



Episode 648: The Parenting Map to Consciously
Create the Ultimate Parent-Child Relationship
With Dr. Shefali

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This episode is sponsored by Hiya Health, which is my go-to source for multivitamins, especially for my younger kids, before they can swallow pills. Typical children's vitamins are basically candy in disguise, filled with unsavory ingredients and things you would not give to your children otherwise. Most brands on store shelves are filled with sugar, unhealthy chemicals and other gummy junk that growing kids, or frankly, anyone should never eat. And this is why I'm so glad I found Hiya Health. Hiya makes children's vitamins with zero sugar and zero gummy junk and unsavory ingredients. Yet they taste great, and they are perfect for picky eaters. They're also nostalgic and remind me of the children's vitamins I took as a kid, though I probably wouldn't love those ingredients. Hiya is unique because it fills the most common gaps in modern children's diets to provide full body nourishment for our kids, with a yummy taste that they will love and you will not have to fight them over. They manufacture in the USA with globally sourced ingredients that are each selected for optimal bioavailability and absorption. And the best part? They arrive straight to your door on a pediatrician recommended schedule, so you never have to worry about running out. Your first month comes with a reusable glass bottle that your kids can personalize with stickers. So in the case of my kids, with six of them, they never get them confused. And then every month after, Hiya sends a no plastic, eco friendly refill pouch of fresh vitamins. Which means that Hiya isn't just good for your kids, it's also great for the environment as well. So you as a mom no longer have to worry about running out of vitamins, and they will automatically arrive when you need them. You can check them out and get them for your kids by going to Hiyahealth.com/wellnessmama. And you'll also save 50% on your first month.

Katie - Hello, and welcome to the Wellness Mama Podcast. I'm Katie from WellnessMama.com, and this is all about parenting, and more specifically, The Parenting Map, to consciously create the ultimate parent child's relationship with Dr. Shefali. You may be familiar with her work, but she received her doctorate in clinical psychology from Columbia. She specializes in the integration of Western psychology and Eastern philosophy, and she brings together the best of both worlds for her clients. She's an expert in family dynamics and personal development teaching courses around the globe, and she has written four books, three of which are New York Times bestseller, including her two landmark books The Conscious Parent and The Awakened Family.

And in this episode, we're talking about her newest book, The Parenting Map, which is a very how-to focus practical guide to this. But there's a lot in this episode, even if you don't read the book. I really do love her approach, and I haven't settled on a very similar approach in my own parenting, even before I found her work. But it's great to know that there are resources like her available. In this episode, we talk about why she wrote this parenting book specifically, and how it is a how-to guide. We talk about how we can move away from control and more toward connection with our kids. We talk about the chaos and nonsense that we create as parents without even realizing it, and how parents can sometimes accidentally create a pattern of dysfunction in our families.

She talks about how no human being likes to be controlled and how this control will ultimately backfire with children, how to depersonalize interactions with our kids to calm the situation, how anytime we as parents perceive a loss of control, we are going to lose control ourselves. Why kids aren't trying to be disrespectful and that when we fail to understand what is going on under their behavior, we actually create more of the same behavior. And she gives some very specific resources around this.

She talks about the three reasons children misbehave, which are lack of skill, lack of life experience and lack of self worth, and how to help with each of those, we delve into what a savior complex is and how it harms our relationship with our children and how showing up as a savior disempowers them and makes things tougher in the long run. Why she claims, and I agree, that our children do not owe us respect, even though that's a controversial statement. How punishment and learning are opposed and how we can actually help our children instead of punish them. Why to avoid outcome focused parenting, like trying to raise happy, successful children and how this can actually keep them from being in touch with their feelings and what to do instead.

And then how to navigate method of parenting when parents disagree on the method or only one parent is on board. What to do when kids are angry, disrespectful, unmotivated or lie and how to build better connection in these instances and so much more. I really enjoyed recording with her. I love so much about her message. So let's join Dr. Shefali. Dr. Shefali, welcome and thanks for being here.

Dr. Shefali: Thank you for having me.

Katie: Well, I'm extremely excited, personally to chat with you. I have known of your work for a long time. I just got a chance to read your new book, which I will link in the show notes for anyone listening. I certainly highly recommend it. And I am actually in the process of writing my first book on parenting/homeschooling, which is something that it's very personal to my life. And this is your fourth parenting book. I recommend all of yours, but I would love to hear a little bit about the story of this one and what inspired it specifically.

Dr. Shefali: Perfect. So, yes, this is my fourth parenting book. It is called the parenting math. It is the how-to of my other parenting books. My other parenting books with the what and the why. And this book is the how-to do whatever I said in the other books because parents are confused, overwhelmed, exhausted, and we need help in the real, tangible, practical ways to put everything into practice. So that's what this book tries to do. It has 20 steps, lot of illustrations, a lot of exercises to kind of break down what is our role as a parent. How can we not bring our childhood baggage into the relationship and how can we better connect with our children?

