

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

Healthy Moms Podcast

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

Episode 85: Raise an Entrepreneur: 10 Rules for
Nurturing Risk Takers, Problem Solvers, and
Change Makers

Child: Welcome to my mommy's podcast.

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This podcast is brought to you by an amazing supplement called Atrantil. And I turned to this supplement when my husband was struggling and recovering from SIBO, which is small intestinal bacterial overgrowth, and I surprisingly fell in love with it myself for just overall gut health. So if you're listening to this podcast, you probably care about your health, care about what you eat and you probably understand a little bit about gut health. And if you've done the diet changes and the probiotics and even medicine but you're not finding real relief for digestive problems or leaky gut, this may be the answer for you.

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Katie: Welcome to the "Healthy Moms Podcast." I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com. And I am excited about today's interview because it's a topic that I have been really trying to research myself and I found an amazing book by an amazing author, and I get to chat with her today. Margot Machol Bisnow is the author of the book, "Raising an Entrepreneur: 10 Rules for Nurturing Risk Takers, Problem Solvers, and Change Makers," and I love that title so much.

So she spent 20 years in the government, including as staff director of the President's Council of Economic Advisers. Both of her children are grown. One of them has a successful...he has several songs, he's the

successful musician with the band Magic Giant. And her other son founded a group called Summit, which is an international conference series for millennial entrepreneurs and creatives. And they led the purchase of an entire mountain in Utah, which is the permanent home for their community.

Her husband, Mark, is also an entrepreneur, forming his national newsletter company, "Bisnow Media," at age 50. And, of course, now she's an entrepreneur as well with her writing career and all of the work she does. And I'm super excited to jump in and talk. Margot, welcome. Thanks for being here.

Margot: Thank you. I'm so excited.

Katie: This is gonna be so fun. This is a topic that's kind of near and dear to my heart because I am at this point in my life an entrepreneur, but it almost was an accidental fall into that. I was just trying to help people and on my own health journey, and ended up creating a business out of it. But now raising six kids, I want to make sure that I'm forming them and helping them to become successful in whatever area of life they choose as adults. So you've raised two successful entrepreneurs. You and your husband are both entrepreneurs. I can only imagine how type A your whole family must be.

But I think all parents wanna give their children the best in life, and to raise them with the skills they need to be successful, and you've done that. So let's talk about that. You've done research on what factors can really impact a child and their later ability to be successful in the world whether that's as an entrepreneur or working independently, or even being a doctor. So can you share what motivated you to do this kind of research and what you've found?

Margot: Thank you. And, by the way, my hat is off to you if you have six kids because two was a lot.

Katie: Especially with boys. Boys are high energy at the beginning, especially.

Margot: I can't even imagine what it's like putting dinner on the table for eight people every night. But, anyhow, as you said, my son, Elliot, started Summit, which is these conferences of mostly young entrepreneurs. And I meet all these incredible people. People who've started life-changing companies and nonprofits, and I asked all of them how they ended up the way they did, so willing to put everything on the line for an idea, so willing to work so tirelessly to turn their passion into a project. And every single one of them said the same thing to me, which you will really love. They all said, "I had a mom who believed in me. My mom told me I can be anything I wanted. I can do anything I wanted."

And I was so struck by this and I just kept talking about it all the time. And, finally, my kids, I think as they got tired of hearing me talking about it, they said, "Mom, you just need to write a book." So I thought, well, if I'm gonna write a book, I have to really interview the entrepreneurs and their moms about how they were raised. I thought I'd end up interviewing 50, and I ended up interviewing 60. And I, honestly, I would have interviewed 50 more except I had a finite length from my publisher that I just...the more I get it, the more fascinating it became for me.

Katie: That is really cool. So after talking to 60 entrepreneurs, I bet you got a kind of across the board, different answers and different things. What were some of the commonalities? I'm really curious because I have a couple of friends who are both entrepreneurs, and, actually, there's four siblings and they're all really entrepreneurial and I always am like, "What did your mom do? What did she tell you?" So you have asked these questions for the entrepreneurs. So what were those commonalities that you found?

Margot: Well, as I said, the one key thing that every single person had in common was they had someone who believed in them. Generally, that someone was a parent, and typically, that parent was a mom. But I don't want to say if you don't have a mom that you can't become an entrepreneur. At some point, you need someone who believes in you. Generally, that's a mom.

And when I say...I've been going around the country talking to groups and I say this, I said, "Well, you have to have...you know, every one of these kids had a parent who believed in them." And they say to me, "No, no, every parent believes in their child." And I said, "No, no, no. No. Every parent loves their child. Every parent wants their child to be successful. Every parent wants their child to be happy. But actually most parents don't believe in their child." I think most parents think if their child does the thing that makes their heart sing, they can't make a living.

So, I think most parents say things like, "Of course, you can take music lessons in high school, but in college you have to major at something useful." Or, "Put away your computer game and study your history." Or, "Stop drawing and study your math." The parents in this book didn't do that. They said, "We are so proud of you for how hard you're working on your computer game, or your art, or your music," or whatever it was that the kids were doing.

