

MERYL: Welcome back everybody to the Rebel Nutritionist podcast. Today I have Amanda. Welcome.

AMANDA: Thank you for having me.

MERYL: Always a pleasure. I know tried and true. Our conversations are always pretty cool. So today we are talking about it is that time of year back to school. It is the chaos of that. We definitely feel that this week here, but What are we going to talk about?

AMANDA: We are going to, it's going to be the, go ahead. What was **healthy kids, healthy parents checklist**.

MERYL: I love that. Healthy kids, healthy parents checklist. There we go. So make a note, bookmark this. Like we are going to give you guys some good little tips and tricks. I feel like to kind of get the school year off to a good start.

And look, you don't have to have young kids around. This could be like for college kids too, I feel like, let's really pay attention and I think it's a great way to get parents to regroup on their own, right? We're coming off of summer. Schedules are a little weird. How do we get back into sort of the flow of self care?

So, without further ado you're back at it. I mean, listen, I'm happy that I'm happy to finally say I have no kids in school, although Lindsay is in law school or last year of law school. Jason's last year of medical school, but certainly I'm not making school lunches anymore. So true. Amanda, how are you feeling? James is in kindergarten.

AMANDA: I know my big boy. Honestly, I'm excited about it. He's excited. **I think we all thrive on routine in our house, right? And I think in general, probably most people do. It's just a matter of how do you create that routine, right?** And a healthy routine, a healthy routine, right?

One that's serving you. And so yeah, it's been great. I love making lunches. I'm a freak. I love it. I'm like, let's go.

MERYL: I think But I think the thing is, is when you are committed to your health, when you're committed to your family's health, going and finding things in the grocery store and, and you know, you're **passionate about cooking and being in the kitchen and wanting to make things that are going to support their health and wellbeing and their nourishment and your own**, right?

Is a big deal. Yeah. And so you and I are very much on the same page when we try and get other people to be excited about going to the grocery store. But Yeah, let's, let's get into it. Let's start with how what are the things that we want to say? You know, I think you said healthy kids, healthy parents.

AMANDA: Well, and I think if we were talking about like **the five pillars of health as kind of like the foundation here, which is what we. Really use as the foundation of what we do here when we work with our clients. I think that really it's the same concept** for absolutely right. You can do with the kids.

MERYL: How do we carry that through? So, right, the concept of nutrition. **So when we talk about five pillars, let me clarify that we're talking about nutrition. We're talking about sleep. We're talking about stress. We're talking about movement and we're talking about relationships.** Yeah, and so we're going to kind of back into this because I want to say nutrition for last.

Yeah. So let's talk about what do you want to talk about first?

AMANDA: **So let's talk about movement. Okay. Right. So getting outside every day to play, like that's like the lost art of like being a kid, getting outside every day, right? And so I think that's really important and it's not only good for our physical bodies, but our mental, right?**

MERYL: I think we've lost one of the things that came up big for me, maybe in the pandemic, I look, I've always enjoyed being out in nature. And I think as humans. We generally enjoy being out in nature, right? **We're not meant to be inside because the outside environment, the sun, the colors of being outside really energetically, honestly, resonate, right?**

And they really do. There's a, there's a chemistry, there's a chemistry to that. And there's an energy to that that does something to our bodies. I know I feel very different when I'm outside. You know, exercise moving than I am. Let's say inside in a gym. And that's why I balance it out. Kids are no different.

Our bodies are no different, right? We're designed to be outside and hard. You know, I had read his study. I'll pull it up, but. **The more screen time we have both as adults and as children, the less our brain functions**, our cognitive abilities go down, kids mental anxiety, all of that kind of stuff is affected by being in front of a screen, whether it's a television, whether it's a computer, whether it's a game.

And so. Look, I mean, we can, I can be a broken record and say, I was when I was a kid, I was out riding my bike and I was doing those, those of us that grew up in the eighties before cell phones were outside playing till our parents basically were like, you got to come home at some point and it was getting dark.

And I really feel like. **We've lost so much of that sense of play and, and just bewilderment of being outside in nature and, and it's, and it's affected us.**

AMANDA: **And also it taps into like a child's curiosity.** Yes. Just going out and like gathering sticks or just you. Creating exploring. Yeah, exactly. And you know, it also reminded me when, **when you have like a baby and, and the baby's crying and you're kind of desperate as a parent, like, what can I do to calm my baby?**

I can vividly remember just instinctually putting James either in a baby carrier or in the stroller and taking him outside and instantly he was calm. Yeah, I mean, right. Hello. No brainer. Right. Like nature is therapeutic. Yes. So,

right. So I getting outside on some level, whether it's a park and look, I get it.

