

## WorkWell

A Deloitte podcast series to empower your well-being



### When well-being goes wild!

**Jen:** Well-being is my life. I'm focused on it every day. Not just my own, but also the well-being of my colleagues at Deloitte. For me, it's a passion. It's a lifestyle. It's my job. But, I can tell you from experience, well-being isn't always perfect, and it certainly isn't easy. And you know what? That's okay, because it's not about being perfect, and there are time where well-being, quite frankly, just goes wild. And that's what we're talking about today.

Hi, I'm Jen Fisher, well-being leader for Deloitte US, and your host for the work well podcast series. And I'm so pleased to be here with you today to talk about all things well-being.

**Kara:** I think it's so important to make sure that we're not moralizing or demonizing food, and I think that unfortunately with well-being, so many people tend to moralize what they do, right? So that if they make a great choice that means they're good. And if they've made a rotten choice, that means that they're bad, and so then they go through their entire week kind of judging themselves based on those choices. If we don't moralize our food, and we don't judge ourselves based on what we're doing, we can actually enjoy life, and that's an amazing concept.

I'm here with Doctors Kara and Chris Moore. Both have PhDs in exercise physiology. They travel all over the world speaking on nutrition and fitness, and they happen to be married, to each other, with two kids. I've known Chris and Kara for a while now. I follow them in real life, and I follow them on social media, and it was actually a post that I saw on Chris' Facebook page that inspired this topic today, and so basically what the Facebook post was, was a giant bowl of popcorn. The post said something like, this is what's for dinner tonight, and it was a giant bowl of popcorn.

Tell me the truth. As a dietician, did you feel bad about giving your kids popcorn for dinner?

**Chris:** You know, well, I'll be honest. I don't usually do that, but it was a late night. I think I got home from traveling, hadn't seen them, and I really didn't want to make anything. And there's nothing prepared, so popcorn for dinner was it. The squeals in their voices were pretty high, because they're not quite used to that, especially coming from me. Kara sometimes does that a little bit more regularly.

**Kara:** Hey now.

**Chris:** But, we did sit on the couch, had popcorn, and I always remember that one meal is certainly not gonna make or break you.

**Jen:** So tell me a little bit more about popcorn, because I've actually heard differing points of view, and quite frankly, that's what I think makes nutrition oftentimes so confusing and so hard for people. I've heard that popcorn's a great snack, and I've also heard that popcorn's a terrible snack. So what's your point of view on popcorn?

**Chris:** Popcorn can be a great snack. You get a ton of volume, so I mean three or four cups is easily like one serving, which is a huge volume. So it fills you up with not necessarily adding a lot of calories, unless you're going to one of those popular shops like in the airport where they have caramel, and butter, and movie popcorn. That's where it gets a bad rap. You make it yourself, you put a little...we actually use coconut oil spray, sprinkle a little salt on there, and it's a great little snack, or sometimes at dinner.

**Jen:** Dinner. That's right. So what I love about the two of you, or I guess one of the things that I love about the two of you, because there's a lot, you're very real, and you're very authentic in terms of what you put out there on social media and who you are in real life. So, I think there's this myth out there about well-being. I certainly hear it, feel it, see it in my role, but it's all or nothing. And so if I can't do it, and I can't do it perfectly, or if I start on Monday, and by Wednesday I've gone a little off track by having a bad meal, or not getting in my workout, or something like that, then I just throw the towel in and say I'll start again next week. Can we talk a little bit about that, and how you guys manage that in your own life?

**Kara:** I think it's so important to make sure that we're not moralizing or demonizing food, and I think that, unfortunately with well-being, so many people tend to moralize what they do, right? So that if they make a great choice, that means they're good, and if they've made a rotten choice, it means that they're bad, and so then they go through their entire week kind of judging themselves based on those choices. So, I think one of the messages we always want to share with people is that, you are not your fuel, right? So you can fuel your body, and you can also feel good, and so if we don't moralize our food, and we don't judge ourselves based on what we're doing, we can actually enjoy life, and that's an amazing concept because it brings vitality to everything that we're doing.