Katie: That's really interesting. I think you're right that, obviously, every parent loves their child but that there's probably more intentionality to nurturing them in a way that's gonna make them, especially, a risk taker. That was actually something I had to overcome in myself when I started out into this kind of entrepreneurial world by accident, as I still had all these kinda scripts in my head talking about how like, you know, "A job is more security, and this is crazy, and this is risky, and why are you doing this?" And I had to work through that in my own head, but that's awesome that a lot of these people, probably, their parents kind of gave them a leg up on that to begin with.

Margot: That's another sort of whole aspect to what I'm talking about, which is...and you've kind of hit the nail on the head. I think one of the main differences between entrepreneurs and other people is their attitude toward risk, which is part of their attitude toward failure. I've always loved the quote from Billie Jean King, he said, "We don't call it failure. We call it feedback." And these entrepreneurs were never punished for screwing up. They were never told they did a bad thing if they failed. If they really screwed up badly, they had to fix it, but they weren't punished.

And so they developed a lack of fear about trying new things. And something else that's really, I think just so interesting is they were praised for how hard they were working, not how well they did. So research has come out that shows that if you only praise your child for success, you get kids who are only willing to take on easy things they know they can master. Whereas if you praise a child for effort, you end up getting kids who are willing to take on hard projects and take on a lot of risk. And I just think that's super important if you want your child to end up being entrepreneurial.

Katie: That's a great point and that's actually some of the best advice I've gotten as a parent. Early on, a friend of mine who had a bunch of kids as well, when I've only had one, she said, "Give them the freedom to be children and make mistakes without coming down hard on them." She's like, "Obviously, if they do something that harms someone, make them fix it, but don't..." In other words, like if they spill milk, don't be like, "Why did you do that? What's wrong with you?" Because you're giving them essentially an impossible scenario, because the answer is they did it because they're a kid and their motor skills are still developing, but you're either making them create an excuse that's gonna teach them in life, you need to make excuses for what you do.

Or, you're making them look inside and say, "Obviously, I'm a bad person." And neither of those is right and neither of those is good. So it's one of those things I've at least tried as a mom not to ever, like you said, come down on them for things that are truly just mistakes or not successes because it doesn't help them at all, and it certainly doesn't help me either. But we keep tossing around the term "entrepreneur." I feel like it is a pretty well-known term in today's world, but how do you define it? Just before we go further into this. So anyone who's listening understands where we're coming from.

Margot: Oh, thank you for that question, because I love that question. For me, an entrepreneur is someone who starts something, anything. So, yes, of course, it's someone who starts something for profit, whether it's a company, or a restaurant, or a store. But it's also someone who starts a nonprofit. It's someone who starts

profits for purpose, it's an artist, it's an activist.

So for example my younger son, Austin, started a band, Magic Giant, I considered him an entrepreneur because starting a band is starting something. And it's very entrepreneurial to find the right band members, to find the right manager, to find the right label that you're gonna sign with to the marketing. Every single thing about it is being an entrepreneur. And, by the way, I also consider that you've been an entrepreneur if you have started something within somebody else's organization. It's called the intrapreneur. So starting a project in somebody else's company makes you an entrepreneur as far as I'm concerned.

Katie: That's a great definition and that's what we want, I think a lot of parents, if their kid in high school or college, wanted to have a band, they'd kind of maybe like downplay that. And, like you said, encourage them to do something more, quote unquote, "That will lead to success." But that's great that you nurtured that in your kids. And I've actually met your son, Elliot, at a conference, and he seems like an awesome, amazing person. So really it makes me wanna ask, what are some of the things in hindsight, because you've done this research as an adult, so what are some things that you did in hindsight that you think nurtured the entrepreneurial spirit in your kids, now looking back?

Margot: Yeah, it's funny because...I mean, when you gave the sort of description of our family, you said we were all entrepreneurs, and I guess we are now, but we certainly weren't when our kids were growing up. Neither of us were, my husband nor I were entrepreneurs. And it didn't even occur to us that that was a job, you know, or a career path. I wasn't trying to make my kids entrepreneurs. I wasn't trying to promote entrepreneurship, but looking back, I believe the reason they both became so entrepreneurial is because they both had passions when they were young, and they were passions that we knew nothing about, and so we had to let them figure it out for themselves.

And we're both...my husband and I are like really helpful people. So if they had had passions in anything, we could have helped them in, like if they were interested in public policy, for example. We would have been all over them with kind of advice and suggestions for how to do it, but ironically, because they both had these passions that we knew nothing about, they had to figure it out for themselves. And I think looking back that that was the very, very, very best thing that could possibly have happened.

So, Elliot's passion when he was growing up, which you probably didn't know, was tennis. And that's all he wanted to do from the time he was sort of 12 to 22. Play, I don't know, 5 hours a day, 7 days a week, 51 and a half weeks a year. And he started really late and he fought his way up to 35 in the country in the juniors, and it's basically all we did for his whole high school was, you know, run around the country going to tennis tournaments.

But my husband and I don't play tennis. We'd be the only people at these tournaments with the top 100 kids in the country who barely knew what the rules of the game were. So he had to figure out what racket to use, and what coach to train with, and what tournaments to enter. We couldn't give him any advice.

And then Austin's passion from the time he was 13 was writing music. And, again, we don't know anything about music. We couldn't tell him what teachers to study with, how to do a CD, you know, what person to work with, or anything. So our kids really had to figure it out on their own. And in hindsight, that was the best thing that could possibly have happened.

