Episode 791: How to Write a Children’s Book for Your Own Children To Help Them Avoid Pitfalls You Experienced with Dane Maxwell
Child: Welcome to my Mommy’s podcast.

This episode is brought to you by Neurohacker. As you probably know, being active with my kids and getting everything done for the day depends on me staying in my prime physically and mentally for as long as possible and valuing the most research-backed ingredients known to science for a better and more graceful and optimized aging process. There’s something called senescent cells, also known as zombie cells, that are basically worn out cells that are no longer serving a useful function for our health. They can waste our energy and they take nutritional resources.

They tend to accumulate in our bodies as we age, leading to things like aches and pains, slow recovery, and sluggish mental and physical energy and associated with that middle-aged feeling. Senolytic from Neurohacker is the new thing I’m experimenting with. They're science back to support our body's natural elimination of senescent cells. Neurohacker packs seven of the most science-backed senolytic ingredients into a formula called Qualia Senolytic, and you can take it for just two days a month for fast, noticeable benefits and a much better aging process. But I've been experimenting with this as well. The formula is non-GMO, vegan and gluten-free, and the ingredients are meant to complement one another, factoring in the combined effect of all of them together. It’s also backed by a 100-day money-back guarantee, so you have almost three months to try Qualia Senolytic at no risk and decide for yourself. Go to neurohacker.com/mama15 and use the coupon code Mama15 to save 15% on any purchase.

This podcast is brought to you by Jigsaw Health, who you might have heard me talk about before. But today I want to talk about their new collagen. And in my house, we go through a lot of collagen. I consume quite a bit for keeping my joints and tendons healthy as I get older and work out a whole lot. And also for the potential anti-aging benefits as I'm now aware of this as I get older. Theirs is really cool and unique because it uses three clinically tested bioactive collagen peptides that are clinically tested to promote the growth and healing of new cartilage. They’re clinically tested to support mobility in healthy individuals. They're clinically tested to have a positive influence on cartilage tissue regeneration, bone density, and to stimulate healthy skin metabolism and promote firmer and smoother skin, which is one of the benefits I'm after. And they're clinically tested to promote growth and health of fingernails, which I noticed very rapidly when I started increasing my collagen production. I love that theirs is unflavored and dissolves really easily. So it’s easy to put into almost any food or drink or even my morning coffee. And it has 17 grams of protein per serving. It’s of course grass fed, and it includes hyaluronic acid, which we're seeing increasing studies talk about from an anti-aging perspective. I keep a canister of it in my kitchen and my kids will add to smoothies or to food. I add it to most drinks that I consume. And you can find out more or get your own by going to wellnessmama.com/go/jigsawcollagen.

Hello, and welcome to the Wellness Mama podcast. I’m Katie from wellnessmama.com, and I'm here today with someone I met last year at an event, and he had such a creative idea, especially for those of us who have been through difficult things in our lives, in wanting to help our children have an easier childhood. Dane Maxwell has been an entrepreneur for 10 years and helped many other people do the same but is now turned artist and singer. And that's what we really delve into today. We actually don't really touch on his successful career as an entrepreneur and serial entrepreneur, but how his process of learning to unravel his own trauma and find inner peace led to him creating a children’s book for his daughter to help impart some of those same lessons. And he actually gives a template if you want to do this as well. I've found this is a fun, creative project. And he really delves into that today, but he also touches on some therapies that really help with PTSD, as well as what his own process looks like and gave some really actionable tips on ways that you can find more grace, ease, and joy in your life. So enjoy this wide-ranging conversation with my friend, Dane. Dane, welcome. Thank you so much for being here.

Dane: Let's do some stuff, Katie. Let's talk about it.
Katie: I'm so excited. I got to meet you in person at an event last year and knew that I was so excited to have your voice on this podcast. We had a wonderful conversation and I feel like so much of what you talk about resonated so deeply with me. And I can't wait to share that with everybody listening today. I think I would love to just hear a little bit about your background. I've heard some of this in person, but I think it's helpful to the conversation and also just such a fascinating story. So can you, we'll get into the book, which I'm excited to delve into, but can you explain how you got to this point?