**Jen:** So Kara, you and I have a shared love for a gummy-type fish that I think we have a love-hate relationship with, and I think we both have some pretty funny stories about being in an airport, being on the road, which I think for people that travel a lot, especially for traveling for work, it's a challenging time for them to fuel their body, to get the right exercise, and then there is all of these options that, and I think airports have actually done a pretty good job of introducing a lot more nutritious options, most lately, but there's always those little gummy fish that seem to pop up wherever I go.

**Kara:** Call your name.

**Jen:** They definitely call my name, so what do you do? How do you deal with those fish talking to you?

**Kara:** Well Chris would argue that I don't allow them much into my life anymore because he saved me from my own diet choices. I think it's important to recognize that if we like something, to allow ourselves to have it. But when I started traveling a lot, one of the things I noticed that I would do, is that I would get to this kind of like whiny voice that would be like, uh, whoa is me, I'm on the road. I'm away from home. I don't get to spend time with my family. I have to travel for work. I have to sit with these long layovers, and then it would just sort of turn on this indulgent voice in my head which would be like, I deserve it. What can I find? And so now when I have that voice, I listen to it, sometimes, and sometimes I also recognize it for just being, just because I'm traveling it doesn't mean that I need to indulge myself, because if travel is part of my life, it's part of my work, then I should take care of myself just like I would on any other workday. But, I mean there are those times where the fish call your name, and that's okay too. But I can't have too many of those, because as we've talked about, they can, you just overindulge and you're like, why am I doing this? And you can't stop, and then all of a sudden you have a bellyache.

**Jen:** So what Kara is talking about is, a couple of weeks ago I was on an early morning flight, and we were going to the same location for the same program, and it was 7:00 in the morning and those gummy fish were screaming my name, and I completely convinced myself that I was gonna buy a bag of them, and I was just gonna eat five, and I was gonna tuck the rest of them away in my bag, and I was gonna eat five a little later, or tomorrow, or the next day. And so I ate the first five, and then I put the little bag away, and five minutes later I ate the next five, and the next five, and the next five until there was nothing left in the bag. And then I sent Kara a message and I said, I just want you to know that I ate the entire bag of fish. It happens, right?

**Chris:** Is it every day, or is it once in a while? That's the important piece. We always say that perfect is the enemy of good. So it's the choice is consistently or versus that one choice, one time, or a couple times that's gonna make or break you.

**Jen:** Do you feel like there are higher expectations or pressures on you to be perfect when it comes to managing your well-being in your personal lives? Do you feel like there's a constant microscope watching you?

**Chris:** You know I think a lot of people do look at us that way, especially if we're in an environment where we just taught a program, for example. People are certainly looking like what do you have on your plate? Am I matching up or competing? And the case is, your decision is your decision We'll hopefully make great decisions ourselves, and hopefully guide you to do the same if we're teaching, but I think a lot of people do think, they've told us that our kids are gonna be so athletic because we're both in this field. That has nothing to do with anything. Our kids may not do sports at all. So, we'll hopefully guide them to make the right decisions, and guide ourselves, but at the same time we're not judging what you have on your plate, and hopefully not doing the same to us.

**Kara:** And just for the record, our oldest daughter said her favorite sport is reading, so she clearly will not.

**Jen:** That's awesome, and I'm totally okay with that. Not that I have any say in it, but I'm totally okay with it anyway. So tell me about your wildest well-being gone wild day.

**Chris:** So many, many years ago, actually when Kara and I were dating, we would sometimes...we both love to cook, and one time we just wanted to go. She was living in Providence, a lot of great Italian food there, and we went and there's this great place, a great bakery, and we thought we were gonna get a loaf of bread, get a little cheese, and kind of melt it, and make a great little kind of snacky type dinner-ish. What we ended up doing is, it was a big round loaf of bread, so we carved out the center, almost like a soup bowl, but imagine a bigger loaf than a typical soup bowl at a store you might go to, filled it with mozzarella cheese, melted it in the oven, prosciutto as well, all layered together, and the entire loaf of bread. Again, a pretty substantially large circle of bread, and cheese, and prosciutto, all in our bellies. And it felt great at the time, didn't feel so good after, but that might be one of those times when it was like, maybe that was a little bit too much.

