Trina Felber: Hey, everybody this is Trina, and thank you so much for joining The Healthy Me again. I am super excited. I have a super spectacular guest today. Today, Katie Kimball is joining me. Katie is an amazing entrepreneur, an amazing mom who took something I know that's really passionate for her and developed something that she shares with other people, other moms and other kids around the world. Let me tell you about Katie. Katie, welcome, really quick.

Katie Kimball: Thank you so much. I'm excited to be here. What an intro.

Trina Felber: Katie Kimball is a Michigan mom from Ohio, so there's a little rivalry there, but Michigan mom of four kids and founder of The Kids Cook Real Food ecourse. She has shared her journey to real food and natural living for nine years at Kitchen Stewardship, a blog that helps families stay healthy without going crazy. I feel that. The video ecourse for kids services over 6,500 families and from six continents, and Katie's wisdom on getting kids to eat healthy foods is sought after by many, and I believe that too. Katie, welcome.

Katie Kimball: Thank you so much.

Trina Felber: First off, tell me, tell me, tell me, how did you get started with this?

Katie Kimball: With the whole thing online or just the kids cooking part?

Trina Felber: Well, everything because you, you're ... Tell us a little bit about what Kitchen Stewardship is and then how that led into what we're going to talk about.

Katie Kimball: Sure. Kitchen Stewardship kind of grew out of the conversations in my own head when I had one little baby and I was trying to learn to feed him properly. It just was a tidal wave of, "Oh, my gosh. Every bite counts so much," and I had never bought anything organic in my whole entire life, but of course, for him, I had to buy organic and learn how to make baby food, so I was spending a lot of time in the kitchen with my own thoughts, and they were percolating about how difficult it was, and this was reflected in other moms around me how difficult it was to keep to a budget and be healthy and not spend all your time in the kitchen and save the earth. It was like, I just felt like those four things pulled on our limbs and like we were the stretched, poor, frazzled mom in the middle.

As I was learning hacks in the kitchen, I thought, I have the heart of a teacher, like I'm a teacher by trade, and I just thought, I think I could help other people not be so frazzled, like find those things that are in the middle that can save you money and time and be healthy and good for the environment. That's where Kitchen Stewardship was born, that we are stewards of all the gifts we've been given and how can we do this and still be good stewards of our sanity as well.

In teaching adults and families how to cook, I heard over and over, "Man, this is so hard because I was never taught to cook, like I never learned this from my mom." I think our whole generation kind of feels skipped and gypped, like we got totally skipped by the passing down of the trade because convenience food kind of took over and the whole idea of "I want my kid's childhood to be better than mine; therefore, I will never make them do any chores."

Trina Felber: Well, yeah, and fast food became the mainstream for a lot of households.

Katie Kimball: For sure-

Trina Felber: So-

Katie Kimball: Yeah, Stouffer's lasagna. Yeah.

Trina Felber: Yeah, it's a no wonder there's a generation that says, "I don't know how to cook." I think we're getting back into the kitchen, at least the idea of getting back into the kitchen at least the majority of the nights at home. I know we still eat out. We try to make wise choices when we do eat out, but getting back into the kitchen with the kids. I was telling you this story before we jumped on on how my daughter at the age of 10 a week ago just mentioned to me how she wants to learn how to cook. I was like, "This is perfect. I'm talking to Katie who's got this program that is developed for kids." What do you think that the biggest obstacles most people find when they're trying to get their kids to eat healthy. Let's talk a little bit about kids.

Katie Kimball: Well, the culture is not exactly supporting healthy eating for kids. I don't know if you've noticed.

Trina Felber: I haven't noticed. Are you kidding?

Katie Kimball: It makes it ... You really have to swim upstream with a motor boat pushing you in order to get broccoli on your kid's plate. Nobody is marketing vegetables to our kids unfortunately. I agree with you, the pendulum is finally swinging back in the right direction. I think people are realizing the importance of healthy food, and unfortunately, a lot of times, it's because we're getting sick or we're allergic to something or sensitive to something or have some sort of intestinal distress, and it's like, "Oh, gosh. Maybe I should eat some vegetables now."

