

Nutritious movement for your child - and you! with Katy Bowman

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SUMMARY

In this episode of the Your Parenting Mojo podcast, host Jen Lumanlan speaks with Katie Bowman, an expert in movement and author of several books, including "Grow Wild" and "My Perfect Movement Plan." They discuss the importance of physical movement for children, particularly in a world increasingly dominated by sedentary activities, and how parents can model and facilitate more dynamic movement experiences for their kids, especially outdoors.

- *Movement is essential for children's physical and mental health, akin to food and sunlight.*
- *The distinction between movement and exercise is crucial; movement encompasses all bodily changes, while exercise is a specific, planned activity.*
- *Children learn about movement from their parents and cultural environments, often internalizing sedentary behaviors.*
- *Creating spaces that encourage movement, such as removing restrictive furniture and incorporating dynamic play areas, can foster healthier habits.*
- *Stacking activities—combining movement with other tasks—can help parents integrate more physical activity into their daily routines without requiring extra time.*
- *Nature plays a vital role in movement, providing essential stimuli and benefits that indoor environments cannot replicate.*
- *Encouraging unstructured play and outdoor activities is critical for children's development and well-being.*
- *Parents should reflect on their home rules regarding movement and actively change them to promote a more active lifestyle for their children.*

[Music] hello and welcome to the your parenting Mojo podcast we have been talking a lot on the podcast recently about what children learn from video games and so it only seems appropriate that we also spend an episode on the opposite side of that topic a place where I feel much more at home which is on what children learn using their whole bodies and especially from taking their whole body IES outside my guest today is Katie

Bowman who holds both bachelor's and master's degrees in kinesiology focused on biomechanics and she runs the company nutritious movement Katie teaches about movement globally and speaks about sedentarism and movement ecology to academic audiences as well as Regular People Like Us Katie is the author of 10 books on this topic including the brand newly released as of the day of recording this episode it's called My Perfect movement plan as well as the book through which I found her which is

grow wild the whole child whole family nature Rich guide to moving more and in grow wild Katie writes that

the status of digital natives awarded to today's children is unwittingly packaged with its sister status sedentary native a body born into a new landscape with almost no movement so we're going to focus mostly on what children learn uh from and through their bodies in this episode but because all of these things are connected all things are our

families and communities are connected our children learn about moving their bodies from us so how we move our bodies also has really important implications for how they are going to move as well as frankly for our own health and well-being so welcome Katie it's so great to have you here thank you for having me and I mean firstly congratulations I know the new book was launched yesterday another big milestone so I hope you're basking in uh the

carryover glow from yesterday yeah I feel like um I was actually backpacking yesterday uh so much of the work happens beforehand and really after as well but it is feel it's a bit a bit like a birth I feel like from a writer's perspective once the book is hand like handed off and officially PR like that's when I feel like it was done the the publication date is just an Amazon thing maybe even yes yeah cool well

congratulations anyway and so um so let's start talking about movement right and writing with the Bas so so what is movement why is it important for our bodies from your perspective well I think the broadest definition of movement is anytime your uh body changes position or or the tissues of your body probably more importantly and thus the cells of your body change position uh and are are loaded in a particular way just due to the orientation that we are um have toward

gravity and why it's important is uh it's not that different than if you think of like why is food important for the body why is sunlight important to the body it's because within those um mediums there are other things you know so within food there are calories and there are um minerals and vitamins there are essential things and movement is the same with within a a bout of movement or when you are changing your body's shape that larger change of shape is

creating inputs down on the cellular level and our body just like it needs vitamins and minerals from the foods we eat but when we move our body what we're doing is we're communicating with our cells and thus different tissues you know we're telling bone how it needs to be and we're telling muscles how they need to be and how connective tissue needs to be and how nerves need to be and uh what that does is create a

structure that is able to facilitate or tolerate um more movement okay you haven't said the word exercise yet I noticed yeah why is that well exercise is a subtype of movement it is one type so if you imagined a big circle um we called Everything of how I defined movement a change in shape as movement exercise is a subtype it's a smaller Circle that sits inside the original Circle type uh called or titled movement

so exercise is um it has a a a a trickier definition so for something to count as exercise it has to use the muscular skeletal system in a way that uh utilizes more kilo calories calories as we're used to calling them so it has to like burn energy is the word that we um words that we tend to associate with that and it also um exercise is usually

pre-planned so you've

pre-selected the mode that you're going to do like what are you going to do for exercise you've predetermined what you're going to do for how long you going to do it the intensity at which you're going to do it and the purpose behind it is uh exclusively for improving your physical well-being so those are the conditions that get something into that exercise subtype yeah in in one of your books um I loved how you talked about exercise is

basically kind of meaningless it seems to that's a key distinction between exercise and movement the exercise is kind of meaningless activity and movement is Meaningful activity well actually the definition that I have in that case is purposeful versus nonpurposeful because what is Meaningful to you you get to decide so I couldn't say that exercise is meaningless for somebody but the in research of trying to understand why exercise adherence is so low when so many people would like to move it's like

well exercise is particularly purposeless meaning it only meets one condition and it doesn't meet other needs that we have in our life and so how are you going to schedule something that doesn't have purpose when there's so many other things that it's um uh pushing up against in terms of your time yeah yeah and so you know obviously we evolved to participate in movement very differently and we have learned some lessons about movement from our parents

from our culture and our children are learning these lessons about movement from us right now and from the ways we set up our houses and from the broader culture can you talk a little bit about what our children are learning about movement from us in in our culture well certainly so there's there's just straight up modeling you know they look to you as parents and or Alo parents and the adults around them and they get a

