



964: What If It All Goes Right? How to Embrace
Unexpected Change and Come Back Stronger
With Angela Gargano

Child: Welcome to my mommy's podcast!

Katie: This podcast is brought to you by LMNT, and this is a company you might've heard me talk about before, and I really love their products because proper hydration leads to better sleep. It sharpens focus, it improves energy, and so much more. But hydration is not about just drinking water because being optimally hydrated, a state called euhydration is about optimizing your body's fluid ratios. And this fluid balance depends on many factors, including the intake and excretion of electrolytes, which many people don't get the right amounts of. Electrolytes are charged minerals that conduct electricity to power your nervous system. I talk a lot about nervous system on this podcast.

They also regulate hydration status by balancing fluids inside and outside of our cells. LMNT was created with a science-backed electrolyte ratio of 100 milligrams of sodium, 200 milligrams of potassium, and 60 milligrams of magnesium with no sugar. Since electrolytes are a key component of hydration, here's what happens when we get our electrolytes dialed in.

We have more steady energy, improved cognitive function, suffer fewer headaches and muscle cramps, we can perform better for longer, and especially the support fasting or low carb diet because when we stop eating carbs like during a fast, the absence of insulin allows the kidneys to release sodium.

So replacing that lost sodium with electrolytes can help you feel good on a fast. Since LMNT is zero sugar, it also doesn't break up fast. Electrolytes are also important for maintaining blood pressure, regulating digestion and proper fluid balance. Keeping skin hydrated, which is a big one that I feel like often gets missed and so much more.

I feel like proper electrolytes is a missing piece for a lot of people and I love LMNT's new canned drinks, which are sparkling water with all the same ratios and minerals I just talked about, and they are delicious. You can check it out and learn more at drinklmnt.com/wellnessmama. And at that link you will receive a free sample pack with any order.

This podcast is brought to you by BIOptimizers and in particular, their product that holds my heart, which is their Magnesium Breakthrough. My goal this year is to continue to focus on my wellness and to create more harmony and resonance, and we all know that the foundation of health is a good night's sleep.

I talk about that so much on this podcast. And magnesium is the one nutrient that helps my sleep so much as well as so many other aspects of my health because magnesium is vital for so many things within the body, and it is nearly impossible to get enough from food anymore. And Magnesium Breakthrough from BIOptimizers is in a category of its own.

They have seven different forms of magnesium in one supplement, and since magnesium is involved in over 600 different biochemical reactions in the body, no other supplement on the market offers all seven types of magnesium in one bottle. Pretty much every function of your body is upgraded when you take magnesium regularly from the quality of your sleep to your brain function, from metabolism to stress levels, and so much more.

This is one of the few supplements that lives on my nightstand and I'm a little odd, but I take every morning because I actually get energy from it though most people notice that it's better at night. Now studies point to a lot of benefits of magnesium, including that it may help improve sleep quality, especially by supporting healthy sleep onset and have more peaceful nights.

Magnesium is also involved in stress management support and it may help maintain energy levels and positive mood while also supporting mental clearness and relaxation. Magnesium is also important for healthy and balanced muscle tone and providing the building blocks to strong bones, and it promotes a balanced stress response, supports relaxation.

And I feel much calmer when I'm regularly taking magnesium. So let's face it, even if your 2025 resolution is not all about focusing on your health like mine is, how are you going to be able to achieve your goals in any area without enough quality sleep and stress management? Check out Magnesium Breakthrough and make it part of your daily routine this year as well.

For better sleep, better stress response, and much more. They have a 365 day money back guarantee and you can find it at biioptimizers.com/wellnessmama and use the code Wellnessmama for a discount.

Katie: Hello and welcome to the Wellness Mama Podcast. I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com. And this episode is all about what if it all goes right? And the incredible story from my friend Angela, who is a six time American Ninja warrior, a keynote speaker, a biochemist turned global fitness coach, and the founder of the Pull-Up revolution.

She's helped thousands of women who thought they couldn't learn how to do a pull-up, including me. And as she'll tell you in this episode, after tearing her ACL on national tv, she had to rebuild not just her body, but her identity. And this led to the work that she does now that goes far beyond just fitness and into rewiring our mindset, learning what if it all goes right And learning how to embrace unexpected change to actually come back stronger.

And as you will hear, she is quite the inspiration. Um, such an encouraging and positive person. And if you are not doing pull-ups, I also would recommend her pull up work because it was very helpful for me. So let's jump in with Angela. Angela, welcome. Thank you so much for being here.

Angela: I'm so excited to be here today.

Katie: Oh, I always love getting to have a conversation with you and I love that we get to record this one. And you have quite the incredible story in so many ways, and I feel like you are such an inspiration. You certainly inspired me actually to finally be able to do pull-ups, which I actually did think was impossible for a long time.

And now I'm working on multiple pull-ups at a time, which is absolutely mind boggling to me. And I feel like your story truly inspires so much hope. And I would love to start with, I know that you have launched a new podcast and I love it, inspired by the idea of what if it all goes right? Which I love from a mindset perspective and an inspiration perspective.

And I know this came from a very, like pivotal and painful moment in your life. So can you walk us through the story of the very dramatic thing that happened to you that led to this amazing work you do?

