

Ep 55 - You can't change the past, but you can change this

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SPEAKERS

Michelle Rogers



Michelle Rogers 00:00

Hey, parents, Michelle here and I apologize in advance if the audio was a little weird. We are up bright and early these days. Julianna, who is a seventh grader, made the high school varsity swim team, and that requires her and I to get up early so that she can practice with the team. So I thought, what better way as I'm trying to get my steps in to see if I could record a podcast, and if this works out, well, I will try and improve the audio recording. But I felt like I had to kind of get on the horn today, because there's been a lot on my mind since the announcement last week. So if you didn't know, or if you haven't heard there, I'm an autism mom, just like many of you who are listening, and the current administration has announced that they feel that Tylenol use is the one of the leading factors in causing autism. So if you were pregnant with your child and you use Tylenol, you if you have a child with autism, they're saying it's a contributing factor. I didn't watch the press conference in its entirety because I had a feeling it was going to be something like this. And I'm sure, like many moms out there, I knew this was going to be very triggering. I'm going to be honest, I really probably haven't even faced my own feelings on this. I already have my own beliefs as to what I potentially think were the contributing factors to Juliana's autism. And I want to preface this whole conversation as me first telling you that I don't know for sure why autism is here or why it's so prevalent in so many children, I do, personally not have any medical experience. I just have a mother's tuition, going through this with her, going watching her develop normally or neurotypically, and then going backwards and feeling in my heart of hearts, that whatever it is that I saw was and I again, I'm not a professional. I'm just going off of what I feel from what I see as a mother, I felt like she went backwards. And to me, if a child's going backwards, to me that felt like some damage was done. And I can't say for sure of that. A lot of people feel like it could be genetics that kids are born with autism. I personally don't feel that way in my scenario, but I had kind of felt like something happened to her, and I wasn't sure for a long time. And this is a really tough subject to talk about, because it's so controversial. One of the blessings, I think, of what's going on right now, whether you agree with the announcement or you don't, is that at least autism is being talked about. It really needed to be talked about, because this is the pandemic of our time. Forget about covid, swine flu, whatever's going on the pandemic of our time is that we