sense of what it means to be an adult and that includes all sorts of information one of those things is movement like what what does an adult moving look like and so they'll see um maybe the own behaviors that you have created within yourself and that is informing them about what they are to be doing um there are other I would say um more explicit things that they're learning and that would be rules in the way that you've set up a container for

them or a set of containers there are um hard fix like fixtures in that environment you know it would be that things that they literally bump up against as they are interested in moving or maybe they want to do a certain movement and there's nothing to facilitate that particular movement in a container and then there's also the invisible parts of of a cultural container which would be the rules or the expectations um that we um have in

that space and so I think both of those are sort of within the parenting domains and then there's um just you know if if you are moving with them you or or I guess another way I would say it is another thing that we give children or in another way we influence movement with our kids is in the language that we give movement there's not a lot of language around physicality a lot of it refers to exercise which we might talk

more about but you know if we talk about food for example we spend a lot of times perhaps cluing our children into signals in their body that let them know when they are hungry or full and maybe that's like Rumbly in the tummy or hunger pains or maybe it's the feeling of being too stuffed or maybe it's um becoming emotional when you don't like when you're hangry we don't have a real language around that so by by not um

giving children a language around movement it's hard for them to and or for their bodies to communicate with them about their need for movement and it seems to me that not only do we not have language for it but we're we spend I mean parents I work with spend a good deal of time trying to stop their kids from moving right it's things like how do I get my kid to stop climbing on the coffee table how do I

get my kid to stop jumping on the couch how do I get my kid to stop bouncing off the walls right what kind of things are our children learning about movement and and I guess you know piggybacking on from that I've seen the video where you give a tour of your house and I I I wonder if you could talk a little bit about you know how we might consider setting up our environments to be more

conducive to the kinds of movements that children want to make well right and so there's different ages but if we just think about you know let's say toddlers or younger children from like zero to seven or eight space is a big one you know we set up our house to really um sort of in a minimalist way but and there's a lot of reasons that people would pursue Min minimalism but for us it was really about space to be able to

execute certain movements without um one injury to themselves but to just even breaking things you know in the house and just to create um not just just a play Space there's a lot to movement but even a chance to stretch out your legs and work on a low table really bringing things down to the level of the child so we had um we got rid of a lot of the seats in our house you know plush chair

types of seats there was still cushions and different ways for them to build resting structures but it's very dynamic in the sense of even the shape of our furniture became uh something that one could fashion based on the mood that they were feeling by understanding what their body was telling them in the way that they maybe needed to be shaped can you can say practically what that means well that would mean like um I I just

made a little photo montage of my son throughout the years who loves to read loves to read and so when you think about like what is the reading position do you sit at your desk do you sit in your chair do you lay on your couch and the answer is his body would let him actually he would like to fidget sometimes he wants to balance sometimes he wants to drape on his back sometimes he wants to drape on his stomach and

because we had different cushions and puffs of different sizes and we didn't have a lot of rigidity blocking some of that creativity he could fashion exactly the seat that he would like to take in the moment and so the Activity one is reading but the shapes of reading could be endless creatively speaking and I could see maybe like eight or nine regularly used body positions and therefore strengths and flexibilities to do this one Behavior yeah yeah you're

actually reminding me when I was researching this episode we were in Flagstaff and my daughter got an ear infection and we had to go to urgent care to get some medicine for it and while we were waiting for them to see us we actually brought the iPad because we had no idea how long it was going to be and she was in pain and um I was watching her uh sitting on the the table right as we're waiting for the doctor to

come in and she's moving her body around as she's using the iPad she's moving from like being on her stomach and propping herself up to sitting up with one knee up and then moving the other knee up and and I was like this is it this is this is how it works um and so it was really cool to see it happen in real time and and also I'm thinking about how children learn in school right

which is where you kind of have a desk and you kind of sit at the desk um can you talk a bit more about what children learn about movement in school that you see well there's different types of you know schooling available so but in that conventional you know room where there's a high volume of sitting down I mean certainly what they're learning about movement is hard to pull out from everything else that they're learning but it might even be that to learn is to

sit to produce is to sit that that is a you know in addition to just simply learning how to sit they're starting to tie together this idea that uh creativity producing is all happening in a still container so that's a big thing um then there are also you know there's um often movement spaces within schools physical education is one of them recess is another one and they should be um they're very different in their

intentions but unfortunately research uh sorry uh recess has been um slowly waning a bit in many schools although like in the state that I'm in They just added legislation to bring back a mandatory amount out of recess because it really does serve not only the physicality I mean that's the thing I think we're used to thinking oh PE and recess that's for the body and the rest is for your mind the realize it's like it's all for the

mind it's all for the well-being of the whole child all of the time so that's you know what can often be picked up in school yeah yeah um I hated PE when I was in school yeah I was always one of those kids who was pick lost and it was you know it was just a Perpetual humiliation and um from the sports team aspect and then I was really bad at the actual you know running around on the field stuff

anyway and and yeah I thought that's like I didn't have any concept that movement and exercise weren't the same thing anyway but it's like why would I do this when it's so miserable yeah and that probably set me up for a decade really of not moving very much unfortunately I would say that many people their sole exposure to movement especially if your family culture also didn't come with a lot of movement then really the only portal for movement is

