

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

# Healthy Moms Podcast

BY **Wellness Mama**<sup>®</sup>  
simple answers for healthier families

Episode 78: How Moms Can Affect Actual Change  
with Big Food and Big Ag with **Leah Segedie**

Child: Welcome to my Mommy's podcast.

Katie: This podcast is brought to you by Annmarie Gianni Skin Care. You can find out about them at [annmariegianni.com/wellnessmama](http://annmariegianni.com/wellnessmama). And for Wellness Mama readers, they are offering a special deal on a sample kit. They'll send you a kit for your skin type (normal, oily or dry) for only \$10. But here's the cool part. They'll also send you a \$10 off coupon with each sample kit. So if you end up buying their products in the future, the sample kit was essentially free. And they'll ship the sample kit to you with free shipping anywhere in the world. They'll also send along their Toxic Free Home Guide, which is an in-depth guide to finding all the chemicals in your cosmetics, in your home, in your toiletries, even on your couch and how to find safe alternatives. So again, find out more: [annmariegianni.com/wellnessmama](http://annmariegianni.com/wellnessmama).

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Welcome to The Healthy Moms podcast. I'm Katie from WellnessMama.com and I'm here today with Leah Segedie who is the founder of Mamavation and also of ShiftCon Social Media Conference. She's a food activist, a social media consultant and an amazing human being. So through her community she teaches moms how to live a healthier life and how to combat disease in their home. This is amazing. Her community members have lost over 3,500 lbs together.

Leah is a very passionate food activist and she's also at the frontlines of trying to bring organic food in the forefront and trying to combat all the additives and problems we have in our food chain. She's been named "Mom of the Year" by Shape Magazine, the fourth most influential mom blogger by Cision Media and a ton of other awards that it would take me an hour to name them all. I'm so excited to have her here. Leah, welcome.

Leah: Katie, thanks so much for having me. It's so good to talk to you again. It's been awhile.

Katie: It has. And this is always, of course, so fun and I love that people can just listen in on our conversation because you're so easy to talk to.

Leah: Oh, thank you. Likewise, my dear, likewise.

Katie: So let's just do a recap in case somebody hasn't heard. We did an episode before and I'll link to it. But let's start at the beginning and hear how you got into this to begin with and your own journey, your amazing story of losing over 100 pounds. Let's talk about all that.

Leah: Yeah. So when I started in social media, it wasn't about everything that I did right. It was more about everything that I did wrong. I was the person who would drive by the fast food place, McDonald's, Jack in The Box, daily. I worked in politics, it was a very fast-fledged kind of world. I was always hyped up on adrenaline and Diet Coke and McDonald's cheeseburgers. And you know, over the years I think I just wore my body down and I gained a ton of weight.

When I met my husband I was, you know, wanting to go become a lobbyist in Washington D.C. or do something like that or work for an elected official or do something. And when I fell in love with him, I just couldn't leave the state and that's essentially why I stayed. It was for my future and I knew that he would make a great husband and father and, you know, I made a decision to stay. And then when I got pregnant I also found out that my father was dying of mesothelioma, which is asbestos-driven cancer. Wow, that stuff is just beeping up like crazy in my phone.

So this is my life, it's just like yours, Katie. It's a non-stop type of thing. So when I found out my Dad had

cancer, the first thing I decided to do was quit my job. Because I really wanted to spend time with him and I wanted those last six months to be memorable and I really wanted to help my Mom. And so that's what I did, I quit my job. And while I was pregnant with my son, my first son, I helped my Mom care for my Dad. And, you know, my Dad was not supposed to make it to the birth and he did.

I actually had him in the hospital room behind my head. He couldn't see anything, he was behind my head, you know, there with his oxygen cheering me on and it was very much a family birth, we had a lot of people in that room. And then three months later he passed away. But the one thing to remember about when I was pregnant that first time is it wasn't about somebody becoming born. It was about somebody dying to me.

So my first time that I was a mom, I didn't really process it mentally until after my father died. And then when I looked into my son's eyes, I just asked myself, "What kind of mother am I? What kind of mother do I want to be?" And this was something that most people had processed way before. You know, and mine was kind of backwards. And I was really overweight at the time. You know, it was three months afterwards and I was a size 22, 23, 24, depends on what shop I was going to.

And I really just wanted for my son to be healthy. And looking in his eyes, I knew that in order for me to change his future, I had to change mine. And that was the beginning of my journey. And it literally was just me saying, "Okay, what do I do? I don't know what to do." And I just decided to stop drinking Diet Coke. Seriously, I used to drink a six-pack a day of Diet Coke. I had no idea it was making me fatter, I had no idea it was causing me so much...you know, causing my body so much torment. None of those things were things I cared about back then.

But I quit drinking Diet Coke and I stopped doing fast food and I just literally walked around the block once a day. I also have this hip condition called hip dysplasia. So people that have dogs typically know what that is and I'm not a dog, I'm a human, I promise you. But it's a rare condition for someone who's human but not rare for someone who's a dog. And what that means is my hips pop out of socket very easily the bigger I get, the heavier I am. And it just puts a lot of weight on the hips. And so walking was uncomfortable back then, it was painful.