**Kara:** We ate the entire loaf of bread between two people, and so I remember that Chris was all proud of himself for making this great Italian bread bowl, and he tells his mom, and she was like, how many people did you have over? He was like, it was just Kara and I.

**Jen:** So I have one question. How quickly did you eat it?

**Chris:** It was a little more quickly than it should have been. I remember we were sitting down in front of the TV doing everything, like distracted eating, which probably played a role in that, maybe we were watching a movie, again going through that bread. So I'd say maybe over about two-ish hours, like the length of a movie. It was a good amount of food and calories.

**Jen:** So what is mindless eating?

**Kara:** So in terms of mindless eating, I think so much of it is that we are just distracted constantly, and we know that people take in about 30% more calories when they're not paying attention to what they're eating. So if they're checking email and eating lunch, or they're scrolling through their phones, or they're watching television, they're going to be more tuned to like let me just, you know, I'll finish this up on the next commercial, instead of paying attention to how their body's feeling, and so they just aren't aware of how much they're taking in. So we always say that if you want to be more mindful, to make sure that you go distraction free entirely. If you have somebody with you, and you can have a conversation, fantastic, because then you have somebody to enjoy that experience with, and you're gonna be more present. But, if you're by yourself, distraction free, and I always say to try and make the meal last about 15-20 minutes if you can. It's hard. That's hard. It's really, really hard.

**Chris:** Especially when you're by yourself.

**Kara:** Right. Because then you're bored, and you're like, I got to finish this up. I have things to do. But when you do that you can actually pay attention to how satiated you feel, how much you're enjoying the food, how the food tastes, is it something that agrees with you, and then how much you truly need.

**Jen:** And I've heard some, and love to know your thoughts on this. I've heard some guidance around you should chew your food 25 times, or I don't know what the guidance is. I'm sure there's different ones, but that to me almost seems when you're talking about

mindful eating and mindfulness, a way of counting, or a way of being present in the moment and giving yourself a strategy of how to make that 15 minutes actually a reality because I can't imagine sitting alone, by myself, eating for 15 minutes. That sounds really scary to me.

**Chris:** Which is maybe why you need to do it. But you know it is interesting, the chewing thing, obviously it slows you down. We always talk about ourselves with our kids, and putting your fork down between bites, or simple strategies. It is harder when you're alone and not having a conversation with people, or somebody, but that's one thing that you brought up earlier. We eat around, from weddings to funerals, we're happy, we're sad, we're lonely, we're tired, and we're eating, for all those occasions. But one thing that we don't do so well, a lot of cultures do, is food is not just about fuel. Food is about the culture, and the environment, the rituals, and there's so much to it. You go to many other countries, and the meal can last sometimes three hours. Maybe that's not realistic every single day, but when it does happen it's pretty cool. So could we at least, not look at the three hour example, but could we at least expand our meal time and enjoy food for what it is, and bring people together, when you're eating with other people, versus just, I need to eat, get the fuel, and get back to my next task.

**Jen:** And one of the other things I've heard you guys tell other people, give advice to, is treat every meal like it's fine dining. And that's always resonated with me just because when you are fine dining, it's usually slower, and then the portions come out and they're smaller, and so there's something to be said too about portion size for sure. And so that's always resonated with me as something that you said and that I carry with me.

**Chris:** Good, and that's so important. Again, you're enjoying that eating occasion versus just eating fuel for the sake of I have to eat something, and it happens to be in front of me.

**Jen:** So let's move on, beyond nutrition. Obviously that's an important component here, but let's move in to other aspects of well-being, and we'll talk about one that is particularly, I think, near and dear to all of our hearts, and that is recovery, and in particular, sleep. I would say that all of us in the modern world are very good at making sure we get enough stress. We're not so good at making sure that we get appropriate recovery, whether that be for a couple minutes throughout your day, at different times, or whether that's making sure that you get the appropriate amount of sleep. And so there's a lot of things in our lives and in the modern world that keep us from sleeping, and so I just want to talk a little bit about that because it's certainly something that, if you want to talk about going wild, that is the wildest area of my life because I do it well for a little while, and then it just goes completely whacky. So let's talk about that.

