

JEWISH LATIN PRINCESS

ALI KATZ, CREATOR OF HOT MESS TO MINDFUL MOM,
& AUTHOR

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You're listening to Jewish Latin Princess Podcast by Yael. Every week get your dose of inspiration from the world's most uniquely talented Jewish women and from Yael herself. Seeking profound and practical ways to live a joyful, richer Jewish life? Welcome to Jewish Latin Princess Podcast.

And now, Jewish lifestyle expert and bilingual blogger at www.jewishlatinprincess.com, your host, Yael.

Yael Trusch. Are you a hot mess when it comes to motherhood? Be honest, it can be totally overwhelming, and yes, even those of us who's thought we had it all under control before we had children, well, let's just say things change, right? How do we become a better version of ourselves? Better parents. How can we be more present and not totally overwhelmed and as they say Yiddish, *zufliegen*. My guest today went from hot mess to mindful mom. I have Ali Katz on the show. You're listening to Jewish Latin Princess everyone. Thanks for tuning in. I'm your host, Yael Trusch.

Ali Katz is the creator of www.hotmesstomindfulmom.com. She is a certified meditation teacher and certified life and parenting coach, she has been featured on Fox News, plugged in to Dallas/Fort Worth, the Houston Chronicle; among other media outlets. She is also the author of the bestselling book, *Hot Mess to Mindful Mom: 40 Ways to find Balance, Joy, and Happiness in Your Everyday*. And is now the author of, *Get the Most Out of Motherhood: A Hot Mess to Mindful Mom Parenting Guide*, which just won the bronze medal of the Living Now Book Awards. Ali is super real on practical and nothing Ali will tell you will make you feel like you are less. Wherever you are, Ali has been there with you mommas. We talked about bratitude, about mind control, prioritizing self-care. How can we teach our kids to be kinder to each other? A big one, right? And of course this is sprinkled with a nice doze of spirituality as Ali is a very spiritual Jewish woman as you will now see. Get ready to learn new tips to help you get the most out of motherhood as well, well, be less of a hot mess and definitely more mindful. Here's Ali Katz.

[Theme Music]

Yael Trusch. Ali Katz, welcome to Jewish Latin Princess!

Ali Katz. Thank you for having me. I'm so happy to be here with you.

Yael Trusch: Congratulations on your new book. Your second book, *Get the Most Out of Motherhood*, and I saw that you were recently awarded the Bronze medal of Living Now Book awards of the Living Now Book Awards, that is really awesome.

Ali Katz: Thank you. It's just, I love this book so much and I'm so happy to get it into everyone's hands. I've been getting such good reviews and people telling me how helpful these books are that is just what my purpose and my passion is, is to put this tools in the hands of everybody out there. I hope it can help some.

Yael Trusch: Amazing and you come from personal experience because you're the mother of two boys which is no easy task.

Ali Katz: Yeah! And it's so funny because my kids have asked me, they're like—When are you writing a book about teenagers? And I'm like, when you're done being teenagers. And I have all the lessons that I learned.

Yael Trusch: That—

Ali Katz: So I really write about where I am in my life and I always speaks from experience and research and all sorts of things, but I really write about what I've gone through in my path and how I've learned so everything is super authentic and relatable and acceptable because I've been through all of it myself.

Yael Trusch: Right. Yeah, people feel like it is totally relatable. That is amazing. And speaking about being relatable, I mean, you started this whole journey by starting *Hot Mess to Mindful Mom*, so this is the second book that you've published under that *Hot Mess to Mindful Mom* series which started as a blog and got you to teaching people about mindfulness and meditation. So, Ali, takes us back to pre- *Hot Mess to Mindful Mom* Ali, the one who was a hot mess like... , right?

Ali Katz: Yeah! It's funny people often asked me this question. They say, were you really a hot mess? And I say, I was, but I almost didn't know how much until I wasn't anymore.

Yael Trusch: Oh!

Ali Katz: If that makes any sense. So it's almost like—

Yael Trusch: No, tell me.