So the walking was kind of like a feat but I did it. You know, I cut out soda, I cut out fast food, I just started walking. And I told myself that I wasn't going...I had no idea I was gonna lose a hundred plus pounds. But what I did know is I wanted to create a lifestyle that was something that the children would replicate and something that would be better for them. And so it took me two years. But over those two years of blood, sweat and tears I lost over 100 lbs. I think it was like 118 or 113 or something like that, after everything was said and done. And I was a new person and I had a new passion for life and I was really excited about the things that I had learned and I wanted to start up a community to help other women. You know, I was staying at home at the time and I was getting really bored. And I'm the kind of person that constantly needs something to do, otherwise I get myself into trouble.

So I started up a community online, it was called Bookieboo.com. It's not there anymore but that's how it started. It was written up right away in all sorts of magazines, like "Ladies' Home Journal," "Shape Magazine," "Fitness Magazine." People were flocking to my site from all over the country, from Canada. And it was a simple idea that instead of us making it about us, we made it about our family and we made it about role modeling. So that the things that we were doing had a deeper meaning, they had a bigger meaning.

And what I noticed about being a mother was, you know, before I had children, when I tried to do things for myself, you know, sometimes I knew it was good for me and I just couldn't do it. Because I didn't have enough desire just for me. But when I became a mother, that mother lion desire in me to provide a healthy, wonderful household for my children and everybody in it was very strong. So I was able to tap into that energy and tap into that power. And I basically teach to other women how to do that in a very positive way, and it just grew.

And so over the years, we went from a community on the Ning platform, to then doing the Mamavation

campaign, which is where I'm at now. It's Mamavation.com and it's...today, I don't really do weight loss anymore. What I do more is disease prevention and things like, you know, "Why you should choose a food that hasn't been sprayed with toxic persistent pesticides, why you should choose, you know, safer personal care products for your family. You know, what is an endocrine disrupting chemical and why should you care?"

You know, those types of things are the things that we focus on. It's all science-based, research-based. We put a lot of time into the content we create. And going forward, you know, my mission really today is to change the supermarket and change the things that people are eating, what they're purchasing and just really change, you know, America and our diet-related disease and change the things that are happening.

And for me, it's not about changing people by shaking my finger at them because that would be stupid. You know, back in the day, you know, I was a very different person. It's more about me being empathetic and meeting people where they are and in a way that's full of love, not full of judgment, helping them be better. And for every person, that's a different answer, you know, that's a different road. But just fostering a community where people are supportive and loving to each other and accepting and just, you know, I like to call it, "singing Kumbaya." And that's essentially what I try to do.

So I have the Mamavation community where I do that, but I also do that with influencers as well. About four years ago I started up the ShiftCon Social Media Conference and that is for influencers, bloggers, YouTubers, you know, anybody who works online, people that are interested in green wellness topics, sustainability, those type of themes. We support them, we help them grow their platforms, we help them learn how to make more money and we also bring in brands that mirror our ideals.

So, you know, we have an expo with anywhere from 50 to 70 brands and brand tables, you know, and non-profits as well, workshops, keynotes. It's a lot of fun but it's a monster to put together. And we just finished one so I'm kinda sitting here breathing and going, "Uh-uh." But many hats that I wear. I wear the hat of the creator of Mamavation.com, I wear the hat of being the host of ShiftCon Social Media Conference.

And then last but not least, I wear the hat of doing a lot of consulting. I also own a network with just over 10,000 bloggers. So lifestyle, green sustainable bloggers, bloggers that do food, etc., etc. I work with brands but only brands that mirror my ideals. And I put them together with influencers, we manage campaigns. It's really the idea of changing that supermarket one influencer at a time.

Katie: That's awesome. So I have a lot of follow-up questions but I have to ask first, where does the name Bookieboo come from?

Leah: Oh, that's such a good question. Yeah, and you're gonna love this because you're a mom. So about that time when my son was first born and I would sit and I would nurse him and I would breast-feed him, and he was just so beautiful. And for some reason, this word, "Bookieboo," came to my head. So I started calling him Bookie and Bookieboo. And I sang this little made-up song to him. I have no idea where it came from, it just came.

And there's a lot of things that happen like that when we're mothers. We find ourselves doing or just saying things and we're just like, "What?" And maybe it's, you know, something that you heard from your mother. Well, one day while I was walking him and singing this song, my Mom turns to me and she says, "Bookie?" She says, "I used to call you Pookie when you were a baby, with a P." And I was like, "What?" And she's like, "Yeah, I would sing this song to you that sounded just like that."

And I went, "Woah." My jaw just like fell to the ground because that was inside my soul for 30 years before it came out again. And at the moment that I shared with her umpteen years ago, I was then sharing it with my son. And I heard as an infant Bookie with a B, but it was really a P. But I kept that name Bookieboo and that was just symbolic of my son and everything that my struggle and my challenges and my mission in life represented. And that's where that name came from.

