



**Episode 422: I'm So Effing Tired:
A Proven Plan to Beat Burnout & Boost Energy
and Reclaim Your Life With Dr. Amy Shah**

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This episode is brought to you by Wellnesse. We make personal care products that go above and beyond just non-toxic to actually be beneficial for you from the outside in. I realized years ago that even some of my most naturally minded friends and family members who made an effort to eat organic food and be really cognizant of what they brought into their homes were still using certain personal care products, mainly hair care and oral care. And the reason was, they weren't willing to sacrifice how they looked and felt just to use natural products. And none of the natural products they were finding really lived up to the conventional products as far as how effective they were. So, I resolved to change this and realized I had things that I've been making in my kitchen for years that worked just as well and that I could share with other families, and thus Wellnesse was born. You've probably heard that what goes on our body gets into our body and that many of the chemicals we encounter end up in our bloodstream. To me, this means non-toxic and safe should be the absolute bare minimum baseline for any products that are in our lives. But I wanted to take it a step further. I wanted it to use this to our advantage to actually put beneficial ingredients in our hair care, toothpaste, personal care products so that we could benefit our body from the outside in. Why not use that wonderful skin barrier to our advantage? Our hair care is packed with ingredients like nettle, which helps hair get thicker over time. Our dry shampoo has scalp promoting products that really help follicles stay strong. And our toothpaste, for instance, has a naturally occurring mineral called hydroxyapatite, which is the exact formulation or exact mineral that's on our teeth that's present in strong enamel. So they're all designed to work with the body, not against it to help you have stronger, healthier hair and teeth. We now have a hand sanitizer that doesn't dry out your hands like many hand sanitizers do. I would be honored if you would check it out and I would love to hear your feedback. You can find all of our products at wellnesse.com.

Katie: Hello, and welcome to the "Wellness Mama" podcast. I'm Katie from wellnesmama.com and wellnesse.com. That's Wellnesse with an E on the end. It's my new personal care line. And I am here today with someone I really, really, admire her work, I've respected for a long time, and she's a repeat guest. Dr. Amy Shah is a double board-certified medical doctor and expert specializing in fields of allergy and immunology, hormones, and gut health. She is highly accomplished, graduated magna cum laude from school, and went on to complete her MD and training at Einstein, Harvard, and Columbia University hospitals. And she's a mom of two. She's one of my favorite people to follow on Instagram for her constant health and inspiration advice. And I definitely encourage you to follow her there as well, she's fasting MD, and I'll put that link in the podcast notes as well.

She has a new book that is called "I'm So Effing Tired: A Proven Plan to Beat Burnout, Boost Your Energy, and Reclaim Your Life." And the reason I wanted to have her on today was to delve into some of these strategies that some are a little unconventional and I feel like are highly effective, especially for women and they're specifically geared to women. So much health advice is typically more concentrated on men or at least tested on men. I think she gives some incredible strategies in this episode and I know that you are gonna learn a lot. So let's jump right in. Dr. Amy Shah, welcome back.

Dr. Shah: Hey, thanks so much for having me, Katie.

Katie: It's always such a pleasure to chat with you. I'm a big fan of yours, all of your work. And I love following you on Instagram. You're super motivational and inspirational. And I'm really excited to go deep today on your new project, which I think is gonna be a game-changer for a lot of people. And there's so many directions we can go with this, and I wanna delve into all of them. But to start broad, let's walk through, A, the impetus for writing this book, "I'm So Effing Tired" and, kind of, why are we so tired?

Dr. Shah: Yeah, I love it, Katie. I mean, you have six kids so you can relate to this. Right? So, I think I could relate to this. And I felt that no one had answers for me. And I'm a doctor. I did nutrition. I was a nutrition major in college. I went to medical school. And I couldn't believe that nobody could explain to us as women why we were always so tired. And, of course, you know, we're moms, we're multitasking, we're getting older. Those are the answers that were given to me. And to me, that just felt inadequate. And that's what started my entire wellness journey, trying to figure out myself and share it with others. And that's the impetus behind the book. We are so effing tired because we have broken so much of our biology.