ALI KATZ: Until I had sort of gotten far off from my journey that I could look back and say, I can't believe I used to live like that?

Yael Trusch: Aha.

ALI KATZ: That had really hit me how far I've come. You see what I mean? So, looking back I can see that even though I was a good mom and I was obsessed with my kids, and just like everybody is? I look back and I see that I was really bringing me exhausted, depleted, overwhelmed version of myself to my family and the world. I was probably yelling a little more than I would have liked, I must have been very overwhelmed and very exhausted, and just last on my list I felt like, looking back, I can see that I felt like I was supposed to be last on my list that that would somehow being a motto was like proving my love to my family.

If I was last it meant that I love them so much that I would put them on first. But then, when I see how far I came on my journey when I started prioritizing self-care, and mind fullness, and meditation in a few minutes a day just for me, I could see that I brought such a more energized, joyful, centered version of myself to my family in the world. That they we're getting the very best of me instead of tired, unhappy mommy they we're getting present excited mommy. And I was such a better mom to my kids and that's when it hit me that just a little bit of self-care goes a long way because we can't give what we don't have. So if I didn't boost myself up and if I didn't used these tools on myself, I couldn't bring them to my family.

Yael Trusch: Right!

ALI KATZ: And I couldn't see them where I want them to be.

Yael Trusch: Yeah, we can't give from an empty vessel. Right!

ALI KATZ: Exactly!

Yael Trusch: But, so Ali, on what point... how old we're your kids when you kind of said, wait, something has to shift here. This is not really the way I want to be or the way I can be. Like at what point? How old we're they?

ALI KATZ: My kids? Okay, so I was like 35—so my kids were probably like 4 and 6.

Yael Trusch: Okay.

ALI KATZ: They were young enough that I had to do a little training in terms of ... so they—this is how I explained what I was doing to my kids because my whole journey kind of started with meditation.

Yael Trusch: Okay.

ALI KATZ: And just a little small bits of meditation so, first my kids, you know, I got up early in the morning before they got up and sometimes they would get up extra early and they would interrupt me like every five seconds for all these little non-essential things.

Yael Trusch: Mm-hm.

ALI KATZ: And so I kind of had to train them and I said, listen, if there's an emergency; if your bleeding, if you threw up, you know you can of course interrupt me; but if it's not an emergency and you just want to be with me, you can always be with me. You can bring a book into where I am and lay on the floor, you can lay with your head on my lap, you can just lay next to me, you can always be with me but you can't talk to me. I need a couple of quite minute because when I have this quite minute I'm a better mommy all day long. And they we're like oh? You're going to be a better mommy? Okay! So they sort of let me have that quite time because they could feel the difference it was making in my life.

Yael Trusch: Mm-hm.

ALI KATZ: And in their life, too! How I was coming to them. So they caught on very quickly and you know we're big supporters of my new program. So it was great.

Yael Trusch: Wow! That's really amazing. Yeah, I guess when we set proper boundaries, you know, the people around us who love us they accept those, you know?

ALI KATZ: And boundaries are important. It's okay to have boundaries with your kids. We want them to grow up having boundaries.

Yael Trusch: Yes.

ALI KATZ: As they're practicing care and respecting themselves and honoring their need. How are they going to know how to do that if we don't model it for them?

Yael Trusch: Right, we need to model it. You mentioned the motto or the kind of motherhood-victim mentality that can be so pervasive and we could fall into that trap without even thinking that we'd be that type to fall into it? Like where do you think it comes from? What is going on?

ALI KATZ. I think it comes from a place of love and care. I don't think...

Yael TRUSCH. Mm-hm.

ALI KATZ. I don't think everyone that does that thinks they're doing the right thing.

Yael TRUSCH. Hm.