**Kara:** So sleep is one of those things that I think I've become a big advocate for because I finally realize what it means to sleep well, and actually to understand how I feel when I've slept well. So for years I would always say to Chris, oh I'm a five hour girl. I just need five hours, and he'd always give me side eye, like no, no that's not true.

**Jen:** Because he had to deal with you, right?

**Chris:** Exactly. It was like self-serving.

**Kara:** He knew what he was getting. But it was one of those things that I just thought I can operate, and I could operate, but I didn't know what operating effectively versus operating well versus operating optimally, and then so once I started dabbling and getting more sleep, then I began to realize, hey I like six hour sleep Kara. And then I got seven hours, and I was like, wow, she's even nicer. Eight hour Kara is amazing because she's patient, and she's calm, and she remembers things. And all of a sudden I started seeing my productivity, my focus go up because now I was rested enough, and I was making better decisions for myself, so I didn't know that at five hours I could feel that much better, but once I realized it for myself then I thought that's something I absolutely need to protect moving forward.

**Chris:** I think what's important about that is, what Kara said, is we don't know that we feel bad because that's just how we are every single day. So, explore and we've talked to people about maybe doing it for 30 days. Try a sleep trial, so to speak. Increase it by, don't go crazy. If you're five hours now, you're probably not gonna go to eight or nine. Can you do a half an hour more, or 60 minutes more, and then let's certainly talk about some strategies to make that happen versus just go to bed earlier. There's lots of strategies that can make not just the sleep length increase, or improve, but also the quality of your sleep as well.

**Jen:** Yeah, but there's all of these other things that I could be getting done instead of sleeping or I could be binge watching my favorite show, or I could be reading a book that really has my attention, or I could be on social media seeing what all of my friends and family are up to, but instead you're telling me I should sleep.

**Chris:** Remember, we're talking about going wild.

**Jen:** Well that's what I'm saying, and that's my version of going wild.

**Chris:** 9 p.m. I'm out.

**Kara:** I'm that crazy, ride or die until 9 p.m. So when you think about it, you could be doing any of those things, and so it comes down to your own personal choice. How do you want to live your life? And so I used to do that, like I would say to Chris, we just put the kids to bed, let's sit on the couch and we can finally watch something. I'm like, we need to spend time together, and then I'd look over and he's half asleep on the couch. We're not talking. We're watching some show that I'm really not interested in, and then it's just gonna leave me feeling less energetic the next day and less focused, so it was like why am I making this choice when it's actually not serving my life. And so sometimes we have to evaluate that. Sometimes we have to put some hard rules because, unlike the rest of the world, where if I start scrolling through social media I'm like, let me see what else I can find. Let's look for the next picture, or the next post, and that can be really addictive so sometimes you have to put some hard rules like I don't turn on electronics, or electronics aren't on after 8:30 or 9 p.m. because I am that wild.

**Jen:** And so tell me how you do that because I think that's a huge struggle for people, and so I know for me in my own life, the experts would probably tell me that I'm still addicted. I have certainly gotten better with my electronic devices and putting rules into place for myself, but I think that that's something that not only people struggle with, but, you're right, it's an addiction, and so it's incredibly hard. It's almost to the point where for me I have to give my phone to my husband and say, here lock it up in a safe and don't give me

the code. And even then I'm going through withdrawals. So talk a little about how do you accomplish that? What does that look like? Do you guys have any tips to help us with that?

**Chris:** It certainly is a challenge because it is addictive, absolutely addictive. So it could be something like you said, give it to your spouse and have them put it away where you don't know. Like anything, like the first time that happens it's going to be hard. You're going to be begging and pleading, and it will get a little bit easier and easier. Another strategy, and we actually heard this from a colleague, with social media specifically, kind of similar to what you just said but his suggestion, and we actually have not tried it yet but we are going to next week. We were just talking about it.

