



Healthy Moms Podcast

BY Wellness Mama[®]
simple answers for healthier families

Episode 66: How to Vote With Your Dollars In a
Way That Really Makes a Difference with John
Durant

Child: Welcome to my mommy's podcast.

Katie: This episode is brought to you by Perfect Supplements. This is a new supplement company that I really love. I've recently discovered them. Their products are made in the U.S.A. They make all-natural, nutrient-dense, super food supplements at incredibly reasonable prices. So, I found this company really helps make it possible for families to eat a nutrient packed, all-natural diet without breaking the bank. And even better, they offer bulk discounts.

So if you have a big family, this has really helped our budget. You can buy all of their amazing supplements like liver, collagen, even fermented kale, and get up to 35% off with bulk orders. If you use the code WellnessMama10 at perfectsupplements.com, you can also get an additional 10% off of your order on top of that. Definitely, check them out.

The other sponsor for this episode is "The Wellness Mama Cookbook," and, yes, that is my cookbook. But I wanted to specifically talk about it for a second because I spent a lot of time compiling this cookbook as a resource for busy moms. As a mom myself, I know that you just don't have extra time to spend hours and hours each day in the kitchen. And this is why the cookbook contains all of our family favorite recipes, many of them you can make in under half an hour using only one pan, so you can save on the dish as well.

And they have sneaky veggies which use veggies in place of a lot of the refined ingredients in many foods. I know that you're feeling a lot of the recipes as much as ours does so grab it at any major bookstore, on Amazon or check it out on wellnessmama.com. Welcome to "The Healthy Mom's Podcast." I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com.

Today, I'm here with John Durant, the New York Times bestselling author of "The Paleo Manifesto" and also of "Spartan Fit" with co-writer Joe De Sena, who is the founder of Spartan Race. John is also a Harvard grad and he's been called a professional caveman. He was one of the first to really adopt and popularized The Paleo Diet. And I believe there were stories of him running barefoot through Central Park and experimenting with intermittent fasting in New York which would be a very hard place to fast and doing Polar Bear swims in the Atlantic.

He's been featured in The New York Times, in The New Yorker, The Colbert Report, and NPR. And he's also one of the 100 most influential people in health and fitness. From a personal side, John is the founder of a company that I believe in called Wild Ventures, which is a seed fund focused on consumer health products and technology. He's also a personal friend. And John and I have had some great conversations over the last couple of years about the future of health and how companies, both big and small, play into that. And today, I'm excited to let you into one of my conversations with one of the greatest minds in our industry. So, welcome John.

John: I don't know about one of the greatest minds but it's great to be here and I love being on your podcast.

Katie: I'm so excited. I wanna jump right in because I always learn so much from you. And I know that you've worked with a lot of companies both large and small and I feel like you have a really good perspective because of this especially about the role of business in making lasting changes. So recently there have been several instances where I've taken a lot of flak from my own readers for recommending a company that has good products but that are owned for instance by big companies or that are seen as kind of big companies that have sold out.

So, for instance, I linked to Burt's Bees Baby clothes because they're organic and they're one of the few brands that are pretty comparable price wise to regular clothes. And I got a lot of comments from readers who were angry that I would link to a company that was owned by Clorox or by a big company. And I know I have a lot

of thoughts on this but I'd really like to hear yours. Do you think it's a bad thing to support companies that are starting to enter the natural arena, even if that hasn't always been their focus?

John: Well, so...I mean, the good... There are drawbacks to the free market system but the good thing about markets is that if you change demand and what people are demanding and what they will buy from small companies, big companies, whoever, companies will respond. Ultimately, they...most of them focus on purely on making money. And if people say, "We want you to make money in a certain way that we believe in," more and more companies will start to do that.

So, people can vote with their dollars. One of the ways that this has entered my life is in some debates and conversations with vegans and vegetarians. And they say, "If you eat me, you're supporting a bad system," and I say, "Well, I get a lot of my meat from ranchers or local farmers, grass-fed, things like that." But it's true. Not all of my meat comes from perfectly pastured sources. Sometimes I just buy what's in my budget at the grocery store, sometimes at a restaurant and things like that. And guess what? I end up buying some food from people who maybe aren't doing it right.

And the way that I sort of...like I read a bunch of vegan and vegetarian books and I went deep into it because I sort of took some of these criticisms seriously. And where I sort of came away is, "If you think about what vegetarianism is in an economic standpoint, it's basically a boycott. It's a boycott on meat." There's a group of people that say, "I don't believe in this. I'm not gonna buy it. We're boycotting your product. We're boycotting your company."