So I focus on the three biggest areas that we can change. We have a broken chronobiology. So, chronobiology is circadian rhythms. Now, circadian rhythm sounds like sleep and wake. But circadian rhythm actually affects nearly 80% of our genes. So it's not just about sleep or wake. It's about everything we do. So broken circadian rhythms, broken circadian biology is one of the biggest causes of why you're so effing tired. Number two is broken microbiology. Now, we all know how important gut health...I know you talk about it all the time, Katie. Gut health is the epicenter of health. And if we have broken gut, we will be tired. We will be burned out. We will be unhealthy. So, that's number two. And number three is broken psychobiology. Now, the brain-gut connection, this is an area that's not well described in western medicine. It's kind of that study of how our thoughts affect our health and then also how our health affects our brain. So just like inflammation in our gut will cause inflammation in our brain, toxic thoughts will cause inflammation in our body. So, those three areas are the three areas I really focused on in the book.

Katie: Okay. So, let's go deeper on all of those because I think these are really important concepts and ones that are not talked about in conventional health advice, and which is largely probably why these are such difficult areas for so many people. So you mentioned chronobiology. Let's go deeper on that and understanding all the factors that come into play when we're talking about the influences on our biology.

Dr. Shah: Okay. So chronobiology is the study of how circadian rhythms and how the body clocks affect our health. Our body has a clock in every one of our cells, not just in our brain. There is a clock in every single one of our cells. And each one of these clocks are attuned to light, but they're also attuned to food and other inputs. And so, to improve our circadian rhythm, there are a few things that you can do, which is, you know, light, dark, meaning sleeping in the dark, getting daylight, eating in the daylight hours, which I'll get into later, and getting no or little blue light late into the evening, which is something that we are so bad at in our Western culture. And then we also know that chronobiology is so much more a part of our biology than we ever knew before. We know that some medications like blood pressure medications are 50% more effective when given at certain times of the day, like at night instead of in the morning. And so, we know that medications have a metabolism that follows chronobiology.

We also know that so much of our metabolism is based on chronobiology, meaning that melatonin, the same hormone that tells us to sleep, also binds to the pancreas and tells the pancreas to turn down insulin production, to turn down pancreatic enzyme production. And so, if you eat late into the night, you're basically asking your body that has already turned down all of its functions to do something that it's not trying to do. And so, what I tell people is that once you learn how important chronobiology is, then you will be more motivated to make these changes that seem so small and minute, Katie, but makes such a huge difference.

Katie: Yeah, I think, truly until you experience, you can't really understand just how drastically those factors affect everything we feel in all of our biology. For me, a regular habit has been going outside as soon as possible after waking up just to get outdoor light. And that alone, like I see a noticeable change in my energy levels. Same thing with food. When you start really paying attention to this and dialing it in, it's amazing the impact it has in such a short amount of time. And like you just explained, it's because we're working in line with our biology.

I think there's also...I'm a big fan of circadian fasting as well, and I practice it most days. I don't do anything every day. But I think that there are some misconceptions when it comes to women and fasting. And I know you and I have touched on this in previous episodes a little bit, and I'll link to those as well. But I've heard from a lot of women who are hesitant to do any type of fasting because they've been told that fasting isn't good for women, or it's bad for their hormones, or their thyroid. So, can you walk us through, like, what women need to know specifically related to fasting and why things like circadian fasting are different than just long-term water fasting, for instance?

Dr. Shah: Yeah, that's a... And I know you do both. And I think that it's like... Intermittent fasting is like exercise. Now, you wouldn't say that exercise is good or bad. It really is so variable based on duration, intensity. And so, we think the same... We have to think of it the same way. Intermittent fasting is not a one-size-fits-all. It is a very, very different stressor when you do it for 12 hours versus if you do it for 24 hours. And so, I think that's where a lot of these people on the internet get confused because they think, well, I tried, you know, 16, 18, 24 hours of fasting, and it didn't work for me, and so, it must not be good for women. And so, this is how this misinformation arises. First of all, there's no studies that show that it's not good for women.