Katie: That's an interesting point and that's something I'm gonna make sure I'm cognizant of now because my oldest son is 10 now, and we joke that he's the type A first born of two type A first born children, and so he is extremely driven, and he's already got the entrepreneurial fire really strong in him. And so he's got a website and a blog that he runs, and he's also starting a podcast, where he is, ironically, interviewing top performers and learning from them. Basically asking them the question like, "What did you wanna be when you were 10 years old and why aren't you that?" And kinda going through their life, but it's hard because this is what I do as well, and so it's not hard to be like, "Oh, you should do this or you should do this," because it's so day-to-day

for me. So that's a great point. I'm gonna make sure I'm aware of is, letting him also have the freedom there to make mistakes, which is another thing I'd love to talk about. I think you and I will probably agree on this, but I'd love to get your take, which is, what are some of the myths about raising successful kids?

I saw a meme on Facebook yesterday that in today's world what it takes to raise a successful kid means they have to be in sports, and music, and academics, and you should be like providing them, and that you should have a background in child psychology, and you need to make three healthy meals a day, oh, yeah, and coconut oil. We're like, all these things, whereas in the past, it was you fed them. Like we've put all these expectations on parents but it's also kind of an expectation that they shouldn't be too uncomfortable, you don't want them to have really tough times.

And I'm really curious what your take on this, because you've now talked to a lot of entrepreneurs. What do you think about children and adversity?

Margot: Well, I would love to talk about children and adversity, and I'd also love to talk about what I think is the big misunderstanding with that article you just read. And if I can just talk about that for one minute because I've read so many articles like that and they make me crazy...

Katie: Absolutely.

Margot: ...because it's how to make your child an entrepreneur. You can't make your child anything, or you can but they're not gonna be happy. You have to let your child be who they are. And if your child loves sports, that's fantastic. Let them do sports. And if your child loves music, that's fantastic. Let them do music. And if your child loves video games, that's fantastic. Let them do video games. And if your child loves debate, or playing chess, or running for school office, or organizing protests, or doing a blog, or whatever, you should support them in their pursuit, because I believe that's what's going to create an entrepreneur. Not sort of a top down parent orchestrating their child and trying to make them something.

But a child who loves something who works really, really hard at it, who's passionate about it, who figures out how to do it, who gets the problem] and fixes it on their own, who makes it better, and eventually, gets good at it and is confident because they know they've mastered something that they love, that they chose, that they've decided to really work at. I think that's where you become an entrepreneur. And I'd be happy to talk about that more. In terms of adversity, yes, I think we are...especially now, this effort by parents to protect their kids from anything bad, they uncover and fix things. And, first of all, if you fix things for kids, they don't learn to fix them for themselves. One of the best people I interviewed in my book, Mr. Wojcicki, one daughter, a CEO of YouTube, one daughter founded 23andMe, one daughter is an award-winning pediatrician. And Esther says her philosophy is everything you do for kids is one less thing they learn to do for themselves.

And something that really surprised me, it's not just learning to fix things and struggle through things, and the confidence that comes from having mastered something. But so many of the kids that I interviewed in this book actually had serious adversity growing up. It actually surprised me how much adversity. I think 10% of them lost a parent before they were out of college, which I don't know about your...or, you know, like where your kids go to school, but for me, that's like astonishing. I mean, my kids went to school with, you know, over the years probably thousands of kids, and I think we knew two who lost a parent.

So for 60 people, you know, for 6 of them to have lost a parent is amazing. So many others had other serious adversity. Their parents got divorced while they were growing up. They had a serious illness or the parents were ill, the kids were ill. The parents lost their money. I mean, these kids really went through a lot, and, you know, as the expression goes, "That which doesn't kill you makes you stronger." And had all of these kids, you know, their parents dealt with the situation openly and honestly, and the kids learned resilience, and they learned to bounce back.

And so many of them talked to me about how they had this really difficult situations then as adults, where, you

know, they lost all their money with their company, or their, you know, company was about to shut down, or they had to let go off half their staff, and they were like crying and their moms just said, "Hey, hey, buck up. You know, we...I experienced a lot worse than this, and, you know, you'll power through it. You know, it's not whether you fail, it's how you get back up again." And the kids just, you know, pick themselves back up and soldiered on.

Katie: That's a really cool point. I think it was Malcolm Gladwell in his book, "Outliers" I believe. He made that point as well, that a lot of really successful people, and I forget which segment he was looking about but who all lost a parent. I know I didn't personally. My parents are both still living, but I had other adversity, especially in high school, that was pretty tough. But it's interesting that that's a common factor and I think for like...so for those of us who are raising, especially, younger children now, I'm curious if you had any ways or suggestions on how to nurture this, because also as a parent we can't really purposely create adversity for our children, and, obviously, you hope that neither one of you is gonna die while they're in high school or college.

But are there things that we can do. You mentioned just letting them work through things on their own, especially, when they're on a pursuit they enjoy, but are there other things we can do to like give them the benefit of doubt, with obviously without making their life horrible on purpose.