MERYL: You know, we're, we're fearful of letting our children play outside alone. Right. That is a real, a real fear. Yeah. I mean, unfortunately it's a real fair fear. It's a shame. Yeah. But how do you support that? I mean, even if you take, look, I remember when my kids were young, Yeah. The neighbors and I, we would sit like in the garage, one of the garages and just let the kids play.

But at least we kind of were all together and we were kind of keeping an eye on them. **Or if it's a park or someplace where you're both getting outside, right? We're talking about healthy kids. We're talking about healthy parents. We should all be outside.** Yeah.

AMANDA: **There's many things you can do as a family, maybe even that's something like an activity that connects you together after dinner let's walk to the park together.**

Let's you know, go for a family bike ride. Like, there's so many ways to be creative about this, but I do think there's so much benefit to being out in nature.

MERYL: I mean, even playing games also like playing Duck, Duck, Goose, I don't know, just something where. You can you can be outside and and breathing the air and getting and getting that so movement and especially outside.

Pretty important. Yeah. In the scheme of creating a healthy, healthy habits. Yeah, definitely.

AMANDA: And then **another, one of the pillars we were talking about was stress,** right? Like stress management. Yes.

MERYL: Big one. Big topic. Maybe we should have saved stress for yet. Right. Oh I think again, right?

We, we, I always talk about this in the podcast, how stress is just, it's like, **it's just so overused and misunderstood and, and, and glossed over** yet we know stress For little kids to young kids. I mean, it could be we know, even young kids that they start to feel stressed when they start to go to school.

Yeah. How, **how do we help them manage that?** Look, I think there's a whole other layer of stress when they go to school and the fear of what. You know, **now they're doing these drills for active shooter, like that puts a layer of stress and anxiety on these kids that we never have.**

Yeah. You know, and so how, what were you I think the thing is, is communicating with the kids. How do you feel about that? Like, what's yourself?

AMANDA: Yeah. Like, are we checking in? Right. Like, are we connecting? Are we checking in on a daily basis to see how they're doing? Right. Yeah. And also... As a parent, right?

Like, are we checking in with ourselves? That we're showing up with intention and maybe not every day you're going to be your best self, but the idea of like **I'm tackling stress and modeling these behaviors of like going inward and communicating and creating that environment so that that becomes a comfortable space for the family.**

MERTYL: Wow. That's so important. And I think Kind of taking a second to to really process that. Yeah. Right. As a parent, am I taking the time for myself to go inward and that is a big one because I don't think Again, **if we get busy with schedules and busy with school and we're just busy doing busy things. Yeah And we're not taking a step back.**

You know, I had a great conversation with Jesse Anger just before the parent coach about slowing down. Like we have to slow down. Yeah. And we have to slow down for ourselves to be able to take a step back and go, okay, I got to regroup here. Because **I need to be okay. If my child is going to be okay.** And one of the things that she said, right, **we just tend to go with the behaviors that we were taught, but it doesn't mean that they were good, healthy behaviors.**

I mean, I look back at some of this stuff and I'm going, wow, I wish I had Jessica to parent me. Maybe a better parent. Yeah. To communicate. Yeah. And to check in. Yeah. You know, and I know you are, I think one of the things that impresses me so much about how you are as a parent, and I don't think I've ever shared this with you, is you, your communication with your son is like nothing I've ever seen.

No, seriously. **You really are so intentional. About how you speak to him and the words that you use and how you support him.** And I will, James is just a really special little boy and it comes from you. And I'm not just saying that because you're, you work with me. I mean, really, it is so impressive to watch the interaction.

Between you guys, because it really is. There's an energy and there's a dynamic, dynamicism. I'm not, whatever. Anyway, **there's a dynamic there that that, that really, I think supports him in the best way possible.** Like he's curious and he's intelligent and he's deliberate and

he's caring. And that comes from you but And I mean, and I don't know that you were that you were necessarily raised like that.

So what, what was the, like, what do you share with other people that like give us some insight there?

AMANDA: Yeah. I mean, I grew up in a house where like communication was really always open. My mom was, her, her love language was words of affirmation and physical touch. So there was no shortage of love and like this open door policy to share.

Right. So I do embody that as my love language. That's the natural innate part of me. But I really being a parent, I mean, your children are your biggest teachers, right? And I really came into this wanting to be really intentional and just give it my all and set them up for success to the best of my ability.

Am I going to screw it up? Yes, I'm sure I'm doing something that's going to 20 years from now backfire. But **I really do just try to be very mindful and this kind of goes into that next pillar about relationships. And how important it is to have a healthy relationship in your home with not only yourself, but with your partner and with your child and modeling that behavior.**

And, and **one of the things that I do on a regular basis is we check in with each other. And then we talked about this, like kind of at the dinner table**, like every day we walk, we, we get together and you know, we all share one thing that we're grateful for or something in the day that made us smile or laugh.

