

Caspar ([00:01](#)):

A parent's physical and mental well-being plays a pivotal role in fostering an environment conducive to their child's growth in the realm of parenting. It's not merely a supportive role, but a cornerstone for success, particularly when raising a child with special needs. Our guest today speaks from experience. She's the mother of a nonverbal, autistic child. She knows how important it is for a parent to stay healthy, to ensure neurodiversity children reach their full potential. This is the story of emotional healing for parents with Sara Intonato. Did I say that last name right?

Sara Intonato ([00:36](#)):

You did. Thank you.

Caspar ([00:37](#)):

All right. Good. I know we're, we're, we're kind of, we have, we're friends almost of, of many years going back to their alma mater Boston University. So this is wonderful that we get to do this like 20 years later. So

Sara Intonato ([00:49](#)):

I love it. I'm so happy and

Caspar ([00:51](#)):

Congratulations on the new book. I truly love that this is being talked about, number one, and that people like yourself are putting it in the spotlight and also showing that a parent plays such a big role in this, right. In this idea that, talk me through kind of the process of, of what even led you to write this book.

Sara Intonato ([01:13](#)):

It's sort of what I would call divine timing. I, during my time at Boston University, in my second half there, I started getting really intense anxiety, you know? Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative> at the time, nine 11 had just happened. We were juniors. We were in a really rigorous program and school of management. And I was just telling myself, everything's fine. I'm fine, everything's fine. And, you know, fine isn't even a feeling really. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And I just didn't even recognize that I was feeling stress and anxiety in ways that I'd never had to deal with before. And went to the doctor, thankfully had a great doctor. I think I still went to my pediatrician at that time, <laugh>. And she said, you know, I don't wanna put you on any medication. Why don't yet? Why don't we try some other things? First, tell me about your life at school.

Sara Intonato ([02:00](#)):

What are you doing? I said, well, I, I go to the gym, I do this, I do that. And I go to yoga class a couple times a week. And she said, well, Christmas break is coming up. How about you go to yoga like three or four days a week? And then why don't we touch base before your next semester and see where you're at? So I did. And it was the only time of day where my mind wasn't running at a thousand miles an hour worrying about something. I didn't know why it worked. I didn't know how it worked. I just knew that I felt different. My family started knowing, noticing things. My parents who'd never done yoga in their life, started talking to each other and saying, I don't know what she's doing. Maybe it's a fault. I don't know. But she needs to keep doing it 'cause it's helping her a lot.

Sara Intonato (02:39):

So, like, they were very supportive. And a year and a half later I was on a flight to India, taking my first trip there to study in immersive way and in an authentic way. That was very important to me. I've always been a go-to the source kind of person. And I thought it would be the thing that I did temporarily while my friends were applying to Wall Street and, you know, law school. And I was gonna do that too. Yeah. But I was gonna just, you know, do this for a little while. First while I got some clarity. Then after about a year, I thought, I don't wanna do this temporarily. I'm gonna do this forever. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. So I started recognizing if yoga could heal me, it could heal anyone. And I started learning more about it. I started going to India repeatedly teaching students in group and one-on-one settings, watching them heal, feeling more empowered.

Sara Intonato (03:26):

Like, this is a tool that works. And then when I was about 30, I had a 2-year-old, a six month old, and my older child was just diagnosed with autism. Mm-Hmm. And the only thing I knew how to do at that time was take care of myself. I had been doing it now for almost a decade, so I didn't think I was doing anything special. I thought, you know, I'd wake up in the morning and feel so overwhelmed with so many decisions to make for my child. You know, I was always passionate about clean eating. So making sure his food quality was top-notch, making sure he was getting the right therapies. I was making the right medical decisions. Wondering, of course, what is his future gonna look like? Will he talk, will he not? I don't know. My mind was just full of things. And yoga again was the only thing that made me feel markedly different.

Sara Intonato (04:17):

I would wake up in the morning and before I even took the blankets off, my brain would be running with all of those thoughts. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And the only thing I knew how to do was go to my mat and I'd seen it help me in my life before. I just had faith it would help me again. I hoped it would. And it did. And if you've ever done yoga or meditation, you know that it's wonderful to do it on the days where you wake up and you're full of energy. Yes. And feel great and life is, life is good. Right? Like those are fun practices, so thankful for them. But what you really notice on the days when you wake up and you don't wanna do it Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>, and you're tired and your brain is running at a thousand miles an hour, your back hurts.