Katie: I love it, such a cool story. So you mentioned in...talking about the mini hats you wear, you talked about endocrine disrupting chemicals, and I would love for us to touch on this because I've written a lot about it and why we avoid plastic and why everyone should avoid plastic. And I know you're very much on the same page. So people can hear it from someone besides me, why do we need to be aware of endocrine disruptors?

Leah: Endocrine disrupting chemicals are...I believe the research has been going on for about 25 years. So it's new in the science world but it's really something that, if you look around, it's evident everywhere. Endocrine disrupting chemicals are chemicals that definitely affect our waistline. They affect our weight, whether we are big or small. It affects our fertility, whether we're able to have children or not, for men and women. It's not just women, it's men as well.

It affects our ability to focus, it affects our ability...you know, IQ. And really, IQ is about, "Can you focus?" or "Can you sit down and do a task?" So it affects, like, you know, for children, it's like their homework. Their opportunities in life is really what that's about, behavioral issues. Your hormones regulate so many things about your body that we can't even comprehend. And there's three times in your...it was actually four times in your life. But for our purposes, there's really three times in our lives that you need to be the most careful and definitely in utero.

When you're having a baby and your baby is in your belly, that is the time that is really, really important to be aware of these things. The second time is when your child is basically under five. That's when you have, you know, your body is building up your defenses before the age of five and really, really are very sensitive. So that's another time. The other time is when you're going through puberty. And so for girls, it's different than boys. But we know, for boys, it's pretty obvious when that's starting to happen. You know, they spend a little bit more time in the bathroom.

For girls, it's when they start getting crabby of course. Obviously, we all went through our hormonal changes. And those are periods of times when your genes and your hormones are kind of raw and they're developing. And they need our protection. And so things that happen in those times in your life can impact you up until the day you die. So some things that can happen in utero can affect you at the age of 55. You know, something in utero may cause cancer when you are 50 or 60, that cuts your life down 10 years or something like that.

And things that we never actually think that are being impacted really actually are. Now, endocrine disrupting chemicals, they're...it's really interesting because there's a lot of them and we actually don't know how many there are. There's over 84,000 chemicals in the industry and we've only really know the health and human impacts of a tiny fraction of them. So the more they study these chemicals, the more we find out that they are in fact endocrine disrupting chemicals.

I work really closely with scientific advisors that do research in the lab, have done research in the lab. You know, have friends and colleagues that are lab scientists. So I'm really connected in with this. And especially being the host of ShiftCon, we have some pretty top-notch scientific advisors that help us with content when we're educating influencers. Because it's really, really, really important that the science that we promote is real science, that it's evidence-based, that it's things that we can back up with facts. Because that's pretty much everything. And because this science is so new--and it really is relatively new if you think about how long science has been around--it's relatively new. But what it is is really frightening, to be quite honest.

But the question is, you know, a lot of the stuff is ubiquitous, it's pretty much everywhere. And the reason that we try or at least I recommend that you try to like dumb it down a little bit is just because some of these things bioaccumulate inside of you and some of them do not, you can pee them out within time. But if you're constantly putting them back in your body, you're not giving your body a chance to get them out, to detox from them. So it's really important to try to get rid of as much as you possibly can and then just let your body heal and avoid as much as you possibly can.

I'm also the person...you know, I say this in my home but then we also have to go out into the real world. And a lot of times, you know, sometimes you're that mom and sometimes you don't wanna be that mom, you know. And so we do a balanced approach where I control the vast majority of the things that are happening in my house. And then when we go outside the house, sometimes I let it fly and sometimes I'm that mom. It just depends on...I kinda have to look around and see what's happening. I'm also concerned with, you know, the emotional health of my children, so sometimes I don't want them to be those kids and sometimes I'm like, "Yes, I'm gonna have to because this is just a little bit too much for me." So I think it's different based on the person.

But the important thing, you know, things that we want to avoid are things like phthalates. Phthalates are, you know, something that you would find in fragrance. And so anytime you look at a bottle of lotion or shampoo or conditioner, any of those things and you see the word "fragrance, perfume, parfum," phthalates are very likely inside there. Now, phthalates, there's a ton of different chemicals but they're all under a class called phthalates and phthalates are really, really, really bad for boys, especially bad for boys. Another is the bisphenols, those are BPA, BPS, BPAF. There's like a ton of them.

We have research on BPA, we absolutely know that those are bad for you. We have some additional research on BPS. That's what we're calling a regrettable substitution, where you see "BPA free" but they've replaced it with BPS and it looks as if BPS is probably a little worse than BPA. So in those instances this is why we recommend people, you know, when it comes to bisphenols, just to go for glass or go for, you know, glass or stainless steel or silicon. Because a lot of times when we're talking about plastic, when they find out one chemical is bad, they use another chemical and it's just as bad and we don't find out until 5-10 years later. But we do know that glass is safe. If we go and recommend the things that we know are safe, they're always gonna be there, those are what we recommend. So bisphenols and phthalates.

