



## Episode 338: From Autoimmune Disease to Thriving Health With Ryan Lee

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Katie: Hello and welcome to the "Wellness Mama" podcast. I'm Katie from [wellnessmama.com](https://wellnessmama.com) and [wellnesse.com](https://wellnesse.com). That's wellness with an E on the end, which is my new personal care line that I would love for you to check out. And today in this episode, I talk to someone who has become a personal friend and who also has a really cool and somewhat similar story to mine of recovering from autoimmune disease, losing weight, and the process that made that possible. And we go deep on some tactics that we both used that led to that. And also, one of the things he does, which is create bars that meet all of the criteria of every dietary plan, but also that are highly nutritious and a repeatable habit. That was part of his story. And we also will have some fun references to the '80s and some lifestyle, just in general, time management tips that we share in this episode as well. So, I know you're going to enjoy this fun and lighthearted interview with Ryan Lee, who is the founder of REWIND. Without further ado, let's join Ryan.

Ryan, welcome to the podcast.

Ryan: I'm excited to be here, Katie. I am ready to get this Wellness Mama thing rocking.

Katie: Well, there's so much we can talk about today both in current events and also about your story, but that is where I would love to start. I always love to hear someone's story and their origin. Think there's so much

power in that. So, to start off, will you walk us through your story and how you got to be where you currently are?

Ryan: Sure. I don't know how far back. I'm not gonna go to when I was born. Let me go to my first job out of school. I graduated college and I spent the first six years of my career working in a children's rehab hospital as a recreational therapist, and that's what my degree was in, recreational therapy and play therapy and adapted aquatics, and I worked with kids who had every type of disability you could imagine, things from spinal bifida, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries, gunshot wounds, you name it. And we did play therapy and it was amazing. I'd loved working with kids. I've always loved working with kids. But on the side, I was a trainer. So, I would train young athletes. That was... I loved staying fit. I was captain of my track team all through, you know, in college and good career there and I wanted to keep staying athletic and I trained athletes. I trained hockey players, although it was ironic because I still can't skate. Elite tennis players, gymnasts. And I wanted to build a website for my sports training company, my part-time business, and this was at the end of '98, so it was really early on. And I just started writing articles about sports training and running faster and jumping higher and all that stuff and things just kind of started to take off. I mean, that was the genesis of me getting into this health world and trying to have more impact and reaching more people.

Fast forward a little bit, sold my site and then that kind of fell apart, then I became a gym teacher in the South Bronx, which is this really rough part of the area called Hunts Point. And so it was an alternative high school. Lot of kids, they'd all pretty much been arrested at one point or another. Lot of former gang members. And I started the whole health and phys ed program. So, this was 2000 and 2001. And I was still building my part-time business to the point where my part-time income was making more than my full-time. And that's where I took the leap and I've been a full-time entrepreneur ever since. Most of my companies and business has been in the health space. And my wife and I have been married now. This year, it'll be our 20-year anniversary. And we have four beautiful, happy, healthy kitties. And now I'm running Rewind. And I know we're going to talk about that too. And there you go. There's a little two-minute version of my journey and lots and lots of ups and downs during those 20 years.

Katie: Absolutely. Well, I've heard it said that, you know, sometimes people go into psychiatry to kind of be able to self-diagnose or to work through their own struggles. And I know for me that was very much the reason I got into health was, like, having health problems that doctors couldn't figure out the answers to and wanting to find my own health answers. And I think we actually have some overlapping parts of our story here when it comes to like health declining and autoimmune disease from what I'm remembering. Is that part of your story as well?

Ryan: Yes, yes. So, that's... So, I think about 10... So, during one of the downtimes, so 10 years ago, my wife and I we just had our fourth kid and right about that time, my mom passed away from cancer. Really it was like a two-month battle. She was only 63 at the time. One of my businesses fell apart. I tried to launch a print magazine, so I went to all this debt, so I had all this stress. And when you have so many kids, I know I think you have like 14, 15 kids, but I only have 4, but what happened was, you know, we started eating off their plate a little more, start gaining weight and combined with the stress, I started getting joint pain. And I would ignore it. I'm a guy. I try to toughen up and just play through it and run through it or do whatever to the point where,

though, it kept getting worse and I woke up one day and I could barely walk. It was... I couldn't step because it hurt that much and I couldn't bend my fingers. And it took months and months of going to every kind of doctor and healthcare professional. I started with my general practitioner. I went to physical therapists. I went to chiropractors. I went to podiatrists because my feet hurt. I went to my good friend who's an orthopedic surgeon. And no one could figure it out 'till finally I went to a rheumatologist. And he looked at me and then saw my fingers were swollen, my feet were swollen, I gave him all the history and in about 10 seconds, he looked at me he said, "Oh, you have an autoimmune disorder, it's called psoriatic arthritis." And I'm like, "Oh, that doesn't sound good."

