



EPISODE 443

# How Your Psychology Controls Your Biology & Transforming Education

With Guest Katie Wells

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**Shawn Stevenson:** Welcome to The Model Health Show, this is fitness and nutrition expert, Shawn Stevenson, and I'm so grateful for you tuning in with me today. When we're experiencing challenging times, we have a tendency to see the world through the lens of challenging times. We tend to create a snowball effect of looking for more problems to affirm our belief that there are a lot of problems. And right now in human history, there are definitely some problems, there are definitely a lot of things going on. However, at the same time, I want to remind us that there is a lot of good going on as well, and there are a lot of innovations, there are a lot of miracles happening, things that would be considered miracles, and yet it's just the normal state of affairs of all of the incredible things that we have access to today and the ability to connect. And the gatekeepers of information and education, all those things have dissolved and our access to food, our access to clean water, our access to safety for most of us. Most folks who are listening to this, we have a modicum of safety and certainty in our lives as far as just our basic needs being met, whereas throughout human evolution, these things were not possible.

Now, not to say we don't have problems, not to say that everybody has the same level of security because we don't, but we need to shift a little bit more to focusing on what we do have and being a little bit more light-hearted about the challenges we're facing because honestly, we can get really caught up in it, and it can debilitate us from being able to take right action. And not to say that we're not taking action because as you know, I'm about that life, and I've continued to be somebody who's really pushing us forward and pushing the culture of health and wellness forward amidst a lot of turmoil and uncertainty, and also this chronic issue of our system being focused on the wrong thing, and not really looking at what are the underlying issues that are making our citizens so susceptible and creating conditions where we're literally... We can see it for ourselves, there's so much infighting and there's such a lack of perspective-taking and empathy and communication.

But again, there's a lot of that happening in the world still in other areas. So again, we get to see what we're looking for, and we want to be aware to work on our awareness that there's a lot of good going on simultaneously. Tune into that, get your juice, get your tank filled, so you can bring that good energy to the mission forward to the challenge. And the reason that it's really hitting me right now, is that we have this term

of first-world problems that we got first-world problems, and we've just been hit with that back, to back, to back here at the Stevenson household. Just the last week, we had everything teed up and working, just crazy to really help to get folks aware and ready for Eat Smarter, my new book coming very soon so... By the way, eatsmarterbook.com, get your pre-order right now. Alright, pause this, pre-order the book, get the bonus, free 10-video course I've put together, you get as a bonus, but been working like crazy to really get Eat Smarter into the hands and hearts of as many people as possible and really shift the culture.

All the while, alright, I'm about to kick my shoes off, relax, take a nice hot shower, guess what happened? The hot water heater broke, alright? The hot water heater broke, and there was no hot water not just for today, not the next day, not the next day. Oh, there's people stinking, there's people stinking in the Stevenson household, we can't shower. Heating up water, do a little horse bath, a little horse bath. Heat the water up, tap the appropriate places and keep it moving, but still, we still have shelter. But at the time, a lot of pissosity like, "What? Can they fix it?" But you got to check back in and look at, "What do we have to be grateful for," because it's that first-world problem. So again, just being aware there's good happening simultaneously.

I was grateful that I had recently taken a shower, so I had a little bit of a headstart in the shower department, you know what I mean? But my wife, ooh, she was mad. Oh my goodness, she was mad, especially that last day 'cause she just didn't want to be dirty. She didn't want it, she didn't want it. So she was uncharacteristically... She was not her very nice and fuzzy self, so... But we had to be understanding and we can have the capacity to do that when we're in a good place.

So my sons and I, we were just like, "Okay, let's just make sure we can do whatever to make this more light-hearted 'cause she clearly has had enough," and it's understandable too. So again, it's not that our negative feelings or when we are fed up or pissed off that those aren't valid. All of our feelings matter, all of our experiences and our perspective, but we tend to label things as good and bad, and that's part of the problem. Even as I'm talking about there's good happening in the world, it's just how we're labeling things. What's really present and ever-present is opportunity. It's all opportunity for growth, and it's all opportunity to learn something, it's all opportunity to find unique and dynamic solutions, it's all opportunity to grow, and that's what it's really about at the end of the day. So let me tell you how grateful we are. Once I took a shower, once that hot water hit my body, ooh, it felt like Christmas Day, it felt like a hug from somebody you love, it was just like... It felt like you're in the bosom of love itself, just hugging and caressing and rocking you back and forth. That's a little... I know that's



a little bit too much for a shower, but hey, I appreciate it, I appreciate you, hot water.

But that was just one thing, then the alarm, the house alarm just started going off on its own. It just had no behavior, just doing whatever it wanted to do, and it sounded like the nuclears were coming in, it sounded like nuclear warfare is going down, that's how loud this alarm is. And so that happened, but we finally got that sorted out, and then I was talking to my wife yesterday and I was like, "Babe, we've had a rough couple of days, everything's going good now," 'cause I felt like we were brewing up a little conflict 'cause we had just had enough, we just wanted to chill, be together, just chill. And no sooner did I say that statement, five minutes later, our entire block went out, the power went out because some guys, they just... They're cutting down the trees at night. You can't even see, why are you cutting down trees? Power went out for a couple of hours.

So it was an adventure, it's been an adventure, but again, these are the first-world problems. You know what happened when the power went out though? My whole neighborhood was outside, everybody was like, "They so stupid, they so stupid. Why are they cutting trees at night?" We got together on the silliness of it, but also we had some laughs, everybody had their flashlights. Man, it was dark, dark, dark. Man, you don't really realize how we're conditioned with our little street lights. But everybody's outside, we had our little jackets and hoodies on. And the community, we haven't all been outside together like that, so it was pretty cool, yeah, in a minute. So there's always beauty to behold in any kind of challenge, small or large, and the more that we can work on seeing the gift in the challenging time, the better. And I'm saying all this in a light-hearted way, but we are facing some very big challenges, but I want you to remember how powerful you are to affect change, not just in the world, but in your own mind, in your own state of happiness, your own state of balance and just being empowered. Again, this is not about being happy all the time, it's about being empowered and capable.

So listen, something else that is upon us right now creeping in ever so slowly, alright, the uninvited guest; cold and flu season, it's got its own season. How dare you? Cold and flu season. Listen, this is one of the craziest things that is a ramification that nobody's talking about, is that right now, we are far more vulnerable to all manner of infectious diseases, cold and flus, that for whatever reason, I've brought the data forward now because nobody cared before that the common flu, influenza, because a lot of people, honestly they don't have a very close association with death. We've never seen a death toll ticker on the television before, we've never seen so much highlighted in the newspapers and in social media, even though this is happening 24/7/365, mass amount of people dying from preventable issues, and one of those things is influenza, with

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650,000 people dying from influenza every year, not just one year, every year. It's not just some new thing, 80 years since there's been a vaccine for it, but it mutates. That's the thing, we got to keep getting new vaccines. The flu is smarter, influenza is smarter, it continues to mutate.

There's another one that's already mutated that is the most... The highest thing on people's radar right now, infectious disease. You know the name, you know the name, I'm not even going to say the name, okay? Like with a rap song, I'm not even going to put them... I'm not even going to give it any shine today, but that's new, that's novel. Influenza been killing folks and nobody's talking about it, nobody's talking about it. The vast majority of those cases are folks who die from influenza of the 650,000 cases from only the respiratory aspects of influenza. That's not counting influenza-related seizures, and organ failure and all manner of other conditions that can sprout from that, which that would make it hundreds of thousands of more deaths. These are folks who have chronic, pre-existing diseases that are largely lifestyle-related, these are the issues we can change, but right now, cold and flu season's creeping in. We're already down, we're already susceptible, but we're more susceptible now. Since the shut-downs have taken place, guess what's happened? Rapid, skyrocketing increase in processed food consumption. Rapid, skyrocketing increases in stress. And stress, you might... Stress is invisible, but it's one of the biggest modulators of health and one of the biggest causes of illness today.

A recent study reported that upwards of about 90% of all physician visits are for stress-related illnesses. So don't think stress is some invisible kitten just coming to purr and to rub on you, stress can take you out, alright? Rapid increases in stress. Are we more or less stressed now than prior to you know who showing up on the scene? More stressed, we know that. Rapid decrease in movement and exercise, massive, massive falling in the rates of folks who are active. More susceptible, all these things make us more susceptible. Increase in erratic sleep patterns. So now, cold and flu season's coming along. Guess what's going to happen? You're about to see all kinds of headlines saying, "Hospitalizations have just gone up," you're going to see it. Just call me Nostradamus, alright? I'm telling you it's going to happen, we're more susceptible. And of course, with the other issue being on folks minds, that being a player as well, being that we are more susceptible.

So I just wanted to share that and give us an insight that even though this is the case, we cannot just sit on our hands and not participate in our own health and wellness, and a big component of that is helping to support our immune system through our nutrition. Of course, addressing these lifestyle factors that I just talked about, but



addressing this through our nutrition because we've got things that have massive amounts of clinical evidence that can support our immune system, and one of those things, this was highlighted recently in a study published in a peer-reviewed journal, mediators of inflammation uncovered that the polysaccharides found in Reishi were found to enhance the proliferation of critical immune cells, namely our T-cells and our B cells, our B cells are related to our humoral immunity. So it's our cells, our immune system's ability to learn an infection, to figure the infection out, so that it becomes resistant to the infection.