And it's really an opportunity for us, number one, to focus on. What we have that's going in our life that's working for us, right? Like what do we have this abundance of gratitude and how can we focus on that rather than just unload all the bad like crap that's happened in our day? But also it gives us an opportunity to intentionally connect with each other at the dinner table.

Yeah. On a daily basis. Right. And I think that's important.

MERYL: Yeah. And Jessica and I were talking about that too, right? The dinner table, how it becomes this place of connection. And so. **So I think there's that consistency is how, how do you find, maybe it's not the dinner table, maybe it's somewhere else.**

Maybe you're all like meeting in the family room or whatever it is, right? Right. Or like before you turn on a TV, before the devices go on, **make sure that at some point during the day you're connecting.** And I think part of that, it goes back to, **All relationships require work, right? And the relationship with your children, if you want healthy children, your relationship with them requires work.**

I think we just assume that because we're parents, everything will be fine, right? Like, oh, I'm their parent, they need to do things my way, and I think that's... Sort of the generational thing where I, where I'm seeing so much of a difference from, let's say my generation to your generation, where there is this embodiment of communication of openness of, of, of just. I don't know.

AMANDA: It's more of like a conscious. Yes. **They call it like conscious parenting. Yes. Well, and you know, what we have to our advantage is a lot of information at our disposal,** right? Where, whereas when like our, my parents and your generation were raising kids, like You got your information from the pediatrician, from the teachers, from, you know your parents or your friends and your family.

That was it or you had to go to the library and like actually do research whatever topic you wanted to explore. **But like now, I mean, you, there's so much information at your disposal and it's almost like. It's a shame if you're not at least utilizing some aspect of it.**

MERYL: And I do think that consciousness is, is, is a big word because I think as I've Gotten older.

I started to realize, Oh, wow. Yeah. You know, there is a consciousness to so much of what we do. Yeah. And I was writing up something and I'm like the whole fact that we have coaches for different areas of life. And I know people make fun of coaches, but what I will tell you is that **really opens a doorway to a diverse ability to, like, address things that, where there's, there's lack lacking, like, whether it's lacking information or even lacking in, in terms of tools and strategies,** like we didn't have that. I wish I had someone like Jessica, like a parent coach to really help me. So you start thinking about, well these, these people who take their passions and their desires to do this kind of stuff.

And I totally know we're getting off on a tangent, but I think it's important that consciousness as a parent. Yeah. And connecting and all of that kind of thing,

AMANDA: and **also having the ability, like, so one of the things that I've learned and I really try to implement to as a parent is like acknowledging when I like, even though I'm like the parent and the authoritative figure when I'm out of line or when I didn't handle something correctly,** like for instance yesterday James had an accident at school and I was a little disappointed because I'm like, he's five, almost six, like, what are we doing?

You just didn't stop what you're doing because you were playing. And then we get in the car, well he comes home and he's wearing, or he's in the car and he's wearing a different pair of shorts that he took out to school in, and then in the car he's like, I really have to go potty, and I'm like, okay, like, you have to hold it, we're all going to be home in ten minutes, but I really have to go.

And then he had another accident in the car, and I can't tell you the last time he's had an accident. And I was so upset. I was, I wasn't mad at him. I was just mad at the circumstances. I'm like, almost like he, he should be better than that. You know, I had this crazy expectation of a five year old.

Right. And I told him, I'm like, I'm not mad at you. I'm just mad at the situation, **but I was projecting my frustration and like where I expected him to be. And the fact that he didn't meet that expectation**, which is. Right? And I did not handle it very well. I handled it really poorly. And I was venting to my husband about it.

He's like, you realize like it really wasn't his fault. I'm like, I know. So long story short in the morning this morning, I woke up and I said, Hey buddy, I just want to acknowledge like **I was really upset yesterday, but it was my issue. Wasn't you? I'm not disappointed in you. We all make mistakes and I'm never going to be upset at you for making a mistake. Mistakes are how we learn.** Right? So I think it's important. **Also to model like I am not perfect. I get it wrong sometimes** and I blew off the handle over something that was so silly and I wanted him to recognize that like even though I'm your mom, I still make mistakes. Yeah, and that **it's okay to make mistakes, but I want to acknowledge it** so that when he As he navigates the world, he recognizes that that might be something that is important to him.

MERYL: And how big is that? That was crazy. Yeah. He was like, okay. He was consoling you. Yeah. He was like, it's okay. I forgive you. But I did that again.