There's, you know, high fructose corn syrup is an obesogen that's kind of like in that class. High fructose corn syrup is one of those chemicals that causes obesity. We can't say "cause," we'll say "correlate." But you might as well say it. The scientific term is "correlated." But these chemicals are things...for instance, they go into your body and for some of them they go to a bone cell and they'll say to a bone stem cell, "Hey, bone stem cell, you really wanna be a fat stem cell." And so they can literally turn bone stem cells into fat stem cells. And where you're only supposed to be born with a certain amount of fat cells, you now have more.

And they're always in the middle part of your body where everybody has trouble, you know, that mid-section. And the thing about these chemicals is, you know, we really, really need...we really need to have some additional regulation to protect us from these chemicals. It's really, really important because it's a really complicated field of science. There's a lot of industry involved in trying to say that this is utter bull and it really is not.

And what really needs to happen and what we found is that the more we educate people, the more they know better and they do better and they buy better products. And what ends up happening is the companies that lose money look at the companies that are gaining money and go, "What the heck is going on?" And once they figure it out they go, "Okay, we want that back" so they start making changes.

So at the end of the day, what I really think is the answer is to everybody educate as many people as they possibly can about what's going on so that they make better decisions. And then after that and as people are starting to get really upset about it and kind of look around and be like, "What is going on?" That's when the regulations start to pop up and that's when the changes start to pop up. But the front part of it really has to be the people.

And that's one of the reasons why I love working in social media, because it's one of those places where someone like you and me, Katie, just like you and me can have a big impact. And people can sense who we are, can sense that we're real, and can sense that we really, really care about what happens to our community and what happens to our online community and what happens to the people around us. And they look at everybody else and say, "Wait a minute, but you're getting paid to say that and that's a very different

message." So it's one of the reasons why I love social media. It's to get so many really unique people that are so sincere and are really trying to do the world a favor. And if we all kind of like join hands and sing Kumbaya just the way I see it in Mamavation, amazing things happen.

Years ago, in 2012, that's when I entered the green industry and started really looking into things like this. And what I did was I organized all of the bloggers for the labeling movement in California and Washington. And as they were doing that, we organized for California over 650 bloggers and created just over...I think it was 700, 750 million impressions in two short months, asking women, and these weren't natural green wellness women, these were just mom bloggers, "Do you have a right to know?"

And bringing these conversations to everyday consumers, everyday moms, people that are in the trenches that are stressed out, that are just trying to keep afloat. Those are the people that really, really, really need these messages and need to understand. And these are also the same people that really, really become that tidal wave of change. Because once they make different decisions, all of a sudden things start changing very quickly.

Katie: Yeah. And I love that you mentioned about the companies too because I think you have a great perspective on this and I want to hear your take. Because I have at times recommended organic products that either the company is owned by a bigger company or like they were acquired by a bigger company or that like they didn't apparently fit with some of my readers' idea of what a natural company should be.

An example would be I linked to Burt's Bees organic baby clothes because they're some of the more affordable organic clothing and got reamed by some readers because they're like, "They're owned by Clorox." And my thing was, "Obviously, yes. If I had like a local artisan, you know, onesie maker that I could actually afford to buy from and that I could get all my clothes, I would do that."

But there isn't one for one and for two, yeah, it's great if you and I are growing organic food at home when we should. But isn't it awesome if big companies are getting onboard? Because they can affect a much bigger change more quickly. And if we're gonna change things, we need all these fronts to change, not just our own personal lives. But I want to hear your take on it even if you completely disagree with me.

Leah: You know, I don't have a problem with the big guys getting into the organic industry. I'm a little cautious about it but I don't have an issue with it and this is the reason. Organic is organic, there's a certification. It's registered with the USDA, it's something that you can't change. So it's like if Dole Foods decided to purchase an organic company, they can change the source of the organic, you know, like what organic farmer they're buying from. But they can't change the fact that it's organic. That, they can't change.

I've actually had so many conversations with marketing people that are in these big huge companies and that's essentially what they say to us. When they purchase these organic companies, their hands are tied. And they know that their hands are tied and they don't want to be Kashi. Now, that might sound like a weird term but that's actually a big deal in the industry.

When Kashi was purchased by Kellogg's, Kellogg's changed everything about Kashi. And when the consumers found out about it, they abandoned Kashi, as they should, and that was something that the industry watched happen with horror, by the way. And today, they're very careful about not to get Kashi. So what that basically means is they understand, when they're purchasing an organic company, that their hands are tied and they have to source through an organic farmer, they have to source through the rules of organic. So that part of it does not scare me.

What I am concerned with is when we have too many conglomerates, like all the conglomerates together could just eat up the organic industry in a heartbeat and we would never...because the organic industry is so small and they're so big. I don't see that happening right now. I see it trickling and trickling and trickling.

But here's the other side to it that I feel is really important. We have less than 1% organic agriculture in the United States. I think it's something like closer to 0.04%. Our demand is between 10% to 15% and it's growing and growing and growing. That means we are importing the vast majority of our organic food from outside of the United States just to meet demand. Now, there's a lot of reasons why that's happening, we just covered that on Mamavation.com, a ton of the reasons why that's happening.