We have things that have been around for thousands of years. We have clinical evidence now that it trains your immune system to actually defend itself, and garner the intelligence to defend itself if it's ever exposed to this thing again, it just becomes like nothing, Reishi is one of those things. So this is something I have nightly, it's part of my nightly routine most of the week. I have a cup of Reishi tea, a Reishi elixir, dual extracted, so that means it's hot water extract and alcohol extract. So you actually get all of the things that are found in studies like these, and so you can extract and get the nutrients you're really looking for. If you're not doing both methods, you're missing out on either the triterpene camp or the antioxidant camp, the beta-glucans, all that stuff is so important.

The Reishi elixir that I use is from Four Sigmatic. Go to [foursigmatic.com/model](https://foursigmatic.com/model), that's F-O-U-R-S-I-G-M-A-T-I-C dot com/model. You get a nice discount, 10%, 15%, even 20% depending on how much goodness you're getting. Alright, the Reishi elixir is one of my nightly things because listen to this, the journal, Pharmacology Biochemistry & Behavior, a pharmacology-focused, peer-reviewed journal found that Reishi is able to significantly improve your sleep quality, alright? Pop over there and check them out, [foursigmatic.com/model](https://foursigmatic.com/model). They've also got a delicious cacao Reishi elixir, alright, a hot cocoa version that my son, Braden, loves, he actually just had it today, alright, so we can make this process of getting good stuff into our bodies and our families with things like this. So highly recommend it, check it out, [foursigmatic.com/model](https://foursigmatic.com/model).

And again, this time right now in human history, we have to take it upon ourselves to get educated, to give our bodies the stuff that it requires to do all the cool things that it's capable of, and to also support and educate our friends and our families and our communities in a way that's inclusive and fun, and that's what we have access to do right now. So just very passionate about this, and I just want to make sure that we are pointing our attention in the right direction right now and taking care of ourselves and the people that we care about and continue to move everything out from there and really impact our communities. And on that note, let's get to our Apple Podcasts review



of the week.

**iTunes Review:** Another five-star review titled "Blown away" by truck chic, "I'm absolutely blown away how Shawn can communicate such critical health information in an engaging and tantalizing way. I'm addicted to his content. I love the research and validation from an unbiased eye. Ahhhhhh, I love. Thank you."

**Shawn Stevenson:** That's so awesome. Thank you so much for leaving me that review over on Apple Podcasts. I really felt that. Thank you, thank you, thank you. And listen, if you've yet to do so, please pop over to Apple Podcasts and leave a review for the show, I appreciate it so much. And on that note, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day. Our guest today is Katie Wells, and she's a world-renowned leader in health and wellness, and a mom of six, and a founder of [wellnessmama.com](http://wellnessmama.com), she's also the host of the top-rated Wellness Mama podcast and author of the best-selling Wellness Mama cookbook.

And Katie is just one of those people that you cannot be around her and not be impacted. My whole team is thinking about their lives differently after this conversation, and just spending time with her and her family in Florida... It's been like probably two years now since we were hanging out, but we left there and we did things differently in our life as a result of seeing Katie and her family and just the... It's just something you would not expect, alright, what's possible with the structure of the family, and she's somebody who's just a great positive influence, somebody who's a leader, and somebody who's been really ahead of the curve in so many aspects of health and wellness and just helping to empower parents, empower moms, empower families and kids for so many years. And so really grateful to have her on for this episode, and I think you're going to really enjoy this very much. So let's jump into this conversation with the amazing Katie Wells. Katie, what's up?

**Katie Wells:** Hey, how are you?

**Shawn Stevenson:** I'm doing good. I'm very excited to have you on, very excited to talk you. Anne and I, we literally giggle like little school children when we talk about you and your family, because when we last saw you was actually in Florida at your house.

**Katie Wells:** It was... Yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, so thank you for having us. That was such an awesome time, very eye-opening, I

think Anne has talked to you about that too. But obviously, a lot has changed since then. First of all, how, Katie, your house was such a freaking adventure, like you had your... Was it your two-year-old at the time? Maybe three, and they're like just walking around eating sauerkraut, doing their own laundry, it's just like, you really change our paradigm of what was possible for what our kids could be doing. So when we got back, we were like "Oh no Braden, dude you got to start doing your laundry." I think he was like five at the time, or six. So how has it been your experience because you moved from where to Florida?

**Katie Wells:** From Kentucky.

**Shawn Stevenson:** From Kentucky. You were like born and raised there, right?

**Katie Wells:** My husband was.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Okay.

**Katie Wells:** Yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** So where were you born?

**Katie Wells:** Texas.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Texas. I knew that.

**Katie Wells:** Yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Texas, all my exes live in Texas.

**Katie Wells:** But yeah, I've been all over and now Florida's definitely home.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, yeah. It was so nice. You guys took us paddleboarding.

**Katie Wells:** Yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah. And your husband is just like low key doing head stands and all this stuff.

**Katie Wells:** Yeah, just casual head stands on the paddle board.

**Shawn Stevenson:** He just kept a super casual vibe, but me and my son, Jordan, we were just struggling to



just stand up, but it was a great, really great adventure, and you've accomplished so much, you become this incredible brand, Wellness Mama is like the top of so many people's minds and just a trusted authority, but recently you've had some big transformations for yourself, like you've been so focused on helping everybody else just get educated, and you took some time to really focus on you, so... What inspired that? That focus, that shift in focus and then we could talk about what the hell you've accomplish something really amazing.

**Katie Wells:**

Yeah, well, I think, first of all, it's one of the great honors of my life to get to be part of the Wellness Mama community, it happened somewhat inadvertently, but I think I've always believed that moms are the most powerful force on the planet, and so to get to be part of such an amazing group of moms has been truly one of the greatest honors of my life. And like you often hear people get into psychiatry trying to figure out what's wrong with them, that was why I got into health, and I think that's a common story for a lot of us, it's not that we just one day logic ourself into being healthier, it's that we have a crisis.

And for me, that was my first pregnancy kick starting an autoimmune disease that I didn't know was an autoimmune disease at the time, and also reading that for our kids, they were going to be the first generation in two centuries to have a shorter life expectancy, than their parents, and just realizing what they were going to face and that that wasn't okay. I wasn't okay with that for my kids and I wasn't okay with that for anybody's kids, so I had no idea how I would change that, but that was how Wellness Mama was originally born, and there certainly was that self-serving aspect as well, of trying to figure out what was wrong with me, and that was definitely the driving force behind a lot of my research for a lot of years, and I'm so grateful for that because I don't think...

I think it was one of my great teachers, I don't think I would be the mom I am now or the wife I am now without that. And I'm also really grateful it took a long time to figure out, because what I've learned in the last couple of years is there is no silver bullet, and if anything and you speak to this so well, everything is so personalized and it's doing the work to figure out your own answers, and I feel like to get to that point, I had to try everybody else's system because I was so desperate for answers that I would read all the research and try all the systems, and what I learned was all of those people are geniuses in their own way, and they have learned what works for them, and we can learn something from every approach, from every person that we encounter.

But at the end of the day, we are each our own primary health care provider, and we have to take the ownership completely and figure out what's going to work for us and bring



in partners and experts to help us. But at the end of the day, it starts and stops with us, and for me, the part of that I avoided for so, so long was the inner side, we read about the spiritual, mental, emotional side and how it affects our physiology and how the body keeps the score, but for so long because that was such a hard thing for me, I ignored that part and just thought like, "Well, I can just power through this, I don't need to deal with that side, I will just eat even cleaner and I will just exercise even harder and I will just do all the things exactly perfect." Which I did for a decade and nothing changed, and it was such a struggle, like daily, I look back and think of how much of my own inner mental energy every day was consumed with all the things wrong with my body and trying to change them, and I think a lot of women can relate to that. I think many, many women have so many struggles with body imaging and with working through that and just... It can be very consuming. And so I think facing that was one of the hardest parts of my journey by far, and getting through that was the most freeing.

**Shawn Stevenson:** That's so powerful and you were really speaking a lot of people's language right now, and experience, and if you could... So of course, you mentioned the first pregnant, the first pregnancy, which you had... How many pregnancies and children?

**Katie Wells:** I've had six babies.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Six babies, with the first one kicking off autoimmune condition, which was?

**Katie Wells:** Hashimoto's for me.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Hashimoto's. And we've of course touched on the subject here, but if you could share a little bit about that particular autoimmune condition, what does it target and also, we could circle back to... Wow, you did some amazing things that to kind of put that in remission.

**Katie Wells:** Yeah, so I now I'm completely in remission, which extremely grateful for. Hashimoto's is when the body is having an autoimmune reaction against thyroid tissue. For me, it took eight doctors to finally get diagnosed because I knew something was wrong, and I had done enough research to figure out it was probably something thyroid related, but a lot of doctors do kind of surface level test or they'll test just a couple of thyroid hormones, and then if those are normal, they don't tend to go deeper, and realizing over time that the ranges they use when it comes to thyroid testing in general, are based on people who go get thyroid testing and who gets thyroid testing, but people who think they have a thyroid problem often, so there's a lot of controversy about what those ranges should be and what normal is versus what optimal is, and I know we see that in a lot of various

areas of testing.