There is an animal study, which people quote all the time, that shows that ovaries shrink when you do the equivalent of a 24-hour fast every other day for 3 months. Now, there is no way that you wouldn't have hormonal effects if you did such intense prolonged fasting in women.

So, I really don't think that there's any evidence that women should not be fasting. In fact, I think that because of its ability to reduce insulin levels, and insulin being the driver for so many of our diseases and weight gain, I think that fasting for women is such a great way to improve your hormone balance, to lose that extra weight, to improve your energy levels, to improve your sleep. I do think it has to be dosed appropriately. Like, you have to start very conservatively, say 12 hours, and then work yourself up to maybe 14 hours or 15 hours. There's really no reason to go farther unless you are like, "Hey, I wanna test my body. I wanna push my body." Similar to the people who decide to run a marathon, it's not for everyone. You have to train. And it is not mandatory to go to that next level.

So, for me, for example, I actually do a 12-hour fast, pretty much every day, except for one day a week, and then I add on to that. About two to three days a week, I call it my push fast days. I pick days that are very appropriate. Like, for example, today I had the recording with you, I had a workout this morning. So, I made it my push fast day where I fast, a little bit longer, maybe 14, 15 even 16 hours. And so, I'd say that if you alternate like that, you move up crescendo style, meaning going low and slow, and you adjust for your infradian rhythms and your ultradian rhythms, you will be able to do this.

Now, infradian rhythms is, you know, women's menstrual cycles. I work on infradian rhythms, 28 days, so that week before your period when you feel exhausted and you feel very stress-sensitive, which is what people feel right before their period, this is not a good time to do intense fasting probably when, in my terminology, those push days might come out at that point. You might just do 12 hours or you might do no fasting at all. And then, you know, once you get your period, about day two or three, you kind of regain your energy and you're ready to go again. So, that's how I approach it for women. I know that's a lot, but I'm trying to give you as much information as I can give you in this little time.

Katie: I'm so glad you brought up, like, tweaking based on our cycle as well because I feel like so much of the fitness information advice is, like, kind of, spearheaded or given by men who obviously don't have the same experience. Same thing with, I know you know for medicine, so many of the clinical trials are done on men. So they don't always take into account the hormonal side for females and how that does change things. But also if we know what we're doing, how we can use that to our advantage. And it can actually really be an asset if we work with our bodies. So I love that you brought that up. And to echo what you said on fasting as well, I think it is so personalized. And at the end of the day, we all have to experiment and figure out what our body wants, and needs, and can tolerate. I personally do longer fasting relatively often, but I know my body can handle it. And when I was new to that, I worked very much with a doctor and tracked things very carefully to make sure I wasn't messing up my hormones. But I love that you reiterated that the evidence doesn't actually show that fasting is all bad for women, we just need to be careful about how we do it, obviously not do it while we're pregnant or at times when our body has a very intense demand for all the extra calories and nutrients. But that it can be such an important tool if we know how to use it.

You touched on exercise as well. And I love this because, especially for women, we're so busy. It's hard to make time for our self-care, for exercise. So, to me, if I'm gonna make time for exercise, I want it to be as effective as possible. And I know you talk about this. I think there are some strategies you have in the book of how we can really maximize the effect of exercise by tweaking in line with our hormones, in line with light, in line with food. So, walk us through some of the ways to really maximize our exercise routine.

Dr. Shah: Absolutely. And Katie, I think it's amazing that you do the longer fasts. I think it's equivalent to running a marathon. Like, it is an amazing achievement and has wonderful things that will happen to your body, but it is not something that someone who's new to it or inexperienced with it should try. And so, I think that every woman is so different.