Angela: Yeah absolutely. Again so excited to be here today and so happy that you're able to do multiple pulls now you're working on that's super exciting. But yeah, so my journey was really interesting. I had accidentally gotten on American Ninja Warrior believe it or not. Before that I was actually a biochemist and randomly tried out for the show, got onto it, and was totally obsessed when I got there seeing the obstacles and the athletes and everything that was happening with that.

And I was determined to come back on that show and be a top female. I wanted to be one of those top female athletes who was getting through that course. So I actually got rejected getting on the show two times after that. And then kept showing up, kept showing up, finally get on the show again. I had now done everything that I needed to do right. I trained really really hard, I showed up when it was hard and as I'm going through the course and I'm literally just feeling on top of the world flying through all the obstacles I finally get to the final obstacle where I need to become a top female.

And I knew I could do it. And as I'm gliding through this obstacle you know through the air looking at my coach he's like yes, this is it, I dismount and then all of a sudden I collapsed. I collapsed and I just remember hearing the crowd freaking out on the sideline. Hearing Matt Eisman be like she's in a lot of pain, not really understanding what had just happened. Someone on the sidelines like, you have to keep going you gotta keep going. And I just could not get up. And I literally had to be carried off the course.

And in that moment I had torn my ACL in front of everyone which was such a moment of feeling like such a failure. It was so disheartening after putting all the work in, showing up each day, doing everything right, you know considerably right. And then all of a sudden right there in the moment just everything just being taken away from me. Going from the strongest to the weakest in a matter of seconds. And it was definitely a huge devastating moment.

And I just remember just thinking: wow, I feel like I let that failure define me for a really long time. And I think what's really interesting about this is since I already was a pretty strong woman and I at that time I had quit the biochemistry job, owned a gym, and I was doing all these different things. Was on a cover of Women's Health for a little while. I wanted to not let anyone see that I was not okay.

And so I was showing up to work every single day as this strong woman cause that's what we do right? As powerful women we wanna show up, we wanna be strong, we wanna push through it. But at home I was crumbling. I was falling apart because the huge piece of my identity was being a ninja warrior was being this strong figure and this strong woman. And I got really stuck in this deep dark place for a while and I think it's really interesting is that a lot of athletes, motivational speakers, right, they talk about this down moment where they had this this moment where everything kind of fell apart and then they talk about how it all came together. And you think that it's a short period of time because it sounds so quick, right.

But I was in this moment for a really really long time and it wasn't until someone had come up to me and said Angela, like I see right through you. I see that you've been stuck here for a very long time and I wanna let you know that you have permission to feel all these feelings that you're feeling. You're feeling disappointed I'm sure you're not feeling really great from what had just happened but I don't want you to get stuck there.

And why I wanna share that piece of the story is because it took a while for me to actually listen to, like it was like the right place, the right time, the right person, that I was ready to receive that. And I was like wow she's giving me permission to feel horrible, to feel bad, but not get stuck there. So really set that deadline to be like Hey you can feel this way but we gotta start putting one foot in front of the other and keep going.

And the thing that really helped me get out of it is I started to sit there and I started to journal in my journal, what if it all goes right? Because I hadn't really thought about what was gonna go right or what could go right. Because all I was thinking about is what's gonna go wrong. I can't walk, I can't do this now. All these bad things and the things I couldn't do.

And when I started to write that in my journal I realized that I honestly didn't even know what going right looked like at all. I had no idea. So it was super blurry.

So no wonder I'm just feeling so discouraged. And each day I would go in and I would journal it over and over and over. I still journal it now every single day. And I would get a little bit more clear on what going right could look like. How I could take this injury and really actually turn it into an opportunity to come out stronger in all these different pieces. So from doing that over and over again I'd realized that I created this framework.

I didn't even realize it was a framework at the time, right, because just going through it of how to go from something like this unexpected challenge, which for so many other people might look very different from an ACL tear, right. Maybe it's that they had shown up to work and done everything they possibly could for this job and they got let go. Or maybe it was the fact that maybe you were in a relationship that you thought was like this person is the one it's gonna be great and then all of a sudden it just wasn't.

So I had this moment, which so many of us had these defining moments, and I didn't know how to get out of it. I thought I was strong and so I realized that I wasn't. So this what if it all goes right concept really came from that. But what's so wild is I can now take exactly what I did that one time and now... There's gonna be always unexpected challenges that keep showing up in everyone's life right? So I'm like okay now I actually I've done this before and I have more confidence now that I can actually get through it, now that I have something that I can tangibly look at when I've had these moments that show up.

Katie: Yeah, I feel like everybody listening can resonate in their own scenario and in their own life with that inner experience and those feelings of, like you said, you didn't want anyone to know that you weren't okay. And even that feeling of just learning to give yourself permission to actually feel. I think of how so many of the great teachers have quotes along the lines of what we resist, persists.

But it's so easy to try to resist those things and not wanna feel them, even if the path through them involves feeling them and let them being accepted. Not from a place of getting stuck, but from a place of release. And I think that's a big shift and, and also it's so easy to focus on the things that are wrong 'cause they're acute and they're in our awareness a lot.

And for me, my version of that was with, of when I was told I had Hashimoto's and told that it would be lifelong and that I would be on medication the rest of my life. And I had that internal story that I was sick or broken and that my body was attacking itself. And had to slowly learn like, that's not empowering language for one, nor is it true because as I'm sure

you found in healing as well, like our bodies are always on our side and they're always doing the absolute best they can.