And then not testing antibodies, which is a clear-cut sign with Hashimoto's. And so finally finding a doctor, I believe you know him too, Dr. Alan Christianson was the first one that helped start me down that path to healing, and it was a long road of... I tried a lot of different things in the beginning, I did autoimmune protocol to reduce inflammation in the beginning and extremely clean for a lot of years, and the beauty of it now is that having, I think rebuild that foundation and healed my gut and all of those things, I now have so much more leeway that I'm actually much less strict than I've ever been, and like I said, I think that the mental inner side was that last piece that had to fall into place because at the end of the day, if we're constantly in that state inside and we're constantly in some pathetic nervous system, it doesn't matter all the things we're doing, you can't out supplement your nervous system, right. And so for a lot of women, I think that's the key, and it's the hardest one to face...

**Shawn Stevenson:** Oh, this is so good. So just on the technical side, Izabella Wentz, we did an episode with her as well on the thyroid, specifically with Hashimoto's focus, and as you mentioned, Dr. Alan Christianson, we did a couple of episodes with him, will put those in the show notes, but this, like you just said, this is where the real change takes place, and we overlook this, unfortunately, especially in our conventional system and not understanding that your mind is controlling everything your body does, so your body can literally be on defense against any changes you try to make just to maintain its safety and its set point, especially like you said, when you're running in that sympathetic kind of fight or flight... And you don't even realize it's happening. So let's talk about that, because that inner work and inner transformation, which you were just like "Nah... Again, I'll power through it." And so many of us do this, once you really focused on this, everything changed, so what was it that you did and what was the barrier that was kind of blocking all of the dominoes that kind of happened afterwards?

**Katie Wells:** Yeah, so from the physiological side, when you're in that fight or flight nervous system state, it makes sense, your body is focused on avoiding whatever the stressor or a danger that it perceives, and in today's world, we're constantly bombarded with those things, whether or not they're real dangers are not, if their nervous system perceives it as a real danger, it doesn't matter because the hormone cascade is happening, and when you're in that state, your body is not trying to be fertile, it's not trying to rest and digest, it's trying to survive.

And so it's not going to do the things physiologically that you need to do to be able to heal and to be able to rest and digest, and I was very much in that state for so long for

me, it went back to a trauma in high school being sexually assaulted, and in that moment, feeling so helpless and vowing to never feel helpless again and to build walls to protect myself, that truly became a physical manifestation of that wall I put on armor to feel safe, and in hindsight, I had to be grateful for that too, because it did keep me safe and I needed that process to heal through some of that, but it had built up and become this wall that I was using to keep people out, and it was physiologically a source of inflammation that was keeping me from being able to heal or lose weight or get better, so getting through that to facing the really hard stuff and doing the inner work and being willing to feel those things again, to face them, to let go of them, and honestly, what it was that finally made me willing to do it and able to do it was seeing my oldest daughter seeing me look at myself in the mirror...

And I saw it register in her eyes that I was judging myself, and to look at her and remember what it was like to be 11 years old and that when that's when so many of us start that cycle of judging our bodies and knowing that she at her age now, she's a pole vaulter and she's an athlete, and to her, her body is this incredible tool that can do incredible things, and to think how healthy is that that that's how we should get to go through puberty, is not like, what's the things that are wrong with my body, but my body is this amazing tool that can do incredible things and carry me through the air, and I realized I didn't... I wasn't being able to be an example of that for her, and so that's when it finally got important enough to me that the pain of staying the same was now greater than the pain of changing, that I realized I have to do whatever I have to do to be an example of not just accepting but loving myself and loving my body even if it's not perfect, and especially when it's not perfect.

And the irony is, I felt like I had fought myself for those 10 years, I had tried to will myself, and now I realize you can't hate yourself skinny and you can't punish yourself healthy, you can't... But that's what I had tried to do for so long, I tried to essentially shame myself into being a certain way, and when I shifted that, and I didn't have to do that to protect myself anymore, there wasn't a fight left, it wasn't depriving myself and dieting, trying to lose weight because I was mad at my body, it became nourishing my body because I loved it, and that was an entirely different paradigm, and it wasn't moving to punish myself that I would be skinny, it was moving 'cause my body was this incredible saying that could do it.

And that shift in perception, the irony is, I now eat more, and I know you can explain it with the physiologist more than I have ever eaten, I definitely don't eat as strictly as I've ever eaten. I did not work out almost at all in that intensive healing phase because my body needed to rest and recover, and so I slept a ton, but I just moved, I walked, I swam



gently, but I didn't do anything that was really intense, demanding on my body during the tough phase of that, and I just let it heal and that shift alone, it wasn't that I found any program that was a silver bullet or you found some macro count that was perfect, it was that I shifted that perception. And everything changed.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, can you share what your results have been thus far.

**Katie Wells:** So as of last week, it's over 90 pounds and I've lost.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Oh my God. Wow. Wow, listen, the reason I want you to state it just for the folks listening, is I really want folks to understand that truly, the most powerful pharmacy in the world, like you just said, you can't out supplement this sympathetic dominance is your mind, your brain is the most powerful pharmacy in the known universe, and your brain is commanding the hormones involved in metabolism involved in the process of storing or burning fat, you can't just use food as the only tool... The only in-roads, it can help tremendously because it also helps you to change your mind, it helps to literally create your brain.

But doing these kind of things seem counter-culture, but they become very obvious once, especially if we have a conversation with somebody like you who's done the thing... And so I want to ask you more about this because you mentioned this traumatic experience taking place, and this is not uncommon at all, can you talk a little bit about that because I think it's also important for folks to realize truly that they're not alone in this when often times it really does feel very isolated and lonely.

**Katie Wells:** Yeah, that was something I realized that was so striking when I started talking about this on my own platform was the numbers are staggering for women, it's one in three, or one in four, and that's just what we know about, so there's likely even more than that. And when I started telling my story publicly, I got literally thousands of emails from women who felt like they could tell their story publicly because of it, and they need a place to tell it, and they felt safe telling me, and I heard stories that shook me to the core... And so this is a very wide spread thing, and I think that's another thing that we need to address in its own right, but at the same time, like the reality is that there are many, many women living in the world today who have some level of this who have had to go through this and who need tools.

And I think just like, there's so many aspects of that that are wrapped up in shame that aren't talked about, and when they aren't talked about, then they have the power like that, and so for mothers, another one being miscarriage, things like that, when we talk



about them, we get to work through them and we get to even just the act of saying these things and having community around it, it lets you process it instead of it being an emotion that we're bottling down and avoiding, and I think often that avoiding is the part that gives the emotion, it's power to begin with, and we can't run away from it, 'cause often it's there to teach us something, and when we can feel it and let it, teach us whatever that is, and then pass through that's when we get free of it.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, yeah. Wow.

**Katie Wells:** And there's a really interesting book, it's called *The Body Keeps the Score*, and it talks about how trauma physically stores in our body and has physical manifestations, and I think we see a lot of that in the health world. I know many practitioners who work with people who have... Like me at that point, we're doing all the things right, and we're trying to take all the supplements and eat perfect and all that, and there's that missing piece that we each have to be willing to face and go to battle with.

**Shawn Stevenson:** What we're talking about here is this growing field of psycho-neuro-endocrinology and how your brain and your perception of reality and stress and all these things that seem like they're invisible are controlling your physiology and what your hormones are doing, so this is so real and so important. And this can be that transformative thing that folks have been looking for, they've been trying every kind of diet, you just say you're eating more...

**Katie Wells:** I'm eating so much more.

**Shawn Stevenson:** This is so amazing, but even, of course, the types of foods and even shifting your perception to be like, "Oh, I can eat this type of food, and give yourself permission to do it and allow that to work on you, just open up those recesses. And so just one thing that I want to reiterate, it sounds like, of course, you took this experience," and as you mentioned, it's staggering the numbers of... With sexual assault, physical abuse, emotional and the mental abuse that goes on, and this is our opportunity, there's so much shaken up in the world right now, those numbers of skyrocket since all the shut downs have taken place, but the real solution truly at the end of the day hurt people hurt people, is taking better care of our friends and our families and our babies, and raising up better humans, and we have the opportunity to do that now, but what happens is, and especially in your story, I mean like, you take that thing and you compartmentalize it, you tuck it away in this one little room, and then you have the personality type where you'll take that aggressive nature and you put that into building this incredible brand that's changed the world, like if you Google anything like a natural treatment for it, you



find you, you know, Wellness Mama pops up, so did you feel like maybe you even addressing this thing might take away from another super power that you were exuding?

**Katie Wells:**

I did have that fear for a while when I was working through things, is that if I let go of this, am I going to lose my edge? And what I learned was, you don't lose it, you actually just get the power to turn it on and off and to use it as an effective tool, but not let it use you as a tool, and to your point about this being an emerging field, I think in today's world, and I think we're going to see this sky rocket with the lack of human connection and everything else that we're in, I think it's going to bring up a lot for a lot of people, but we know from even just medical data, when you tell a person that they have cancer and they have three months left to live, they die in three months, and then sometimes autopsies revealed that it was a misdiagnosis and they never had cancer, but they thought they were going to die, so they died. And conversely, there are people who have cancer and they believe in some type of healing modality or some miracle's going to heal them, and they get better, or they address trauma and they get better, and for years, I discounted just how powerful the mind was because I thought I could research my way out of it, or regiment my way out of it.