Margot: Right, I mean, obviously, you're not gonna just, you know, force something then to happen, but it was interesting, several of the entrepreneurs I talked to really had no personal hardship as they were growing up. Their parents and their grandparents had had terrible adversity. And their parents talked about this all the time. So many of these people, their parents or their great parents were immigrants, had really hard times when they came to the United States.

Erik Ryan, for example, who started Method products. He came from a really idyllic upbringing. But when his mother had been growing up, she had lost a parent and had watched her mother suffer, struggle, raising kids as a single mom, you know, when her father had died. And his mother talked about this a lot, you know, like, "We're lucky, but look what my mom went through."

Adam Braun, who started, Pencils of Promise, and more recently, MissionU. He had a pretty idyllic life, but his parents both had had problems and they talked about it all the time. I think on his mother's side, her parents were Holocaust survivors, and she had talked about, you know, what they had struggled with.

And something else they did, which was really interesting was, his father was coaching their high school basketball team in the summer, and some kids came from Africa to spend the summer and the family just fell in love with them and adopted these two kids from Africa, who would say like, wow, you mean there's kids here who actually have enough to eat and they don't eat it. You know, they couldn't like comprehend anorexia or things like that. So, I mean there's different ways. You know, there's other people who had enough money but their parents on holidays, they always, you know, went and served food to others. You know, things like that.

Katie: Yeah, that's a cool point. And thinking back, my husband's family and my family, they both kind of have that story. Our grandparents being immigrants, and then my mom lost her dad as a teenager. So that's interesting that maybe that spirit of resilience and grit that you learn through that can be actually passed on from a parent who learned it. It's a really neat concept.

Margot: Well, and not just the zeal or the spirit, but just to talk about it, you know, "Look what grandma went through, you know, how tough it was for her, and how she bounced back." And doing that with your kids, letting them know that everybody struggles and that's...you know, that's a good thing.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. I know one of the ways that we've been trying to kind of nurture that spirit of overcoming adversity with our kids, and they're still young, but we love to travel even if it's just budget-friendly like camping or on a road trip within the U.S., but I feel like travel by its own nature, it has adversity, and there's times that are uncomfortable, and times that are stressful, and they get to see the parents overcoming those as

well. So I think that's kind of one of the small ways that we do that.

But a friend of ours, they have five kids, and they travel internationally quite a bit, and the dad, Ryan, has a saying that he tells his kids all the time when they start getting like tired or frustrated, he's like, "Hey, you were made to do hard things." And that's kind of become their like battle call as a family when things get tough and I love that. That they are kind of meeting adversity head on even in the little ways like that.

Margot: So it's funny. Before I wrote the book, and before I started interviewing everybody, I wrote down what I thought the rules were that, you know, that the things that worked for my family that I believed in, that I thought other families would have. And it turned out, of course, they were just mine and almost nobody else had them. But one of them was family travel, and it's always been a huge deal for me and it's always been a big part of our life, and I say in the book that I wanted the kids to travel so that they'd realize that there were other ways of doing things, and other cultures, and other kinds of people. But what I realize looking back is that these trips together made us a family, because you have all this time together. And as you say, you're working through things, and you're seeing things, and you're experiencing things, and showing things just as a family with nobody else.

But there's something, I mean you go to a third world country and you see these kids with nothing, and they're smiling, and they're happy. And then you go to, you know, your private school where parents are paying \$30,000 a year tuition, and these kids are picked up in the carport line and they're all grumpy about something, and you're like, "wow." You know, what's wrong with this picture?

Katie: Yeah, that's a really stark contrast for sure. Another thing I'd love to get your take on is birth order, because I have a lot of friends who are entrepreneurs now, and we even have like a group of families that we just get together and either camp or hang out a couple times a year where all the parents are entrepreneurs. And one of those times, I was like, "Hey, just out of curiosity, like where's everybody in their birth order in their family?" And we went around the room it was like first, first, first, lots of first born children. That's kind of a definitely a common perception, but what did you find with talking to entrepreneurs? Is that across the board or did we just kind of end up with a group of firstborns?

Margot: So it's really interesting. When I very first began to do this, one of the first moms I talked to who's child is very successful, was a firstborn, and she said, "Oh, I'm so interested in birth order. I'll bet you'll discover everyone was a first or an only," and I was thinking to myself, "Oh, geez. I really hope that isn't true." And, in fact, not only wasn't it true, they were definitely not the majority. Birth order was all over the map. They were the middle of three. They were the youngest of three. There was the middle of five. There was the youngest of five. There was the youngest of seven. I mean they were all over the map, but the thing I loved is that every single entrepreneur I talked to, wherever they were in the birth order, they would always bring it up to me and they would say how that was perfect and how that's why they become an entrepreneur.

So, you know, Robert Stephens, who started Geek Squad who was the youngest of seven said, "You know, I'm so lucky because I think by time my parents got to me, they were just kind of exhausted, and they left me alone. And I got to be who I wanted to be and, you know, that's why I became an entrepreneur." You know, somebody else would say to me something like, "You know, I was the third of four kids and my mom was so focused on the first two, and then the fourth was kind of a problem that she just kind of left me alone."

