

**SELF**



Post-  
birth  
body  
rehab as  
self care



**CARE**

*The M List Presents a series of conversations on self care*

*2022 / The Mamahood*

# *A Conversation with Natalie Garay*

## **Heather Anderson of The Mamahood:**

Hello, Mamahood! It's my pleasure to introduce you to the fabulous Natalie Garay. She is a multi-preneur of so many facets, but we're gonna focus on self-care and how she began as a Pilates instructor who honed in on helping women rebuild and rehabilitate their bodies after birth, and how from that she's evolved to understand our full bodies, guts, minds everything. And she's currently getting into functional medicine, and it's a whole thing. But we're gonna start with that. And I want you to take note that in addition to her already existing beautiful business You Need Therhappy, where she sells therapeutic mists called 'theramists', she is currently writing a book called WTF Happened to My Body, because that's what her clients come to her asking. On that note, you can find her on Instagram at Natalie Says WTF. Anyway, hello, Natalie!

## **Natalie Garay of You Need Ther•happy**

Thank you for having me. I'm thrilled to be here and chat with you.



# *There are so many ways to give ourselves love and attention.*

HA:

Yay, likewise. So jumping right in, we are on the theme of self-care, which is so particularly important for moms, since we're caring for others as well. And I want to break down the stereotype in peoples' minds of what that might be like. I've talked to a lot of people who think it means you're on a beach vacation in the Bahamas, or you're getting a mani pedi. But there is just an endless spectrum of what self care can entail. It can be everything from peace and quiet in a minivan to you know, a warm bath, to doing kegels. There are so many ways to give ourselves love and attention. And so kicking it off, Natalie, like, how did you get into this work of rebuilding women's bodies? And also what are your own self care needs and practices?



NG:

Yeah, well, it started, you know, from my own experience, I have three daughters. The twins are now 19, almost 20, and my youngest just turned 18 on Sunday. And all of my work and obsession with learning about the body goes back to my two-month stint in the hospital on bedrest with the twins. Prior to that, I was a dancer. I graduated from UC Santa Barbara as a dance major and I was living in Los Angeles dancing. It was short lived because I was then pregnant with the twins. I danced until my seventh month and then found myself on bedrest. And I was there for two months, flat on my back. And I completely atrophied. I was 26 or 27 years old. so I was relatively young, strong. Definitely mobile, you know, and, and then all of a sudden, I'm flat on my back and my muscles completely atrophied. And I ended up having an emergency C section. And I could not walk.

HA:

And how was the recovery from that? I always hear different things like that a C-section can be more friendly on your internal girl parts, but are there also healing issues after that procedure that affected you?

NG:

Yeah, absolutely. It really infuriates me that a C section does not require physical therapy afterwards because 18 months later, I had my third daughter another C section. And I started to learn about Pilates and the body more at that point. And a C section is a major abdominal surgery and for whatever reason, we're not given a prescription or a recommendation for physical therapy. I just happened to get into Pilates at that point because a friend of mine bought a studio while I was pregnant with my third daughter and I needed a job. I couldn't dance.

NG:

I had to support my daughters and myself. And so I started working at this Pilates studio at the front desk. And then I thought, well, you know what, this looks great. And I need something flexible, and I need to make some money. So I'm going to become a Pilates instructor. And I started training to be an instructor my ninth month of pregnancy. I had my C section. Yeah, came back after a week of resting, but I couldn't do anything because I couldn't feel my abdominals. And so it was...interesting.

HA:

From the nerve cutting or...?

NG:

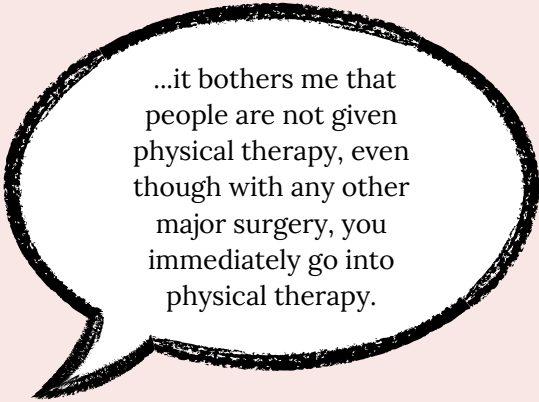
Yeah, and weak, my abdominals were extremely weak. I mean, they cut through your abdominal layers. I have the hospital reports from my hospital stay with the twins, and read through the surgery report and what they did at that time, which was almost, you know, 20 years ago. How they burn through the skin and cut through each layer and roll it back and clamp it. To get to the uterus, to get to the baby.