Or I had check lists and spreadsheets for all the things I was doing, and then everything I was... And I realized it's incredibly simple, it's not easy, but often... We already have those answers.

**Shawn Stevenson:**

Yeah, yeah, you just said it so perfectly. And by the way, a great resource, one of the guests we had on very early on, years ago was Dr. Lissa Rankin, who wrote Mind Over Medicine, so folks want to check out some of the clinical evidence behind the examples that you just shared of folks literally taking that nocebo effect, that you're going to die in a this certain amount of time, and is a misdiagnosis or folks having this... What's called "spontaneous remission," and there thous... And I mean thousands upon thousands of documented cases where there's a shift that takes place looking at this field of... And now it's becoming more common in discussions with this growing field of psycho-neuro endocrinology and psycho-immunology as well, and how this affects our immune system, and one of the big players here today is stress, and just since COVID's become on the tip of everybody's tongue, hopefully not literally on your tongue though, but since it's become the... Has stress gone up or down, you know, it's just like... This is a rhetorical question because everybody knows the answer, we're all far... Not all of us, but our society overall is far more susceptible right now to all manner of infectious diseases because we are more stressed, and now this is our opportunity to pay attention to these things because these things arguably matter more than anything else.

So one of the things that I'm hearing too, and in just I'm hearing some of the things you've been doing with your family, you freaking... You started pole vaulting.

**Katie Wells:** I did start pole vaulting.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Tell me about that.

**Katie Wells:** So what's funny is, I thought I had dealt with everything and I was feeling great, and then COVID hit, and I was so angry for a couple of weeks and I could not figure out why on earth I was like... I felt like I had this rage and I was working out so many times a day, and what I finally realized was part of that I had vowed I would never be helpless again, and I had constructed all these elaborate ways to never feel helpless again. And then there was this thing that was bigger than me, and so I felt like I was back in the helpless situation, so I was coming up swinging, which was a great opportunity to then process that and to be able to use that in a beneficial way as well. And part of that for me was finding an outlet, a physical outlet for that energy and then to work through it.

My kids had already started pole vaulting, and we have this motto in our family that you were made to do hard things. So they started turning that around on me and, "Hey, mom, you were made to do hard things too," and I was like, "Yeah, but not fly through the air after having six babies, that's not the hard things that people do."

**Shawn Stevenson:** I haven't seen that movie.

**Katie Wells:** Also I don't like to be upside down after having six babies, the vestibular system changed, but it became a family bonding activity, and it was one of the few things that was open throughout everything, because it's an actually sort of social distance sport, you're not all running together, you have space between...

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, you've got a pole.

**Katie Wells:** You've got a pole. But that was... It was something I got into for my kids and it's become a really fun outlet for me as well, and there's Olympians in training who are in our area, and I just to learn, signed up, they start their whole regiment in September, and they train all the way through the summer, which is when they start their meets, and it's this 28-week cycle that rotates every three weeks based on the different bases you're trying to accomplish for explosive power and speed and strength, which is fun 'cause I haven't gotten bored yet.



Every time, I think I've caught up then there's a whole new thing I got to learn, but it's been incredible and it's been awesome to have that focus. And I think that's another thing of these subtle mindset shifts, that one of training versus working out, it's such a different feeling of working toward a goal versus, I'm just going to give myself a time limit, and move my body every day," it's so fun to be striving towards something.

And I think this has been another thing I've realized so much is... The things... We have to become very conscious of our self-talk because our mind will answer the questions we give it, so if we give it questions like, "Well, why can't I lose weight?" It's going to go, "Oh, well, let me explain to you all the reasons why you can't lose weight... Here's all your excuses." Whereas if we say like, "How is this so fun? Or why is this so easy for me, or how do I love this so much?" Or... It will start answering those questions as well, or the things like... I used to have this script in my head, "If only I could lose weight, then I would be happy," and I realized, "Or I could just choose to be happy right now," and when that inner shift happened, my body caught up, my mind perceived me changed, my body changed to catch up with that.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, that's profound. So what I'm really hearing is that the health side and the body transformation, and the weight loss was a side effect...

**Katie Wells:** Exactly.

**Shawn Stevenson:** It wasn't even the main thing. So was this... What other things changed? I would imagine that there were other benefits that even outweighed the weight.

**Katie Wells:** Absolutely, I would take the mental freedom that came with that, even if physically nothing had changed, letting go of that constant negativity toward my body, which is that part I desperately didn't want to pass on to my daughters, that alone has been the freedom of that. I didn't even realize quite how much that was consuming my mental activity until it was gone. And then it was drastic like when you have a headache and then the headache goes away and then you realize just how bad the headache was.

You're right, it absolutely was a side effect, and that happened, I wouldn't say effortlessly but very easily once I shifted that focus, and I think it just goes back to not fighting my body anymore.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, I know some people are wondering, what is this eating more? Like what is she talking about? How is that a thing? So when you say eating more, what are you eating more of like... Is there... I think I already know the answer to this, I would imagine. We

haven't talked about it yet, but there's probably like a shift in the macros that you allow yourself to consume?

**Katie Wells:** Yeah. It's funny when I started tracking it, it surprised me. I'm eating a lot more protein now, I thought I was eating enough protein before, and then I actually tracked it and I was like, "Oh, I'm not even eating enough protein for my six-year-old..."

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, right.

**Katie Wells:** Like this is really bad. And I wasn't actually eating enough in general, and what's surprising is I think a lot of women run into this. I think we're under-eating, which to go back to the earlier point, that puts your body and in sympathetic nervous system because it's constantly operating in a caloric deficit, which can be a tool, but not when it's all the time...

**Shawn Stevenson:** Chronic.

**Katie Wells:** Exactly, and so I think a lot of women, their body has an underlying stress from that, they don't even realize, and then once you're in that cycle, you diet more 'cause you... It's not working and you want to lose... And so it becomes this very vicious cycle, and when I started paying attention to what I realized I was under-eating from all those years of dieting, and it makes sense when we think of it in terms of the metabolism, you want to give it enough fuel to teach it to burn fuel and have metabolic flexibility by changing it up, so a couple of the kind of guidelines I live by with the caveat that again, we each have to figure this out on our own.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah.

**Katie Wells:** But I don't do anything the same every day. So I don't take supplements on the weekend, I don't eat the same macros every day. My goal long-term is I want my body to be able to efficiently handle whatever I throw at it, including if I have a day where I decide I'm going to eat ton of carbs, it needs to be able to handle that, or I'm going to be keto for two days, whatever, or I'm going to fast, which I do pretty often. It needs to be able to handle those things.

But it was a gentle process of learning that... So I mentioned, I had to recover first, I had to let it... Let my nervous system calm down, let my hormones get back into balance, that's not the thing, you don't start the fasting and the... All those changes when you're in a state of stress 'cause that'll just keep stressing your body out. But my goal was

metabolic flexibility, and I had to re-feed my body to get to a point where I could do that again. I think I was kind of operating in that state of deficit for so long, that it just thought it was in a state of starvation and it was surviving.

So when I started tracking, I had to make myself consciously eat enough food every day, and it felt so weird in the beginning. And even now, I sometimes catch myself and have to catch up on protein at night if I haven't gotten enough or hard workout days. Another fun one recently that I've learned, I've been wearing a continuous glucose monitor, and I've learned some fascinating data from that on how my body responds to different foods, but also it turns out athletes knew what they were talking about, that you do occasionally need carbs when you do Super high intense workouts.

And I went through a point where I was like, "Why do I have headaches all the time. This is so weird." And with the glucose monitor, I was like, "Oh, it's because my blood sugar is getting low 'cause I'm sprinting and doing all these heavy lifting and I'm not refeeding my glycogen at all." And so it's been really fun to get to learn that and to shift that focus of fuel versus calories, and I know you've talked about that so well, and even knowing all the data, I think I still got stuck in that cycle for years of why don't I just eat less, eat less, and eat less or eat super low carb or whatever it was.

**Shawn Stevenson:**

Yeah, this is so awesome, this is so freaking awesome. I love that you also keep pointing back to it still is dependent upon you, and there are some overarching principles, and one of those things for folks to understand, even from what you just shared, is that our bodies are very adept and even have evolved to use different pathways to fuel different activities. And it's so... Like we cannot grasp how intelligent our bodies are, but there are preferred nutrient sources that run certain things like going for a walk is actually one of the fastest ways for your body to bypass its normal function of basically the hierarchy of fuel use, which is to use available glucose first, then using stored glycogen, then finally using some fat.

But when going for a walk, your body shifts over for most folks to just start using stored fat as a fuel, which is fascinating, but as soon as you start to get into that high-intensity stuff, it becomes much more glycolytic, and so it's just... That's important to understand, and you doing some of that self-quantification to find out, "Oh, this thing... I need this, this is what my body is telling me to do," and continuing to see results as you go on, and I love that so much.

And this conversation of, of course, being flexible, like your body, being able to handle whatever you throw at it, ultimately that's how we were hard-wired as well, like there's...

Things are going to be sporadic from day-to day, but today we become very cookie-cutter, even we are healthy in a state of really good health, we tend to get caught in that food prep gone awry you know like chicken, rice, broccoli, chicken, rice, broccoli.