And boycotts can be effective if you get most of the people in an area to do it but if it's a very small number of...if it's 2% of people or even 5% of people, they're not always effective. So if you think about a million bucks, if you take \$1 million away from Cargill or Monsanto or Tyson or someone like that, these companies are so big they don't even notice. A million bucks is a rounding error to them.

But if you take that same million bucks in sales and revenue to a US Wellness Meats or to a small operation that we believe in, that million bucks makes a huge difference. It's just enormous, right? Because for what amounts to a start-up, getting off the ground, starting up an alternative food system, those initial sales early on are make-or-break. It's the difference between continue to build and grow and expand and failing and getting out of the business.

So getting back to sort of the vegan and vegetarian arguments, it's true that not every piece of meat that I eat...and I can't afford to have every piece of meat be perfect but I...there's always a dedicated portion of my budget, basically as large as possible, that goes to small groups that are doing that right or bigger companies that have seen the writing on the wall and said, "We're gonna shift our processes." And I do wanna reward that because I want more people doing it right.

And so for me, it's more important to reward people for doing it right than to try to punish people for doing it wrong. And that's just the nature of people trying to do new things. Another example in this area that really moved me is, are you familiar with Temple Grandin, the animal expert? There's a great movie. I think it was released on HBO with Claire Danes playing Temple Grandin. But she's just this incredible woman who basically helps design more humane slaughterhouses. That's one of the things she's done.

She's autistic and she says that that enabled her to put herself in the mind of animals and could understand their fear and their emotions as they were being led to slaughter. And she helped...her designs for these more humane slaughterhouses that wouldn't cause fear, that wouldn't cause stress, eventually got adopted by McDonalds and other big chains.

So that's another sort of interesting ethical question, right? Like, "She works with McDonald's." But on the other hand, McDonald's has so much scale and if McDonald's says, "Okay, we want to improve and do it better.

We agree. You're right. We're doing it wrong. We wanna do it better,” and so she worked with them and she helped them make it better. And so her willingness to do that...the scale that a company like that has, if they start to make a change, it just has a big impact.

I'll give you another example. So Walmart, of course, is massive. Not everybody likes Walmart. They do offer very low prices. It's a mixed bag. But Walmart, at a certain point, realized that there were a lot of things...because they have such power over the supply chain, that's really what Walmart is good at, is supply chain and logistics and distribution. And they had so much influence over the brands that they've stocked, they realized that, like the laundry detergent companies, Tide and whatever, they would water down their products, make them bigger and heavier than they needed to be and more wasteful just because they could charge more and it seemed like people were getting a more substantial purchase. But you can have a little bit more concentrated laundry detergent and you get the same effect but it doesn't weigh as much.

It's not as much shipping. It doesn't take up as much space. It's less wasteful. And there's really no difference except for just the psychology of sales. And Walmart said, “You know, you're taking up an awful lot of space on our trucks and on our shelves and you need to make your product smaller and less wasteful.”

So if Walmart makes a decision like that, suddenly they can have a huge impact and using less water, fewer resources, and delivering the same product. And so if they do make a change like that, that is better than them doing it the old way. And so I'm willing to support that if people are starting to make changes. I'm not gonna get a Walmart tattoo on my bicep. And I'm not gonna become like their biggest cheerleader, something like that, but if people take steps in the right direction, I'm willing to support that.

Katie: I agree. That's why I love your perspective because I feel like you have kind of the inside view of what these companies are doing and I think they don't have to be at odds. I think that's why I get frustrated is, of course, it's important. I think all of us would agree that it's important to support our local economy as much as possible and to support local farmers when we can.

But at the same time, if a huge company like Clorox starts buying massive amounts of organic cotton, that affects the demand much more quickly than if my small farmer here is just growing organic cotton. So I think, for the long term, for actually lasting changes, we kind of need to address all of these points at once instead of just being like so opposed to big companies.

John: And so like in the food space, I agree completely. In the food space right now we have seen Applegate get bought by Hormel. We've seen Epic get bought General Mills. And so people see those acquisitions and they're like, “Oh, man, what is gonna happen? Are they gonna start trying to cut costs and use lower quality ingredients? And who's profiting from this and what is the values of the mothership?”

There's good reason for people to be skeptical because some of these big companies just don't have a good track record around health and the environment and stuff like that. And I have spoken to other entrepreneur friends in the food movement who are in touch with...and I know the Epic folks and I'm cautiously optimistic.

I mean, the big CPGs, and CPG stands for Consumer Packaged Goods Companies, so, you know, these are General Mills, Kellogg's, Kraft and stuff like that, their sales have not been doing well in a lot of their categories. And it's not just like a one or two-year dip. You know, breakfast cereals are in decline. A bunch of their big moneymakers are in decline. And sometimes when these things go in decline, it's a few year fad where, for whatever reason, people are buying less of it but then it pops back up. And some of these categories that they have are in long-term decline basically.