And increasingly like every single person talked about where they were in the birth order being so good for them. And I just actually read, "The Originals" by Adam Grant, and his point...he's done a lot of research and discovered that something like 40% of all entrepreneurs are actually last born, and he thinks it's because by the time the parents get to them, they kind of, you know, give them a lot more freedom. And he makes the point sort of in an asterisks that, actually, which is the point that I discovered. It doesn't matter where you are in the birth order, it's how you're treated, and how your parents raised you, and how much independence you're given.

Katie: That's a great point. And maybe also a trait of successful entrepreneurs is kind of looking for the silver lining or the optimism if they all said, that it was perfect, whether they were that was perfect for them. Maybe they're able to just...they're adaptable and can thrive in their circumstances. Let's go a little bit deeper talking about adversity. I've glanced through your book. I have another copy on the way because I gave mine out, but I feel like a lot of parents today either do a lot of things for their kids, or help their kids to do everything, especially, young kids. And I feel like that is a tough balance to learn like when to let them do things on their own and when they do still obviously need help when they're little, but what did you find about this? And on a practical level, what would you encourage moms with maybe kids under 10 or under 12 about as far as giving them independence and letting them do things on their own?

Margot: You've raised a really good point. And it's interesting, when I interviewed the mothers of hugely successful entrepreneurs who are older, sort of in their 40s now, sort of For example, as I said, Esther Wojcicki, you know, whose daughter is the CEO of YouTube, Jayne Plank, whose son, Kevin Plank, started Under Armour. Parents with kids this age talk about how much independence and freedom their kids had. And they say things like, "Gosh, if I was raising kids like that today, they'd probably put me in jail."

You know, Jayne Plank talked about how her kids would just go out at night and come in when the street lights came on. Esther whose kid grew up in the Palo Alto, you know, on the Stanford campus, and said her kids would do chores around the house, and then they'd have a dollar if they keep their big bike down to Palo Alto where they pick out something in the store they wanted, when they were pretty young.

And I think it's increasingly parents just hover. I heard an interesting thing on...NPR had said, "Compared to the 1950s, child abductions by strangers is way down. But compared to the 1950s, fear of the child abduction by strangers is way up." And parents are just fearful today, and, you know, that doesn't lead to raising confident, thriving kids. I've been thinking about this in terms of how I raised my own, and I was thinking, sort of laughing at myself the other day, because my attitude was always, "Well, I don't want them to break their neck, but I don't care if they break their arm."

Elliot at one point broke his wrist, and Austin at one point broke his arm, but at least they're not fearful today. So, you know, obviously every parent has to decide what they need to do to keep their kids safe, but I think the more freedom you can give them within bounds, the better. Something else...I mean, we live in Washington, D.C., and, you know, I would love when we visit friends during the summer who lived in small towns, and we could give the kids a lot more freedom to ride their bikes around and just walk into town, that kind of thing.

Or when you go skiing, and you just said, you know, we'll meet you for lunch and you just would let them go in a way that you wouldn't let them go home when you're in a bigger city. So I just think whatever you can do to give your kids freedom is a good thing.

Katie: I love that metric. If they're gonna break their neck, it's a no. But if they're gonna break their arm, it's okay. That's a good benchmark to have in your mind, because as a mom I know our first instinct is like, you know, we don't want our kids to break anything, but if they never take a risk that could eventually lead to breaking something, you're also psychologically, probably hurting them.

There was a really good article. I think it was in "The Atlantic" a few years back, talking about the psychological damage that actually happens to kids when they're not allowed to take risk, or even perceived risk when they don't find those boundaries on their own when they're little. And I think about that as I watch my baby learn how to walk recently. I'm like she's not realistically going to actually die from learning how to walk or even like climbing up on things and falling off of them. But by doing that, she's learning where her limits are, and what's safe and what's not, and what hurts and what doesn't.

And if you've protected them from that, I feel like in life there's kind of a metaphor there. If you protect your kids from every bump, and bruise, and fall and climb, and everything they could do, you're kind of, in a sense, stunting them not on walking, but on a metaphorical walking and learning risk taking as they're older.

Margot: Right, you'll end up with your kids who won't be willing to try something, you know, that might fail. And now I just want to say when one of your kids fall down and breaks their wrist, don't get mad at me.. But, you know, the other thing is, I mean it's really...and I think about this sometimes like, I look back at our life, and I think about all these things at the time that I felt were really bad, and how they turned out to be really great in hindsight, sort of ironically. And one of them was, Austin actually ended up also breaking a leg and that was like in the first day of basketball camp when he was 13.

And I had signed him up for summer of sports camps, both my kids were really into sports. And he broke his leg and he couldn't do any more sports games for the summer, and I was desperate to find a camp to sign him up for, and basically everything was full, and I found one program that had writing music on a computer, and I signed him up for that. And he fell madly in love with it and he's been writing music since he was 13. And when he applied to college to major in Music Composition, they said, "You know, it's incredible that he discovered writing music so young because most people don't discover it until high school or college." So sometimes even things you think are horrible end up having wonderful, you know, benefits.

Katie: That's great.

This podcast is brought to you by Four Sigmatic. If you follow me on Instagram, you've probably seen me mention them because I have been using and loving and Instagramming their products for years. They have an amazing instant mushroom coffee. Hear me out before you think it's weird. I know mushroom coffee doesn't sound good. It's not only the best instant coffee I've ever tried, it's also pretty high up on the list of best coffee I've tried. It's cheaper than coffee shop coffee and it's so convenient because it's so portable and it tastes so much better.