And your body requires diversity, that diversity helps, of course, the microbiome, all these things that you've already automatically made better, it just sounds so freaking awesome. So thank you for sharing that. And you know what, I want to talk for folks more about transformation and more about wellness from wellness mama herself, and we're going to do that right after this quick break. Sit tight, we'll be right back.

Snuggle up with some fat-burning nutrition this holiday season, you know what time of year it is, it's that time to get cozy, it's that time to snuggle up, it's that time for a nice pumpkin spice everything, but truly, some of the most potent nutrition can be found right in our spice cabinet, and this particular spice that you need to know about has been used traditionally in cooking, medicine, and rituals for thousands of years. And what I'm talking about, is turmeric. Turmeric and one of his most renowned micronutrients, curcumin, have well noted anti-inflammatory effects, but what isn't commonly known is its surprising anti-obesity effects.

A study published in the European Journal of Nutrition covered that in addition to down-regulating inflammatory cytokines, curcumin in turmeric, also up-regulates the activity of Adiponectin, and other satiety-related hormones. Turmeric has been found to actually improve insulin sensitivity, reduce blood fats, and directly act upon fat cells.

Another really interesting thing about turmeric is that it has anti-angiogenesis properties. A study published in the Journal of Nutrition found that curcumin in turmeric is able to reduce angiogenesis in adipose tissue, which is fat tissue, and angiogenesis is the process of decreasing the blood supply nutrient supply to those pesky fat cells, and also to cancer cells as well. And turmeric has been found to have an intelligent selective capacity to target rogue cells and reduce their ability to grow.

Really, really fascinating stuff, and it's one of my favorite things that's in the gold blend from Organifi. This blend highlights a super critical extract of organic turmeric plus other metabolism-enhancing spices like cinnamon and ginger, and it also has reishi which is clinically proven to support your sleep quality. It's a great vibe, a great way to relax and a great time to enjoy this season.

Head over and to check them out, it's [Organifi.com/model](http://Organifi.com/model). That's O-R-G-A-N-I-F-I.com/Model for 20% off your gold latte. Check it out.

Alright, we're back and we're talking with Katie Wells, aka Wellness Mama, about her recent transformation and about all things health and wellness, and one of the things that you're really well known for is helping to educate folks on the crazy stuff that's been added into our food supply and also our personal care products, for example. And there's been a revolution taking place with education on those things, and just understanding how some of these things like endocrine disruptors and just...

We have become a society that has accepted it as normal to consume synthetic chemicals, things that were never made with an intention for humans to consume. And you've recently started your own company to really just kind of break through and make a new level of impact with these things. So first of all, can you talk about some of the big issues with our personal care products, the stuff that's out there, the conventional stuff? Because again, these might be the small things that are just stacking conditions against you that's causing problems with your metabolism, or with your sleep, or even with your gut help.

**Katie Wells:**

Absolutely, and to tie it into our earlier point of stress, we often think of stress as just a mental or emotional state as a human, but the body can perceive a lot of things as stress. And so the things we're exposed to in our environment can have the body in that sympathetic nervous system state and be creating cellular stress without us feeling stressed. So we may feel like we're doing fine and doing everything right, but if the body is perceiving that as stress, we're still in a state where it's going to be hard to heal or hard to work toward any of these goals.

And what I've realized was I had all of these people in my life who understood so much, and I think what's been amazing in the 14 years I've been doing this is to see that the societal ship's happening, and I know you see this too, like people are so well-educated now and people are making these changes and doing it themselves, and especially when it comes to diet that I feel like there's so much awareness, but even people in my life who ate organic and who had a really good understanding of nutrition and the ways to live healthy, they were still using personal care products, like conventional personal care products that were filled with endocrine disrupting chemicals that were signaling their body, that they were in a state of stress when they weren't.

And even the most clean living people I knew were still using these certain core products from conventional brands because they worked, and I get it, especially as a woman, I don't want to sacrifice how I look or how I feel just to be natural, but at the same time, I don't want to sacrifice my health to look a certain way, and it made me mad.

I was like, what... There shouldn't be an either or, with everything we know now and with all that we have available to us, there absolutely should not be an either or at this point. And so I decided to tackle the really tough ones first, and what I saw was people who did everything else right and would never touch food dyes or sugar or anything, they were still using Colgate toothpaste and traditional shampoo and conditioner because that's what they were used to, and that's what worked.

And I realized you can't... Yeah, yes, we have to educate, but you can't just educate about the problem, there has to actually be an alternative that's as good or better for people to be willing to actually make that change. And I had been creating DIY versions of a lot of these products for years, because that's how I was able to find safe versions that actually worked, and I realized there were a lot of people in that same position, and so I could take these same formulas that were working for my family and make them available on a wider scale.

And we know from the data that 80% of the chemicals that we're exposed to from a personal care perspective, it's the core products in our bathrooms. Like there's others as well, like laundry detergent, because those vocs store in our clothes and we're inhaling them all day, so it's a low-level exposure, but for most of us, we're putting things like toothpaste and shampoo conditioner directly on our bodies, and then that's being absorbed directly into our bloodstream.

And we know that the majority of what goes on us goes in us, and so my philosophy with this was, that means obviously, of course, the bare minimum is that we should stop putting the bad stuff on us, so avoiding the harmful things is a given, but why not use that to our advantage and put good stuff we want in knowing that the skin is the biggest organ, why not give it the beneficial things to make us better, why not give the gums the things we need to enhance the oral microbiome?

So we kind of turn that entire principle on its head and started designing of how do we benefit the body from the outside in? And how do we nourish it from the outside in? And how do we build in the herbs that help make your hair thicker from the outside in? And hopefully, of course, we're all doing the dietary stuff and the lifestyle stuff as well, so that's what we set out to...

We said tackle the hard ones, first, we're going to talk all the ones that people are least likely to want to change because they need something that works, and we're going to make something that outperforms the conventional ones, but we're going to do it not

just naturally, but beyond naturally.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah. And you just said it, which I didn't think to talk about, but a lot of folks think about you for the DIY, the Do-It-Yourself versions of like, "Here's how to make your own toothpaste, here's how to make your own deodorant options." And sometimes you just... You see this stuff, and you're just like, "Why don't Katie just make it for me? Just make it for me, Katie, I don't want to do this." And then you finally did, so you launched your company recently, and of course, we have access to you, so we got stuff early. So can you tell everybody a little bit about the company itself and what you guys have available right now?

**Katie Wells:** Yeah, the company is called Wellnesse, which is Wellnesse with an E on the end and the kind of the essence of being wellnesse well was our goal. So we started with hair care, so some shampoo and conditioner, toothpaste, and we also now have a dry shampoo, which I had to explain to all the guys involved in our team that it's a shampoo that works without water at all. You sprinkle it on dry hair, and it helps absorb oil.

But we put ingredients in it that also help your hair follicle be healthier and help your hair get thicker over time, 'cause a lot of the conventional dry shampoos, you're spraying high speed chemicals at your scalp using aerosol, and over time, that can be really damaging. People can see your hair get thinner over time. So we're like, if we're going to put this on your food, or your hair, let's make it hair food. Let's nourish your scalp. And so we started with those.

We also now have hand sanitizer just because I'm like, "If we're going to have to use it anyway, I'm going to make one that's not going to dry out your hands and completely destroy your skin biome."

**Shawn Stevenson:** Oh, that one's so good, that I was hoping that you would bring it up 'cause I'm about to. That's of course, even when the pandemic first started, my wife who's like, do you see what she's doing right now? She's like, "Oh my god, he's going to tell this story." But she ran out, and she got the big jumbo sized pumper of that hand sanitizer, she's going to stand by the door and start squirting people, you know.

She was like, "I don't want this, I don't want... And I shared very early on in the episode that...The FDA was coming after one of the top hand sanitizer companies like, "Hey, it doesn't actually kill viruses like you're saying it does, you have to stop promoting it this way." And so... But we've gotten into this consciousness of cleanliness that has... And talking with so many experts who were just looking at the data, we've gone too far with



it, to the degree that we're forgetting that this is destroying... If it's killing 99.99% of germs, what are you mostly made of? You've got a biome, like you just mentioned, you've got a microbiome, this internal ecology, but you've got bacteria and viruses and fungi all cascaded throughout your entire body, over your skin, and it forms this... It's a symbiotic relationship that's protective of your skin. And so we've seen many instances of folks washing their hands so much that they start to lose that and start to create...break their skin and all the different, very harsh chemicals that are in these hand-sanitizers just destroying... Basically, what... The unfortunate thing is it makes your hands more susceptible to absorbing opportunistic bacteria and viruses by using this conventional stuff. So you created something that is far less abrasive.