have the sickest children we've ever had in the history of this nation, and nobody's talking about it. So whether we agree with this announcement or the things they're saying or not, to me is inconsequential. What's more important to me is that it's being talked about. So I'm hopeful that we can all come to a conclusion with all of this exposure that's going to lead to something for all of us to understand autism better, whether or not we agree with the findings or not. So last week, it was announced that they thought this Tylenol use during pregnancy would be a high risk factor for causing autism. And I haven't really like processed what was said. We were away when the announcement came down. My brain is just kind of telling me, You know what? Juliana's doing great, so we don't need to think about painful things right now, because Julianne is doing great. But I felt like it was important for me to at least address it with you guys, because some of your babies aren't doing great, and I can't imagine what you're going through. I'm on the other side of my diagnosis, I'm trying to help as many parents get on the other side with me, but I'm sure a lot of you who are listening are struggling, and to hear something like this if you happen to have taken Tylenol during your pregnancy, I'm sure can be devastating. And here's my i. My experience with all of this. So I thought, in honor of all the families that are still fighting for the opportunity to create an independent life for their children, I wanted to do this episode, even though it's very painful for me, even where I am, it's painful for me, and tell you my perception of what the best way forward is, whether you believe this information or you don't. So to give you some history, I had Juliana when I was 34 I was pregnant when I was 34 I had her when I was 35 so 34 going on 35 and she was my first and it was not an easy pregnancy by far. On top of that, I was traveling and working full time, and I got sick a few times, and at the advice of my doctor, I was told a few times to take Tylenol cold, and a few times I was also had headaches. I don't remember every moment of my pregnancy, but I do know I wasn't allowed to take Advil, but I could take Tylenol, and I was told it was safe, and I listened to that, and I know had taken it quite a few times. I don't know, quite a few times, but definitely when I look at her pregnancy and her near typical, neurotypical brother, I did not take Tylenol anywhere near as much as I had to with Juliana, because I wasn't it was a different circumstance. With Cody. I didn't get as sick. It was a different pregnancy. I don't remember having as many headaches. I don't know you know what I mean, so I but I do know specifically with her, I did take Tylenol, and I took Tylenol cold a few times as well. So here's my thought on all of this. When Julianna was little, we had decided, when I was pregnant with her, that we were going to bank cord blood, which I did, and I banked the cord blood, and a clinical trial came up at Duke University where they were infusing children with autism with stem cells from umbilical cord blood that was stored. And I was very interested in doing this with Juliana, because I thought maybe it would help at that point, she was just three, and phase one of the trial had only about eight, six or eight participants, and Juliana would have been patient number two for clinical for the phase two of this clinical trial. So I found a mom who was in phase one when I was making the decision on whether or not I was going to go through with this procedure for Juliana. I'm a very due diligence girl. Shocker, I know, but I said I'm going to talk to this mom and see what her experience was, infusing cord blood into her child. And she was very gracious to get on the phone with me, and very adamant that her son was vaccine injured, and that's why she thinks her son had autism. And I remember at that time, I was never, I was never a believer of that, that I had been told by my doctor, that I had read that the administration at that time said that vaccines do not cause autism and that parents shouldn't be thinking that that the Andrew Wakefield research was garbage, you know, he lost his license, or, I don't know what ended up happening with him, but that it wasn't accurate. So up until that point, I had been vaccinating Juliana on the schedule, except I would delay them, so meaning, like, I would only do one at a one at each visit, versus, like three or two. And I always did that because, only because I didn't like needles myself. And I'm like, I can't watch my baby get three needles in her thighs. So I only did one at a time. And if, of course, if you do one at a time you're going to fall behind. So we ended up doing that, and



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we end up doing that. And then I speak to this mom, and at that time, my son, Cody, was a little over a year old, and I said, Okay, I get off the phone with her. She had rave reviews to say about the trial. Just to give you guys a quick update, that trial was shut down, they can they surmise that infusing cord blood with stem cells did not show a significant enough gain to consider this a perfect official treatment for autism. I knew, know that you can go to Panama, you go to Mexico to get this treatment done. My personal opinion being a part of it. It wasn't a needle mover in getting Juliana where she is today. It was me learning how to teach her. I still advocate for that, even as I went through that trial. So it never discouraged anybody from doing their due diligence as well. This is my personal experience with it, and obviously they shut the study down because. They felt like there wasn't enough information to conclude it was helping children on the spectrum. So when I get off the phone with this lady who was adamant that an MMR shot in particular caused her baby to go backwards in development the next day, turns out, I have to take Cody to his wellness visit, and he's probably, I want to say, 13 months at the time, maybe a little older, maybe maybe 18 months, I can't remember. And I hung up with her, and I told my husband as I get into bed, I'm like, I talked this lady, she says the MMR shot caused her son's autism, but they disputed that, you know, like, that's not true. And I'm like, tomorrow, Cody's got to get a shot, but I already think he got MMR, and at that point, Cody was like a rock star. He was developing above and beyond, past his milestones. So I said, I'm going to go to the doctor tomorrow. I'm going to mention the trial to them, and I'm going to tell them what this lady said, and I know that they're going to tell me that, you know, vaccines don't cause autism, but, you know, it doesn't matter, because I think he already had MMR. And then the next day, I go into the doctor's office, and they're like, you know, Cody has to get shots done. I said, Yeah. I said, What's what's he do for? And they're like, oh, it's time for MMR. And I remember just freezing in my chair, and I'm like, Are you sure? Because I thought he already had that. And the lady gets his chart, the nurse gets his chart, she looks it over, and she's like, No, Cody needs MMR. And I remember just like, I don't, you know, like, Listen, I'm not, like, a voodoo person or anything like that, but I do believe in intuition. And I felt like there was something in that moment that was telling me, like, something is wrong, you know, like, how could I have this conversation less than 24 hours ago? And I was so certain he had already had the shot, and then, actually, that wasn't the case. So, like, what you know? What's going on here, you know? So I remember thinking, I can't let him have the shot, like I just felt like it was too close to home, and I made the decision not to get the shot that day. And it was the first time I thought, like, maybe there is something to this, not just because of this coincidence, but in that moment, like I remembered things I forgot about with Juliana. Like, I don't remember which shots they were, but after two shots in particular, she had really high fevers, and I gave her Tylenol, because that's what she was told to do. So I remember two of the shots, she ended up having, like, a 105, like, it was a really high fever. And I know babies can run higher fevers than adults, but I remember thinking, oh my gosh, this is really high, and I was ready to take her to the hospital. So I remember the doctor saying, this could happen, and I can give her Tylenol. And I ended up giving her Tylenol. So you could imagine how I'm feeling right now, thinking about everything they're saying. Because not only did I take Tylenol while I was pregnant with her, but then I gave her Tylenol right after a vaccine, where I probably should have tried to, like, give her a cool bath, or there's so many things I would have done differently, right? But he was a new mom. I didn't know what it was doing, you know? I mean, it did the best I could, and I don't have any proof to anything that anybody's saying whether Tylenol is causing autism or these vaccines are causing autism. I just know how I feel as a parent and as parents, especially as moms. We had these we were holding these babies in our tummies for 10