But it isn't just ordinary coffee. It has super food mushrooms like Lion's Mane, Cordyceps, and Chaga mushrooms. And these mushrooms have some big health benefits and, especially, immune benefits. I personally, especially love them for the energy and the mental clarity without the jitters from traditional coffee. And did I mention how good it tastes? So I always take these instant coffee packets with me when I travel, and I also always drink it at home these days now that they have a big tin that lasts about a month, so I don't have to open a little packet every day.

Some friends of ours recently traveled for three months carrying only the backpacks on their backs and they brought an entire three months supply of this instant coffee in their bag that have limited space. In other words, this coffee beat out a pair of jeans for how important it was to make it in the bag. It's that good. And, of course, if you aren't a caffeine person, they also have a variety of mushroom tea and other products that don't have the coffee, so you can get the benefits without the caffeine.

And I love them so much that I reached out and they agreed to give a discount to my listeners. So go to, foursigmatic.com/wellnessmama and use the code "WELLNESSMAMA" to get 10% off. That's Four Sigmatic, F-O-U-R, S-I-G-M-A-T-I-C.com/wellnessmama.

This podcast is brought to you by an amazing supplement called Atrantil. And I turned to this supplement when my husband was struggling and recovering from SIBO, which is small intestinal bacterial overgrowth, and I surprising fell in love with it myself for just overall gut health. So if you're listening to this podcast, you probably care about your health, care about what you eat and you probably understand a little bit about gut health. And if you've done the diet changes and the probiotics and even medicine but you're not finding real relief for digestive problems or leaky gut, this may be the answer for you.

So Atrantil is developed by a Board Certified gastroenterologist, Dr. Ken Brown, and it naturally addresses issues like bloating, SIBO, IBS, leaky gut and other issues with digestive health. It's all natural, it's over the counter and it works within the bowel which is a difficult thing for a supplement to do. It's well tolerated and

has no-known drug interactions and it's 100% money back guaranteed. So the cool part is there's published clinical trials that have shown that more than 4 out of 5 people who suffer from digestive symptoms find actual relief with Atrantil and that was certainly the case for my husband. And I reached out to them because we noticed such an amazing difference from the supplement and they agreed to give listeners a 15% discount. If you want to check them out, go to lovemytummy.com/wellnessmama and use the code Wellmama for a 15% discount and those links will be in the show notes as well.

Katie: I saw that you brought up another interesting point that I would love to touch on, and that's higher education because my husband and I both have college degrees, but it's something we actually...it's a controversial view I think, for a lot of people, but we don't actively encourage our kids to go to college. I, for instance, I didn't know until I got to college that you had a choice. I thought it was a thing. Everybody did.

But we're definitely not raising our children that way, especially, in today's world. I feel like education doesn't actually offer the same value of higher education in a world where you can actually learn all those skills on your own on the internet, or through a more curated education. But I'm curious of your take and what you found with entrepreneurs. Do people need to go to college in today's world to be successful? And is there a point of diminishing returns with higher education? What did you find there?

Margot: Yeah. No, I love this topic and I could talk about it for the rest of the hour. I have an MBA, my husband has a law degree. My father was a professor. I grew up in the university towns. It never occurred to me that it was even a possibility that I would have a child who didn't go to college. It just like wasn't...it wasn't in my universe. And Elliot dropped out halfway through his junior year, and I had to kind of reevaluate. And I've given it a lot of thought, and obviously I looked into overnight, did the research for the book. I would say about a third of the entrepreneurs were academic superstars. Breezed through college, got advance degrees, there was a Broad Scholar, they were, you know, valedictorians of their college class.

But there were another third that struggled through school, graduated but were never happy. And then there were another third, I'm sort of, have rusty, rough numbers here, who didn't go to college, or who dropped out partway through. And, again, I mean, I think the answer is, there's not one answer. You don't wanna say to your child, "This is your path because this is the path that people take." You know, you want to say, "What's gonna make you thrive? What's gonna work for you?" And if your kid is like madly in love with some topic and wants to get a PhD in that and spend their life in it, hey, God bless them. And if your kid isn't happy and doesn't wanna go to college, that's great, too.

And I feel the same way about school. I mean, parents say to me all the time, "Well, jeez, I want my kid to be an entrepreneur. Do I lock them in a small private school, or a big public school, or a chartered school?" And also I'm like, "No, you don't get it. Like you want your kid in a school where they can thrive and it's going to be different for every child." And there were parents in this book that pulled their kids out of their small private school and put them in big public schools. And there were parents that pulled their kids out of big public schools and put them in small private schools.

And something that you realize as well, some entrepreneurs, who are academic stars, a lot of others, they were really smart but school didn't work for them. A lot of entrepreneurs had very different learning styles. They don't give the teachers the answers they want. They don't like to sit still. They don't want to, you know, just regurgitate answers. They wanna think outside the box. They want to do things differently. And lots of times teachers find that annoying. And then there's the whole thing about college today. I mean, if you send your kid to a private college, you're talking about a quarter of a million dollars. It's about \$60,000 a year, which is just horrifying.

