditation. People think you should be like in a deaf, dumb, and blind chamber of nothingness, but you're actually very mentally alert during meditation. And it is that mental alertness that allows your body to get such deep healing rest, and it's that deep healing rest that makes you more awake in your waking state, which is what's making you better at life to bring it back full circle.

Katie: That makes complete sense that your body would not want to be in both of those states at the same time.

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Katie: For people who are curious, and I am too, what is the like practical way that the program works? Is it like an online course that you follow because it's something people can learn over time and then integrate without needing to follow something or what does it look like?

Emily: Yes, that's exactly it. So, what I love about Ziva and the book and ZivaONLINE, basically, all of my trainings are designed to make you self-sufficient. It is designed to give you the keys to the car and the driving instructions so that you can do this stuff on your own for life, meaning that, you know, let's say it is 11:00 at night or 10:00 at night and you're in the room with your kids. You don't need to like go get an iPad and make sure it's charged and have it on dim mode, so the lights aren't coming in their eyes and have the perfect speakers or headphones or... You know, there's no electronics required once you graduate, which... And this is a little bit of a secret. It's like all those meditation apps out there, the "free" meditation apps, they're designed to keep you tethered to your phone. If they're free to use... And that means they're getting their money off of advertising dollars, which means that they are monetized by how long your eyeballs are on your phone.

And I don't know about you, but I don't want my eyeballs on my phone for my meditation practice. And so, the idea here is that once you move through the online course, you have the tools to take with you for life. And I

don't know that I said this yet, but the Ziva technique is a trifecta of mindfulness, meditation, and manifesting. So, the three Ms, that's what we teach. So, with the online course, it's about 15 minutes a day for 15 days. So, it's like, ideally, you just wake up before the kids get up and watch it first thing in the morning before coffee, and it builds upon itself. So, the first 3 days are mindfulness, and then days 4 through 12, you learn the meditation. And that's really where the magic happens. That's where this deep rest comes. That's where you're actually given something called a mantra, which is not a slogan, it's not a saying, but it's a very powerful mind vehicle. That's what mantra means. It's a song script word. Man means mind, and tra means vehicle. And that's kind of, like, the key to the Ziva car.

So, you get that, and you use that days 4 through 12, and then once you become an expert in that, we move on to the manifesting. And that sounds a little witchy or a little hippy-dippy, but it's not. It's you getting clear on what it is that you want in your life. And I find that for so many of us, we've been in survival mode for so long that it's easy to forget our dreams, especially as moms. It's so easy to start taking care of everyone else and forget what you want. And so, I love this manifesting piece because you do it just for two minutes at the end of your meditation, and it's time to start to ask a question such as, "What would I love right now? What would I love right now," not, "What should I do," no, "What do my kids need," not, "What's going to make me the most money," not, "What would look good on Instagram," but, "What would I love right now?"

And what I've found is the combination of meditation and manifesting is so much more powerful. It's so much faster than either one alone. It's like it's supercharged. I just got off the phone with someone, and he said that he was a yoga teacher, but then he learned Ziva. And he said, "This is like jet fuel for my spiritual classes," because even though a lot of us might think that we're manifesting, we might even think that we're praying, but what we're accidentally doing is complaining, and we don't even realize it. We're asking questions like, "Why can't I lose this weight? What's wrong with my husband?" Like, "Why did she get a job and I didn't?" And if you start to ask terrible questions, you're gonna get terrible answers.

If you ask your body, "Why can't I lose this weight," your body will answer that question. If you ask, "Why does she have a boyfriend and I don't," again, your body will answer that question. So, instead, I teach people how to remember their dreams, how to use this very sacred time where the right and left hemispheres of the brain are functioning in unison to plant the seeds for everything that you want to create. So to ask questions like, "How much money would I love to make this year? What does my dream relationship with my body feel like? What does my dream schedule look like with my family? What does my dream relationship look like?" And then you start to move towards the positive instead of away from the negative.

Katie: I love that. I think that's another thing that I've heard you say that I love so much is about the questions we ask ourselves because I think so many times we do that more in our head than we do... We wouldn't ask those things of a friend, or we wouldn't talk like that to other people, but we have that script running in our head, and then, you're right, our brain answers the question. So, I think even that simple reframe is so amazing. And at the beginning, you talked a little bit about adaptation energy. I want to go a little bit deeper on that, if you don't mind, and talk about how meditation helps replenish that, and what are the benefits of that?

Emily: So, I would define adaptation energy as your ability to handle a demand. It's your ability to handle a change of expectations. So, as moms, we are dealing with, you know, changes of expectation and demands all day, every day. You thought you were gonna sleep until 7:00. Haha. Your kids woke up at 6:00. You thought you had eggs and then, uh oh, you realize that you didn't have any. You know, you thought there was going to be no traffic driving your kids to school. It turns out it's parking lot, and now they're late for school. You know, you thought you were gonna be able to get all your work done by 2:00. Haha. Conference call went late, and now you're late to pick up your kids. It's just a constant stream of demands, a constant stream of changes of expectation. And these demands are burning up something that we call adaptation energy. And if you run out of adaptation energy and then you have another demand, then your body is going to launch into fight or flight whether you've read, "Eat, Pray, Love", or not, whether you've read, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," or not because we don't act in accordance with what we know.

We act in accordance with the baseline level of stress in our nervous systems. We all know how we should be acting. None of us are doing it because we're stressed. You know, we know we shouldn't drink a bottle of wine at night. We know we shouldn't be bingeing on Netflix until 2:00 in the morning. We know we shouldn't be scrolling through Instagram for an hour, but we do it anyway because we're stressed. And so, if you start meditating every day, twice a day, not only are you getting rid of that stress, but you're filling up your reservoirs with this adaptation energy. And so, does it take away the demands? No. What it does is that it increases your ability to elegantly handle the demands. So, instead of freaking out and having a full-blown fight or flight stress reaction on your kids by 6:00 at night because you're exhausted, it's like you just meditated. You have more patience. You have more creativity. You have some more gas in the tank to handle the flow of demands.