**Katie Wells:**

Exactly, and exactly to your point, I think people... We now have a pretty good understanding about the gut microbiome, and that's so well understood and talked about, and I think a lot of people have awareness about that, we don't talk as much about the skin microbiome, that, to your point, is also one of our first lines of defense. And if our skin is our biggest organ, it is meant to have a bacterial community that exists on it, and that's part of what protects us. And I think we're going to see some big challenges over time from over-stripping the skin microbiome. And also that applies to... We have a really robust oral microbiome, and this is a fascinating thing I... In the research for the toothpaste, that there's a delicate balance between the types of bacteria that are supposed to be there, and when it gets out of balance in either direction, that's when you see problems, when they're on opposite ends of the scale. So there's the bacteria that lead to things like gingivitis and then there's the rest of the bacteria that lead to things like cavities. And if you over-sanitize against either one of those, you put yourself at a higher risk of the other one. So actually... You're most protected by maintaining a strong oral microbiome, yet most of the products we use in our mouth like toothpaste and mouthwash, kill 99% of the germs in your mouth and actually increase your chance of Strep Mutans, which is the bacteria that causes cavities getting out of hand and being more opportunistic because the good bacteria that keep it in check aren't there. So it's not just about not eating sugar and flossing, just like with our gut, it's not about just not eating certain foods, we need to maintain the right bacterial balance as a protection. The same thing applies to our skin, our hair, and our oral microbiome. And I think that you're right, we've seen this kind of... This pendulum has gone too far. We're over-sterilizing, over-sanitizing everything in our lives, even most shampoos are detergent, your hair's not dirty laundry, you don't need to use detergent in it. We need to be conscious of the fact that our body, to your point, is more bacterial than human and exists in a symbiotic way with what's supposed to be there?

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, So where can folks find your products?



**Katie Wells:** Wellnesse dot com. Wellness with an "E" on the end and I'll make sure, if you want it, we'll give a discount code, for anybody listening... Yeah...

**Shawn Stevenson:** Oh yes, we love the hook-ups, yes. So... And we'll put that in the show notes for everybody as well. And it just really... I appreciate it so much because, again, you can give a DIY version of like, "Here's something to use for your hands..." because, honestly, if I'm out at an event and I'm like shaking hands, kissing babies, and then it's just like some chips and dip, I want to get in the dip, I want to get in that Guac. So, but of course, if you don't have time to run... This, is for me, just mentally, I would want to wash my hands first before I go grab that chip and dip, after shaking a bunch of hands, it's just kind of logical. But also, I don't want to use something that... If somebody's got some hand sanitizer handy, when I can use something that's better. That's better for my skin, but also does the job of like, "Let's get rid of some of the opportunistic stowaways that could be there as well." So we really appreciate you doing that. Another thing that I really, really want to talk to you about is... Well, actually before I do that, when you were talking about the toothpaste and mouthwash it just like, I had a flashback of Listerine... Like I would... Like my head snapped back, it wasn't caught on camera because the camera was on you, but my head snapped back because it literally... It hurt...

You're swishing that around, dealing with the pain, "It's going to kill everything." But it literally is killing everything, and that is so abnormal, we think it's normal, it's not normal. And then we get the super fresh breath for a while, but at the same time, this very important balance that's supposed to be there to protect your mouth, to protect your teeth from cavities and gingivitis and all those things, we're just killing all of it. And then, the funny thing is, even though we have all of these increases in dental practices and toothpaste and all this stuff, our dental health, as a society, keeps getting worse. More money... I just was talking to this guy, he does all this great stuff for his health but he just had to get another root canal, and all of these different dental issues that... If you look at Weston Price's work, for example, and you see that this... If... Cultures that are more... Doing more of their traditional diet and practices, some of these folks aren't necessarily quote brushing their teeth...

**Katie Wells:** At all...

**Shawn Stevenson:** Using any of this stuff, and they keep their teeth their entire life, for 90 years, they've got their teeth. So we need to have a shift in our thinking, because again, with Listerine, it's another example of what you were talking about earlier, of like punishing yourself into health when it just doesn't make sense.

**Katie Wells:**

And Weston Price did a great job of explaining, there's a nutritional aspect as well, and I think we've seen that societal decline in enough mineral consumption, and fat-soluble vitamins, and we know our food supply is not what it used to be, so that's a side we should absolutely address as well. I think you have to nourish your body enough to have mineral rich saliva and that's an important key as well. But you're right, these... We know about these populations that... Some that never brush their teeth, and they keep beautiful strong white teeth into old age. And I think that's another thing when it comes to oral health, is we're so concerned with white teeth that we will put literal... Essentially bleach in our mouth, to make our teeth super white, when a lot of the times that discoloring can be a sign of your body not having the minerals it needs. So instead of anything harmful to whiten teeth, we put in something called hydroxyapatite, which is the naturally occurring mineral that's already in your teeth, but when it starts to deteriorate, you can lose some of that shine and that whiteness. So we put it back in to help kind of rebuild the teeth from the outside and let your body do that, that process naturally, which leads to whiter teeth, but without having to strip away those bacteria that we need.

**Shawn Stevenson:**

Yeah, that's brilliant. Babe, what did you guys use in Kenya?

*Charcoal?*

**Shawn Stevenson:**

Charcoal... Straight up. Was... You were brushing your teeth with charcoal?

*Yeah, you just... No, you just take the coal and you just go like...*

**Shawn Stevenson:**

Oh my god... You see like, we would never think of... And she's got that beautiful smile over there... Hopefully everybody could pick that up, but she said they would literally take the charcoal and just rub it across their teeth as just a traditional practice. So... Now we're circling back to things that our ancestors have been doing and knowing about for quite some time... And this leads me to another thing that I want to talk to you about, which is, during this time, obviously, our family structures and communication, connection community, these things have been turned upside down, inside out... Freaking Stranger Things... Going to the upside down... It's been really, really nuts.

Some families in some contexts have been brought closer together just by the sheer nature of hunkering down, while in many instances, folks have been more isolated, even if they're under the same roof... And kind of pulled apart. And this has been a trend that's been happening and we talked about this before this show with the former US Surgeon

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SHOW**

General saying that loneliness was the biggest epidemic facing America prior to COVID 19 hitting the scene. And within that, I think that potentially, who is suffering the most from this, and we're not going to know the full ramification for years are our children. They're in such crucial times of their mental and emotional development... To interact with other children, just to learn what it's like, it's very different to do it through a screen... Grateful, we have that...

But when you're in the real world, you can see the expressions and the subtle movements, because, what? 90% of our communication is not through the words that we use. And so, so much of that process of laying down more myelin and the brain wiring itself correctly to be an interactive human, this... All this is so important. So what I want to talk to you about is you've got six kids, Katie's 6, you've got your own little... Like a basketball team plus the alternate, you've got the whole squad and... So I know it's been, of course a really great blessing, the kids having each other, but something also that you've been doing for years is educating your kids, like finding a way to implement education. And I saw it first-hand, 'cause I didn't know what I was walking into, I knew Wellness Mama had all the babies, but to see the... Just this really interesting web in your household. This dynamic, like everything kind of flowed and functioned together. One of your kids... I think... Is he the second to oldest who had the Rubik's cubes...

**Katie Wells:**

Probably the oldest, both boys do the Rubik's cube. Yeah.

**Shawn Stevenson:**

Okay. But man, he had a Rubik's cube, that had a Rubik's Cube inside of Rubik's cube. I had never seen this level of like... And he was like, "Yeah, I just did it in, you know, five minutes." No big deal, you know, whatever... He had Rubik's cubes that were like shaped like triangles, and he was just a super smart kid and so helpful, he was so helpful in just us navigating things. I think maybe your three-year-old or two-year-old was outside flying a drone. I was like, "I wouldn't give a two-year-old a bottle to carry... "Like a glass bottle... Like, "Be careful with that... " And they're out there flying a drone. But anyways, but... You've integrated education into the construct, and so what I want to ask you about is, today, we've outsourced so much of our education of our children to other people, and not to say that outside folks cannot be... Absolutely, it's such a valuable resource, but I think we've gotten away from being able to give the most valuable wisdom, which is from ourselves with our children and that connection. So what are some of the things right now, especially when folks are more... Like they're trying to navigate how to, "How do I educate and support my kid's education when they're at home right now versus being in a school setting?" If you could, just give some insight because I'm really at a loss, we're all navigating this ourselves too, so if you could just share some of the things that we can possibly look towards right now...

**Katie Wells:**

Yeah, well, my heart goes out to all the parents who became homeschooling parents overnight with no prep, 'cause I got to ease into this with my kids gently... Homeschooling from the beginning. But I think, to your point, first of all with... People love to look at Blue Zones and they try to say like, "Oh, it's the red wine... ", or "It's the seafood... " or whatever, I think it's the community, that's the common factor of why people live so long... And I think, you're right, we have to be much more conscious about community right now, 'cause it isn't as easy as it used to be, and also a lot of parents are very much in the stress of having to educate their children very much, not just first-hand, but single-handedly, right now... And... Just like we talked about with health, that we're each our own primary health care provider, we are still each our own... Our child's first teacher, even if we bring other people in to help with that, the responsibility still lies with us, to some degree, and also with them. I very much believe that children are also the best educators in knowing how to direct that... But for us, what started with it... And the core message of this that I'll come back to is that it can be much easier than you think. So if parents are in that and they're struggling, the beauty of it is you can do, and I would say should do much less than you're doing...

For their sake. It's not taking the easy way out, it's giving them the best. But what I mean by that is this, when our oldest was about to hit kindergarten age, we started asking, "What is going to best prepare him for the future? And is that homeschooling? Is that any of the school options available to us? "And to answer that question, we had to say, "Well, what does the future look like?" And the best that we can predict... We don't know, my job didn't exist when I was five, so I couldn't have directly prepared for it. So, "In an uncertain future, that we know is technological and rapidly changing, what are the core things we need to impart to our children to make them have that foundation to be successful in whatever pursuit that entails?" And what I realized in that moment was kids are actually innately born with most of those things. When we boil it down to its core, what kids need, is creativity, which they're born with, they need the ability to ask hard questions, which, ask any parent of a two-year-old, they're born with, to connect dots and make patterns, which they're also born with.