And I think there's 43 million Americans now have college debt. They got so much college debt, they can't even start a company because they can't afford to have zero income for a few years because they're paying back these loans. And, increasingly, I think these colleges and high schools, too, are gonna have to come to

grips with what they're teaching, just isn't going to equip kids for the next 30 years. And I think so many...I'm sorry. As I said I can talk about this for an hour, but, I mean, I think that what kids need to learn to do is to think, to question, to read, to write, to analyze. And, you know, they don't need to regurgitate facts. And a lot of schools are really, you know, kind of need to get with the program.

Katie: Yeah. I'm right there with you on that. Again, I had a college degree, but I feel like even in like the 12 years now since then, things have changed so much that there was a time, especially in my parents' generation. My dad has a PhD, when that did offer a whole lot of opportunity, but in today's world, like you said, unless there's a very specific topic where you have that burning passion and an intense desire to help people, in which case absolutely pursue it, I feel like you're right. There are other ways that are very individualized in today's world rather than just regurgitating back.

And I'm grateful sometimes, sometimes we home school. Sometimes I'm not so grateful we do that because it's a lot of work. But it's neat to see even just among my six kids, the small sample size, but how different all their learning styles are, and realizing how at least a few of them would not do so great in a normal just sitting still in a desk type of environment every day. That's not how they learn. Like one of my kids, he does not like sitting still. He doesn't like those kind of like slow learning things. He'll learn anything if he's jumping on a trampoline, but he has a different kind of intelligence. Like when he was six years old, he figured out how to solve the Rubik's Cube by himself, and we were like, "Whoa, okay." So we need to adapt how we're teaching this kid, and once you figure out that side, I feel like he's really excelled. And he's now like, technically, two grades ahead but he loves it. And so I think you're right. I think the individuality is gonna be the important part going forward, especially at least my take is that we're in a very like adaptable and rapidly changing world.

So our thought is if we can teach our kids to learn new skills quickly, to think critically, and to like see the things other people maybe aren't seeing, and not just take everything at face value, that hopefully those will be really valuable skills, because, truly, how do you prepare your kids for a world when we have no idea what it will look like in 10 years?

Margot: Well, I couldn't agree with you more. And, you know, super congrats on home schooling. And I know how much work that is, but, you know, as we get into May and June, and it's college graduation time, and I just feel so bad for so many kids. They're graduating from college. They've done everything they've been asked to do for the last 15 years of their life. They studied the things they've been told to study. They got good grades in all their subjects in high school, so that they can get into a good college, and they got good grades in college so that they could graduate.

They really have no idea what they like because they've never had time to do what they like. They've never been encouraged to do what they like, and now they're graduating, there's no jobs. They've got debt. They have no idea what they want to do. And it's just really sad. We go to restaurants all the time, and this adorable young millennials are waiting on us, and I always ask them where they graduated from college because that's what's happening. You know, they're being offered jobs as baristas and waiters, and it's just sad.

And that's why I think my book is so important. That's why I want everyone to read it. And I want everyone to think about what it's saying, because instead of making your kid go down this path, where they're not gonna be find something they love, there's a whole different thing that you can do to raise your kids now. You can support your child's passion. You can tell your child to follow their dreams. And you can have a child who finds something they love and encourage them to make a career out of that.

And, you know, it's not like a guarantee they're going to make a billion dollars, but I bet you anything, you're gonna have a kid who's a lot happier.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. And I love that...and I would encourage everyone as well to read the book. I'll make sure it's linked in the show notes. But I love the tagline underneath the title is, "For nurturing risk takers, problem solvers, and change makers." And I think that's going to be super important at least from what I can

look forward and maybe predict of the world in 10 years or even 5 years. We know we've got all kinds of nutrition related problems in society, we've got all kinds of medically related problems in society, and we have all kinds of economic related problems in society and we're gonna need people who think outside the box and who have innovative solutions if we're going to be able to tackle this.

So, I think you're so right. If you can raise your kids without that fear of taking risk, and let them go, let them learn. I think it was Henry Ford when he was trying to build the first car. He wanted a shatter-proof window. And all of these scientists kept telling him, "It couldn't be done. It couldn't be done. It couldn't be done." And he said, "Get me the young guys who don't know it can't be done yet." And they figured it out. I think that's like kind of a good thing, a mindset to have with our kids is get...like they don't know it can't be done, so why are we telling them it can't be done.

Margot: Right, I love that. And, you know, the tagline, "The 10 rules for nurturing risk takers, problem solvers, and change makers," we put that in, partly because of the question you asked me earlier, how do you define an entrepreneur? Because the title, "Raising an Entrepreneur," I thought if people just saw that, they'd think, "Oh, you know, she just wants them to go into some tech business." And as I said before, for me an entrepreneur is any problem solver, risk taker, change maker in any field.

We were talking about, you know, kids that don't make teachers happy sometimes because they do things differently. One of my favorite stories in the book is this guy Benny Blanco, who I think has written 20 number one songs. He's written songs for Maroon 5, and Rihanna, and Katy Perry, and on, and on, and on. And his mom told me that when he was in kindergarten, she'd get a call every week from the teacher saying, "Benny won't sit in the circle." And she would say, "So?" And I love this, because I just thought, "How great. Benny's mom said, 'So?'" You know, because I would have like freaked out, I think back then and, you know, try to get him to sit in the circle.