ALI KATZ. It comes from love. So if not, it comes from a positive place it just can go so far overboard that it's not positive anymore. Then if it comes negative for ourselves because we deserve that same loving care that we're giving to our family, right? We deserve that, we have to honor our own needs. Like we said with the modeling, we want our kids to grow up honoring their needs, how are they going to automatically know how to that if we don't model it for them. So I think it does come from a place of love and then I think that once we've realized we've sort of falling into this trap, I think compassion is really important. Not beating yourself up in anyway and saying I can't believe I did this to myself and how did I let it get so far but just saying, okay, so this is where I am right now and how can I sort of step by step come out of this a little bit and just show more love and care for myself just like I do for my family.

Yael TRUSCH. Right and I guessed our mothers—it was a little bit different their generation. I mean do you think your mother suffered through this? I don't... my mother like... I was just...

ALI KATZ. I don't think so.

Yael TRUSCH. Right? Totally different.

ALI KATZ. Times were so different. I don't think if the same pressures existed. I don't think there is as much judgment and comparison kind of what we have with social media where we're looking at everybody else's life online and what people post looks so perfect and then we feel all this pressure; it can sort of be a merry-go-round of comparison and judgment and we have to notice if we're on that merry-go-round and make a conscious choice to get off.

Yael TRUSCH. Yeah and I think also on the good thing of this is we have in a way more freedom, more opportunities, more choices. I think our parents' generation and for sure our grandparents' generations they were just busy with a lot of other stuff they weren't so hyper focused on their kids like we can be because think a lot, we have the luxury. It's really a luxury but—

ALI. Right.

Yael: It could go overboard like you said.

Ali Katz: Yeah.

Yael Trusch: So, Ali, and now that we're on it, come on, it's overwhelming and for mothers, for women in general, we tend to connect a million dots. We think of one thing and then within seconds were thinking of 15 others.

Ali Katz: Housework.

Yael Trusch: Right? It's like our brains are wired like this mishka bubble of wires all fumbled together, right? However, we are meant to go beyond that. We're meant to become more mindful, more present, even if that's a little bit of our nature, but it's challenging. What do you suggest we start? How can we start little by little be more present?

Ali Katz: Well, I loved what you said that it is challenging and I think that's the very first thing, as acknowledging that.

Yael Trusch: Okay.

Ali Katz: Yeah. So you can feel successful because especially when it comes to meditation let's say. Even bits of meditation, I teach a lot about one minute meditations and what you can do to feel calmer and more present in one minute. Well, you are going to have thoughts popping your head, whether you are doing a mindfulness meditation or whether you are saying a prayer or whatever you're doing.

Yael Trusch: Mm-hm.

Ali Katz: Thoughts are going to come into your head because human beings are wired to think. The average human being has a thought about every two seconds, okay?

Yael Trusch: Mm-hm.

Ali Katz: So that can be about 50 or 60,000 thoughts in one day. So to think you're even going to sit for two minutes and not have any thoughts even one minute is unrealistic. So you want to set yourself for success knowing that's normal and that you're not doing anything wrong and there's misconceptions about let's say meditation or any mindfulness practices that you're going to sit and you're just going to clear your mind, okay?

So people think that's what's supposed to happen but that's not what's going to happen. You're practicing. You're practicing, it's focused and thoughts would pop into your head and then you'll say, okay, you know what? I'm planning our vacation, I'm thinking about my grocery list, I'm thinking about what I'm making for sure bottom Friday night, okay I've left my meditation. I've left my prayer, let me come back. And that's the whole thing is keeping to come back, making that choice to come back and back and back, and that is success, and everything we do in our meditation or in our prayer is about doing it in everyday life. It's about having a better life.

So, let's say you take one minute and you practice a one minute meditation and you bring your focus back and you bring your focus back. You're exercising that focus so that when you're outside of meditation or outside of your mindfulness practice you're better at focusing. So you are more present with your kids and people that you love or your spouse or your friends or whatever activity you're doing you're more present in it. So we only become more present if we practice that, and we will automatically know how to do that.

Yael Trusch: It's like a muscle that we have to practice.

Ali Katz: Exactly. Exactly and what you see is that you don't have to attach to all this stuff so thoughts come into your head and it's kind like you can pretend there's a sort of other cloud drifting by.