Dane: Well, yeah. And the book is really secondary, right? Because it was a children's book I wrote for my daughter to save her from the trauma that I experienced growing up. And that's a secondary topic. The background of this is really interesting because I am a very hypersensitive male, so I feel everything. And I got very rejected growing up. And ridiculed, abused, bullied, so much so that I ended up abandoning the beauty of my own heart. And in abandoning the beauty of my own heart, I chose to build impressive businesses and show them off to the world. I would basically liken it to when I didn't believe I mattered and thought I had an ugly heart, I built beautiful businesses and showed them off to the world. As I began to believe in the beauty of my own heart and believe in my existence mattering, all I wanted to do was sing.

Now, these are completely different worlds because I, because I had all the heartbreak, I had to build a really strong intellect to handle all the heartbreak. And that strong intellect is able to navigate the business world. When the passion for singing came online, I might as well have been in a wheelchair in that domain and having to go to physical therapy. So it's taken me, I'm 40 now, at 33, I made the transition. It's taken me seven years, five vocal coaches, quitting music four times because it was just so difficult for my heart. And that's just my, my greatest joy is for every mother that mostly mother's listening to shows that they know how worthy they are, how much they matter. And how much of, like as you said, of a force they are for the planet. And just how much I've struggled with that with my own journey. And I'm finally arriving at a place where I can show my face without a mask.

Katie: Yeah, I think so many parts of what you talked about just now and in our first conversation really resonated with me because I think a lot of people listening have had that pull towards something that they know is sort of an alignment that's what their calling is. And having fear around stepping into that or having stories that prevent us from stepping into that. And like you, I went down the high achieving entrepreneur route from a similar childhood of not believing I was lovable. And I had this idea that if I could create enough things that would help people that I could maybe find, I could prove to myself that I was lovable.

And like you, I got to unpack a lot of that. And the beauty in that is realizing like those businesses were still helpful to people and I'm so grateful for them. But when I was able to come from a place of not trying to prove my value or my worth in existence, but from just a deeper place of love, it shifted how I felt about it and the whole conversation. And I think ironically made it easier to connect with people and to grow in a way that was really impactful. I also love for you that it involved singing, because I think there's a beautiful metaphor about finding your voice. And I've been on that journey as well. I'm still on it. I've by no means resolved it, but I think for women, especially, it often can be hard to find your authentic voice in today's world. And I know that you have a daughter and that that's, I'm sure, something you think about often with her as well.

Dane: Mm-hmm. Well, I don't think about it with my, my daughter has a voice, and she uses it pretty well. I'm not worried about it. I'm mostly watching, like if my daughter gets angry and then I'm like, ah man. She's my walking shadow. Where do I have unresolved anger? And then I'll work on my unresolved anger, and she'll be less angry. It's wild. I take so much responsibility for, if my daughter is acting in a way that's puzzling to me, I'm almost certain she's mirroring my unconscious. So it's, you know, if she explodes one day, if she's impatient one day, I'm like, where do I have impatience? Where do I still explode? And I heal that and then my daughter just transforms in front of my very eyes. But yeah, my daughter’s got a good voice right now. If she loses it, I
will be thinking about it all the time. And I think in terms of finding your voice, it's a mystery. I think we just go back in the past and look at every time someone shunned our authentic voice and remap that emotional experience till we just become like my four-year-old daughter again, who has no thoughts about using her voice at all.

Katie: Well, two such important points, I think, there. One is that I see every day how much we can learn from our kids, even in simple ways, like how much they naturally move in the ways that we all work with trainers to get back to as adults, or how they can just thrive in their environment, or they can climb a tree, and these things that would feel so difficult to many of us as adults.

But I think what you said also is really important about at the end of the day, we only can control ourselves. We can only control our own emotional responses, our own feelings, how we show up in the world. And I know that can be a tough thing to hear, but I think there's a proportionate relationship between the amount of responsibility we take in our own lives and our connection with other human beings. And for people who have pushed back on that in the past, I said, you know, if you think you can actually control your child, which I would argue isn't a great thing to try anyway. But if you think you could, have you had a two-year-old? Because you cannot force them to eat what you want them to eat. You cannot force them to sleep. You might be able to force them to go to bed, but you're not going to force them to sleep. They are already their own infinite autonomous people. But what you can control is yourself. And you control how you show up in that interaction and your own inner state.

And I know also that that is easier said than done. And it sounds like it was a journey for you as well, that you did not just wake up one day in complete and graceful control of your inner experience of life and how you communicated with everybody. What did that journey look like for you?