So, that was the beginning of this journey back to health. I mean, I gained 40 pounds. Everything was just falling apart physically. And it took me a lot of starts and stops. I tried a complete inflammation free diet. I went all in. Went to a naturopath. They said, "Okay. No more sugar. No more dairy. No more gluten ever." I'm like, "What?" And I tried that for two weeks. Couldn't do it. It was just too hard, to be honest with you. I know people can do it. I just couldn't. So, lots of ups and downs 'till about two years ago, I said, "You know what? That's it. My symptoms are starting to come back. I don't wanna go on methotrexate," which is the drugs they recommended. "So, how do I figure this out?" And I said, "Let me just win the morning. Let me start off something in the morning that's good for me on the go. I got the four kids. I've run businesses. I don't have time to do a lot of stuff. Let me... Is there a good bar?" And I just had a bar every morning. And the problem was I couldn't find a bar, though, that didn't have dairy, gluten, added sugar, sugar alcohol and all that stuff. And that gave me the big, "Well, maybe I can create one for myself and maybe there'd be some other people that would like it." And that became this journey back to health and really focusing on simplification and that's become this business now called Rewind where it's about rewinding the years and having things that make you feel good physically, emotionally, mentally, non-inflammatory. And now at the pinnacle, Katie, I'm talking with "The Wellness Mama." Look at this. It's amazing how far I've come.

Katie: Oh, I love that. And I think your story and my story, like I said, they overlap a little bit and they illustrate that we do have to become, like, partners in our own health and that there is such a personalized and individualized aspect to it, but at the same time there are some commonalities like those whole real foods and avoiding certain common inflammatory triggers in those spaces that can be kind of universally helpful across the board. How long did that process look for you? I know I also recovered from Hashimoto's and I'm now in remission and all my numbers are great. But how long did that journey take for you?

Ryan: I think from the first time I was diagnosed it was about two years of me trying different things, you know, being good and saying, "Okay. I'm starting to get some symptoms. Let me go strict. No sugar, no dairy, no gluten." And then I would last a couple weeks and then I'd kind of slowly fall off the wagon and then I'd go back. So, it was two years of that 'till the breaking point I'll never forget. My wife and I took our kids on vacation, went down to Florida, and, you know, I wore a pair of jeans going down because the northeast, Connecticut. And I was putting the same jeans back on after the vacation coming home and they didn't fit. And I asked my wife at the hotel, I said, "Did you dry clean my jeans? What's going on? Why can't they fi..." And she said, "I didn't touch your jeans. What are you talking about?" And I gained weight. And I got home and I was so sick and I went I had a double ear infection and went to the doctor and then they said, "You have high blood pressure. You got some serious things starting to happen here."

And that was, like, the scary point. So, it took two years of up and down, starts and stops 'till I said, "You know what? I need something that..." You're right. "That has the universal principles of anti-inflammation that's gonna make me feel good, but something that's not so restrictive for me that I feel like I can never do it and I'm gonna fall off the wagon again." So, I needed something that had a little built-in flexibility, which is how I came up with my kind of thing about the '80s which we can go into in a few minutes, but that was... And I think it's important for everyone to kind of know themselves and know their own body and see what makes them feel good and what doesn't make them feel good. Right? What's against it? So, it was two years of start and stop and then now I've been 100%...well, I won't say 100%, 99% symptom-free for these past two years. So it's been like four years since I've been diagnosed.

Katie: Got it. And do you maintain that same level of, like, dietary restriction now or... I found that once I was able to heal the underlying issues, I actually have a lot more leeway now.