But one of the reasons has to do with conventional farmers. I've talked to conventional farmers, I've talked to organic farmers. Conventional farmers just kinda don't like organic farmers, you know, they're the new kids on the block. They're the ones that are different, they do things weird. You know, they don't like the way they're doing it and they don't like being looked at differently by their new consumers. Because now people are asking them questions like, "Well, what kind of pesticides are you spraying?" and "Duh-duh-duh." And these are things that they've never had to deal with before and they really just don't like it.

So there's an issue, a cultural issue with that but there's also an issue of, you know, having...when you become an organic farmer, you have to let the ground rest for three years and you have to farm organically. And in those three years you don't make any extra money. Well, what happens when the big guys get into the game is not the fact...it's perceived differently.

When we have these little companies like Nature's Path, you know, they're cute. But there's only like four or five or six or seven farms that they pull from. And it's not a sure thing for them because all of us understand what it's like to feed a family. You know, you have to work hard. And the last thing you want is the idea that maybe next month you won't have an income. And that's really frightening for a farmer. And especially since farmers don't really know how much money they're gonna make until they actually sell the product and then they get it, you know.

So it's one of those industries that are really volatile, very, very volatile and they could lose their shirt in a heartbeat. Well, when the big guys get into the picture, what that means to them is stability. That means there's a sure thing. Because if General Mills comes knocking at your door and saying, "I want all the corn" or "I want all the zucchini" or "I want all of this that you're producing for the next two years," they take them seriously. But if it's a little organic company walking up to a farmer saying that, it doesn't seem as sturdy, as safe to them.

So one of things that the big companies provide is that sense of assuredness, that sense of stability, that sense that, "Okay, if I partner with you, I'm gonna be able to feed my family, I'm not really gonna have to worry." That's what they bring into the picture. That type of thing you can't really put a price tag on. It has to do with how people are feeling.

So in the sense that we want to grow past 1% organic...shoot, if we had 1% organic farmland, we'd be doubling what we have right now. And we really should have about 10% organic farmland to near the demand that we have. And so when the big guys get into the picture, that is what I'm looking at as how it's solving the problem, one of the problems we have.

And of course, I really believe that organic food should be for everybody. And the more we have, the less it's gonna cost. And so that part of it is also something. The distribution, you know, we go into Target...and Annie's has been purchased by General Mills. My husband loves their cookies, their chocolate chip cookies. He's like, he buys them and he hoards them. He literally hoards them and will hide them up in the bins so the kids can't find them and stuff. He's got a sweet tooth, so I let him do what he wants. And he gets to buy those at Target because Target already has an established relationship with General Mills.

So once Annie's was purchased, it was everywhere. Those types of things I really like. Now I am cautious about too many big companies buying up too much organic. We need to constantly have small companies in there with the mission and the value system that we have. That is really, really important. It's also important to understand that, you know, if you're one of those people that said, "No, I don't want to buy from Annie's once they got purchased by General Mills."

I would say, "You know what, that's fine. That's great." Because what that does is it creates a business opportunity for a smaller brand to go into that space and grab that market share and that just grows the organic industry in general. So if you are one of those people that don't want to buy from a big company, I don't think there's anything wrong with that, I think that's fine. But there's a lot of people that do as well. And so, by all of us together, we're going to grow the industry, we're going to change the supermarket. But it's really going to take all of us.

Katie: I agree completely. And like you said, that's still super important that we are supporting the small businesses and our local farmers' markets and all these places. But at the same time, if these big companies and their purchasing power can make those changes as well to the organic side, then they're impacting so much more farmland, so much more industry across the country and eventually that hopefully will all reach a tipping point. But I agree with your cautions as well. And of course, yeah, if anyone still doesn't feel comfortable with a company after they're acquired, absolutely, find a smaller company and that's a great solution.

Just a reminder, this podcast is brought to you by Annmarie Gianni Skin Care. And you can find out about them at [annmariegianni.com/wellnessmama](http://annmariegianni.com/wellnessmama). Make sure to use that link because you can get a special sample kit offer that's available to Wellness Mama listeners. They will send you a sample kit for normal skin, oily skin or dry skin, based on your skin type, for only \$10. But here's the cool part. They will also send you a \$10 off coupon with each sample kit, so this can be used for future purchases. In other words, if you find a product that you love, and I think you will, then you can use that coupon and the sample kit was essentially free. They also will ship it free to you anywhere in the world. So it's free shipping. Just \$10 for the sample kit. And it's full of different facial products that you can try and see how your skin does. Also included, they will send you their Toxic Free Home Guide, which is an in-depth guide to the worst and most common chemicals you will find in your home, including in your cleaning products, your toiletries, even in your couch. And they give you some safe alternatives to use. So it's basically full of tips for creating a natural home and they have a lot of recipes and recommendations in there. And their skin care is the go-to skin care of a lot of celebrities and a lot of well-known people in the health industry including Dr. Mark Hyman, Kris Carr, Louise Hay, JJ Virgin, and many more. So, make sure to check them out: [annmariegianni.com/wellnessmama](http://annmariegianni.com/wellnessmama) to get the sample kit offer and I think you'll like them as much as I do.

