



Episode 440: Working Through Trauma and  
Understanding the Mind/Body Connection  
With Dr. Ari Langdon

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Katie: Hello, and welcome to the "Wellness Mama" podcast. I'm Katie from [wellnessmama.com](https://wellnessmama.com) and [wellnesse.com](https://wellnesse.com), that's Wellnesse with an E on the end. And this episode is an attempt to start to answer the question of how I worked through my past trauma and ways that others can start that journey as well. I'm here with Dr. Ariana Langdon, who is a Bastyr educated naturopathic physician. She was raised in the Ukrainian area of Chicago and she learned basically street smarts by age 9 and sociolinguistics from a four-year stint in Europe and third-world travel. She worked as an emergency room doctor for a number of years, and she witnessed just how much mental and emotional trauma correlated with physical trauma. And this led her on a journey into that world in a much more deep way. And now her clinical focus has been on things like chronic pain management, chronic disease, women's health, oncology, and more. And I wanted to go deep with her in this episode on some of the aspects of trauma recovery, and forgiveness, and working through some of those things and how mental and emotional traumas can have a very physical effect on the body. So we talk about all of those topics in this episode. And let's join Dr. Ari.

Dr. Ari, welcome. And thanks for being here.

Dr. Ariana: Thanks so much for inviting me, Katie. I'm looking forward to this.

Katie: I am too. I think it's gonna be a helpful conversation because I've shared quite a bit of my own personal story on this podcast over the last few years, and especially with all the work I did to process some past

trauma and all the physical changes that that led to. And I think there's a lot of directions we can go there because I've gotten so many follow-up questions and I struggle to be able to give people tangible tools they can use because everyone's journey is so different. But before we jump into the nitty-gritty of that, I would love to hear a little bit more about your personal story because you were an intro through my husband and through a friend, and I know you have a medical background, and then really got into the trauma side of that work. And so I'd love to hear your story and what led to that.

Dr. Ariana: Yes, I would say that a lot of the interest that I had in trauma, and release work, and mental-emotional work began more on an intellectual level. So I did a lot of reading in high school and college. And so, I was introduced to it by way of a lot of different authors that alluded to it or talked a lot about the human condition. And it wasn't until graduate school that I began to address my own traumas. And so that in conjunction with the stress of school really made me face it head-on. And then I had a background in emergency medicine. And so I was introduced to trauma on that level and I really saw not just the physical trauma of people that came into the ER, but also the mental-emotional. And I would say that it was always on my radar. It was palpable for me. It was almost the elephant in the room that I could not ignore. And so, while everyone around me was rushing around, putting in IVs, running labs, and doing CPR, and whatever else takes place in the ER, I was really in tune with the mental-emotional traumas that were coming in. And so I really couldn't turn a blind eye to it.

And so when I pursued naturopathic medicine, that was a perfect segue into really diving deeper into that work. And I would say that there's a saying in our field, that you attract the type of patients that are perfect for you. And I began to work a lot in chronic pain management and chronic disease, chronic infections. And inevitably, the mental-emotional component became a focus amidst all of that work. And so, the more and more I worked with the mental-emotional, patients were getting better and I was seeing more results when I really focused in on that.

Katie: Yeah, I feel like you got to witness really firsthand probably in those acute moments of trauma for a lot of people what would be, I would guess, the start of a mental and emotional process of recovery that I don't feel like, to your point, that medical system really addresses well, on average. Certainly, that wasn't the case for me when I went through that, and it took me years of...Because part of my trauma was sexual trauma and high school. And I remember at the moment, basically vowing internally that I would never, ever be hurt like that again. But in doing so, shutting down so many emotions in order to keep protect from being hurt and building walls that eventually, for me, became a physical wall of extra weight that made me feel safe. And I feel like, hopefully, we address the physical aspects of trauma.

But in the last few years, I've learned so much reading books like "The Body Keeps the Score" and other books about how those physical traumas can be just the very beginning and how the body can physically manifest things that happened emotionally. Can you, kind of, delve into that a little bit? Because I'm sure you really witnessed, like I said, the acute moments of that in people who are suffering from a very intense physical trauma in the emergency room and then now you deal with probably very much the other side of that when you see patients who are working through the mental and emotional sides.