Ryan: Yeah, yeah. And that's exactly what happened. Now, I have this theory, live like the '80s. And you know Rewind, we kind of have a fun retro thing, we talk about the '80s because that was the best decade ever. But my idea was with the '80s if I can do that Pareto's principle of 80% of the time I'm gonna eat real good, clean whole foods, as many vegetables as I want, like, unlimited veggies, unlimited fruits and veggies, all good stuff and 80% really good stuff, but yet, you know what, give myself a little bit of leeway with that 20%. So, if there's a salad and it has all this good stuff, so I love... Luckily, I like a lot of healthy foods now. I love sardines and olive oil. That's one of my favorite things in the world. That in a bowl of greens. So, I'll have maybe Swiss chard or arugula or kale. So, that's, like, the 80% really good, but it's missing a little something. So, maybe I'll throw in some croutons, which I shouldn't have, but that's my little 20%. And because it has that little crunch and that little extra flavor, it makes me really look forward to the salad instead of just saying, "Oh, it's good." I really look forward to it. So, that is my way to kind of play with the 80/20 and give myself some of that flexibility. So, I'm definitely not 100% strict, but I try to eat really well 80% of the time. And if I'm not feeling good, what I find is I'll kind of move up to the 90s and tighten it up even more and go 90%. And it's worked. It's worked well for me and for people that I've helped that feels like it gives them a little bit of that leeway.

Katie: Yeah. Well, I love the tie in with the '80s. I'm a huge fan of the Pareto principle as well and I use that in a lot of areas of life both, like, dietary and fitness, but also just time and organization and house management. I feel like it's kind of almost universally applicable. But I think it also speaks to another really important point which is... Because I did the exact same thing. I had that cycle for years of... All my symptoms would flare and I would feel bad and then I would tighten everything up to probably a neurotic level and be 100% compliant, which is not sustainable, and then eventually fall off the wagon. And I think that a big key of it, for many people, we all have ideas of what we probably should be doing or we know that we should be eating less sugar or we know we need to avoid certain inflammatory things, but it's keeping that consistent motivation and focus on being able to do it and I think that's where that 80/20 comes into play because it makes it sustainable.

Ryan: Yeah. And you know what? It just gives us a little bit of a break. And we put so much stress and pressure on ourselves. And I know obviously, a large majority of people listening to this are moms. There are some that don't have kids, but we're under so much pressure, anyway, you know, so much stress caring for not just ourselves, but our family that, you know, you see...and you see it all the time, Katie. You see the diet books. And what's one of the first pages they have? It's always within the first 10 pages. It'll say something like, "Forbidden foods. Ten foods you can never eat again for the rest of your life." And you look at it and you're like, "Are you telling me I could never have a chocolate chip cookie forever?" We're gonna have a problem. So, I think giving people a little bit of a break and saying, "It's okay. You don't have to be perfect. Let's stop worrying about perfection and let's get really good and dialed in. And I know everyone is different. Everyone is motivated by different things. But I think when you start to do this, knowing that you know what? I could have that cookie, but I choose not to. You don't have to eat stuff that's not the greatest for you 20% of time, but you can if you want. I'll give an example, how this works. So, when I was at my height of just disgusting, like, falling off the wagon, my go-to junk food was plain M&Ms. That was a crack for me. What's yours, Katie? What's your "This is like the greatest thing in the world."? Everyone has something.

Katie: Yeah. I mean, much less anymore. I don't really crave anything, but it would be... For me, it's salty stuff, not sweet stuff. So, it would be like chips or french fries probably.

Ryan: Okay. So, for me, it was M&Ms, plain M&Ms. Every night, I would have like a bowl of plain M&Ms, just watching TV and trying to eat away like my stress. And I still... I rarely have M&Ms, but I will have them once in a while, maybe, like, when I go to the movies, like, once a month or something. But the other night I got my kids a little treat and I bought myself a little bag of plain M&Ms, like, a little tiny bag. And it's been sitting in my house for five days. I just didn't want it. I don't want it. I don't know if I'm ever gonna eat it. But the fact that it's not like I have this pressure and I feel like, "Oh my God, I'm resisting because I could never have it again," knowing that if I want to I could, but I just choose not to. Giving yourself that power is... Sounds redundant. Giving yourself that power is powerful. And you're right. You're to the point now where you don't even crave it. And I'm kind of getting there too. Again, I just don't feel like having it anymore. But I think if it was a diet or "diet," a restrictive thing where it says, "You can never have sugar. You can never have an M&M. You can never have a cookie. You can never have this. You can never have a slice of pizza the rest of your life," then I feel that pressure and resistance. Again, this is me personally, and everyone is different. But you do that enough over time and you start feeling good, you don't want to feel bad again, like, you don't want to have the M&Ms or the pizza because you know how it makes you feel.