Sara Intonato (04:57):

But you feel different on the other side. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative> of your practice. That's when you think, oh, this stuff really works. And so for me, it once again became my daily medicine. And for years that's just what I did. I woke up, I did my practice, I came home, I faced the day of parenting, running my own business, being a wife and a mother in all capacities, and just taking it one day at a time. And it never occurred to me that I was doing anything special. I was just parenting the child in front of me, the children. I have two kids and my daughter's neurotypical. And only about when my son was nine or 10, we had been approached about making a documentary film about his journey. Again, didn't think we were doing anything special, just parenting the kid in front of us, always believing in him, always pushing boundaries, never settling for things, and just being those types of parents.

Sara Intonato (05:52):

I picked my head up and I started looking around at the population of parents, of kids with autism and other needs. And I realized, oh, this group is not thriving. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>, in fact, they need a

lot of help. And everyone is throwing help at them for their kids. And no one's saying, you need to hit the pause button and help yourself. And so when Rocco was two and he was diagnosed with autism, I looked for the book that was gonna help me. The parent thrive through this process, didn't exist when he was 10, 11, 12. I kept looking for that book. Surely by now, with all the self-publishing options, there's gotta be something like that still didn't exist. So I thought, I'm just gonna write this thing. And so that's how this book came to exist. It was just me both telling my story and also in each chapter, providing tools that parents can use at home, even if they don't have a caregiver, even if their child's too young to go to school, taking the time to help themselves every single day.

Sara Intonato (06:54):

And that was really important to me. I didn't want to just spew the message of this is why you need to support yourself. I also wanted to say, and this is how you do it. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative> in a way that you can do it with your complex life. 'cause Believe me, I know how complex their life is. And I've watched this population also be distrustful of experts. You know, they can listen to their therapist, tell them it's really important that you care for yourself. Go take a walk, go meditate for 10 minutes. And they almost have a knee-jerk reaction of like, well, that's easy for you to say yes. You have a kid who talks. Right? Yeah. Like you have a kid who can tell you when they're sick. Yeah. You know, you have a kid who can tell you if they're being mistreated at school. I don't have that. And so I had to really show them, I get your life and I'm simply evidence that you can do this too. So the book does both. It tells my story. It tells 'em why I was doing what I was doing to help myself. And when, and then it shares with them how to do it on their own.

Caspar (07:57):

I think it's really important that your story gets out. And it's not from, let's say, a doctor expert in autism. 'cause Like you said, there's a lot of skepticism. I get it all. So patients come in here years and years, chronically ill, we see them and everything, but they're skeptical. Yeah. What we say doesn't really matter. They want to hear from someone like them, almost like, give me someone my age group, my diagnosis, my everything. Right. Or a mother who really gets it, who lives it isn't sitting there and collecting money or like telling you this is the treatment for it. This is the way. Right. That's really important. What I've noticed is the more people that you can connect and put yourself in those shoes and say, if they could do it, I can do it. Yeah. It's like breaking the four minute mile sort of thing.

Caspar (08:44):

Like no one thought they could do it till someone did it and everyone did it. Right. And then it was a bunch of people doing it. So seeing a parent that can do this, and I understand that. I understand, listen, I'm not a parent, but I understand it's very difficult to have children that, that they are completely responsible about you. Then you add in someone with special needs or anything that's even more of a burden and something that's very difficult. But it is possible to do things like you're saying, to take care of yourself. And it's not only possible, it is necessary in some ways. Don't you feel that way? And when you were writing this book, was was, was there like a, a, something coming outta you? I've never written a book. I'm trying to, but it's just really hard to get yourself to do that and write and be in that. What was the process there? There,

Sara Intonato (09:28):

I think you book in you Casper, and I'm gonna help you get that book out.

Caspar ([09:30](#)):

Thank you. I, I think again, you're, you are like an example of like, Hey, if she could do it, of course. Like I got the time. I can't say I don't have the time. But what was that process like for you? Was it a cathartic kind of process in itself of writing something that you kind of re reviewed your whole life in a sense?

Sara Intonato ([09:49](#)):

Yeah. It was at times really intense to relive some of the things I'd experienced. And at times it made me go back and think, wow, I never thanked that young 30-year-old mom enough for taking a stand for her own needs when everyone around her was telling her not to. It also made me keenly aware of the societal messages that parents receive and parents of kids with needs really receive that just because they're normal are not good. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>, for example, when your child is diagnosed with something, you as a parent are giving a to-do list a mile long. I talk about this in the book of like, now address this for your kid. Now address that for your kid. Now address this, nowhere on that list is your own wellbeing. Mm. And so you have these parents who are trained or told to sort of become martyrs.