Dr. Ariana: Yes. So the first thing I wanna say to that is when somebody walks into my office, or even now Zoom calls, it's not necessarily where I dive into first. This skill of really staying present and listening not just to what the patient is saying but also to what they're not saying, or the client is not saying is the first point that I have to make because unless that's taking place, you're missing a lot. And so sometimes we have our own agenda and we have our own lens through which we see things and inevitably, we wanna project that. And even as a physician, we have a tendency to do that. We would joke in school that you would go to a conference on sibo, and then all of a sudden, every patient that walks through the door had sibo. And so, when things are on your radar, you have a tendency to almost impose what you think the patient or the client needs.

And so, when you can turn that back into a channel for listening and really, really hearing and staying present with the person that is expressing, whether it be their diagnosis, their journey, their narrative, whatever it may be, from that place, you can assess not only the language that you have to communicate with or the word usage, I would even say, it's also knowing what they might be open to in their journey, where they're at in their journey. And together with those two, you can really communicate better with the person and they can go that much farther. So, it's not so much as laying out a protocol for them because that protocol can really change based on where someone is willing to go. And so, it really requires you to stay flexible and adaptable. And a lot of times, you're really just learning from the client, from the patient. And when you come to come to it with that humility and that openness, it really moves forward in such a beautiful and effortless way.

Katie: Yeah, it seems like such a novel concept. But I can see that. I'm not a doctor by any means but I definitely have seen that just in my own life or with friends when I go really deep researching a topic, it's easy to start seeing symptoms of whatever that is in lots of people and thinking, "Oh, I wonder if they have that issue." And that's a great point. Probably one that is hard for many doctors as well, as fast-paced as the medical system seems to be. And I suspected that was gonna become a theme of this episode was that there's truly very individualized aspect to this because certainly when it comes to the physical aspects of health, I've learned that more and more over the last decade of just how individualized that is and how the system that works perfectly for one person is not...You can't just duplicate it and it will work so well for the next person. But it seems like this would be even more relevant and nuanced when it comes to the mental and emotional side.

And so when I first shared my story and people asked, like, you know, "What exact modalities did you...or what exact therapist did you see or how did you release trauma? How did you forgive?" I was hesitant to share too many details because I just felt like I threw a lot of things at the wall and I think some combination of them finally worked. But it was also because I was finally ready for them to work. So, I'm curious, like, when people come to you, maybe at the different stages of this or for listeners who have heard my story and have past trauma and want to know where to start with being able to work through that, how you direct them, what modalities you think can be potentially helpful? What's a good starting point?

Dr. Ariana: So, Katie, you brought up a really good point that I wanna touch on, firstly. And that's that you threw a lot at it. And what's so amazing about that is that there's a mindset within it. The mindset is, I'm dedicated to resolving this. And when you start with that dedication, that forms this attitude that allows you to not give up on yourself. And that, first and foremost, is essential. And the other thing I would say is that I do have a great respect for protocols, whether it be in the ER or in my profession because they have been tested and they can work. It's simply to say that sometimes you have to be flexible and willing to change it up.

So to answer your query, where to begin. It sounds like an oversimplification. I would say though that the most essential thing, and this is also from my own life, is really staying present. And what does that mean? What does that look like, especially for someone who has chronic pain and has had it for 12 years or someone who can't get out of bed in the morning? A great place to start is doing simple breathing exercises and really staying present with what is coming up for you. It's in those quiet moments that you can connect with, I would say, almost like a consciousness shift that can happen when you do that fine-tuned listening, and then that can really start shifting your perspective, your attitude, and it allows you to propel forward in a different way.

Katie: That makes sense. I think another thing that came up for me when I was working through a lot of that because I had tried just traditional talk therapy for a long time and I think some of those wounds were so deep for me that I just wasn't willing to mentally go to those places and talk through them. And I remember even being in some of those and thinking like, "Okay, now we're gonna do the inner child thing, and here's what I need to say for that." But it wasn't really registering deeply.

