



Episode 391: Using Detailed Health Journaling and Mindset Shifts to Heal With Sarah Kay Hoffman

Child: Welcome to my Mommy's podcast.

This episode is sponsored by Hiya chewable kids vitamins. It's a new company I found that my kids are extremely excited about. Do you know that most typical children's vitamins are essentially just candy in disguise? Many have as much as two teaspoons of sugar, along with some food dyes, some other unhealthy chemicals, or gummy junk that kids should probably never eat as a dentist would probably agree with. Hiya is the complete opposite. It fills the most common gaps in children's diets with full-body nourishment and a yummy taste they love without any of that junk. While most children's vitamins might contain as much as 5 grams of sugar, it can cause a variety of health issues. Hiya has created a zero sugar, zero gummy, junk-free vitamin that tastes great, and as my kids will attest, is delicious. It's perfect even for picky eaters. Also importantly, it's manufactured in the U.S. with globally sourced ingredients, each selected and screened for optimal bioavailability and absorption. What's cool is they send us to your door on the pediatrician recommended schedule. And the first month, you get a reusable glass bottle, that you can personalize with stickers. So every month thereafter, they send a no plastic refill pouch, which means it isn't just good for your kids, it's also good for the environment, and it reduces waste. My kids love the little glass jar that the vitamins are in and I love how it's low waste. You can find out all about them, and their sourcing, and the many benefits by going to hiyahealth.com/wellnessmama.

This episode is brought to you by Alitura. You've probably heard me talk about that. This is a skincare company I love, and it's founded by a dear friend of mine, Andy, who created these incredible products when he was in a horrible accident that left him with scars on his face. And this sent him into an incredible research phase to figure out ways that he could hopefully heal those scars and not have them with him for life. And he's developed some incredible products that have allowed him to do just that. One of my favorites is their face mask. And if you've seen me on Instagram with clay all over my face and hair, this is likely the one that I'm using. It's a simple mask that does incredible things for the skin and contains dozens of really, really beneficial ingredients. I notice a big difference in my skin tone when I use it regularly. They also have something called the Gold Serum, which I find especially nourishing for my skin without being too oily. And I love to use that, especially before we go outside or if I'm gonna be in front of the red light. I just find it's really, really beneficial for my skin. I love all of their products because they use completely natural ingredients, and not just natural but incredibly beneficial ingredients. Andy goes above and beyond to make sure that everything that is contained in these formulas are so beneficial for the skin. And his skin is certainly a testament to how well they work. And I've gotten incredible feedback from many of you who have tried these products and loved them as well. They're much less expensive than spa variations of skincare products and I found that the quality is so, so much better. And I don't worry at all because I know they're so natural. I would love for you to check out their products and find out all about the different formulas they have by going to alitanaturals.com/wellnessmama. And they've generously offered a discount of 20% with the code WELLNESSMAMA, all capital, all one word.

Katie: Hello, welcome to the "Wellness Mama Podcast." I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com and wellnesse.com. That's wellness with an E on the end, which is my new line of safe and natural personal care products, including hair care, toothpaste, and hand sanitizer. I have talked in the last few years increasingly

about my own health journey and how it was so personalized and individualized and I truly had to figure out my own system. Following any other system to a T never worked for me. And I think this is a commonality and something being talked about more and more is, each of us needing to find our own best path for health, which is why I'm here today with Sarah Kay Hoffman, who is the founder of A Gutsy Girl, and also a new online health, documenting journal and a written journal. And this was something that was helpful to me in figuring out the factors that actually worked for me to finally get my Hashimoto's in remission and to lose weight. And I think that being cognizant of this and focusing on these core factors, and noticing patterns and trends through journaling can be really helpful as part of a healing journey. So we go deep on some of these factors today, including mindset, including rest and food, of course, the common ones, as well as some more specific 80/20 things that seemed to help a lot of people. I think you'll get a lot from this episode, and there's a lot of links in the show notes at wellnessmama.fm to the things we talk about. Without further ado, let's join Sarah. Sarah, welcome back. I'm so excited to chat with you again.

Sarah Kay: I am so excited to be here. Thanks so much for having me back.