Sara Intonato ([10:41](#)):

Yes. Put everything into their kid, nothing to you. And I've seen in my work now, parents who subscribe to that theory, to their, the detriment of their own health. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>, I've seen parents who on the surface look like great parents. They're doing amazing things. They're for their kids. They're finding the right therapists in schools. And beneath the surface, their health is deteriorating fast. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, they have PTSD so intensely they can't really get outta bed in the morning. They don't look at their emails. They have trouble corresponding and following up on things. They aren't looking at their finances sometimes. I've seen this Yeah. With people on the outside who are are kind-hearted people. I wanna make that clear. There's no judgment here. I've been there, but they are still, what's the next thing for my kid? Mm-Hmm. As their bodies are actually breaking down. And so I think I'm sort of waving the flag and saying, not only is it important for you to do this for yourself, it's actually necessary because if you're not the bottleneck and your child's wellbeing now, you will become one eventually.

Caspar ([11:44](#)):

Yeah.

Sara Intonato ([11:45](#)):

Important to address that.

Caspar ([11:47](#)):

And that goes for, for any parent in any situation really. Of course, it's more so pronounced when you have someone who, with a child that is autistic or special needs. But even with a, a child that has a chronic illness of some sort, just symptomology that continues and, and you're trying to figure out what's the best way to do something. I've, I've seen so many parents that have come through these doors and they themselves sometimes are more of a problem than a solution. Meaning they are confused about what to do. They're not being the proper role models in some ways and neglecting themselves, getting very stressed out and their child's stressed out. They become almost hyperactive at stressful situations. Guess what the child does? Becomes hyperactive. The situation. It's, listen, a a child is like a sponge and an amazing mimicker. It sees a parent do something.

Caspar ([12:38](#)):

My brother got angry, suddenly my little nephew is the Hulk running around smashing things. Right. So it's, it's so, so important. But again, like you said, I hear it all the time. Like, I'm just overwhelmed. I'm a parent that's doing this and going to PTA meetings and running over here and running a company and doing everything. How do you start to reclaim that even if you wanted to? And yes, I agree that many are like, I'm a martyr. I'm doing this all for my children. And you want to be like, well, you gotta do something for yourself, for your children. Right. But how do you start to reclaim that idea of empowering yourself and taking some time for the meditation, the yoga, the, the healthy habits? I

Sara Intonato ([13:23](#)):

Think the only way to leave your comfort zone is to leave your comfort zone. Mm-Hmm. And I think the difference that you feel on the other side of doing something even small, like a 10 minute walk around the block in the sunshine will be the thing that reinforces itself. I think if you're waiting for that divine moment of suddenly feeling like, now is my time, I'm worthy of taking this time, you're probably gonna be waiting forever. I've met a mom recently whose child has a genetic disorder. She's the carrier. And she was so vulnerable in saying, I feel so guilty. I know I should meditate and take the walk and do the meal prep. I know how to do that. I do that for my kid. I feel so guilty taking that 20 minutes from myself when he's gonna have this thing that he's dealing with for the rest of his life.

Sara Intonato ([14:09](#)):

That's my fault. She used the words my fault. And, and that hit me really hard. You know, she really felt so unworthy of wellbeing in her life because she felt so responsible for her child. So when someone comes to me saying, I don't know how to care for myself, and we do a little digging, it's not that they don't know how to care for themselves, it's that they have been unwilling to feel worthy of that time and energy. So giving them supports around accountability so they can get through the discomfort of doing it. And maybe feeling moments of guilt that come up, maybe feeling fear or anxiety or shame around having not done it for so long. That's just as important as doing the things itself themselves. Because that's what we're seeing this population, they may not talk about it out loud, but their dirty little secret is feeling like they're not worthy of that time and energy. And we see this with parents of any kids, right. They're doing everything for the kid and nothing for themselves, even neurotypical kids. But to those parents, I would say, well, how will you know when you're worthy? Then? When is it enough? How will you know when it's enough? How do you actually measure that? Usually they can't measure it because how do you measure enough? It looks different for everybody. So then giving them the push of, are you willing to just decide I am worthy of being well today? Mm-Hmm.

Caspar ([15:31](#)):

<Affirmative>.

Sara Intonato ([15:31](#)):

And doing something to further that purpose. That's very often where the discomfort is for them. Yeah.