All of these things are innately built into them. And then beyond that to have a love of learning, so they can learn anything new quickly. Because at the end of the day, what they're probably going to do one day, it may not even exist yet, or it's going to change before then anyway... So we can't give them knowledge that's going to directly serve them in adulthood, but we can absolutely give them skills that are going to serve them in adulthood. So when we look at it, skills, up versus knowledge, down, it becomes, "How do we best do that?" And a lot of people love to point to the education system and say,



"It's broken... "And I don't agree with that at all. I think it's actually still brilliantly doing exactly what it was designed to do, but society has changed and we didn't adapt education, and it's now doing a disservice to our kids.

So what I looked at... In the rest of my life, I use things like the 80-20 principle, and go back to first principles and mental models and trying to figure out what is the most efficient way from point A to point B, and how can we make it foolproof and repeatable and easy to implement across the spectrum. And I realized, we don't do that with education and we should. So I started from there and said, "How can I most efficiently impart these skills to my kids?" And it's not in them sitting in a desk all day, because that's actually not preparing them, likely, for what the future is going to look like, and I would argue it's physiologically horrible for a child to sit for eight hours a day. So if those weren't the variables, if textbooks weren't the best way to teach them, what could education look like? So we built a curriculum kind of from the ground up, using that idea, saying, "How can we use the best of technology, the best of everything we have available, the 80-20 principle, and give them the skills they need in the shortest amount of time possible...

So they get to go do the things kids are built to do like climb trees and play outside and learn social interaction by playing with their friends... How do we prioritize that?" And that's what we did. And when you focus on the skills, up versus knowledge, down, you know, most schools they throw a ton of knowledge at kids and then we say, "Well, I hope from that they learn to be a good person, and they learn to have, a focus on helping others and to solve problems, because certainly their generation's going to face plenty of them that we've created." Instead, what if we give them those skills and say, "You have access to 10 times the Library of Alexandria, literally at a cell phone at your fingertips all day long, we know that you have the knowledge you need, you can find any knowledge you need... "Or maybe the cliché, we've all said of like... I remember saying in math class, "Why do I need a calculator?" or "Why do I need to learn this?" and they'd be like, "Well you're not always going to have a calculator." It turns out we do.

And we don't even have to type anything in, we can just say, "Hey, Siri, what's the square-root of whatever?" and she'll tell us. So they're going to have the knowledge. That variable that we used to be trying to solve for, knowledge isn't the gateway anymore, it's the mindset. So how do we prioritize mindset with our kids? And I think that's going to be the key that helps our kids become the element of change that our society is desperately going to need in the next two generations. And so we did that, and this was a system I had built for my kids and had this very strong desire to give to other families and eventually to give to other schools and to... Anywhere that it could serve as well. And



I... Even last year, I thought, "Well, you know, in another 10 years, most of mine will be done, and then I'll turn it into a curriculum because I'll have time and maybe by then people will be okay with virtual learning and it'll be widely accepted." And then COVID hit and I think, beautiful silver lining, virtual learning is widely accepted by every school system in America, almost overnight. So the beauty of this is I think parents who are overwhelmed with the idea of virtual learning or homeschooling, it's because they think they have to do so much more than they have to do.

And I would argue that the great geniuses that have changed and shaped history, the Einsteins and the Ben Franklins and the Leonardo Da Vincis, people point to them and they say, "Wow, look how much they accomplished in spite of only having two years of actual education." And I say, "No, look how much they accomplished because they only had two years of actual education to un-train them from their natural genius that they already had." So I think the beauty of this is we can have less stressed parents and more creative kids at the same time. It's like one of the few areas where they're... You don't have to do more to get the best result. And I think if we look at it, if we reframed, there are so many beautiful silver linings to COVID. We are spending more time with our families, statistically, we're cooking dinner at home, I hope that sticks around, we're cooking from scratch, and we're being much more involved in the education of our kids. And if we use this as an opportunity, I think we're going to see societal changes. And my message to other parents is, "It doesn't have to be this hard.

You don't have to try to give them all the knowledge in the world." It's simple things like, start the day with three TED Talks on totally unrelated topics, they're natural pattern makers, they're going to try to connect dots that aren't there, and they're going to start... And that's how we create businesses. People who create businesses, they solve problems by connecting dots in a new way. So give the kids opportunities to start doing that in simple ways where they can fail. Another thing we do with our kids is, they're done with the bookwork side of education by about 13, 14. So they've completed all the check marks of traditional high school by that point. And then we move them into an entrepreneur incubator, which I've built into their curriculum.

And the goal here is that a lot of those skills that make them successful in adulthood can be taught easily through the lens of running a business. Things like all the detail that you need, financial accountability and management, being consistent, customer service, showing up, solving problems, helping others 'cause at the end of the day, that's what businesses is, is solving problems and helping other humans. So by doing that, they're learning so many of these lessons in a hands-on way. So we have a contract with them that before they can have a car or a phone they have to have a profitable business for a



year. We've got the top two about ready to cross that line. But I think like... It just... It's re-imagining the approach that we have versus trying to make the system that's already not working a little bit better.

We have the chance to completely change it, and another beautiful outcome of this is I, also, 100% a believer that we create change by each of us going out in our own community and we create ripples where we can create ripples. Certainly, we should talk about the big problems too, but we can change the little ones right where we are. So I got to use as an incubator for this, I got to go into our local prison systems and start to teach this to prisoners who were going to get out within nine months, realizing many of these people just haven't been given these basic skills that would help them so much, and when we see people come back to prison over and over, and it's because that's where they know, and also that's where they are getting their core needs met.

So what if we give them tools to be able to financially manage their lives and teach them, let them see for the first time that they could actually be in the driver's seat. They could own a business. They don't have to wait till someone else gives them a job, they can build it from the ground up and have that freedom and that power, and getting to see people make that shift, that's how we create change. And so COVID gave me a chance to get to do that. And I think this is the next shift we need to see in society is to bring... To totally turn on its head. These things that we've taken is the best way for so long and maybe reimagine them for the sake of our kids, because we've talked about there are a lot of problems they're going to face in a lot of challenges they are going to get to solve.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, absolutely. That's so good. So important. You just said it perfectly, this is offering up an opportunity. I said this before we got started, I feel that humanity's at a fork in the road right now, and it's just like truly dark outcomes are possible or this is our time to really change the things that have not been working, that have gone largely unnoticed, and one of those things is our education system and the wonderful people who are in it as teachers and educators, and the jobs that they've done, it's absolutely vital, and important, and eternally grateful. We live in very different times and folks are not being trained for those times. The greatest interception point for the vast majority of kids is technology now, not the technology that you want them to learn in school. And these kids, literally, each child has a potential to take their phone and to create a six-figure business or a million dollar business just by tinkering around on their phone and so when we're telling our kids don't play games or don't be on your technology, get your education, what does that look like when you've got other children who, in the instances you gave, who are creating things with this technology that's not being taught in our conventional setting.

And also, we've become very kind of hard-lined on rote memorization, books and learning, more time studying and test taking, and continue to take away from the arts and from physical activity, which both of those things, especially physical activity has been found in study after study and I did shows on this, to improve education, improve the ability to retain facts and figures and memory and all this stuff, but yet, we've taken that away largely, and so this has given us the opportunity to change those things. And I love it that for a lot of us, our kids are under our roof more frequently now and we get to be involved and we get to. And I love you gave us permission to like, "Let's not make it so hard on ourselves," because I think we really are taking off for... I know a lot of folks and ourselves included, have been sweating with the oldies or whatever it is called, sweating with the oldies, yeah, really just mentally pushing like, how are we going to do this? How can we figure this out? When in reality, kids are great educators of themselves too, so we spent more time really paying attention. I really got my son, Braden, I've dialed in his personality like I've never before. I really get it with him. And one of the other things that's really interesting is that not only are your kids is having their own profitable business before they get a car, it's just amazing, but one of your sons is beekeeping now too, is that right?

**Katie Wells:**

And that's the thing. I think kids have... They're intensely curious and so if we just get out of their way a little bit and not have them... I think we kill so much of that creativity by them, sitting still at a desk, so to your point, like one of our core things is we don't have really desk or chairs, so even when they're learning in school, there's yoga swings, there's balance balls, there's surf trainers, but they're constantly in motion, and I think you're right, that helps them learn. It helps your blood flow, they're not sitting, which... Or if they're sitting there sitting on the floor and all kinds of weird positions, which we both ...you had Aaron Alexander on, he's a big fan of floor culture, don't just sit in a chair all day. But yeah, I think it gives them that time for creativity and so it's really fun when you get out of their way. I've got kids who... We have super worms growing in our closet. One of my sons had an idea that because plastic is becoming a bigger and bigger problem, that's no secret, that there's a series of super worms that can break down polystyrene, which is styrofoam, and he's testing right now and potentially break it down into a nonBPA component.