HA:

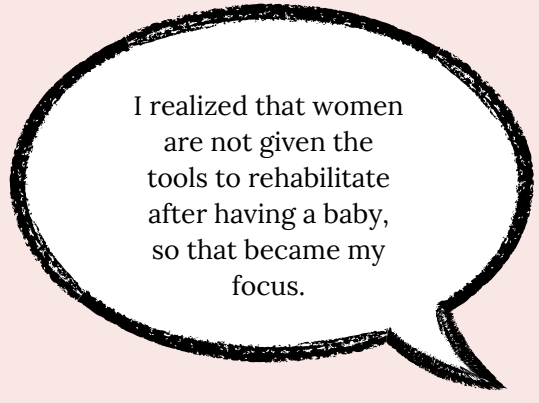
Hardcore. I've watched a video and also thought that is not what I was picturing. There are just so many layers that they're almost like running a chainsaw through to get down in there.

NG:

Yeah, it's intense. It's a lot. And again, it bothers me that people are not given physical therapy, even though with any other major surgery, you immediately go into physical therapy. And that lack can lead to so many different issues: hip issues, neck issues, posture issues, back pain, you know, all of it. I could go on and on. And so, through my own journey of restrengthening my body and rehabilitating and learning to be a Pilates instructor, I was simultaneously hearing stories about women peeing themselves after sneezing, coughing, or laughing or having chronic neck back and hip pain. And I realized that women are not given the tools to rehabilitate after having a baby, so that became my focus.



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HA:

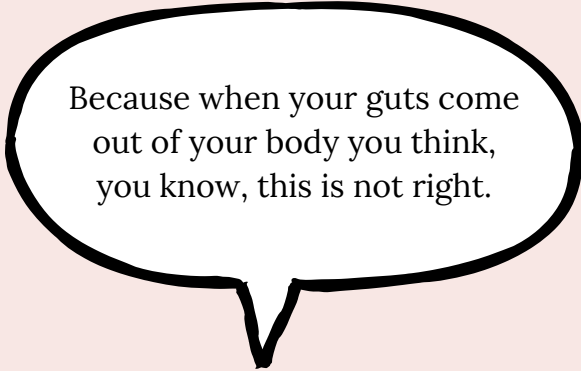
This might be the right moment to mention that I felt like the most uber-prepared birth-woman in the history of mankind because I was obsessed. I had tried to get pregnant for a while and I'd read about 40 books about pregnancy and birth and birth stories. My whole bookshelf was about birth and vulvas and vaginas and uteri and everything. I had midwives and doulas and I was planning for a home birth. But the one gap in my knowledge was the post-birth healing even though I thought they'd told me a lot of stuff. And right after I gave birth at home, it was a very violent fast birth. I forget the word right now (precipitous labor). But it's the term for when your baby basically rocket-shoots out of your body. And within a few hours post birth, I went to the toilet and my guts literally folded inside out and were hanging outside of me. And I thought I might be dying. My husband thought I was dying. We all thought I was dying. Because when your guts come out of your body you think, you know, this is not right. I had no idea that was even possible and began frantically calling around. I want to spread the word on this because no one should have to make panicked calls from the toilet. It was horrifying! I found out pretty quickly that it was vaginal prolapse, which is basically like if your vagina is a water weenie and it just went inside out and flopped out. That's basically what it is. But people like Natalie help women secure your vagina back up in your body.

NG:

Well, yeah, and you can rehab it for sure but most doctors or OBGYN will say that surgery is the only way.