Caspar ([15:39](#)):

Yeah. And I did love the title because it's emotional healing for parents. You could've went with just healing for parents and healing a lot of people think is more on the physical level. Right? Right. And a lot of people think that's it, but just get to the gym a little bit, you know, eat a little cleaner and that will be what I need to do to be a good parent. That's showing they're healthy. But so much of it comes from the

mental and emotional side, the psychological parts of it. Right. And, and again, you're going to have a lot of different feelings when you have children that are going through this guilt, shame, you know, regret anything of that nature. Fear what, what are the kind of first steps that you're giving to then look at those aspects and improve on it. Because, you know, it's easy to say, we need to reclaim your time to get some meditation down, to do this, to to take a few minutes, go for that walk. Absolutely. And that will show in the emotional, but a lot of this is sometimes trauma that we need to address something a little bit deeper from our childhood, maybe sometimes. Right. Are are, what are you doing with client, with parents of that to start to move the ball on the emotional level?

Sara Intonato (16:48):

Well, for example, in the first chapter of the book, I give them a breath work exercise that anyone can do. Even a pregnant woman can do it. Sitting down in your house, wherever you can. And doing that, it will take you five to 10 minutes. And then after that, I give them a journal prompt around, let's see what came up with that. Did you feel guilty during that? Did you feel some people feel so angry at their child's diagnosis, they can't sit still because they don't wanna see the anger or the sadness that comes up. It's almost like they're afraid it's gonna be old, faithful. Once it starts to come up, it won't stop. And then they think, well, how will I function? So giving them an outlet to move those emotions out in a way. And, you know, some people are journalists, some are not.

Sara Intonato (17:30):

Some people wanna do an audio clip, you know, fine, just get it out. And that is the point. A lot of these parents are emotionally overwhelmed because they have all these low grade feelings of anxiety and overwhelm and stress beneath the surface. And going around and saying, I'm overwhelmed is easier than saying I'm sad. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>, I, I felt blindsided. I'm, I'm hurting. I'm angry. And so giving them a place and a safe way to do that with things that are actually calming and healing for their nervous system on the other side, I believe, and I've seen in my own life, is this special sauce that they need. Mm-Hmm.

Caspar (18:10):

How much of the healing wi within what you're teaching and, and going into is really on the level of the family, the level of the partnership and the level of you being actually doing the work yourself.

Sara Intonato (18:24):

I think you can't even begin to address the family and the partnership until you address yourself.

Caspar (18:29):

Hmm.

Sara Intonato (18:30):

Full

Caspar (18:30):

Stop. Gotta start there.

Sara Intonato (18:32):

Full stop. I think that we've seen that actually not work for families doing everything for the kids. They're going on the date nights. Either they're doing the things that people are telling 'em they're supposed to do to be good parents and good partners. And at the same time, they're feeling the stress and the overwhelm still. Mm-Hmm. And so giving them the way to slow down and be with themselves. And I also wanna say for people who think the idea of slowing down is really scary. I give you physical things to do with your body. Like those of you like me who needed the workout too, <laugh>, I give you that. I promise. So, but giving them the chance to be with themselves. And one of the things I think is so powerful about yoga, meditation, breath work is you can't hide from yourself. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>, maybe you can hide your feelings of stress and anger from your partner, or you think you can, but you can't hide them from yourself when you're in silence on that yoga mat or breathing and being with your body.

Sara Intonato ([19:28](#)):

And it's a safe place to let those feelings and emotions move. And I, you know, have a wonderful husband. We've been together since we were at Boston University, you know, 20 years ago. And we've had different timelines on our healing journey. And he is been a great parent and a great partner, and he's only really starting to just uncover these things for himself. Can I say with a hundred percent certainty, would our partnership be stronger if we both discovered these things right away? Probably. Yeah. I believe so. And at the same time, I don't judge him. I, I don't, you know, scorn his journey. That's his journey. I can only my journey, but I think that it's evidence for me to be able to say, taking care of yourself as an individual is priority number one.

Caspar ([20:20](#)):

Yeah. And, and I think a big part of taking care of yourself individually. Also, and I'd love to hear your input on this 'cause you have, you, you coach and you do this thing with full potential method, which is great. And I think potential like leads into this idea purpose, this idea of like having something bigger than yourself or, you know, I, I am totally on board with, I do this for my family. Like that's a big purpose in it. But do you feel you, like a lot of people need to find their own purpose beyond that sometimes something that takes them into this idea of like, you know, have releasing their full potential in that. Is that part of this like, training in what you're doing?

Sara Intonato ([21:01](#)):

Well, yes. And the word fulfillment comes up a lot for parent. I don't feel fulfilled in what I'm doing as a parent, as a partner. They're great and something isn't feeling settled or like it's clicking. And as you heal your nervous system, those answers will find you Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative> you'll feel comfortable sitting in silence so that those insights can find you. You're not gonna find those insights when you're going in a thousand miles an hour. You're not, you never get your aha moments when you're busy at the grocery store. You get them when you're walking outside for that 10 minute walk by yourself in silence. You get them in those moments. But you can only handle those moments of silence when your nervous system is available. And if your nervous system is offline because you're in fight flight freeze, you're not gonna be available for those types of downloads and fulfillment.

