



Episode 363: Mental Health, Micro-Communities,
and 80/20 Personalized Wellness
With Colleen of mindbodygreen

Child: Welcome to my Mommy's podcast.

This podcast is brought to you by Four Sigmatic. You've heard me talk about them a lot and it's because I love them so much. Their products are a regular part of my life and I can't remember the last time I didn't use at least one of their products. My hands down favorite is their coffee with Lions Mane and there are two ways I drink it... they make convenient packets that are great for adding to hot water for coffee on the go, and they also make ground coffee with Lion's Mane that is great for brewing just like you would any other coffee. Neither of these tastes like mushrooms... they taste just like coffee but provide the added boost from Lion's Mane, which gives me clean energy and focus all day without the jitters or acidity of some other coffee products. I also love the coffee packets for the popular dalgona coffee that's making the rounds on social media right now and I make it with Coffee with Lion's Mane packets and coconut sugar for a delicious iced coffee treat. Check out this and all of their products at foursigmatic.com/wellnessmama and code `wellnessmama` gives 15% off.

This podcast is brought to you by Wellnesse, my new personal care company that is based on the recipes I've been making at home in my kitchen for decades. Many "clean" products simply don't work and this is why I have spent the last decade researching and perfecting recipes for products that not only eliminate toxic chemicals but contain ingredients that work better than their conventional alternatives and that nourish your body from the outside in. I'm so excited to finally share these products with you and wanted to tell you about our brand new dry shampoo! It can be used various ways. You can sprinkle it in clean hair to add volume and to extend time between washes, sprinkle it in hair that has not been washed in a day or two to absorb oil or sweat and you can work it in to color treated hair to maintain color-treated hair by not having to wash as often. It contains oil-absorbing kaolin clay and volume-boosting tapioca which work together to refresh hair at the roots. Lavender oil and cactus flower help to balance scalp and strands' natural pH. We even added hibiscus for healthy hair growth. You can check it out and try it at wellnesse.com and my tip is to grab a bundle to save or subscribe and save!

Katie: Hello. Welcome to the "Wellness Mama Podcast." I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com, and now also wellnesse.com, that's wellness with an E on the end, where we make non-toxic, safe and beneficial personal care products, including hair care, toothpaste, and hand sanitizer. Speaking of all of those things, in this conversation I'm here with Colleen Wachob, who is the co-founder and co-CEO of [mindbodygreen](https://mindbodygreen.com), which is an exhaustive online resource you've probably heard about, of course, I will link to it in the show notes with some of my favorite articles that they have. She graduated from Stanford University with degrees in international relations and Spanish and spent 10 years working at Fortune 500 companies like Gap, Walmart and Amazon, but she now lives in Brooklyn, New York with her husband and co-founder Jason and their two daughters. And they run [mindbodygreen](https://mindbodygreen.com), which like I said is a massive health and wellness resource that you can find. We go into a lot of topics on this episode, especially mental health for moms during a pandemic forming micro-communities and ways to keep in touch in physical relationships with people even during these kind of unusual times and the 80/20 for personalized wellness and what we can all learn from that. It is a wide-

ranging really fun conversation that I know you will enjoy as much as I did. So without further ado, here's Colleen. Colleen, welcome. Thank you for being here.

Colleen: Welcome. I am so pleased to be talking to you.

Katie: I'm excited for this conversation. We met on the phone not very long ago. And I feel like we instantly connected, and I knew I wanted to share you with all the listeners today. I haven't even heard this part of the story myself, but I have read about this a little bit in places where you've written before. I love to start by hearing someone's kind of personal journey, especially into wellness. And I'm guessing we might have a little bit of overlap here in kind of a health crisis turning into an impetus for a lifelong journey, but I would love to hear what brought you into the wellness world.

Colleen: Yes, your instinct is right on. So, mindbodygreen started just over 10 years ago, and I had been working on mindbodygreen nights and weekends, and really just kind of at that point in my career, I had been working at a lot of Fortune 500 companies, Gap, Walmart, Amazon, lots of big ones, where I was feeling a little stuck. I was really missing purpose in my life. I knew that what I was doing was not probably my long term way to seek fulfillment in my career, and just feeling a little bit of stuck, and I was kind of casually invested in wellness. I was very interested in yoga, running. You know, being a Californian native, that's kind of how you live and how you grow up there. But what really was an inflection point for me was when I was 32 years old, I had a life-threatening pulmonary embolism. The ER doctor had never seen so many showers of clots in someone's lungs who was still alive. And that was definitely the inflection point for me when I started transitioning to well-being full time.

When any 32-year-old ends up in the ER, they obviously do a battery of tests. And I was no exception. And I have no genetic predispositions towards clotting. And really the only thing that the doctors could surmise was that it was because of the birth control pill. And this was 10 years ago. And yes, people knew about the birth control risks. But I think now there's much more of a dialogue around these risks, and people are a lot more conscious of it. But it was still the earlier days of the conversations, and it was a story that I shared in the early days of mindbodygreen with the mindbodygreen community, and I was blown away by the amount of women who came forward being like, my friend, my sister, myself had had this similar type of experience. So it's definitely something that I'm glad people are talking about now more in the forefront. But for me, that was the start of what has been a deeply fulfilling personal journey, in terms of trying to live a complete and fulfilling life, and in the midst of that health crisis, it was definitely, you know, let's try to address this underlying condition and get back to a place of feeling well, feeling able to breathe again. And feeling whole.