Right. I think ultimately that kind of dialogue, that kind of communication allows like, a situation where then he doesn't have anxiety around that, but like, **that's where the anxiety starts as a kid.**

Yeah. Right. Like, Oh my God, I've done something wrong. It's about me. And you're little, right. I don't even know. And yet, you're so fascinating. I was doing some work and I was looking at something and it says You really, everything is subconscious until you're like seven years old.

So you're like this sponge of just absorbing things and absorbing things and you know how our parents talk, talk to us and how they communicate with us. You're absorbing and saying, well, okay, wait, this is how I'm learning, and then I have to go do that in the world. Yeah. And if we're getting weird messages Exactly.

Nasty me, right. Angry me, whatever that is. So part that is, **it's building the relationship. It is consciously being aware of relationships that you're building with your kids and, and whomever your partners**

AMANDA: **and it's also doing the work yourself because if I wasn't doing that work, I would think that I was entitled to behave that way.**

Yeah. And that was okay because I'm his parent and tough. Right.

And that's how you were raised. Right. Some of it is how you were raised. The stories were told too. Exactly.

So it's just it's interesting, but the conscious parenting perspective on this whole thing, I think is helpful for this generation. Our kids are reaping the benefits. the hope. Absolutely. You know,

and I find that my generation of parents are, are all kind of similar in the sense that there really are striving to do the work themselves and also like be better for their children.

MERYL: Right. Well, and hopefully that creates a better society than what's coming up.

I know. All right. So that was a little bit, I want to say that was a little bit more about relationships and maybe stress, but I do think Okay. You know, part of the stress as a parent, right, if we're, **here's the piece of the stress is that we have schedules that we need to maybe follow, then it's after school activities and, and I've got to shuttle one kid here, one kid there, one kid here and then dinner.**

What does dinner look like? So part of, I think that the preparation, like kind of **coming up with a routine, but what does the healthy routine look like?** Right.

Okay. Yeah. And also like you said about the stress, like **the stress management pieces really important too, because especially for the parent to model that behavior for their child, right?**

Do you have some sort of some mechanism or something you can turn to when you're feeling really stressed out? Like a behavior that you can model for your child instead of just like close the door and isolate yourself, right? Right. Like, can we come together as a family? Can, you know Meditation.

That's one thing that I think about that comes to mind.

MERYL: Absolutely. I when I was going to what I was going to say, yes, meditation, I didn't mean to interrupt you but **even just taking a breath doing some breath work, right? Doing some breathing. It doesn't have to be a specific type of breathing,** but literally taking a minute or two to take a step and go.

Yeah. Right. I mean, that makes a big difference. Totally.

AMANDA: Yeah. Yeah, and, and I was we went on a vacation recently and my husband and I, like I said, we are really conscious about how we're doing this and we really pour a lot of stuff, a lot of self-love into ourselves so that we model that for our son and It was really sweet that we stayed in an Airbnb and James was sitting on the patio, just quietly sitting with his palms faced

up and he was just staring outside and my husband happened to see him and he goes, what are you doing, buddy?

He's like, I'm just meditating. And we were like, like, **because he sees that that's what we do. Right. So it's like, how do we think about. our actions and how do we make better choices so that our children see that that's the norm.** That's how you de stress. That's how you go connect inward. So really it starts, it starts with the parents.

MERYL: Absolutely. Right. I mean, and, and, and so as a parent, think about this. If you're that frenetic parent, whether you're a frenetically running around. Yeah. How do you expect your kid not to, not to emulate that? And you want your kid to be calm and like go do their homework and you're running around like a crazy person.

What are you showing them as, as a model? And you take a minute and go, okay, wait, I got to regroup here and you know, take a second. It's okay to do like, it's okay to do that. Yeah. As a matter of fact, it's important to do that. Yeah. I think for some reason we have this. And society that we've got to be busy.

You got to do more. We've got to do more. And I, and I really think it's important to like, look and say, **how did we actually do less?**

AMANDA: Yeah. Right. I know. Good point. I think it's really hard for people to do less, especially in our society. Yeah. We're doing. Everything and anything. There's a million things to do in the to do list every day.

MERYL: Well, it's like I always say, look, **your to do list will be there when you're dead. So that's it's just, it doesn't ever end unless we put some kind of boundary on it.** Yeah. You know, and I know that has worked for me in terms of creating the, the boundary between, okay, **where is the boundary between work and play and rest.**

And it's not always easy. I mean, I have that mentality of go, more and, and yet. I intentionally, and maybe that's what it is in the mornings, I intentionally, I am up early. I am meditating. I am journaling because I know I have that. I've set aside that quiet space in the morning because then I know what my day looks like until it's time for me to be intentional about making dinner and wanting to nourish.

And I think. Reframing that I think we've got to reframe it's **how do we reframe the I'm busy? I'm busy to wait. I want to take a minute to nourish my body. I need to take a minute to move my body. I need to take a minute to relax my body because that's what health is.**

AMANDA: Really add that on that to do list as high priority and then everything else kind of falls.