Katie: Yeah, I'd love to go deeper about that because like you said, you have the 20 steps and they're in three different sections. I think even just that statement you just made of understanding the role of a parent is maybe something not everyone has thought through entirely. Like, obviously we consider ourselves the parent of these children, but really delving into what does that role entail? What does family culture look like? How does that shape the interactions I have with this child?

And then you use the word connection, which I have found with mine at least, that seems to be one of the most important, if not the most important piece of this is that actual connection we're nurturing with our child. Much more so than even the words we're using or the actions we're saying so much is like keeping that connection as a focus. But I would love for you to walk us through some of the key points of those 20 steps.

Dr. Shefali: Beautiful. So exactly, we don't understand what our role is. We think our role is based on the traditional parenting model, which is we are in control. We are the owners, so to speak, of these children. They owe us their loyalty, their fidelity, their compliance. And so if we don't get the compliance or the obedience, then we have every right to, "punish them". So we kind of look at our role as kind of the rulers of these children. We get to say it's our way or the highway. And that traditional parenting paradigm is really toxic because it suppresses our children's ability to harness their own inner power and inner initiatives. And it really curtails their own initiative in life, their own creativity, to manifest who it is they are, and then creates a legacy of unworthiness.

So, in conscious parenting, what I teach in these 20 steps of the Parenting Map is how can you move away from control into connection? You can still be in charge, but you're in charge of yourself. You're in charge of the environment you create, but you're not in charge of these beings. You're not in control of these beings. Yes, you are responsible, but you're not in control because no one can ever be in control. So the first stage of this book is all about debunking and really eliminating the lies we've been told from traditional parenting. The second stage is all about breaking out of your dysfunctional patterns from your childhood. And stage three is all about building conscious connections with our children.

Katie: Yeah. I find from following your work. And as I was reading this book, I just found myself going, "Yes!" so many times to the statements that you said. And just to reiterate what you just brought up, I love you debunking this idea that we own our children or that we have any sort of actual control over them. I've always come from the idea that control often is tied to fear and not love. And that when you fully love someone, you don't have the need to control them. But like you said, we all have our own baggage that came from childhood or from life experiences that we do bring into our relationships, including our relationships with our children.

But on a practical level, I've joked before, if you think you have control over your children, try to actually force a two year old to do anything that they don't want to do because they just simply won't. We can guide them, we can encourage them, we can even and we're going to talk about this, we can punish them, though. I don't like that term either. But at the end of the day, we can't control them. And so instead, I think your focus on connection is so important and also how you really walk us through focusing on the only part we can't actually control, which is ourselves and our own moods that we're bringing in.

Dr. Shefali: Right. And there's so much we can control on our part that we don't realize. And also we don't realize how much nonsense and dysfunction and chaos we create. We're bringing so much nonsense that is creating more nonsense, and we're just blaming the two year old or the seven year old and not realizing it is us who is actually creating this cycle of dysfunction. We're not seeing our part in it. So not only do I show parents, do not do it, I show them what to do instead. And we need to really understand that no human being likes to be controlled. So even if we can get momentary control because we have so absolutely tyrannized our children, that control will backfire because no human being likes to be controlled at the end of the day.

So when we don't understand our children, when we don't attune to them, when we don't show them that we trust them, we are doing so much harm. And then when we suppress them and oppress them and then wound them through punishment, yell at them, spank them, shame them, we don't realize what a devastating impact it has. Sure, in the moment it can bring about compliance but in the long run it brings about so much more dysfunction than ever before.

Katie: I think that is such an important point and I will say I think my parents were absolutely incredible as far as parents go. But I can recognize patterns, especially after reading this, where they did exhibit reactions of either disappointment or shame or things that you talk about and how that actually caused me to shut down and want to talk to them less or to hide certain parts of myself from them. And so when I had kids I realized I don't want them to ever feel like they have to hide part of themselves from me or that part of them is not good enough. And so I worked really hard their whole lives to make sure that they hopefully don't feel that way.

And mine aren't grown yet. But I have teenagers who are not rebellious. There's no need to limit them. They're responsible and aren't trying to do anything dangerous or that I would have to be very careful with them about. And they want to have conversations and we have a great relationship but that was a lesson I

think I learned the hard way through my own life and then sort of figured out as I went with my own kids and you give so many good tips like that. Can you share a few on maybe just some common interactions that parents have with children and ways we can pattern those better or just be more aware in those interactions?