Katie: I'm curious, what were some of the early things that you researched and changed. Because I know for me, I had what ended up being Hashimoto's. I didn't know that at the time. It took years to figure it out. And it sounds crazy in hindsight to say, but it was the first time I really started connecting that what we eat impacts our body and what we're exposed to impacts our body beyond just calories. Which, now it seems so common sense, but back then I had only ever thought of it in terms of calories. And I kind of entered this whole new world of understanding just how incredible but multifaceted everything we interact with is and experimenting,

I've become more and more a proponent of the personalization and taking control of your own health and experimenting with what works for you, especially over the last few years. But I'm curious what some of those early steps were for you.

Colleen: Yeah. And I think your mindset that you touched on is just so critical, right, of really taking control of your own health and being the CEO of your own health and well-being. Ultimately, there are so many people and companies and resources, but ultimately, we have to conduct that orchestra in terms of ensuring that we are looking out for ourselves. And first, the biggest lesson was just in terms of listening to your own intuition. I think so many women might have, or still do, can fall into that trap of dismissing symptoms, "Oh, they're not that important. I'm fine. I'm feeling fine." And definitely my mindset at the beginning of my PE, I was dismissive of things that were real symptoms. I didn't wanna go to a hospital. I didn't wanna see a doctor. I was feeling fine. "Oh, I'm fine." And thanks to my husband, he really insisted I see a doctor. But I think a lot of people have that tendency to not take the symptoms as seriously, and just kind of live with them. And for me, it was a big lesson in terms of both listening to my intuition across all areas of my life. Also a big lesson in slowing down, this idea of being a little bit more mindful about how I choose to spend all of my energy. You know, at that point in life, I was very busy professionally, and I think socially. I was also really busy always just putting a lot of stress and strain in my body.

And now, you brought up the topic of personalization. Like, my body doesn't need a lot of fast cardio to feel great. And it took me a lot of time to really figure out what my body needs to thrive when it comes to physical exertion. And I've realized that I gravitate a lot more, and feel a lot more rejuvenated, after a lot of slower movements, so think things like yoga, Pilates. My body doesn't need intense cardio and lots of running. In fact, it probably puts a little bit more strain on it. And then this crisis in health, too, starts catapulting a lot of conversations about eating optimally for your body. And this is just something that pains me that we don't get this nutrition, either in school or in other areas of life, and if you go to certain doctors in the conventional field, you might not be exposed to this type of nutrition information too.

But really learning how to eat in a way that was better optimized towards my body, I think it's really a journey for so many people, especially as they start becoming more interested in health and wellness. And what I fully believe in is that there's no one-size-fits-all approach to health and well-being. And no matter who the expert is, you do have to experiment and figure out what works for you. And especially as women, as we go through different parts and journeys of our lives, like, what we need changes so much from when I was single, or child-free in my early 30s to then when I was pregnant with my first and second child, like, my nutrition needs, and what I need to sustain myself and feel great, has just evolved so much through each life's journey. And I think it's just my overall kind of wisdom from this journey is really just about listening to your intuition, whether it's about big life decisions, or what you're eating to feel your best, how you're choosing to move. There's so many resources right now out there, but at times, it can almost be overwhelming, the array of choices, and at the end of the day, you really have to be connected into what makes you feel the best, and after you do something, do you feel nourished? Do you feel rejuvenated, or are you feeling depleted? And to start making those life changes baby step by baby step to start moving more towards what makes you feel good.

Katie: I completely agree. I had to learn that, I think, on my journey as well, because when you start researching in this world, and I wanna talk about some of the many topics within the health world in a minute, but when you start researching, it's there's so many options and so many things you wanna try. And I feel like it actually became a process of simplifying to the things that actually worked and kind of 80/20'ing those things for my own body that worked, and I think exercise, that you brought up, is a perfect example, because I also do well with slow movement like walking and yoga and swimming. But I've also found I do great with, like, lifting heavy weights and sprinting, just not, like, extended kind of moderate cardio like running.

And for years, I did the whole, like, distance running thing, because that was supposed to be what was "healthy," and there's such that individual aspect. And I think back 10 years ago, I researched about how saturated fat had kind of gotten a bad rap through different studies, and how they had been interpreted. And so I wrote back then about how important saturated fat was, which I still fully believe, but at the time, didn't know my genes. I didn't know that I have certain genes that make saturated fat not ideal for me.

So I was eating all this coconut oil, and it turns out my genes needed a lot less fat and more monounsaturated, and so now I almost completely avoid saturated fat. But there's that personalization aspect, even though many people thrive on more saturated fat than the recommended normal allowance is. And so I think you're right, that's where the wisdom is, that intuition. And being willing to experiment and track, in our own lives and our own bodies, what's working and then improve from there. I know that you also do a lot of research in the health and wellness world. We have kind of similar paths with our websites. I'm curious what trends you're seeing in health and wellness right now that you think are fascinating.

Colleen: Well, and it's so funny that we're having, or interesting that we're having this conversation in the middle of COVID, because if you had asked me these questions just a few months earlier, I'm sure I would have had a really different answer. And if I think at a really big macro level of what are some of the biggest changes that we've seen since the inception of mindbodygreen, we know that when MBG started over 10 years ago, people were really coming to us for nutrition and for yoga. Those were the gateway drugs that we saw people come and really want to continue to dive deeper into.