Yael Trusch: Right.

Ali Katz: Like you don't have to attach to it. It's just a thought and you can let it go, and the other thing that I think is so profound and so important is, just because you have a thought doesn't make it true.

Yael Trusch: Right.

Ali Katz: You can think something it's not necessarily true. And so by saying to you for—

Yael Trusch: We have visitor.

Ali Katz: Okay. It's my dog—I turned off my phone but not my dog.

Yael Trusch: Well, you know, we can't do that much.

Ali Katz: So, anyway, you can ask yourself is this even true? You know if you're having a negative thought or thought of judgment about yourself or even someone else, is this true, do I really know it's true, right? And then there's this woman that I love, this teacher named Byron Kadey and she asked this

question that I think is amazing. Where would I be without this thought? Would I be more present? Would I be more calmer? Would I feel more confident? So sometimes I ask myself that. Well, if I wasn't hiding this thought, if I didn't attached to this, how would I feel? I'd feel so different.

Yael Trusch. Right, I like what you said about attaching to it. There's The Book of Tanya, I might have mentioned this too before, but it's the classic book of Jewish mysticism of Chabad mysticism per se. And he speaks, the author Rabbi speaks over there about us. We can't control what we think of meaning thoughts that pop up into our head like you said but we can definitely control what we think about. What we're—like you said before, what we were attaching ourselves to.

Ali Katz. Exactly.

Yael Trusch. And that's where the practice is, controlling what we're going to choose to think about and it's almost like if you allow your thoughts to come in then the more you do that or the more you attach to those the easier they will return and return. But if you just let them go, if you choose not to engaging them, then it's going to become easier for those thoughts not to even ever pop in. It's kind of like diffuses...

Ali Katz. Exactly. It's almost like being the observer and being like, huh? That's interesting what I thought as interesting.

Yael Trusch. Right.

Ali Katz. You don't attach to what's interesting and another thing that I think is so important for moms especially or anyone? Is that every emotion that we have, every thought, it's okay. But our reaction to it is not, okay. So it's okay to feel frustrated with your kids that is going to happen so we're not superhuman, we're not robots, we're going to get frustrated with our kids. Yelling and screaming is probably not the proper reaction that you want but taking a second to go from the other room and take time breath and calm down and tell your kids that you just need a moment so you can respond to them versus reacting yell, that's more appropriate.

Yael Trusch. Right.

Ali Katz. So not feeling bad about the emotions that you have ever just choosing a response and a reaction that feels good to you. And sometimes that takes awhile and takes awareness and practice and we do something that doesn't feel good and we say, okay, that doesn't feel good. What I want to do

different next time? Next time I'm not just going to yell. I am going to tell my kids I need a minute for myself.

Yael Trusch: Right.

Ali Katz: And so we just slowly can sort of change how we respond to a situation by just becoming aware of what feels good to us.

Yael Trusch: And I think that the key word here is also "slowly". Like you said before we also have to be gentle because we're very harsh on ourselves, women, and sometimes we beat ourselves up and that technique never works like, oh, I was such a horrible mother and how come I yelled at my kids and I'll never going to get it better. Now, it's okay. It's okay. Tomorrow's a new day.

Ali Katz: I used to say... oh, my goodness! I used to lay awake hours and hours every single night in my hot mess phase.

Yael Trusch: Uhuh!

Ali Katz: And just beat myself up all night over every stupid thing I said, every time I yelled, every response that didn't feel good.

Yael Trusch: Right.

Ali Katz: And so as I think that's a waste of energy.

Yael Trusch: Exactly.