Katie: I think this is gonna be a great really practical episode. And one thing that's been hammered home for me the last couple of years in my own health journey is just how individualized and personalized all of our health journeys are. And I knew that logically, but really, that hit home in my experience of actually navigating some of the tougher parts of my own health journey the last couple of years and now being fully in remission from autoimmune disease. And what I realized was that while there can often be commonalities and wonderful starting points from any given system, at the end of the day, we each sort of have to figure out what our most important factors and each of our own individual 80/20 is for the things that are gonna work for us. And I think that can seem like an overwhelming process, especially for people who are just starting out or learning about a lot of the aspects that can go into that. And I also discovered that a huge part of that, especially for me, was being able to track and see what was actually making a difference and what wasn't because certainly, there are dozens and thousands of resources out there that all have such great advice. But you can think that there's now all these things that you have to do, and you need a way to be able to track the things that are actually working, which is why I was so excited to have you back on because you've created a resource that helps make this very tangible and very practical. So, to start off broad, why don't you have a health journey as well? And I feel like this will probably tie into the explanation of this health tracking journal that you have, but walk us through the impetus for why you created this and some of the factors that it covers.

Sarah Kay: All right, sounds great. So, the reason I created it, you know, really was just, like you said, everyone has their own unique health journeys. And it is so hard to kind of, you know, be in the everyday online blogs and, you know, going to different doctors and getting everybody's two sense and opinions about what is going on with you, when the reality is that the only way that you can really get to the bottom of it is by focusing on, you know, really looking inward, and how you're feeling, and how things are working for you. And, you know, what's actually going on with yourself versus, you know, looking at so many different external factors. So, really what happened was, you know, in 2007, when I first started journaling, I guess it would have been mostly just a food journal, I started to journal by way of, you know, I would write a date down. I would write, you know, just various foods. I would write, you know, a few symptoms. And at the time, I would just kind of make note, like, did I think that these foods were high offenders or low offenders? Did I think they were, you

know, mistakes or were they safe foods? And that's kind of how I got started on my entire journey for healing was really just to kind of correlate foods I was eating and how I was feeling. And, you know, the journey from 2007, until I finally printed this 90-day gut healing journal, just a few months ago, has been very long, and I've learned so many things along the way. But I think the most important thing that I learned was that if we only focus on writing down, you know, general and random foods paired with symptoms, you will never ever get to the bottom of anything because there's so many factors within your own circumstances that you haven't taken into account yet. Like, for instance, you know, an appropriate diagnosis and then all the lifestyle factors, the sleeping, you know, your mood, you know, your water intake or so many different things that fall beyond the food components that are so, so critical.

Katie: Yeah, and what I love about this is I think it really highlights the point that at the end of the day, we are each our own primary healthcare provider. And I think people maybe don't think about that enough, especially when we're in health crisis, and I've been there too, wanting to find an outside source that is gonna help you or fix you or make things better. And I 100% empathize with that. But I also have discovered on my own journey of this is at the end of the day, we are each our own primary healthcare provider, and it's the day to day, and the experimentation and dialing in these factors that make the biggest difference in the long run. And that doesn't mean that we can't learn from all these sources. In fact, I think we should. And one of my core beliefs is that we can learn something from every person we encounter, every situation we encounter, but at the end of the day, the responsibility is ours for figuring out the system that is gonna work for each of us. And so that's why something like this is so helpful. You mentioned lifestyle factors. So, I think, like, my audience is pretty well-educated, and a lot of them at least have a pretty good passing understanding of a lot of the different foods and how they can impact the body, or at least that foods can dramatically impact the body. What are some of the other lifestyle factors that you included in the journal and that you feel like make a big difference for a lot of people and their health?

Sarah Kay: Okay. So, I will just kind of go over, you know, some of the ones that I put right into the journal for everybody every single day. But it's very important to note that this journal really was made to be a combination of a traditional journal, like the one that I just described, you know, where you can write your foods. I teach it in a little bit different way than just, you know, writing salad with dressing. But I also combined it with more of a bullet journal approach, in which I give people a key and for really, really dialing down to their own journey. And in that, all combines food as well as lifestyle. But the lifestyle pieces that I wanted to just mention because they're pieces that I never really realized, were making such an impact on me healing or not healing. These are the ones that are on every single page. So, for example, one of them is sleep. So every single day, you have the ability in this little creative way on the journal pages to track sleep. And the reason that is so important is because I once did this study, I couldn't figure out, some days, I would wake up, I was feeling great. Like, my stomach, you know, I would be... Nothing would change from what I was eating or seemingly, nothing else was changing. But some days I would wake up and I would just feel famished all day, and just, you know, very fatigued, and I couldn't understand why. And so I started to think, "Okay. I wonder what the difference is in how I'm sleeping." And I was wearing a sleep tracker at the time. And so I think I did, like, a 30-day study. And what I found was that the days that I got 7.5 hours to I think, like, even 7, and 3/4 hours of sleep or less, I felt like that. I felt starving all day. I had no energy. I was just exhausted.