And that stayed the same for five, six, seven, eight years. And starting last year, we saw a really big shift into mental health. And that, obviously, our audience is still deeply passionate about all things nutrition, but there was just so much more fascination, pageviews, search interest around the field of mental illness. And this was in 2019, before the pandemic, and we already know that 20% of Americans at that time were suffering from a mental health illness. So, and what's happening in this COVID world, we're seeing those spikes too, and this ripple affecting other health markers as well.

You know, we do a trends piece every year. And what's interesting is earlier in the year, we talked about how alcohol sales were down and wine sales were down for the first time in 25 years. And now we know that consumer behavior is evolving and changing with COVID, and that alcohol sales are booming. But I think this trend of looking for healthier options for alcohol, and wanting to stay and feel, get the best type of alcohol for your body, if you're going to choose to consume alcohol is going to stay. I think you may be a fan as well as dry

farm wines, which has lower sugar content. And those are the types of healthier options that my husband and I look to when we try to consume wine. And I think those healthier options are only going to grow in popularity as people decide to consume more and more alcohol. Something else we're really fascinated on is the surge in hand sanitization use. My husband and I are bringing it to the park, wherever, you know, if we're outside the house, and we don't know that we're gonna be able to clean our hands with a sink. And obviously with the two little ones who put their hands into everything, we have to be very mindful of that. But we're also interested in the impact to the skin microbiome, and kind of how that will long term change, how we think about our body care and our personal care.

Another trend that we're interested in is just this shift that we're seeing in terms of consumer packaged goods. Over the past five years, there's been this surge in better for you, but we see so much of our audience really demanding more in terms of better best ingredients, and we're excited to see a bigger shift into best for you, and people really standing behind health in a really bigger way. I think there's been a little bit of health washing over the past five years. But we're seeing our audience really dive into ingredients and details, and wanna go deeper in understanding the choices behind all of the ingredients in their products in a way they haven't before.

I'm really interested to see too how nutrition choices will evolve long term. January was the first time in which we saw a little bit more subdued spikes as it relates to search traffic among certain popular types of diets like paleo and keto. But we know that the brands that are built on a lot of these diets are really thriving. So I'm not sure if it's a bigger shift into just people becoming more familiar with these brands and less looking for kind of, like, generic searches to help find those choices.

So, lots of exciting developments within the world of health and well-being. And I think one of the underrepresented conversations that will be happening amidst the pandemic is I think there will be so much more of a macro shift of people really focused on their own health and well-being, because it's truly imperative now, even more so than it's been. And I think a lot of people maybe have come into health and well-being from a way in which you and I did of a personal health crisis. But now I think there's just going to be even more widespread of a focus on health and well-being being such a key to people's families.

Katie: Oh, you brought up so many great topics that I wanna delve a little deeper on. I think you're right. I think we're seeing a really unique and unusual time when it comes to mental health, especially for moms. And I think of so many of my friends, like, they thought they were getting a two week spring break instead of a one week spring break, and ended up with a six month spring break that turned into summer. And I think that's been a lot to navigate for a lot of families, both working moms and moms who homeschool. I think we're all navigating new waters right now. So I'd love to hear in what you're seeing in trends, and also in your research and your writing. When it comes to mental health, especially for moms, what are some things we can be cognizant of, or focused on right now? Because certainly, like I said, it's an unprecedented time for mental health.

Colleen: So, mental health and moms I think is one of the most underrepresented conversations that is happening in the midst of the pandemic. I think moms were already under a lot of stress, and I think that stress has only been magnified, and so many of our tools of coping aren't available to us. You know, maybe that was seeing a therapist in real life. Maybe that was gathering together with girlfriends, maybe that was going to a nail salon and getting a monthly manicure, pedicure. Maybe that was just having a walk around the block with your spouse without your kids. And so many of those tools are not available. And I think it's one of these conversations that women need to be talking about more, so that there is more visibility and more awareness of it, because it is something that is of deep concern. And as it relates to wellness, I think the conversation needs to shift to "How does this not just become something that I do to check off my box, but, my box of my to-do list, but how does this become something that I do, and that nourishes me and helps me, and really shift that conversation from a to-do list to something that really helps and rejuvenates?"

I think, related to it, there's going to be a real switch flip in terms of how we think about self care. And I don't think Instagram did the world of wellness and well-being a service with showing self care as something that we do as a rose petal bath that takes 45 minutes, and it's really elaborate. And, I mean, I didn't have time for that pre-pandemic, but I think we really have to set a higher standard in terms of what self care can really deliver on us from an ROI standpoint, and be really mindful about those investments, because I know that I have a lot less time when it comes to self care. So sometimes these days, that could mean connecting on a Zoom with old friends, having a FaceTime chat with a girlfriend. And that time becomes really, really sacred and rejuvenating, but I'm definitely not going to say that I think it replaces the value that I find as someone who gets a tremendous amount of connection from in real life interactions too. So I don't have all of the answers, but I think it's something that we as women need to be talking about and supporting each other through. Especially mothers.

