

A sunburst graphic with numerous thin, light gray lines radiating from a central point behind the text.

Healthy Moms Podcast

BY **Wellness Mama**[®]
simple answers for healthier families

Episode 64: Keep Your Family Safe With Tips from
Former CIA Agent Jason Hanson

Katie: Hi welcome to The Healthy Moms Podcast. I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com. This episode is brought to you by two companies that I absolutely love and whose products I use all the time the first is Kettle and Fire Bone Broth, which is the only USDA-certified grass-fed bone broth made with organic ingredients, and their broth is made with bones from grass-fed, pasture-raised, antibiotic, and hormone-free cows, and it's also delicious. The best part is it's nonperishable, so it's available in many stores but it can also be shipped anywhere in the US without refrigeration, which makes shipping less expensive and more environmentally-friendly.

The second company is Thrive Market which is a hybrid of Whole Foods, Amazon, and Costco. And what I mean by that is it has a membership fee like Costco, to let you into the low prices, then it has it's online like Amazon, and it carries natural products like Whole Foods. And if you live in a real-food-desert like I do, where it's hard to find many specialty items, Thrive Market may be your answer. So check both of those out in the show notes for today's episode. Without further ado, on to today's episode.

Welcome to the Healthy Moms Podcast, I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com. I'm so excited about today's guest. Jason Hansen is a former CIA officer and the New York Times bestselling author of, "Spy Secrets That Can Save Your Life." He's appeared pretty much everywhere including "Shark Tank," "Fox and Friends," "Dateline," "NBC Today show," "Rachael Ray," and a lot of others. He runs Spy Escape and Evasion School on his 320 acres spy ranch in Cedar City, Utah, and he's also just a wealth of knowledge. Jason welcome and thank you for being here.

Jason: My pleasure, thank you, Katie.

Katie: So this is definitely going to be different than our normal episodes. I typically focus on health, but I feel like you are an expert that moms need to hear from, because you kind of in a sense talk about a different kind of health, which is being situationally aware and like being aware of your surroundings and being safe, and I think you can offer a lot of advice to moms. But to start, can you talk about your history and how you got here, how you came to be in the CIA? I believe you're also a dad, maybe you can talk about that.

Jason: Yeah, sure absolutely. So I was born and raised in the Washington DC area and growing up, of course, there's every agency in the world in your background. So coming out of college I knew I didn't want to a regular job, so to say, and the CIA and the Secret Service offered me a job. I decide to go with the agency because I figured it'd be a little more exciting and I was there from 2003 to 2010. It's a wonderful place, a great job, I had a blast there.

But the agency is a single man's life. So I eventually wanted to get married and have kids which you mentioned, so right now I have three kids. They are ages four, two and a half, and one, so our household is very entertaining, to say the least, and my wife also runs a preschool. So I actually do a lot of teaching and training with moms and kids and we have our kind of Spy Kids course is what we call it. So I'm very familiar with what we're going to talk about today and what moms are looking for in kids, just because my wife is always telling me this stuff when I'm helping out with the kids and moms.

Katie: That's awesome. Well, to jump right in, I feel like a lot of women don't really feel like they need to be that concerned with self-defense or to carry any kind of self-defense tool, assuming that they're just... Pretty much in most places in today's world is safe. I think statistically thankfully that's true, but the statistics don't really matter if you're that one person who is the victim of an attack. So in your

opinion from everything that you've seen and studied and taught, do women need to be concerned with self-defense in today's world?

Jason: Definitely, and I think you said it perfectly. So I have trained thousands upon thousands of students over the years, and it is a very small percentage that anything happens to, but that very small percentage, lives have been saved. So for instance, we're going to talk about the tactical pen later on, which is my number one favorite self-defense tool. A woman I trained, two men tried to kidnap her at a gas station in Sarasota, Florida, she was able to fight them off with this tactical pen and thankfully not get kidnapped.

So whether you're at the playground or walking down the street or a shopping mall, I have story after story of people that unfortunately have almost been robbed or kidnapped, and because they had awareness, because they were paying attention to their surroundings, and because they were going to do stuff we are going to talk about later on they were able to get out of it. So the way I look at it is, I pray that it never happens to me, my wife, my kids, but I have peace of mind that my wife does know what to do if, heaven forbid, she ever find herself in that situation.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. I'm the same way. I think you've met my husband and we're both trying to be very situationally aware and have taken self-defense classes, but it's the same thing. It's all these tools I hope I never, never have to use, but if I ever do they're there.