Dr. Shefali: Well, the typical ones where the toddler is having a tantrum and then you yell at them or spank them because they spank their brother is just so stupid. It just absolutely goes against common sense. Or when a teenager slams the door and says I hate you, you're taking it so personally. And I teach in this book how to depersonalize situations because that's really the core of our reactivity is we believe that the child is purposely doing this to us, right? We believe that they are purposely being manipulative and devilish and controlling of us and we don't see how we are actually perpetuating it on our end because we're perceiving them as bad. So anytime you perceive it as a loss of control, you're going to lose control.

So if you perceived it differently, you didn't even look at it as a battle of control, you would be okay. It's because you're looking at it through the lens of wanting control that you are then looking at it as, oh, now I don't have control. You don't have to look at it that way. Right? So you have to begin the process in a different way so that you end it in a different way. If you start with fighting for control, then everything is going to look like an attack on control. So I really help parents really shift their mindset and show them how their way of thinking is actually causing the problem. So depersonalizing, it's not about me. It's not about me losing control. This has nothing to do with me is a very key component of conscious parenting.

Katie: I love that point so much and I think also it's been helpful for me to realize, like in those instances where a child gets really upset or a teenager wants separation, realizing in some cases those are just very normal developmental parts of teenage years to want independence, to want separation. And yes, that can be done in a responsible way. That's not going to endanger their safety, of course, but that may mean they aren't as close to me as they were when they were two years old. And that's actually a good thing. That's okay, I don't need to limit their independence and I can still maintain that connection in kind of a way that adapts as they grow, as they become adults, which is the goal.

I'm guessing you have people who ask, well, what about then, when kids are disrespectful is a term I hear a lot when it comes to parenting or they won't do what they're supposed to do. And I know you address these so well in your other books as well as this one, but maybe walk us through the reframe of some of those situations as well.

Dr. Shefali: Well, first and foremost, children are not trying to be disrespectful. There is a dynamic that is set up that is causing them to act out. And when we fail to understand what is going on underneath their behavior, we actually create more of the bad behavior. So the first thing when we see misbehavior in a child, I use the acronym sign S-I-G-N. We need to ask what is the sign? Something inside gone negative. What inside them is not aligned. What inside them is not working for their best benefit. That's the first focus. What is going on inside my child? That's what you and I would want. If we misbehave, we want somebody to know that we are essentially good and that we've just messed up because of our inner state of being. So we need to give that to our children. So that is the first thing.

What is the sign? And then I explain to parents in this book, the Parenting Map, that there are three reasons why children misbehave. Number one is because of lack of skill. Number two is lack of life experience. And number three is because of lack of worth. So lack of skill means their brain is not yet developed. They just haven't practiced the skills yet to assert themselves, to have emotional literacy. They're still learning.

Number two is lack of experience. They haven't lived long enough. And number three is lack of work. They don't feel confident. They're fearing failure. So when we understand that it's always one of these three, you don't have to dissect which one. Just take it for granted that it's one of these three, then you will never or you will be less likely to blow up and explode because you have compassion that it's not against you, that it's something within them that is gone awry, that needs help, that needs development, needs practice.

Katie: Yeah, that often quoted, I think, meme, that's gone around. But understanding that they're having a problem, not being a problem, and even that alone helps you reframe it. And to your point, approach it with either curiosity or empathy or understanding, which it seems like, especially as moms, we really have an ability to sort of set the tone by our own reaction. And that, at least I found with my own children, is that when I approach them back with only kindness and love and calm and understanding and wait and just be patient with their emotions, even those really big, hard emotions tend to process much more quickly than if we give them back. Like, you're being too loud, go to your room, that kind of reaction. Often they are asking for help, maybe in artfully, but that's actually the root of what they need. And so if we are able to give them that connection and empathy back, it seems like it diffuses a lot of that. What can escalate if we were to give them anger back?

Dr. Shefali: Correct. But we parents just don't realize. Right? So I have compassion for parents. I've written this book with a lot of compassion for parents because many parents don't know, they don't understand that the child is not purposely doing this. The child cannot do it. It's not that they can, and they're purposely not. They literally don't have that muscle. So how can you have somebody to speak Chinese when they've never heard Chinese before? It's like that. It's that alien to them.

And here we are, losing our shit, getting upset with our children and creating deep sense of unworthiness shame and a disconnection with us. So parents just don't get it, and it's okay, it's our fault because we weren't trained, we didn't go to school, and also no one told us. So my book really helps parents break it down. You're not in control. You don't have to worry. This is not against you. So that then you can come to yourself and your children with greater compassion.

Katie: That's such a good point. And really important to call out is that I think at the end of the day, the vast majority, if not every parent does want the best for their children. And no parent wants to be grumpy or yelling with their children. It often feels like the parent is at the end of their rope. And I love that you really break this down and how you focus on the things like you talked about that are within our ability to change and control, which is our own reactions. And you mentioned ego styles. Can you explain what that means?