And so they've sort of had their “oh, shit” moment and they see the writing on the wall and they're like, “We've...” Purely, even if it's just from a selfish perspective, they realize they have to start doing things differently. So what I've heard through the grapevine is that...and I want...I don't take my word for this, you

know, verify with Applegate and how they continue to do things, but I've heard that like Hormel has said, "We want you to be more Applegate, not less. We want you to do more of everything that you believe in because that's a different way of doing things than how Hormel is doing things."

And the future seems like it belongs to Applegate. Like I said, people out there should remain skeptical. They don't just take my word for it but I'm cautiously optimistic that these big CPGs have seen the writing on the wall and are realizing they need to change how they do things.

Katie: I think you're right, and I think in a contrast to that is companies that are smaller comparatively but that are in the natural space that are doing it right, that are just seeing insane astronomical growth like Primal Kitchen and like Thrive Market, these companies that are focused on the values that a lot of people are looking for and that have organic foods. And they're doing awesome and they're growing very quickly which I think is a testament to that demand like you were just talking about.

John: Absolutely. And, you know, this sort of ties into... Maybe I'll sort of explain what I'm doing with Wild Ventures because that ties into the startup ecosystem. But when my book came out three years ago, the first one, "Paleo Manifesto," little startups were reaching out to me on a fairly regular basis for a review, a blog mention, introductions if they were in New York where I lived at the time, and I just started to help some of them.

And I didn't have grand ambitions of getting into the venture industry. I wasn't looking for some sort of like...and a lot of them I would just sort of help because I liked the company or the product and wanted to see them succeed. And I started to get more closely involved with a few of them. One of them is Thrive Market and got involved formally as an advisor and started to help these startups raise capital from influencers with platforms and distribution.

And it's just gone very, very well. And one of the things that companies love... See, a lot of these founders are very... You have to be crazy to be a founder, basically. Like the odds of these many of these startups succeeding are very low. And so you have to have non-financial reasons for doing what you're doing because it's crazy and it's hard. And the toll of being a founder is enormous on your relationships, on your body, your stress levels, you know. You're trying to raise money sometimes from whoever you can and then, you know, when you owe someone money that is major obligation, it's just...it's a very difficult thing to do. And I respect founders enormously.

And what sometimes happens if you wanna grow quickly and go big to try to challenge some of the big guys is you start to have to raise money from institutions. And these institutions at the earliest stage are venture funds. And they have enough capital where they can write a 2-million-dollar check or a 5-million-dollar check, you know, that if they really love you they can do that a week after they meet you or go through your business.

And for people that wanna grow big and change the system and shoot for the stars, the VC's don't always...they might believe in the business opportunity but it's unclear whether VC's always believe in your mission. And there's a lot of rules and restrictions that come with these big institutions raising money. So what we do with Thrive initially is they were turned down by, I don't know, 25 VC's for a few reasons.

I mean, one is nobody wants to compete with Amazon because Amazon is such a juggernaut. The logistics and fulfillment of running an online retailer and having 4,000 products in stock, that is complicated and it requires a lot of capital and even though the founders had built successful businesses before. And so they turned to influencers and said, "Look, you believe in this mission. You know your people want something like this so that we can get, you know..." The big problem with Whole Foods is this whole paycheck. It's so expensive and most people don't live near a Whole Foods.

So how do we start to make these products and these brands more accessible wherever you live, more affordable so that it can be within your budget and start to take this to everybody in America? And you heard

this. Mark Sisson heard this, Robb Wolf, Michelle Tam, and they're like, "Yes. We want this to happen. We believe in this. This can be a force for good and it's something that our people want." And so Thrive ended up raising capital for a long time, not from institutions or not any dominant institution that set the terms, and from mostly influencers. And so far it's been a tremendous success.

You know, there's still a long way to go. It's hard to build a business and to build it quickly but I'm very hopeful and optimistic that... You know, one of the initiatives that Thrive is gonna be doing more of is because they're online, they can feature the stories of these brands much more effectively than in a story of very limited real estate. But online, they can start telling the stories of these brands and these founders and their supply chains much more effectively so that, you know, they're working on that.

And you don't see that at Amazon. You don't see that at Kroger when you're in the store. So that's...helping these startups that are focused on healthy living. And so I've been coordinating, you know, some health and fitness influencers to find things that we truly can believe in and get behind. Not just sort of a, "We'll promote at one," sort of thing but a brand and a mission that we feel confident about for years going into the future and then sidestepping the mainstream media, sidestepping all the big channels and speaking directly to people and sort of taking them these healthy living startups.