MERYL: Well, then it'll fall in right then because then everything else gains a different perspective. Yes. Right. So, so many times it's just about perspective too. Yeah.

AMANDA: And the other thing is I want to, I **want to mention that really it's not too late. Like even if your kids are five or 15 or it's not too late to start to model this behavior because your kids are still always watching what you're doing.**

MERYL: Listen, I my girls live with me and I, **there's been a shift with a few things and you know that I've done and I did. And when I'm resting, they'll look at me and they're like, Oh, good job.** Now I get the good job from them. But you know, again, like for that, even you're one of them is in law school.

The other ones were like, take a minute to feed yourself. Take a minute to nourish yourself. Don't just grab and go, you know? And so for all of us, like, I think the nice thing is it's a reminder for all of us. And so when you say it doesn't matter what age it really doesn't know

AMANDA: **and good, bad, or indifferent. Our behavior that we're modeling. They often model as well.** Yes. So that's something just to have kind of at the forefront of like what you're doing and how you're doing it, you know that good, bad or indifferent, they're going to be adopting these behaviors as they go out into the world. Yes. So not to put a lot of pressure on parenting.

There is a lot of pressure already, but just things to start thinking about.

MERYL: Well, I think it's more of maybe it's not the pressure, but it is, **it's the perception of how do I reframe it** in a way that is more, more. I don't want to say productive because that's I don't want to like to always be about that.

It's really more of what is, what are the habits that create the health of all of it and the balance. Right. So if we're talking about the five pillars, like they all kind of meld into each other as we're talking about this, like we're trying to stay on track. But you see that one sort of builds on the other one is entangled in the other because ultimately if we're talking about creating health and well being and longevity, regardless of how old you are, yeah.

Yeah, those are the things that that all that it ties into, right? So, so what's next? So, oh Sleep sleep

We didn't Sleep. Yeah.

AMANDA: I mean we obviously know that we thrive in a more routine type Sleep. What do we call it? **Like sleep hygiene per se. And getting the adequate amount we need especially for our little people's brains that are growing.**

And so, yeah, that's an important topic, Meryl. I don't know. What do you, what do you think is like a high priority to start delving into?

MERYL: I think what we really need to look at is **what does sleep do? Sleep allows our bodies to recover. It's not just rest.** Yeah, right. It's not just that we're resting and not doing. **Sleep, physiologically is when our body goes into recovery mode. It's when the immune system recovers. It's when we're not eating. So our blood sugar and our metabolism starts to balance a little differently. Our hormones balance differently. And so it really is a reset. And if we are not getting a good restful night's sleep.**

Then where our bodies are not recovering and we are our health suffers for it. I mean, there's plenty of studies that show that. Yeah. And so, and it's not about, oh, I'm getting eight hours of sleep. So I'm going to go to bed at midnight and sleep till 8 in the morning. Right. We've got to be careful **if we're really looking at when melatonin is produced, and we're trying to balance cortisol, which is that stress hormone, right? Cortisol is high in the morning, as it should be, because we want to be productive, and that's when we're up and we're moving, and cortisol starts to dip throughout the day.** There's a reason for that, right?

Cortisol starts to dip, and as the sun starts to go down, and **we start to wind down, that's when melatonin production is starting to ramp up, and saying, okay, so by... You know, somewhere around let's say 10 p. m. melatonin is starting to really be produced and it's somewhere between 10 p. m. and 2 a. m. that our peak melatonin production is happening and melatonin is an antioxidant, right?**

That's when all the immune stuff is happening. **So physiologically, we want to be asleep around 10 o'clock, right?** I know people are listening on what I'm a night owl. Really, there's no such thing as night. I mean, that is a learned behavior. If you look at nature, right, the idea of **how we live in circadian rhythm, it's we are supposed to be up with the sun, down with the sun.**

Yeah. But we have so much technology and the light and, right, obviously that, that interferes with that. It creates the disruption. Yeah. But really a good healthy night's sleep is, is yeah, we've got to create a good sleep hygiene schedule. When I ask people when they're in with me and I'm like, well, **what's your sleep routine?**

And they look at me like, what? Yeah. A sleep routine?

AMANDA: Right. Right. Like **one of the things that you implement when you have a newborn baby or you're trying to sleep. It's the same concept for yourself.** Yeah.

MERYL: I know. Yeah. So it's what is that wind down time at night and not stimulating your brain.

Yeah. **So if you're watching horror films or detective movies or dramas, yeah action movies or shows before you're going to bed and then you wonder why you're not sleeping.** Well, that's part of it. Yeah. You know, you don't want your cortisol to be ramping up at 10 o'clock at night.