this PE games Athletics Avenue and then you're I mean you're already in a sort of a vulnerable kid space and then when you're in this you know um picking teams and having to all put your skills on display and some children have really been nourished through those skills and some children are coming to them uh completely um as a novice it's very um it creates a psychology around how we relate to movement and

one of the reasons that I've spent so much time I think redefining movement outside of exercise is because I think exercises also sort of uh can align to PE in that way where the same people who sort of resist or resisted uh physical education PE feel that same way towards exercise like again you're stepping into often times spaces where other people are more familiar more practiced it's there's a culture around it that you might not be part of other um again

because your family culture or maybe you just had a family that gave you that Sports culture but you've really find some other types of movement meaningful people often discover them later in life love for moving through nature but it needs to be very broad because we don't need exercise we don't need PE we need movement and so to make sure we're carving out these other ways that we can get it um so that we can get those those

nutrients inside of it that we do require yeah okay so so let's talk about how to make that happen right because I can imagine listening to this as a parent thinking yeah when am I going to have time to do that um and uh this sort of speaks to how I started digging into your work because um my daughter had another daughter's appointment this one was a few months ago and uh it was just a regular well child checkup and the

doctor's like how much time do you spend on screens and and she gives her amount uh Which is higher than most people would normally recommend but still well below um sort of you know how much time kids spend sitting in school and the doctor is looking at my daughter but I can tell she's really talking to me and she's like you should get more exercise um and I'm like H well she doesn't really love team sports and you

know I'm I'm just like I this doesn't feel right to me it doesn't feel right to kind of push her into something that she doesn't want to do and then I found your work and uh and I know one of the the Big Ideas you talk about in grow wild is this idea of stacking and so I wonder can can we start talking about like how we can uh broaden our movement potential particularly broaden it in

nature without adding three hours of work a day to what's already on our plates yeah I think a big um another part of the messaging that I have around movement is we do see it as something separate you know again that's an exercise repe phenomenon it sort of all of our knees are are parsed neatly and have a tidy box and they happen in isolation and and in series one after another and that's not not really the

way to get all of your needs met fully you know we're so time oriented culturally um so stacking is this idea of looking for a task that ends up meeting multiple needs at the same time uh how old is your daughter if I may ask she is 10 she just turned 10 right okay so so a way of stacking would be what are interests that she does have and you could do this for anyone listening this

could be for yourself you know like what are interests that I have and what are Dynamic expressions of some of those interests and then is there a way to um not only fit movement to her interests in that way but also bring in other things that children or and all of us really humans really need like community so is there a group that does this where um you know maybe it's horses you know and

so horses is a time to be outside and and moving and then is there a way is there something that you could be doing during that same time with them that also is meeting your particular need and when you start to trait meet multiple needs at the same time you find that you need less packages of time because you're meeting multiple needs like a skewer through through one segment of time in that way yeah okay so I'm

thinking of an example and I'm wondering if you can maybe give an example from your life as well so I'm thinking um I organize a group of parents and kids who goes out we go out about once a month when we're at home which we're not at home right now but uh we go to do some sort of nature-based activity uh recently we've been doing a lot of things around things like digging clams and so we will uh all work together to

dig clams and then ideally if the tie table works out with dinner time I'll pre-prepare some clam chowder and then we'll shuck the clams and toss them in the chowder and we'll sit and eat Chowder on the beach and so we if I if I'm sort of getting this right I'm looking at your C categories that that you list in um in in uh in your book uh grow wild and the categories I see are rest family play nature food work

Community movement and learning and so if I think about what I'm getting there um I I guess I'm getting mental rest right I'm not getting physical rest but I'm getting mental rest from the kind of work I do regularly obviously it's family time I would consider it kind of playful uh definitely it's nature it's food it's work it's you know it's it's that evening's meal it's absolutely Community it's how I like to spend time with people it's

definitely movement and it's also learning as well because the kids are kind of running around and uh some of them are digging some of them are jumping around in the sand and kind of trying to find quick sand and how can they get stuck and skim in stones and all that kind of thing so I can see how I'm hitting like the vast majority of these categories by doing something that I find fun um so that was an immediate

example that stuck out for me as as you're talking through that I'm wondering if you can give an example from your life as well that that parents can start to see more of you know maybe a less you know I have to take four hours and go and do this thing the beach and more of a an everyday kind of thing yeah I was going to give you I mean yours is quite elaborate and beautiful and one of those ultimate Stacks right

where where the time investment is worth it because you're meeting so many needs all at once right something a little bit more uh every day would be to take homework at the end of the day you know if your kids are have this stack of homework they've already been sitting perhaps in school for a long period of time or even if they're at home school they've been in school space they've been inside and they've had a particular way of relating to that

material and um we would take it out on a walk we would do math facts on a walk play lines on a walk with the family taking turns I mean you can gamify it in a little bit where you could say all right take a break from that okay there's going to be a race up to this hill you know where you're throwing an element of play in this way so it's not as ultimate of a stack but it's a way of

disrupting maybe the tendency to always approach what homework has to look like in one particular way or also it could be packaging up dinner like maybe you just make a regular soup in your house but you're going to put it in a in a thermos and you're going to head out somewhere and you're going to sit outside and eat it or you'll go for a short walk and stop and take a few spoonfuls in the rest of time you know you've got you've

walking the dog also maybe that's something on your task that you have to do and everyone is out and you're noticing birds and and it just is um a more nutrient dense p period of time it's another way of talking about stacking um but it's also checking off multiple boxes instead of just homework yeah yeah and that that to me is kind of the key to all of this is how do I stack the stuff and I've started to look at my