Dane: I advise nobody take that path. It was really difficult. So the bad for me, I'm just experimenting with my daughter. So it's like, I've tried to get my daughter to calm down, try to get my daughter to calm down, try to get my daughter to calm down. Then I'm like, wait. Why am I not calm in my life? Right. And I'm just experimenting with it. And what I'm looking at is like, so the bad news is, it's you have to do the work. The good news is you do get a little bit of control because if I have unresolved, if my daughter has unresolved anger and all I have to do to resolve her unresolved anger is recognize that she's my walking shadow and look at and resolve my own anger and then she stops acting out my unconscious, it's one of the most liberating things as parents. It's actually better news than, oh, I just need to get my daughter to change and then I'll feel better. It's no wait, where's my daughter acting out my unconscious? How can I change it? And then she changes automatically. It's like, it's actually better this way. Because you actually can influence it by changing yourself.

So kids, and this is just working for me with my daughter. I don't know. Some mom's going to have like either bipolar or autism or, you know, there's, I don't think there's anything I can say about that regard. But it's worth exploring children as the shadow of your unconscious, puzzling behavior that you're puzzled by reflecting on yourself. Your question was, how did I work on my journey? First, I started with talk therapy. Then I did EFT and tapping. Then I did neuroemotional technique, which is like a muscle testing tapping. Then I went ahead and I tried like the ayahuasca. Then I went ahead and tried like these things called like a bioemotive framework, which is like an emotional thing for processing.

And nothing really, really worked to the degree that I wanted until I found a Hatha yoga practitioner. And now I do Hatha yoga five days a week, 90 minutes every morning, five days a week from 6 to 7:30. And no matter what happens during the day, I wake up at 6 AM. And I get to process it through because the Hatha yoga practice, basically, you'd be amazed as a woman, actually, how little you need to talk about things. And how much you just need to get the energy out of your body. And Hatha yoga is like, if you want the fastest shortcut
to feeling well-being, get the energy out of your body. Half the time when you're talking about things, you're just reinforcing them. Sometimes it's really good to talk about it, really, really good to talk about it. But a lot of times you're just reinforcing stuff, especially moms that like complain about their kids to other moms. Please don't do that. Your kids, your kids, your kids are going to grow up with like a not-enough syndrome and you're going to wonder why. And it's because they felt you doing that, you know. And so, I just want to say. Hatha yoga did wonders for me. I talked about my problems until they were sorted out. But once I got the energy out of my body, I didn't need to talk.

Now, getting the energy out of my body has been viciously painful. But I'm talking like viciously painful for like five minutes at a time. So five minutes of vicious pain and then just bliss. It's like, it's bliss. Like the pain gets out of the system. It's like, the last thing I want to do is feel this. The last thing I want to do is go into this. The last thing I want to do is embrace this. And I feel all that while just doing it. And then I'm like, oh, I hate this. I hate this. I hate this. Five minutes. Five minutes is the longest time. Then, boom, I pop through, and I'm like, oh, dude, what just happened? I just popped through a whole bubble in my brain. So Hatha yoga was like my absolute favorite for what I recommend. It's a very personalized thing. And I recommend having it be some form of body-based movement. More so than like a talk therapy.

And running is not, I don't recommend running Because running can keep your fight or flight, your flight response on while you're running. And so Hatha yoga is really nice because it disables fight and disables flight. It gets you into the rest and relaxation state where the feelings can then flow safely. And then actually also, I got a biological treatment done for PTSD. Katie, it's absolutely mind-blowing. It's called dual sympathetic reset. And they go into the spinal cord, and they put a numbing agent on the spinal cord, which resets the fight or flight response. So women that have been raped are getting this. Soldiers that come back from combat are getting this. And it's resetting their body back to the pre-trauma state. It's absolutely mind-blowing. It's like three grand or something. And like you reset your fight or flight response. That's called dual sympathetic reset. You can Google that. That was really monumental. And then Hatha yoga was really monumental. I don't do like journaling. I don't do a whole lot of meditation, which I'm starting to do. It was really just getting the energy out of the body. Long answer.