Exactly. And if you're watching the news, if you're watching drama, action, horror, your cortisol, you're in that fight or flight. Like, just think about it. You're watching a TV show. Yeah. So you got to rethink what you're watching what is your brain Listening to looking at before you go to bed.

Yeah. And I think that's a big one. You know, are you falling asleep with the TV on? Not a good thing people.

AMANDA: And having predictability, right? Like going to sleep around the same time on a daily basis. You're like, once again, back to this, **our bodies thrive in a kind of consistent. Schedule.** It's so true and I'll say we're, we're one of those people where the house shuts down like basically when the sun goes down and we have, we feel, we have no regrets about that.

It is our favorite time of evening. But even with that, like when the sun starts to go down. We have the lights. They're dimmer. We have the Himalayan salt lights plugged in. We have our blue blockers on. We're like, okay, we want to biohack a little bit here. That artificial light, because I know that that blue light from the TV and the screens and all of that is going to impact my ability to sleep really well through the night.

So those are the things that we're mindful of and you know, works to our advantage.

MERYL: Absolutely. And I think that's the thing. I think about what in your... Schedule like, like after dinner, right? What are you doing? And if you need quiet time with your spouse, your partner, whatever, what is that? I do that a little earlier, maybe like we said, right?

Connecting at dinner or so that you're having those conversations. And it's not 11 o'clock at night. You're like, how was your day? Yeah, exactly. Or, **or even if it's a warm bath with a candle with some aromatherapy or some kind of essential oils and I know my wind down routine at night is You know, just doing my like, whatever I do with my skincare routine,** right?

If I have some music on the sound bowls or meditative music on or sometimes it's nothing and I'm just in my head but creating that consistent routine to wind down, exactly.

AMANDA: Which signals your body, like it's alerting your body, like it's, it's, we're getting ready for bed. Right. Instead of the opposite.

MERYL: Yeah. You know, and the other part of that is and we're going to get into the nutrition piece, but making sure you're not eating too late you don't want to be eating really three hours, but you know, at the, at the minimum two hours before you go to bed, because the whole point of sleeping is your body is resting, not digesting.

Yeah. And if you're digesting, then your body is in action mode and we don't want our bodies doing that. Plus it creates a whole storm of things with insulin and blood sugar and you know, and all of that. And that's a problem with metabolic issues, right? People can't lose weight or even things like cardiovascular disease.

I mean, those types of things are affected by when you eat. Too close to the time you go to bed.

AMANDA: Absolutely. And I was kind of doing a little science experiment on myself because I have the great fortune of having the aura ring. And **I noticed that if I, when I was trending eating a little bit too closer to bedtime, that my resting heart rate through the night was higher and that my heart rate variability was really low.**

So my, and then the next day, my recovery score was really low too. Like, it was like you need a little extra recovery in your day to make up for the sleep that was not as optimal as it could be. So, I mean, there is real legitimate data that backs this up. And it's fascinating to see it because you know, when you have the data right in front of you, you can't really dispute it.

You're like, okay, yes, I shouldn't have ate that bowl of popcorn right before bed so.

MERYL: Absolutely. And look, I think those are great tools. I think people who... want whether it's an aura ring, whether it's a glucose meter I, I don't negate that information because it looks like **you need to use whatever you have available to you to support your health in that way, right?**

If you are that person who likes that data Yeah. I, I'm always like, I don't really need an aura ring because quite frankly, I know what I slept like crap. Yeah. I know what I need to make absolutely like I'm, I'm that in tune and, and so I don't need the ring to say, yeah, that's what you did. And then I'll beat myself up for that.

But, it is good. I mean, I also know, right. If I have a little too much caffeine, if I have too much sugar, I feel it, right. **I think these devices are really great for people who are trying to get in tune with their body and not there yet. Because it does validate so much of what we're talking about.**

Yeah, definitely. So, yeah. God, I'm getting worried. No, we're not. Yeah, we're not sponsored. Right, no sponsorship here. I just... Whatever device you like. So so sleep. So I think we covered the four. So **now we're on to the big one, nutrition** which there's never enough time to talk, to talk about this.

But I think part of the toolbox that we really want you to understand and have and, and think about as far as nutrition is really, I think the biggest one for me, especially as of late is really. And where the data and there's so much more science behind **the whole thing about ultra processed foods.**

Yeah, like it is like there's articles and research all over the place. I mean, we know ultra processed food is just so, so bad for us. Yeah. And keep throwing it into our bodies. We keep throwing it into our kid's bodies. I think if there's one thing. That that I would say right now it has the biggest impact on our health overall.