Ali Katz: I can't believe I did that to myself. So my key that I sort of I tell people is, you are not going to overhaul your life in one false move. You're not going to say like I'm going to wake up tomorrow and be totally different. But it's picking one area that you want to work on and being consistent. So whether it's meditating for five minutes in the morning or being more consistent with your prayer, or saying, you know I am going to take a twenty minute walk every day, or I am going to do a little bit of spiritual reading or practice gratitude or whatever feels good to you, choose one thing and then be consistent with it. And I always say your tools don't work unless you work them. So you can't do something for three days and think it's going to change your life, but if you do something consistently for a few weeks then maybe it turns into a few months you really start to notice the difference. So start with one small thing and then be consistent.

Yael Trusch: You know you mentioned gratitude and I read some... I read an article that you've wrote that you try to practice gratitude very early in the morning, the first thing that you do when you wake up is you try to have a thought of gratitude. And I was so taken aback by that because I don't know if you're aware and I guess that this is my question, this is such a Jewish concept. This is the first words that we say in the morning. The Modeh Ani are those first, those twelve words where we express gratitude for our soul to come back into the world, into our bodies, and for God to have faith in us that we could give to this world and we could create, we can have a new creative day for ourselves and I just thought it was so special that you have that in you. Do you think that you inherited... it was like a Jewish thing or—

Ali Katz: You know what's so funny? You're saying that I'm like—okay, I'm going to start saying the Modeh Ani in the morning because I'm saying it in kind of an English . . .

Yael Trusch: Very nice.

Ali Katz: And like we talked about one small change so I have been, since we talked about it, lighting the Shabbat candles every Friday night.

Yael Trusch: Yeah.

Ali Katz: Doing that, it's just the reason now I'm going to bring the Modeh Ani. So once you get one habit going then you can bring another in. That so what I try to remember when I open my eyes is the first thing I say is, Thank you God. Thank you for another chance to live my very best life.

Yael Trusch: Exactly! Beautiful!

Ali Katz: And that's what I say and then—

Yael Trusch: It sets the tone for the entire day, that's the bottom line. It really does

Ali Katz: And I have another. My favorite new gratitude thing, because I'm always learning and thinking of new things that I have a bunch in *Get the Most Out of Motherhood*—

Yael Trusch: Uh-huh. Tell us?

Ali Katz: That too that I can share that there is even another one that I started doing after I wrote the book because you know it takes a year for a book to come out.

Yael Trusch: Mm-hm.

ALI KATZ: So there is a new thing still and one thing my favorite, my new favorite is I have a note that simply says, gratitude on my bathroom mirror.

Yael Trusch: Okay.

ALI KATZ: And I see it when I brush my teeth in the morning and the night. And when I see it I just think of a few things that I'm grateful for. I'm just standing there brushing my teeth anyway, and so I'm sure that I begin and end each day with gratitude which feels really good. And you could put a note, you could put that gratitude on your kids mirrors or your husband, that's really nice. But there's a bunch of things so we do family gratitude. We have a family gratitude journal.

Yael Trusch: Okay.

ALI KATZ: We keep on the dinner table and everyone, you know, at the end of the day write something that they're grateful for their day. And then another one we do morning mindfulness in the car on the way to school. So everybody takes like three to five nice long deep breaths to sort of settle their nervous system and then they think of three things that they are grateful for, big or small, and then everyone tells me why today is going to be amazing. And it puts everyone in the best mood, everyone gets out of the car for their day feeling great. You know those days? Have you ever had a day where like your kids are fighting in the backseat and one's crying and then you pull up the carpool lot and you say "get out of the car".

Yael Trusch: Me? Never. Ali, it never happens in your home. I don't know what kind of home you are running.

ALI KATZ: Those days, I'm like... I can't stand sending them to school like this. I got to do something and make everyone be in a good mood on the way to school.

Yael Trusch: Right.

ALI KATZ: And that's what we do in the morning. And then everyone is happy with a full heart and feels really good when they get out of the car.

Yael Trusch: I love that. I'm going to have to. My kids walk so I'm going to have to—

ALI KATZ: You do it while you walk or right before they leave.

Yael Trusch: Before they leave. I really, really love that. It's really so beautiful.