Katie: Exactly. And I think that's the mindset shift that was pivotal for me and I think everybody's tipping point of getting here is a little bit different, but it was that shifting focus from foods being good or bad and needing to deprive myself and being angry at my body for what it wasn't to switching to a point of view of "I want to nourish my body with things that are good because I love my body and I'm trying...and I wanna support it and nourish it," versus deprive and just taking away that deprivation mindset made all the difference because I think we do have that thing as humans too, like, or at least I maybe I'm projecting, I have that thing where if I'm told I can't do something, even if I didn't wanna do it in the first place, now I'm like, "Well, now I do." It's kind of like right now we're all stuck at home. I don't usually wanna go anywhere anyway, but now that I can't go anywhere, of course I want to go somewhere.

Ryan: You're like, "I wanna walk into Target and just hug strangers." That's all you wanna do now.

Katie: Exactly.

Ryan: Yeah, yeah. With no gloves, just feeling everyone's faces. Look, everyone... I think most people feel that. When you're told you can't do something, you want it even more. It's like the restaurant. You can walk by and there could be an empty restaurant and then the restaurant next door has a line at the door, but you want that because you can't get in. So, yeah, it is pretty powerful that when you just say...you make that shift to, "I just wanna feed myself, my body with really, really good stuff." But knowing that if I wanna have a little bit of flex time, if I wanna have something that I know isn't the greatest for me, but maybe it's a celebratory thing and maybe you don't like drinking alcohol, like, I think I maybe have one beer every like three or four months. That's my alcohol. You could maybe say, "Okay. I'm gonna have a glass of alcohol, I'm gonna have a glass of wine," and not beat yourself up over it or feel guilty or not go out with your friends or your family or go to any holidays anymore because they're gonna have wine and you feel bad and you're sitting there the whole night staring at it and just miserable. That's not fun either.

So, it's kind of this, this flexibility of giving yourself a little bit of a break and just filling up with the good stuff. When I discovered...when I really, really started to discover, like, how good vegetables are a couple of years ago because I didn't...I ate a little bit but not a lot, man, it's life-changing. And you look now and it's really sad, Katie. You look at the typical American diet and what they eat and there's just, like, no vegetables. Everything is brown and fried and sandwiches and fried food and pizza. It's just... It has no nutritional value. Their idea of vegetables is, "Oh, well, I had some lettuce on a hamburger," or, "I ate ketchup with my fries." And that's it. It's really sad. And people have this misconception that vegetables are just...they taste bad. It couldn't be further from the truth. My oldest daughter who's 16 she loves making vegetables. Every day she's experimenting. She's like, "Oh, I'm gonna do some Brussel sprouts and I'm gonna try to add this and add these little spices and..." My kids all love eating vegetables, and I think it's pretty cool.

Katie: Yeah, I love it. Mine too. And me too. And that was something I had to learn as an adult as well because I didn't grow up loving vegetables and now I can't imagine not eating as many as I do because I love them. But I think another part of this that was a key for me and I'm guessing for you as well is to simplify and automate as much as possible the things that need to be repeatable to make something a habit versus I feel like the more decisions are built into something, the less likely it is to succeed over time because you hit decision fatigue. And so for me, I eat many of the same meals, like, at least lunches, I'll eat the same thing over and over the same three meals because it's simple, I don't have to think about it. One of them has definitely sardines, but it takes away the decision fatigue and it takes away the choice of it and then I can just stick with it because it's there, it's easy and I know what I'm doing. And the same thing with, like, I eat usually a six to eight-hour window every day which is just an easy change that I made that works for me, it won't work for everyone. But that was a huge key for me. And so I think that's where things like the bars come into play as well because it's a simple, repeatable habit that is always there, there's no decision involved and that tastes great. So, talk about the bars and the formulation. What went into that and why did you decide on bars?