But the days that I consistently got that 7, and 3/4 hours and above, so really, like, 8 hours is my personal sweet spot, 8 to 8.5 hours, I was feeling better. And after I started to make note of that, I just kept really focusing on, you know, getting that eight hours of sleep and it drastically, you know, continued me on my healing journey. And so, I had to add it into the journal because I think that, you know, we talk so much about sleep and, you know, in theory, we understand, yes, sleep is very important for us. But there's this really fine line when you're trying to heal and everybody is so different. You know, some people, they really can thrive at 7.5 hours, but some people need 8.5 to 9. So this is the way that you can really dial in to figure it out for yourself. And it's just a really, really important component. So that's one of them.

Another one is obviously water. And so there's just, you know, have eight little water cups that you can fill up and just track on a daily basis. Again, it's not like it's rocket science or anything. But what I have found, especially in working with women all over the world for the past decade, is that everyone thinks they're drinking enough water. And most people are more constipated and bloated than have diarrhea, in my experiences and in my research. And so, when they really take a step back and are forced to see, okay, how much water am I truly drinking a day? And they start to realize, "Oh my gosh, you know, I'm only drinking four or five, and I always thought that I was at eight or above," then they start to increase and add more water a day. You know, they get to that 8 to 10 cups, all of a sudden, things are starting to move through them a little bit more and a little bit better. So that's another really important component.

And another one that I added into the journal is workout intensity. And so I do it a little bit different. In the journal key, I have different ways that you can track your workouts and I am never asking people to track calories in this journal or, you know, how many calories they burn with workouts. The way that I have the workout intensity is people will rate their workout on a scale of 1 to 10. And the reason that's so important is because along my journey, I would feel really bloated one day, and I thought in my head, "Okay. If I could just, you know, workout harder or more, maybe that bloat would go down, maybe I could go to the bathroom. But the problem was the opposite always happened. I always felt worse and I felt more bloated. And the next day and the day after, I would be more fatigued, and then the cycle would just continue. And I couldn't understand, you know, because I was "doing all the right things," working out, you know, eating right. And so, what I learned over time was that, and I actually say this and you know as well, there's a lot of research that shows, you know, the length of time you work out and the intensity really does matter in how your body responds, especially if you have any kind of autoimmune condition or you're just not well. And so, what I invite people to do in the journal is to mark workout intensity from a 1 to a 10. So, the days that, you know, you're working out, you just maybe take a nice couple mile walk, and it's very leisurely. It's out in nature. You're really calm. You know, maybe that's just, like, a two or a three. And you notice that day, "Wow, I really feel better," you know. And then maybe the next day, you think, "Well, I didn't do much yesterday, so today I'm gonna do something really hard." So you go run six miles. And then you make note that you're tired the rest of the day, you're starving. You just start to not feel well again. And that's really, really telling.

But, you know, more so than that, again, because I created this journal for people for their own personal journeys, it's gonna look different for everybody. So, you might be able to find over, you know, the first 30 days that you can get by with a workout of intensity of a 5 to a 7, while someone else, they might be truly, really sick and they can only get by with that 1 to 2. And that's okay. There's no judging with it. It's just really

to be able to identify patterns, and habits, and to see how things are or are not working with your body. So those are just... I mean, those are three of them.