Katie: I'm totally on board with that and I think that's a great example that you make about, it being so much more effective to support the companies you do believe in than to boycott the ones you don't because I know it feels pretty powerless if you're gonna boycott for instance General Mills. Like they're probably never gonna notice you boycotting it or even a large group of us. But like you said, Thrive has noticed the support from so many of us and are growing really rapidly because of it. Do you think that it's reasonable to think that these kind of companies can eventually challenge the big ones at least in some of these verticals of natural products?

John: Absolutely. Absolutely. You know, in the more organic space they tend to be more like a little bit higher margin products, more premium products, and eventually, the price will fall. But if you're... Here's what's happening to the big guys. There's sort of two things that are happening. One is you have some bigger like organic players and local players that are starting to get more and more scale and I think will be able to challenge them.

The other dynamic that's happening is that the big players, they're losing sales but the biggest of the organic healthy players aren't as big as all the sales they're losing. So what seems to be happening is that people are... The industry is sort of decentralizing where people are buying more and more from local purveyors, artisanal things, doing it themselves. And so, you know, for every \$1 million that General Mills is losing or Kellogg's is losing, it's not as if all of that goes right back to Annie's or whatever which I think is owned by General Mills or one of the big organic players.

It seems like a bunch of that is just going now and into the local economy. And you know what? That's good. It may mean that some of these... These big guys are cash cows. If you take something like lunchables or even cereal or cake mixes and things like that, they...some of these categories aren't growing but they just produce...they print money because the grains are so cheap and the ingredients that they put in them are so cheap.

And so I don't think these guys are going anywhere soon because they're sitting on a lot of cash but they don't have any growth in these bad parts of their business. And so they realize that if they're gonna grow, they need to change and do things different. So I don't quite know what the future holds. I'm not sure that if I had to bet 20 years from now, I'd probably bet that some of the big guys are still the big guys. But hopefully they've shifted their behavior a lot.

And I think there could be a few companies that would challenge them. I mean, look, like Whole Foods... was a tiny regional player until, I don't know, 15 years ago or something like that. And now you've got some of these retailers like Trader Joe's have been doing a bunch of better things as well. So, well, I guess we'll see.

Katie: I'm optimistic as well. And like we talked about, if these big players, in 20 years, have chosen organic ingredients, at least that's so much more land space that's not being sprayed with chemicals and those are gonna make changes across the board. So, I hope you're right on that.

John: Well, just one other additional thought there. To focus on the environment, for example, you know, people... I have sort of complicated views that don't line up with either party on global warming and the environment and stuff like that. But what I feel very confident about is we're gonna have to innovate our way out of the problem. And so I really think that what's gonna happen is, you know, they do all these climate accords and things like that.

And we're gonna reduce emissions by 5% over the next 20 years and... Kyoto was like 95 years from now, there will be a 0.2 degree reduction in the global temperature average. And it's like 95 years from now. What I really think is gonna happen is you're gonna see alternative energy, whether it's solar, wind, nuclear, you know, many things across the board. Over time they will become more affordable. There will be breakthroughs if entrepreneurs are allowed to innovate. And there will be an innovation, whether it's Elon Musk or someone else, where these alternatives become so inexpensive and efficient.

Oil isn't gonna go away but these government-led accords, they're not gonna do jack squat. I'm being a little bit cynical here. What's gonna happen is people are gonna create the future and the alternative and 20 years from now we're gonna look back on it, we're gonna be like, "How did we ever think that these government bureaucrats were gonna solve this complicated, you know, global problem?" We're gonna have some geniuses invent some amazing stuff and if some other regulations can get out of the way, they're gonna create the future. That's how we're gonna solve some of these environmental problems. That's what I really believe.

Katie: I 100% agree and it maybe opening up a can of worms but I think that applies in so many levels that we can't regulate our way out of a problem and especially if you're trying to get the government to do that. It's gonna be a very long and inefficient process that's probably not even gonna work in the long run. Whereas, if all of us as consumers are driving the demand, you're gonna see changes quickly because, of course, you're affecting the bottom line for these companies.

John: That's exactly right. And the other thing is a lot of the big companies, they like regulation because they can afford regulation. And the small players, they can't afford the expensive facility. I've seen this in the local meat movement where a lot of these slaughterhouses basically are very expensive and they make it very difficult, the USDA makes it very difficult to find more affordable alternatives for people that are raising their cattle properly.