And I think some of the breakthroughs, like, the ones I wish I could just give someone the checklists for is that were those moments of learning to sit with the discomfort or to ask better questions internally, or as a friend of mine says, never waste a trigger when those emotions would come up, see what I could learn from them and approach them with curiosity versus approaching them with, like, putting up more walls or, like, white-knuckling and trying to push them away. And I think maybe that's an important point before we move on from this is that it's...well, we always hope for that silver bullet or that one life-changing thing that's gonna fix a problem. In all aspects of health very often, it's more than consistent, small habits that over time make the big change. And do you find that's the case in trauma work as well?

Dr. Ariana: Yes. I mean, we definitely live in a pill-popping culture and we want immediate results. And so that can really be a challenge because we're bombarded with answers, if you will, in media, you know, on Facebook, on TV. Everywhere we go, it's like, here is the answer. This is what you need. And so, you have to sift through all of that and really find out what is gonna be your path forward. And we really want to get better and yet, sometimes we make that path very complicated and very difficult. And I would say that that shift, that consciousness shift that I was speaking of, that doesn't necessarily take work. It's our inner narrative that we cling to that keeps us in this perpetual discomfort, disease if you will. And so, I really like what you said about that, staying present, and really sitting with the discomfort because when you sit with that discomfort, that inner voice, that inner knowing really comes up. And we all have that. And we can all tap into that. We have to be persistent and cultivate more and more resilience. And I would say that, essentially, that's the piece that really can be missing in healthcare.

Katie: So, to go deeper on that point, I think you're so right with that inner narrative that we cling to or that, kind of, becomes our defining filter for our life. And I've heard therapists talk about that idea of a filter, how if you, for instance, had just the simple filter that people didn't like you, you would find proof of that in their facial expressions or things that may have objectively nothing to do with you whatsoever, but you would have that lens and so you would find proof of it and, kind of, that inner narrative drives our relationships, and it drives our interactions with people and how we perceive the world. So, on a practical level, how can we start to change that narrative, recognizing that once we realize that, we actually have control and the power to start changing the narrative?

Dr. Ariana: Yeah. Yeah. And that is definitely one of those complex and simple answers. And aside from cultivating that, you know, staying present and tapping into your inner knowing, a lot of it has to do with really staying aware throughout the day, the more and more you stay present, the more aware you become. And I like to do a lot of self-reflection at the end of the day. And it's in that self-reflection that I can tune in to what I learned and maybe some areas that I have still to work on. And I would say that triggers are a good place to start. And within those triggers, being aware that there's a lot of projecting that we do with those triggers. And if we can really sit with that, and look at it from a different perspective, and internalize it in such a way that we don't personalize it, we can actually start shifting that lens.

And so, I would say that this takes practice and a daily devotion to that work. And this can work with anything. Like, this is more of a lifestyle shift that can take place. And so, whether you are struggling with pain or a diagnosis that you are given or if you are at the height of your career, there's always an opportunity to really delve into the triggers because we all have them. Right? It's not that, you know, we all have things flowing in such a way that we don't ever have to address anything. So there's always an opportunity...I like to say that the person that triggers you the most is your greatest teacher.

Katie: That's a great line. I'm gonna write that one down. And in that sense too, I think that was one of the last stages I realized of working through the hardest parts of that for me. I think I felt the most guilty actually when I started to feel okay and even started to feel gratitude for what I had been through because it kind of shaped who I was in so many ways. And I felt guilty being okay in some ways because I knew so many other women had been through similar things and still really struggled. But I think that gratitude, kind of, is helpful for reframing. And you also use the word inner knowing, kind of, tuning into that inner knowing. Can you explain for anybody not familiar, kind of, what that means or how to, sort of, tune into that?

Dr. Ariana: Yes, I'd love to. So, I think a lot of people describe it differently. And for me, that inner knowing is almost the answer that pops up when I'm at my best, when I'm the most clear-minded and when I'm coming from a place of love. And so, that is not a negativity that comes up or when I'm stressed out or anything like that. It's really when I'm at peace and I really just drop down into my higher self if you will, and I'll have answers that pop up for me. And it's almost this assuredness or this confidence that comes up. And it's not that I have to grapple with it or I have to question it, it's so clear, it's so evident. And when I move forward with it, it really feels as though I am in flow and I'm working in harmony with my nature and my being.