So that's the problem is even when we get rid of plastic, we still have these plastic compounds that are getting into the water supply. Well, it turns out, it looks like these worms might be able to break down styrofoam into safe carbons and not BPA components at all. So right now, there's 2000-plus worms in one of my closet at home. I've got beekeeping going on, we've got eight ducks in the yard they're raising, and they





got bored one day and they made a foundry to melt down aluminum cans to make armor for their Mangalorean Halloween costume. I think when we get out of their way, they're just naturally are creative machines, and they just... So many kids are spending so much time trying to do all the check marks that are expected of them and trying to live these almost adult lives in school, and to your point, to take all these tests that are essentially meaningless as adults. I have never been asking my test scores, and ironically, I was a good test-taker, I played that game well, it has not served me an adulthood at all. What served me was the ability to learn quickly. And so that's the thing. If we can give our kids that they'll be able to learn what they need to learn, to do whatever it is they want to do when they're older, and if we can do without killing their creativity, they'll want to.

**Shawn Stevenson:** So awesome. I just... I'm so excited about this conversation. There's so many things I want to talk to you about, but also, I want to make sure that we mentioned this, you're a big fan of Beekeeper's Naturals, and they recently sent to both of us their new cough syrup, which this is another thing that you're known for, because again, I saw you, the DIY, but the conventional cough syrups are unbelievable with the... Let me just share a couple of the ingredients with you. This is nuts. Listen to this. This is one of the most popular over-the-counter cough syrups. Alright, it has flavor... What the hell? First of all, what the hell is flavor? FD&C blue number one, FD&C red number 40, high fructose corn syrup, propylene glycol, saccharin sodium, just all of these synthetic chemicals that should not be in something we're giving to our children, and what was so funny for me was that I actually put this in my new book, Eat Smarter, it was a randomized double-blind placebo controlled.

This is the gold standard of gold. This is the gold member of studies, reveal that honey is able to outperform placebos in effectively reducing cough frequency and severity at night and improving sleep quality. And they dialed in what's the best honey for this formula, and they also included Elderberry, Chaga, propolis, of course, you've got a post on your site about the propolis and all the incredible benefits. So when you told me that your son was beekeeping, I'm just like, "That's so cool. He really gets it. There's something special there with bees and these bee products." So you're a big fan. You love the propolis.

**Katie Wells:** I'm a fan of all of their products, but yeah, to your point, kind of the constant theme of this whole conversation has been, not signaling your body that it's in a state of stress and yet, when people are sick, they're taking what is literally just a chemical cocktail that's signaling their body that it's in a state of stress. When we have, like you mentioned, there's amazing, there's just dozens of studies on honey for various things, like for healing burns. Burn units, use Manuka honey all the time. Propolis is so cool because it's

the thing that bees used to keep the hive sanitary so if even a dead mouse gets in the hive, they will entirely coat it in propolis to keep the bacteria happening from that, from affecting the rest of the hive, it's that powerful. And so we have these tools that taste good, that kids don't fight you on, that we can use or use it on burns to heal burns. We're a huge, huge fan in our house of bee products obviously, but I love that Beekeeper's makes them into just remedies you can just use immediately.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Right, yeah. And by the way, guys, [beekeepersnaturals.com/model](http://beekeepersnaturals.com/model), you've 15% off everything that they carry. This is that time of year, cold and flu season. I know that for a lot of folks that listen to this show, we're taking care of our health, but this is a great thing to gift other people to have something much healthier in our medicine cabinet. We shouldn't have things that hurt us included with our medicine. So that's B-E-E-K-E-E-P-E-R-S [naturals.com/model](http://naturals.com/model). And listen, this has been one of my favorite episodes. So many important things like we've just... You brought together so many important principles and you're like the walking, talking representation of it, and truly, we shared this with you. You changed our lives. When we came to your house, our stuff was different when we left. We're just like, we weren't acknowledging what our kids are capable of because we're conditioned. We might think that we are pushing the boundaries of what parenting look like, but when you see it, from another perspective, it just continues to open those doors. And your kids, also they seem just to be very cool and happy at the end of the day, too. They weren't like pageant kids like, "We're going to put on this performance for these people." They were just living and joyful and so I just... I really admire you and I appreciate you because... And also, what you've accomplished recently, just tuning in with yourself, you're amazing, Katie. You're just amazing, so thank you.

**Katie Wells:** Thanks Shawn. I feel the same way about you guys. It's an honor to get to see your face in person and it was an honor to have you over, and I think we talked about it when you were there, that's one of our core parenting principles is we won't do anything for them that they're capable of doing themselves. I think a lot of parents, we take on so much of that burden and we add that stress to ourselves, thinking we're helping them. Of course, we all want what's best for our kids, but our goal is to create adults and to get out of their way and let them be brilliant and so for us, it's not doing the things, not insulting them by trying to do the things they're already capable of, it's recognizing their independence and their brilliance and giving them the tools to accomplish it.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Yeah, definitely. If folks can just tune in more with you, get more information, you've got an awesome podcast, you've got other resources, can you let everybody know where they can connect with you and just continue to learn from Wellness Mama?

**Katie Wells:** Yeah. Easiest thing is Wellness Mama everywhere. So [wellnessmama.com](http://wellnessmama.com). The podcast is, The Wellness Mama Podcast, and then same on social media.

**Shawn Stevenson:** Awesome, Katie, I appreciate you.

**Katie Wells:** Thanks for having me.

**Shawn Stevenson:** You're welcome. Everybody, thank you so much for tuning into the show today. I hope you got a lot of value out of this. I took a bunch of notes myself, and I just want to recap some of these principles for our kids, and even if you don't have kids or if you have... If your kids are super grown up and they own a car dealership now, whatever, if you've got grandkids, nieces and nephews or just kids in the neighborhood, folks that you just want to help, our children are truly, this is the future and so we're helping to, like she just said, we're raising adults, and we want to raise adults who are happy, sovereign and capable of the transformation that we need because they're already solving problems #wormsinthecloset. So one of those principles was creativity, really encouraging that because we have to think differently about the problems that we're facing and just problems in our day-to-day lives. We tend to be very... We tend to cultivate tunnel vision and attack things the same way when Einstein, just paraphrasing, everybody knows this quote, but we cannot solve a problem from the same level of thinking that created the problem, yet we continue to do it. We have to be more creative.

Another one of those principles was, be able to ask hard questions. She mentioned this earlier, even the questions we ask ourselves, our mind is hard-wired to answer questions, so it's a process called instinctive elaboration that takes place when we ask hard questions of ourselves and other people. And I think that we tend to be just a little bit gentle in what we think our kids can do, and to ask them questions and to challenge them. As I mentioned, I know that my son, Braden, I really dialed his personality. He's a lot like me, alright, I'm just going to be honest. My wife was making a face right now like, "Meh." He does not like to be told what to do, alright? He is much more of a self-motivated person. If he knows the thing that needs to be done, he just wants to do it, he doesn't need you to tell him to do it. So once he starts to see like, "Okay, well, you get to play Roblox online with your friend for an hour today, however, we need you to do this, first. I need you to do... Let's jump on this 30 minutes of reading a book that you like, let's take care of... Taking out the recycling and sweeping the floor, take care of..."

So what he does, instead of us telling him to do the things, he'll get up in the morning first thing, just immediately, just go knock those things out. And he's like, "What else you

got for me? I've done the things that I needed to do. This is my time now." So I understand that. So I want to create structures where I can enable him to know the things that need to be done. He knows our Sunday routine now, whereas before he might have battled it a little bit. We get up and watch Michael Beckwith, watch a talk from him, so he'll like, "Hey Dad, can you make Mom her coffee and make my hot chocolate and we watch Michael Beckwith?" Because he knows it, that's the part of the morning routine, then he can kind of hang out with his friend afterwards, but he's still getting that enrichment and finding a way to find joy in it. That's another thing with the connective tissue, so being able to connect the dots as well. This is something we naturally do if we have the opportunity, so we have to stop connecting dots for people and allowing them to do it themselves more often, just creating the atmosphere for that to take place.

I love that, the three different TED Talks on totally different topics. You have no idea we're still going to use that, we're doing that. Also, support the love of learning, and this is probably the most powerful thing. This is probably the tip of the spear or the top of the tip of the umbrella, alright? And if you can create and cultivate a love of learning, you've created somebody who is going to continuously be a curious and capable, free-thinking human being, because the ability to want to learn more, it really kind of supersedes what we're seeing right now. We're seeing a very concentrated amount of people who think they've got stuff figured out already, and it is dangerous, and so understanding that we don't know everything, continue to learn because we love learning and we know that there's always more. It's like a super power, so I love this. And to sum it all up is to prioritize mindset. It's not the rote activities, it's not the thing, it's the mindset, and we all have the capability to help to instill a positive learning mindset and an affirmative mindset and an empowered mindset in our children, and in ourselves.

Alright, so I appreciate you so much for tuning in today. Make sure to check out [wellnessmama.com](http://wellnessmama.com) and all the goodness there, and check out Katie's podcast as well. And we've got some epic shows coming your way very soon so make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day and I'll talk with you soon.

And for more after the show, make sure to head over to [themodelhealthshow.com](http://themodelhealthshow.com), that's where you can find all of the show notes, you could find transcriptions, videos for each episode, and if you got a comment, you can leave me a comment there as well. And please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave us a rating to let everybody know that the show is awesome, and I appreciate that so much. And take care, I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.