ALI KATZ: And you know what, those weeks, the kids we carpool with now, like the whole carpool has to do it when they are in the car with me, and they love it. And they get in the car and the first thing they say, are we doing mindfulness this morning? And then they tried the other moms. So now whoever drives does it with the kids. They love it.

Yael Trusch: Good for you. You see how a good deed spreads and spreads—

ALI KATZ: Exactly!

Yael Trusch: Like a ripple effect.

ALI KATZ: That's right.

Yael Trusch: I love it. I so love it. Okay, so tell us more specific techniques. I know you divided your book into three parts, mindset, method and moment. And you were very intentional about that. So maybe walk us through those three and then maybe you could give us some more techniques that we can put to use right away as calmer mothers.

ALI KATZ: Okay. So the mindful mom mindset is really about how you're preparing yourself to come to your life basically.

Yael Trusch: Mm-hm.

ALI KATZ: So I talked about what mindful parenting is to me. I talked about things like crowding out, how—this is actually something I've read first in a diet book like how if you eat enough of the healthy food, then you are not hungry for the junk food.

Yael Trusch: Absolutely.

ALI KATZ: And I was like, if that works with eating, I bet that it works with thought.

Yael Trusch: Yes.

ALI KATZ: So I'm like, okay, so if I think enough good thoughts, I don't have enough time in the day for bad thoughts. And so I talk about that gratitude, how you make your smart phone your mindfulness tool, getting rid of comparison, and judgment and then I do a lot of, I call it meditation for the real mom world. They give a lot... a whole chapter like how to meditate instruction for people that want to bring meditation in. All kinds of just ways to have a more mindful mindset about pushing left and flowing more and using your intuition, like a full time job and all those things that just sort of get you thinking

in the right direction for how to be more mindful and then mindful mom method is sort of extending this to your family.

Yael Trusch: Uh-huh.

Ali Katz: Prioritizing your partner, using transitions, technology detoxing and tech rules in your house.

Yael Trusch: Yes.

Ali Katz: The best way to get your kid's attention and get them on your team and getting your kids to be kinder to each other and doing this all with the mindfulness based approach. Mindfulness is really moment to moment awareness without judgment. But really just being in the moment and so I used—talked a lot about these methods and how you can bring this to your family. And then mindful mom moments are... I have five different ways that you really connect and bond with your kids in a meaningful and fun way. So that's always really important. Everything doesn't have to be so serious. We want to have fun with our kids, too, and really connect with them. I talk a lot about connecting and growing these bonds and respect before their teenage years. So really creating that open minded communication so that when the teenage years hit, you really have this foundation with each other to keep the lines of communication open.

Yael Trusch: Wow! So important. I guess we're both kind of in the same age group. How old is your oldest? Twelve?

Ali Katz: He's twelve, so he's preteen.

Yael Trusch: Preteen. Yeah, my oldest is eleven and yes, I see the preteens years, like the shift is happening.

Ali Katz: Oh, yeah.

Yael Trusch: I once heard a wonderful speaker, Dina Herwood. She's a mother of seven and her husband suffers from ALS, a degenerative disease, and she was telling us to... in one of the—she gave us a few tips. And one of them, really resonated with me which was, "say yes to your kids more often". And I was like, what? And she said, and I don't mean like indulge them or buy them everything they want. I mean think about it. Think about what you're saying no to. Like very often we're just saying no, no, no; because we just want to do other stuff, but really like the kid just wants you to read a book, the kid just

wants to play the music; let him play the music. The kid just wants to bake with you. Just look for ways to say yes. And I was like, wow! That's really true!

ALI KATZ. And she and I are true sisters.

Yael Trusch. Right?

ALI KATZ. Because I have a whole chapter on that in my first book, Happiness to Mindful Mom. Look for when you can say yes. So I'll give you an example of how these came to my life.

Yael Trusch. Uh-huh.

ALI KATZ. There is one time years ago where my little one was very small and I had my hands in a pot, dish gloves up to my elbows, scrubbing a pot in the kitchen and he came over and he said, mommy will you play this game with me? And I had that split second where I was about to say, as soon as I'm done with the dishes I'll play with you. And I said to myself—

Yael Trusch. Very typical reaction that any of us would have had.