Yeah, getting kids to eat vegetables is really, and not just vegetables, healthy food in general, things that don't have sugar, it can be a real challenge. The parents who started when their kids were babies are definitely patting themselves on the back now because it's a little bit easier. Their palate [inaudible 00:05:07] against sugar and toward healthy things, but it's just ... I mean, everything in parenting is a challenge. You're exhausted at the end of the day, and so at the dinner table to have one more battle, you've already done the homework battle, you've done the "hey, by the way, you have to get dressed and brush your teeth and brush your teeth" battle, you know what I mean?

Trina Felber: Right.

Katie Kimball: Everything, the kids don't want to do any of these things, and so we just get exhausted. Is it one more thing to have to fight about at the end of the day? I try to give parents a lot of skills, strategies, techniques and habits that you don't have to think about where if you just set the rule "this is what we eat and this is how it's going to be," it diminishes that exhaustion.

Trina Felber: It is exhausting. By the time you sit down to eat, sometimes you're like, "I'm done. Stop talking." The dinner table's meant for conversation, and sometimes you're so overwhelmed with all the noise that happened all day that you're like, "I just want some peace and quiet. This is my meditation moment," but it is true, like getting kids to sit down, slow down, and enjoy the food that they're eating and actually taste it has a lot to do with family time and getting kids to enjoy the moment of actually preparing it too.

You talk about power struggles. What are some of the power struggles that people have to overcome?

Katie Kimball: Yeah, I mean, our generation, and maybe one before us, was a big "clean your plate" club generation where you need to eat everything on your place, that's the way life works, you don't move on to dessert or you don't move on from the table unless that's done. Well, obviously, if the parent says, "Eat," period, and the child says, "No," period, now we're in a power struggle because there are certain things you can't make kids do. You can't make them sleep, you can't make them eat, and you can't make them poop. Those are the things. If they decide that they want to say no about something and stick with it, those are the things, and so we really can't stand on the other side and say, "Thou must."

One great way to diffuse the power struggle is to offer some choices. You can offer different things at the meal. You try to have, well, you know, one thing that they like, but maybe you serve them a small serving of what they like, and a bite. I like to tell parents just if it's a new food, and especially if you have a real selective eater or a real strong stubborn personality, don't put a whole serving on the plate because that's overwhelming. You might say, "I only need you to take a bite," but they see that pile of food on their plate, and they're like, "Yeah, right."

Trina Felber: Oh, it's huge. I remember that. One bite was huge when you don't like it. You have to get over that. It's hard. That tiny little morsel is huge to a kid, so.

Katie Kimball: Yeah, but at least, at least don't put a whole serving on their place. Just put the tiny little morsel so that they know that when they've finished that, you're not going to try to con them into more.

Then a nice one, again, and this is for really stubborn kids. Most kids, if the parent is keeping it pretty chill and not entering to that power struggle too hard, they'll take a bite. They'll take that "no, thank you" bite or that first-taste bite. Different families call it different things. It's just really important to continue to encourage your kids to do that because physiologically, it may take 5-10 times of having a food touch your tongue before you like it. We have to encourage, and for really stubborn or really picky or selective kids, it might take a hundred times, and so we parents just have to be perseverant and just have that expectation. "I know you didn't like broccoli last week. You still get to taste it this week."

Trina Felber: It's funny, we started talking about taste buds. Now, my twins are eight, and Mia is 10. We talk about the ... I'm a nurse, so everything has its name, and we talked about taste buds one time, and we talk about how taste buds change, so they know that even if they didn't like something a year ago, your taste buds ... One day, my kids, one of them, I don't know if it was Cash or Roman, walked up and was like, "Mom, my taste buds changed. I didn't like this the last time, and this time, it's so good." It's fun to use words like that and let them know that things change over time too.