The other, you know, just very basic lifestyle things that are on page 1 is the journal really, it was intended for the female body. So there's a place where you can write your cycle day. I think it's something that is so overlooked when women are healing their gut is how they're feeling, as it relates to what day they're on with their cycle. There's a place to record energy levels. I've mentioned that a lot with all these other things, energy levels really play into, you know, how you're doing and how you're healing or not. There's mood. You know, we know today a lot about the gut-brain access. We know that if things are off with our gut or we're just not well, also, there could be things that, you know, emotionally, we're not doing well or we have a lot of anxiety or, you know, whatever it might be. So there's different mood things that we can track. And then just overall, I have a place where people can rate their day. What I found on my own journey is that it's kind of like that nonlinear line. You'll rate your day at, like, a 3 and then another 3, and then a 4, that'll spike up to a 5 and a 5, and then it'll go down to 2. And you wonder why but with, you know, really looking at your journal and what you've been recording, you can see, well, there you go, because the patterns are always going to be there. So, those are the main components that are for everyone on every single page of the 90 days.

Katie: Yeah, I love that. I love that you touched on all those different aspects. And I think the important thing, too is I know from reading studies, you know, we think that we're good at remembering things in the past. And we're actually really not, especially when it comes to intricate details, even just a couple days out. And any studies that are having people like self-report food intake or water intake, after any period of time, they're inherently actually not reliable at even remembering what they ate and drank or their own inputs. And so, when you're trying to figure out these factors that are so important, and like you just showed, like, such small changes can make a really drastic difference, it's very difficult to try to just keep that all in our heads, and remember it, and then try to draw patterns from that. Whereas if you have all of these in a centralized place, it's much easier to go back, and look, and see how the body is responding, and to be able to tweak things in a conscious way to figure out what's gonna work and what's gonna not work. And I love that you mentioned it's a little bit of, like, a regular/bullet journal as well. I think even just the act of journaling, of being intentional for that amount of time, it can help provide so much focus and calm to a person's day and you probably, I'm sure have seen this as well in your life and in your own health journey.

Sarah Kay: Yeah, and actually, that's a good point. That's one thing that I did forget to mention. So, this journal really combined tons of different journaling methods that I did on my gut healing journey over the past decade. And so, one of the things that really kind of set my days, a lot of times it would just, you know, really, like, set me back to a place of just feeling that gratitude. And everything was to do a one-liner daily gratitude. So there is a journal out there that is a one-liner daily gratitude, and I kept one of those for a long time. And I absolutely loved it, I kept one. When my children were really small, I would do one line for each of them, each day, like something that I was grateful for them or something, you know, that they did. And what I realized is that that is really part of our healing as well. I would kind of blend gratitude also with different mantras. So, when I first started healing my SIBO about a year ago, when it was finally healed, it's something that I would say to myself over and over is, "You're healed. Your SIBO is gone. You're free to live your life." And the more that I told myself, the more I did heal, and the more I believed it, and the more I didn't believe that I would never heal. So on the top of each page, there is a one-liner so that you can write daily gratitude because I

think it's very, very important. But I also didn't want it to be, you know, a page full where you had to do a certain type of journaling every single day because I find that when you don't really have those prompts and you're not really sure what to do, you just won't do it at all. And so I wanted to make sure that things were done in a way that people wouldn't feel like it was an extra thing they had to do to their day, but it was something that would enhance their day and enhance their journey. So yes, there is the daily gratitude right at the top of each page.

Katie: Yeah, and you just touched on this. And I know it's subtly woven in, in the entire practice of this journal. But I feel like all these things contribute to the mindset piece. And I'd love to talk a little bit more about this one for a minute because this was the piece that was missing for me for so long. I've had a lot of the health stuff dialed in. And I was for so many years extremely careful with my diet and I had very strict supplement regimen and was doing all the things by the book "on paper." But I hadn't really addressed the mindset side. And so I still mentally was very much stuck in this cycle of all of those health problems, and Hashimoto's, and having trouble losing weight. And it wasn't until I addressed the mindset piece that it got so much easier to shift all of those other things. And you just subtly mentioned something that I think is so brilliant, when you said in your own SIBO journey, that you worded it in the present tense as if it had already happened, "I am healed. This is gone." And I think that's so subtle, but so important because I think the body does often start to follow our mindset. And so, I had another podcast guest explain, you know, we have to be very careful of the questions we ask ourselves or the statements we tell ourselves because they're so powerful. And so rather than asking, like, for me questions like why can't I lose weight, at which point the subconscious kicks in to give you all the reasons why you can't lose weight, which is not actually the answer you're looking for, start to ask the positive reframe of those questions of, how is it so easy for me to do whatever it is that I'm trying to accomplish? Or like you did in the "I am" statement. So, I would love to hear any tips from the mindset side of your journey and how that shifted for you.