So when it comes to exercise, this is interesting, I'm like you, I like to multitask. Women, in general, I think are much, you know, busier, especially during the pandemic and we need to maximize our time. And so, I talk about this concept called fasted workouts. Fasted exercises, meaning that say you start your fast at 7:00 p.m. at night, it means that you work out before you break your fast at, say, 9:00 a.m. in the morning. So you may work out at 7:00 or 8:00, and then break your fast at 9:00. This strategy is a way for you to deplete a little more glucose in your body.

So, our body uses glucose as fuel. And once it runs out of glucose in the blood, it looks for glucose in our liver. And once it runs out of glucose in the liver, then it is now looking for fatty acids for fuel. Now, this is when the magic happens. We call this the metabolic switch. I call it the fuel switch. So when you switch fuel sources from sugar or carbohydrates to fatty acids, that has some downstream benefits for us that are beyond just calorie restriction. So we think the magic of intermittent fasting really happens when we get into that metabolic switch zone. This will happen for different people at different times. If you have a high carbohydrate, high sugar diet, and you fast for 12 hours, you're probably not in that metabolic switch zone.

However, if you fast and you are on a low-ish, healthy carbohydrate diet, meaning vegetables, low refined carbohydrates, and you do a 12-hour fast and then you do a fasted workout where now we're demanding a lot more energy, your body's looking for glucose, and it's a lot more likely that you're gonna get into that metabolic switch zone. And that is the magic of a fasted workout. Now, we know that marathoners for many years have used a fasted run technique to train their bodies to be more efficient at using energy and switching fuel sources. And in the "New England Journal of Medicine" article in 2019 about intermittent fasting, Dr. Mattson outlines this metabolic switch as probably one of the key reasons intermittent fasting can be so beneficial to your health.

Katie: I love that. I know there's also a lot of debate, and I think this area's hugely personalized. But when it comes to when you are eating, what you are eating, what you should break the fast with, if there are any guidelines about that. I know I personally feel really good when I break a fast and get enough protein early in the day. But I think there's obviously some genetic and personalized aspects to that. But do you have any

guidance for women, specific to that? I think the one thing I've noticed to be careful of what I'm especially doing longer circadian fasts and eating in a shorter window is I have to be conscious to get enough calories, which is also a mental shift, I think for a lot of people to be, like, cognizant of actually eating more. And that's been really impactful for me. But do you have any guidelines when it comes to the what or the how during that eating window?

Dr. Shah: Yeah, that's a great question, Katie. And just like you said, it's really highly personal. But we do know that if you're trying to balance your muscle gain with intermittent fasting, there is some evidence that you should have the protein pretty much right after your fasted workout within an hour window. So, for example, if you were gonna fast from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. and then go for your fasted workout, and then you wanna break your fast within an hour of that workout, ideally, to build that muscle. In fact, we know that when you eat protein and you have just worked out, you have a better chance of muscle growth in that area that you have worked out. And it also is a benefit because when you break your fast, you're able to stay full longer because protein has that effect. So, I always say a mix of protein fiber and antioxidants to break your fast.

Now, protein fiber and antioxidants are just basically fancy words for a vegetable and fruit and, you know, protein of choice-based fast breaker. And then for the rest of the day, I tell people to use the mnemonic, the four S's. So when you're trying to... Like, think about what you should be eating when you're not fasting. Think of the four S's. The four S's are salad, soup, smoothie, or scramble. Now, you can break your fast with those or you can use those as a guideline for the rest of the day. But when you're looking at those four S's, you're basically getting very plant-heavy, fresh, unprocessed foods with low sugar. And that's kind of, like, the rough guideline that I give people.