It is processed and ultra processed food. **So what does that mean? What is processed food?** What is ultra processed food? You know, literally anything that comes out of a box or a package, like **anything that's in the middle section of the supermarket is processed or ultra** right? Fast food and things like that.

And as much information as we have, as bad as it is, these food companies food manufacturing companies continue to pour it out of their facilities. **Because it's cheap, it makes them money, and we're addicted to it, and we keep doing it.**

AMANDA: I want to say like **the sugar**, right? That's huge, and which is tied into ultra processing.

MERYL: Right, like that is the mainstay. **Sugar and processed oils are the mainstay of ultra processed food.** Do you agree with that? A hundred percent.

Yeah. And you know, **forget taking your kid with you to the grocery store because then you're competing with the food marketing and all the other stuff that they're doing strategically to target your kids** to say, mommy, but I have to have this because it has my favorite character.

And you're like, but no trying to reason with your child why it's not good for them. That's challenging too. But yeah, it's not really they don't really have our best interest at heart, unfortunately. **And so while it's cheaper, what are the implications, what is, what are the long term effects or even the short term effects of consuming these on a regular basis?**

MERYL: Well, look, we know that ultra processed food, **so if it's ultra processed, it means it's so processed that there's really no nutritional value**, right? What does that mean? So if you don't have vitamins and minerals and all those things that actually feed your cells in food. Yeah. Then what do you eat it like that's what you have to take a step back and think of if there's nothing real about this food, then what exactly am I consuming right and you know it was interesting I had a woman sitting in here the other day and said to me well wait a minute I don't really understand so I need vitamins.

Why do I need vitamins? Like she said a specific vitamin and I'm like like, like as if vitamin A was less important than vitamin C or something like that. **Like we need vitamins. Vitamins are, it's like a lock and a key in our set. Think about it like that. Right? So. Vitamins are the key that open the door, that open the lock to allow nutrients to go into our cells.**

And if we don't have that dynamic lock and key thing going on with the vitamins and the minerals, our cells are not being fed. If our cells are not being fed, guess what? We're not moving, we're not thinking, we're not, we're not functioning. Yeah. Think about it like car. **If you don't change the oil in your car, what happens?**

It's not going to run. Yeah. Right. Think of the oil like your vitamin. Yeah. Right. If you don't have that vitamin, your car's not running. If you don't have that vitamin, your body is not running.

AMANDA: Yeah. **I mean, food is meant to nourish. I, but I think people are so like, we're so disconnected from that.** Because I mean, literally in the forties, that's when the introduction of the fast food industry came to our, convenience in our lives.

And we've never recalibrated since then. You know, it served a purpose back then. You know, that was after World War II when women had to go to work because they lost their spouses and they had to provide for their family and convenient food had to be available to them. But even then the fast food back then was actually real food.

We have just, oh gosh, just stripped all nutrients from the food that we consume, unless it is it's. Real whole forms.

MERYL: Right. You know, so what is the takeaway to that when you're looking at a don't just go purchase a food and throw it into your cart, right? **Take the food and actually read the label.**

First of all, **if there's more than five ingredients, you can guarantee that it's been way to processed.** Yeah. Right. Because then it starts with all of the things that you need to preserve the food. Exactly. Right. **And if it's a half inch thick. Then those are all the chemicals that you can't even pronounce and if you can't pronounce it, your body doesn't know what to do with it.**

Yeah. So **be mindful**, right? We're talking about with other things, right? With stress and with sleep. Like **taking a step back. We have to be doing that with the food we're eating.** Take a step back. Like look on the Lunchables container. Not to call out Lunchables, but I'm going to. Look on the box. Maybe the first ingredient that you see is actual something that you recognize, but keep going. And it's a bunch of chemicals.

AMANDA: Well, when you think about these, your children, **you're sending off to school without food that's nourishing not only their body, but their brain, their immune system, all of these things that we want to be mindful of as we're sending our kids off to school amongst lots of kids and germs and all the things** that come along with that.

Like we wonder why our kids come home and they're sick all the time when they go to school. . There's no resiliency there. Yeah. There is no immune resilience. Yeah. 'cause their bodies are

so malnourished. Yeah. Right. So yes, it's, it is. **Part of it is how do we create healthy immune systems? Well, you gotta have healthy food to create a healthy immune system.**

And you know, people come back and say, oh, well it's hard to eat well or it's expensive to eat. Well, look, there's plenty of ways. We certainly don't have time on this podcast to do it. Yeah. There are plenty of ways and there's plenty of resources like this is why we do the work that we do to **provide you with quick tips and tools and resources that are not time consuming, that are nourishing**, that You know, easy ingredients, right?

Like go on to our website and go on living plate and you can find all these great recipes that, that are five ingredients or less.