Sarah Kay: Yeah, I actually have done a lot of research on this and I've done a lot of practice with myself on it. I've done a lot of reflecting. I've done a lot of therapy, like talking it out and really trying to work through these all. And because it's so important, on the front cover, you know, where you would write this journal belongs to and then you put your name, right underneath that, I give everyone the opportunity to really set the tone and the pace for how they really want the next 90 days to align for them. And I asked them to write out my gut healing mantra. So, mine currently is "Heal your gut, heal your life." And it's kind of my life mantra now, but, you know, I give people tons of resources for different ideas as, like, starting places for their own because I really want people to be able to get in the right mindset before they start this journey.

I remember when I was first healing, my mindset wasn't ready. Just like you, I would say, you know, "Oh, it's gonna be so hard because XYZ or well, I don't even know what's wrong so how am I...?" You know, it was just all these negative things. And I think that the way that our mindset is, it really changes the trajectory of how we heal. Mindset really goes into, you know, how you feel about yourself and then also how you feel about gut healing. And so, you have to first have the mindset of yourself that you're worth it, that you can do it, that you're strong enough. You're capable, you know, everything. You have to believe in yourself that you're going to heal. And then the second thing is that you really have to have the right mindset about the healing journey, in general. So, yeah, yours is Hashimoto's, everyone has their own... You know, people use this journal, not

just for gut healing to chronic illness, in general, I would say, but everyone has their idea about gut healing, and if they can do it or if they can't.

And if you believe that you will heal, then that's something that I think is very important, you say over and over and over. If you believe in yourself, but you don't believe that healing is possible, they're conflicting. And so I really, really encourage people as much as possible to just get into that mindset and say the things that you believe in yourself, and you believe in this healing process, and that it can and will happen.

Katie: Yeah, and I know, we talked about it a lot in-depth in our first episode, I'll link to that. But for people who maybe didn't hear that one, walk us through a little bit, just overview of your health journey and the things that you were able to overcome for context.

Sarah Kay: So, my own journey, you know, it really kind of started, I would say, with my Colitis diagnosis in 2008. At that time, you know, I didn't know really anything about healing to be perfectly honest. Like I had said at the beginning of this podcast episode, I started keeping a food journal in 2007. But it was more along the lines of, you know, I ate macaroni, and I didn't feel well. And maybe macaroni is not good for me. To me, it was just so basic. There's nothing more to it. So at the time, when I was diagnosed with Colitis, it just nothing clicked. And so it just kept on my journey. Well, I mean, I started to kind of research here and there, and I started to make some correlations and some connections, but it wasn't until I got super ill in 2014, when I finally kind of said, enough is enough, I had rejected a lot of the drugs and medications for Colitis, I was put on Canasa, which is a suppository, but it made me worse. And so, you know, that was kind of my first inkling like, "Okay, there has to be more to this. You know, something's not right. I'm not just going to accept taking this and not make any changes." So I didn't take it at but I did start to make some changes. And I started to make some correlations. But after we adopted our first child in 2013, I was just on pins and needles all the time. I was up 24/7. I had exhausted every last resource of my mind, my body, my energy. I mean, meanwhile, I'm still trying to work out like a madman. I mean, I had no clue what was going on. And so, in 2014, I went and saw my first functional practitioner at the California Institute for Functional Medicine.

And we did all of the alternative tests, then, you know, all of the blood tests, I did my first SIBO breath test, everything. And I was diagnosed with a pretty severe SIBO. When I was first diagnosed, I was taking B12 injections to my stomach. At the time, my whole face was broken out into perioral dermatitis, so I had, you know, just face covered with rashes and scaly acne, and it was painful, and it was miserable. I was also diagnosed with, you know, "adrenal fatigue," which is just the term, and then low functioning thyroid. So, I was diagnosed with a whole host of things then in 2014, and it would take me up until summer of 2018 to heal for good. I have been at 100% functioning since then. So it's been over two years now. But from 2014 to 2018, it's when I did the majority of my healing. And it was during that time period that I kind of made the foundation for everything that I believe today, through trial and error, through research, through therapies and doctors and, you know, both Western and integrative. You know, I've done it all. And so, from 2014 to 2018 is really when I kind of formed this idea around my three ultimate pillars to gut healing and just healing your life, in general. And the first is diagnosis because, you know, from 2008 to 2014, I was just miserable. And I had no idea why I thought it was, "just the Colitis." But the truth was that everything that was underlying and making me feel miserable was SIBO. And so, without that proper diagnosis, I would still be spinning my