Now, I don't think that anybody should be calorie counting, except for when you're trying to, like, really hone in on where the problems are. Sometimes if I'm troubleshooting with someone, I'll calorie count and make them track everything. But honestly, I feel that if you follow these rules, if you do a circadian fast, a few days a week even, and do just 12 to 14 hours and maybe do a push fast 3 days a week, so that would be like basically 6 days of circadian fasting, 3 easy, 3 push, and you do a fasted workout after your fast on most days of the week, and then you follow a loosely healthy diet with whole foods, low sugar, plant-heavy, and stick to the four S's, it's pretty much foolproof not only for, you know, health and weight loss but really for your energy and your long-term health, which is, I guess, you know, the overlying reason we're doing all this.

Katie: Absolutely. And I think also, like, we've touched on a little bit, sleep is such an important factor. And truly, like, when we look at labs and we look at research, one night of poor sleep can make all of these other factors so much more difficult. It decreases your blood sugar response. It increases your stress hormones in a negative way. So, I feel like every health expert agrees that sleep is important. I think this is also a really tough fall-down area for women, especially for moms because we have so much that we're responsible for. And sleep can be really difficult to dial in. I've personally seen that really, like, dialing in these other factors, like exercising at the right time, eating at the right time, eating enough, and circadian fasting, so not eating after dark, those really do help improve sleep quality. But any other tips as a doctor or a mom for improving sleep?

Dr. Shah: Yeah absolutely. Katie, I am like... Like, in my family, they basically consider me crazy because I am crazy about sleep. And I'm crazy about their sleep. And I'm crazy about my sleep because just like you, I know the research and I know the brain development, and insulin dysregulation, and the cortisol dysregulation that happens with low sleep. And so, I'm pretty much so adamant about getting adequate sleep for myself and for my family, especially my children. And one of the strategies I use is getting some bright light, daylight in the morning actually really helps your nighttime sleep. So just like you were saying, Katie, it helps your energy, but it also helps your sleep at night. So, there's study after study that shows that getting input into your retina that goes straight to your suprachiasmatic nucleus in your brain, it kind of resets that clock and tells your body, "Okay, it's daytime." And so when it is nighttime, your body's optimized to get ready for sleep. So, that is one strategy.

The other strategy is stopping eating about two to three hours before bed. This is a great way to, kind of, let the body know that it's time to go to sleep. The third strategy is, I think you know it but blue light blocking. So, we have blue light blockers on our phones. We have, you know, glasses, but really the ideal situation is to put all that stuff away. I put my phone on the charger and I walk into the bathroom, at least to do my nighttime routine, try to really get away from the blue light as much as possible before bed. So turn off the TVs, the computers, the ambient light in the room. And usually what I do is I use these yellow bulbs, like the old incandescent yellow bulbs for light, and make it dim. Get your body ready.

Make the room really cold. Our body, one of the ways it induces sleep is dropping our body temperatures. This is something that's a game-changer for so many. Once you drop that temperature in the room, it helps your body drop that temperature. And that's why some people take a shower before bed because it helps you drop that body temperature. And then blackout curtains. You wanna sleep in complete darkness. I wear a face mask and earplugs because I have kids and I can't always control the external surroundings. And so, I control at least what I can control.

Katie: That's a great point. And I think that alone is a huge factor in all areas of life is you focus on the things that are within your control, let go of the things that are not within your control. And that alone can improve your stress so much. It's easier said than done, certainly. But that's an important lesson for sure.