Sara Intonato ([21:47](#)):

And I think also a lot of parents feel a lot of shame around admitting they don't feel fulfilled only by their children or their partnership. And, and I think there's, especially with moms, they feel like they should, <laugh> shouldn't being on the PTA be enough, you know, shouldn't being a great homemaker or a great



working mom be enough? And they feel guilty admitting they want some type of dharma divine purpose to relate to this. And, and I think that opening the door to healing yourself and quieting your mind is what gives you those answers. So we do see that come up a lot. Fulfillment is the word that almost everyone uses, which is kind of interesting too.

Caspar ([22:32](#)):

Yeah. It, it's something I, I truly believe is part of the healing journey of anyone is truly understand what is my purpose, my place in this all, where are my passions, my hobbies, and, and really go after them and, and light that fire within you that so many people are missing and unfulfilled about.

Sara Intonato ([22:49](#)):

That's right. Yeah. That's not kind of how my book came to exist. Because when Rocco was two and newly diagnosed, people told me, you have so many tools, you could go write a book. And I thought, no, that's not what I want. I'm supposed to be Sara, the yoga teacher forever. This is what I'm passionate about. I don't want any of that. This isn't what I signed up for. I remember saying that out loud. This isn't what I signed up for. The autism thing is not what I signed up for. And I had a lot of resistance to it. And whether I signed up for it or not on the 3D level, I obviously signed up for some type of soul contract with it, because here it is in my life. And so I had to make peace with that. My purpose is gonna look very different from the purpose that was my purpose prior to this.

Sara Intonato ([23:28](#)):

And I had to do my own healing around acceptance. And at the same time, accepting, but never subscribing to the commonalities or glass ceilings that are imposed upon families with autism that I saw all the time. I became really comfortable saying, that's not okay for me. I'm gonna fight for more. I'm gonna do this thing. And the only reason I could do that is because I had the energy. I was healed. I wasn't overwhelmed, but only after I felt like, okay, my son's in a really dialed in place. He's doing great. He's learning and communicating more and growing. I feel really centered and calm and strong. I've accepted my life. I love my life. Now I feel fulfilled in it. Now I can write the book. And that was probably eight years of me just focusing on my own healing, being a great parent. And, you know, I'm a very spiritual person and I really had to lean on those spiritual teachings of my son and I obviously have a soul contract together, and we're here to fulfill some purpose together on this planet.

Sara Intonato ([24:37](#)):

At the same time, I have my own lessons to learn. He has his own lessons to learn. I can't control his journey. He's 13, you know, he's gonna be an adult soon. He's gonna find his own purpose in his own way too. And really seeing the beauty in, in that, instead of fighting it or feeling bad about it, or resenting that this wasn't the purpose that I thought I was gonna have. Yeah. And, and the healing in that regard is really important. You meet a lot of wonderful families who are still kind of curbing the issue of denial or acceptance. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative> or they're afraid. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> you know, they're, they're spending a lot of time in their mind, often the future wondering about, what if my child never goes to college? What if they are unable to have a job? What if they never, I never have grandchildren.

Sara Intonato ([25:25](#)):

You know, like, they start letting their mind go into all these places. And that can seem consuming. If you don't have tools to bring yourself back to the now, you're never going to do everything you can



today to achieve the best possible outcome in the future. And really, it just comes down to doing the best that you can today, every day, trusting that tomorrow you're gonna face the things that you need to face tomorrow, but worry about that tomorrow, today, just do today. Yeah. And I'm very thankful that I had my spiritual teachings to lean on when I had all those big questions in my head too.

Caspar ([26:01](#)):

Yeah. I think this is where it's so important to have tools so you become resilient because you will be thrown into these challenges. And like we were even talking before we started recording, like, you know, at your child's school, the idea of like the, the health class teaching 'em how to change a tire <laugh>, because that's a stressful thing. And most people freak out and have like panic attacks over that these days. Like, no, you have the tools now to go at this in a calm even way. And, and anything life throws your way in the future, you can use that as well. So those spiritual tools, like sometimes people just think it's like, oh, that's really nice for you, but you know what, how would I, we use that? All of us could use that. All of us could use, you know, de-stressing techniques and everything else out there.