wheels. And so I'm pretty, you know, adamant that people get the proper diagnosis, and to understand that, while Dr. Google can be part of that, Dr. Google is not the final diagnosis by any means. And then the second thing was just diet. So from 2014 to 2018, I mean, there's no denying that diet plays a huge role. I would learn on my journey, that it's definitely not everything and that it's not the thing that, you know, will make or break a journey. But it definitely made a huge impact on everything with my healing journey. And then the last thing was lifestyle.

And the last pillar is lifestyle. And that's because from 2014 to 2018, I think I relapsed from SIBO, I think three or four times, and I never could understand why, you know? And it's something that is so hard to explain to people today because they think that the answer is the diet or the medication or the supplement, but it's not. It's whatever was causing underlying root cause is the thing that you need to work on. And until you focus on whatever that is, I mean, that can be anything from emotional to physical to, I mean, who knows. Everyone is so different. But until you address that, and really address it, and understand that, it's really hard to heal. And for me, personally, a lot of it was lifestyle. And so without the lifestyle piece, I don't believe people ever can fully heal because it's just such a huge piece. So, all that to say, you know, in 2018, then, and that summer, I took my last round of Rifaximin and Neomycin. And it was about a month-long. And it was right around that time that I just really started saying my gut healing mantras. You know, I was journaling in all the right ways I was really understanding, like, if I don't get eight hours of sleep, I am not doing any kind of hard work out tomorrow. And by hard at that point, even meant, like, 30 minutes of walking. I just really scaled back. I worked really hard on my stomach motility. Like I said, I went to therapy. I did all the things that I had neglected to do in the past. And I believe I felt like with all my heart that that is the reason I have been two years functioning at 100%. You know, I have the ability these days to eat, like, anything I want and just really live my life. And that's where I get "Heal your gut, heal your life" because it healed my life. So, that's kind of my story, like, a super long story in a nutshell.

Katie: Yeah, I love it. And to circle one on one thing you said about that you were still working out like a madman, I love that you brought that up, and that you mentioned not working out too hard is part of recovery. That was something I found as well. And I think, especially for me with wanting to focus on weight loss for so long, that's obviously something that people think is tied in to lose weight is working out more. And what I ended up finding when I actually listened to my body was that I needed the rest, and recovery, and parasympathetic side much, much more than I needed the workout side at all, especially in the beginning. So, for me during the intensive phase of that rapid recovery from Hashimoto's and when I was losing so much weight, I literally did not work out at all. I went on walks with my kids when I felt up to it, and that was it. And I think that's just something I love to mention because I found after years of thinking I needed to, like, do more and add more supplements and be more regimented, the answer for me actually ended up when I paid attention to these factors, like you're talking about, was rest, and do less, and recover, and let your body have time to heal without all these extra inputs. I love that you brought that up. Do you find with people, like, with your own readers, that often that rest is often more important in the intensive phase than the working out?

Sarah Kay: Far more important. To this day, I'm very careful. To this day if I don't get enough sleep or I even feel like even a hint off, I just skip the workout because I mean, whenever we focus on weight loss with gut healing, it's so conflicting because the thing with weight loss is everyone thinks that more is better. But like you said, less is always better. But here's the thing with women I have found is that it's one of the last things, it

was for me too, so I don't blame them. But it's one of the last things that you're really willing to give up. You know, it's very easy to say, "I'm gonna give up that chocolate cake and that soda because, you know, I'm being "good." But it's a lot harder if, you know, you're bloated and miserable, and you think you have all this extra weight that you need to lose, to say "I'm gonna give up that hard work out." Because what you also know is that that hard workout burns X amount of calories. So in your head and what we've been taught what society teaches us, it doesn't logically make sense. But it wasn't until I actually just started... I just did it. I was just, like, "Something has to change. Nothing here is clearly changing and I don't feel good anymore. And I don't wanna feel like this forever. It wasn't until I did that, that I saw it, and now I can now I say confidently over and over..." And I mean, it's so hard to explain to women, but I'm so passionate about the idea that more, especially when you're trying to heal is not better in any way, shape, or form.