life and where I can start to do some of this stuff um and I know that in your most recent book you actually talk about um the the ways that you can uh examine the task that you do on a daily basis and uh and see how you can start to fit more movement into those and so I'm wondering if you would be willing to kind of dance in the moment with me a little bit here and if I was to tell you

the five things that I spend most of my time doing in the house uh which I imagine is somewhat representative of the kinds of things that other parents are doing if you can help me to see how I can start to work more movement in and I'll tell you since I've been reading your book how I've I've started to do that myself as well but I'm curious to hear your ideas first so um so the the

five things that I think I spend most of my time on are work firstly which is largely computer based largely typing based second actually is I I'm kind of proud of this actually when I'm thinking about how I spend my time it's actually reading to my daughter and I I would say I do that for at least an hour a day by the time you factor in bedtime stories and other things through the day um there's cooking there's washing dishes

and those laundry so how can I possibly stack those things okay well let's do the one at a time so your computer-based work I imagine uh you being in place or at least in front of a keyboard is important so uh arranging your shape as you type you know the idea of not everything being seated I'm doing a podcast right now this is in place work but I'm doing it standing I actually have something underneath my feet I'm

stretching my calves as I do it so it allows some of this very light activity micro movement so changing up the shape of your workspace a bit also as a writer um which you are perhaps as well um I have found that I spend I was spending a lot of time sitting in front of my keyboard not actually producing writing that there's a synthesis there's a creativity and making sure that that was represented in my writing Time by taking

outside because I think what happens is if you if you're writer or you or your output is the written word there's a lot of rumination maybe there's discussion with yourself maybe there's discussion with others to to organize that TimeWise where maybe on Mondays is the time where you call your writing or your work partner and you're working through whatever otherwise typing that you would need to do on the Move in that particular way or at minimum opening up

a screen and instead of going back and forth with text based conversations standing up and doing some stretches while you do it or sitting on the ground and doing some stretches while you do it that was a big one for me because I would say that you know if you're like 40 hours a week of writing or 20 hours a week of writing if you actually had a camera on yourself you're probably producing writing much less than that and so

instead of sitting there and jump scrolling to just go oh this is part of my process and it doesn't need to be sitting down inside to do it you can Lear and there's a lot of research on creativity and walking for writing stuff and so just honor that and put it into your schedule yeah that's a good point actually I have I would say there's a good chunk of reading time and then there's writing time and I've already

sort of disaggregated those two things so that we can do things like going to places that don't have internet access and I can keep working while my daughter's doing something else um but I hadn't thought about taking the additional step of how could I actually stand up while doing this or do it in a different posture so okay so that that's a new one for me okay so um reading to my daughter I'm curious to see your

thoughts I've been playing this one a lot actually what what is the reason for reading to your daughter what what is what is the need being met by that experience she likes it she likes it yeah she she can read uh she's not a super fluent reader and she really enjoys the connection with me of reading um so it' be interesting to know if similar connection would be you listening to a story being told to both of you while

you were out it would make my life a lot easier if she was open to that but no she likes me to read to her okay so maybe going out to a playground in reading and letting her move about as she's being read to you know or at minimum getting into a swing outside you know if you're always doing a lot of that reading sitting inside when the bulk of the day is also sitting inside um and seeing if

maybe she would be open to a different way like is it just that you are reading to her is it just that you were focused on her you know if if there's another way if she would lose your focus because an audiobook was playing is there some other activity where you would give her equal Focus but it would be dynamic you know when maybe reading is not uh the only conduit to what she is able to

extract out of it so that would be a trial and error and coming up with some other activities where you were focusing on her which I know having you know an 11-year-old and 12-year-old is a need but it might not have to be a sedentary okay yeah so I hadn't considered those ideas um we have tried taking the book elsewhere we're we're actually staying in Albuquerque right now and we have friends who have a pool and they're letting us use their pool

regularly and she will slip the book into her pool bag and ask me to read to her while she's in the pool so she had thought of that one herself already we haven't tried sort of um some sort of side by-side task a jigsaw puzzle I could imagine could be one that's a little sedentary but still but but maybe we could come up with something else there um the way I've been playing with it is I can get a pretty much a full

stretching routine in as I'm reading to her yeah and I'm also sitting on the floor while I'm doing which I know from reading so many of your books is a huge shift uh from your perspective can you talk a little bit about what you think about floor sitting well it's a very light activity that um really slots well into life it doesn't take an extra time it's an easy stack so if you're doing any activity that uh requires that you

more or less be in place um so that could be anything from reading a book to watching television to even working on your laptop if you can bring it down to floor level and be um when not only are you getting up and down off of the ground which is a big body user and all of the chairs that we have really prevent us from using the lower half of this movement you know like for many people

that's a movement they do they hardly do at all um so if you reintroduce that plus the different sitting positions it's similar to going to a class to just stretch those parts on purpose you know or again that's the exercise packaging where you have to leave and step the side you're like I'm going to do yoga or I'm going to do some you know Mobility work for this period of time it's like you don't have to leave your house you

can meet other needs while you're also getting that done right yeah yeah that was that was a huge shift for me that I could you know I could spend 20 minutes stretching and it would cost me zero extra minutes in the day so um what about things like uh the the cooking the laundry the washing dishes those kinds of things what would what would you do with that well a big for like for me and I in my one book I think I put dishes