Caspar ([26:46](#)):

Yeah. And so many different things that you will find work for you. Yeah. So it's really important that, that way I'd love to hear your experience because I, I always love to hear all parents' experiences of how they navigated the kind of the medical world with doctors, professionals, everything like that. Right. Because obviously you've been, you know, you, you knew it three years old with Rocco and you had autism you know, I'm sure you went through different types of practitioners and everything, giving different diagnoses or looking at it differently. What was the experience like overall for you?

Sara Intonato ([27:21](#)):

Well, I will say I probably had a healthy distrust of Western medicine long before that. And, and also an appreciation of it. Good start too. Good. Right. An appreciation of it too. You know, like had broken lungs when I was a kid, so thankful there was a hospital for me to go to to get those fixed. Right. Like, not knocking that at all. But I remember when I was in college and I was dealing with anxiety and I was having my tonsils out at 21 years old, and I was, you know, dealing with seasonal allergies that no doctor could fix, thinking like, there's gotta be a way to fix this. And I remember, I knew I was fed up when I was at Boston University, went to this amazing allergist in Boston, and their solution to me was to leave my windows closed from March until November.

Sara Intonato ([28:06](#)):

And I remember thinking, you know, I have to leave the house, right? Like, I have to open the door and go to class, and I have to get a job over the summer and I have to go outside. Isn't it healthy to get fresh air? And something just felt so wrong to me. I didn't have any other solutions at the time. I just knew this doesn't feel right. And so I was spending some time in Long Island. My husband and I were dating for less than a year, and he had already graduated. So I would go visit him on the weekends and vice versa. And I was going to yoga studios around to take class when he was at work. And one of the studios had an acupuncturist there. And I had never had acupuncture before. And I remember telling the owner of the studio, the yoga teacher, what I was experiencing with my allergies.

Sara Intonato ([28:50](#)):

And if I went into a room with a cat, it was like itching. Mm-Hmm. Eyes walking, couldn't wear makeup. I looked like a raccoon. It was, it was so uncomfortable. I was literally like crawling out of my own skin.

And I thought, there's gotta be something here. And so I, she said, book an acupuncture court on this day, because on this day the acupuncturist teacher comes too, and they have an herbal clinic and they talk about herbs that might be able to help you too. So I booked the appointment, I went, first thing the guy said to me was, have you ever given up dairy? And I said, no. Does that do something <laugh>? Why? And because why did no doctor tell me to try that Noian even spoken about diet was never spoken about. And so I got an acupuncture treatment. They gave me herbal mixtures to help me with the allergy symptoms while we strengthened my immune system with acupuncture.

Sara Intonato (29:39):

They gave me some dietary changes to make. Cutting out dairy was one, I was a different person in probably three days. Hmm. And I remember my mom, who's a nurse, she was a nurse at Boston University too. You probably met her back in the day, <laugh> being so impressed that I was feeling better so quickly with holistic solutions. She was starting to get fed up on my behalf. Well, what, why didn't the allergist make this? Why does no one talk about this? So then that was the cascade of me going into yoga in a much richer way. I did my first cleanse at 22 and felt like a different person again, and started exploring what foods made me feel good, not feel good. 20 years later, still exploring that. So I had many years of exploring healing on my own in holistic communities before I became a parent.

Sara Intonato (30:28):

I had both my kids at home with a midwife. So grateful I made that choice. I can't imagine where Rocco would be, had his early months been full of unnecessary interventions and medications and whatnot. So again, going back and thanking my 28-year-old self for doing what I did. And I always looked at what's the right mix for my family of asking questions. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative> taking face value. So I sought out a pediatrician who didn't force vaccinations, and my kids were young and not in school. So I took it slow with them. In hindsight, I wish I'd done none, at least for the first few years of their lives. And with my daughter, she basically had none. She only had one. And with Rocco, I thought I was doing the right thing by, you know, giving him only one at a time, really spaced out nursing exclusively, giving him vitamin C, all these things.

Sara Intonato (31:24):

And for him it might've still been too much. Will I ever know if that was the only cause? Probably not. Did it contribute? Yes. and I've no problem saying that, but I always just looked for practitioners who were gonna listen to me because I knew by that point I knew a thing or two about healing and diet and how my body worked and how doctors didn't help me. And then grateful for the practitioners and the other doctors who did. Yeah. And so I really looked for pediatrician specialists who listened to me. And ultimately, one of the doctors who I work with now and have for many years with Rocco is my favorite doctor because he says, when a mom comes in here and he only works with kids with needs, when a mom comes in here and says, something's not right with my kid, we do not stop until we find the thing that she's talking about.