Dr. Shefali: Well, I have lots of ego styles that I talk about in this book. The entire stage two of this book, The Parenting Map, is about our five ego patterns and five emotional styles so people can read the book more. But it's basically we have five ego patterns and five emotional styles and each emotional style feeds into what ego pattern will have. So if you have the emotional style of anger, you're going to be the ego pattern of a fighter. If you have the emotional style of anxiety, you're going to be the ego pattern of a fixer. If you have the anxiety style of attention seeking, then you're going to be the ego style of a feigner F-E-I-G-N-E-R. If you have it of avoidance, you will be a freezer. If you have it of abandonment, you'll be a fleer.

So the reason why I just broke it down into these simple steps is because you want to begin to identify what emotion is driving your ego pattern. Well, first, parents don't even believe they have an ego pattern. So the first job is to understand, oh, we are in a pattern. I'm in the same pattern, I'm always in this pattern. And the second thing is to go beneath the pattern to ask, well, what is the feeling? Why are you always going towards this pattern? Obviously you're feeling something you're just not aware. And that's where the five A's come in, the anger, anxiety, attention seeking, avoidance and abandonment.

Katie: Yeah, and it seems like awareness is truly the first step to understanding that and catching yourself in that moment. But then you also go on to explain some ways that we can process that and work through it ourselves and also really nurture connection with our child. So can you explain those as well?

Dr. Shefali: So anytime we're in an ego pattern, we are actually just protecting our inner children and we're not really dealing with the needs of the child before us. So right there we are creating a huge abyss of disconnection between ourselves and our children.

Number two, whenever we operate out of our ego style, we don't realize that we are actually setting up an ego style in the child. Because now in order to combat our ego style, the child needs to develop some coping strategies. So the child now develops an ego pattern against us. So here we create what I call these loops, which keep going around and around, and no one is breaking the loop. We keep yelling at the kid or pretending like it's the kid's fault, but the kid just is reacting to us. The kid doesn't know how to manipulate us. They're too small. Their brains are not developed, even teenagers. So we have to take ownership of our part in the pattern and break the loop because otherwise we will set the children up to create their own ego, and then it's really downhill from there.

Katie: You also touch on the idea of the savior complex and how this comes into play, and I would love for you to explain that a little more and maybe bring that to the awareness as well.

Dr. Shefali: So, because we think we are the ultimate be all and end all in our children's lives, and because we believe that we are here to control their moods, their opinions, and their feelings, we've put on ourselves this burden to be the savior. Like we're playing the hand of God. And we kind of believe that we had these children

out of, like, doing a favor to them. So everything we do for them, we act like it's a favor. And now they're obligated to us. Now they owe us. And that's a terrible toxic imbalance that occurs between parent and children because children don't owe us anything. I go so far as to say they don't even owe you respect. They owe you what they want to give you, like any human being, like any free person. But because we own them, we think that they owe us. And we've given ourselves this cape that we are the superheroes in their lives, and we are. If it weren't for us, then they would not survive. So we actually create a very crippling sense of anxiety in our children because we come with this tendency that, oh, I'll rescue you. I know what's the best. And that's just a terrible setup. In the long run.

Katie: I would guess you maybe get some resistance to that idea that they don't owe us anything, even respect. I actually wholeheartedly agree with you, but I would guess you occasionally get people who push back on that idea. But I would love to hear a little bit deeper about what has been the antidote to the savior complex because I am in complete alignment with you that especially when it comes to things like we owe our children emotional support as their parents, they shouldn't be our emotional support.

So I'm a big fan of, like, I find therapy or ways that I can find other adults to support if I'm having an emotional problem, but I do want to be there for my children if they're having an emotional problem. But can you elaborate on what you mean by they don't owe us anything, even respect, and how we can sort of undo that savior complex?

Dr. Shefali: Well, there are two things. So one is the savior complex is that when a child is going through a hard time, if we enter with a savior complex, that means that we think they are incapable of saving themselves and we actually enable, which means we disable their capacity to take care of themselves. So saving someone is never the answer, right? Helping them to save themselves is the answer. So we have to step back from wanting to swoop in and be playing the hand of God and let our children, by teaching them how to carry the baton of their own saving, they can carry the oars in the paddle, in the life jacket. They can do it, of course, developmentally, appropriately, but step by step, we can teach them. So at the age of two, we teach them, no, you can choose your socks. Do you want yellow socks or pink socks? You can tell me what you want to eat. Do you want scrambled eggs or do you want fried eggs?