ALI KATZ. But I didn't! And I said, do you know what? In my head like split second and I said, does it really matter if I do the dishes first or play the game first? No.

Yael Trusch. No.

ALI KATZ. And I said, you know what sweetie? I will play the game with you and I took off the dish gloves and I left the pot and his face just lit up that he was more important to me than a pot! You know!

Yael Trusch. Yes!

ALI KATZ. And I just... I will always remember that and so—it's not always possible. Sometimes you do really need to cook dinner and you need to put a younger sibling to bed and you can't always say yes but when you can do it. When you can, do it!

Yael Trusch. Yeah. It's so important. It's so important I have to have that so present because yeah, I need to find more ways to just say yes especially now they grow so fast and like you said they're going to be teenagers soon and if you missed these opportunities to just simply connect with them just because you're missing out on a lot, you know, when you said before, about—we we're talking about mindsets and you said about thoughts and it reminded me that I heard something that the brain works kind of

like a Google crawler, and if you... the brain will pull the thoughts that are searched for more often so it's like search engine optimization, so—

ALI KATZ. right!

Yael TRUSCH. If you want to optimize your thoughts then you have to try to engage with the thoughts that you really want because the brain will pull automatically what comes up most. It's very...

ALI KATZ. That's a really cool analogy, yeah.

Yael TRUSCH. Mm-hm. So talk to me about being kinder to each other because we... you mentioned that during the method, and that's a big one. I mean, come on! They are... they fight! It's like the most painful thing to parents, to see sibling just not being nice to each other.

ALI KATZ. Yeah.

Yael TRUSCH. What can we do?

ALI KATZ. I started utilizing this... I put a note on my fridge that said, "think". So just get your kids to think, okay? And it's like a big T-H-I-N-K. And it stands for: Is it true? Is it helpful? Is it inspiring? Is it necessary? Is it kind?

Yael TRUSCH. Oh, I love that!

ALI KATZ. And so I was going—we we're having a little phase where—as sad as it is to admit, my older one was like sort of not being so nice to his little brother all the time.

Yael TRUSCH. Mm-hm.

ALI KATZ. I'm sure no one else have it in their house.

Yael TRUSCH. No, we don't. Of course, right?

ALI KATZ. And so it sort of gave us a language to use. Like instead of me saying like be nice, I would say, okay, before you say something you need to think. Is it true? Is it helpful? Is it inspiring? Is it necessary? Is it kind? So he might say something, you know what sweetie, if we're using THINK, is that really helpful? I mean, for real, is that helpful? And he's like, no. And so it just gave a language besides be nice, because they could understand. Is it true? Is it helping the situation? Is it necessary? Or you just wanting to vent or take out your frustration on someone else because there's that other way to do that. A

healthier way is to act on your emotion than taking it out on your little brother. So, it just gave us that new language, that conscious language to use around being kind.

Yael Trusch: I love it and also it gave them a kind of turn the table to them and makes them think about what they were just saying instead of being on you, the nagging mother, who's always making a comment after they speak.

Ali Katz: Exactly. And they can use that language with each other, like, you know what? I don't feel like you were thinking when you said to me. And what we did when I introduced this concept was, we modeled, we kind of role-played a little bit, and we run through some examples and I would say something and they will have to determine if I used that criteria and then they took turns practicing and it was really helpful.

Yael Trusch: I'm going to go, right after we hang up, I'm going to go put it up. We have a board on our kitchen. I'm going to go put it up and then explain it to the kids when they come home. I love this, I really do.

Ali Katz: Yeah.

Yael Trusch: And what about technology? You mentioned technology and I know that's a big one for so many moms, and the use of technology at home and detoxing and setting boundaries around those.

Ali Katz: Yes. I mean I think it is really important because our phones, it's a blessing and a curse. They're inspiring. We connect with people, we read beautiful quotes, we get ideas and recipes. You know there so many good things about it but it can be a time suck and it can make us feel much less present with our loved ones.