Katie: Yeah, exactly. I found I needed much, much more sleep like you. I needed much more sleep, much less working out. And for me, what ended up being helpful as a compromise was I found that sauna use was really helpful for me, specifically, because I was able to get some of the same cardio effects as exercise but stay in parasympathetic and stay in a relaxed state. I don't think that's necessarily gonna be the answer for everyone to go back to the point of everything being so personalized, but that was definitely really helpful for me.

This episode is sponsored by Hiya chewable kids vitamins. It's a new company I found that my kids are extremely excited about. Do you know that most typical children's vitamins are essentially just candy in disguise? Many have as much as two teaspoons of sugar, along with some food dyes, some other unhealthy chemicals, or gummy junk that kids should probably never eat as a dentist would probably agree with. Hiya is the complete opposite. It fills the most common gaps in children's diets with full-body nourishment and a yummy taste they love without any of that junk. While most children's vitamins might contain as much as 5 grams of sugar, it can cause a variety of health issues. Hiya has created a zero sugar, zero gummy, junk-free vitamin that tastes great, and as my kids will attest, is delicious. It's perfect even for picky eaters. Also importantly, it's manufactured in the U.S. with globally sourced ingredients, each selected and screened for optimal bioavailability and absorption. What's cool is they send us to your door on the pediatrician recommended schedule. And the first month, you get a reusable glass bottle, that you can personalize with stickers. So every month thereafter, they send a no plastic refill pouch, which means it isn't just good for your kids, it's also good for the environment, and it reduces waste. My kids love the little glass jar that the vitamins are in and I love how it's low waste. You can find out all about them, and their sourcing, and the many benefits by going to hiyahealth.com/wellnessmama.

This episode is brought to you by Alitura. You've probably heard me talk about that. This is a skincare company I love, and it's founded by a dear friend of mine, Andy, who created these incredible products when he was in a horrible accident that left him with scars on his face. And this sent him into an incredible research phase to figure out ways that he could hopefully heal those scars and not have them with him for life. And he's developed some incredible products that have allowed him to do just that. One of my favorites is their face mask. And if you've seen me on Instagram with clay all over my face and hair, this is likely the one that I'm using. It's a simple mask that does incredible things for the skin and contains dozens of really, really beneficial ingredients. I notice a big difference in my skin tone when I use it regularly. They also have something called the Gold Serum, which I find especially nourishing for my skin without being too oily. And I love to use that, especially before we go outside or if I'm gonna be in front of the red light. I just find it's really, really beneficial

for my skin. I love all of their products because they use completely natural ingredients, and not just natural but incredibly beneficial ingredients. Andy goes above and beyond to make sure that everything that is contained in these formulas are so beneficial for the skin. And his skin is certainly a testament to how well they work. And I've gotten incredible feedback from many of you who have tried these products and loved them as well. They're much less expensive than spa variations of skincare products and I found that the quality is so, so much better. And I don't worry at all because I know they're so natural. I would love for you to check out their products and find out all about the different formulas they have by going to alituranaturals.com/wellnessmama. And they've generously offered a discount of 20% with the code WELLNESSMAMA, all capital, all one word.

I'm curious with all the people that you've worked with and all the data that you've seen and, of course, with the caveat that there's so much individualized personalization here, are there factors that you would say are kind of part of that 80/20 of things, like changes that do make a big difference or that tend to be more commonalities across the board when it comes to healing?