Katie: I agree. I'm curious if we're gonna see maybe, and I would encourage this, like, the rise of almost, like, micro-communities or tribes. That's what we've started doing in our local area. Even as, kind of, big activities are limited right now in most places, like, small group stuff, especially outdoor stuff, is okay. And I think that's actually perfect. Like, if we can form groups where we're outside, maybe exercising. I think this is a kind of a unique time to return to that, because the last couple of decades have been a gradual move toward more and more virtual types of relationships. And I think this last six months has kind of made everybody realize, like you said, the importance of that in-person, real touchpoints with real people. And until everything kind of calms down, I think maybe micro-communities are part of the answer of forming small little tribes in our local areas, with people with common interest that we can stay connected with. And I've even heard of communities forming micro-schools, as a lot of schools are not going back, hiring teachers for small groups of students. Having, like, little community gardens. And so my thought is I hope we can focus on the silver linings here. Certainly there's been a lot of challenges that go along with this.

But if we can focus on the positives and maintain those even, as hopefully the pandemic ends, but maintain the eating at home more, and maintaining friendships with people in our local neighborhoods and communities, and spending more time with our families, I think we can learn so much from this time. I think it's like anything in life, so much what we make of it. But I just really wanted to kind of offer encouragement for micro-communities, because until we're able to travel and see those friends all over the world again, I think it's important, like you said, to have those real-life touch points with real people.

Colleen: I love that perspective in terms of we have to find the silver linings to come out of this stronger and more united together. Great perspective.

Katie: I also love that you brought up hand sanitizer use. I think this is a good springboard into an important topic, because I've had this concern as well, and I actually make a natural hand sanitizer through our company, Wellnesse, because I wanted to provide an option that at least did not dry people's skin out and that had natural elements in it. But I think we're gonna see some interesting rebound effects from this widespread use of hand sanitizer, knowing that the skin has a microbiome, just like our gut has a microbiome. And so I'm curious if you have any tips for navigating that and trying to maintain that balance of skin microbiome, but also of course, avoiding getting sick and not wanting to deplete, especially children's skin. So have you figured out any tips for navigating that?

Colleen: I think with all these choices, they become, you know, which personal value is more important at one time. And I think at the beginning of the pandemic, when we didn't have enough information, when we didn't have enough of the data, and I look at this even in my own household, we were over-cleaning our groceries. We were overusing hand sanitizer, when we were walking through the door, when we were coming into our building's lobby, when we were going into our office, because we didn't have any of the data, and there was a lot of fear. And now, five months in, we do know that if you have the ability to use a 20-second hand wash soap that that is a better option long term for your microbiome.

That said, when we're leaving the playground, and we're 30 minutes from our house, we don't have that option. And so that's when we're gonna choose to use hand sanitizer. So I think it's all just about kind of using the right method for where you are, because there's not one broad stroke approach that works for every situation in your life. And just being really mindful. You know, if we're hopping on an airplane, which we have not done yet, and don't really have any plans to do in the immediate future, but that would be a time to bring hand sanitizer on, and it's just about using the right method for where your family's at.

Katie: And I know, like, for us, we're also very cognizant right now of, like, doing the flip side as well. So any way that I can support the kids' microbiome and our microbe naturally, I'm being really conscious to do that, both internal and external microbiomes, just realizing by the nature of what's going on right now, we are gonna encounter a lot more things that can potentially damage that. And so, if it's possible, one thing I encourage is sending kids outside to play in the dirt, where there's good bacteria, or in a garden, where there's beneficial bacteria, and not sanitizing them after, just letting them wash normally after that, since outdoors is typically considered a safe exposure place anyway.

I'm also definitely upping all of our probiotics, mainly because gut health is so linked to immune health in general, but also because, like I said, that we are encountering more of these antibacterial substances. And so I wanna make sure we're on the other side, supporting the immune system. Our family uses one that I can open the probiotics and dump them into smoothies, or even bake with them. So I've just been upping our

whole family's probiotics, and then there's, like, really creative ways that...you probably have written some of these on mindbodygreen as well. But I've done probiotic facemasks with yogurt. There's even probiotic skin sprays. There's all kinds of cool ways to do that.

I think another topic that is important right now, and that seems like people are struggling with, is sleep, which, you think if we're all at home, we're all getting great sleep. But that does not seem to be the case, probably partially because of anxiety being up for a lot of people. Also, people are, we know from the stats, watching more TV at night. There's blue light there, but I'm curious if you have any tips, both personal or from research, for maintaining good sleep, especially for families right now.

Colleen: I think the importance of good sleep is one of the most underrepresented conversations in well-being, period, and then you add on the pandemic, and there's just been such a crisis of sleep. And prior to the pandemic, like, I've just been so passionate about sleep. It's something I've struggled with for 20 years. I remember being a senior in college and even starting that struggle with sleep. And women in particular, as we go through hormonal fluctuations, whether it be pregnancy, whether it be perimenopause, we are just so susceptible to having more ripple effects within our sleep. So I am just hugely passionate about sleep, and I think it's really important now more than ever to prioritize our sleep etiquette. And to me, that means being very diligent about my caffeine consumption, being very aware of, you know, even if I'm choosing to have a hot chocolate, not having it too late in the day, because my body metabolizes caffeine in a way in which I will not be able to sleep.

We've invested in an Avocado mattress, which has wonderful GOTS certification, and they have the certified wool. They also have a vegan mattress option without wool, in case that's valuable information. But we found not only just having one that aligns with our values, but is really comfortable, is such a huge important part of our sleep routine. In some ways, I've actually had to increase my exercise activity during this time, because when nerves are high, I know that I need to exert myself a little bit more than I would during a normal time period.