HA:

Yeah, I mean, I haven't even done any kind of official rehab, and I'd love to learn from you and work on it. And my vagina is currently inside my body, but I didn't do surgery. So I'm in the limbo between basic functioning and optimal. I got it back in myself, but I don't want to do surgery or the mesh. I just looked into all of that and I'd rather I'd rather do what I can to strengthen the muscles around.



Because when your guts come out of your body you think, you know, this is not right.

# *Our society expects so much of women.*

NG:

Yeah, absolutely. And there was some sort of mesh that was recalled a few years ago because it was moving and damaging organs and such.

HA:

Yeah, that's probably what I was reading about. And my husband had a similar - but totally different non vaginal - mesh surgery for a hernia. And he didn't like that either. So I'm kind of like mesh adverse?

NG:

Yeah. Yeah, there are definitely ways to strengthen and support it. You know, even if you end up needing surgery, there's so much you can do before it comes to that. And that's what I've been trying to teach women and scream from the rooftops: that you can do something about it! Because it affects you and your daily life and your mental well-being knowing that, you know, you might be limited in certain movements, you might not be able to be as active as you'd like to be, might not be able to play with the kids or lift them or carry them, you know, different things. And in the back of your mind, there's always something kind of holding you back and affecting your quality of life.

HA:

Exactly, and after it happened, my midwife explained why it's so important to stay in bed after birth. And this ties back into self care and patience and treating ourselves to actual relaxation, because she was explaining that a lot of us just jump right back into action after giving birth, like no real time off. You might be up in the kitchen, making a meal for your toddler shortly thereafter, but it's so important to stay horizontal as much as possible, at least 10 days. But ideally, in a perfect world, 40 days of rest and relaxation is optimal to stitch your body back together naturally. And I know you were saying earlier that you agreed with that. So what do you see? And what do you think about that?

NG:

I think, you know, it's amazing there are certain cultures who set up the moms to be able to do that. The family surrounds them and they make sure that the mom is fully taken care of and the baby's fully taken care of, for at least 30 to 40 days. And, yeah, that would be amazing in an ideal world. Our society expects so much of women. One - to get pregnant easily, and two - to just kind of jump up off the hospital bed and carry on with life and motherhood and be you know, knowing and doing everything naturally. And some of us didn't have support when the babies were born or you know, we had our surgeries. And when symptoms pop up for those of us powering through with inadequate support, our symptoms are so often dismissed with the notion that that's just part of motherhood. Or what do you expect, you had kids. Or "at least your kids are healthy", you know, or "at least you survived". Shit like that.

# *Your body is always trying to tell you something like maybe you should rest.*

HA:

That's what happened.

NG:

Exactly. They get dismissed. It's just "You're a mom and that's just part of the territory", or are you practicing your kegels? A lot of women are repeatedly asked about their kegels when there's so much more to it. You know, I have a program called Think beyond the Kegel because while kegels can be great, it's not always the end all be all for supporting bladder leakage. There's a lot more that goes into it. And OB GYN don't always know. I've found that the OB GYN who refer their patients to me have doulas and midwives working in their offices ,but thankfully, more and more OBGYN are learning that there are more ways to support women after having kids than surgery and telling them to do their kegels.

HA:

I love that and I want to echo that back because this is like the biggest takeaway debunking what I've heard and what I feel like so many people just think. These two things: One, if you didn't have support when you gave birth and you now have some undesirable ramifications going on like loose or leaking anything or weirdness down there, you might be thinking: "Well shoot, I should've rested but I didn't and I guess that's being a mom; I'll get myself some pee leakage underwear!"

NG: Right.

HA:

But you reiterated to me that it's never too late. You could be working on this even in your elderly years to protect your uterus from uterine prolapse. So it's never too late and we can always do this repair. And the second thing I love that you said was that you're tired of women's complaints getting dismissed like, "Well, that's just part of being a mom". Because I think a lot of us just accept the status quo of these birth injuries. I have literally had people tell me, well, your baby was healthy, too bad about your vagina, you know? But you think, why can't we have a healthy baby and also a healthy repaired body?