Sara Intonato (32:14):

And sometimes you find it on day one. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> sometimes it takes you three months to find it, but she's always right. 'cause No one knows her kid better than mom. And he said, and I've seen too many doctors tell the mom she's crazy and send her home. And so for me, that was the most important thing. I wanted a doctor who I could communicate with, or a specialist of any kind who took

me seriously, just like I take them seriously. And that, for me was hugely important. And I'm really grateful to have found those people because

Caspar ([32:45](#)):

Oh, it's so important.

Sara Intonato ([32:46](#)):

It's essential. Right.

Caspar ([32:47](#)):

Yeah. I, I was watching this Netflix documentary the other day. I don't know if you've seen it, take care of Maya? No.

Sara Intonato ([32:54](#)):

Oh, I heard of it, but I haven't seen it.

Caspar ([32:56](#)):

Yeah. Someone told me to watch it was, it was difficult to watch. Yeah. as someone that knows like the, the medical side of it, and like, and you see like, it, it's, it's a girl going through some rare kind of condition and the parents are trying to figure it out and going to specialists. They don't know they're told, it's in their head, it's anxiety. She just has panic attacks. But this girl's in lots of pain and just struggling. And, you know, it ends up, they, they go to like a ketamine specialist who puts her in like in a ketamine coma. And it's multiple days, but she has to go to the hospital and the hospital says you're abusing her with the ketamine. They take her away, the mother commits suicide,

Sara Intonato ([33:31](#)):

Heard this terrible

Caspar ([33:32](#)):

It awful. But like, you see just the let down on so many levels and you feel the pain of a parent just trying to do the best by their child. But to me it was like, I, I could even understand some ketamine treatment for some very, very rare condition. Everything. But why not try acupuncture first? Why not try, why not exhaust solutions that may not kill the child? Because it literally, they, the doctors like this may kill the child and change 'em forever. It's like, well, can we try like other things? And unfortunately, too many people, parents, everything feel they've exhausted themselves, but the awareness is not there. That there are hundreds of other solutions they could still try. And that's where I feel they, they really could have become empowered, but every doctor's like, nothing left. You have no solutions. This is it. And it's like, I, I just want it to be like, reach out to me and be like, there's so many things out there.

Caspar ([34:26](#)):

And I think that's a really important message, like you're saying, is that continue to try, be very aware. Do it on yourself too. Experience acupuncture. Yeah. Acupressure, you know, chiropractic like energy medicine, spiritual practices, yoga, meditation, and the list goes on and on. Experience those things so that if ever your child needs something, you can lean on some of those and go up the ladder, down the ladder all around before you might make a drastic decision that forever changes everything into the

future. So, you know, it's, it's really wonderful to hear parents such you, your husband that, that are trying so many different things and then, you know, able to navigate a little bit better when things go, you know, wrong for a child.

Sara Intonato (35:09):

Absolutely. And I think a lot of people are stressed about they're paying for health insurance, and if you're like me, health insurance doesn't cover the things you wanna do or that you need to do more anyway. And the way I approach it is, one, have a great accountant because medical write-offs are a thing and they will tell you.

Caspar (35:26):

Yes, absolutely. So

Sara Intonato (35:27):

Keep that, keep track of that stuff. Yep. It helps you. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative> to look at the money people invest in their house or their car. You live in this house 24 hours a day and you only get one if your car breaks down, it gets totaled. You can buy another one. You can't buy another one of these. So I never batt an eyelash at investing. Sometimes it's like, all right, gotta, this is a big thing. I better take this seriously. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>. But I never batt an eyelash at investing in health and wellbeing because it allows you to enjoy everything else so much more fully. And certainly with Rocco, I've seen him perform so much better in school. He's a very sensitive biome. And so I, I can immediately notice, you know, if the sleep goes awry, I'm like, oh, maybe it's time to get blood work done or something.

Sara Intonato (36:12):

You know, I can really see how investing in his health allows him to do things that people have told me were impossible. You know, he goes to a typical school, he's in eighth grade there, he's in a special ed class, but he's an extrovert and he loves being around people. He is regulating himself. And that's not to say he never has a behavior, but when he has one, that's an indication to me that something isn't feeling right with him. And we look at what that could be. And I just imagine how uncomfortable he would be in his own body if he were eating foods that didn't serve him, that were making him break out and, you know, have skin issues. And we saw that when he was little as we started trying different things so we could see with our own eyes how fast the healing response was when you found the right mix And ditto with his supplements that he needs. None of it's arbitrary. It's all based on blood work and things that he needs. And and I, to all the parents who are doing that already for their kids, bravo and now go do it for yourself.

Caspar (37:11):

Yes. Yes. You know, apply what you're doing to your child, to yourself. Right. Right. That should be a unified front that our health together, not your health, my health or anything. Our health is what really matters.