They're not sick. They're not on the antibiotics all the time. They're fed more natural diets. And so the lack of slaughterhouses or affordable slaughterhouses is in part due to some of this regulation. Now, I understand why there are calls for regulation at times. You know, people get scared. There should be some like base level of... but the big business loves regulation because it is a barrier to entry, to keep the small guys small and to keep them from challenging, you know, taking the crown.

Katie: Absolutely, and I know even just from talking to local business owners in our own area including farmers, that it's almost impossible for them to make a reasonable living even working 12 hours a day farming because of things like regulations. And it's hard for them to hire employees because of all the extra taxes and there's just so much involved in that the people don't realize.

And so I think, you're right. The long-term solution is gonna be a multi-faceted approach that hopefully involves fewer regulations but also involves those of us who are buying products making the choices with our dollars. And I think you offer a really viable solution in explaining how it's not effective to boycott but you can make such a difference by voting with where you do spend your money.

John: And look, boycotts work sometimes. You know, there's some people angry at the NFL this year and NFL ratings have dipped. There's some people angry at Target and Target sale...you know, they made some political statements in their sales dip. So boycotts can be effective. However, if you're in vegetarianism and it's 2% of the population and then the big players grow industrial soybeans and turn them into Boca Burgers and sell them right back to the vegetarians, there's a good 2% one-time hit to their sales. And then they're like, "Okay. Well, this is our new business. It's 2% less but like going..." You know, so it doesn't have as big of an impact as many people think.

Katie: That makes a lot of sense. So we talked about some of the good studies that we've seen in companies that you've worked with like Epic and seeing Applegate and then be acquired by big companies. I'm sure that these companies that are trying to grow and to face these big companies in today's world also face a whole lot of challenges. So we talked about the regulations.

But for other companies, let's talk about the challenges they're gonna face in the industrial system since the system is geared towards these big companies. Things like...I know you've worked with Exo and the crickets and AOBiome who is also a podcast guest. So let's talk about those and what kind of challenges they face.

John: So, AOBiome is a skin microbiome company. They make a consumer line called Mother Dirt and really their signature product that nobody else is gonna come out with because they have IP around, it is a live bacteria in a spray, ammonia oxidizing bacteria. Bacteria is a living thing and they have to grow it. And they have to grow it in the right conditions and do lots of purity checks and things like that. But our industrial system is not set up... It's set up to try to kill bacteria wherever possible. It's not set up to grow bacteria.

They may do that...because of some of the industrial stuff but if you've ever been like in an industrial factory or something like that, it tends to look like a jail with a lot of cement and steel and stainless steel, things like that. In part, because those are materials that you can sterilize relatively easily, but they're trying to grow bacteria.

So that is... They're having to do... The consumer just sees the product when it arrives and they're having to do all this work on their supply chain to grow good bacteria. It's sort of like how, you know, when a lot of these Kombucha companies started to get bigger and bigger and bigger. They weren't necessarily co-packers that would ferment products. Like, they didn't have the setup for it. And so if GTs or Health Aid or other smaller ones out there, as they get bigger and bigger, the facilities just didn't exist to grow bacteria and then their regulatory challenges.

So, you know, Exo is trying to pioneer insects as a healthy, sustainable, ethical, source of protein. And in most cultures around the world, aside from the West, there are at least some insects that are considered clean and are eaten regularly like crickets and grasshoppers and locust. And you see that in the Bible, right? There are people eating locusts and honey, John the Baptist, that sort of thing.

You know, but the USDA has restrictions on basically insect contamination for foods, unless the food itself is an insect. But then if you go to a co-packer, and a co-packer is like a production facility that will produce your product for you and then it's your specifications, your ingredients, your label. But it's too expensive for a startup to have their own kitchen facilities as they start to get to scale. And so you work with a co-packer.

You know, what co-packer wants to work with the insects, right? And so this is one of the reasons why I've come to respect these founders and these startup so much. It's because they do so much work behind the scenes that people never even see on, "I'm trying to get the supply chain for these unconventional products up and

running.” But I started to laugh when I was like, “Man, a lot of the companies I help, behind-the-scenes there's a lot of work that goes into producing products in a better way.” And it's expensive at the beginning.

In other example, I don't have a relationship with U.S. Wellness Meats but John Wood of U.S. Wellness Meats, there's also social pressure. We talk about regulations. We talk about machinery and things like that. I think he's in Missouri. All his neighbors, when he started doing grass-fed cattle, all his neighbors thought he was crazy, just absolutely crazy.

He was the only one around. He said it was very stressful on his family and on his marriage. And it's hard to be the one person in your area that might be doing something completely differently and need a lot of money on the line. And after some hard years, it's turned out to be a huge success and the Paleo community has been incredibly supportive of his operation.