NG:

Yeah and a healthy strong *happy* mom at that. I can't even tell you how frustrated that makes me. It's so dismissive. I mean, people don't realize what they're saying sometimes. And yes, of course, we are grateful that our babies are healthy. But then why should we have to limp along just not feeling 100%, and not feeling well in our body and our minds. Feeling broken shouldn't be an aftershock of having kids. We can do and have both. We can be strong. And it only helps us be better parents, better community members, better partners and bosses, if we can feel great in our bodies and supported ourselves. And anything that we experience physically will affect us mentally. Having that chronic pain is always in the back of your mind. It's going to suck the energy out of you and you're just going to be that much more tired and irritable, whatever you're doing. So we shouldn't just ignore it. Your body is always trying to tell you something like maybe you should rest, maybe you need to go soak, maybe you need time to meditate, maybe you need to go journal, maybe you need to go get colon hydrotherapy or go sit in a sauna.

# *Colon hydrotherapy is on my bucket list..*

HA:

Oh yes, colon hydrotherapy is on my bucket list. Do tell!

NG:

I do love colon hydrotherapy. I just started doing it again after a few years. I have a gal here in town who is amazing. And she has this great building she built in the back of her house. And she's just fantastic. And I feel great afterwards. It's a great way of detoxing and offers mind clarity; you just feel so clear. She says we carry about eight to 10 pounds of excess shit in our body, which then just sits there and rots and you know, your gut is your second brain. So you are affected mentally with cognition, brain fog, energy, and she's like, we're just filled with boogers; it's like we're just filled with a bunch of snot.

HA:

Oh my gosh, I know. Ugh! So my functional medicine doctor was the one that got me pumped about it like four years ago. And I would have already tried it without the whole pandemic thing. But I was reading something before I talked to her that gave me pause and was the only reason I hadn't done it on my own sooner. Something, like rinsing your guts too clean gets rid of the good bacteria? But then it's like: No, when you say we have eight to ten pounds of rotting shit, it just sells it, right?

NG:

Yeah, I asked her that. I'm asked, how much is 'too much'? And she just kind of looked at me like: there's no 'too much'.

HA:

You had the same concern? Like "too clean", right?

NG:

Exactly. I just didn't know what's too much. I mean, I only go every couple of weeks right now. I think she would probably prefer for the beginning part of it that I go at least once a week for a good month or two,. But in the meantime, between sessions she's encouraged me to give myself an enema at home and I finally got around to doing that. I did that twice. And that's been amazing too.

HA:

This is more often than I thought; the people I talked to do it maybe once a year.

NG:

Yeah, I'm going every two to three weeks.

HA:

Is this like an initial clean-out period? Or is this like a permanent lifestyle?

NG:

No, I won't go that often long term. But this is the startup.

HA:

Wow, this is like so much fun. I had no idea we were gonna derail into poop talk. I love it. Every time I talk to you, I love every topic that rolls in. So what are you experiencing from it? Are you feeling mind clarity, like lightness and happiness after?



# *I need this lady in my life...*

NG:

Yeah, and she is very intuitive too. She sits at my side and she's constantly rubbing my belly while I'm at her studio. And she's like, okay, I can feel you shifting, I can feel your mind shifting a little bit here. How are you feeling? And, you know, she really tries to tune in to what my body's doing and what's going on. And then she's putting essential oils all over me. She's got stones resting on my chest. And it's just really a full body cleansing and reset.

HA:

I need this lady in my life, but I think you live far away, right?

NG:

Yeah, I think I'm three hours away from you.

HA:

Getting ready to drive down for this!

NG:

You could come down once a month and then do your enemas in between and then I can teach you how to strengthen your pelvic floor and during the whole immersion day we could go through the gamut. We can address everything that's going on with you physically, go through all the energetic and the emotional work and create tinctures. And we can schedule you a colon hydrotherapy session while you're here too maybe.

HA:

I could be like, hey Natalie, you want to go to coffee? I just got my s%\*t like rinsed out of me. Actually, we probably can't have coffee, right? I have no idea.

NG:

You could actually. Sometimes she'll switch it up. She'll try baking powder, coffee, and chlorophyll. She will interchange those depending on what she feels your body could use and will tolerate.