So if something's not where we want it, that's great feedback from our bodies and our emotions and our mind of where we can learn and grow and heal. And I'm curious for you, what was it like that feeling of kind of being in the paralysis of worst case scenario because you went from being like the most mobile person ever to not being able to walk.

Angela: Yeah, and just like I was saying you know and much like you just said, I'm so happy that you shared that story about Hashimoto's because absolutely like doctors were telling me the same exact thing. Like you're never gonna be able to come back. You're not gonna be the strong athlete that you used to be. And I started to believe all those things that they were saying cause I'm like maybe I won't be able to do that.

But yeah it was a huge... I mean I felt like my identity had been placed on being this strong athlete. So I didn't know who I was without it, which was super wild. And I actually didn't think I was worth anything without it which is wild. And actually I'm so happy, now I obviously can say this, that it did happen, because you never wanna place your worth on any kind of external circumstance, whether it be American Ninja Warrior, whether it be being a mom.

I feel like I see that with moms a lot. Like they place all their identity on just being a mom. Like you're you're a mom but you are also more than that. A job that they're like super obsessed with and they've done everything with. Like they place their identity on that and then they get let go. I had this happen with my dad when he got let go and they asked him to retire. Like it was just like he didn't know who he was anymore, which I thought was super wild. So it was definitely really tough to be in that moment, but I really needed it to happen because I had to really go inward, and realize that without all those external things I'm an awesome person. I am all these other things. And you have to have that. You can't place your worth on all those external things.

Katie: Yeah, I think that's such a beautiful and inspirational thing. And I know in hindsight it's easy to look back and see how the things that were hardest in our lives were actually some of the biggest blessings. And it's so difficult sometimes to have that perspective in the moment. One thing I've been really trying to practice in life recently is like I know a hundred percent of the time when I look backwards that the hardest things I went through actually became the biggest blessings in my life. And I can, I'm trying to learn to trust that and to have gratitude, even in the hard moments without, even before I know the blessings and the good that will come from it.

And I'm certainly not there yet, but it's been a really helpful inner practice. And it sounds like for you the journaling every day was really helpful. I'm really curious what that inner shift looked like for you, how long it took.

I know that rewriting our inner voice can take a while because we have to like learn to befriend ourselves in ways we haven't before. And I know that for you that's also evolved into a beautiful process that you now help other people with. But what did that inner journey look like for you? How long did it take? What were the kind of roadblocks along the way?

Angela: Yeah I mean it, like I said, typically when you hear all these stories, right you hear it, it seems like really quick, right. These were, this was like months of me first being stuck, then finally realizing from that one moment with my friend who was saying, don't be stuck there anymore, to kind of starting the process of being able to feel. And I would say, I mean, so the the journey back was probably, it was 11 months to get back from my ACL. So I really wanna say like honestly in that 11th month timeframe I didn't fully feel back together until that 11th month when I went to go compete again.

So it really took that whole entire time to go through this entire process, and there was highs and lows just in between that journey. So the first piece of it like we just said was really recognizing and feeling. Allowing myself that permission and putting a name to it like we just had said you need to move through it right. Putting that name to it, journaling it, because once you put that name to it, it loses its power. The power starts to to go away.

And once you also give yourself permission to feel that way, a lot of times it goes a lot faster because you're like oh, I'm giving myself permission. It's losing its power. I at one point I put like my deadline on it. I like to call it like I had a little pity party. And I tell people like they can do their pity party for like 24 hours. You can do it for five minutes if it's something smaller. Or even there was a point where I'm like for seven days I'm just gonna allow myself to be like, whatever. Like I quit, whatever, just for seven days, but not forever, just for that time.

And because of that it actually allowed me to move through it a little quicker on that end from just the feeling piece of it. Then I had to really understand. And so like in my framework, I call it the right method now cause it just all kind of came together that way. So like R is recognize and feel, I is like identifying what I could control. Because again was thinking about all the things that I couldn't do, I'm like what can I do? And it took me a while to really understand what I could actually do. And I actually went through, and maybe you've done this before with somebody who may have had Hashimoto's or things along those lines, but I went online. I'm like I'm gonna find a bunch of athletes who have torn their ACL before and I'm gonna see what their journey was like back.

And I started to see that there was a lot of athletes who actually came back from their ACL and had their best years. Their best years. And I was like, wow, I actually can control this. I can actually do something within my control. I could focus on, hey I don't have my leg, but I have my upper body, I have my mindset I can work on. I can do things to really create a strong foundation.

So I started realizing a lot of things that I wasn't doing before that I actually had the opportunity to now do. And I just wanna bring up this quote cause I feel like it's so powerful and you might have seen it on my page before, but I saw the quote when I was going through this, and it said if you're not living your life by design you're living your life by default.

And I'd realized that if I keep allowing this to keep me down, that I'm letting the default takeover. I'm not living my life by design. And you absolutely do have control of things in your life. And it took me a while to realize that, but it was using and utilizing other people's proof that really helped. Going through, seeing other people that had gone through these tough times and saying to myself, okay they went through it. They got through it. Maybe I can get through it too.

So and maybe even it's the proof is even maybe yourself. Because once you go through this once, like you said, you start to look back and you're like okay, I got through this other hard thing before I can get through this also too. So looking for that different pieces of proof I think was really helpful. And again this was going through these 11 months so I had that moment. Probably the recognizing and feeling took me about I wanna say a full month or so to just really like sink into it. And then identifying what I could control.