**Jen:** I thought you told me you were gonna do it two weeks ago. You obviously went wild. You went wild.

**Chris:** We're doing it now. We're doing it. So here's what it is. You give somebody, your assistant, your partner, your spouse, whoever, log out of all your social media accounts and have them reset your passwords and not tell you them. So maybe like a Monday morning do that, and then you can't get them until Friday night, for example. So Monday through Friday you have no option to log into any social media accounts, whatever your one is or many are. That alone, it would be hard for sure because it's not even like, so yes you can get distracted at night, but even just think about you're in line at a grocery store, you're waiting at an airport, you're just mindless things and you realize how distracted...Someone the other day was walking his dog, and I was running, and his dog actually kind of ran into me a little bit, and he was staring at his phone, and looked up and said oh my gosh, I'm so sorry. I was caught up in my phone. I'm sure he wasn't reading anything uber important, but again we get so caught up we don't even realize we're doing it. That's one strategy, give someone your accounts, have them set your passwords.

**Jen:** No, that's definitely happened to me. You get off the elevator on the wrong floor, or I'm famous for getting in the elevator and being completely distracted by what's on my phone and not even pressing a button, and I'm just standing there, not going anywhere. Until I realize, oh wait, or it starts going in the wrong direction. I mean I'm supposed to go down and the elevator goes up, and I'm like, wait, why am I going up?

**Chris:** Your friend from high school is on vacation, so all those pictures...

**Jen:** Absolutely, and I needed to know in that moment, right?

**Kara:** The other thing we do is, I have actually alarms on my phone to tell me to turn them off, so to unwind and unplug. So I have an alarm to tell myself to get ready for bed, which has been really powerful because it's all of a sudden the reminder I can't get caught up in this. I have to allow myself to make the time and get ready right now. So that usually helps pull me out of the social media slurp.

**Chris:** Yeah, cycle.

**Jen:** So, you guys are in the field of well-being. It's your job, your role to be role models for all of us, yet you're very open and vulnerable with the things that you share and the things

that you post. Why do you feel that it's important to share those imperfect moments of your life?

**Chris:** Yeah. I think it is because obviously we're not perfect, like everyone, right? And it also does show that vulnerability like you mentioned, and it gets people, like you mentioned earlier, people often look at us like oh, it's so easy, you make all these perfect eating decisions all the time. You exercise 23 hours a day. It's so easy for you, and we're like everybody else. We have challenges, and bumps in the road, and to be honest, when we show that, we've gotten people to be like, oh my gosh, really, you do that. Yeah, absolutely. The bigger responses are from when we post those real things versus the pretty picture with the ocean in the background and whatever else it might be. There's some of those too, and those are great when it happens, but it's not real life most of the time.

**Jen:** And just so all of you know, Chris' favorite food in the whole world is pizza, I think, right?

**Chris:** It is. Absolutely. We have pizza night. Every Friday night in our house is pizza night, and going back to food is just eating, it's the whole culture. So we'll make the dough first. The girls are involved. They're rolling the dough. They're mixing the yeast, all that stuff, and then we make it.

But again, there's so much around it and if there's a night we don't have it, our girls are asking why aren't we having pizza tonight? It's a Friday. And we love that. As they grow up, hopefully that continues to be a part of our culture and family.

**Jen:** So let's move on and talk a little bit about movement and exercise. Exercise doesn't have to take a lot of time, and we were just talking a little bit earlier about your workout today, Chris. It was 10 minutes, because you had to get on a call, and that was all you had. So Kara, I'll turn it over to you. What about you guys?

**Kara:** Well we know that if exercise were a pill it would be the most widely prescribed and also addictive drug known to man, because of how it makes us feel. We have those endorphins flying after we've exercised. No one walks away from a workout and was like, man I wish I didn't that, right, because we feel so good, and then we have that sense of confidence and empowerment, but then it's also impacting every cell in our body. So it is really a powerful thing, and I think what trips people up is they have a story around exercise. So often I see people have this mindset of well I used to do this, or when I was in the best shape of my life, working out took me an hour and a half, and I don't have 90 minutes so therefore I don't work out. And I think we always have to look at that story and say, how is that story shaping our current behavior, and how do I change it? I always use the motto of what do I have time for today? And so my goal is to move every single day, and ideally I would love to go to the gym, and be able to get a great workout in, and do some resistance training, but it also can look like I'm gonna get a 10-minute walk in before I pick the kids up at the bus stop, and that's good enough too. So if I look for opportunities for movement, rather than defining what it should look like, I can always make it happen.