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naturally minded friends and family members who made an effort to eat organic food and be really cognizant of what they brought into their homes were still using certain personal care products, mainly hair care and oral care. And the reason was, they weren't willing to sacrifice how they looked and felt just to use natural products. And none of the natural products they were finding really lived up to the conventional products as far as how effective they were. So, I resolved to change this and realized I had things that I've been making in my kitchen for years that worked just as well and that I could share with other families, and thus Wellnesse was born. You've probably heard that what goes on our body gets into our body and that many of the chemicals we encounter end up in our bloodstream. To me, this means non-toxic and safe should be the absolute bare minimum baseline for any products that are in our lives. But I wanted to take it a step further. I wanted it to use this to our advantage to actually put beneficial ingredients in our hair care, toothpaste, personal care products so that we could benefit our body from the outside in. Why not use that wonderful skin barrier to our advantage? Our hair care is packed with ingredients like nettle, which helps hair get thicker over time. Our dry shampoo has scalp promoting products that really help follicles stay strong. And our toothpaste, for instance, has a naturally occurring mineral called hydroxyapatite, which is the exact formulation or exact mineral that's on our teeth that's present in strong enamel. So they're all designed to work with the body, not against it to help you have stronger, healthier hair and teeth. We now have a hand sanitizer that doesn't dry out your hands like many hand sanitizers do. I would be honored if you would check it out and I would love to hear your feedback. You can find all of our products at wellnesse.com.

You mentioned earlier the idea of stress and some stress being good, some stress being bad and used the word hormetic stress. Can you explain, for anyone who's not familiar with that term, what it is and how to know if a stress is hormetic or not?

Dr. Shah: Yeah, hormetic stressor, the concept of hormesis will change your life. I mean, I feel like I'm overstating it so now you're not gonna be as impressed, the listeners. But what it is, is that a little stress is not only tolerable but actually good for you. So, I think the easiest way to think of this is exercise again. You know, when you do a muscle...like you lift weights, not only is it helping that muscle, it is having all these downstream effects on your body. It is improving metabolism. It's improving brain function. I mean, there are so many things outside of the muscle benefits from exercise. And we know that because it's very well-established in the literature and in the culture. We know that exercise is not just beneficial for its effect on our muscles, but its effect on the rest of our body, on our brain, on our longevity, on our metabolism.

And similarly, there's other things that are hormetic stressors as well. Intermittent fasting is a hormetic stressor, meaning a small stress on your body, small intermittent stress that has downstream benefits. So, I think of sauna as a hormetic stressor and cold cryotherapy. I know you're a fan of that, Katie. All of these are hormetic stressors. We know that giving your body a little bit of stress is very beneficial to longevity. It's like there's these genes that turn on in the presence of hormetic stressors that would not be turned on without these hormetic stressors. So the more you can put small pulsatile hormetic stressors, the better it is.

Now, remember, you don't want to layer all the hormetic stressors all at once and intensify and have, like, a stressful day at work, and get no sleep, and then try to do all these things. So, no, you cannot...you can turn a hormetic stressor into a bad thing if you make it prolonged and if you make it intense. So you really don't...you really wanna watch that intensity layer on one by one and really watch your emotional stress as well because I think that, you and I, Katie, like to talk about mindset work and trying to control that mental stress. I think that is a negative stressor and not a hormetic stressor because that is a constant stress on our bodies. And we're trying to reduce that baseline constant stress so that we can get benefit from these pulsatile hormetic stressors.

Katie: Yeah, that makes perfect sense. And I think you're right. I think mindset is an often overlooked and under talked about area of this. And I've become a big fan of some of the original stoic writers like Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, and also people like Viktor Frankl who wrote. And all of them, the common theme is that we are happier and less stressed when we focus on the things that we have the ability to improve and control, and let go of worry about all the things that we don't, which is certainly easier said than done as moms but I think a worthy goal at the very least. I also think an important thing to talk about here is the connection between this book and women's empowerment. And for anybody who doesn't follow you on Instagram, I would certainly encourage you guys to go follow her. She has constant great health advice and awesome inspiration. But I think that anytime we're talking about these things, it does really speak to a deeper issue as well that I've touched on a little bit in past podcasts. But I would love to hear your voice on this as well.