That's when you start to see the videos of me with the leg brace and me doing workouts with my leg just like up on the bench and doing like bicep curls and saying Hey, I have my upper body but I don't have my leg but I have all these other things that I can actually work through which I think is really important with going through everything. And then the next piece is like really figuring out what my game plan was.

Okay cool I wanna come back in 11 months I decided. I put that decision down this is what I wanna do. And for somebody else it might be again, maybe it's like Hey, I'm gonna finally put my resume out there again and to try and find that job even though I just got let go, right. So I figure it out what my game plan was and then I reverse engineered it and I was like okay what small steps do I need to take every single day. Not massive steps because you're not gonna go from I feel sad and awful and I'm just crushed to I'm empowered in 24 hours or whatever that timeframe is, right?

You're gonna go from like I feel sad to like what's the next step up? Maybe it's I just feel okay today. So for my mindset and how I was feeling I took that one step up. And then also for just what my next step was to creating a strong foundation to come back stronger, I figured out what those steps were every single day. And that really definitely helped me to slowly start to get out of it. But again it was like definitely still wanna say on the ride it's up and down, right. So you have those days where you're like I'm empowered I got this I'm starting to feel a little better about it, I'm following my game plan. And then it's like the next day it's like wait, I don't feel good anymore.

So you're really kind of going up and down on this journey. And I've even called it before I call it the hallway, because another great quote that I love, and I don't know who it's from, so if you do let me know. I cannot find the person who it's from, but it says, when one door closes the other one opens but no one talks about the hallway in between. So I just envisioned myself like there I was in this hallway. And it's so true when you're in the hallway between what was and what's next, you can't see when it's gonna happen, what's gonna happen in between.

It's dark, it's scary, it's all these different pieces. And your guests you're going through and you're doing your game plan and you're feeling whatever you need to feel, but you still really don't know what's gonna happen on the other side, if it's gonna happen. Anything along those lines like really trying to trust that type of piece. So the next piece for the framework was really remaining adaptable. I really wanted to make sure that as I went through... cause again you're gonna have your game plan, but stuff's gonna happen.

So I had a point where I had a huge pain in the bottom of my calf and it was aching and I told my doctor I have this pain, like I think there's something wrong with my leg. They're like no you're probably fine, you're so healthy like this this and that. Finally convinced them to let me go in and get it checked out, wound up having a blood clot in my leg. So now I'm like trying to remain, I'm feeling a little better and then all of a sudden, oh blood clot in your leg.

Now I'm taking blood thinners, stuffing tissues up my nose, and trying to adapt to that situation. So it's really remaining adaptable through that hallway because again you're gonna set that game plan and then things are still gonna go up and down which I think was really really important. And then, yeah, the next piece was just honestly just having those little pieces of faith and taking like that delusional action that maybe I actually can come back in 11 months. Maybe this actually is possible for me but I know it was a long winded piece for the whole entire framework.

But we wind up calling it the right framework cause it just does it just kind of made sense with how it flowed into overcoming what we were just talking about, which is the hallway.

How long is that hallway gonna be? Do you know when you're gonna get out of it? Pretty much no, you have no idea. So you just have to trust and keep putting one foot in front of the other and know that eventually you're gonna make it there.

Katie: Yeah, and I love the idea of having that kind of scheduling a deadline around it because that actually creates the space for it to exist, which it seems like in the emotional realm that often is what those feelings really want is to be felt and to be acknowledged. I've done that too in small ways.

Even if things are overwhelming or I'm stressed, rather than letting that be pervasive in all areas of life, actually taking time that I'm like, okay, I'm going to actually feel the stress of this. I'm going to let my mind go in all the directions and feel the overwhelm, and I'm gonna set a timer.

And just simply like having that, letting all the stress hormones run their course, seemingly, like I have such different perspective after because I felt like I acknowledged them versus resisting them. And I feel like for women especially, resisting and having all the mental loops of those things running can be so like actually the source of stress more so than the actual getting things done or the things we're trying to do.

And I love that also, even when you couldn't use your knee for a while, of course you could work on your mindset. And that gave you kind of space you might not have had if you were still competing full-time to actually nurture that and to build it into something that I'm sure became a tremendous asset later on when you were able to return.

And also the small steps aspect feels really important. I would guess you see this probably all the time, especially in fitness, where people set really lofty goals and then decide that they're gonna go from not having done anything to being like professional athlete level, working out all at once. And then not shockingly, is not sustainable because they haven't built the physical, mental, any of the foundations for that big of a jump.

And I see that in all areas of health and wellness too. Like if you decide you're gonna try to overhaul your entire house, your entire diet, all your personal care products in one day, it's overwhelming and exhausting and not sustainable. Whereas if you kind of set a slower schedule than you think. And then you look forward to the baby steps because you didn't try to just tackle everything all at once.

So I love that you built that into like such a beautiful, cohesive system. And I know you work with a lot of really high achievers. And I would guess, especially with high achievers, there's a lot of struggle when things don't go right because we're used to being able to execute and to get everything done and to have things work out.

And so it seems probably for you too, and now and the people that you help, do you see that often and how do you help people when they're in that frustration of expecting everything to always work out perfectly?