like I just feel like dishes is the thing that fills my life you know I if I no one ever says it on their biography but I feel like dishwasher is such a significant portion of my time um we do a lot of outdoor cooking you know that prepping and just setting up a small I'm not talking about building an outdoor kitchen but just moving dinner prep to outside um has really been a way to take

a lot of those household hold tasks and and get some fresh Light in and again floor sitting or ground sitting it brings the children outside also and opens up the Wonder of the natural world you don't have to go to a Nature Center or go to something that more akin to Wilderness it could just be not inside your home so that's a big one um we also in our home we do a lot of kitchen tasks

by hand we've assu a lot of the motorized um kitchen AIDS in in for like things like hand beating you know we make cream by shaking it in a jar and then what you're doing is you're just you're expanding again the nutrient density of a task you know it's not just eating the whipped cream it's the fact that you made it and then you understood how it is made and the energy that goes into making it and

of course it has all the benefits of less trash it's another minimal approach to maximizing sort of how you get out of something so household tasks like that we're always making them over for more physical input and then dishes is just one of those things like luckily in the Pyramid of movements that we need making movements is a big one you know and it it really meets the need for hand work it's not the most fun

perhaps but it is it's just labor you know we've gotten rid of so much of the labor yeah exactly y yeah okay um yeah I as I was reading your books um I obviously it happened over a period of time and I I make this oatmeal every morning I call the world's most amazing oatmeal and it's got all these fresh ground spices in it and uh and I do grind them myself with a mortar and pestel and I realize oh this is my grip

Ren workout and I started alternating the hands that I do it with and then I kept reading your book I'm like Oh my right hand is already so dominant that I really should just start grinding the spices with my left hand because that's going to provide a sort of the you know the level of activity that my right hand is getting just in everyday usage and it's it's little things like that and and in one of your

books you talk about how you know if you if you don't have grip strength you're not going to be able to drive as you get older and so I'm at a point where I'm starting to think about the next 20 years and what are they going to look like and and so you know if it's just as simple as grinding my spices for my oatmeal helps me to maintain the kinds of things that I want to be able to do

for longer it's like okay yeah this makes sense yeah and also you know the three last tasks that you mentioned really seem to be homebased tasks and so instead of only making over those tasks I would check to see if you had a hanging station in your home you know because you're moving in between tasks you don't only have to make over like the way you vacuum or the way you do dishes it's just recognizing oh this uh container this environment is

an environment in which I'm spending the bulk of my time so if there's nothing for you you to get any sort of big body hanging work simply putting in a doorway hanging bar or some sort of hanging station would allow you just flowing from task to task to fit in one minute or two minutes of really essential movement without needing to schedule it without really needing to uh step on the toes of any of these other tasks that

you need to do yeah we actually have a a pull-up bar in the doorway which doesn't have a door between our bedroom and the bathroom and I have never used it in that way oh so we will start when we go home um I would love to put some kind of hanging bars down the hallway I'm not sure it's going to work when we get home I'll have to check it out we have a big wall of glass down one side and then I

think doorways are going to be too high so I'm not sure that's going to work but I would love to put something in like that that I've seen pictures of online that kids I mean just adore using even one set of rings you know like there's there's if the if the big modification sometimes we pick the bigger thing and it's got a lot of hurdles for us like maybe pick the smaller thing that will be used more frequently

anyway yeah yeah and um that actually reminds me of a house that we were staying at in Flagstaff a few weeks ago belonged to a friend of mine and it had a uh like a rope suspended from this really high ceiling with a dowel across it and um she my daughter would when I when I'm reading to her all evening every evening she's launching herself from one couch to the next and trying to see if she can get you know can I get

from the arm without doing a skip step on the couch and get to the arm of the other and she's doing this so much she actually built up calluses on her hand by the time that we left and um this is it just seems like such a contrast with um a paper that you site in grow wild where it said the most common reason why children say they sit is I sit because it's the norm or because I have to right

so how if I'm seeing that I'm sitting a lot of the time how can I kind of challenge this idea that sitting is how these things happen when I'm doing something like reading to my daughter when I'm not staying in a house that happens to have a dowel hanging from the ceiling at a perfect height for that kind of play tell me more about the Contra where are you seeing the contrast um well the so the contrast in

uh one one of the papers that you site in grow wild right where the the kids are saying I I sit because I have to and and my friend having this this dowel hanging from her ceiling is like my friend already sees sitting is not a requirement of being together in our living room right unfortunately my husband actually whacked his head on the end of the when we were staying there so there is zero chance we're going to be

able to do that in our house um but but it seems as though um there are other ways that we can encourage children to move as well right instead of instilling in them this idea of I sit because I have to because it's expected because it's the norm oh yeah so what what would you say to them yeah well I mean I I so I do think that the literature shows that the reason children are still is

because it's the containers beget Stillness the Imp the implicit and the explicit rules are to be still and when you happen on a space where someone has changed the rules changed the container you can see it's not actually it's not their Norm but that to me that paper is communicating the child is saying the weight of the environment and the rules within so what can we do is to take more cues from your friend and the rules that

they have set up for movement I mean to put a big swingy thing in a living room space is to communicate a set of values that they have around movement and so I think where parents are often tethered is they recognize the importance of movement at least theoretically academically but they might not embody them or they haven't actually changed rules enough for them so there's this tension where they're telling like we should you need to move more move more but yet they're

not doing anything yes but they're not changing anything about the rules that they either don't realize they're communicating or are communicating sometimes just explicitly you know this is not a place for that kind of play this is dangerous type of play look I got hit in the head you know and and to get you know to like validate the reasons that you don't move you can always find reasons not to move it's much more challenging to be

counterculture in that way to recognize oh it is a priority and um and we're going to set up our lives to really hold this as a greater value yeah I think that that point that you said early in that answer that that we don't realize that we're communicating right the values we don't realize we're communicating because um I I had seen how she would moved by herself right like I described at the the doctor's office with the ear infection and when