Katie Kimball: Yes, absolutely, and we'll say things like, "Oh, that's okay that you don't like that yet. Maybe that's more of an adult flavor," and of course, there's some reverse psychology to that too but-

Trina Felber: Well, yes, because, yeah, as soon as ... Or "the older kids like this." "Usually the older kids like this" is another way to create that "I want to be the older kid."

Katie Kimball: Yup. Absolutely. We just don't want to put them in boxes. I think too many parents just accidentally fall into the habit of like, "Oh, forget it. He's picky. He won't eat that." Well, no, now he won't because you just set that expectation really low. We always want to use growth language with our kids.

Trina Felber: That's such great advice. I know that a lot of my listeners are moms, or parents, dads, and it is this struggle with kids to get them to eat even healthier choice and just giving yourself the okay that knowing that it's okay as the parent to talk to them a different way and model them after you and let them see what you're doing, and even if you don't like something, you try it, it does help the kids see and relate to food a little bit differently.

Katie Kimball: Definitely, and take hope and encouragement from the fact that your kids just told you their taste buds changed. I've seen that in my own. I had, my now six-year-old would never touch anything green when he was in kindergarten, and it was like he went into first grade, and he goes, "Oh, I like broccoli now." Same thing.

My husband just started liking sweet potatoes this year, and he's a little older than 10, so believe me, it's always possible for your taste buds to change, or you get a different presentation. Maybe it's got some spices you like better or sauce or roasted versus sauteed. There are many ways to serve a vegetable.

Trina Felber: Balsamic glaze is one of my favorite, like drizzle points of anything. I can drizzle balsamic glaze on anything.

Katie Kimball: Amen to that.

Trina Felber: Now I've gotten Mia like, "Mom, can I have some of that balsamic?" so things ... What's one of the most effective ways you found to help kids just each healthier, get into a healthier habit?

Katie Kimball: Well, I mean, I gotta say, it's working with food. It's getting in the kitchen. Studies show, but also, people prove, that any time kids are involved with food, whether it's the grocery shopping or the gardening or the meal planning or the meal preparation, they're just more likely to feel positive about giving it a taste.

Trina Felber: Okay, yeah.

Katie Kimball: I can't tell you how many members in our Kids Cook Real Food ecourse will write to me, and they'll say, "Gosh, I have tried to get them to eat," whatever it is, it's often celery because that's in one of our first videos. "I've tried to get them to eat celery a million times, and all of a sudden, just because they spread the peanut butter on it, they're like, 'Mom, I want to taste that,'" and you know-

Trina Felber: And they act like it's brand new. They're like, "Mom, why didn't you ever offer me this before," and you're like ...

Katie Kimball: Right? I know. It totally changes kids' perspective because they feel involved, they feel proud of it, there's-

Trina Felber: And I-

Katie Kimball: They're in it.

Trina Felber: What's fun for me is to let them actually make the smoothie. They pick out the ingredients. I always tell them, if it doesn't look pretty when it's done, you still have to taste it. You just have to taste it, so they'll throw in the broccoli, like I'm not ... Because otherwise it'd be me. I'd be like, "No, don't put the broccoli in there. It's not going to taste very good." I mean, if it's not green one or whatever, but they just throw it all in, and then they ... When they make it, it's always good. If they saw me put all that in there, they'd be like, "No, mom. I saw the celery go in. I know it's in there." I just love letting them participate and go to the fridge and pick out what they want and just toss it into the blender.

I know that there's parents out there that are thinking that there's going to be a lot of pushback from their kids. People are thinking, "I'm not sure I can put Brussels sprouts on their plate and go through the power struggle and make them eat them." Do you have any last tips for smoothing out the pain or smoothing out the path to healthier eating?