Angela: Yeah. Yeah, and I think that just as humans like we only want to wanna show up when things are gonna be perfect, right. So, I say it right from the beginning when I work with anybody, whether it's the women who are getting their first pull up and working on this really hard thing that they've never been able to do, or whether it be the leaders that I'm working with who are in corporate and they're going through all these challenges and they're not really sure how to handle it. I always say allow yourself to show up imperfectly.

Show up imperfectly. You're showing up, it doesn't need to be perfect, because what happens is when you set like you were just saying that expectation if we're gonna go from zero to a hundred and you're like you said doing a whole overhaul of whatever it is that you're trying to do, it's gonna be really hard to actually stick to.

And that's kind of that all or nothing type mindset. Whereas instead if you're all in and you allow yourself to show up imperfectly that allows you to show up to adapt when something maybe isn't really going as planned or not going the way you thought it would be. And just allowing yourself, like you said, even more. It's basically very much the same of what you were saying like allowing yourself to have that space for things maybe not to go right. And knowing that that's literally okay.

And I always remind them that a lot of times when things aren't going quote unquote right, they actually are. Because it's a lesson or something that you do need to learn or skill that you need to learn that's gonna help you and propel you forward, right. So it's that sense of not allowing, when things aren't going right, to break you.

Instead thinking to yourself, you know I'm gonna just bend and I'm gonna literally use the bend of that to propel me forward to learn so much more to come out even better on the other side. And again it's obviously, like you said, that's so hard to do when you're in it. Like you're in it and you're zoned in and you can't...it's someone had said the other day to me they're like when you're in the picture, you can't see the whole picture, like when you're in. And I was like, wow you're right.

You can't zoom out to see where you are in that mountain or whatever it might be. So it's really putting that trust in it and really allowing yourself to show up imperfectly and to be okay when nothing is technically going right. And I always say, what if it all goes right even when it isn't? Because typically most of the time things are not going to go right and they're not gonna go as planned at all, but I think right away, especially with the women that I work with, I set that expectation from day one. From day one.

I think that's really important with anyone who's coaching anybody or helping anyone in the spaces. I always try and figure out what are they gonna run into? What do I already know they're gonna run into later down the line? They may not even know it right now. And how can I right away set that expectation and walk through that so they can be prepared. Just really be prepared for what might come up next.

And that helps a lot with the women who get their pull-up. Literally the first day of my pull-up program it's a whole video walking through that. It's like here's the deal Like you're gonna show up imperfectly, you're gonna have days where things aren't going right. I don't want you to compare yourself to others, your past self, I just really set that expectation from day one. And by having that, again it allows them to have that permission to show up even when things are not necessarily going right.

Katie: I love that. I think that actually allowing ourselves permission and actually showing up imperfectly is really actually super motivating. And especially for moms listening, I feel like that also, especially when we show up imperfectly and especially with our kids, when we apologize, when that happens, it actually gives them permission not to feel that stress of trying to hold themselves to perfect standards either, and gives them modeling of showing like we're not perfect and we get back up and we try again.

And we actually can make something stronger when there's a fracture and we can build a stronger relationship when there's been something hard in it. My friend Tina has a quote she says all the time, which is, everything works out perfectly for me. And she has really in her life now, like I feel like she's such a beautiful example of seeing that even when it doesn't feel like it's working out how she wanted it to, she can still keep that perspective of this works out perfectly even when I can't see the reasons in this moment. I trust that everything does work out perfectly.

And ironically in her life, it seems like so many things do really work out, even outwardly perfectly for her. I think because that's her energy that she stays in all the time. And I love your concept of helping people reframe and use change as kind of something beneficial to kind of springboard them or catapult them into whatever the next thing is, versus fearing it.

I know it's hard not to resist change, and I've heard it said that we don't resist the unknown, we resist the loss of the known, which I thought was a really helpful distinction.

And just all those quotes along the lines of that, our growth is tied to the amount of truth we can accept and hear about ourselves without running away. Or that happiness is tied to how much we can change, because truly in life that is one of the only constants, that it's constantly changing. And you mentioned the pull up side. I'd love to delve into this as a metaphor for what we're talking about because I do feel like for many women, myself

included, pull ups feel like a very huge hurdle and a big obstacle, and largely impossible. And I even was recently talking to a Marine, a friend who's a retired Marine, and he said when he was joining the Marines to get a perfect score for the men, they had to do 20 dead hang pull-ups.

Like full lockout, no kipping, and the chin had to go above the bar, like all these things. And for women it was like they had to dead hang for a certain amount of time. So I feel like even the perception is like women are not good at pull-ups. I know the average, I think I've read, pull-ups that women can do is zero.

So it's not that, it's like an easy thing and which I think makes it a beautiful metaphor. And I've gotten to experience how empowering it is. Actually my first one, I didn't think I'd be able to do it. I was just trying to like see how far up I could get and I was so surprised myself that I actually got my chin above the bar.

But I know you have a lot of passion related to this specifically because it's often a difficult challenge for women. And I do feel like that energy transfers. Like when we accomplish something, even if it's a pull up that is like related to fitness seemingly only, that mindset actually ripples into other areas of life.

Similarly to how when I had my first child, it seemed impossible. When I was in transition, I was like, there's no way I can survive this. And then once I was holding him in my arms, I felt incredible because I had gotten through something I thought was impossible. So I would love for you to talk more about all the women you've helped with pull-ups and how this actually is not just metaphorically, but directly applicable to other areas of life too.