I'm reading to her often she will like move her body and she'll she'll drape herself off the couch and she'll end up upside down I'm like how is that even comfortable but it is comfortable for her and so I've never stopped her from doing any of those kinds of things and she does move herself uh fluidly and frequently throughout the day but I have never taken that extra step to you know other than you know the outside movement

that I try and incorporate regularly I've never taken that extra step to you know how can we set up our house to better incorporate that and what am I communicating about my values about our values when I don't do that when I have that silent message of you're not you're you know jumping on the couch is kind of not okay um and so I think that see seeing that unintentional values communication is really really really important so um so I think you know

that's something I see in your work is you're so explicit this is my value and this is how we're setting our our our home up and our lives up to take that into account and and I think further um another way way to support one of those earlier points about how are we affecting how we're how our children move to verbalize what you're seeing about the way that she's moving it's like wow I see you're doing a back bend

over there that must does that feel really good to your body because then what's happening is a lot of those um you know it's just like natural eating behaviors they're they are they're upwellings natural upwellings but to to give someone a language around it and a recognition of their body's Communications is to call that out and be like wow I see that you really love hanging would you like to be able to do more of that in other places when's

another place that you feel like hanging because then when there's tension later on the child will be like oh I need to hang this is that feeling that I'm getting and so just by checking in that way and communicating is to give them a language that uh helps give voice to these communications that are coming from the body these signals to move that she's able to follow now but become harder and harder to follow as your cultural construct becomes more Sol

solidified in your mind like if you're the only one moving in a room at some point you're going to stop if it's just your mom it's okay and I think a lot of times with some children they'll need to only be with their mother because the mother is the only person who tolerates that way of moving and so that's why it's really important to recognize this is a need for all children and if we can be okay with it then more children can

be comfortable in more spaces and you know more spaces can be for them yeah that was in one of your books you have pictures of movements that are allowed instead of having a sign saying you know don't jump on this don't climb on that it's like do this here see how how you can jump here take an eye break and see how what's the furthest thing you can see I love that idea yeah I uh there's so

many don't signs especially around movement the more you now that we've you've heard this you'll start seeing them in places I'm like I understand that there are reasons safety reasons where you would not want certain movements to happen but if you don't declare where a movement can happen then what's happening is just a slow withering of the space in which it's okay to move culturally and that is what is happening so I just made

some signs anyone can go download them and

you can hang them up in your school or your space and it's just a little visual permission if you don't have the ability to stand around and give permission 100% of the time you can let the signs you know do their job oh fantastic I hadn't seen those available to download I will get that link from you and we'll put those and put a link to that on the website so awesome um so it seems as

though extracurricular activities might be a place where parents are thinking oh my kids running around all the time in soccer football whatever the thing is um how how do you see extracurricular activities fitting into a picture of movement well I see everyone having a movement diet you know and with a movement diet you're looking to make sure movement is distributed over certain categories I do think you know we're in a kind of a movement free culture you know we're in a sedentary

culture so right now the way we see movement is very binary you're doing it or you're not doing it you know so that and like so many of so much of the messaging around movement is to just burn off excess energy like that that you would just want to put gas in your car only to drive it around because you have it rather than put it towards developing certain skills so this movement diet for children and also for

ourselves there are categories that you want to hit there are skills that are um listed for children and they're they're not some of them are for skills it's kind of tricky because as our society becomes more sedentary less movement is required for certain people in society now this keep in mind that there's a quite a large laboring force of people and those uh people are getting plenty of total movement although their diversity of

movement is not very great because it's very repetitive because they've we've outsourced many people have outsourced much of their labor to other people but for you know the group of people that is really identifying as sedentary and seeing this is a problem the skills that we want to have would be like walking you know being able to walk from point A to point B this is all outside of the idea of a disability but um you know

that you've got endurance and strength to be able to walk you know a few miles different different mileage at different ages um jumping is so important for bone building you know in children I mean the thing to remember about children is the juvenile period of time is is when you're setting your adult body that's part of the role of that period of time so as child hoods become more and more sedentary the adults will have that in

their their biography will be in the skeleton of sedentarism early sedentarism so um whole body big body movement you know crossing the monkey bars like opposite to fine motor fine motor has its place but you know making sure the shoulders and the arms can hold that weight um throwing in catching you know little accuracy with those types of things is just part of how the brain and the eyes work together and coordinate with the arms so if your child plays a

certain sport you know you can look and say oh they're getting lots of sprinting and outside and Community

time okay great play is also something children need which is usually unsupervised unscripted they're free to create the rules around that that's a need for child so playing a sport doesn't necessarily meet the need for play they we're using the word play in both and in both situations but plays a little bit different it's unstructured so I like to

use the word unstructured they need unstructured Dynamic time um so making sure that's in the movement diet and then you pick your extracurricular activities by obviously what the child finds meaningful but also in something that sort of balances how they spend the bulk of the day you are asking like how do I offset all this in front of the computer work I have to do you want to think in those same terms like if your child is sitting inside um at a desk for