HA:

Oh, I have heard of the coffee. I was talking about drinking it, but you mean she adds it to the water. Mm hmm. This is so fascinating. Okay, well, I'm gonna start plotting my day trip road trip. My poop energy trip. We'll do all the things.

NG:

Yeah. Plan a day

HA:

I'm just starting to brainstorm. If it was like a group field trip. How many people could do hydro colonic therapy in one day anyway,

NG:

It just depends on the person. She will want to plan on it for an hour, and then she will kind of keep her schedule flexible. So if we go a little bit longer, she's got the time and space for it. Sometimes she'll do an hour and a half. And it just depends on me. She's like, how are you doing on the table? How's your bladder? Do you need to go to the bathroom? Let me know.

HA:

You don't feel self conscious about this?

NG:

No, I don't. She's fantastic.

# *I'm usually in the bathtub with bubble bath and Epsom salts, at least three times a week.*

HA:

This reminds me of a birth poop story that I heard before I had kids. My very best friend was giving birth first, out of state. So I was always asking, like, how's it going? What's happening? And she said, going into it, "I just have major anxiety about one thing, I keep fixating on it in my mind. Like, I don't want to shit on the table. I keep hearing the possibility." And that began festering in my own mind's eye. So she gave birth and you know, do you ever look back on different moments in your life with more experience and go oh my god, I was so clueless.

NG: Yeah.

HA:

Because she was the first person I knew giving birth, I didn't even know how to be supportive over the phone and didn't even get what birth was like, so I didn't even talk to her. It was like she gave birth without me even knowing and it was horrific. It was like a seven day experience where she had to be rushed to the hospital via ambulance and then she was induced but her labor stalled out and her baby was at risk. But I didn't even know any of that yet. So I called her afterward super nonchalant. "Oh, wow. Congrats! So how was it?" She was overwhelmed and just been to hell and back, totally speechless. She was just like, "girl". First question was "So diid you poop on the table? She's like, "Woman, that no longer matters. It was so bad, I no longer cared about that. I would have gladly taken the poop and smeared it on my face like war paint and run naked through the streets of Indiana, screaming "hear me roar!" And I listened, dumbstruck, like "ummmmmmmmm what?"

NG:

Oh my gosh.

HA:

It was my first birth story. And motherhood had made that notion of vanity or feeling self conscious totally void. And by the way, she did poop on the table.

NG:

I've heard you just don't care. I had two C sections. So I didn't labor like that.

HA:

Exactly. So I think I'm to that point on this poop thing too.

So obviously for your own self care, colonic hydrotherapy. But what else do you do for yourself that's not in your own wheelhouse, like your own pelvic floor and Pilates. Like, what resources do you turn to at home beyond your own skills?

NG:

I take a lot of baths. I'm usually in the bathtub with bubble bath and Epsom salts, at least three times a week, sometimes more three or four times a week. I swim, I love to get in the pool and swim laps for 30 minutes, like three or four times a week. My morning routine is always part of my self care. For me, it's getting up in the morning. And the ritual of making coffee and sitting with my coffee, either in bed again or outside. And then I go to my journal. And I always write in the morning and spend some time meditating. I only have an alarm set for 11 minutes. I meditate for 11 minutes. And then I do a little bit of tapping.

HA:

For meditating, do you use something like the Insight Timer app? Or what do you use - just a clock?

# *I usually pull some sort of Oracle Card, It's just a tiny daily ritual mindset shift.*

NG:

I just use my phone timer and set it to 11 minutes. And then I'll do a little bit of tapping. And then I usually pull some sort of Oracle Card, It's just a tiny daily ritual mindset shift.

HA:

I love that we have so much overlap. I bathe as my number one go-to. It's literally my own water based escape. I can have a bath three to five times a week with Epsom salt. And the fancier version would include darkness and a candle or some kind of music or podcast. And the morning coffee ritual outside or inside with some writing. But I need to really get back to maybe drawing a card because I love Tarot decks.