Angela: Yeah, absolutely, yeah. And I love what you just said and how you related that to childbirth too, cause I would never honestly that makes a lot of like this is like this impossible thing that you're like how am I gonna get through this, yeah. And while yeah the statistic of... I mean I just I didn't fully know that with the test for the military that it was 20 and like women dead hang.

Because yeah, immediately you're basically telling a woman like you're not gonna be able to do this. Maybe not on purpose, like it's not on purpose, but like you're that's like literally what the picture is of it. Instead of being like oh no you can do it too type of thing. And it even used to show up in the national and physical awards that they... if everyone ever did that in the in the states. I don't even know if they do that anymore, but it was the same thing. Like the men had a certain amount of pull-ups they can do and then the women they would just be like, just hang on the bar.

But yeah it's this seemingly impossible goal. But so many women were coming to me when I was, of course when I was on American Ninja Warrior, and they're like my goal is just to get

one pull up. And it kept coming up like over and over again. Still today even when I'm hosting a workshop for it this week I asked them their pull up goal. Everyone: I wanna get my pull up on my 50th birthday, I wanna get my pull up on my 70th birthday.

Like it's so many women have this goal. And what I realized when I went online is that there was really nothing explaining how to specifically do it for women. There was nothing really created by a woman who was like it was like approachable. Like oh this is actually gonna be possible for you.

You just see like these PDFs or these programs made by men who don't fully understand how like again that mental piece of how tough it can be for a woman to show up for something that feels so challenging and so impossible, yeah. Now I've been able to help thousands of women, wild. Thousands of women do this one thing get their pull-up get multiple pull-ups like you are now.

And for me it was learning all the different missing links that these women weren't getting from all these other programs. So I really put everything together just like how I helped my framework with the RIGHT framework. I just worked with so many women one-on-one and figured out exactly out what the pieces were missing. And a lot of it was things that we don't really talk about: mobility, stability, strength, their central nervous system.

So I bring all that together to help them not only get their pull up but get a really strong foundation. But like I said, it's not to me about the pull up at all, like which is so wild, right. I'm teaching women these pull up and it's great. I love seeing them do it. I love that they know that I have the actual framework to get it done right in less than 12 weeks.

But for me it's that confidence you were just saying. Like every time they're showing up at that bar, first of all they're showing up imperfectly like we just talked about. They're going up to the bar and having days where they feel great and they're feeling strong and powerful, then they're having days where they're not feeling so great. But they keep showing up even during that, which is so powerful.

And then when they do finally get their chin above the bar, what I love so much more is how their whole demeanor changes. They're like wow I was able to do this seemingly impossible thing. What else can I do? How can they bring it into their life? I'm seeing these women like get promotions, feeling better in their body, trying the new thing they never thought they could do before. All because they finally got this one skill of getting their pull up.

So while to me obviously having the FrameMaker and all the pieces to get their pull up together, to me it was never about that. It was as soon as I saw the look on their faces when they got it and I started seeing how they personally changed, I was like this is powerful. Like

this is so much more. It's more than all these programs that are out there about let's lose weight and lose this and dah dah dah.

It's like no, let's get strong, empowered, feel good in our bodies and come out like just feeling so strong from the inside out. And that's what it was for me with working on their pull up. And I bring that in even to you know it's the same process, using the RIGHT framework that they have to go through that it is for these leaders that I'm now training. It's the same thing.

It's literally getting your first pull up and coming through an unexpected challenge. It's the same mindset shifts that have to happen and the strength that needs to happen from getting a pull up, which again I just feel like is so powerful to see. And every woman that I see in there... I mean like there was a woman in my group yesterday who I was talking to: 77 years old. She's 77 years old. She's working on this pull up with me. She told me that other day, Wow I'm feeling so much stronger more confident in my body. I'm going outside and I'm, you know she lives in this beautiful house and she has to garden and do all this stuff yard work outside. She was like, I'm just feeling so much stronger being able to bend down and grab onto the tools I need to and do all these things. Which is so powerful seeing that you can do that even as you age.

So I could ramble on forever about this because I have so many incredible women who are doing this, but the biggest piece of it is that empowerment that you're feeling from doing this seemingly impossible goal of getting your chin above bar. And once you can do that and once you can overcome an unexpected challenge and see that you can absolutely come out on the other side, you just realize just how capable and how powerful you are.

Katie: I love that and I think it touches on so many important things. And one I love to specifically name and talk about is misconceptions around strength for women, especially as we get older. Because you just mentioned women in their sixties and seventies who are doing pull-ups, which is incredible. I love that so much.

And I know I've seen videos of you doing pull-ups alongside a woman who's my mom's age and she's just completely badass and I love that. And I feel like this is an area that a lot of women maybe have misconceptions around, especially as we get older and we get told things like, you lose a certain amount of muscle per year.

Obviously like there's so much data around strength and the more lean muscle we maintain as we get older, it's actually protective in literally every area of health. And even very strongly correlated to life expectancy. But what do you tell women who are kind of getting that message related to strength as we get older or who think it's too hard or they like missed the window, or they can't do it now because they're older?

Angela: Yeah, I have so many women who will come in they'll say to me like, can I really work on this goal right now? What if I get injured while I'm working on this goal right now? That always comes up cause they're super nervous. One of the things I love is showing them true proof and true data.