Katie: That's such a good point, though. I had a similar experience with that, having trauma in my past as well and experiencing that talk therapy wasn't helpful because my conscious mind was able to sort of keep it locked down and not and be able to not actually go there. And that there was a process of relearning to sort of be in touch with my body again after dissociating after that pretty extreme trauma. And so things like tapping were really helpful to me as well. But I think that book, The Body Keeps the Score, initially opened my mind to the idea as like, yes, we think of healing just in the mind, but you can actually the body is an incredible tool and friend in that journey for you as well.

I also like that you frame this in the in the reference perspective of that we have it in our ability to do this work, that we actually much of this is within our control to begin to shift because I say the same thing even on the physical health side. We hear these statistics that over 80 or 90 percent of people have some marker of metabolic disease. And to me, that's great news because that means there's lifestyle factors involved that we have the ability to create change around. And I think the same is true in healing. So just as I often say, we are each our own primary health care provider, I also love to follow that up with and we are our own healer. That has to start and it ends within us. And there can be helpful tools along that journey. But the process is within us in both cases.

You also mentioned that story of like, oh, if just my daughter was regulated, then I would be calm or if just I think any of those if just stories are great light into where we are still stuck sometimes. I used to have those stories. Even if only, I were a certain size, then I would be happy. If only I looked like this, then I would be happy. And it's that reframe of understanding when I find self-love, when I can find grace, ease, and joy, when
I can find inner peace. Those things might shift and they're not going to feel like the important thing anymore. And I know for you, what I was most excited to get to delve deep on today is that this beautiful journey for you led to you creating something to help your daughter to have hopefully a more beautiful path from an earlier age. And I would love for you to talk about this, because even though this is a book that you wrote, you and I spoke about how this can also be an amazing tool for all parents, that they can both benefit from your book, but this is also something we can all do. So can you explain how the book came to light?

Dane: I love my dog, he's just tearing the carpet up behind me. If you guys are watching video, I have a little cute little King Charles Cavalier dog. Greatest dogs I ever had, by the way. So children's book. What I would like to give and what I’d like to offer everybody for free on this podcast is I want to give you a free guide on how to make a children's book for your child that combines what your child loves with what your core trauma story was. You combine what your child loves with your core trauma story pattern, plug it into a content creation framework called like the hero’s journey, which you'll all get in this document. So you take your child's great loves, your core trauma pattern, plug it into a story framework using the hero's journey framework. I'll give you all the guide. I'm repeating it just so you guys can hear it again. And then also using AI, how to prompt AI to create the images and how to prompt AI to write the story for you so you can tell the story to your child and have their full attention because it's about what they love.

So I was in a bath. I'm sorry, my daughter was in a bath. And she would not stop talking about mermaids. She loves mermaids. Oh, my gosh. Mermaid this, mermaid that. She wants to wear a mermaid tail and, like, hobble around the house, which drove me a little bit nuts. Just like, just walk, use your leg. You know. More of my own stuff to look at there. And so she loves mermaids. And then my core trauma pattern was I could never find acceptance in the world growing up so I kept changing myself. I kept changing myself to try to get acceptance from the group. And it didn't work. I never got acceptance from the group.

And I changed myself like six times by the time I still wasn't accepted that by the time I changed myself for the sixth time, I was lost as to who I was. I might as well try entrepreneurship. Seems like a pretty good idea. Mark Zuckerberg seems to be pretty celebrated on the cover of Yahoo right now. This seems to be a good route to go for a guy that couldn't find acceptance anywhere else. So that was my core trauma patterns. The last thing I want my daughter to do is to change herself over and over again until she loses herself. So I wrote a book called The Mermaid Who Couldn't Pick a Tail. I love the title. I'm very, I'm actually very impressed with my creativity because I never explored this aspect of myself. But I came up with The Mermaid Who Couldn't Pick a Tail. I was like, this is the coolest title for a children's book ever. And there's no other book named that.