Dr. Shah: Yeah. And you're such a great voice in this space, Katie. Seeing you do what you do with the family and homeschooling, and all of the things that you do, I know because I just look at you in awe. I think women's empowerment is really that. It's really bringing women of all backgrounds, of all different ways of handling things, helping each other succeed, helping each other rise, helping each other lead, helping each other be healthier, and happier, and more productive in whatever it is we are working on to contribute to this world. So, what my contribution to this is that I know that as I was navigating my career, and as many of my friends and colleagues were, we were faced with all the stressors of life. And no one teaches us how to rise in our, you know, pursuits, but also be happy, be healthy, be energetic. And what's the point, really, of doing everything that you're doing if you don't have health, energy, or happiness? I mean, one thing we can learn from the pandemic is that health is the most important thing in life. If you don't have health, you don't have anything. So, I wrote this book because I knew that women can rise faster, more efficiently, they can do the things they were meant to do in their life, they can be better moms, and better wives, and better friends, and better people, they can be happier and they can be more energetic if they follow some of these strategies that I've outlined. And I think that that's the real purpose behind this book.

Katie: Yeah, I love that. And I think you definitely have found and really spoken to an important pain point for a lot of women. And just the idea that so much is on our plates. I've talked about this before, as well. Like, it's wonderful that we have the opportunity to do all of the things that so many of us do in today's world. But unfortunately, as we added more and more things to our plates, we still kept all the other things that were already there. And so, we do have to be so cognizant. I think it's important to, kind of, rebuild all those analogies, put your own mask on first and refill your cup and all those things. And as women, we have to be extra cognizant of that I think.

Dr. Shah: Yeah, women, you know...As you know, there's a big "New York Times" piece that came out, it was, you know, talking about how this is not just stress. This is like a cry for better policies, for better ideas of how to improve our health because women during the pandemic felt a disproportionate rise in responsibilities. And many people had to quit their jobs. They felt more burned out. Burnout has risen 33% in the past year. And a lot of this has to do with women, you know, having more childcare duties, having more responsibilities at home. And so, I really, really do think that, you know, multitasking, yes, it's great to be supermom, but we also need to have policies and we have to have strategies and tools so that we can balance what we do every day without burning out, without feeling fatigue, without feeling unhappy.

Katie: Absolutely. And that then flows over into our families as well and into our kids. And speaking of kids, I think another important consideration here is that some of these strategies can be really beneficial for our kids, especially as they get older, and certainly not that we should be encouraging young children to fast. But there is still a benefit, I think from what I've read of kids not eating after a certain point at night, either, and this improving their sleep. And I know these are questions that always recur. Anytime we talk about any health topics are what about for my kids and what about during phases like pregnancy and nursing, can they be modified? So, I'm curious, I know you have children as well, how you incorporate that analogy with your kids, and then any, kind of, bits of wisdom we can pull from this even for women who are in the pregnancy and nursing stage.

Dr. Shah: Yeah, great question, Katie. So, my blanket statement on the internet is really, for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding, to not do any kind of fasting and young children as well because, of course, they can do it but they would need really close guidance. And a lot of people will do it in an extreme and unhealthy way, and so you don't want people to fall into that trap. Now, if you're talking about what I do with my own kids, I love the idea of closing the kitchen at some point before bed. And I think that we all know that we sleep better if we haven't eaten two hours before bed. And, you know, we're talking about really modest fasting here. We're talking about 12 hours for children, even older children, and that can improve their insulin levels and their brain function in so many ways.

Children that are doing a circadian fast, that would mean like 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. I mean, this is really, really modest. Most Americans, Westerners, we eat 15 to 16 hours a day, basically eating a dessert late, right before bed, and eating first thing when we wake up. And so, I think that even having a very modest fast for children, older children, who then are not snacking at late at night, they get a better night of sleep. They don't have insulin dysregulation because as you know, obesity is a huge problem, not only in adults but in children. And so, I think, doing it very modestly and conservatively, but doing it for children can be really, really nice and effective, especially for those older preteens and teens who are starting to eat pretty unhealthy and late into the evenings. It's a great habit to give them, you know, for the rest of their life.