Ryan: And you're 100% right. The less decisions you have to make, the less willpower and fatigue you start getting. And I'm the exact same way. Every morning it's a bar with supplements and every lunch it's either sardines with greens or rice cauliflower with sardines or a piece of salmon or something like that. And that's 99% of time. That's my breakfast and lunch. The reason with bars is just for me, it's really about convenience and something that I'm gonna stick with. And I've always loved bars. I love the convenience of them. But I said, "Well, if I'm going to create a bar, if I wanna..." If in a perfect world, because all the bars I always having, the protein bars, and I'm sure you've seen this a lot, most protein bars, the protein source is whey protein, which is dairy, which is not great for inflammation. I don't react well to dairy. And a lot of them, all of the, you know, cookie-flavored ones or anything like that they all had gluten as well. And now the big trend was everyone is like, "Oh, we're keto this. We're keto that." So, what they do is they say we only have one gram of sugar, but they'll jam it with all this sugar alcohol, which tends not to be the greatest.

So, I'm like, why can't there be a really good, clean, healthy bar that even has some greens, so we snuck in some spinach and kale, but tastes really, really good? That was the thing because you can have a bar... And there were some bars that are healthier, but they just didn't taste good and I didn't wanna have it every morning. I still want something that tastes good. And that was the original idea behind it. Can I create a bar? Can I have one that tastes really, really good that doesn't have the added sugar, the gluten or the dairy? And it's only made with good stuff. So, it's non-GMO, no artificial flavors, no artificial sweeteners, no corn, no rice, no nothing like that. And that's what we set out to do. And it took probably seven months of, like, playing and back and forth and tasting and then, you know, people don't realize when you make a bar you can have the best ingredients in the world, the best nutritional facts, and maybe even you get the flavor profile, but then there's the texture. And maybe you have too many of one thing and it's way too chewy and sticky or it's too crumbly, or it's too wet, or it's too dry. So, nailing all those, the flavor and the texture and the nutritional profile, and then the actual ingredients, it's a lot easier said than done. And it drives me a little crazy when, you know, we put all this effort into the bar and someone on Facebook will be like, "Oh, why don't you...how come you didn't just make it with blah, blah, blah?" I'm like, "You have no idea how hard it is to make a bar like this." I wish I could just say, "Oh, yeah, we'll just add that. Cool. No problem."

So, it took a while. But that was the idea, just something convenient. My wife calls it grab and go. And as a really, really nice side benefit, which I didn't know originally, my kids and kids in general love it. All my kids have the bars every day. My daughter who's on the tennis team in high school, her tennis team they always have the bars. My little three-year-old nephew, Luke, loves the bars everyday. Rewind bar. So, it's pretty cool to see families now enjoying it and having something that's good. And because we have nine grams of fiber, they fill you up. So, I have the bar in the morning and that's it. I'm good. I have the bar in the morning. I work out a couple of hours later, and then I have lunch. So, it holds me over for a few hours.

I did try like you...I know you do...if you eat in that six to eight-hour window, a lot of people call intermittent fasting. I tried that. I couldn't do it. All I did was think about food. I was nasty, Katie. I was not a good person. So, for me, the bar worked for me. It took the edge off and it gave me a little bit of fuel for those first few hours in the morning.



Katie: Yeah. I think fasting is very much an individualized thing. And like I said, it works for some people. I'm definitely not recommending it for everyone. And certainly, a lot of women actually should not intermittent fast if there's any kind of hormone issue and so it's not something I would recommend everyone do. I think it just speaks to, we all have to find kind of our thing that works. And I know in your case from what I remember of your story, you lost a pretty substantial amount of weight and you have now reversed your autoimmune disease. That had to be an amazing journey. What do you do? What is your routine and your day look like now both nutritionally, exercise and just lifestyle to maintain that?