months. We're very connected to them, very in tune to them. So to dismiss a population, a mass population, for feeling a certain way about vaccines, I think is wrong, because something if they felt like everything was a certain way, and then they go and they take the recommended shots, and their child goes backwards. That's the only time we don't listen to a parent like it doesn't make any sense to me. Here's my thought on this. This has always been my thought on this, and I do want to kind of circle back to this announcement, because this announcement makes it seem like it's our fault if we took Tylenol that we gave our kids autism, and that's a hard pill to swallow for any of us, but I had had this feeling before, and when I was going through the process of researching these clinical trials, I talked to a like, an like, I guess, like a more naturalistic, not so Western medicine kind of doctor that a lot of people in our community and the autism community went to because he had his suspicions about vaccines at the time. So to kind of backtrack a little bit when I was making this decision on whether or not to do this clinical trial, not only did I talk to a family that had been through the clinical trial, I talked to several doctors. Rogers about it before I made the decision for us to do it. And I meet with this natural doctor, and he makes a comment that being overweight, in his opinion, is one of the contributing factors to autism. He didn't say anything about Tylenol. He believed vaccines, the artificial ingredients in certain vaccines are a contributing factor to autism. The food we eat because of the way it's, it's made. Now we make it bigger faster, make it grows faster. It's, it's, they make it bigger. There's antibiotics and cat and, you know, protein and all of these things are contributing factors to autism. But he said one of the biggest advices he gives to parents, or expecting parents, or women who want to get pregnant is to lose weight. And I have struggled with my weight my entire life, so this was the first time I had come in contact with the feeling that somebody or something, or somebody out there or something that I was I caused Julian as autism because I was overweight. You remember feeling very devastated by that. He said, there's studies that show being overweight causes, you know, can cause this autism. And I went and looked, you know, at first when I got home, I was hysterical, you know, thinking like, because I was curvy, that I caused her autism. And I went home, and I started searching for the study he was referencing. And the study I found was that if you overeat, when you overeat, you cause inflammation, and when you were inflamed, that could have a correlation to an autism diagnosis. And I sent him an email, and I said, Show me where it says in this study. And I sent him a link to the study he referenced when I went there that said being overweight causes autism because I see it as when you overeat, your body becomes inflamed, and that could be correlated to autism. And he got super defensive, and he said, Oh, it's in the study. You need to look closer. I'm like, I am looking closer. I said, it says overeating, not being curvy. You know what? I mean, like an excessive amount of overeating. Now, listen, I'm not, I'm not, like, unrealistic here. I'm overweight because I overeat. It's one of my biggest it's one of my life struggles. But to hear a doctor say something like that to you felt just as difficult as hearing Tylenol cause Tylenol uses causing autism. So here is my kind of wrap up of what I believe about all of this and what's being told to us. And I hope this is helpful for you, because I understand if you're struggling with this. I know what this feels like, because I'm thinking it too. You know is that this, I can't get in the time machine and turn back time and lose 50 pounds and not vaccinate her and tough it out. I hated that. He said that it was fucking stupid to say that tough it out with my headaches or my colds or whatever. I can't go back in the time machine and do that, and it's as much as this is painful to face, whether it's true or not, my personal thought about autism is that I feel like something happened to my daughter, that she was developing fine and then she wasn't, so that would tell me something happened to her. It wasn't something she was born with. And this is just my gut intuition, and that whatever happened to her, in my belief, is a contributive factor of multiple things. I think it's the food we eat. I think it's the shit in the vaccines, and probably the Tylenol. Like, I don't necessarily disagree with it. It doesn't I