Sara Intonato (37:23):

And one thing that is a commonality amongst parents of kids with needs that I didn't really notice until I started my consulting practice for them, almost every single one will say at some point, I worry about what's gonna happen to my child when I'm not here anymore. And that's something I don't hear parents of neurotypical kids talk about. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>. But every parent to a kid with autism who

can't communicate clearly, I hear them talk about it. So what better way of caring for them than ensuring you're here and you're healthy and able to lead them and support them however they need, as long as you possibly can. Doesn't it feel good to go to sleep every night knowing you are doing that with everything that you have and you're gonna be there for them as long as you can because of it. And be smart and set up the other things too for when you're not here. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. But you do that anyway for your neurotypical kid, probably so, or to some degree. So why not take impeccable care of yourself now so that they have you as long as they can have you,

Caspar (38:27):

Your longevity and vitality is the greatest gift you could probably give to a child, I think. Right. To be able to be there and, and be able to, to, you know, as long as possible. And it isn't the greatest gift to you. You get extra years with your child. Like, I, I don't know what would be more valuable than that. That's literally no price tag on that.

Sara Intonato (38:46):

Yeah.

Caspar (38:47):

Sara, if there was one thing you would want readers of your book to take away, what would that be?

Sara Intonato (38:54):

Don't read the book and then put it on the bookshelf. I want you to read the book and then go do one thing. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative> from the book every day. Keep it on your nightstand. Keep it next to your yoga mat. Use it as a guide manual for your self-care and your life every day. I already had a neighbor of mine say I read it, and then when I saw the exercises, I didn't do them yet. And I was like, well, I live around the corner, so I'm gonna get on you to do them <laugh>. Yeah. And she said, well, please do, because that's my goal for the winter months anyway. You know, she was rushing to leave town for a conference that she's speaking at, but don't do that. And she and I had a loving joking exchange about it, but don't do that.

Sara Intonato (39:35):

It's not just something to plow through. It's not a box to tick. Oh, I read that book. Yay. It's a guide manual to keep reading and keep looking at. And I know that you and I talked about Louise Hay as being an important person in our lives, and she was the first self-help book that I ever read in my life when I was 21. And I remember keeping her book on my nightstand, and often I would just open to a random page and see what message was there. And so often it was the message that I needed that day.

Caspar (40:05):

Absolutely. I love that. Right. Go in with an attention, intention, pick a book up and go to a page and see what it teaches you. And it's most likely something you need to hear, right. For your greater book.

Sara Intonato (40:16):

Yes. And this book can do that for parents too. What do you I love that. Yeah.

Caspar (40:20):

Yeah. I love that. Because too many of us, like, just like you said, tick it off. Next book. Next book. And I've learned, like I, my goal isn't to read a book a week, it's to absorb books and actually apply them. Right. And slow it down a little bit. Because again, it's just, you know, information. There's so much of it out there already. We don't need just more and more. We need to apply it too to take it in, absorb it and apply it. So I love that your, your message is there. Where can people learn more about you, your services, the new book?

Sara Intonato ([40:49](#)):

You can come to my website, saraintonato.com. Everything is there. If you buy the book, you, everything is in here too, and there's a QR code you can scan to hop on a call with me. Awesome.

Sara Intonato ([41:01](#)):

Ask your questions, I'm here to help. And just remember that you don't have to go it alone. I think that you've been to enough places in the world to see different cultures that live in a village community with generations helping younger generations. Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative> and neighbors and relatives helping each other. And here in the states, everyone's so isolated and they have this superman mentality or superman mentality of like, do it all yourself. Look good while you're doing it. Don't admit any weakness. Ask, never ask for help. That's a sign of weakness. And I think certainly in parenting kids with autism, you realize that's not sustainable really quickly. Yeah. So ask for help. I have a group for parents who are sick of being isolated and ready to change that. And I love meeting real people and reminding them, you're not alone on this journey.

Caspar ([41:47](#)):

Hmm. You're never alone. And, you know, asking for support is one of the greatest things you could give to yourself and to the other person. You'll realize that people want to give support that gives them value and purpose. So it's a revolving door. Sara, thank you so much for coming on. Great to see you and keep up the amazing work. You know, I love everything you're doing and it's really paying it forward. So thank you.

Sara Intonato ([42:08](#)):

Right back at you. Thank you.

Caspar ([42:11](#)):

So remember to go check out Sara Intonato, that's I a, I'm sorry, saraintonato.com. And check out the book, Emotional Healing for Parents for Children with Autism. Until next time, continue writing your own healing story.