This podcast is also brought to you by Butcherbox. And this is one of my go-to companies for healthy protein for our family recently since our local farmer retired and we don't have a great place to buy locally any of these foods. So, Butcherbox delivers 100% grass fed beef, organic pastured chicken, and heritage breed pork directly to your door. Their products are all humanly raised, and free of antibiotics and hormones. And as a lot of you may know, 97% of the beef for sale in the US is grain-fed and processed in feed lots. And this is gross for several reasons. They're in crowded, in-humane conditions, but they're also fed antibiotics to help prevent the spread of disease. And the problem here is that these antibiotics can build up in our bodies, they can transfer to us through the meat and this is leading to the antibiotic resistant bacteria, like super bugs, and a lot of doctors are worried that we're going to see a time when we won't be able to effectively treat these because bacteria are getting so resistant to antibiotics. So my solution is that our family consumes only grass fed beef whenever possible, which we really try to make a priority. So Butcherbox sources their meat from the best places and delivers it directly to your door. They guarantee that the beef is 100% grass fed and grass finished and never taken from feed lots. All of their products, including their chicken and pork, are free of antibiotics and hormones and all of their animals are humanly raised. So in each box you're going to get roughly 10 pounds of meat, which is enough for 20 individual sized meals that actually lasts our family a month because we do a whole lot of vegetables to supplement with that. And if you want to check it out, go to [butcherbox.com/wellnessmama](http://butcherbox.com/wellnessmama) and use the code HEALTHYMOMS (in all capital letters), HEALTHYMOMS to get \$15 off your first order plus free bacon. Again, this is a go-to source for our family and make sure to use that code for the discount.

Katie: What do you see as the most pressing things that we need to, as parents and families and mothers and activists, change in society today? So, like with our limited purchasing power that we each have in our families, where do you see as the biggest areas that we should direct those?

Leah: Well, definitely food. I would definitely say that, you know, if you're going to purchase something, definitely, definitely make it food. I'd also say that, you know, a lot of those big personal care product companies, you know, I hate to say it but, you know, companies like Dove and cosmetics like Estée Lauder. You know, they're not really looking out for us. I think they have great campaigns that are justice-driven and driven towards us being all equal as people and stuff like that.

But to me, sometimes that hides the fact that, in the ingredient world, they're not really your best friend. And so they can give themselves a halo with certain things. But what you have to realize is, at the end of the day, if they contain carcinogenic or endocrine-disrupting chemicals, it's not the best for your family. And sometimes marketing campaigns are amazing but that's all they are, marketing campaigns.

So food, definitely, personal care...I love what you do, Katie, how you encourage people to make their own. Because, you know, if you're able to make your own stuff, you're saving a ton of money. You know, also air, really your air quality. Air in your home can be up to 10 times more polluted than the air outside of your house. And so little things like, you know, changing your cleaning products to things that are based on the vinegar in your home or things like that that are not expensive. You know, using borax and sugar and putting that together to kill your ants as opposed to spraying pesticides and those type of things.

Anytime that you can either change your purchase by buying an organic product or buying something to that or making something because personal care products are really expensive, I think you're really communicating a lot with your dollar. And your dollar is something that gives you a vote every single day, for breakfast, lunch and dinner and everything in-between. That is where your real, real voice lies. Because the more we're able to support the companies that are doing the right thing, the more those people will be in power tomorrow.

So if we support the people that mirror our values today, they're the ones that are gonna grow in the industry and grow the world and be the leaders of tomorrow. That's really, really important to me. Especially now, I mean, this year's been a really tough year for everybody. It's been emotional, it's been like crazy. I mean, "Oh my God." You know, I avoid social media some days because I'm just like, "I need Zen," you know?

Katie: Yeah.

Leah: And now more than ever, vote with your dollar. I mean, I'm double-downing on that bad boy. Vote with your dollar every single day. And if you're an influencer out there, you get a double vote. And the reason you get a double vote is because not only can you vote with your dollar but you can promote the good guys with your voice, which is so incredibly important now more than ever.

Katie: Yeah, I agree completely. And another thing that I think you do really well and I wanna talk a little bit is balancing motherhood and work. Because I know a lot of moms listening are either work-from-home moms or they have a job. And you and I both also have businesses and careers that we're running along with raising our children, and so let's talk about that. How do you balance motherhood and work and also how do you kinda apply that whole 80-20 principle to motherhood to make sure that you're giving it your best as well?

Leah: Well, the interesting thing with balance is I don't think you're balancing all the time. You know what I mean, it's kind of like with my marriage. You know, sometimes I'm doing 80% of the cooking, sometimes my husband is doing 80% of the cooking. But at the end of the day, it's pretty balanced and I think that's the point. Some days I'm doing all my work all day long trying to get it done, my husband comes home, he sees that it's a little crazy, he steps in, helps me with everything and I'm working.