And you've written a lot. I've read some of the things on your blog and I'm going to link to some of your blog posts. But you talk about mindset, and I think you wrote something about how, when they interviewed criminals in jail, many of them claimed they could spot a victim within seconds from the person's body language, and could tell if they'd be an easy target or not. So can you talk about that and give some advice on basically how not to look like a target?

Jason: Sure. Yeah, they did do that interview where they went to the prisons, handed all these criminals pictures and basically said, "Would you rob him? Would you rape her? Would you attack him? Would you attack her?" And it had nothing to do whether you were male or female. It had nothing to do if you were big and strong, or if you were four-foot tall woman, it was how you carried yourself. So walking tall, having your head up, walking with confidence.

One of the most important things I share is that if, heaven forbid, you ever find yourself being followed... Let's say somebody is following you out of the Walmart parking lot, and you just know this guy is following you. Well, Hollywood tells you to put your head down, to walk faster, to look sheepish and kind of look like an innocent victim. That is the last thing you want to do. If you ever think you're being followed, whether it's in the parking lot, whether it's in a mall. You want to be walking tall, and actually turn around and make eye contact, and let that person know you're onto him. You can even say something to him. Because then that person realizes, "Whoa. This person is going to put up a fight. There's no way I'm going after that woman. I'm going to find another victim."

A perfect example I'd give you is, I trained a woman who lived in Fairfax, Virginia. She told me that she was on a jogging trail one morning, and she was sure that this guy was following her on the jogging trail. So she said the first thing that came to her mind is, she immediately turned around, she threw her hands up and she just yelled, "What?" to the guy, and she said, "As soon as I did that, he looked like he had done something, he immediately turned around and ran the opposite way."

When you think about it, that proves that guy was a criminal, because if I'm on a jogging trail and a woman turns around and throws her hands up and says, "What?" I'll look at her like she has three heads like she's crazy and say, "What are you talking about?" But guilty people have guilty reactions, which that guy showed because he turned around and ran away.

So not necessarily that you have to turn around and say, "What," but I've been in situations where I've turned around and I've said, "Hey, can I help you?" or "Hey, do you have the time? Do you know what time it is?" So basically, let this person know that you see them, that you're onto them. That way they'll realize they need to go find somebody else.

Katie: That's really smart. So on that note, what are some of the basic things that women can do if maybe this has never been on the radar before. What are some of the first things you tell women to start doing to have that mindset, to not walk like the victim?

Jason: The easiest thing to do, but yet the one that most people don't do is, get away from that Smartphone. Use the Smartphone when you're in a safer space, meaning you're in the bathroom, you're in a store where it's safer. But as you're walking through the parking lot, as you're walking through a store, don't be texting and have your head down, because most crimes are crimes of opportunity. So most crimes are somebody who wants drug money, because most crimes are drug related.

So he's waiting at that shopping mall and he's watching everybody leave a shopping mall and he's saying to himself, "Who looks like they're going to be the easiest victim and cause me the least trouble?" And if one woman walks out in her head is down and she's texting, and another woman walks out and her head is up and she's looking around the parking lot scanning, he's obviously going to choose the woman who's texting because she'll never see it coming, she's very easy to surprise-attack. So don't text, stay away from that Smartphone. And the good news is, since 90% of people are in zombie mode and are paying attention to a Smartphone, if you're that 10% of people that have your head up, you'll be the 10% that aren't chosen as victims.

Katie: That's a really good tip. What about with kids? I feel like that adds a whole layer of complexity. For instance, we used to live in a big city and I knew a woman personally who had someone attempt to carjack her while her two small kids were buckled in the backseat. So what are some ways that women can be more safe and aware on cars in parking lots especially with children?

Jason: Yeah, so like I said, I've got three kids under the age of five and I'm obviously taking them out all the time even though I try not to. I would rather not go shopping or leave the house with them because it's obviously chaos. So first thing is, still of course, stay off the phone, watch the kids, but you've got to remember to just lift your head up every few seconds. So not that you have to have your head on a swivel and look like a crazy person raising your head every point five seconds. But as you're managing the kids, and as I'm trying to keep my two-year-old from hitting his sister and running out in the parking lot, and the one-year-old from screaming, I still keep my head up and look around.