We can begin to give them autonomy to get to know themselves, to direct themselves. And we need to hand over the power in small waves at first. The second thing is they don't owe us anything, means that nobody should be obligated, including our children, to be mandated and commended to give something that doesn't come authentically. That is like the core premise of a healthy relationship where nothing is done out of coercion or obligation. It's done out of flow and authenticity and empowerment. So we want to empower our children through a deep connection. When we're deeply connected to our children, we have influence over them. When we have influence over them, we have the greatest power because they are doing it out of their will, not because they are forced to do it. And no one in our lives should feel that way around us.

Katie: Yeah, I think that part you just said is so key. And I know I hear from parents who say, like, well, but if I don't demand respect, how are they going to learn respect? And I think, like you just explained, it's like when

we create connection and relationship and earn respect, they learn how to have respect when it's necessary and important and valid and also, hopefully, learn how to have boundaries with people who aren't earning that respect in their life. Because how many of us in adult relationships have run into issues with boundaries and those things because we didn't learn them that way in childhood?

And you also talk about sort of as an extension of this, about punishment. And I love the way you approach this, and I think it's so valuable. So if you could explain to us kind of your philosophy around punishment.

Dr. Shefali: Well, this whole idea that we should punish our children is just a very primitive idea. And it's, again, coming from this tyrannical hierarchy that we have placed ourselves on that we have a right to punish our children. And punishment is nowhere connected to education, we always say, oh, how will our children learn? Well, not through punishment. They learn through practice, through trial and error, through cause and effect, over and over and over again. And we can help them have natural consequences. So if they don't want to wear a coat outside and they feel cold, okay, that's a natural consequence. Or they go outside and they don't carry an umbrella and it's raining, that's a natural consequence. Fine, they can have natural consequences.

But what is it to punish a child? When the child, like I said, doesn't know, doesn't have life experience or is acting out of a fearful place? How can you punish that? And when we come down with this hard head of punishment, we are really saying to the child that you're not important. I get to tell you who you are, what you should do. I'm ashamed of you. You should be ashamed of yourself. And that's how children's unworthiness starts, because too much was expected from them before their brains developed to create that outcome. So they were being punished for no reason, only because the parent was losing their shit and getting upset. That's why they were being punished. But really, they should never have been punished because it was never something that they were doing out of purpose. And because we punish our children, we create this fear within them. And then they begin, like you said, hiding from us. They begin suppressing their troops, they begin taking shortcuts, running away. Then we get more angry. But we don't see how we created this fear in them of not being accepted. And when they sense that they're not being accepted, that's what creates the disconnect.

Katie: Yeah, it's so important. And I love that you also talk about shame so much. That was something I became really aware of after going through therapy myself, is that I really wanted to avoid as much as possible any scenario where I was leading my kids to feel shame or that I was disappointed in them. Because I realized how lasting those effects were on me and how it took a lot of work as an adult to be able to repattern and let those things go.

And so one of the ways I love to do that is every day to tell my children, I love you unconditionally. There's nothing you ever can do to take away from that, and you never have to earn it. I think that was the other half of that key, is that you don't have to earn my love. It's not going anywhere, and there's nothing that it can take away from it either. And I resonate so deeply with your message there. But I would guess you also get parents who ask you, okay, but if we don't punish, how do we actually get them to do things like clean their room and

learn how to keep their space clean or to help around the house or whatever? Fill in the blank thing may be. And I know you talk about this so beautifully as well.

Dr. Shefali: So children will help, but they will help not in the ways that we imagine, like a robot. They will help when you connect with them, when you make it a game, when you partner with them, when they see that you're working hard, they'll come and help you because they care about you. If you don't have unrealistic expectations of your children, if you work hard to be creative and create a partnership with them, if you work hard to have patience and give them time and keep it reasonable, children will do things. Of course they will, because they love you and they're partnering with you. But it may take if a kid is scared to brush their teeth, it may take you brushing the doll's teeth first, and then they brush the teddy bear's teeth, and then they brush your teeth, and then they brush their teeth. It may take a little time because children have to go through these transitions, and that takes a lot of effort and patience, and we don't want to put in that effort.

Katie: Another thing I really loved and resonated with when reading this book was when you talk about the point of parenting, and I often hear parents say and I used to kind of have maybe this idea as well, of like, oh, I just want my kids to be happy, or I just want them to be successful. And when I really took a deep kind of first principles approach to family culture and realizing the relationship with my kids and the priority, and I sort of walked backwards from that, I realized that it was actually much different than that. But you explained this better than I could. So I would love for you to explain why that's not the only goal of parenting or necessarily the goal at all.

Dr. Shefali: So typically, parents think that the goal of parenting is to raise a happy child or a successful child. And the reason why those are problematic are because we're focused on outcomes. Happiness. Happiness is the outcome. So when happiness is the outcome, we're actually training our children that the other experiences in life are to be avoided and to be denied. And that's why we all have problems with our feelings when we grow up, because we were told that only the happy feelings were good. And we don't realize that when we're doing that, we're actually telling the child that your other feelings are not to be tolerated. And that actually creates more unhappiness.