NG:

Yeah, I have a couple different ones I pull from but it is fun. It's fun to you know, see what's, what comes up and then write about it a little bit sometimes, too. And it kind of just sets the tone for the day.

HA:

Yeah, that's super cool. I just want to mention this because I get this question a lot. A lot of people have a certain view of things like Oracle cards or Tarot, that the card is forecasting your future, and so these same people have anxiety about pulling a card because it might be bad news. So I just want to say, if you haven't delved into cards as a self care practice, it's a great, very affordable way of checking in with your own intuition. You know, one pack of cards, and you're good. It's just a tool for your own introspection and reflection and to give an anchor to your thoughts for the moment. If you don't like your card, you can pick another one. But what Natalie's saying is she's using the luck of the draw to give her something to think about for that day - like an angle or focus or theme for the moment.

It's just a helpful tool for self reflection. So if you pull a certain theme, it can give you ideas about how to frame what you're already thinking about. It's not going to forecast some random outcome.

NG:

Yeah, I am. There're so many different types of oracle decks you can find. I have a moon deck; it just talks about the different phases of the moon and what comes up during the moon phases. And then Gabby Bernstein has some that are just affirmations. I've been thinking about putting a card deck together for the longest time for my You Need Therhappy brand. Because I have these four different stickers and they all go with a theme. For example, I have this therapeutic mist called Calm The Fuck Down. And so I have different stickers that say "Calm The Fuck Down", or "Tomorrow's a New Fucking Day" or "Stand in Your Fucking Power, Sister". So along those lines, I want to make a card deck, and you could just pull one and think, okay. And then you can write about it. Or, you know, I was even thinking of putting a sentence or two on there to just pump you up a little bit more. But they can be as simple as that

HA:

I love that. I would do it. I know you're publishing a book, and our partners Get it Done may help you with that as well. But either way, they're currently crafting a program to help people publish card decks. I can't wait!

NG:

Yeah, awesome!

HA:

I literally screamed with glee because I've been into that for 30 years and have so many card deck ideas too.



## *WTF Happened to My Body?*

NG:

Yeah, that'd be very cool. I have all of them written out for the most part. They're just sentences right now. About my book...

HA:

Yes, tell us. How's that going?

NG:

OK. Yeah. So I just started working with a publisher in Canada. And I finished an outline, which took a lot longer than I thought it would. But I just started writing chapter one a couple of weeks ago, it's called WTF Happened to My Body? How to fix the aftermath of having kids.

HA: Yesss!

NG:

I'm talking about the physical body, C section, pelvic floor, Diastasis Recti (DR), the emotional body, the energetic body. And then I'm gonna sprinkle in some information about hormone health and brain health, because you just can't not mention it. And there could potentially be two other sequel books about just that: WTF Happened to my Hormones and, WTF Happened to My Brain.

HA:

We need all the WTF series that you're going to put out. I think it's so perfect. And I'm glad my random story came out about my vagina, because those were the actual words that came out of my mouth: WTF. And now you have this book telling me what I needed to know then. And it's going to be so incredibly helpful for everybody else having that same exact thought. I love it. I wanted to dive into what you just said, because I've never heard this really from anyone else. I love how you tie the core rehabilitation and our physical body in with our hormones and minds because I always put together gut, hormones, and our mind. But I love that you've basically linked it all together - even our pelvic floor, because I think that's a very neglected concept.

NG:

Yeah, it is. And that's why I am so excited to finally put down on paper this information that I've been teaching and talking about for the last eight to ten years. More and more people are talking about pelvic floor health and prolapse, which is amazing. And I just feel like there needs to be a book combining everything that's swirling around in my head, and what better way to talk about it than with humor, which is how I kind of approach everything. And it's evolved through my own personal experience of surviving the births and raising my three daughters solo on my own. All that I've learned about self care and healing came from a need to support my own body and tiny family. And as I'm going into my 46th year, and entering perimenopause, I've been learning so much about what these hormones do to our bodies and just feel like, holy shit, almost nobody knows this information. Women are just kind of suffering through it and going oh, menopause or perimenopause or you know, it's just part of being a woman or being a mom and again, just kind of dealing with it. Oh, I'm 50. I've hit menopause. I'm peeing myself. I have no energy. I'm having these fucking hot flashes.