Now in a car, the woman you mentioned almost got carjacked, is number one, the most important rule, never ever let a criminal obviously get in a car with your children or have you get in the car. So what you actually want to do is, if a criminal is coming up, your kids are buckled in their seats, they're in their car seats and he tries to carjack you, say, "Here's the keys, you're not taking the car till I get my two kids out." You don't give them an option. You don't ask permission. You never ever let him talk you into getting in the car and going somewhere with all of you. You just got to stand your ground because we know statistically, if you get in the car or if he takes your kids without you, everybody's going to end up dead. So you tell the criminal again, "I'm taking my kids out. You can have the car you can have my wallet and credit cards, but I'm first getting the kids out." And criminals aren't used to somebody standing up and telling him that, so in all the cases...not all the cases, but in the vast majority of cases women have done this, it has ended well and they've gotten their children out.

Katie: That's a really good tip as well because you're right, I feel it is chaos when you take kids out and you're like trying to carry one or two and to juggle. So that's a really good tip as well.

The other place obviously I would think that women are often is at home, especially stay-at-home moms. I know I spend a lot of time in our home, often here with my kids alone when my husband is not here, and we've talked about this as a family, but can you offer some strategies for improving your security and safety at home? So, for instance, what should someone do if an intruder is trying to get in or has already made it in the home?

Jason: Like everything in life you want to make yourself look like the hardest target, so walking out of the mall with your head up, and somebody else is texting, they're going to choose the easiest target. You want your house to be the same way. So criminals case neighborhoods, it may be two weeks it may be five minutes, but as they're going up and down your neighborhood, you want them to say, "Whoa, that house looks like it's going to be a pain in the butt. The other houses in this neighborhood are going to offer an easier pass to get into."

So on your house, have an alarm, have an alarm sign. Make sure you have a motion sensor lights. Have security cameras. They're very inexpensive these days, and even if you don't want real cameras, get a fake dummy camera. They look the exact same as the real cameras and I've got to tell you a quick funny story.

I have a client in Salt Lake City who did not want to put real cameras on his house and so we put up the fake cameras that you can buy on Amazon for about \$10, and he called me one day, and this was after about a year after we put the cameras, and he said "Jason, Jason, guess what? My neighbors got robbed, and the police came over, and they want to pull the security footage from my cameras. That way they can see if they can identify the robbers." and so I said, "Well, what did you tell them?" and he said, "Obviously, I did tell me cameras were fake and there was no security footage, but how awesome is it that I didn't get robbed and my neighbor did." So criminals again, if they see cameras, they are not necessarily going to know if they're fake or real they're going to choose a house where they're not going to be on video.

Then as far as in the house, what my wife does a lot, of course when she's at home during the time when she's not often busy...like I said, she runs a preschool. But alarms have the home-mode where you can set the alarm, so that way while you're at home you can walk around you can do everything, but if somebody attempts to enter or exit one of the doors, it sets the alarm off, you have that very loud siren. So I highly recommend setting the alarm.

Then you always have to have some tool to defend yourself. I train a lot of women, some love guns, and God bless America, use a gun to defend yourself. Others say, "I'm comfortable with a knife. I have a lot of knives in the kitchen." Use that. Some people say it's a tactical pen. Some people say, it's pepper spray. Use whatever you're comfortable with, but have it handy, have it somewhere. If you're using a gun, make sure it's locked up, but in a rapid access safe, meaning you can push four buttons and the lid pops open, that's what I personally use on my nightstand.

But the worst thing you could do is have no plan of action. So I travel a lot, my wife is often home alone with our kids. So she has a plan of action to use, and knows exactly what to do. So plan something even if it's, "Hey, my knife is sitting here on top of the fridge, I know to go grab it if someone tries to invade our home."

Katie: That's really smart. So I know we've practiced what you do in the event of a fire, and we've practiced that with the kids. I feel like that would be something that would probably be also good to practice with them is what to do if someone's trying to get in, what to do if someone does get in. Or

even like, if something would happen to Mom and Dad what do you do? Is it better in those cases to try to tell kids to get out or to hide or...? Are there any statistics on that?

Jason: Yeah, what you want to do is actually have the kids remain in their rooms, and of course depending on the age of your kids, it's easier said than done. But because the bad guy could have a weapon...a gun, a knife...because bullets could be flying, because chaos could be ensuing. Tell your kids that they should remain in the room.