Katie: Got it. And you also mentioned about cultivating resilience. And I think this is a really important skill that affects all aspects of life and that I've been working toward as well. Can you walk through what that means and then maybe also some of the ways people can start to cultivate and build their resilience?

Dr. Ariana: Yeah. And I would say that resilience is a lifelong journey in some respect. And a lot of times when...going back to the triggers that I spoke of and really learning more and more how to stay aware of where those triggers are coming from, when we continue on a path of having more self-reflection rather than projecting, we can really stay present with our own emotions. And let's face it, we all possess the sadness, the anger, the apathy, and we also have joy. And the more and more we can connect with each of those emotions, the more apt we are to connect with those emotions that someone else is feeling. And so it's twofold in that sense. When you can feel those emotions coming up within you, rather than suppressing them, you can stay present with them and notice them coming up. And so, you're more familiar with them and you move through them. And then you don't, I would say, pile them on top or start suppressing or repressing them. You just start being aware of them as they come up.

And so, it allows you to just continue moving forward in such a direction that you become more resilient because you haven't been suppressing things or repressing things. And then the second part of that is, when you really tap into your own feelings and you're honest with what's coming up for you, the more readily you can identify the emotions that someone else is having. So, a lot of times people will say things and express themselves. And what's really behind that sometimes is fear, even though they're coming at you with anger. And if you can identify your own emotions coming up for you, the more readily you can identify those emotions within someone else. And then you can have a really honest and meaningful conversation, rather than two people reacting and getting triggered over and over again. And I would say this really builds a resilience for yourself and it really helps build resilience in your relationships.

Katie: That's a great point. I've heard that line that hurt people hurt people or that often behind the reactions of anger, there's usually some kind of fear. And I think for each of us, that's also helpful perspective, just to understand whether if it's our children who are angry or someone in our lives, realizing instead of, like you said, responding back with anger, realizing that there's pain or fear or something else underlying that and then we can look at them with compassion and empathy, and try to help get to the root of that, and solve what that actually is versus just escalating by adding more anger to the anger.

It seems like another really important component of this, and one that I know I struggled with, and it seems like many others might as well is the idea of forgiveness, especially when there has been a trauma that involved another person. And I used to hold on to, kind of, that idea of, like, things somewhat being unforgivable or being unwilling to forgive and it took time, but realizing that...I found the quote and it really struck home for me of, "Forgiveness is setting the prisoner free and realizing the prisoner was yourself." And I had to, like, reframe that idea that I'm not forgiving them for their sake, I'm forgiving them because I need to forgive them and because that makes me a better mother. And that helps me be more present human. But

talk about forgiveness because that seems like a really tough obstacle to overcome for people who have been through maybe pretty intense trauma.

Dr. Ariana: Yes. I would say forgiveness is essential. And that's one of those pieces that we somehow think that if we forgive that person that we're somehow empowering them when the truth is, is we're doing ourselves a great disservice when we don't release ourselves from that narrative that we've been clinging to or that belief that we've been holding fast to. And the more and more we can see past the hurt or the anger and we can really connect with that person from a higher place, it's at that point that we really release ourselves of the obligation to carry something that has been draining us of our vital energy. And forgiveness work does not mean that you have to reconcile with the person. And I think this is something that is often misunderstood. It's that forgiveness piece that essentially allows you not to simply offload the burden of carrying it, it also allows you to humanize that person. And the more you do that, the more that you embrace and love yourself. And let's face it, the hardest relationship you'll ever make is the one with yourself.

Katie: That's so true. And it's the one you can't get away from either.

Dr. Ariana: That's right.

Katie: So, in your work, both on the medical side, seeing the physical aspects of this, and then now also with your consulting seeing so much more of the mental and emotional side, walk us through some of the ways that you see this connection expressing physically because that was the thing that really struck me when I started reading things like "The Body Keeps the Score" was basically how we can store trauma in our bodies and how this can express or at least contribute to, it seems like, a variety of all kinds of physical health problems that often get just written off as a physical problem.