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probably wouldn't have taken it had my doctor not told me it was safe. If I had, if I was by myself in the wilderness, well, in the wilderness, I guess you wouldn't have Tylenol. But if I didn't have anybody to ask, and Tylenol was an option, I probably would have not taken it. But because I was told I was it was insisted, because I tried not to take anything that. Why are you making yourself suffer? That would be more stress to the baby, and maybe there is truth to that too. But to take it, it's safe. Women take it for years, and they do believe that so to have this overwhelming amount of children sicker than they've ever been in the history of our country. Do I think Tylenol is the only reason? Because I think Tylenol has been taken for years and years and years by pregnant women? No, I don't, and this is my personal opinion. But do I think could it be a contributing factor, like inflammation, not being overweight, but inflammation, or the shots and the Tylenol and it be a tipping point? Yeah, and this and the and the pesticides that we are exposed to in the air we breathe. Yes, I think all of that could be contributing factors. It's not children that are just the sickest we've ever been. Us as adults are the sickest we've ever been. So it has to be coming from something so from my personal belief, I believe it's a little bit of everything, and I can't jump in a time machine and change the course of history. And I've always said this because the vaccine conversation has been out there for a while, I still think that that still needs to be looked at. I think they need to do a clean, clear study that's federally funded that compares unvaccinated children's health to vaccinated children's health. To say for sure that vaccines don't have isn't a contributing factor. But of course, because I believe the healthcare system is so money driven, I don't know if that study will ever really happen. I know they are trying to do that now. I hope and pray they do. But as a mother who had two children, one on the spectrum, one not knowing, I did things very differently as soon as I could with Cody than I did with Juliana, I'd be unrealistic. It would be unrealistic in my mind to think that there aren't things that she was exposed to that he wasn't that contributed to her having autism, but at the end of the day, I could beat the shit out of myself about this. And I've said this. I've said this in past, past podcast or a blog post. Listen, if giving her the vaccines, me taking Tylenol, me being overweight or contributing factors through her autism, I can't unring that bell. And it is the is it the best use of my time to sit here and beat the shit out of myself? And if I know a survival brain, a survival brain just wants to stay in the cave. It doesn't want to do a lot of work. It just wants to keep everything on autopilot. And if I know a human brain is designed this way. It loves this news because now it's another reason to keep you from doing things differently, from pushing the envelope, from for doing the hard work that's necessary to get your kids potty trained, get your kids talking and stopping their problem behaviors. I can't unring the bell of autism if I was the cause of it or not, but what I can do is show up as her mother and give her the best shot at living an independent life. And I want, if you can walk away with anything from this blabbering today, is this, is that listen, whether it was the cause or not, is inconsequential because we already in the club. Maybe that information will be helpful to future people, or at the very least, and this is why I'm, like, so adamant, like, I'm not like, a super fan of doctors, because of everything that I've been through and all of the pushback I've gotten when I've tried to ask questions against their medical education. Right is that parents, or expectant parents, question fucking everything. You have a right to question everything. This is the most precious thing that you could ever create. As your child, you have a right to question every fucking thing they tell you to do. And you go with your gut. You want to do it. Do it. You don't. That's fine, too. And that's one of the biggest if I give my if I could give pregnant Michelle or pre pregnant. Michelle, advice, I'd be like, Listen girl, you research everything. You don't just listen to anybody blindly. You research anything, and then you go with your gut what feels right to you. So I want you guys to kind of think of it from that perspective. But all that aside, we're all here. We all have children on the spectrum. Is it the