And so, that's been another kind of lever that I have to pull in case I know I'm a little bit anxious or I'm gonna have, like, a mind that's a little bit overactive, I know that I'm gonna need to up my cardio that day so that I'll have a better time getting to sleep. But I just think it's such a universal problem that affects so many people, and disproportionately affects women, as well as first time mothers. So it's something I've been passionate about finding a solution to, and one of the tools I also use is one of our new mindbodygreen supplements that's grounded in magnesium that really, magnesium bisglycinate, that helps with relaxation. There's some jujube in there that helps calm the overactive mind, and pharma GABA that just helps with sleep quality, because I have struggled to both fall asleep and stay asleep.

And at a macro level, across mindbodygreen, we're seeing surges in all types of sleep curiosity, everything from sleep aids to mattresses. I think this is really a point in time when people are struggling and needing to, yes, get the tools, but also look at their overall kind of day and plan, and make sure that their life is being set up in a way in which they can fall asleep, because you do need more than just a supplement. You have to plan

your whole life in a way to ensure you are getting sleep, from being mindful of caffeine consumption, and having the right tools at your fingertips.

Katie: Yeah, completely agree on all those points. I've found the same thing, and I've realized, especially right now, working from home, being at home all the time, having the kids at home, and now homeschooling full time once school starts, I've had to kind of 80/20, I mentioned in the beginning a little bit, but I 80/20 almost all aspects of my life, and especially for sleep. Because you're right. If sleep is affected, everything is affected. And so for me, similar to you, I've noticed the things that seem to be that 20% that make 80% of the results for me are getting more exercise. Definitely sleep better if I move every day, so love walks. If I'm not gonna do an intense exercise, I'll walk, and also do Hunter Fitness classes, which are, like, joint mobility focused, and I don't know what in those classes does it, but I notice a drastic improvement in sleep and in heart rate variability from that kind of movement. I love that you said magnesium. That was a huge key for me as well, and I'll make sure to link to the one that you mentioned.

Also, things like adaptogens. I've added a lot of adaptogens into my normal routine. A cool trick that I have that works really, really well, I'm curious if you've ever tried it, is about 30 minutes before bed, laying against, on the ground, with your butt basically up against the wall, your feet straight up against the wall, and basically getting those arteries in your leg completely vertical, and then doing 4, 7, 8 breathing. So breathing in for four, holding for seven, and then breathing out for eight. And that combination seems to reduce cortisol, which helps improve melatonin, and it naturally kind of encourages the sleep cycle. That one, when I remember to do it, has been a really big difference for me. And then my husband and I usually drink reishi, some form of reishi tea, or sleep herbs at night to help, but just, I completely echo what you said, like, sleep is the most important thing.

Colleen: And you've definitely given me some new tips to try. I love the idea of some reishi tea, and I tend to go for, like, a calming one at night. I'm definitely gonna give that a try. And while I've not tried the particular breathwork exercise that you mentioned, I think that breath work is gonna be something that's just gonna have such a huge surge in interest, whether it's for helping to wind down, or just people really trying to breathe properly. For both relaxation or just optimization in life. I tend to do some ones where you have a much longer exhale than you do inhale. Because typically I'll use breath work as a way to reduce stress or anxiety. But I love the idea of trying it before bed. That's a great idea.

Katie: Another thing we have in common, and I would love to get your tips on, I'm guessing a lot of people might have in common with us right now, is working with your spouse, both in a very physical sense, and also getting on the same page when it comes to health and well-being. I know a lot of people personally, who, now, all of a sudden, are both working from home, both spouses are working from home, and they're having to learn to navigate that kind of new and interesting dynamic. And you and I both work with our husbands already. So I'd love to hear any tips you have for navigating that, and how you guys are making it work, especially right now.

Colleen: Yeah, so we've both been early adopters on that front, in that we've been working together for years. And on the professional front, it's really one of the only dances we know. So we have just been so hugely passionate about these issues that the way in which, these issues being wellness and well-being, that we tend to use the phrase of work-life integration, because our minds always travel to things involving work, and problems, or opportunities, or people, and things we find interesting, or podcasts that we listen to while on a walk. So it's really hard for us to find clear boundaries between work and life. It's become a very porous relationship, but in a good way, because the things that we're exploring in our personal lives are deeply connected to the things that we're exploring in our professional lives.

So we've really embraced this language of work-life integration, partly because we just failed at work-life balance, and once you add in kids into the equation, too, the hours of which we work, again, tend to be a little bit porous and all-consuming. So we found work-life integration sets us up for more success from a mindset standpoint, where we both are aware that our minds are kind of always traveling. Now that said, the hardest thing for us to do is to turn off those times, when you do wanna turn off, and sometimes one partner will wanna turn off more than the other.

And I think it's made a little bit trickier during the pandemic, because you don't have those usual escapes that we might have had, which was the ease of getting a babysitter, which we haven't done since March really, or going out to dinner, those things that would provide kind of a quick escape and also a way to prioritize your own relationship. I do think that when partners decide to join forces on the professional front, especially when there's also children involved, you really have to make a conscious effort to focus on your marital relationship or your partner relationship, because the first two, whether it's jobs or kids, they just tend to yell louder, thus get more attention. And so, we have to kind of constantly nudge ourselves to make sure that we're also having time for ourselves just as people. And as, not as parents or as co-CEOs, but really just again, as partners on this life journey together, and it definitely always needs a little bit of a nudge.