Dr. Ariana: Yeah. Well, the first thing to really mention about this is a lot of times people are attached to their diagnosis. And so, most of the time, with that mindset, you have to meet that person at their diagnosis first in order to start leading into and working with the mental-emotional piece. In an answer to your question, I would say that this can manifest in any number of ways, whether it be chronic disease, and I lump cancer in with chronic disease, and whether it's chronic pain, whether it's constantly getting sick the same time every year because there is an incident that you have completely suppressed that happened around that time, or it can look like anything. The thing to be careful of is to attack that challenge that someone has as it being all in their head. And that's not what I'm saying and that's not what a lot of these writers are saying, It's simply to say that the perspective and the mindset can really be addressed, and worked with, and complement the physical protocols, the physical manifestation of the disease, and hand in hand, the two can really help the person move more into a wellness journey, rather than this disease mindset.

And we have...And I would say that this is really ingrained in Western medicine, this approach to maladies, if you will, with a diagnosis mindset. And it's hard to break out of that. And I know that I can be susceptible to, you know, buying into the label that we give things. And so, I've enjoyed getting into Ayurvedic medicine, and

Chinese medicine, and herbalism because they look at the body and they look at the body-mind interaction from a very different way. They don't attach to the label that's being given. And so, when you have fresh eyes and you're looking at it from that perspective, it's in those moments that you can listen to the person and you can listen to what their body is saying in a very different way.

Katie: And you have I know something called The Six Pillars of Health. I'm assuming, like, some of these relate to some of these aspects that we've talked about. But, like, to your point, everything is so integrated and I think a large part of the solution, whatever the cause may be is realizing the integration of the mind and the body and not trying to treat them as separate things. But talk to us about The Six Pillars.

Dr. Ariana: Yes. So, I would say that there's no separating out mind, body, and spirit. And what I mean by that is that when we work on one area, let's say we work on the body, we have the potential and I would say more of the mindset to be open to the other areas. And we are doing a great disservice to the entirety of our being if we only look at one area. So, when I do work with people, whether it's with consulting, coaching, or when I saw patients, I spent a great deal of time listening from all three places within me in order to assess where someone is at and how open they are to the other areas.

And so, with The Six Pillars, obviously, I had to separate out different facets of health, wellness in order to integrate. And I think we do that for the sake of articulating or getting our point across. But even within each one of those pillars, I'm constantly looking at it from all of the other pillars. And so, whether it's approaching health by working on the body or approaching health by working on the mind, mental-emotional, or the environmental aspect, or the spiritual aspect, you're still integrating all of them. And so, over time, the more and more we address all of those areas, we eventually start working more in harmony. And then I'd say there's greater satisfaction in life and love.

Katie: I agree. I'm curious if you...I know that you have website, and I will link to it in the show notes. But for people who are wanting to get started, I know you work with some people remotely, I believe, but are there specific modalities, in general, that you feel like can be a good starting point for someone to look at in their local area or wanting to work with someone in person or, like, just kind of starting points you could direct people towards?

Dr. Ariana: Yes. I would say that you alluded to cognitive behavioral therapy. And I wouldn't say that I'm against cognitive behavioral therapy. And I think that that sometimes is a place to start. Anytime you do any type of counseling, though, I would really encourage people to combine it with some type of energy work, whether it be cranial sacral therapy, whether it be Reiki. I know there's a lot of things out there. Find a practitioner that you trust, that you resonate with, and really combine that with any type of counseling or talk therapy that you might be moved to do because this really will start addressing it from multiple areas or for multiple ways. And the other thing, quite simply, is you talked about this too, is gratitude, doing gratitude work. I would say if there's one thing I would love to implement into all of the schools, it would be to do gratitude work first thing in the morning. And what that does is it really brings you into a different mindset for

the day. And the things that you draw to you and the things that you will hook into will start vibrating at a different frequency if you will. So that's one thing I would say.