I'll tell you real quick my home defense plan for my family. So I am a gun guy as I said, I've three young kids so every gun in my house is locked up. We have a gun safe which is my rapid access safe for my nightstand. If somebody is trying to kick in our door at 3:00A.M. my wife actually runs to the kid's room, grabs the baby, the other two kids are in the same room, and they hunker down there while they call 911. I grab my gun and go to the top of the stairs, warn the intruder and hopefully he's not foolish enough to try and come up the stairs and get past me to my wife and kids.

So I will tell you is, the room that you want to end up in is the room with the weakest member of the family. What I mean by that is, if 98 year-old grandma lives with you, that's the room everybody should go to because grandma is the slowest. If you have a baby in another room, then you want to have the baby's room be the room that everybody goes to because the baby can't move. So right now the baby is still with my wife and I so we can just pick her up and go to the other two kids, which is easy. But if she were somewhere else, my wife would grab the other two kids, put them in the baby's room, since the baby is in a crib and not moving. So you want to make sure that the fastest people can get to the slowest person, hunker down while dad or mom or whoever's assigned can be that kind of line of defense while somebody else is calling 911.

Katie: That's smart. So, if for instance I was home alone with the kids, I could practice having my older ones call 911?

Jason: Exactly, Yep.

Katie: And I put myself in between? That makes sense. That's really smart.

Katie: Do you love the taste and the benefits of bone broth but don't love how time-consuming it is to make? With the time you spend sourcing the best ingredients and then savoring it for hours on end on a stove, Kettle & Fire solves that problem with their bone broth. So they use only bones from 100% grass-fed, pasture-raised cattle that are never given hormones and antibiotics. It's also unique because they focus on bones that are especially high in collagen which is one of the healthiest things you can put in your body. Another great thing about them, is they use really eco-friendly minimal packaging, and their bone broth is nonperishable. So unlike many bone broths on the market, it ships without the need for refrigeration, which is also much more eco-friendly.

It is available in many stores so definitely check your local area, but if it's not, like it isn't for me, you can order it online and have it shipped to your door, which is what I do. So to check it out and to find out more about why their bone broth is so wonderful, go to kettleandfire.com/wellnessmama.

If you're like me, and you live in an area where it's sometimes hard to find any kind of specialty ingredients, especially if you're talking about organic ingredients, gluten-free foods or allergy-friendly foods, I highly recommend that you check out Thrive Market. So Thrive is like a combination of Costco, Amazon and Whole Foods and here's why I say that.

So like Costco, they have a yearly membership fee and this lets you access all of their special pricing and deals. Like Amazon, they're online and they also have very fast shipping and it's usually free with

most orders. And then, like Whole Foods, they carry high quality foods and specialty ingredients, and especially focus on GMO-free and organic foods. So it's really been helpful to me and I know that you're going to love it too. You can also get a free jar of coconut oil with your first order. So check them out. Go to thrivemarket.com/wellnessmama.

Katie: So actually I'd love for you to settle a kind of marital dispute for me with this. So with travel, that's actually our biggest stumbling block with situational awareness and safety because you have met my husband and he is very situationally aware all the time and he really worries about traveling with six kids, because he's like it's not actually possible to protect all of them at one time if something got bad. And so we've debated about this a lot but we've kind of held off on any big travel because it's not easy to travel with kids. And there is a perception that...probably a wrong one...that going to other countries is less safe than here, although I think people in other countries may argue with us about especially our big cities. But is there more danger when you're traveling and what can you do while you're traveling? Especially if you've obviously can't carry a gun through airports, you can't carry a knife on an airplane. What are some ways you can stay safe when you're traveling?

Jason: Oh, the million dollar question. I do not have six kids, I have three kids, and I don't like to travel often with them because of the security issues, but also because it is a nightmare. So it's funny, we just took a family trip to Hawaii and it was a beautiful family trip, but being on the airplane for six hours with three kids and everything is very tough. So there is no perfect answer. The perfect answer is right now because my wife and I only have three kids...it's not six or more is...if anything happens she's going to round them up, get in the opposite direction. I'm pretty much going to rush the bad guy, take out the bad guy do whatever.

I'm very blessed to have been trained by the CIA, so I'm confident I can do that, but if... Basically, you've got to have someone who's the sacrificial lamb. I know that's a poor way to put it, but you've got to have someone who goes and stops what's happening. So if a guy's trying to push you or attack your family, I'm going to go and be the frontline. My wife is going to quickly huddle three kids and get away while I sit there and block them and hopefully stop them.