Katie: I agree about that. And I hear from a lot of women who are trying to get a spouse on board with health changes. I think there's a lot of people whose story echoes ours, that they encountered a health crisis and then had to make changes for their own health, saw the benefits, and of course, wanted the most important people in their lives and their spouses to be on board as well, and their children. And then they encountered some friction from a spouse going, "Wait, why do I have to change my whole life now?" I'm curious how that went for you. Did you guys kind of embark on that journey together, or was there ever any tension that you guys had to work out?

Colleen: So it was a really synergistic journey for us. My husband Jason, who's the founder of mindbodygreen, and also my co-CEO, he had his own issues, which were very different, but had a similar kind of journey path as mine, in that, back in the early days of mindbodygreen, his journey started with an excruciating back pain. So, right before we were getting married, he couldn't walk a city block without keeling over in pain. And he's six-foot-seven, and had been traveling hundreds of thousands of miles a year all coach, which is an excruciating combination, and he developed two extruded discs in his back, in his L4, L5, and couldn't really walk without keeling over in pain. He saw a lot of doctors who recommended surgery, and while he was totally open to it, he wasn't running towards it. And yoga, for him, ended up being that gateway drug, and what I was

talking about earlier, kind of like those things that can provide that early validation to help people go on that journey with you. And so that was, for him, kind of the inflection point of once he realized the effect of yoga, then he started thinking more about the foods he was eating, the thoughts, and all of the things that are part of the larger conversation around wellness and well-being, mental, physical, spiritual, emotional, environmental well-being, and it all being connected.

But I think what can help a couple, if they're perhaps on different pages, is I think people really like that early validation points, in terms of doing an activity, feeling better after it, and inspiring people to go deeper on that journey. So whether that's going on a hike outside. You mentioned, now's an important time to make sure your kids are out playing in dirt. If you live by a beach, just spending some moments grounding in the beautiful sand, and getting those little moments of kind of validation of, wait, spending more time, whether it's outside eating a good meal and feeling better after it, and not having that kind of meal hangover effect, where you've had a wonderful meal that then actually leaves you feeling a little bit gross and bloated, and it takes two to three days to leave your system. But when you have a few of those experiences, that you leave feeling better, then it's a lot easier to start tackling some of, like, the bigger, harder challenges around health and well-being that have a lot less easy fix.

So, we always say, because of that, that nutrition tends to be the entry point, because you feel so good after you start your day with, like, a really nourishing smoothie, or you have a great clean dinner that makes you just feel great and start the day better. And then you can start tackling some of the meatier issues. So I think it's always important just to meet people where they're at. If they're just getting started on a wellness journey, maybe it's not the best time to start introducing intermittent fasting. Maybe it's just starting with some great grilled vegetables and a great smoothie and, not easing into things that maybe they're not ready for until they're drinking the metaphorical kombucha, so to speak.

Katie: Exactly. And one thing I always remind people as well is, while we, as parents, of course, have an obligation to provide a nutritious foundation for our kids and to make sure that we're supporting them in living a healthy life, when it comes to your spouse, you are dealing with another autonomous adult, and your spouse is not your child. And so, when people write me and say things like, "How do you make your spouse do XYZ?" I'm like, "I don't. He's not my child." At home, I view it, like, I do all the cooking, so I view nutrition as kind of my realm. And my thought is, when at home, I cook clean food and nutritious food to make sure we get enough protein and healthy fats. And when he's not at home, he actually does make healthy choices, I think the majority of the time, but it's not my job to control or police or try to change those choices.

The best I think any of us can do, and this doesn't just apply to our spouses, but the best any of us can do is to be an example. And I think you probably had this experience as well, is when you focus on your own health, and then you start thriving, people notice, and then they ask. And then you have a wonderful opportunity to explain and tell about your journey, and to bring them into it. But it's important, even with your spouse, to kind of wait until there's that willingness, versus kind of trying to force them, because that never tends to end very well.

Colleen: Yeah, and I love that example of being autonomous adults, because even though Jason and I are both so embedded in this world, our approaches are really different. You know, I remember a confrontation a couple years ago when we were talking about 23andMe testing, and he is the type of person who wants to have all the data. And my approach is very different. And I was kind of less willing to go down that journey with him. And I think you have to really respect people to go down their path when they're willing, and in their own way as well.

Katie: I also love that you brought up intermittent fasting or time-restricted eating. There's a couple different names for it. And I would love to hear how you incorporate this into your life, because I will say, as a disclaimer, first, I'm not a doctor, and I'm not recommending this for anyone. But I personally feel best when I do...I start the year with a pretty long water fast, and I do some form of water fasting for a few days once a month, and then eat in a varied amount of shorter time windows most days. But I'm curious how you incorporate intermittent fasting or time-restricted eating into your life.

Colleen: So I am at such an interesting life stage to talk about kind of nutrition and eating, because I've been birthing babies or breastfeeding babies for the past three and a half years. So I'm at an odd point in my life when it comes to that. But one of the things we are really mindful about, call us senior citizens, we have a really early dinner. And that, for me, is just a great way to embody some of those principles, which do seem to be very science-based, but also acknowledge the state I'm at, as a woman who's still breastfeeding, where my nutrition is very interesting at this life stage. So we will have a very early dinner, likely around 5:00, 6:00. It's the first thing we do when we get home from work. And then we will essentially fast until the morning. And that's the way in which I, as a woman, have been able to incorporate it into my life in a way that feels really sustainable and doable, and feel so much better than having an Argentine-inspired 10 p.m. dinner, with lots of snacking afterwards. I've just found that I have a little bit more pep in my step when I wake up in the mornings.