And right now, there's so many different apps and different meditation resources out there. And that would be another thing that I would really encourage people to start doing because everyone describes their stress load differently. I would say, though, that we all do experience stress. And now with what's happening in the world, that's really shifted things for a lot of people. And if we can return back to ourselves, and what I mean by that is doing breathwork, doing some type of meditation, doing self-reflection, that can really keep us grounded and staying present. So I would say that those are some tools that they're just simple tools that you can implement, and even hooking in with your community and finding different practitioners, and even working with naturopaths. A lot of different naturopaths have different emphasis on health. Some are more in the energy work field. And so that can be a really good complement to working on your health in a more complex way.

Katie: Yeah, I think that's an important point. And I know for a long time, I resisted any of the energy work type things or anything that I had, kind of, written off as woo-woo. Like, I wanted to see the studies and I was very much in the logical part of that. And I think for me, part of that was also a fear response and a way to avoid maybe having to face some of the stuff I eventually was very glad I worked through. But I think people can be a little bit skeptical with some of those things. And I was too until I tried some of them. Even things like tapping was a beneficial tool for me in working through some things. And until that point, I had kind of written it off as not really...I didn't know that there was any much behind it and then found it really profound personally. And so, I think, to your point, you know, going into things with wanting to approach the mindset side and being willing to try things that maybe you haven't tried before is a big key.

Dr. Ariana: Yeah, getting in the habit of, I would say, being around people and reading things that you don't agree with and learn to suspend judgment so that you can truly listen to what's being said, that's a skill that can really lend itself to going deeper within your own story and being open to shifting your lens.

Katie: Agreed.

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I think maybe another important point to, kind of, hone in on and that touches on something you said before about not getting too attached to your diagnosis is maybe also not getting too attached to your trauma, and not identifying with it. Because that was something that surprised me. I think because I avoided doing anything to work through that and just basically avoided it all together for so long, that it had grown. It basically had become such this big thing that I expected it to take a really long time and be really difficult and be this huge fight to work through any of that. And it kind of surprised me when I started actually going through it was that we have the ability within us to release some of these things much more easily than I expected. And perhaps you see this with people as well but, like, within us is the power to let go of those things, and to forgive, and to make those mindset shifts that make us more resilient.

And so, you know, when people ask me, like, "Who's the therapist that helped you the most or who's the one person I should work with who's gonna fix me?" I kind of go back to, well, you are, you're the person who's going to eventually work through it, and you're the person who's waiting to fix you. And just like with other forms of medicine, you wanna find practitioners who are great partners in that. But for me, it seemed like a part of that was stepping into the responsibility of realizing I had the power to do that and then having the courage to actually take those steps. But I'd love to hear from your perspective, having worked with a lot of people, because maybe that'll be encouraging to some people listening is that this doesn't necessarily have to be a battle you fight for the rest of your life. At least for me, like I was able to release some of that and find freedom from it. And it was not the fight that I expected it to be. Do you find that with other people as well?

Dr. Ariana: Yes. And one thing I'd say is that the mindset and goal here is to get people as independent and autonomous with their overall health to tap into their inner knowing, intuition, and true power, which really lends itself to seeking out teachers, experts, and other forms of guidance so that you can further expand. It is a good thing to check ourselves for it keeps us humble and curious. And I'd say those two qualities, ultimately lead to wellness. And on top of all that is finding our tribe, having community. And you brought up a good point, you thought you were alone, right? And that can be so isolating if we think that no one else has shared our trauma. And I think it's so important to understand that we are part of a larger community of people that have struggled with or have trauma, and the more and more we can work through our traumas, we can stay more and more connected with those around us.

And that's another thing. Even, you know, as of late, we all feel a lot more isolated. And we do a great deal of self-isolation. And then there's the whole isolation with what's going on. And I'd say that the more and more you really delve into your own trauma and offload it, and you cultivate that relationship with yourself. You realize that you are connected to other things and other people around you and you have this rich community that is here to support you, and to love you, and to be with you, and to help you through this process. And you have to be willing to ask. You have to be willing to go into those darker areas, those places that you're resisting if you will. I say, whatever you resist, lean into.