He's a great guy but he took a lot of risk and it was just hard socially to say, “I'm gonna do something different.” And not just do it different but do it early, be a first mover. So there's just a lot that goes on behind the scenes of these startups that's very difficult and they don't get a lot of praise for it necessarily or maybe you read about it on the packaging but there's real work that goes into trying to do it right.

Katie: Absolutely. Hey, guys, I wanna pause this episode for just a minute to, again, thank the sponsor for this episode that makes it possible, perfectsupplements.com. They make these amazing natural, nutrient-dense superfoods, made in the U.S.A. and incredibly reasonably priced. They are recent additions to our diet and I'm finding that every product of theirs I love, that I've tried.

Our favorite in our house right now, especially when my husband, who does not like liver no matter how I cook it, no matter what I do, is their perfect desiccated liver supplement which is a capsule. So if you have listened for long, you know that I use organ meats in our home a lot and I consider it nature's multivitamin if it's from a really good source. If you have a hard time with the taste of liver like my husband does, you may wanna try their desiccated liver capsules.

Other products of theirs we've been using recently are collagen, their greens powders, and even fermented kale because I will admit I don't actually love kale. It's just one of those greens I don't love. And so it has made it possible to get it in our diet. But back to their liver, it's made from 100% grass-fed cattle and nothing else. Their liver is packed with vitamin A, B12 and iron and this is the same product that has been recommended by Tim Ferris and Dave Asprey. And I finally broke down and tried it and I love it and can see why they recommend it.

So I actually found especially with pregnancy and nursing that liver capsules like theirs can really help with energy levels and help mental clarity which of course all homes need. So, I wanted that you guys to be able to try it and love it as much as I have. And they've offered an amazing discount. So you can get 10% off of any order by going to perfectsupplements.com/wellnessmama, and using the coupon code, “WellnessMama10.”

But the best part, if you're from a big family or even if you only have a couple of kids, you can order in bulk and get even bigger discounts. So they offer 25% off if you order three bottles of their supplements and 30% off if you order six bottles. So if you combine this with the coupon code “WellnessMama10,” you're saving 35% and 40% and you can mix and match these to get a volume discount, great way to get discounts on their prices and some of the best prices I have found on these supplements especially U.S.A. made, high-quality ones.

So just go to perfectsupplements.com/wellnessmama to get all the details. This episode is also sponsored by the Wellness Mama Cookbook and as I mentioned before, this is a resource that I worked for hundreds and hundreds of hours on to create a guide that would actually be useful, practical and really easy to use for moms who are busy and who don't have hours and hours each day to spend in the kitchen but who also prioritize cooking real food.

And my kids help me test these recipes so they are definitely family approved. They're also mom approved and here's why. Like I said, I'm an incredibly busy mom and I don't have a lot of extra time. So the majority of recipes can be made in under 30 minutes and a lot of them can be made in only one pan because I'm personally not a big fan of dishes and would rather not do any more than I have to.

So you can check out the cookbook at any major bookstore on Amazon or on wellnessmama.com. It contains over 200 family friendly recipes as well as some meal plans, some guidance on planning and some how-to for getting your family on board with eating healthy. I also like to tell people that it's a completely grain free cookbook but if you don't do grains, you can easily add in things like rice and pasta to dishes for most meals.

What I did though is I replaced a lot of the refined ingredients in the recipes with vegetables. Our family does not eat any refined flour or refined sugar so I replaced those in recipes with vegetables that kids love like zucchini and cabbage and sweet potatoes. And there's everything from lasagna to chicken fingers to shepherd's pie and all of our family favorites. You can check them out, like I said, any major bookstore or at wellnessmama.com. Now back to the episode.

Let's talk a little bit more about Wild Ventures and as far as what you see is the future of health because I think a lot of people are very pessimistic about the future in a lot of different areas right now and especially in health and natural foods and what they see is happening. So what do you...what's your take on that and how do you see things like Wild Ventures helping to change it?

John: You know, I'm optimistic and maybe that's just my nature and who I am. But I believe that if you have enough committed, talented people, you can...a small number, you can change the world. You know, we are looking to be financially successful but that's not our only criteria. And it's sometimes not even the primary criteria or the top criteria.

We have a set of principles and I have a little bit of a manifesto up on our website and some of the things that we believe in. But I do believe in sort of taking the best of the old and the best of the new. So I don't expect everybody to lead a pure paleo lifestyle. Even myself, I don't do that. I use technology and all that sort of stuff.

But I think we're gonna... One of the things that I look for... One of the big questions when I look at companies is, "Is something a fad or not? Is this just gonna be a blip for the next two years or is it gonna be sustained?" And one of the things that I look at is, well, "How old is it? Have we been doing it for a long time?" Because if we've been doing something for a long time, it's very likely that we're gonna continue doing it for a long time.