HA:

I am selfishly cheering you on and want to rush you along. Because I am one year ahead of you. I just left the beautiful year of 46 behind and I need you to write the hormones sequel asap. It's such an underdiscussed journey.

NG:

Yeah, absolutely.

HA:

Everyone just jokes, oh these darn hot flashes, hahaha.

NG:

Yeah, or like the peeing. "Oh, peed on myself again", haha. Like, you don't have to.

HA:

I was about to do a roundup of the best pee underwear for women. And it's like, maybe we should all just take a different approach and solve the problem with Natalie before we resort to buying pee-pee underwear.

NG:

I think they're great for women who don't know about how to strengthen it and even if they do, they're great as a failsafe. However, same thing with those stupid Poise panty liners like why? I hate those commercials! Hahah! Just effing do something about it!

HA:

Hahah wait, what are Poised liners? Is that a pee pad thing?

NG:

Yes.. And Brooke Burke is the spokesperson for it. And like no, go back to Sketchers - stop talking about Poise! We just need to strengthen the pelvic floor. Hahah.

HA:

You need to be the poster child for *not* wearing pee liners; that could be your infomercial!

# *When not regulated or monitored, our hormone shifts can speed up the mental decline in women.*

NG:

Oh my god. I remember walking into Rite Aid one day and looking up at the aisle 17 said "Incontinence" and I took a picture and I posted it on social media somewhere. And I was like, I won't be experiencing this because I know how to strengthen my pelvic floor. You know, there's now a whole row dedicated to incontinence. It's actually on the sign!

HA:

Oh my gosh, you should do a Tiktok duet of the commercial!

NG:

Oh, yeah. There you go. That's a great idea. I like that one. I like that.

HA:

I am not a TikTok Pro. But I've been trying to prepare to be one so I've got all these good ideas swirling in my mind.

NG:

Yeah, I know I have one too. I'm not very active on it. Especially the Natalie Says WTF one. I'm not very active on there.

HA:

After your two books. Don't stop til the hormone book is out because I need to read it.

NG:

Yeah. So the hormone book and then how hormones affect brain health. I read somewhere women - I forget the percentage - are much more likely to develop mental decline than men.

And it has to do with the different hormone shifts that we experience, through our teenage years through pregnancy, through post pregnancy, late 30s, again, mid 40s, menopause.

So when not regulated or monitored, and our hormones start going wacky, it speeds up the mental decline in women. Which is insane. And another thing that gets dismissed as just 'part of life' is dementia, which is my obsession because my mother passed from dementia last January. And so I went to a lot of her appointments with her with this functional medicine doctor, which is why I'm obsessed now with becoming a functional medicine doctor. And my daughter, one of my teenagers, also had a substance induced psychosis, and so we did brain therapy with her for the last year and a half, again through Functional Medicine and neurofeedback. And so anyway, these are my new obsessions, I guess.

HA:

And I am totally picking up what you're throwing down, because these are all my joint obsessions. Like, I've always had this inkling and buzz around me, like an article here and a rumor there, or a conversation with somebody. But that link between hormones and mental decline or mental health issues has always been on my mind. Even before I knew what a hormone really was, just as a teenager because of what I saw change in my own mother around perimenopause. And I've never quite solved it so it's like this unsolved mystery that intrigues me just for the same reasons that you're obsessed. So I am pumped to know you, I'm pumped to watch the journey. I'm excited, go to your poop party. Like, this definitely has to happen. And I really just want everybody to know there's hope. You can rebuild. You don't need to buy pee underwear.

# *It's never too late to strengthen your core.*

HA:

But you can you can fix yourself, you can heal yourself. And it's never too late. And I feel with mom stress, we always worry like, oh, gosh, I missed the boat. Like "Oh now,, I didn't do XYZ." And so I love whenever we get to be reassured that it's not too late. And we can do something today.