Katie: That's another great quote of, "What you resist, lean into." I've noticed that as well. I used to call it cocooning. Like, when I was going through something difficult, I would find myself, kind of, isolating from everyone, which, logically is the last thing that would make sense to do. But it seems like it's kind of an instinct for a lot of people. So I think that's a really important reminder is when you start to feel that, maybe challenge yourself and try to do the opposite or try to find a touchpoint in a community because I know I've talked about the statistics on here before of, like, loneliness, being more dangerous than smoking or eating vegetable oils, or not exercising. And, like to your point, we're seeing an epidemic of this right now, which I have a feeling, and you're maybe already seeing, is going to probably bubble up a huge amount of mental health problems for a lot of people. And I think community is a very big part of the antidote to that. Do you have any other tips for people who, maybe it's just me, but people who like me tend to cocoon when they're having a hard time for establishing those communities or for anyone and just reestablishing that after such a tough year?

Dr. Ariana: Yes, I'm gonna give you a very simple exercise that I myself have done. And that is going for a walk and having eye contact with people and...well, if you're wearing a mask, obviously, it's hard to smile and have them notice but you can smile with your eyes. That is one thing that will get you out of the house. You don't have to look for any community online. You know, it can be such an easy thing to implement. And that will start making you feel better, slowly and surely, and you'll connect more and more. So that is a very foundational practice that I myself have implemented. And you'd be surprised at how many people are willing to connect with you. And you have to be willing, though, to leave your house and do that. And I have worked with people that can't even get out of bed. So people are at different places. And so that's one of the exercises that I think is foundational.

Aside from that, as far as community goes, I'm gonna say something that that may be a little triggering. And this goes back to our parents. If we feel so alienated from our parents, whatever our parents were like, this is that pressure that keeps building up in our subconscious, if you will, that makes us feel disconnected. You know, I say we're 50% our mother and we're 50% our father. And of course, we do a lot more with that. But if we feel so disconnected and we don't embrace our parents on some level, then we always have a tendency to alienate ourselves and to self-isolate more. And sometimes, you can be in a room full of people and still feel so alone. And so that's why I really hone in on those relationships, those early relationships with our parents that have to be looked at. Let's face it, our parents weren't perfect. And if they were perfect, we wouldn't know how to survive in the world. And so, that relationship, however tumultuous or traumatic it was, finding something that you can connect with will allow you to have a perspective shift and allow you to know that where you come from is there to support you in some way, and you have to be willing to find that.

Katie: I think...I'm so glad you brought up the idea of parents, I'd love to touch on this a little bit more, and maybe see if you have any recommendations for therapies or books or ways that people can delve into this because I've also talked to people who say things like, "I objectively don't have any really overt traumas. There's nothing horrific that happened to me in my childhood. And my parents, by all accounts, were great parents. And, like, I feel bad that I had these problems to work through because my childhood was perfect." But realizing, even for people who had childhoods like that, there seems to always be things in therapy, at least that I found, that go back to some of those inner child experiences or to things that happened young. And, for instance, for me, I had a couple of memories of things when I was maybe even just 3 or 4, where I had spilled something or done something that was a genuine mistake, and my mom just kind of lost her temper with me. And that had, kind of, reframed this internal narrative that I had or framed this idea that, like, I wasn't good enough or I never did things right.

And I kind of maintained that my whole life and it had driven this need to prove that I was capable and worthy of love and all these things. And then when I was able to go back and look at that, now through the lens of being a mom myself as well and go, "Oh, well, that was not at all my mom thinking I wasn't good enough. That was my mom probably also having a stressful day and my mom also processing having lost her mom recently," and all these other things. It totally changed how I saw that situation. But I think even things like that wouldn't have stood out, you know, as like a really drastic trauma by any means. Someone wouldn't look at that and be like, "Well, you weren't, you know, beaten or anything horrible," and I wasn't, but it still stuck in my mind for 30 years. So, talk a little bit more about how we can start to unpack some of those pieces of our parent relationships and things that happened when we were young children and use those to work through.

Dr. Ariana: And yeah, Katie, thank you for sharing that story. And that is something too as far as, you know, that one incident that you finally connected with. That is not necessarily something that we are aware of. You know, when we have the disempowering belief that I'm not good enough, we don't automatically trace it back to that one instance where our mother, you know, yelled at us when we spilled something. And so that's a journey at times and unraveling that.