And then I have this beautiful mermaid named Nomi and her little pet fish friend named Gooper. And they go around the ocean and like she gets rejected and tries to change her tail and then finds like this person that says, don't give up your true tail. And I read it to my daughter and I’m like kind of crying as I’m reading it to her. And we've read it to her like probably 10 times now. And I was like, parents need to do this for their kids. Take your children's love, take your core trauma, use the hero's journey framework, create a little, it doesn't need to be very it doesn't need to be like perfect looking. Like if you go to Amazon and you search The Mermaid Who Couldn't Pick a Tail or better yet, use the link that Katie gives you and look at the book. You see, it's beautiful. I spared no expense building this book. I didn't start that way, Katie. I was like, I'm just going to do it in a Google Doc, a few images. Well, like eighteen thousand dollars and eleven months later, I have an eighteen-thousand-dollar children's book, which looks absolutely stunning. But I was like anything for my daughter to have freedom. I didn't need to go to that extent. But that's kind of the essence of it. And I just wanted moms to be able to make these kind of books for their kids, too. You don't need to make one. You could make like 10 of them. And they're really easy to do with AI. They're almost free.

Katie: Yeah, it was so cool to hear that story from you. And I had not thought about, I had been in search of children's books that I could read to my kids that would have messages that I wanted to help them learn. But I
had not thought of creating one until we had that conversation. And the irony is my oldest daughter actually had. So as a school project, she created a book that she printed, I think on Shutterfly or something for her younger siblings. And she’ll read it to them sometimes at night. And so I thought it was awesome that she had come up with that idea too before I had and before speaking with you.

But I love this concept because I think this is something, like you said, very tangible that our kids already love bedtime stories. And this is a way that we can connect with them more deeply and also in a very fun way, help them to avoid some of these patterns that we had or that we experienced as kids. And I think also maybe even unwind some of that generational trauma for the people who talk about how even our traumas can get passed down and how we can break that cycle. I know there are a lot of moms who are passionate about sort of being those cycle breakers for their families.

Dane: Yes. You do a good job reflecting on these shows.

Katie: Oh, well, thank you. And like you said, I'll make sure the links are available in the show notes as well as I'm sure you'll get me a link for the free guide on how to actually navigate this process so we don't all have to figure it out from scratch. And I know there's tools now, like you talked about, that you can get this printed online. You could even probably print it and sell it if you wanted to, because I know yours is available and I'll put that link in the show notes as well. But I just think this is such a fun, creative project and that many of us as adults haven't gotten to tap into our creativity deeply in a long time. And so I think it's fun for us as well to be able to start on that journey a little bit.

Dane: I went ahead and looked up real quick. I'll register a domain, childtraumafreedom.com. Child trauma freedom. And that's going to, that'll forward people to a Google Doc. And on that Google Doc, you'll get the guide. Now, I'm not going to bring you guys to a squeeze page and try to grab your email and then sell you something later. This is really just, motive is generosity. And I want you to feel it. Go there. You get the Google Doc. Create your children's books. If you want to get The Mermaid Who Couldn't Pick a Tail, I would appreciate it. But only if you have kids that would benefit from the book. But I'd love to have that. And then I'll put my email on there. And also, Katie, you can put your email on there. And any of you guys that end up making children's books, even if it's just a Google Doc with a few images. I had a friend of mine make a children's book about like a girl who struggled to love Jesus and then found Jesus. And it was just a Google Doc with some like AI-generated pages. And like his three daughters were just like all huddled around him as he was reading this thing that he printed off from a printer. It wasn't fancy, but it changed the, is a huge connection point. Yeah, childtraumafreedom.com. Get the Google Doc, fill it out or follow it. Get a book for your kid and let Katie and I know what you end up making.

Katie: I love that. All of those links for you guys listening on the go will be in the show notes at wellnessmama.com. And, Dane, I know we're going to get to have another conversation that gets to go deeper in some of these areas and talk about finding and maintaining your sanity as a mom and as a parent. But for today, this has been such a fun conversation. And like I said, when I first met you, I knew I wanted to share about your message because I think this is such a helpful tool, especially for those of us who have navigated some difficult life circumstances and want to help our children have a better childhood than we did. So thank you so much for your time and for your vulnerability and sharing today.

Dane: I'm honored to be on. Thank you, moms, for raising. Thank you to my mom for raising me. And thank you to moms for the most important job I think exists in the world.

Katie: And thank you for listening as always and sharing your time with us today. We're both so grateful that you did. And I hope that you will join me again on the next episode of the Wellness Mama podcast.
If you're enjoying these interviews, would you please take two minutes to leave a rating or review on iTunes for me? Doing this helps more people to find the podcast, which means even more moms and families could benefit from the information. I really appreciate your time, and thanks as always for listening.