Ryan: Yeah. And it was a really, really nice byproduct because just by doing this, I automatically ate less calories because the bar is about 160 calories. So, rather than having crappy food or a doughnut or whatever, just that alone was saving me calories and losing all the weight. Yeah. So, I'm down the 40 something pounds. I'm the exact same weight and pant size I was in high school, which is still mind-blowing considering I'm gonna be 48. So, I've never felt so good and my symptoms are gone and I never needed to get on the drugs. So, in terms of my routine. So, nutritionally, my routine is pretty much always the same just like you, very structured, bar in the morning, lunch is usually some kind of salad with a protein, usually sardines. And often I'll have a bar in between lunch and dinner too because I eat lunch really early. I'll have lunch at, like, 11:00, 11:30 in the morning because I'm up so early, and then we'll eat dinner as a family at like 5:00, 5:30. So, I'll usually have another bar around 3:00, 2:30. And dinner, it's just different things. Whatever my wife makes, we bring in, and... There's oftentimes, because I love it so much, I'll have another salad with a different protein. And I'm not... I guess I'm probably more pescetarian-ish, but I don't subscribe to any specific diet. I just tend not to eat a lot of meat, especially red meat. It just doesn't make me feel good, but for some people, they love it and they eat all red meat. Again, I don't judge. So, that's nutritionally and it's that 80/20 rule, 80% really, really good, clean, healthy veggies and greens and 20% go crazy.

Exercise wise, this was interesting because I was a trainer and even my master's degree is exercise physiology, I always believed exercise and fitness was 90% of your results. And that's what we were told as a trainer. Ninety percent is fitness and exercise and you got to know your progressions and your upper body, lower body, your splits, your... And I was obsessed with that. And then I started getting older, I'm like, "You know what? Let me just feel good. And what can I do that more importantly than the workout, what am I gonna do consistently that I enjoy and I know is not gonna take up a lot of time?" That's the thing with me. It's gotta be efficient. It's gotta be simple. Like you, you said with your lunch, you eat pretty much the same thing every day so you know what to do, it's one less decision you have to make. My workouts are almost identical every single day, but I add a little bit of progression. So, I'll take you through it. You ready for it, Katie? You're ready for the workout?

Katie: Let's go.

Ryan: Here we go. It's in my bedroom. I have a treadmill and a couple little free weights and kettlebells there and a pull-up bar over the door. So, I go on the treadmill, I go at the highest incline. Our treadmill I think is about 10%. And I walk at about 4.1 miles an hour, so it's like a fast walk. And I'll do that for about two and a half minutes. So, it's 200 meters on the thing. I ran track, so I always think in terms of meters. So, the equivalent is two, two and a half minutes, so it's about half a lap on a track. I jump off. Obviously, stop the

treadmill first. I'm not a lunatic. Stop the treadmill, jump off, and I'll usually do like pull-ups, like 8 to 10 pull-ups, 15 to 20 push-ups and 15 to 20 abdominal core exercises. Then I go back on the treadmill, I do another two, two and a half minutes, stop the treadmill, get off and do another exercise, sometimes like kettlebell swings. And that's it. So, each of those little two minutes, so the two minutes on the treadmill, and then the strength exercise, that's one, like, little mini circuit and I do eight of those. So, with the exercise and the treadmill, it takes maybe 20, 25 minutes tops, and I'm done. And I've got some good cardiovascular benefit, I've got the strength in, which I think is really important. Cardio is great, but especially as we start getting older, we need strength exercise. It doesn't have to be hardcore weights, but we need at least resistance training, could be bodyweight training, old school push-ups and bodyweight squats. That stuff still works. And it's all done at my house. I don't have to go to the gym. I don't have to spend time driving back and forth and showering there. And it's easy. I just did the workout right before we started this call.

So, that's my nutrition. That's my fitness. I do that five to six times a week. Pretty much the same workout except I might switch up the strength exercise and maybe I'll have one day it's all kettlebell swings or something else in there instead. And just simplifying. I'll tell you that the biggest thing I did when I was going through this, I knew that autoimmune is definitely worsened with stress. And I was traveling a lot. I was speaking at all these marketing events and selling and doing all this stuff, just wasn't making me feel good. And I was missing stuff in my kid's life. And about six years ago, one of the biggest decisions I made was...well, actually, this was eight years ago now that we're looking back. For six years, I'm not traveling at all. I said no to every single speaking gig, every one. And I turned away hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars, maybe a million over the course of those years by not speaking. But I just wanted to focus on my wife, my kids, my family, and I made them the center of my universe and I said, "I'm gonna build everything. I'm gonna build my business, my life, everything around my family."