So just got involved with a bone broth company, Kettle and Fire, that I really believe in. And some people say to me, "Oh, bone broth is a fad," and I'm like, "Oh, come on," like, "You can't be serious." People, humans have been making bone broth for at least 10,000 years, probably longer. And you see it in all these different cultures around the world because using hot water, particularly with an acid in there, is an effective way to get valuable nutrients out of different parts of the animal that are difficult to access like marrow in the middle of a bone or cartilage which is tough and hard to eat or leaching nutrients from the bone directly.

So that's one of our sources of insight is we do look for things that have been around for a long time and had sort of fallen out of favor over the last 50 to 100 years where the industrial food system has really taken off. So what's old is new again is one of our themes. One of the things I say is that I like cults and it doesn't just have to be the paleo cult. And I'm actually using cult.

Cult usually is like a negative connotation but I'm using it in a positive way here. When you have a group of people that have a high intensity of love for something, that's a really interesting signal because it means you have a core group of hardcore believers. Not everybody is gonna become a health fanatic. The world doesn't work like that. People are different. And some people just don't care that much. And that will always be a certain percentage of the population where it's not part of their identity. And so we also look at things

called...that one of my friends Steve Dean coined, “passive interventions,” things that will work on anybody even if they're the laziest person, they don't care about health but it would still work.

So those are sort of like two opposites that I think about. So the cult members and then the passive interventions. I like those extremes. I love the people that don't need financial motivation and they're true believers and they'll go to war for it, for what they believe in, and then, on the other hand, the people who don't care at all and you need something that works for everybody.

So, one of the companies that we're doing right now makes a product called the Chilly Pad. And the Chilly Pad, I got one a couple months ago and I just love it. I use it every night. It's a pad that you put on your mattress underneath your fitted sheet. There are some very thin tubes that you can't feel that contain a little bit of water flowing through them which connects to a device off to the side of the bed, tested at zero EMF. But the water flows through it. And you can warm or cool the temperature of your sleeping surface which I love because I sleep better when I'm cool but then I throw a lot of covers on and then I get hot.

Like it's hard to get the temperature right under the covers in your bed, particularly if you have a husband and a wife or something like that and she likes it warmer and he likes it cooler and you're fiddling with the thermostat. And if you're heating up the room a lot, it's expensive and running the AC and all that sort of stuff. So this just warms or cools the surface of your bed. I love it. And what's interesting about it is that there are the cult members, and I count myself among them, who use the product and love it.

Tim Ferris has written about it. There's a music producer named Rick Rubin who introduced me to the product and Mark Sisson and, his wife Carrie, use it and love it, Gabby Reece, the volleyball player and Laird Hamilton, the big-wave surfer, and so you've got these cult members. But then what I love about the product too is that once you install it and put it on your bed, all you have to do is turn it on at night and eventually it'll have automatic settings where it just turns up by itself and it just works. And when you're asleep, you're not conscious when you're asleep. So discipline and willpower and all the stuff that people usually struggle with when it comes around health, like you're asleep, you're unconscious, like your willpower doesn't matter.

And so you just need the context, your little habitat, your room to be right to allow your body to sleep better. Because temperature ties into circadian rhythm and when it's night, it should be cooler. And to your body, that's a signal that it's night. So this was an interesting example of something that was both a passive intervention or could be for a lot of people where it doesn't require willpower. It doesn't require discipline or identity. And yet you had a bunch of cult members who loved it too.

So, I think we're gonna find solutions for people that are on both ends of the spectrum where believers are gonna make a big impact and we're gonna come up with things that work for everybody whether you care about it or not and it'll just work. So, you know, I'm hopeful. It's hard to build these startups but I'm irrationally self-confident. And that can get me into trouble sometimes but I'm a big believer in the power of entrepreneurship.

Katie: Me too, and I'll echo. I'm gonna write about it soon but the Chilly Pad, I've been trying it at your recommendation and I would say for moms, because it's a little bit pricey for a mom and I would probably forgo the expensive stroller for a baby and buy that instead just because it actually really helps with quality of sleep especially if you're pregnant or nursing and have trouble regulating your temperature because of all those hormones. It's been awesome and I can see especially this summer it being really energy-efficient to save money on air conditioning because I don't sleep well when it's hot. And that's made a huge difference. I love it.

John: I'm glad to hear that. And I went through a bunch of reviews and there are a few quirks with the device that in the next launch are gonna get worked out. I love mine but I see over and over women going through menopause and getting hot flashes and then pregnant women who will get hot flashes and just periods where they can't cool off. I've seen comment after comment about how this is the only thing that works for them and from both husbands and wives.