AMANDA: Yeah. Well, that's kind of what inspired me selfless plug to, or shameless plug, to make the **healthy recipe ebook**, because I feel like so many parents. I, that were in my core group of friends or just acquaintances had no clue how to provide nourishing foods for their kids.

All they knew is like chicken nuggets, mac and cheese, hot dogs, kids menu, those types of things, that that is what we've been conditioned in our culture to feed our children. And we obviously know that that's not nourishing, right? **So that's kind of what inspired me to do that. And, and it's, it's just getting back to real whole foods, colorful food.**

Yeah. You know, **as minimally processed as possible. And I imagine if you made that change, you would see how your kids are thriving.**

MERYL: Yes. Well, and I think especially like being said, we didn't really say it. We kind of brushed over the brain health. Yeah. Like **we wonder why kids can't pay attention.** We wonder why they can't focus.

Okay. Yeah. Maybe there's a real issue there. Right. I'm not dismissing the fact that there are issues there and that there are certain things, but by and large, I mean, so much of that can be dealt with if we just fed them real food and not so much sugar and not so much of these chemicals and additives and preservatives that wreck their brain health.

Yeah. And, and wreck their ability to focus. I mean, **you give a kid sugar and yes, they're going to be amped up and hyped up. And then you ask them to sit in a seat for three, four or five hours at school. It just is not, it's, it's counterintuitive to what they've just done or just eaten.** So I think that's so important.

And going back to what you said, I mean, shameless plug or not I think we should actually connect **we should put a link to your ebook for the parents**, right? This is a great resource for them. Like start to delve, even, here's the thing, one thing, **just do one thing this week. One or two things for your child this week that is going to help nourish them.**

I guarantee as you continue to put that together, you're going to see a big shift in them. And in you!

AMANDA: Yeah, absolutely. **And get them involved. Yeah, the more they get involved in the kitchen, the more excited they are to be really, really explorative in, in, in what they're willing to try because they want to be proud of what they've made they, they want to feel like they've contributed.** You know, this summer I you know, I buy the little bento boxes for James's lunch and this summer I had him in the kitchen helping me and he was so excited every night. Like, Ooh, okay, I'm going to pick this for my snack or this for my snack. And he was, I mean, his whole face lit up.

Yeah. And I'm like, oh, okay, this is great. Like, he's always been in the kitchen with me, but just to have control over what he gets to make himself, you know? What?

He made him proud.

MERYL: I, well, and that's the thing. **When a child makes food, Yeah. they want to eat what they make.** Yeah. Right. So and look, and look, **there's plenty of parents out there who don't like being in the kitchen.**

Yeah. And so maybe it could be a lesson for both of you, right? We can talk about how do we get you both in the kitchen and it could just maybe just think about starting with a smoothie.

AMANDA: Yeah. **Maybe it's one meal a week that you do together and maybe it's a smoothie, right? Something as simple as like, let's build a smoothie together.**

MERYL: Right. Like people think, oh I think it becomes a lot of people are intimidated. Like I hear this oftentimes, I have friends over. So. Oh, my God. You know, I'm not a gourmet chef like you. I don't spend hours in the kitchen. Yeah. Like, first of all, I don't really spend hours in the kitchen.

And I, this is you talked about love language. And it's like, we both talked about food is our love language or cooking is our love language. Yes. But, but it doesn't mean you have to spend hours, right? There's ways to do. And again, I don't spend hours. I just can creatively pull something together.

Because I've practiced it for so long, right? **We're not expecting that this comes first nature to everybody, but you got to start somewhere. Like anything else, just start by doing.**

AMANDA: And, and doesn't have to be five meals a week, right? Just make the smoothie.

MERYL: Yeah. Make a smoothie and go from there. And then look at Amanda's book and get some inspiration

or even just go around the perimeter of the grocery store and get some inspiration there without, without getting stuff that's pre packaged and so forth.

So yeah, we could go on and on about those kinds of things, but I think you guys get the gist of just small little changes. Like let's **take a step back, think about these five pillars, like I said, it's the nutrition, it's the sleep, it's the stress, it's the movement, it's the relationship.**

Don't get overwhelmed with trying to put all of those together at once. Yeah. Just take one thing at a time and use us as a resource. **We've got plenty of tools and resources and reach out and we can certainly help and support you in any way we can.** Yeah, absolutely. Thanks.

Any last thoughts?

AMANDA: I don't think so. I really enjoyed this conversation. Thank you for having me.

MERYL: This would have been a conversation. We're just recording one of our conversations. Exactly. Yeah. So yeah, it's awesome. We hope that you've learned a thing or two. And We hope everyone is off to a healthy and productive start to this school year.

With that, and this is your Rebel Nutritionist signing off, making a great day, everybody. All right. It's a wrap. All right.