So, every decision is run through that filter of, "Is this bringing me closer to my goals of spending more time with them and building a business of soul or is this taking me further apart?" And if it was taking me further away from it, I said no. And just that simplification, it made my relationship with my wife stronger with my kids. I don't miss any...I don't miss a play or a sporting event and I still coach all their sports. I'm done with my day by 3:30, 4:00. So, I carpool all night, which isn't always the best, but I get to spend time with them. I've coached every sport from football, to baseball, to soccer, to lacrosse. You name it, I've coached it. And it just... And I'm...look, I know I'm blessed to be able to do it. I don't have a typical 9:00 to 5:00 job, but the simplifying of the nutrition, the simplifying of my workouts and the simplifying of just my life, it just changed everything and I just feel so much happier and more content with the way things have gone and I feel better.

Katie: And I love that you brought that up about exercise because I think that's also a source of guilt for a lot of people is the idea that we should be doing more harder exercise. And you're right, especially with certain conditions like autoimmune disease, very often we need to give the body a break and rest becomes more important or at least restorative, regenerative movement, not just high intensity as hard as possible which is...or like extended cardio which is what society kind of, at least a lot of times, presents as the option. And I know in my own journey, I've now lost over 60 pounds as well in the last couple of years. And I didn't exercise at all during the really intense part of that weight loss because I'm a data nerd and a math person and in general, if you're doing hard workouts, you're going to make yourself more hungry. And if you're trying to heal, you need to let those calories and that energy go to healing. And I'm not saying not move, but I didn't

focus at all on exercise during that time and I found the things that were the most important like that rest and the calm and being with the family, the things that really do help you rebuild. And I think that point can't be stated enough is, you know, it's easy to try to focus on all of these silver bullets and exercising more, "I need to take more supplements," or whatever it is, but you've got to find those core things, and sometimes that means doing less, not doing more.

Ryan: Hundred percent. I can't agree with you more on that one. And believe me, I was drinking the Kool-Aid 25 years ago. I was all about the high intensity. Actually, I taught high-intensity exercise classes, then I remember when CrossFit came out and everyone's thinking like, "You got to work harder and play hard, work hard." And they're showing, you know, 60-year-olds flipping tires. And I was totally into that stuff, but I'm like, "You know what? It's not necessarily best for everyone." You should... And I tried. And again, I'm not putting down CrossFit. There are people that love it. If it works for you, great. I tried it at two different places. I'm like... I try everything. And both times I ended up getting hurt. And it didn't make me feel good. It actually broke my body down too much and I was not getting enough rest. Sleep is just as important as the exercise. And you know, where I used to believe it was 80% exercise or 90% exercise, 10%, 20% nutrition, it's flipped. If you're eating well and filling yourself with the good stuff and getting the rest and recovery, great.

And I'm all about now, like, the lower impact stuff. Again, I was in...so, I ran track competitively all through college and I was a sprinter, so as hard and as fast as you can. But now I enjoy the walking part. I like that part. And another thing I do is I try every day to just walk 20 minutes outside, usually with my wife. If she's not around, just by myself just thinking and just taking that time. That's almost like my spiritual meditative time, just getting out. There's about 60 acres of nature preserve in our backyard, so I just walk the trails and it's like one of the greatest things that we can do. And it's more important to find stuff that you like and it makes you feel good verse it's the hottest trend or get this, you know, stupid ab wheel thing and all your fat's gonna melt off, which is the most ridiculous thing in the world because it doesn't work like that. The weight loss and the abs it's made in the kitchen, not in the gym. So, I'm glad you're bringing that stuff up, Katie, and showing people and showing them it doesn't have to be high crazy intensity exercise.

Katie: Yeah. It's amazing to me how many...how much our stories overlap and I love that you're spreading this message and giving people a practical, repeatable habit that they can implement to help get there faster.

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A few questions I'd love to ask toward the end of interviews and I look forward to hearing your answer is, what are some things that are less known or not well understood about your area of expertise that you like to talk about?

Ryan: Well, we definitely covered a few of them today. I think number one is that '80s rule. I think a lot of people are all about strict diets and what you can and can never eat again. So, I think giving yourself that flexibility is definitely my nutritional philosophy. And the workout stuff too. I mean, that's the second thing. It's the more about the consistent, repeatable, lower impact, but also getting bang for your buck and adding in strength exercise.