Right? We're teaching our children not to be okay with not being okay, and then they're. Not okay because many times we're not okay. And instead of learning to be okay with not being okay, we're teaching them, no, no, be happy. Why are you sad? Why are you so ungrateful? Let's be happy. Be cheerful. That's a terrible message to give. And I always talk about instead of teaching your children to be happy, teach them to be authentic. Whatever they are, they're allowed to be that. Just because it's making us feel uncomfortable doesn't mean they can't have their feelings. So that's the first goal of making children happy.

And the second one is creating successful children. Again, it's based on narrow metrics of success. It's extremely limited. It makes the child feel overwhelmed. If they don't meet that level of success, that means they're nothing. And they end up feeling really lesser than and unworthy and really begin to actually avoid doing things because it doesn't match that level of whatever you've decided is that definition of success.

Katie: Yeah, I had that experience as well. I think not through any intention on my parents part. I internalized somehow that my love was connected to my achievements, which I think ties in with this success based parenting idea. And then for a while, I got afraid to try anything new that I wasn't already good at because it felt like being loved was dependent on being good at things. And this was a whole other thing I had to unpattern as an adult. And I love your remedy of teaching them to be authentic and to be at peace with who they are. And going back to, like you say so much in the book, that connection as the main focus, not these other things that we've talked about.

This episode is brought to you by Somavedic, which is one of my personal solutions for dealing with EMFS in my home. If you're not familiar, Somavedic creates a harmonic field in your environment which reaches 100ft in all directions and can penetrate through walls and floors. It's important to note this does not block EMFS in the traditional sense, but rather it supports the body and helps bring it back into equilibrium from the negative effects. We know that EMF's negative effects can be measured by various biomarkers such as blood pressure, heart rate variability, blood oxygen levels and sleep. Studies show Somavedic is helping to improve these measurements and also increases cellular regeneration. Their Amber and Vedic models also restructure your drinking water, which improves absorption and hydration.

They have a lot of science about this on their site at somavedic.com/pages/science, and they show images of water and blood samples before and after exposure. They also have a published study on the Amber model which shows cellular regeneration after exposure to mobile phone radiation. I have personally found that the sum of it can help improve sleep, focus, energy levels, mood, and even in their testing can lower free radical levels.

Many customers who suffer from headaches and migraines report significant improvement from using Somavedic. I also love that they have a 60-day money back guarantee, so it's risk free to try it and it comes with a five year warranty. This is something I have in multiple places in my home and I love the soothing glow of it and the fact that it helps support the body to deal with the EMFs that we are all exposed to everyday. I of course also like to turn off WiFi and excess exposure to EMFs at night, but this is another insurance policy that I love having in my house. You can find out more and get a discount when you try Somavedic by going to somavedic.com/discount/wellnessmama and using the code `wellnessmama` for an exclusive discount.

This episode is sponsored by Hiya Health, which is my go-to source for multivitamins, especially for my younger kids, before they can swallow pills. Typical children's vitamins are basically candy in disguise, filled with unsavory ingredients and things you would not give to your children otherwise. Most brands on store shelves are filled with sugar, unhealthy chemicals and other gummy junk that growing kids, or frankly, anyone should never eat. And this is why I'm so glad I found Hiya Health. Hiya makes children's vitamins with zero sugar and zero gummy junk and unsavory ingredients. Yet they taste great, and they are perfect for picky eaters. They're also nostalgic and remind me of the children's vitamins I took as a kid, though I probably wouldn't love those ingredients. Hiya is unique because it fills the most common gaps in modern children's diets to provide full body nourishment for our kids, with a yummy taste that they will love and you will not have to fight them over. They manufacture in the USA with globally sourced ingredients that are each selected for optimal bioavailability and absorption. And the best part? They arrive straight to your door on a pediatrician recommended schedule, so you never have to worry about running out. Your first month comes

with a reusable glass bottle that your kids can personalize with stickers. So in the case of my kids, with six of them, they never get them confused. And then every month after, Hiya sends a no plastic, eco friendly refill pouch of fresh vitamins. Which means that Hiya isn't just good for your kids, it's also great for the environment as well. So you as a mom no longer have to worry about running out of vitamins, and they will automatically arrive when you need them. You can check them out and get them for your kids by going to Hiyahealth.com/wellnessmama. And you'll also save 50% on your first month.

I know you probably also get a lot of questions about what if only one parent maybe what if only mom is on board with this idea of parenting? Or what if only dad is on board with this idea of parenting and the other parent is not? I get the same thing in the health side. What if only mom is on board with healthy eating and dad isn't? How do you navigate that?