NG:

Yeah, absolutely. It's never too late. Yeah, and I always picture this new mom, when there's so much going on, when we have kids and our newborns, we're just trying to survive, basically. And that's why I picture this woman 10 years out 10 to 18 years out, you know, around her 40s, kind of looking down going thinking what the fuck is going on with my body?

HA:

And I know just enough to be dangerous. But don't the hormones in perimenopause start to make things get saggy and drop internally too, right?

NG:

Yeah, that's what happens. That's what it is. The hormone shifts weaken the muscles. So the muscles are weakened during pregnancy, the muscles are weakened during birth. And that's why, you know, even women who've had C sections are still susceptible to having pelvic organ prolapse or bladder leakage. And then because we start to experience a shift again in our late 40s, mid 50s. And that's when women are going well, oh, my God, all of a sudden, I'm starting to leak now. And it's not all of a sudden, it's been a slow evolution of wear and tear over the years. And if we're not strengthening our muscles to counteract these shifts, they're gonna weaken.

HA:

Yeah, it's all these things that we take for granted. Like we just give birth and keep on trucking and just assume that our bodies are going to keep working with no maintenance, which reminds me of the change oil light turning on in my van today. And we don't maybe think about doing that kind of stuff to our body machines. But we really should perform scheduled maintenance.

NG:

Yeah, absolutely. And I've heard women say "I had three kids", "I have four kids. And I'm not having any problems." And in my mind, I'm thinking, I hope that continues. But my guess is that's going to change drastically at some point.

HA:

No, that's what my midwife scared me into bed with. She said, you know, a lot of people just feel like if they didn't have vaginal or uterine prolapse at birth, thatt they're good, and they can just start running around and start their power walks the same week. But those people come to me in their 70s with uterine prolapse. I'm like, Okay, I'm getting back in bed. So it's never too late. And also, never too early. Like maybe we should all check in and do some maintenance work on our cores.

NG:

Oh, yeah, the core is so important. And it's again, ignored. But if you were to strengthen your abdominals - and I'm not talking just crunches - but if you truly strengthened your abdominals, your hip pain, your back pain, your neck pain,would all be eliminated.

*Even without disposable funds, you can do so much for yourself with a morning ritual, a card draw, and a bath with Epsom salts.*

HA:

Yeah, and I feel like it even just gives your whole body a self esteem a boost. It's like you stand up straighter and your shoulders are back and you're ready to rock. Speaking as someone who has major core issues and who still has Diastasis Recti, you're going to be my North Star in perimenopause. I am so grateful to have had this conversation with you today and that you've been my first guest on this brand new Mamahood podcast and I hope we can have you back again in the future - maybe after your book is out so we can discuss it in more detail. And maybe when we both didn't just have COVID so my brain is fully functional and I'm not clearing my throat.

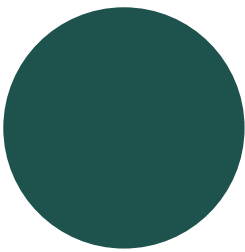
NG:

Yes, that'd be great. And I'm heading to an infrared sauna appointment today to help rid my body of anything still stuck in my system from COVID. So I'm looking forward to doing that.

HA:

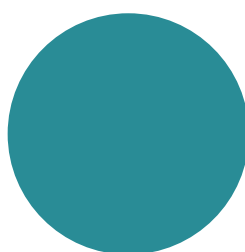
Yeah, that's another beautiful self care thing. And so I want everybody to take away the fact that even without disposable funds, you can do so much for yourself with a morning ritual, with a card draw, with a bath with Epsom salts. Which are of course not totally free but are a very affordable way to get magnesium in your body and destress and relax and help your muscles and your mind. And then when you do have funds to invest, the sky's the limit. You can have colonics and red light saunas. At least we all have somewhere to start and can put everything else on our future bucket lists.

Well, thank you so much Natalie. I've included links below, so everyone knows where they can find more of you and so we can all follow along on your book journey!



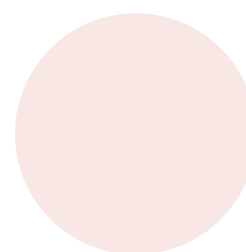
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