I'll tell you my biggest concern and what needs to be people's concern especially if you take your kids overseas. So my kids learn or look... excuse me, I'll just say learn, look nothing like me. Yes, they're all my biological children but they've got blond hair and blue eyes, and I am brown-eyed and brown-haired. So be careful when you're taking your blue eyed, blond-haired kids, or whatever American looking kids overseas. Kidnapping is very prevalent so they'd love to have, again, some blue-eyed, blond-haired kid in all these foreign countries.

I also worried about that here traveling in the US. So when we recently traveled to Hawaii, my wife was watching two of our kids, I'm assigned to the other one. We're keeping an eye because amusement parks, airports, whatever it is, criminals target these because they know they're busy avenues, and it is so easy for someone to snatch your child. So what I would do is assign different parents different children and say okay, "You're in charge of these three, you're in charge of these three. Keep an eye on them." Because again, my biggest fear these days is kidnapping because of what I do for a living. I hear horror story after horror story. So if you make assignments. If you say, "Hey, if something happens, I'm going to scream, yell, I'm going to jab him with a tactical pen, I'm going to punch him in the stomach... whatever your plan of action is. But have that plan of action and keep an eye on those kids. Do not look down at that Smartphone and then look up and see your kid disappeared. Fight the urge to get sucked into electronics when you're with your children in busy places.

Katie: Yeah, that's a great tip, and on that note, I know it's definitely not a comfortable subject to even bring up, but we know that sex trafficking is on the rise and the kidnapping of children is on the rise.

So what are some things we can do to teach our children, just like we talked about, not being to look like a victim yourself? How can we teach our kids the things that will help them in that situation and also what should we prepare them for if there ever is an attempted kidnapping? What should they do in that situation?

Jason: First and you've already mentioned it is, use common sense. Don't take your families to countries you shouldn't be taking them. So there is not a chance my family will go to Mexico. There's not an amount of money in the world. And I have clients who have tried to pay me very large sums and I said, "I'll meet you in Las Vegas, but I will not enter Mexico." Don't go over to Thailand and take your children kind of thing. Just bad, bad ideas. But even here in the US, if something has happened, teach your kids basic stranger danger.

As I said earlier my kids are four, two and a half, and one. The two and a half and the four year-old I've taught, "Hey if a stranger comes up, you yell, you scream, you fall to the ground, you kick, you just do all kinds of crazy things. And then we practice it and they think it's fun to practice with dad. Because when they grab the kids rest or whatever, you don't want them to just be dragged along walking. You want to teach them to fall to the ground so they're hard to drag. My two and a half year old, who still loves to bite, I teach them, "Okay, you can't bite people, but if a stranger tries to take you and grabs you, you're allowed to bite them, and scream, and go crazy.

And again we do family nights where we practice this stuff. It's fun and they'll every once in a while come up to me and say, "Hey dad, do the stranger thing where you grab my wrist." I'll grab it, my two-year-old will start screaming, fall down kicking, making it very, very tough to take her away. So that's what we teach and we practice it every now and then, once a month or so.

Katie: That's a really good idea and that way it's not so scary to them. It doesn't hopefully scare them away, but they get those skills and they practice it, and hopefully that will kick in if, God forbid, that should ever happen.

Let's talk about improvised weapons too, because I know a lot of people listening may not be comfortable like you have said you are, and like I would be, with a gun and in their home or with carrying a knife around, but that's what I thought was so fascinating about the things you write. There are all these improvised weapons that your baby could teeth on without hurting themselves, but you could use as a weapon. So let's talk about some of those.

Jason: Yeah, I'll start off about it with number one favorite weapon, it's called the tactical pen. A tactical pen is a regular writing pen, so you can take the cap off you can write with it, but it's made of aircraft grade aluminum, it has a point on the end, so you could smash out a window if you were trapped in a car going under water, but you can also strike people. Earlier I mentioned the woman two men tried to kidnap in Sarasota, Florida, she fought him off with that.

Because you can't carry guns and knives on airplanes I've carried my tactical pen all over the world. I'm getting ready to go on an airplane after this interview to fly to New York City which is one of my least favorite places in the world just because it is so restrictive with what you're allowed to carry to protect yourself. So I'll have my tactical pen as the way to defend myself. My wife has used it. We have so many customers who have fought off kidnappings or people trying to mug them. One guy over in China, two different times, people tried to mug him and he used his tactical pen.