Sarah Kay: Sleep, for sure. The workout, for sure. But the other thing that I think is always pretty standard across anyone who kind of has been triggered with anything, you know, they can't heal or they're just really uncertain about where everything is coming from is the stress piece. It's something that... So, you know, obviously, you mentioned it with the stress response and working out, you know, people don't even really realize that hard, intense workouts are a form of stress. People just think that, you know, stress is, "Oh, my gosh, you know, I'm late to work." You know, but stress is so much more than that. And I find that's one of the common underlying things with every single person is that they cannot get out of that fight or flight mode, and their bodies are just in a state of chronic stress. And, you know, as we know, when the body is in a state of chronic stress, it holds on to everything. It's not allowing you to just digest your food appropriately, and to be able to absorb nutrients, and just do what the body is supposed to do. It's so focused on, you know, fighting and fighting and, you know, being in this stressed-out state. So that is one thing that I believe, probably 98% of people, it's their bottleneck. And, you know, that really can be due to thousands of factors. And I think that it's one of the reasons why journaling can work for stress, meditation, yoga, just walking because it's so simple, breathing. Also, you know, we don't even think about things like this, but one thing is the stress that we put when we're eating all the time. So, for me, one of my issues was motility because we were taught that, eat every couple hours because, you know, you eat less then, and whatever. But that was just putting more stress on me personally because it never was allowing for the migrating motor complex to come through and sweep through and do its job. So, I started to practice more meal spacing to put less stress on my digestive system. You know, stress just comes in so many different buckets, that it's something that's common for everybody, I think.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. I think you're right. That can be the factor that makes it really hard for any other factors to work and often the hardest one to address. And yeah, like I said at the beginning, I love how you get all of these into one central place so that people can actually kind of tangibly see them and start to see patterns. Because at the end of the day, there's, you know, thousands of systems out there, and the one that's gonna work for you is the one that you figure out for yourself based on your individual factors. So, yeah, I love so much what you're doing. And another question I love to ask toward the end of interviews is if there's a book or a number of books that have had a dramatic impact on your life, and if so, what they are and why?

Sarah Kay: I love this question. So, I still maintain the two that I mentioned last time. So I'll just quick briefly mention them, but then I wanna just share about a new book that I'm reading because it's fascinating to me, and I'm loving it. But last time, I just meant the two books that really have changed my life and that have been just huge on my healing journey that I have, you know, stickies on them and everything. One is the "Gut and Psychology Syndrome" by Dr. Natasha Campbell-McBride. That was the book that I really... It really kind of launched my entire healing journey. And I really started to see food, and healing, and mind-body connection, gut-brain access, everything in a much different way and different light. And to this day, I believe in so many of the ideas and theories that Dr. Natasha presents in the book. And you know, while I definitely do not follow any sort of gaps diet anymore, I still think that it's just a really incredible book, if you wanna learn a lot about the gut-brain access and just healing the body, in general. And then the other book that really has made a huge impact on my life, you know, as you know, Katie, my story isn't just about gut healing. It's I am A Gutsy Girl, because I talk about a lot of just, you know, issues in general that women face and one is, you know, this IBS, IBD, but also infertility and stuff like that. And so, along my journey, I've had a lot of different, you know, life circumstances. And one book that always has gotten me through is the Bible. And, you know, I'm very passionate about that, too. But a book that I'm reading right now that I don't know if you've ever even heard of it, but it's called "Body into Balance." It's an herbal guide to holistic self-care. Have you ever heard of it?

Katie: I haven't. I'm looking it up right now, though.

Sarah Kay: It is fascinating. So I really started to get into... You know, now I'm at the point in my journey, where I'm into gut health more than gut healing. And I believe that there's such a difference in gut health and gut healing. You know, gut healing, there's very specific things that you have to do. And they're not meant to be long-term, in my opinion. But gut health is something that I am so passionate about now that I'm healed, and it's really just how can I build the most robust microbiome? I'm like, constantly, you know, wanting to do new microbiome testing and all this stuff. And right now, you know, mine is so great, but I'm just, like, how can I get it even better? You know, how can I make it more diverse? How can I learn about what makes the gut thrive and just all of that? And so, I think one thing that I haven't studied a ton about are just herbs and using them to enhance overall health. And so this book is just really all about herbs. And, you know, there's some common ones that everyone has heard of, you know, elderberry and echinacea, some things like that. But then there's so many that I've never even heard of, that I'm just really interested in. And she goes into herbs for digestion and elimination. And, you know, for all different types of conditions. And I just find it fascinating. So that's one thing that I'm really into now. I'm gonna start practicing with making some of my own tinctures and stuff. So that's my current book.

Katie: I love it. That's a new recommendation, I'll make sure it's linked in the show notes as well on wellnessmama.fm. So you guys can find that and check it out. And, of course, I will also have a link to your website, and all of your resources, and to the journal, so people can find that since we've talked so much about it. But Sarah, thank you so much for being here today. This was as always, of course, such a fun conversation that I think hopefully will help my listeners a lot and I'm really appreciative of your time.

Sarah Kay: Thanks, Katie.

Katie: And thank you so much for listening, for sharing your most valuable resource, 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.

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.