a large portion of the time maybe it could be an early morning walk maybe you could figure out how to walk all or partway to school after school you're walking home so that you've got this decompression period of time um and then talk to Children about utilizing their recess times or their lunch times you know saying oh this would be a really great time I I had a good conversation with my kids once about what I was

packing for lunch nutritious but didn't work for their very short schedule it's like I need something I can eat faster so I can have 20 minutes to play it hadn't occurred to me to pack a lunch for playtime okay right and so I'll make that you know so having conversations about if they're having to eat or move to not force them into that situation and a lot more conversation around seeing movement as a need will help yeah and so you've you've been sort

of mentioning this a bunch of times throughout our conversation I want to make this explicit like um you you talk about nature right why why it's important that this movement happen outside and preferably outside in nature as however we can Define that right it can be uh a flower pushing up through a crack in the sidewalk if that is our observation of nature that we have access to um wait what what's what does nature mean to you why does it

matter that this movement happen outside in nature well I think of the classic definition of nature is in the parts of the world that aren't so human Centric and so you know be looking at the phases of the Moon it could be looking at a tree and so to make sure there's a balance in um our experience of the world you know when I I mean this is just you know my own value system uh is making sure that there's an

appreciation for beyond the human Centric experience um but then there's all the benefits of nature that are just you know researched and and that usually just means Outdoors it doesn't have to have a there's anything outside counts but then of course Wilderness is going to have a lot more intact less humancentric pieces and then you know staring at the moon cycles which everyone can do lunar tracking lunar cycles from wherever you

are you might stand outside and your porch in your very busy City and there's more human Centric but there's still plenty that aren't humancentric into T you know tune into birds and plants and clouds and weather um and then the moon and there's always something available but I think there's multiple reasons it's beneficial some of

it's physiological you know this the chemicals that are coming from the plants and the trees and then there's

things like the eyes you know the fact that your eyes are sort of blocked from being being able to do their eye thing based on how far the thing is from the our faces that we're looking at so going outside just happens to be the only condition that allows the eye to stretch really far um there's natural light right that's just something that the walls of your house block there's nothing you can do about it windows

don't even let it in glass blocks it so there's just physiological interactions that are created through being outside that because outside is the environment in which our bodies evolved we just can't exist solely inside like a greenhouse is the example that I like to use plants can't even exist completely in a greenhouse why would humans be any different yeah and so I I just want to draw a point that you said there you know our bodies evolve for a different

kind of movement you you talked earlier about taking food prep outside that's how we prepared food for thousands and thousands of years we prepared food by sitting or squatting on the ground found we didn't prepare it standing at a kitchen counter um and and in one of your books you say that the movements required by today's environment are a one-handed phone grasp and finger swipe the movements required by our bodies are based on much older environments um and

so we we when we are constrained to eight eight plus hours a day sitting at the computer typing the the one-handed you know on the phone finger swipe um our bodies aren't designed to cope with that little movement they they're design try to move to get the food that we need to survive not just to burn off the calories that we overate because we because getting food is so easy now yeah I mean it's just again the the movement

that we're doing has things in it that we need so so you couldn't exist solely on one food nor can you exist solely on a single position of your body there's just um as you are shifting your position throughout the day and picking different things up and bending over and twisting and doing different things your um the cells in your body but like even the plumbing you know we're we're really a big Plumbing machine you know when you

think about all the tubes and the pressures that are operating within the body those are all depending on movement this is a complete novel and outlying environment that would allow you to be completely still while still producing quite a bit and so it's just what's called a mismatch evolutionarily speaking our bodies cannot work correctly in this environment there'll just be places of movement malnutrition showing up in our lives now whether or not we call it movement malnutrition

that's the tricky thing we have different names for it because our language again around movement isn't very well developed yeah and you've alluded to this already but I want to draw it out more explicitly um we've talked a lot about walking walking you know to to school to other places um what does this mean for people who have what in our culture is called disabilities which is really a mismatch between our body's capabilities and the way the environment

is set up um but but what does it mean for people who can't walk to the grocery store to you know pick up their kid from school well I mean anyone with a disability who's unable to move would just remove that from their needs it's like not being able to digest a certain nutrient like there's just some things that are always going to be off the table for you and whatever your sometimes permanent disability sometimes temporary disability is so walking if

you can do it should be done if you can't do it you're not going to do it but it's also not the only movement you're just trying to maximize your movement diet given your capabilities and and certainly there is always um things that you can use to potentially supplement uh technologically you know or um we we would call it like adaptive you know there's a way to adapt different movements like maybe you can't walk but you could bicycle outside you know and

you could still transport or do a walk after school on bike instead or you wheel if you're in a wheelchair you can wheel the the principle is that you're doing more human-powered motion outside in whatever way shape or form you can yeah okay great thank you for addressing that um and so uh as we start to head toward a conclusion I know that that some parents are going to be listening to this thinking I'm just so

tired what I need most of all is rest and I've seen you argue that rest doesn't have to mean sitting on the couch as I have started to discover right I I have historically thought you know what I'm tired I'm reading to my daughter I'm I'm going to sit on the couch it's taking a shift for me to start using that time for exercise um and so I I'm wondering if you can tell us about if I am just feeling tired

right now what are some kinds of movement that you might recommend for parents well I just quickly Define like we need a better language for tired or exhaustion there is definitely physical exhaustion many people have it but there is also intentional exhaustion so you know you're still processing you're still your your mind's on a treadmill your eyes are on a treadmill you're taking in a lot of information you're thinking you're doing all of this processing it leaves you exhausted but