And husbands are raving that they bought the perfect gift for their wife who might be uncomfortable in pregnancy. So I don't experience that obviously as a man but there are a lot of testimonials there.

Katie: I'm definitely a big fan and I'll make sure we link to all the companies, I know we've touched on a lot, but all the ones that you've mentioned and that are involved...were involved with Wild Ventures. I think there's some great ones that I'm excited to see what the future holds for that as well.

John: The other thing that's really exciting about it is when I'm talking to founders, they love that we're true believers and founders ourselves because like they're all...and the right to be cautious of some VC's. Many VC's are very good. They're good people and they're straightforward and whatever, but when you're on a 5 or a 10-year adventure, you want true believers that will be with you at your lowest moment because there will always be a lowest moment.

And so I've heard from them like, "Oh, man. You guys get what I'm doing long-term. You're founders yourselves so there's more immediate trust and then can help with promotion of what we believe in." So it's...the model is working and I'm really excited about seeing what happens. I mean, I guess, if I have one regret about going through this whole process is I'm talking to great companies all the time and I just wish...I wish I had the time and resources to work with more of them. But even when we don't necessarily invest, if I can still help a company, we will. Sometimes people get a little competitive and they say, "You're helping my company versus the other company." In most of the spaces we're playing, there's so much room in the industry for everybody that succeed.

It's like with Exo. There was a point where some of the insect protein companies felt very competitive with one another and it's like, "Guys, come on." There's either gonna be an industry around this or there's not. It's not like one company's gonna succeed but the rest are gonna fail. It's either gonna take off as a thing or it's not. And if it takes off as a thing, there's gonna be room for a lot of people to succeed. And so that's sort of the attitude that we take is let a million flowers bloom and change the ecosystem and change the industry and focus a little bit less on sort of ultra-competitiveness with each other.

Katie: Absolutely. And as kind of maybe parting words, I'd love for you to speak to moms especially because the majority of people listening are moms. And I know, as a mom myself, oftentimes it feels like it's so hard to make any changes and especially with the tight budget, it's hard to make good choices. But at the same time, as a group, moms have a huge percentage of the purchasing power of our country.

And so my thing I always tell is we actually have a lot more power than we realize as far as affecting the outcomes long-term. So what would you say to moms and their ability even if it's a limited ability on a budget and their purchasing power? What can they do on a practical level to help make these changes happen for our kids' generation?

John: I mean, mom's role...and when it comes to large sectors of the economy, it's women who make the purchase decisions. And so first, don't count yourself out. You do have enormous power. Second, even if you don't have the budget to buy something all the time, even if you just buy it occasionally, that still benefits the company and it's better than nothing. And because they're startups and because they're smaller, it makes a difference.

So don't beat yourself up if 80% of the time you can't afford the grass-fed option or something like that. Even if you do it from time to time, when you have the budget, that's great and that makes a difference, too. So it doesn't have to be an all-or-nothing thing. It can be an incremental thing moving in the right direction. And then moms are raising the next generation of people who are going to have values and preferences and things like that, and I know your followers are adamant about this but trying to raise kids in a way that they eat real food

and come to like it and care about that because there are periods during kids' lives where, at the end of the day, they will eat what you give them.

And I think a lot of parents, they stop short and eventually they just sort of give in and basically bribe kids with sugar. And I realized that school and the peer group and all that stuff is very tough to deal with at times but the end of the day, there are many periods during kids' lives when they will eat what you give them. And you have that power and you can do it in a good way.

So moms, like I said, mom's rule and have an incredible influence, even if it's incremental, even if it's a little bit here and there. So don't beat yourself up and just small steps in the right direction. One foot in front of the other, that's how you run a marathon. That's how you can change the world.

Katie: Awesome, John. Thank you so much for your time. I'll make sure to link to all the companies we talked about and also to your website with Wild Ventures and to your website for the Paleo Manifesto and to the audiobook which is awesome. Moms can listen while they drive. So, thank you so much for being here, and I really appreciate your time.

John: Thank you, Katie, I really enjoyed it.

Katie: Thank you so much for listening to this episode of the Healthy Mom's podcast. Did you know that you can become a Wellness Mama VIP member for free? Just go to wellnessmama.com/podcast to subscribe to the podcast. And then click Free Membership to gain access to a membership library of health and wellness resources. You'll get the latest from Wellness Mama each week as well as special discounts and offers. Also, find Wellness Mama on social media to stay updated with the latest podcast episodes, blog post and more. Thanks again for listening, I'll see you next week.