**Jen:** Tell me about a time when one, or both of you, or perhaps as a collective unit, have fallen off the wagon or gotten into a rut yourself, and what was your approach to getting



back on track, or maybe if your approach to getting back on track was less than optimal, what would you do differently now?

**Kara:** When I think about my own ruts, I think I have a tendency. I mean, I've been working with individuals for the past 20 years to help people change their habits, and I am a classic all-or-nothing person. So one of the things I tend to notice about myself is when I feel like I'm slipping, I might still get some exercise or movement in, and my diet's still relatively clean, but I'm just moving away more frequently from the principles I like to live my life by, that I tend to try and start to plan. Like, oh, next week, when all this travel ends, then I'll get five days in a row of hitting the gym hard, and cleaning up my diet, and so I tend to find myself trying to plan for that. So the one thing I always tell all of my clients is that you just have to do something. Take action. It can't be perfect. It shouldn't be perfect, but just do one thing. And so rather than thinking, I'm gonna wait for January 1<sup>st</sup> before I really clean up my diet and pay attention to my well-being, do something today. What is it that you can do? Can you do 10 pushups before you go to bed tonight? Can you make sure that you're drinking some more water? What is that one thing that you can take action on right now?

**Jen:** And I think there's some things that I've definitely learned, and that I talk about probably pretty frequently, is, for me, somehow everything always goes back to food. I don't know why. Making sure that I am actually fueling my body throughout the day so that it is helping maintain and sustain me. And I'll get going and get focused on something or be on back-to-back calls and I will simply just, I don't know if it's forgetting to eat, but I'm just too busy to eat. And so I've scheduled time on my calendar. If you look at my calendar it says breakfast, snack, lunch, snack, dinner, snack, bedtime. We talked about technology, and the things that kind of distract us, but that's in my own way a way to use the technology that's at my disposal to also remind me and enhance my tendency to forget to eat, I guess, if you will, instead use it to prompt me or nudge me, like hey, it's time to eat, or you're gonna become hangry, and nobody likes Jen when she's hangry.

**Chris:** And you bring up a great strategy because we schedule so much else in our lives. We have these meetings from this time to that time, and that's all scheduled and back to back, but we never do that with exercise and nutrition. So if you have that in place, just like any other appointment, take full advantage. So maybe if you block out a certain time for exercise, or like you said, now's my breakfast, lunch, whatever time, but making time for that is important.

**Jen:** I want to talk a little bit about meditation.

**Kara:** My favorite topic.

**Jen:** Meditation. It has become the buzzword around Corporate America, and well-being. It has made its way into main stream, if you will. It is something that, again, I am always trying to evolve my fledgling practice. It always seems to be a fledgling practice. And I know there's some things in there around judgment, and you just need to just do it and get over it, and stop thinking about the fact that you're thinking, and punishing yourself for it.

**Kara:** Isn't it so easy?

**Jen:** That's just it. I think, again, when we talk about myths around different aspects of well-being, with meditation people feel like, oh I can't do it because I can't sit still. I can't clear my mind. I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't. We come from it from a complete place of I can't, and if I spend time meditating then I could be doing all of these other things. I know this is a topic that you have some great stories around, and so love for you just to share that with us.

**Kara:** Great. So meditation is one of those things, it is a practice, and that's I think something that everyone forgets because once they start to meditate they want to know that they're doing it well, so then that automatically brings in this layer of judgment that says, am I doing this right? How am I doing this? Wait, what am I thinking? Why am I thinking? All of a sudden we get carried away with our thoughts, and so therefore we feel like we're not doing it so we give up, but it's simply the practice of just saying, oh, I'm thinking again, and returning back our breath. Meditation for me has been so powerful because I used to be a person who was highly attached to expectation.