best use of my time to mull over the fact that maybe Tylenol use caused autism, or is it better use of my time to say, You know what, I can't do anything about it. I did have Tylenol. I did give her shots. I do think there's more than one contributing factor that I probably exposed myself to that may have harmed her or I exposed her to that harmed her, but it's not healthy. It's not helpful. It's not going to do anything to change the outcome of where we are right now. I can't change the past. I can't unring that bell, but I can choose how I want to show up today. And I think I did say this originally when this administration first came in, is that, listen, I get it. I hear you. I hear your pain. I know how awful this feels, but it's not helpful. And what is helpful is getting out of your shit, strapping on your big girl or big boy panties, and getting to work to help your kid. That's all we can do. We already have the autism. What they're talking about now is for those who don't, and this may be something that you can do to avoid it, whether you agree or not, so it's just something for you guys to think about. This is how I see it, and I really haven't unpacked my whole feelings on this, but I kind of had my own sadness about. This because I was already blamed for my daughter's autism, for being fat years ago. So I know what this feels like. To feel like, Is there something I did that caused this? And I just kind of say to my brain when it wants to have that game, or wants to play that game of me being, you know, blame, blaming myself for this, that this is not helpful. This is not going to help me to get her more friends. This is not going to help me to get my child high train. This is not going to help me to get my kid talking. If anything, it's going to hinder me. It's going to give me another reason why we don't shouldn't do the hard work and why we should quit, and it's not fair, because there's so many people that do shit like like that they didn't know where was harmful. And I understand this is about our children, but it's not helpful. And if it's not helpful, I'm not allowed to think it. And this is what mindset work is all about. I tell my parents, you know, I get some parents that work with me, and they just want me to get their kid potty trained. They don't want to look at their brain. And can you get a child potty trained? Or can you got get a child talking, which is white knuckle grit, probably you could, but it's a much more painful existence. It's exhausting. You won't have much left in the tank to do anything else, and more people quit that way than any other way. We have to nurture our mindsets and entertaining thoughts like this, taking this information, and just beating the shit out of ourselves for taking Tylenol or giving our kids vaccines or whatever the case may be, is not going to help change the trajectory of the future. I can focus on the now in this moment, on how I can help my child move forward, or I can focus on shit I can't control, make myself feel like shit, and I do nothing in the moment. So if you could take anything away from this, I know how this feels. I'm feeling it too. I haven't really like directly faced the set on because I it doesn't matter because I can't undo it anyway. What does matter is, what can I do today to help move the needle so that she's living the happiest life that she can live, and the sun's coming up here, and she's about to walk out of a high school varsity swim practice as a seventh grader. And you know what? Tylenol or not? Me being fluffy or not, I call it fluffy, not fat, is inconsequential, because she's doing great, and she's doing great because I didn't sit in that kind of shit. I made an intentional decision that that is not helpful to think it. I can't unring the bell if I if it did have it, but I can show up today, make better decisions, question everything from a healthy place and take action that's gonna move her forward. So this was a rough one for me. I hope you guys can hear it all right. I hope this was helpful, and I'll see you next week. Bye, everyone. Bye.