Katie: Got it. Yeah, that makes me think of several years ago, gosh, it's probably been like five now, I hit a point where I thought I was gonna have a nervous breakdown because I was so stressed. And probably I had no adaptation energy left, but I had a business and family and just all the things on my plate, and I had this moment where I realized in business everything just... It's automated. It flows. I have systems. It's so easy. I get that part. But at home, I feel like I'm just treading water or juggling plates all the time. And I finally had this moment of clarity to realize that because in business I have systems, and objectives, and KPIs, and goals, and I run things according to a plan whereas, at home, I'm just trying to juggle everything in my head all of the time.

So, for me, part of it was figuring out how to put practical systems in place at home that reduce stress, so I didn't have those open loops all the time, and I didn't feel like I was constantly having to adapt. But I think you have the other piece of the puzzle, which is that you have to like give your brain the ability to have more adaptation energy with the two of those. I feel like that's extremely effective for moms because we do have typically more on our plates than most people in society. And we're juggling a lot, and we're managing the, you know, emotional responsibility for our kids, and food, and house, and job a lot of times. So, I love that you talk about that. That's so important.

Emily: Yes. And thank you for illustrating such a beautiful idea of how to get out of that survival mode. It's like, yes, if you create a system to close those open loops, that's another way to give yourself more adaptation energy. So, all those open cycles are burning up adaptation energy as well. So it's two-fold. You want to increase your capacity, but whenever possible, we also want to remove the demand or delegate the demand or systematize the demand. So, it is. It's hardware and software.

Katie: That makes sense. So, as we get near the end of our time, I always love to ask a couple of questions and the first being other than your own, which, of course, will be linked in the show notes, if there is a book or number of books that have dramatically impacted your life and if so what they are and why.

Emily: So, I've been thinking about this a lot, and I'm gonna go old school and go to a book that I read in high school. And it was Ayn Rand's "The Fountainhead," and I read it. I was in an AP literature class, and it's basically... I mean, it can be... Some people call it like the capitalism manifesto. It can be taken out of context or taken too far because it's very much celebrating the individual and the ego. The idea is that the ego is the thing that's propelling society forward. But I read it at a time where I was... It was in a small town, and I was, you know, making straight A's and I was the lead in the play. And, you know, I was succeeding in a lot of different areas in my life, and I think I was getting a little bit of tall poppy syndrome. And I started feeling like I would rather people like me than be my best because I started to see that I was excelling in these different areas.

At least my perception was that I was making other people uncomfortable or they didn't like me. Now, I could've just been a meanie, and that's why people didn't like me. I don't know. But I started diminishing myself, and playing small, and trying to make other people feel better by not being in my full power. And I read this book. I think I was a junior, and it really changed my life. It allowed me to step into my greatness, and it allowed me to see, well, like, me diminishing myself as not helping to lift anyone else up. And I quote from Marianne Williamson, which is, you know, "It's our light that most frightens us, not our darkness. Who are we to play small? As you step into your greatness, you inspire other people to do the same." That quote and book have really, really changed my life at a young age in high school.

Katie: I love that. That's a new recommendation, and I'm actually gonna read it because I've had those thoughts as well. Like, there are times when I was worried that if I was like fully myself, I would be intimidating or, like, too much or, like, people wouldn't like me because of that. And so, that actually really resonates with me. I'll make sure those are linked in the show notes as well. Are there any other misconceptions about your area of expertise that you feel like people just don't understand?

Emily: I mean, I've said it before, but I'm gonna say it again because I think it bears repeating because it's so pervasive, and that is that people think they can't meditate because they can't clear their mind. That really is the biggest thing keeping so many people from practicing. I was on the subway the other day, and this guy was like, "What do you do?" And I said, "I'm a meditation teacher," and I saw his face cringe. It's like, "Oh, I can't do that. It's like I can't clear my mind." And this guy clearly had zero meditation training, and yet he was convinced, he was hell-bent on the fact that he couldn't do it because he couldn't clear his mind. So, I'm gonna

be shouting this from the rooftops for a really long time. You don't have to clear your mind in order to get the benefits of meditation.

Katie: I love it. And any parting advice to leave with the listeners today?

Emily: Well, I think this is a trick question for me because, for me, it's find a teacher that you trust and you respect and invest the time to learn a meditation practice because it just makes everything else better. Life is sweeter. Food tastes better. Your body is stronger. Your sleep... I mean, it makes life so much more enjoyable. So, that's my parting wisdom. Find a practice, invest the time, and just do it. It's so worth it for you, for your kids, for your husband, for everyone around you. It's worth it.

Katie: Awesome. And all of the links to find you and your book and your courses are in the show notes at wellnessmama.fm. So, you guys make sure to check that out, but anywhere else, people can find you and connect with you online?

Emily: Yeah, so the book and the online course and our live courses, that's all at zivameditation.com. I know it's a kind of a weird word, but it's just Z-I-V-A, Ziva meditation, and then we're all over social media just @Zivameditation.

Katie: Awesome. Emily, thank you so much for being here. This was super fun and enlightening, and I am definitely gonna be checking out all of your resources, and I know many others will as well. So, thank you for sharing.

Emily: Thank you for having me. Thank you for the body of work that you've created in helping so many people, especially parents because we need it.

Katie: Well, and thanks to all of you for listening and sharing one of your most valuable assets, your time, with both of us. We're 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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