Another reason I'm a huge fan of this is... I mentioned earlier about the woman jogging, a lot of women I trained, they're going for walks or exercising in the morning and they run with this in their hand. That way they don't have to reach for a gun or a knife. It's already in your hand if somebody tries to harm you. So I would say without a doubt that's the number one thing I'd recommend for

women, for moms, and that's what most women or moms that we train do carry. So I would go with that.

Other options are... and this is getting more or not in this silly round, but you can be as creative as you want. And back to me thinking of flying, because I'm about to get on an airplane here in a little bit, is I have a buddy... and again remember this is more sillier/out there...who does one or two things. He'll take a sock with him on the airplane and he'll bring either a soda can or a small bag of pennies. When he's on that plane, he'll put the bag of pennies in the sock or put a soda can in his sock, and that is a nasty improvised weapon.

If you swing a bag of pennies or you swing a soda can that's inside a sock, that will absolutely hurt somebody. But, remember anything can be an improvised weapon when somebody is trying to harm you. You could pick up a rock, you could pick up a stick on the side of the road and start hitting them. In a life and death situation, I'd prefer to have things on me like I said, a gun, a knife, a tactical pen. But if I didn't, I'm going to look for anything around me that I could throw at them, that I could strike them with.

I highly recommend you remember too is, always go for the eyes. And that could be gouging the eyes with your thumbs, that could be throwing something at a person's eyes. Because if you take out their eyes they can't see you to harm you, and there's no body builder in the world that can lift enough weights to lift his muscle eyes. So it's not like you can lift enough weights while your eyes are immune to being poked in the eye. So that's what I teach everybody men or women is, remember if something bad is happening and it is justified, don't be afraid to stick your finger in the eye. Don't be afraid to jab him in the eye with a tactical pen. Don't be afraid to throw something, throw a brush at their eye, because then they're going to bend over to protect their eyes and that gives you that window of opportunity to flee to safety.

Katie: That's a really good tip. Also, I'd love to get your take on something I hear women say a lot, friends of mine even. They're like "Why are you so concerned...?" because I also travel with a tactical pen...they're always, "Why are you so concerned with safety in airports? Aren't they the safest places because they have all this security?" I certainly have my answer, but what's your take on that?

Jason: Criminals love airports. So we have to worry about multiple things these days. We have to worry about the active shooter. So the guy going to the airport and shooting up the place as we now know. But con artists love airports because it's so crowded, people are so busy worrying about their flight. So there are all kinds of scams where they go in bathrooms you put down your bag they walk out with your bag, or else they watch stuff on the belt and they'll snatch somebody else's items off the belt. So people let their guard down during airport visits and when they're doing all that stuff, which they should not. Because, if I went to the dark side, an airport is one of the first places I'd go just because nobody is paying attention, and I know that I could pickpocket, steal all kinds of stuff. So you still have to be very situationally aware at airports.

Katie: That makes total sense. Also, I often hear people say you should never carry a gun or a knife because, unless you're really highly trained like someone in the CIA...is ironically what they usually say...it's more likely to be used against you. So it's safer to just not to carry it. What do you think about that and the statistics around that?

Jason: I think it's 100% false. That is, of course, statistics that are made up. I will tell you there are two ways to get people who don't like guns to like guns. Remember I've trained thousands of people, I've seen all kinds of situations, horrific situations. So the two ways to get somebody was anti-gun to like a gun is one, take them to the shooting range and they'll realize that a gun is a weapon of respect

and that shooting is actually fun. They'll have a great time at the range, and they will say, "Hey, well this isn't scary I enjoy it." The other way to get somebody to realize a gun is an important tool is something horrific happens to them.

True story. Years ago, I'm teaching a pistol class, I had this woman come up to me and she says, "Jason I want you to know why I'm here. I used to think you're a horrible person. I hated you. I knew who you were. I used to think you were the worst person in the world for teaching people how to use guns." and she went on and on and I'm like, "Okay lady, you've clearly hated me. This is a nice intro." And then she says, "I live in a rough area of Washington DC, and somebody broke into my house a while back and raped me, and the police got there long after the rapist was gone and I realized that a gun was the best way to protect myself. So that's why I'm here."