if you can look at your day and say well I barely took any steps and I sat most of the day I'm exhausted then you're probably more intentionally exhausted you're not physically exhausted unfortunately both feel the same when you're trying to muster enough energy to change something anything um including your physical state or your position but if you can be armed with this understanding of oh right I'm intentionally exhausted then you could find an activity that you don't have to think

that much about and so it's usually something simple and repetitious it would be you know a gentle walk outside it could be just putting music on and just like swaying around to the music you know just a little kitchen dance party if you will um it could be uh sitting outside and maybe chopping you know chopping vegetables to be like oh instead of ordering out I'm going to bring this giant cabbage with these vegetables and I'm going to I'm going to

sit and chop them if I've been sitting down I'm going to stand and chop them outside and get some sunlight and

maybe I'll put some music on too because it pleases me you also might want quiet you know there's there's a lot of different factors to individualize but usually it's something rhythmic swimming laps you said you had access to a pool you know just going in and just even kickboarding you know side stroking we're not talking about Fitness you're

not trying to get your heart rate up it's simply uh ringing out your body shaking out the edge of sketch a little bit and letting your your mind off the treadmill and then once you start moving your body there's again that that Loop that language of communication of like I I needed to move I didn't realize that my body was telling me I needed to move because oftentimes that's what pain signals are that's what the feeling of

just general malaise is and the more we can correlate those messages with our movement State the more we'll be able to be in communication with ourselves about movements that we need and when oh that's beautiful and and as you're talking through those examples I'm I'm realizing there's so much pressure in our culture to do all the time right to produce to to move to do things that are you know I'm exercising because I want to burn X number of calories and it's

good for me and all the rest of it and what you're really describing is the sense of being right I'm not going to the pool to swim laps to burn calories I'm burn I'm going into the pool to lazily go up and down because it feels good to my body it's a state of being not a state of doing um it's such a more profound uh nurturing way of of being with ourselves and sometimes I'll go

swim laps and just chat with my do with my 11 year-old we'll just we'll just take kickboards and chat and so you know I do think that looking at the modes of movement that you're selecting to make sure you actually like them because so much of what we do is because we're supposed to and it's close or it's convenient all fine but if you haven't actually asked yourself what would I love to be doing with my body and get that answer

then it's a lot easier for what we call adherence just the ability to do it again and again without resistance so yeah meaningfulness is um very important when it comes to selecting exercise for ourselves it is for sure okay so so as we wrap up then I like to try and leave listeners with three ideas or three practices that they can try and we organize those by level of difficulty right so curious is I'm just learning

about this now for the first time listening to this episode how do I get started learning is okay yeah I've been around this idea for a little bit I want to take the next step growth is okay yeah I'm I've I've been practicing some of this stuff for a while now how do I move this forward and take it further what practice would you offer to listeners at each of those levels so let's start with the the ground level

and let's do literally get on the ground level just start using the floor of your home you know just if you're watching TV at night or if you even like to read instead of doing it in the chair or the space that you normally do it in get down on the floor you can lay on your back put your legs up on your couch put your legs up on the wall the whole point is that you're using your body in a in a

different way it doesn't take more time all it takes is just a little uh reminder oh I I'm going to do this on the floor and maybe you need a pillow to be comfortable you know maybe your body needs a little extra support that's fine what I just mean is get out of your typical conventional seat and get yourself into something slightly different yeah for the next for learning okay thank you for learning I would look for a

single rule in your home I I would ask in grow while there's a bias check-in in every container I would I would ask yourself like what are the rules of my home around movement what are the explicit ones you know the ones ask your children ask your partner ask your roommates like what am I allowed to do movement wise what what do you think you're allowed to do in this house and what are you not allowed to do

what movements would you like to do and have that as a conversation and then you'll have a little template of um maybe some changes that you could make you might learn something about what you've been uh silently communicating that you didn't know and then change one that would that would be the actual action then change something okay and then growth yes is the higher level yes for growth I would look for pairing walking if you're able or if not uh the

your equivalent your outdoor on the move on the role equivalent of taking some task that you would have sworn was an indoor task and make it an outside task an outside on task and that could be a morning meal you know when people especially were in the summer they're like I can't get my kids out like they just start on the tech and then they're and then they're on there all day serve breakfast outside and just Watch What

Happens because it's in the same way for us it's just um inertia it's just the inertia of change if you put food out there and that's their breakfast the food will do the work for you and now they're outside and now a nurse is also working for you now they're outside too much work to go back in you know and put out a few things put out a hula hoop put out you know a seemingly silly little thing and

just watch uh children and yourselves become more playful because all of those hidden simple gems either don't exist in your house cuz my kids wouldn't play with them you'd say or you'd think they want their higher Tech things if you put the low Tech things outside and you create some novelty they just start listening to their bodies more and start following suit awesome thank you so much for that that was super super helpful so um so we

listeners can find links to the the um papers that I referenced in today's episode as well as Katie's books a couple of the ones that I've really especially appreciated are grow wild the whole child whole family nature Rich guide to moving more and also my perfect movement plan is the one that was just released yesterday the move your day all day uh move your DNA all day workbook um easy can you just say where else folks

can find you I know you have a podcast as well you're on social media can you just share where folks can find you um move your DNA podcast named after move your DNA book and the nutritious movement is my company it's the website it's the social media everything so if you think movement nutrition you'll find me awesome well on that note everything that we just talked about will be at your parenting mojo.com nutritious movement thanks Katie it was really

great to talk with you yeah likewise thank you [Music]