I have doctors that come up to me all the time and they're like we are obsessed with what you're doing. And I'm like oh like tell me more like why are you obsessed with what I'm doing? And they were like because all the data shows that grip strength and working on a move like a pull up is highly correlated to your overall health and longevity. They said it's one of the number one things actually which is wild.

So when I tell them that and I relate it back to how it's gonna help your actual life and how you're able to absolutely get that grip strength now and how it's gonna... I literally show them practical things for women that it's gonna help them with, like with opening jars, doors, getting up, not having a fatal fall and being able to actually pull yourself up from something. There's a lot of things that come with it, so I try and show them practical things.

I also again love to show them proof because I think that's really powerful. A lot of times when women are coming into my workshops that's the main piece I'm focusing on. It's like obviously I'm gonna show them the strategy, but it's like how can I help you overcome your mindset? The fact that you don't think you can do this. That you think that you're too heavy, that you think you're too old, that your grip's not good, that can I actually do this?

Or what if I start and do this goal and I fail. Like what if I actually fail? Yeah, I think the biggest thing is like showing the proof of it. The amount of women I have... I'm like, I can say this to you all I want, but you probably need to see somebody who's actually done it and how it's helped helped them and overcome their life. So I'll show those side by side videos or show that 60-year-old who got it in a couple days. Or the woman who they literally will write out like my goal was to get up off the floor from this program, obviously to get my pull up, and now I can do that.

Like so when they see that kind of pieces they start to see like wow, like this whole huge misconception of what aging looks like, of what strength is in your seventies, is just way not true. Like just not true at all. And but you get to decide that, right? You get to decide.

And it's not that you're ever gonna be also too late to get stronger, cause some people think that too. They're like, well if I didn't do it when I was in my forties or thirties, like I'm not gonna be able to do it now. It's like you can actually build strength right now. You have a choice. That whole living your life by design is at fault. You have a choice right now that you can start and you can absolutely build strength right now, even if you've waited or you haven't done it.

You're never too old, like you're never too late. So again, I think a lot of it is proof and really getting them to take that first singular step. So a lot of them, like I'll say, Hey you're nervous let's just start by hanging on the bar. We'll start with that step one to just get you a little more confidence, because the only way you're gonna get more confident... and even what I'm saying at all is, by trying something, by taking action, by seeing that little win and that little step for yourself. But you have to do something.

So yeah. I always try and fire them up with my energy to get them started, but yeah that literally that mindset comes in all the time when it comes to this. But I'm also really excited with the day and the age that we're in now. I feel like things are evolving. I think things are changing. Like I really am seeing and I'm sure obviously on this podcast you talk about this a lot, I'm seeing this huge shift in longevity. I'm seeing this huge shift in going from like let's lose weight and worry about how we look to hey don't you wanna live a really great life, have great energy, and feel amazing in your body? And it's seeming like the trend is shifting to a more positive place which is nice, but there's still a lot of women who do need convincing.

Katie: Yeah, I'm with you. It's really exciting to see so many women seemingly caring about strength and how they feel in their bodies, versus even the mindset of losing weight feels very disempowering. And also our minds don't like to lose anything, so we're like creating resistance immediately there. I know for me, even just the small switch from like thinking of calories or macros or trying to like limit into how do I maximally nourish myself, like how do I pull every lever to give my body what I can give it?

That alone, without actually changing any of the inputs, but just changing my mindset around them was so drastic and so much more positive. And like you mentioned, grip strength. I just wanted to echo that because it truly is extremely correlated to longevity and it's entirely within our control to build that.

And often we get to learn a lot about our nervous systems in that process as well. And I love your message of encouragement for women especially, and especially as we get older, because I read the stat that the majority of people, I think it was upwards of 95%, will never sprint again after age 30. Most women will never do a single pull up.

But these are things we actually have the ability to choose, and so I love that you are giving people a roadmap and a path for that. And I also think there's the empowering mindset piece here to kind of bring it back to where we started with this, is like the brain responds really well to new challenges and goals and it responds really well when we're able to getting out of our comfort zones.

And this is something I have tried to nurture consciously in my life, where every three or six months or so, I'll take on a new challenge, which sometimes is physical. Sometimes it's

learning to solve a Rubik's Cube or getting better at chess with my kids or whatever it may be. But there's something magic that happens in that out of comfort zone, new challenge that I feel like reignites neural pathways, it helps shift our mindset.

Like there's so much power there. And so I'd love to like circle back now and tie into everything we've talked about. What are some of the first steps that women especially can take, whether physically, mentally, or both if they've had that mindset, they can't do it, or these challenges seem not overcomeable? Like what are the first baby steps that you walk people through or where would you encourage them to start?

Angela: Yeah, I mean like you said I feel like the biggest piece is absolutely the mindset. There's gonna be not only the mindset, but then you wanna be surrounded by people who are gonna uplift you and again show you that proof and show you that you can absolutely do it. When we talk about the the RIGHT framework that I've created, the last step is always taking that delusional action.

And a lot of times what helps you take that delusional action is having that someone or listening to this podcast right now who's telling you you can absolutely do it. And you have like that little glimmer, a little maybe it's 1% or 5% delusional thought in your head that you can absolutely do this like in some kind of capacity. And then using that little bit of courage you have, that like 1%, 5% to just do a little bit of something. You only need to do a little bit something.