So what I highly recommend to people who are not comfortable with guns is, we're blessed that we live in a country where there are a lot of good trainers out there, find a local NRA-certified trainer, take lots of training. Because yes, if you've never touched a gun, it can be scary, but once you get training and realize it's a tool just like any other tool, once you know how to use it safely, then you'll be confident and then you'll realize, "Hey I know how to respect this tool. I know how to not do anything stupid with it. And yes, it could save my life." Whether you'll use it for home defense or whether you want to carry it concealed out on the streets.

Katie: That's a great point. And you talked about having a safe in your home that would obviously be very difficult for your children or impossible for them to open, and I think of it...like you just said...a gun is a tool just like anything else we use on a daily basis, or like a car, and you just have to take proper safety measures. You would never leave your children unbuckled in the back of a car while you're driving around on a highway. You shouldn't leave a gun on the kitchen table loaded where they can play with it, but they're both a tool and objectively, neither is right or wrong, even though used incorrectly they both could be very dangerous.

Jason: Right, I'm obsessively compulsive about safety. So anybody that's training with me knows I emphasize safety. We don't play games with it. Anybody violates the safety rules they get kicked out, they don't train with me. So my young kids I've taught them already. I show them the gun, I explain to them mommy and daddy are only allowed to touch it, that they're not allowed to touch it. And I love what my kids do is, these days when they see me taking my gun out of the safe or taking my gun off at night, they point to and they say, "Daddy is only allowed to touch it. We can't touch it." They say it over and over. So I've trained them that they're not allowed to touch guns, and if they see one anywhere they know not to touch and to go tell an adult.

Katie: That's a great, great thing to teach your children. What about older children? At what age do you feel like it's actually good to start teaching them self-defense or to be more situationally aware, or even to carry weapons like even a tactical pen?

Jason: Again, I've trained a lot of kids and it all happens to do with maturity. We know that girls tend to mature faster than boys. So when parents bring them to me I say, "Listen, you know your kids best, can your kid handle this tactical pen? Can your kid handle a gun?" And I mean handle a gun as to teach him to start using it and not obviously to have one. So every kid is different.

I was a Boy Scout, I'm an Eagle Scout, and I don't remember the exact age, but I want to say I was ten years old when I started to learn how to shoot. Some kids it maybe earlier, some kids it may be a heck of a lot later. But I remember my dad taking me out with a 22 rifle learning how to shoot and, when each of my kids as of the age that I feel it's safe, they're going to learn how to shoot. I'm going to teach them gun safety. Obviously they're not going to have a gun in their room or have a gun

anywhere, I'm still going to monitor all that, but I think you just got to play it by year, but as soon as you feel they're ready, teach them stuff.

My kids know stranger danger at age four, two and a half...and not the one-year-old yet because he's too young. But as they get older, increase the knowledge to what is age-appropriate to "Hey, kick them in the groin, gouge out their eyes, take this pen and stab them," whatever's age appropriate to share with your kid. So you constantly every year need to be giving them more knowledge about safety.

Katie: That's super helpful and I think you're so right. Like with ours, just looking at their different maturity levels... And we live in a more rural area and hunting is big here, so our kids shoot 22s at a pretty young age, but out on land where we know the backdrop is safe and we know that we can control the safety environment. I was a competitive shooter in high school, I did that for competition. So that's something we want to pass on to our children, but you're still right, it's going to be individual for each child as far as when they're safe and when they're mature enough and obviously never ever no matter what their age leaving them unattended with a gun of course.

Jason: Yeah, and it's funny you mentioned about the hunting, and you're a shooter, which is awesome. So me being from the Washington DC area, the only reason I learned how to shoot at that age it was because of Boy Scouts. Never did any hunting...nothing. I have now moved to a small town in southern Utah where I'm probably the only person in this town that doesn't hunt. And it's only because I don't know how, and I don't have time and nobody is taking me out to go deer hunting. But I see these kids who are much younger than me and, like you said, they are already going deer hunting with their father and they know the knowledge and how to do it.

So obviously where you grow up, me versus the Washington DC area, versus small town USA, they're going to learn differently, and it's every parent's decision when it's right for their child.

Katie: Yeah and I think it's really interesting, now that you say that, to see the different views that people have on guns especially when they come from different areas. So where we are, we both grew up in areas like these. Guns have always been a tool, they're almost always used for hunting. There's no fear culture around guns, but there's a lot of respect for them and kind of gun safety is just built in from the time that you're young, and we have friends from Canada who are from big cities and it's so different their perception of guns and how dangerous they are, and I always have to tell them guns don't shoot themselves. If you if you exercise proper safety they really are just as safe as any other tool and they are just a tool.