Katie Kimball: Yeah, so I like to teach a technique I call bridging the gap. It's taking the foods that your kids already like and figuring out what that brick path might be to something that you what them to eat. Pizza's a really good example. Most kids like pizza. You take baby steps. You figure out, and with the kids, "What's new topping you can put on the pizza?" Maybe it's sliced tomatoes. Tomatoes are already in the sauce, but when they're sliced, they're like, can be a totally different food to a kid, and it's not about hiding it. They know they're in there.

You just say, "Ah, we're just going to take a bite," and just, whatever it is, you might fail that time, you might try something different. Try whole wheat flour instead of white flour, try making a piece of it home made, a home-made sauce or a home-made crust.

I mean, so this is, again, really, really tiny baby steps to take them from five-dollar hot-and-ready pizza to something a little closer to what you want. Eventually, you can make pizza into anything. You could do a pizza quiche. You can do pizza vegetable. We'll dump a jar of marinara sauce on frozen vegetables and add some mozzarella cheese, and we're like, "Oh, it's pizza vegetables." Twice as many vegetables go on my kid's plate because it kind of looks and smells and tastes like pizza.

There's ways that you can, again, be a little creative with what brain cells you have left at the end of the day to figure out how you can connect foods that they really like to foods that you want them to eat. That can be a really positive strategy, especially if they're invested. You said it. They are getting some skin in the game and getting in the kitchen and working with you. They're just more likely to want to see it through and go to the end with you.

Trina Felber: Before we talk about your course because I want to talk a little bit about that, you talked about getting their hands in the game. Give us some tips on how parents can get their kids involved in the cooking because I know a lot of parents are somewhat afraid, like you've got a lot of utensils in there, I have all the kids' safe knives, the plastic ones and stuff like that that they use, but give us your tips for getting the kids hands-on in the game.

Katie Kimball: Usually, the kids really want to get in there. They want to be with the stove. They want to use real knives and stuff.

Trina Felber: They always want to be with the stove and the knives. That's the fear.

Katie Kimball: That's motivating for the kids. It's not that hard to say, "Hey, let's play with sharp knives today," but it's getting over the fear for ourself in our own head. I mean, that's what I try to do with Kids Cook Real Food, and I actually have a 10-minute knife skills and safety class that I would like to give your listeners as a free preview so you can ... This is for ages 2-12 because, really, you hold a butter knife and a chef's knife in the same way. We teach those basic holds and techniques all the same, no matter your age, and we use fun phrases, we have a lot of ... It's all safety. We use a lot of safety techniques and phrases. The kids love it. They remember these phrases, and I think the parents feel a lot more comfortable taking them in to the kitchen because they know that they've actually been trained. You don't have to think, "Oh, my gosh. Where do I start? What knife goes with what food and what kid," or whatever.

Trina Felber: I like that ... I have your course, so for anyone that's listening, she's got that course, Kids Cook Real Food, and it's kidscookrealfood.com, and if you want to preview the class, to preview it for free, it's kidscookrealfood.com/healthyme, but what I love about it is that you've got it broken down into like different ... It's beginner ... I don't remember the language.

Katie Kimball: That's okay.

Trina Felber: Novice, beginner-

Katie Kimball: Yeah, beginner, intermediate, and advanced.

Trina Felber: And advanced, yeah. You get to pick where the level your child is, but inside there then, you also have flashcards or all the tools that you need for your kids to actually learn how to cook, and it's really good for the parent because as a teacher, I'm not true teacher by nature, I wasn't trained how to teach, but you forget the basics. You forget that you need to teach the basics. For me, the best thing is, is I know how to do this, but it teaches me how to, it gives me the tools to teach my daughter and my kids, my boys how to actually use it.

When I look at a spatula, I know what it is. I assume they do, but you explain how to use these tools, so I love the technique that you use in there and the different tools that you offer in your course.

Katie Kimball: Cool. Thank you. Yeah. You're so right. It's totally, it's a different skill knowing how to use something and knowing how to break it down and explain it to someone who's never used that tool before. Yeah.