Again not thinking about it as the all way. Like again maybe the goal is the pull up or maybe the goal is overcoming some huge challenge, like for me my ACL comeback, right? But not thinking about that huge thing just yet but just again what is that one little step that you can do right now to get started. Again, if it's your pull up, maybe it's just hanging on the bar. Like let's just hang on the bar, get up there.

And that's again, get your, get that little courage to just show up and do that. Maybe it's sending that first email that you've been nervous to send. Like just sending it, whatever. Not even caring. Just like, I'm gonna send it, I'm gonna do it, I'm gonna take that like delusional action I feel like is really important with it.

And I also wanna come back to what you were just saying too about our mind, our comfort zones, right? So much so often our body absolutely is trying to keep us safe. It's trying to keep us in our comfort zone. And it's that story those stories of fear. Again, what if I can't do this? And those, I just wanna remind everybody on here like that those are just stories. Those are stories your mind is telling you and it's just to try and keep you safe and trying to keep you where you are, right? But where growth truly happens is outside the comfort zone.

So if you are getting a little bit uncomfortable... which I love what you're saying with taking those, having that one thing that kind of keep you out, a little outta your comfort zone each week, that's where your true growth is gonna happen. That's how you're gonna get to that next level is by saying, Hey cool stories I see the stories, I recognize em they're gonna be there. They're always gonna be there. Like no matter the the most successful person in the world that I've ever talked to, I'm like you still have stories of fear, but they're gonna show up despite those fears. They're gonna be like, Hey thanks for trying to keep me safe, but I'm gonna do that one step and I'm gonna try and get myself a little bit outta my comfort zone so that I can actually do this next thing and be this next version of myself that I see is there. Like you typically always have some kind of delusion that it might be there.

I told a story the other day in my keynote, but I...this cover of the magazine, it's kind of funny. I took a one step of delusional action for myself. This is way before I was a ninja warrior. I photoshopped myself on the cover of Oxygen Magazine and for some reason I had this one day where I had a little bit of courage and I decided to send an email to everybody at oxygenmagazine.com. Like accounting at oxygenmagazine.com, info at oxygenmagazine.com.

And I sent out this Photoshop version of myself on here and I had this little hint of courage. And obviously nobody got back to me with that email, but I sent that email and I did it even if I was scared, even if I was nervous, even if I was fearful. I was like, Hey that little hint of courage, I'm just gonna go for it. Followed up every single month month month month. Finally after like six months finally get a message back from one of the ladies, the editor in chief, she's like I'm actually doing a shoot in a church basement. Do you wanna come do wrist exercises?

And I was like absolutely, I'm in. But if I didn't take that little delusional action step, that would've never happened, right? So I think that's really really important. And the last thing I want to... last point I have, so many things I can say about this is that wherever you're at right now, whatever it's that you're scared to do next or the thoughts that you're having with it, what's the harm in trying? Like worst comes to worst you just stay where you are right now or it turns out even better than you imagined. So if you're really fearful of something and taking that first step it's also just like, you either stay where you are right now, like that might be what happens, or you take a step and something awesome happens. So what's the risk in that? I don't see a risk at all in just going for it.

Katie: Yeah. That idea that you get a no to 100% percent of the questions you never ask. And yeah, like I love, I think your title is perfect. What if it all goes right? And I think even just if people shift a little bit into that mindset, it might just be drastically life changing. And for people listening, whether it's they want to maybe finally tackle their pull up or whether they

really wanna go into the mindset side and do coaching with you, where can people find you? Where can they learn from you? Where do you recommend that they start?

Angela: Yeah, so you can go to my Instagram, I'm @angela_gargano or you can go to my website www.angela-gargano.com, everything's on there. Right now I'm doing a lot of keynote speaking which I'm super excited about. I just spoke to an awesome woman's conference. So 750 women this week which is really great.

And we went over... and we of course customize the talk to whatever it is that people are looking for. And then for the pull-up program, we typically do these workshops. So you hop into a free workshop, we'll walk through the whole methodology so you get a sense of exactly what it is that we do, and then you can join the the pull-up program at any time.

But yeah, it's all on the site. And yeah, looking to definitely...I think I told you I'm doing it also scared, right? I'm like I'm gonna go all in on my speaking this year because I know that I can have such a great impact on these stages to help women to help people to help leaders push through these challenging times. And I think right now what people are really needing is an authentic voice. Someone who's been through it, who's living through it that they can use in order to help them get past these challenges.

So I'm excited to be that and excited to be I guess I realize that there's not a lot of female speakers which I'm learning about now. So people are really excited to have female speakers, athletes, on their stage being able to help empower their teams or their leaders to overcome all these challenges. Cause we're obviously in a time where things are changing rapidly every day.

Katie: Well, I love it. I will put all those links in the show notes for any of you guys listening on the go. That's www.wellnessmama.com. There'll be links there. Angela, it's always truly a joy to get to chat with you. I find you so inspirational. I love your work. I've personally benefited from your work and I'm so grateful. Thank you so much for being here.

Angela: Thanks so much for having me.

Katie: Aand thank you as always for sharing your most valuable assets, your time, your energy, and your attention with us today. We're both so grateful that you did, and I hope that you will join me again on the next episode of the Wellness Mama Podcast.