Katie: That's a great, great point. And one that I think gets often overlooked, even in the intermittent fasting communities, is when you look at the actual data and how food impacts circadian biology, that is really smart to shorten the eating window by not eating late at night. I think a lot of people often skip breakfast. And there's benefits to that as well. But we know that when it comes to circadian biology, there are certain signaling mechanisms that are really important, and one is light. And I talk a lot about getting morning sunlight for that reason.

The other is food, because that would be typically one of the things that regulates awake periods versus asleep periods. So a lot of people tend to intermittent fast all day, and then eat a huge meal at night, or eat into the night. And the problem is, we know, we have pretty solid data, that eating too close to bedtime can impact your sleep, because you're still digesting when you should be sleeping. And so, if you look at the data, it's actually seems like it would make sense for the biggest meal to be around lunchtime. And then, like, a smaller, earlier dinner, like what you talked about, and then giving the body rest for a while before bedtime is a really great way to give the liver a break, and to, at least in my own life, I've seen improved deep sleep.

So, I track my sleep really carefully. And deep sleep seems to be the metric that improves the most if I don't eat late at night, so that's a great tip. And like you said, even for breastfeeding moms, you still wanna make sure of course you're getting enough nutrients that you're not eating in too short of a window, but you can move that around. And you don't have to eat close to bedtime. And do you find that improves your sleep as well?

Colleen: Absolutely.

Katie: For sure, and I think that's, to me, that's one of my keys of, if I was gonna talk about my sort of 80/20 overall for wellness, that's one of the big ones, is time-restricted eating. And I might, you know, long window, I might still eat for, like, 8 or 10 hours in a day, but just not eating late at night is a big key for me.

This podcast is brought to you by Four Sigmatic. You've heard me talk about them a lot and it's because I love them so much. Their products are a regular part of my life and I can't remember the last time I didn't use at least one of their products. My hands down favorite is their coffee with Lions Mane and there are two ways I drink it... they make convenient packets that are great for adding to hot water for coffee on the go, and they also make ground coffee with Lion's Mane that is great for brewing just like you would any other coffee. Neither of these tastes like mushrooms... they taste just like coffee but provide the added boost from Lion's Mane, which gives me clean energy and focus all day without the jitters or acidity of some other coffee products. I also love the coffee packets for the popular dalgona coffee that's making the rounds on social media right now and I make it with Coffee with Lion's Mane packets and coconut sugar for a delicious iced coffee treat. Check out this and all of their products at foursigmatic.com/wellnessmama and code `wellnessmama` gives 15% off.

This podcast is brought to you by Wellnesse, my new personal care company that is based on the recipes I've been making at home in my kitchen for decades. Many "clean" products simply don't work and this is why I have spent the last decade researching and perfecting recipes for products that not only eliminate toxic chemicals but contain ingredients that work better than their conventional alternatives and that nourish your body from the outside in. I'm so excited to finally share these products with you and wanted to tell you about our brand new dry shampoo! It can be used various ways. You can sprinkle it in clean hair to add volume and to extend time between washes, sprinkle it in hair that has not been washed in a day or two to absorb oil or sweat and you can work in to color treated hair to maintain color-treated hair by not having to wash as often. It contains oil-absorbing kaolin clay and volume-boosting tapioca which work together to refresh hair at the roots. Lavender oil and cactus flower help to balance scalp and strands' natural pH. We even added hibiscus for healthy hair growth. You can check it out and try it at wellnesse.com and my tip is to grab a bundle to save or subscribe and save!

I've also found, I mentioned the early morning light. So as long as I get sunshine, it doesn't have to be, like, even on my skin, but just get outside with my eyes, early in the morning, as soon as possible after waking up. That makes a big difference in my sleep and my energy levels. Protein was one of my 80/20s. I wasn't getting enough protein for a long time. And when I started tracking that and made sure to get enough protein, that

really changed not just my nutrition, but my energy levels as well. And then, some kind of movement, or sauna, that leads to sweating every single day. Those are kind of my non-negotiables. I'm curious for you, what are your non-negotiables that you do every day or almost every day, when it comes to wellness?

Colleen: Well, I love your fundamentals. And I was nodding as you were going through them. And for me, like, my fundamentals, one of the books that actually resonates with me the most around these is "Blue Zones," who looked at some of the longest-living communities in the world. And I think there's about five of them, and they look at all the commonalities that they share. And I think it's just so refreshing, because in this world in which we're just bombarded with so much information, and if you're at the point in life where you have the ability and curiosity to explore all these awesome optimizations, which I love nerding out, and it seems like you do too.

It's amazing. But if you're also just like, I'm just starting off on this journey, and I don't know where to start, there's things like "Blue Zones" that I think offer such a great prescription of things that you can do to maintain health and well-being. And you brought up movement. What was great about the work in the Blue Zones community is they found that people moved naturally. It wasn't like they were going to crazy boutique fitness classes. They weren't really intentionally moving. They were just doing movement that they enjoyed. You mentioned walking a lot. That's something that Blue Zones people did so much, and I think that's a really easy way to get that movement in where it's a joy and not something that you're checking off of a list.