And then another day I've got my act together, I've got the lunches down, I've got everything down and I don't need any help. And then, you know, he's coming home and he's like, "Oh my God I want to kill somebody because something happened at work." And that's kind of what balance is to me. It's the everyday asking yourself, "What is the priority today and what do I absolutely have to get done?" And then everything else falls

into place. And the other thing about balance is, you know, I feel the most for women who don't have any support.

But I really feel like if you want to feel balanced, you need to be emotionally balanced. And what that means is asking for help when you need help from the people that you know will support you. So I'm very lucky because I have, you know, my mother. When my father died my mother also retired and, you know, she stays at home but she's become my nanny. And my mother is here with me pretty much every day, you know, and I don't always have her. But I would not be able to run my business without her.

So I know a lot of people that have a very similar setup to me but they have, you know, daycare or they have like relatives or they have something else set up. What I would say to people is, "This is your life. This is your walk, okay?" Nobody can tell you what to do and nobody can tell you what is right. The number one thing to listen to is your gut. You need to tell you what your priority is and it probably will be different every day. And you know what? That is okay. And that's to me what balance is. When I hear people talk about, you know, swamis out and then up a hill and, you know, "La-la-la-la-la," singing Kumbaya and I have my ... together all the time," I call bull... on those people. Either I call bull... on them or I don't think they're actually normal. Because I don't think the average person has it all together all the time at all seconds of the day.

But especially for the modern woman...you know, we're such an interesting group of women because we went to college more than the men did, our generation. We outrank the guys in college. We are now educated and a lot of us are staying home and some of us are either just raising children or raising children and working their job at the same time. And this is something that's never happened before. You know, what we're able to do and accomplish is something that has never been done. And taking our power the way we are, being able to have it all. But the flip side of being have-it-all is that not everybody understands what you have.

And so for the work-at-home mom, you know, that goes to the school and, you know, moms look at them sideways because they can't volunteer as much as they want. At the end of the day, you just have to remember that they're your priorities and you set those priorities daily and you do what's good for your family first and then everything else falls into play.

Now that's one of the reasons why I do the 80-20 rule. You know, I've been struggling with an eating disorder since I was a little girl and I'm very serious about not creating an environment to cause an eating disorder in my children. And so sometimes I just have to let it up and walk away and just say, "Have at it kids, do whatever you want." Because what I'm looking for at that moment is not to create an eating disorder or to create a disordered eating or something like that in them.

Now, it's more likely to happen with girls than boys but boys are rising every day with eating disorders that they have and the things that they have to deal with. So I also take that into mind when I'm talking about 80-20. But what I do do is I control the things that I have control over. I have control over my house, I have control over what happens here.

But when we leave the house, I don't have control, you know? I mean, they're breathing air, you know what I'm saying? There's no control over that. They may be with friends who are gonna...they're gonna do something, eat something, go somewhere. I don't really have a lot of control over that. I do and I don't and I think what we have to do is balance that part of it. You know, say to yourself, "When is their emotional health more important than their physical health? When is their physical health more important than their emotional health? And when is my emotional health important?"

Like, maybe if I like decided to put my foot down in this area, I just wouldn't be able to manage the rest of the day, you know, emotionally, and sometimes I even have to consider that. But the answer to all this is, "You know what? It's okay. It really is okay." It's based on who you are, what your priorities are and how you need to live your life. And gosh darn it, I'm supportive of women who are empowering themselves. And whatever you decide to do with your family, that is how you empower yourself, that is how you empower your family and I

think that's awesome.

Katie: I love it. So you mentioned your husband, so I have to ask, my kids would kill me if I didn't. I saw on Instagram that he has quite the Lego obsession going on, so talk about that for a second. I'm sure there's a lot of Lego fans out there.

Leah: Oh my God, my husband just doesn't have like a Lego hobby, I would consider it like a Lego obsession. You guys could check him out on Instagram as Mr. Bookieboo, "M-R-B-O-O-K-I-E-B-O-O." He puts up one picture, he gets like 1,300 likes like within like, I don't know, 10 hours or something. He has an entire Lego city. So if you guys remember the Lego movie and he had that whole basement, it's about half the size of that basement. And it's all against the wall and it goes around the side so he has the entire city.

And now what he's doing is he's adapting things to be Star Warsified. And so he's now taking the Lego city and he's rejiggering all of the buildings to be Star Wars buildings. So this one restaurant that he had is now 3-POs, "Three-P-O-S" and it's like the robot, like skins and stuff like that inside. It's hysterical. You know, he's a Star Wars fan, so he does a lot of Star Wars Legos and a lot of Lego City stuff. And, you know, he does a lot of customized things as well. So he'll take some kind of like Lego thing that was, I don't know, a 350-piece set and he'll turn it into a 3,000-piece set and just adds so many crazy things.