Dr. Shefali: It's not easy. And actually, when couples fight about parenting, it's really a relationship issue. And that's really what it is. It's not a parenting issue, it's a relationship issue. So all I can say is that whoever's trying to be more conscious, you try your best. It's better than nobody trying. And when you're a conscious parent, that has a huge impact, even if it's just one parent, because that child now has a safe place to come, to process their feelings, to express themselves. And that's a huge benefit. Even if it's just one parent, even if the other parent is god awful, it's okay. The other parent can help that child at least process. Imagine if both were unconscious. Right? So at least one conscious parent is better than zero. Correct. I always say, take what you have. Don't wait for permission. At least one of you can begin the process.

Katie: And I know you address this in detail in the book and so I definitely encourage people to read it and to really go deeper than we can in a podcast episode. But I would love for you to just also speak a little encouragement to parents who maybe struggle with parenting consciously because they themselves feel broken and they weren't parenting consciously and they know they feel triggered and a lot of days maybe they feel like they failed at it. And you have such beautiful words in the book that speak to parents in those ways. But I would love to also just touch on some of them here because I think that's such an important piece of this as well.

Dr. Shefali: So for parents who are feeling like they're broken, that's why I wrote this book. It's called the Parenting Map. To help you, the parent, really build on your own skills and become confident and empowered and learn the steps and heal yourself. I give you a whole section on how to heal yourself because that is the greatest gift you can give your children is when you come to the dynamic, healed and whole and abundant, that's what your children will absorb, they will receive, they will carry through in their own lives. So it's never too late to start. You can always start right now. It doesn't matter how old your children are. This book, The Parenting Map, will help parents of all aged children. But the only thing you need to do is be willing to show up in a different way for your children. I have laid out the map. Now it's just up to you to show up in a different way.

Katie: Yeah, and like you said, there's a lot of very applicable practical information on that in the book itself. I also think something you speak to so well is that working on ourselves and the modeling being so much more important than what we say, but is how we show up. What we model is what they're going to really pay attention to, and whether it be small things like you mentioned, getting them to help around the house, even to big things like emotional regulation. If they see us making that effort, if they see us being vulnerable and apologizing when we don't do it perfectly, that gives them an example to do that themselves, which is so much more powerful than just demanding respect or telling them those things. And I think you explain that so well.

Also, I know parents might have specific questions I would love for us to touch on briefly about. Maybe navigating things like bedtime seems to be a very common struggle among especially younger kids, without the yelling and the punishment and the threatening, when that is a time of day when both parents and children seem pretty tired and kind of at the end of their resources.

Dr. Shefali: I often tell parents, don't wait till bedtime to start the process. You have to start the bedtime process a few hours before. You have to make sure you have taken care of yourself. You're not exhausted. Nourish yourself because you are getting tired. Now the day is long and start winding down two or 3 hours before. Start putting the lights off. Start making the house quiet. Get excited to go to bed. Wear your pajamas. You may have to also get into bed so that the party is over, people. So we give the attitude that, okay, the whole house is going to bed.

And bedtime can be a beautiful time if you see it as a beautiful time, if you see it as a bonding time, as a connecting time. And give yourself like a whole hour, hour and a half to complete it. Don't give yourself like, okay, I'm getting into bed with them at ten to nine, and by nine I need to be done. Because they will sense your anxiety and ramp themselves up even more. Because they don't want to be disconnected. They want to stay connected to you. So make it easy, make it fun. Sleep in your child's bed. It's okay. Don't let them come into your bed because then they'll never leave. But if you go to their bed, you can always leave after or sleep on the sofa in their bed. Don't make it about independent sleep too young. Children will grow up and sleep on their own. Make this about bonding and connection.

Katie: Yeah. Which is such an important theme throughout your whole book and all your books, truly, is like if we center on the connection and go back to the connection, the how-to actually does sort of fall into place when we keep that as our focus. And to build on that, I'm going to actually throw a lot of other commonly asked things in one category, which is what do we do then from a connection standpoint when kids do lie or are disrespectful, or don't do the things around the house, or are angry or do yell I hate you, how do we approach those instances?

Dr. Shefali: Right? So I talk about this. The first thing we need to do is validate that they are good people, that they are just maybe acting in a way that doesn't work right now. So I hear you, I see you. I know you didn't need to forget. I know you didn't mean to ignore me. I know you didn't mean to be disrespectful. I get it. You're just struggling. Let me understand you. Let me connect with you. You know, normalize their feelings

and then make a plan with them in a win win way through negotiation. OK, I get it, you didn't do it. But can we do it in the next ten minutes and then we're done? And then what do you want to do after that? Okay, I'll do this. What do you want to do. You're creating a win-win partnership and you're buying in their so called compliance or cooperation. You have to buy them into it. You can't just dump it on them and run just like any employer with their employees. They have to buy them in, but build in that teamwork. And this is what you're doing at home. You're building in teamwork and partnership.