Jason: Yeah, it's all about personal responsibility. Learning how to use a tool. It's like everything else. You're not going to get in your car and drive 90 miles an hour and do something stupid or kill somebody in your car. You should respect the gun the same way.

Katie: Exactly. I want to respect your time because you said you have to get on a plane, and so I have two last questions for you. The first would be, women and moms are obviously the most of my audience. We've talked a lot about self-defense for moms and for women, especially with kids. If you had to offer just one piece of advice to all the moms out there to start with, where would you have them start? What would you tell them to do?

Jason: Well it's [inaudible 00:34:56] I would tell them not to be intimidated, that you have to go take some martial arts and be a ninja and take 27 years of experience and train for 20 hours a week kind of thing.

Keep it simple. We all know the kid's phrase, Keep It Simple Stupid. So the people I train, again men or women, they're very busy, I train a lot of executives, they don't have time for this. And I say, "Listen, here's what you want to do you want to punch him in the throat, you want to gouge out their eyes, you want to kick them in the groin. And you want to do all three things because one may not work." So any woman can kick somebody in the groin, my wife, any woman, can gouge somebody in the eye. So don't over think it.

And the beauty is, every mother on the planet has that instinct protect her children. Interestingly enough criminals...and they do know this...if they're scouting people coming out of a store and they see a woman by their self, they see a woman with children, they'll say, "I'm going to go to the woman by herself because I know that woman with children is going to go nuts on me, because she's a mom protecting her cubs." But if you do find yourself in that situation go all out. Don't be afraid to gouge in their eyes, punch in the throat, kick in the groin, because as soon as that criminal sees you're not going to be an easy victim, he's going to go somewhere else, because even though he is a dirt bag criminal, he doesn't want to get injured either. He doesn't want to have somebody kick him in the groin. When he sees that he'll run off and that's what we want. So don't be shy. Don't be timid. Create a scene, go crazy. Save yourself and your family.

Katie: I love it. And lastly I know I'm going to include a link in the show notes and in the e-mails about this so people can find it, but talk a little bit more about the tactical pen and how women can get it and why they would want to carry it.

Jason: Yes, so they want to carry it because I said you can carry it anywhere and everywhere. I've carried it all over the world when I've flown, I've been in courthouses with it, I've been in highly secure government buildings. It's funny, I do a lot of TV shows as you mentioned, very fortunate I have a good PR team, and I did a local morning show in Las Vegas just earlier this week, and there was a police officer on the show, and he was doing bike safety. It was bike safety week, I guess, and he was talking about it and, "Hey come the police station will check your helmets in your bikes." And I went on before him and he saw my tactical pen and I was talking about it, and he said, "Hey, where can I get one of those? That's super awesome, I want it" so I gave them the one I had on me.

But you can be anywhere as I said, courthouses buildings, fly all over, and because it is super easy to use. I just mentioned you don't have to worry about training for 27 years, you shouldn't have to do anything complicated because in a life and death scenario, things slow down, your mind slows down, you go into... you lose all your fine motor skills. So it's a pen you holding your hand and you jab. We can all jab, we can all strike. We can strike the head, the neck, eyes just very easy and intuitive.

So my wife always carries this. My wife always carries this, all my relatives carry these, and it's because it is so easy to use and it could save your life, and I could tell story after story of women who have used this in one fashion or another. So Katie, as you've said, I'm sure you have a link that you can mention where they can direct people to, but please get a tactical pen. Hopefully, you'll only be taking notes and writing down things, but it may save your life.

Katie: Absolutely, and I'll make sure to link to your website and a couple of the articles that you've mentioned things on, and especially to the tactical pen for anyone listening. But Jason, thank you so much for being here. I feel like... personally, this is such an important topic that I feel like maybe moms don't really address as much as they should. And so I think you are doing such amazing work by training all these women, families, men, children, in how to be safer and how to just be situationally safer and not to fall into these situations. So thank you so much.

Jason: You're certainly welcome, it was my pleasure.

Katie: And thanks to all of you for listening, and I'll see you next time on The Healthy Moms Podcast.

Thank you so much for listening to this episode of The Healthy Mom's podcast. To get the bonus from the episode, as well as a content library of free health resources, join the community at wellnessama.com/podcast.