And back to, you know, your question, I might say that, first off, being aware of what that belief is that keeps running over and over in your mind, in your entire being, being aware of what that is, is a really good first place to start because sometimes we don't know what it is. We don't know, if it's, I'm not smart enough, I'm not good enough, I am afraid of success or whatever it may be. The more and more you can connect with that, I think that starts to unravel what it is you may be running from. And then we can take a look at those relationships that we had and how our interactions were as children to really see what we have modeled from our parents and why.

And we don't question that. And a lot of times when we're not aware of that, that becomes our blind spot. You know, as soon as you say, "I will never be like my mother," look out. You're more likely to be like your mother because that is your blind spot. And so really going into what those dynamics were like when you were a child and what things have I picked up and how am I like my mother? How am I like my father? And sometimes we don't wanna look at those because our relationship with our parents is so broken. And then we

lose that part that can reach past it and actually change it. So you're more apt to change, the more and more you embrace that relationship with your parents. Did I answer your question? I might have...

Katie: Yeah, that absolutely did. Yeah, I think it's a very difficult thing and one that we may not often think of as the root of problems, but one that's important and, to your point, can be very difficult to look at.

Dr. Ariana: Yes. Yes, it is. And it's a journey. It really is. There can be those moments of clarity in those moments where you can really connect. And then there are those moments where you still might get triggered. And that, again, is another opportunity to start piercing through another layer.

Katie: I love that. As we get close to the end of our time, I'd love to hear any other additional resources you would recommend for people and point them to that I can include in the show notes. And also here, if there's a book or a number of books that have had a profound impact on your life, doesn't even have to be related to any of the things we've been talking about, but if so, what they are and why.

Dr. Ariana: Yes. Well, a book related to what we have been talking about, that I quite like, is the book, "Letting Go: The Pathway of Surrender" by David Hawkins. And he really goes quite deeply into different emotions, and what they mean, and how to really unravel it more. So I think that's such an amazing guide to what we've been talking about. And then I would say, two of the more influential books for me would be "Iron John" by Robert Bly and "The Wisdom of the Heart" by Henry Miller. And I first read these in my 20s. And I re-read "Iron John" about five times. And, you know, like a poem, each time you read it, you delve deeper and deeper into its meaning as you yourself grow on your journey. They both untangle the intricacies of the human condition and capture what surrender truly means and what it looks like. And this, ultimately, that piece of surrendering, this really allows you to start, well, as David Hawkins says, letting go.

Katie: That is very timely. I've actually had three other people in my life recommend David Hawkins in some way in the past week, which tells me I probably want to go and pick up his book and start reading, but I will link it in the show notes as well. I know he's written many other books as well from what I understand.

Dr. Ariana: Yes. Yeah. Yeah.

Katie: So I'll put those links as well as the other ones that you mentioned and as well as to your work online so people can find you. And I think I'd like to just end with the encouragement to anyone listening. Like we've talked about in this, like, we within us have the power to work through these things. It can often not be as big of a fight or it doesn't have to be as big of a fight as it may seem. And there's support and community and resources, and there's always someone that can be there to help. And just any parting thoughts from you to anyone listening who maybe is in those stages of processing trauma?

Dr. Ariana: Yes, I'd say we each have an inner knowing, to reiterate what I said earlier, and we can tap into that inner knowing. The more we are present with our own discomforts, as you said, whether they be physical or emotional, our insight about that discomfort in ourselves can increase. And with that new insight and a little courage, we can shift our perspective. And as I said, we can even shift our consciousness and that is a magnificent thing.

Katie: I love it and a great place to wrap up. But Dr. Ari, thank you for your time. Thank you for all the work that you do. I hope this gave some people listening a direction in which to start working through things. And, again, all the things we've mentioned will be in the show notes. But thank you for your time today.

Dr. Ariana: Thanks so much, Katie. It was a pleasure.

Katie: And thanks to you guys, as always, for listening, and for sharing your most valuable resources, your time and your energy with us today. We're both 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.