You know, it really is his passion. He's been obsessed with Legos since, I think, he was six years old and, you know, I let him do it because it's really fun to watch. And the funny thing is though he...I have a little bit of an OCD issue where if I start something I have to finish it. I'm just weird like that. So like, if I start cooking something I have to be the one to finishing the cooking. That's why I'm so good at working because I love finishing things, it brings me a lot of satisfaction.

Well, when he wants to mess with me, he'll bring a set that he doesn't want to build and he'll be like, "Hey Leah, start this for me." And he knows that I won't be able to stop until it's done. So he's like...the 2,000-piece things he'll hand over to me and I'll be like, "Okay" while I'm watching TV. And then like three, four hours later it's all done and I've done the whole thing. You know, it's hysterical. He does that to me all the time. It's like what free time I have I'm sitting there putting Legos together for him.

So I think like from his Lego I wanna say three or four of those buildings are all me. He's got about 12 or 13 maybe in there, maybe more, I don't know. But at least four of them are mine, of me sitting there obsessively like finishing it and then he's all like, "Honey, you gotta put the kids in bed." And I'll be like, "Uh-uh, no. You handed this to me two hours ago, you should've known better." And I was still trying to fix it going faster, you know, it's hysterical. He does that to me.

But yeah, just go check him out. You guys will be astonished. Lego is always watching him on Instagram and giving him high fives. He's just grown really quickly on Instagram, he loves it. And he's doing YouTube videos as well. So he's Mr. Bookieboo on YouTube and you can hear him talk about...everything, to him is really funny. So like most of the...there's jokes within most of the scenes that he has. And so when you see it, if you watch the videos, he'll tell you what the joke is behind what they're doing.

You know, it's like for instance...oh God, I'm trying to think. There's the recruitment center, the Empire Recruitment Center where those guys are, you know, they're recruiting people. And then you have, you know, like, I don't know, the rebels, the rebel cause is in the front with Chewy and those guys like undercover selling hot dogs to them. It's just like really funny, you know, he has these little things, these little nuggets that are all through the city that are just like that. It's so funny.

Katie: That's hysterical. Are your kids into Legos also or is he the biggest in the family into it?

Leah: No, my kids are not equally because, you know, he's got like 40 years of Lego obsessiveness. But my kids, you know, they're allowed to play with it. He lets them do whatever they want as long as they don't break

everything. So it's like, they know they're not supposed to take the buildings off the table, they're not supposed to, you know, change big things.

But they can go in there and they can change the statues around and do a couple of little things here and there. They don't really mess with it so much because they have their own Legos. I mean, we have thousands and thousands and thousands of these blocks in our house, and so much that I'm constantly stepping on them. I have to look where I'm walking all the time.

But I try to keep the Legos to the Lego room and the kids' rooms, you know. But they all have bins and bins and bins of them. The cool thing is to watch kids just create out of nothing. And what they're creating and what they're thinking and they're all really, really imaginative with that. I love it.

Katie: It's so fun, I love it. And yeah, I would definitely...I'll link to him in the show notes as well and to everything we've talked about. But anybody with kids...my kids follow him through my Instagram, they like to check him out, so...

Leah: Oh, that's so sweet. I'm gonna tell him. He's gonna love that.

Katie: Oh, yeah. Anybody with kids, have your kids check it out because they'll love it. Although it could be an expensive hobby if you...

Leah: It is an expensive hobby, I swear, it really is. Oh man. And we actually have boxes of Lego sets that have never been opened. And I'm not gonna tell you how many but it's like I look at it and I'm like...and the boxes...and if you look at his organization, that's one of the things that people are just like floored by.

He gets these plastic drawers and stuff like that and he has it all organized by color, by size, by kind of like genre, what it does and it's all in there. But then there's still like 12 big huge bins of Legos that are not organized. So it's like it's a constant thing where he's constantly adding to the organization and throwing all of his stuff back in the bin. It's super fun though, super fun.

Katie: That's awesome. Well, Leah, I could talk to you all day long but I want to respect your time and everyone's listening time. But like really quick tell us where we can find you and I'll make sure I'll link to it as well.

Leah: So you can find me at Mamavation.com, it's spelled M-A-M-A-V-A-T-I-O-N.com. If you're an influencer, you should check out the ShiftCon Social Media Conference that's at ShiftConMedia.com, spelled S-H-I-F-T-C-O-N-M-E-D-I-A.com. And if you want to join the network for sponsored post opportunities, go to Bookieboo.com, B-O-O-K-I-E-B-O-O.com.

Katie: Awesome. Leah, thank you so much for your time. It's always so much fun.

Leah: Oh, love you, Katie. You're awesome.

Katie: Oh, you too. And thanks to all of you guys for listening and for caring and for making changes for your own family. Because like what we've talked about in this episode, that's what's gonna change our whole society and the future for our kids. And I will see you next time on The Healthy Moms podcast.

If you're enjoying these interviews, would you please take two minutes to leave a rating or review on iTunes for me? Doing this helps more people to find the podcast, which means even more moms and families could benefit from the information. I really appreciate your time and thanks as always for listening.