Trina Felber: You have in there, for adults, there's information for adults as well as for kids. Parents, don't be afraid of the course. You might learn something too. But yeah, I love the fact that you broke it down for kids and for adults. It's such a great course. Again, she's said it's for any ages 2-12, and even beyond I would say, any kids that, even teenagers that want to start with the basics, start with it. It's a great course. I urge anybody that has kids to check out kidscookrealfood.com for the course, and then if you forward slash "healthyme," you'll also get to preview what you're, the knives, it's the knives course.

Katie Kimball: Yeah, yeah. It's video, and there's kids of all ages in the video. That's really motivating for other kids too. They're seeing real children using the knives, making mistakes, getting corrected by me, being safe, nobody cut any fingers off. It was good.

Trina Felber: That's awesome. Anything else you want to ... I don't know if I asked you all the questions that you usually like to go over, but is there anything else you want to tell the listeners about your program or about your Kitchen Stewardship?

Katie Kimball: Sure. Well, I mean, just, my passion is getting kids in the kitchen, and we totally need that resurgence and so just encouragement is what I like to leave parents with, that no matter what your skill level is, no matter what your child's personality is, there is something for them in the kitchen, and if you can just take a deep breath, remind yourself it's important, pick the right time. Don't bring kids in the kitchen right before dinner when everybody's stressed out.

Trina Felber: And hungry.

Katie Kimball: Do it ... Yes, exactly. I like to work with kids in the kitchen right after lunch because they're all pleasant and well-fed, and you can just prep stuff for later. That's something that a lot of parents don't think about because the kids are asking to come in like right at crunch time, and so thinking ahead and just making it a point. Raising kids who know how to cook is a great gift to give your kids.

Trina Felber: This is perfect because today's my birthday, and so-

Katie Kimball: Happy birthday.

Trina Felber: Yeah, thanks. I turn 50 today, so it's my 50th, believe it or not.

Katie Kimball: I do not believe it. I'm looking at, you do ... No way. No way.

Trina Felber: Thanks. It's my skin care and my-

Katie Kimball: Of course.

Trina Felber: ... healthy food. Anyway, but what's really fun is my kids, we were supposed to go out to dinner so that I didn't have a mess and I didn't have to clean up, and they informed me that they're making dinner for me. Here you go, yeah, so they're making dinner. They love it, and I'm not really allowed to be there, so I'm going to go to my yoga class while they're making dinner for me tonight. I'll have to maybe do a little video and put that in with the podcast.

Katie Kimball: That's so fun.

Trina Felber: Guys, check out Katie's course. It's kidscookrealfood.com/healthyme to check out her free preview. Get your kids involved because the sooner they get their hands on it, the sooner it goes in their mouth. If you're cutting it up, chances are, it's not loaded with sugar and processed anything, so you want your kids to grow up and know the healthy options before they leave your house, right?

Katie Kimball: Yes. That was perfectly said.

Trina Felber: Well, thanks, Katie, for joining me. Where can they find you? I'm sure you're on Instagram and Facebook. Give us where they can find you.

Katie Kimball: Yup. We are Kids Cook Real Food on Instagram, and then both on Facebook, so if you want to get into the research and what's healthy for you and what's not, that's Kitchen Stewardship on Facebook, and then if you just want have real encouragement to be a good parent and get those kids eating healthier, that's Kids Cook Real Food on Facebook.

Trina Felber: Ah, Katie, you're amazing. Thank you, thank you, thank you for getting the word out and helping parents learn how to get their kids back involved in the kitchen because I think the pendulum really is swinging and I really think that the movement has to be for the kids to really know, but in order to know, they have to be involved. I thank you so much, and my kids love it, so I'm excited.

Katie Kimball: Great. Well, me too. Thank you for letting me talk to your moms and dads in your audience. I loved it.

Trina Felber: No problem. Thanks, guys, for joining us, and we will catch you next time here on The Healthy Me.

Thanks for watching. Make sure you subscribe to keep learning how to create your healthy self. See you next time.