**Jen:** I just looked at Chris. You guys can't see them right now, but they're giving each other a look.

**Chris:** The eyebrows raised. Used to be.

**Kara:** And so whenever I'd be in the middle of an experience, whether I'd be facilitating a group, whether I'd be having a dinner party at my house, I could never enjoy it because I was always judging how well it was going. I was always noticing the things that weren't right about the experience, and then afterwards I would sit there and just ruminate over the fact that it didn't go perfectly. And so I'd had friends who were meditating, and I started noticing the changes in them, and some of my friends who I associated with like high anxiety, or always having these really high expectations, and so I was like, oh, maybe I'll give it a whirl. So when I first started meditating, of course I was like monkey mind. I can't do this, and then I just gave in and said I'm gonna allow myself time to do this. At first I was really inconsistent with my practice, and then I started putting it first thing in the morning. And our kids are early morning people so they wake up early, and we do too. There's something about my children knowing that my body must have changed positions, or my breathing's different, they can sense the second I'm up. So I would like stealth mode, go into the living room and try and be as quiet as possible to meditate, but inevitably I'd hear them, and so it would interrupt my practice, and I'd be like, I can't do this. So eventually I started getting Bose headphones, and really trying to block out all signs, making this a really quiet experience. So one day I had my headphones and I could still hear my child coming in the room, and she comes in the room, and all of a sudden she's like, mommy. And I'm like, what? I'm meditating. I'd be completely anti-Zen, yell at her, go back to bed, getting all upset. And I'm like, what is the purpose of this? And so now I realize that meditation is all about those interruptions. It's about the real world, and you can't have a perfect practice. You can't make it so that it's gonna be this ideal Zen environment, but it's just simply giving yourself time to return to your thoughts so that you can get the benefit of clearing your mind and allowing your mind to focus on whatever you want it to, rather than being interrupted constantly by sounds, thoughts, other people, and so forth.

**Jen:** All of this, it sounds good. It sounds great, but why? There's so much science behind it now that's coming out and so if you want me to do this I need to know why because I could be spending my time doing something else. Tell me the why.

**Kara:** So they've shown that meditation, people who meditate on a regular basis have lower stress. They have higher happiness. They have a higher sense of self confidence, and acceptance in their life. It's decreased blood pressure. It decreases sleep medication. It improves cardiovascular help, and it changes neuroplasticity in the brain, which means that we adapt to learning faster. We have better memory and retention. We make better decisions when we've meditated, and I think it takes out that reactivity that we tend to have. So when we react to a situation, or we allow our emotions to take over, that's really our amygdala in our brain, kind of like a reptilian brain, saying I have this feeling, and I need to react to it. But, what meditation allows you to do is recognize that that's just an emotion or feeling, and that we can return to rational thinking by naming it, by recognizing that just because I'm feeling this way does not mean I have to respond.

**Jen:** Or that it's even reality.

**Kara:** Yeah, right. Or that it's gonna last forever. It's a passing emotion, just like a cloud passes, and so if I just wait for it to pass, I won't feel this way forever and I don't have to respond and react to it.

**Jen:** So meditation is really a magic pill.

**Kara:** It is. The best pill. It's absolutely free. Has zero side effects.

**Chris:** I think an important piece too is when we think about meditation people often get overwhelmed. It doesn't have to be 30 minutes, 60 minutes.

**Jen:** I was gonna ask that next. What is the optimal time to meditate?

**Kara:** Whatever time you're willing to give it, consistently. So I would say it's not about an optimal time, it's about creating a practice that allows you to do it day-in and day-out. So if that means two minutes, great.

**Jen:** And it doesn't have to be at the same time every day or just whenever you can fit it in?

**Kara:** No. Any time we take a habit and we put it in at the same time every day it makes it more ritualized, which means that we're more likely to do it. But if you can fit two minutes in the morning, and then two minutes the next evening, it's all good.

**Jen:** And again, it's not about being perfect. Sometimes it's about being wild.

**Kara:** Progress. Not perfection.

**Jen:** I'm so grateful that Chris and Kara Moore could be with us here today to discuss well-being gone wild. Thank you so much to our producers and thank you to our listeners. You can find the work well podcast series on [deloitte.com](http://deloitte.com) or you can visit various podcatchers,

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