Katie: Yeah, and you do have so many good examples of that in the book. And I think even just from reading that one book, it's like you start to recognize those patterns and you start to create new patterns because you're now aware of it and you do it in such a gentle way, in a really encouraging way, which I really, really appreciate.

You also talk about some of the threats we face in today's world, especially to consciously parenting our children. And I would love for you to just touch on those. So they are a thing that's in our awareness as well.

Dr. Shefali: Well, the main threats right now are the social media addiction and the influx of technology, which is causing intense distraction. And we're checking out, we're not paying attention, we're not focused. Our children are fighting with us because they were on the screen. We're on the screens, everyone's on the screens. So I would really encourage parents of young children, especially, to not give into screens. They are a drug. They cause tremendous dysregulation, dysfunction, disconnection in our lives, in our children's lives. So we owe it to our children to be present and our children need us to be present. So that, I would say, is the greatest threat is our lack of presence and what we need to do in place of that so that we can stay connected with our children.

Katie: I love that. I feel like two really important pieces of advice I got as a mom were just how impactful a small amount of really present time as a parent can be. It doesn't mean that 24/7 we have to be entirely focused on our child. Even just 20 minutes a day of one-on-one focused interaction with them helps really build that connection cup so that they feel better, they feel more secure in every area of life. And it kind of diffuses so much of those problems we might otherwise run into.

And I also heard it explained that kids really have these core needs for belonging and significance. And if we can help them feel those things at home, it tends to diffuse a lot of these things that we talk about as if there are problems that we need to feel like we need to control. If kids feel like they belong and they feel valued and significant, they tend to not exhibit those behaviors or be able to exhibit them in a way that we can help them. Absolutely awesome.

Dr. Shefali: We have to nurture them at home to feel significant and worthy and like they belong because then they hold the balance stuff. They feel very important here, right? So it's like a friend or an employee who feels worthy. Why would they leave? Right? They will feel like they contribute, that they're powerful, that they're empowered, their voice matters. Why would they leave?

Katie: And like I said, I will put a link in the show notes. Definitely encourage everybody to pick up a copy and read the book because I think it's so beautifully written and so to the point. But are there any other key points from the book that you want to touch on at just a high level in this limited time we have in this episode to make sure that moms hear them or at least are aware of them?

Dr. Shefali: Well, just that we owe it to ourselves to learn how to parent. We shouldn't just presume we know how to parent. And this book is a step by step guide. Let me tell you, if parents read this book, I worked with hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people for the last 20 years. Their parenting has changed. It's a game changer. What I teach changes people's lives. It transforms the relationship. It launches empowered, resilient, secure human beings out into the world. But it more than anything else, it makes the parents feel secure and empowered and confident. And if you read my book, you will get the tools and strategies to make your life much happier and carefree so you don't have to suffer. Your relationship with your children doesn't have to suffer. This is the book to help you to suffer less. So thank you all for listening and I hope you go by the book. It's called a Parenting Map.

Katie: And that link will be in the show notes for you guys listening on the go as well, so you can find it in one place. And a couple of last wrap up questions I love to ask, the first being if other than your own, if there's a book or a number of books that have had a profound impact on you and your life personally and if so, what they are and why?

Dr. Shefali: Well, I think the main books are the Power of Now, books by pema, children books, books that are more spiritual and all about mindfulness. Because mindfulness really is the key strategy to come back into the present moment, to be connected, to be here, to be here right now. So that's really what I tend to read and absorb.

Katie: And then lastly, any parting advice for the people, mostly moms who are listening today that could be related to the parenting topics we've talked about or it could be just general life advice to other women.

Dr. Shefali: Well, just that women. We are the carriers of all this wisdom and connection. So don't shame yourself. Don't put so much pressure on yourself to be perfect. You don't have to be perfect. But you do need to be aware of how you can make this journey better for yourself. This is about being more conscious, not being more perfect. It will help you as a mother to reduce your guilt, your shame, your fears, and every mother deserves that.

Katie: Yeah, I love that. I think that's a perfect place to wrap up. And I've noticed the pattern that these things that we can do to help our children are also some of the same ways we repattern our own inner child if our childhood wasn't perfect. And so, in a sense, it feels like a beautiful journey. We actually get to go on hand in hand with our children, and they are as much our teachers as we are theirs when we kind of co create that

journey together. And I love that you give such practical and beautiful ways to do that within families and that you've helped so many thousands and thousands of families. And I'm very grateful for your time today. Thank you for being here and for sharing.

Dr. Shefali: Thank you for having me. Thank you for listening. Everyone grab a copy of my book, *The Parenting Map*.

Katie: And as she said, thanks to all of you for listening, for sharing your most valuable resources, your time, your energy and your attention 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.

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