But it's just like, you know, you with your homeschooling your kids, he doesn't need to sit in the circle. You know, your kid can go figure out the Rubik's Cube by jumping up and down on a trampoline, you know? I mean it's just whatever works for them. And I just think the more parents and teachers realize this, the happier our kids are gonna be.

Katie: Absolutely. Not making like, he hates sitting down and doing worksheets, but when he was like six or seven, also riding in the car, the kids were asking about gas mileage, and I was like, "Well, think about it in your head, if you have these many gallons, and you get these many miles per gallon." And he could like do that division and multiplication, no problem, in his head. So like you said, it's nurturing their strength.

And I'd love to talk to, so what about the mom who's maybe listening and thinking like, "Well, that's all well and good, but like why do I actually want to raise an entrepreneur because I want him to have a job that's more secure, and that just sounds so risky, and like it's gonna be really hard." What do you say to those moms?

Margot: Well, first of all, I don't think what you want is what you should force on your child. What you want is a happy child, and you want your child to do something that makes your child thrive. And, by the way, in terms of a stable job, just like remind me, what's a stable job? You know, working for Kodak? Working for, you know, Polaroid? You know? Working for Arthur Anderson? Working for Sears? Working for Macy's? I mean you tell me, what is a stable job in the world today, and that's part of the answer.

Like I don't think anything is guaranteed as a safe job anymore. And even if it were, if your child isn't happy, I'm not sure that that's the solution for them. And the other part of it is, look, they can be entrepreneurial in any field even if they're not entrepreneurs. So even if your child becomes a school principal. And, I mean, that doesn't like an entrepreneur, but if they view their job entrepreneurially in order to find new ways to solve all the problems, to see opportunity that others don't see, to risk new projects for their school district, there is so many things that can be improved, if people think in an entrepreneurial way.

Like you said Henry Ford said, you know, "Show me the person who doesn't know that it can't be done." And I just think that we want our children to grow up entrepreneurial, even if they don't grow up to be entrepreneurs. We want them not to fear failure. We want them not to be afraid of setbacks, because even if you're in the most secure job in the world, you're going to have a setback, and if you view that as a learning experience instead of as a failure, that's a really good thing.

My younger son always says, "You haven't failed if something doesn't work, you just learn one thing you're not good at," which is a positive.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. So as we get closer to the end of our time in this interview, I always love to ask people like what are three things about your area of expertise in research that you feel like people don't understand? And what would you say to them on those points?

Margot: So I think so many parents believe that if they want their child to be successful and happy, they have to urge their child to follow the path that worked for them. And I think there was a path that worked when you grew up in the '70s, in the '80s, in the '90s, and maybe even in the last decade, but that path is really broken. And I think parents just don't understand it, and so, they think they're doing the best thing for their child by telling their child to study all their subjects, and take lots of extracurricular activities, and do everything they think they need to do to get into a good college.

And it just, it's not working. What they need to do and what my book talks about, "Raising an Entrepreneur," it's not just raising an entrepreneur, it's raising a child that's full of joy, a child who is not afraid to dream big dreams, a child who's not afraid to try new things, a child who's not afraid to risk, a child who's not afraid to fail, and a child that learns that building something beautiful is wonderful just because it's wonderful, regardless of how much money they may make.

And so, I really want parents to rethink. I know it's a big ask, but rethink how they're raising their kids because I know they mean well, but it's not always working. And as you said, as the economy changes, people are saying something like 30% to 40% of all current jobs are going to be gone within 10 to 20 years, we really have to think anew about how we're raising our kids and what we're equipping them for, and what kind of jobs are gonna be there, and what is going to make them happy and fulfilled.

Katie: Yeah, I love that. And, obviously I'll link to your book and to your website in the show notes for anyone who wants to find it, that will be at, wellness.com under the podcast tab. But tell everyone where they can find you to learn more and to find your book.

Margot: Yeah, so my book is, "Raising an Entrepreneur: 10 Rules for Nurturing Risk Takers, Problem Solvers, and Change Makers," and it's on Amazon. I think it's \$13. And you can also read more about it at, raisinganentrepreneur.com on my website. And I'm also on Instagram, @MargotBisnow, M-A-R-G-O-T, B-I-S-N-O-W. And I'm on Facebook, Raising an Entrepreneur One, I believe.

So I'm constantly putting up what I hope are inspirational articles, stories about other really wonderful entrepreneurs, interesting things different entrepreneurs are doing. And I hope people really enjoy reading all the things we put up on Instagram and Facebook, because I'm always just so proud of so many entrepreneurs in the book who are just going on and doing whole new things every week.

Katie: I love that. I'll make sure I'm gonna follow you as well and keep an eye out on that. Will there ever be, do you think, a round two with more entrepreneurs, or are you posting stories from those online continually?

Margot: I'm posting stories continually and who knows if there'll be a round two. I have to see how round one plays out.

Katie: Awesome. Margot, thank you so much for your time. Like you could talk about this topic all day, but I

know it's been really helpful to those listening as well. And I'll make sure that all the links are there for people to find and follow up with you.

Margot: Thank you so much, Katie. I really enjoyed it. It's been a lot of fun, and have fun with your six kids on Mother's Day.

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

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