Food is obviously hugely important to how I feel in terms of well-being, and a huge pillar of Blue Zones. You know, you've been mentioning the 80%, and they kind of have that rule too, where it's like, eating to feel good. But also recognizing the community aspect of food as a shared cultural experience, a shared family experience, because it is so important, not just the food you eat, but how you consume it. Are you mindfully sitting down with your family over joy, and talking about your day, and all of that matters. You know, they enjoy wine, which I think is a key point, but they enjoy it not by themselves. So having it be a ritual and that shared experience. And then this idea of community is so important to the Blue Zones philosophy. And I think now more than ever, we're really understanding this interconnectedness that does bring us all together in our human need for connection, and while technology has done some amazing things, a FaceTime with my daughters and their grandparents is not going to be a replacement for real-time connection and community.

And then purpose of course is a huge part of the Blue Zones philosophy, and that obviously, I think, is a longer thing to cultivate in life. I don't think you can just say, "I wanna have purpose," and then just start living a life of purpose. I think for many people, it's a winding circuitous journey, where it's a little bit of a game of Marco Polo. Sometimes you get closer to it, sometimes you get farther apart from it, but whether it's your career, your family, your children, volunteering, I think there's so many ways to bring purpose into your life, even if you're perhaps in a career that isn't giving you all that you want from it from a purpose standpoint. So, Blue zones really embody kind of my 80/20 in terms of the fundamentals, and some of them, not all of them, are luckily things that we can incorporate into our lives without a lot of economic expense or craziness.

Katie: Love it. And as we get near the end of our time, another question I love to ask, somewhat selfishly, because I'm always looking for new ideas, is if there's a book or a number of books that have really impacted your life, and if so, what they are and why.

Colleen: There's so many within the health and well-being world, and I've already talked about Dan Buettner and the "Blue Zones" book, which I really like. But one that I've been going back to, which I think is always a good test of its resonance, is "The Daily Stoic" by Ryan Holiday. And such a big focus of stoicism is on being very intentional with where you put your energy. And I think that that is such an important tenet, especially now, and the world in which we live in, which has a lot of fear and a lot of uncertainty, but being really mindful about where you put your attention, and being thoughtful about that and diligent in your daily life.

Another one that I love is "The New Food Rules" by Dr. Frank Lipman. He wrote it about three years ago, but it's one of those coffee table books, and just good reminders of things that you can incorporate into your daily life. And Frank Lipman is just, I think, one of the best functional medicine doctors out there, and who really embodies a forward approach to health and well-being, in that it's so much more than just looking at the body or one issue by itself, and that all of the things we're doing from a health and well-being standpoint are so intimately connected. You know, we were talking about the microbiome before, and that can have such a big impact on mental health as well. So, he's really started...been one of the pioneers in this movement of looking at the body and everything in it as interconnected and interdependent.

Katie: Great suggestions. I love that you brought up Ryan Holiday and "The Daily Stoic." That's been a big part of my own journey in the last couple of years is reading a lot of different stoic works. I love all of Ryan Holiday's books. And I think you're right that where you put your energy is such an important thing, and the small shifts that I've made as a result of some of those books have been really drastic. The ripples that they've caused in my life, I think, especially for moms, they can be so applicable. Actually found a fun free app that I use now. It's called WeCroak, which sounds a little morbid, but it reminds you a few times a day that you're going to die, which is one of the tenets of stoicism, memento mori, remember that you will die.

And it sounds counterintuitive, but there's actually science that shows that, they've done research on this, that thinking about that kind of puts things in perspective and actually reduces anxiety over time. So, my husband laughs at me because my phone reminds me and gives me a quote about death a few times a day, but I actually find it, like, weirdly calming and reducing of anxiety. But a fellow big fan of stoicism. So I love that you brought that one up.

Colleen: Well, I love that perspective. I might have to give them another download today. Because I think it is a great perspective in terms of helping to reduce the anxiety that we're all facing a little bit more of these days.

Katie: Exactly. And lastly, is there any parting advice that you want to leave with the audience today? Could be wellness related or not.

Colleen: I think as it relates to people who are likely on a health and well-being journey, I think it's all about getting back to a lot of the fundamentals that we talked about together in our time today. You're thinking a lot about sleep, thinking about connection, thinking about those micro-communities, getting in a little bit of movement. Touching the earth, and grounding. And I think if we focus a little bit more on the fundamentals, I think we can truly get some of the tools and keys to live a complete and fulfilling life.

Katie: Perfect. Well, I will make sure that I link to mindbodygreen, and to you, where people can find you. But anywhere you want people to connect with you in particular, if they wanna stay in touch?

Colleen: Well I am colleen@mindbodygreen.com, and [@colleenwachob](https://www.instagram.com/colleenwachob) on Instagram, and of course, mindbodygreen is our resource.

Katie: Awesome. Colleen, I know just how busy it is to be a full-time mom and working in the middle of all of this, and I'm so grateful for your time today. Thank you for being here and for sharing.

Colleen: Thank you so much for your time and for sharing your message with so many people.

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

If you're enjoying these interviews, would you please take two minutes to leave a rating or review on iTunes for me? Doing this helps more people to find the podcast, which means even more moms and families could benefit from the information. I really appreciate your time, and thanks as always for listening.