Now, pregnant and breastfeeding moms, it's a tough situation because you really don't wanna do anything that's sacrificing nutrition for the child, either the born or unborn child. I do think it's possible to do it but you have to be very conservative. You have to work with your doctor and you have to make sure you're getting

enough calories during your eating windows. You don't wanna be doing the aggressive fasting at this time for sure.

Katie: Yeah. I love that advice in how to really incorporate that with our kids in a family environment. As I've got a couple of kids now moving into the teenage years, I've learned to really try to let them listen to their bodies. And because we've always, kind of, implemented some of these things, they seem to be very in tune with their bodies and seem to, kind of, go in waves. There are times when they're more or less hungry, and I try to encourage them, and not push them to eat when they're not hungry, and also not keep them on as rigid of food standards when they are hungry because they do have that increased caloric need. But I've seen they tend to not eat late into the night, which kind of is built into our family culture.

But if they don't wanna eat lunch, for instance, I don't push it. And I feel like those times of natural fasting when they're listening to their body are great as they get older. And that that's a really important skill. Not that we're trying to...Obviously, like, little children have such an intense calorie need while they're growing. I would never dream of restricting food for little ones. But I think as they get older, if they've been raised this way, and if they've been given nutritious food, they do learn to listen to their body, which is so valuable. And as we get close to the end of our time, a couple of questions I wanna make sure I reserved time to ask you, if there is any advice, could be specific to health and diet or not, that you want to leave with women and moms today.

Dr. Shah: Yeah. I think one of the biggest pieces of advice is that, give yourself grace. Give yourself time to breathe in the day. I tell women that an hour a day is minimum for you to have to yourself to reset, to not burn out, and not have poor health. Another piece of advice that I think that people don't get enough is that mindset is everything. And just like, Katie, you said, stoic philosophy and so many philosophies, when you really look at it, say that mindset is the key to everything, the key to happiness, the key to success. And you really have to focus on your mindset when you're trying to improve your health. And number three, really try to help others. So, there's lots and lots of research that show that helping others rise not only helps them but it also helps you. It makes you happier. It makes you more satisfied. And it's something that we don't talk about enough in women's circles.

Katie: I agree. I love that. And the last question that I love to ask, your book will actually be one of my answers to this question right now because I think it's really important for women, but other than your own, if there's a book or a number of books that have had a profound impact on your life or that you've recently read that impacted you that you would recommend.

Dr. Shah: Oh, yeah. I recently recommended and read "Can't Hurt Me" by David Goggins. It is, you know, this whole concept of mindset and being stronger than the surroundings, and the people, and the experiences that you have. I think it really just reignited a light in me to say, "You know, my mental state is my brick house and I need to protect that. And whatever happens in my brick house has nothing to do with the external world. And I can control that. And I can make that good or bad, depending on the input I put in there. It's not just based on the external world." So, that book was one of the recent ones. I also, you know, originally really loved "4-

Hour Workweek" by Tim Ferriss. I think it was a one...It was a book that really came at a good time for me when I couldn't imagine working in a typical, you know, medical setting every day in the Western medical culture. And that book really opened my eyes to say, "Oh, wow, there's a world out there and you can do things. You can help people in ways that we didn't even understand just 10 years ago." So those two books are two of my favorites if I had to pick some.

Katie: Awesome. Well, the links to those and, of course, to your book will be in the show notes at wellnessmama.fm for all you guys listening, of course, available anywhere books are sold. But I love that you are bringing awareness about this and giving women such tangible strategies to improve it. And like I said at the beginning, I'm such a huge fan of your work. I encourage everyone to go follow you and keep learning from you. And very grateful for your time as a busy mom and practicing doctor. I'm so grateful that you were here with us today.

Dr. Shah: Thank you so much for having me. And Katie, likewise, I can't tell you enough how your work is so important and the things that you say are so impactful to women and moms everywhere.

Katie: Oh, thank you. And thank you, guys, as always for listening and sharing your very valuable assets, your time and your energy, 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.