And I'll give you a third thing. With Rewind, we definitely have fun with some of the retro '70s, '80s, '90s pop culture. And I love it. It's fun. But there actually have been scientific studies showing the mental, the psychological, physiological benefits of nostalgia. And I'm not talking about sitting around and thinking about when you were a kid and just crying and getting depressed and living in the past. I'm not talking about that at all. But it does feel good to kind of go back a little bit and watch a movie from your childhood or listen to an album. You should see. If you saw my space here it's filled with hundreds and hundreds of records, cassette tapes, VHS tapes, arcade machines, movie posters here. I'm looking at "Back to the Future" and "The Goonies" and "Breakfast Club" and "Ferris Bueller's Day Off," stuff from my youth. And it does feel good. It really does. And obviously, whatever decade you guys were born in, if you were more '60s or '70s or '90s person, but just going back and having a little bit that nostalgia is good for you. And I'm trying to spread that too. Just go back and feel good. Live in the present, but it's good for you to go back a little bit sometimes.

Katie: I agree. And that's one thing we've been doing lately to pass the time is we have a playlist my kids have made for cleaning or just for, like, dance parties around the house and it's a lot of '80s music and it's fun and it does take you back.

And I love having those kind of touchpoints. I think that's awesome. Also, I know we've mentioned the bars multiple times and, of course, there'll be a link in the show notes at [wellnessmama.fm](https://wellnessmama.fm). But also for any of you

listening, the website is [rewindbars.com](http://rewindbars.com) if I make sure I got that right, Ryan. And then there is a discount code MAMA, M-A-M-A. That's for 30% off, which is awesome. That's a huge discount. So I just wanna make sure we said that out loud. And, of course, it'll also be in the show notes as well. What kind of flavors do you guys have?

Ryan: Right now with the bars... Well, when people are listening to this, we're gonna have a new flavor come out. We have a new mint brownie coming out, which is...and that was, by the way, my 14-year-old daughter came up with that one because she's obsessed with mint and I'm like, "All right, let's try it," and it's incredible. So, we have mint brownie. We have cinnamon coffee cake, which is my personal favorite. We have chocolate coconut. And then we have almond butter and jelly. And they're all gluten-free, vegan, no artificial flavors, no GMOs, no inflammatory ingredients, not added sugar. So, those are the flavors. And then we have new green drinks that just came out. We have orange, we have berry, and we have pineapple. And they are, by far, the best-tasting green drinks ever created. I could say that because I've tried every green drink and every one of our customers say the exact same thing. So, they're the best tasting anti-inflammatory green drinks in the world. I don't talk about them as much because they're brand new, but I'm really excited about those. And we're creating lots of new smoothie flavors and fun stuff with that.

Katie: Awesome. And of course, those will be linked in the show notes, you guys can find them. Just head over to [rewindbars.com](http://rewindbars.com). And then another question I love to wrap up with is, is there a book or a number of books that have had a really dramatic impact on your life? And if so, what are they and why?

Ryan: I think the initial book that changed the way I thought about things and really got me kind of into the personal development world, read a long time ago, it was "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" by Stephen Covey. I read that in, I think, like, early '90s and mid-'90s and it was just life-changing. I was like, "This is..." It was amazing to see and to start learning about personal development from this thing that I never even realized. I remember my dad had tapes when I was younger and he had tapes by like Denis Waitley and I listened to those. I thought those were kind of cool and interesting, but "The 7 Habits" was the one where I was old enough to really get it and understand and got me into this whole different mindset of priorities and that he had the whole chart and all this kind of stuff. And I just thought that was really cool. That was definitely, like, a life-changing impactful book. I haven't read it in a long time. I should reread it because that was the one I remember as kind of started me off on this journey.

Katie: Awesome. Well, Ryan, this has been such a fun conversation as it always is when talking to you. And I really appreciate you being here and sharing your story today.

Ryan: Well, I appreciate you having me on. And you're right, we're so similar. I think I'm gonna start a new site called Wellness Daddy because I am ready to rock this. No. But I appreciate you and I always love talking to you and to Seth and so I am always here to help anytime, any way you need me, Katie. Thanks for having me.

Katie: Oh, thank you for the time. And thanks to all of you as always for listening and for sharing one of your most valuable assets, your time, with both of us today. 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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