Yael Trusch: Yes.

Ali Katz: So we need to just have boundaries around it. Okay? I read this statistic that you think teenagers are the worst offenders, but it's like 20s, 30s and 40s and the average adult checks social media 19 times a day, okay?

Yael Trusch: Wow.

Ali Katz: I mean it's shocking and sometimes I'll check a few times and like, oh, my goodness! How many times am I doing? I have to put this away!

Yael Trusch: Right.

Ali Katz: So, I often detox at least one day a minimum of few hours on Saturday or Sunday which really kind of bubble my mishnah shabbat I mean if you think about it? I mean if you think about it, it's just Shabbat is the perfect time.

Yael Trusch: I know.

Ali Katz: To detox, so you know that's just been given to us that guideline—

Yael Trusch: Yes.

Ali Katz: Which really works so amazingly and then we never have phones at family meals, and I often leave mine at the car if I'm walking in to a restaurant with my family, and I'm with like the people that would be my emergency.

Yael Trusch: Right.

Ali Katz: And so I know I won't be getting, you know, an emergency phone call, then I just leave it in the car.

Yael Trusch: Yeah, I try to do that, too.

Ali Katz: Yeah, we do like family game nights that you know we get our board games and we all put the phones away. What else do we do? Oh, I don't look at social media for at least 30 minutes before bed or up to—I try for an hour. I really try that, I leave my phone downstairs and I go up stairs around nine so, after nine I don't know have it. And then what I try to also do is from when my kids get home after school till after dinner, I try not to—I don't do social media and try not to look at the phone so I can be really present with them.

Yael Trusch: Yeah. That's a big one. I try to do those too, and I just—like you said before, it's just practicing it. Not every day we're going to succeed but like set the framework and the boundary and try to stay as consistent as you can. I found it really helpful especially unplugging around 7:30, 8:00—I think my phone is in do not disturb and it's just plugged in my bathroom, I don't reach for it, I don't—nobody beeps me. I said it in a way that I'm not even tempted because there's no buzzing.

Ali Katz: Right. Exactly and actually I used apps before, where it times how much time you spend on your phone in a day and it's really shocking. So I encourage everyone to just use more a timer, an app

that times your social media or phone use just for one day and see how much it is because you might be very, very surprised.

Yael Trusch: Yeah, it's amazing. And speaking of time, Ali, I know you're a big proponent of flipping the way we think about time. We often think about time as, I have to find time for this, I have to find time for this but time is not necessarily a scarce resource as we kind of like think about them, it's more like we are able to make the time for certain things that are priority and so, talk us about that subtle difference.

Ali Katz: Exactly. We'll think about it like this. If there was, you got a flat tire, okay? You would make the time to get it fixed.

Yael Trusch: Mm-hm.

Ali Katz: You have to. If your tire, God forbid, had an accident, you would find the time, you would make the time to go to the doctor, right? You don't find the time to go to the doctor, you make the time. You make the time for what's important to you.

Yael Trusch: Exactly.

Ali Katz: So I use my calendar as my mindfulness in this area. What I do is I'm a big scheduler and so I don't think that having a to-do list is enough. Having a to-do list means we just keep track of everything we have to do but that doesn't exactly help us figure out when we're going to do it. So my key to making the time for what's important to me is taking my to-do list to my calendar and plugging in when I'm doing each of the things I need to do. This includes my self-care. This includes when I'm exercising. This includes having a special date with one of my kids. This includes having a coffee with a friend, right? We're going to schedule our coffee.

Yael Trusch: Yes.

Ali Katz: We don't schedule it for a month or two out in advance but we're going to make that time, you know, so, and I also have a longer term projects on my calendar so let's say I want to, you know, clean out my closet, okay, and I need 2-3 hours to do that. It might take me 2 months on my calendar to find that 3 hour block but I will plan it out. It will be there, and then the weight is sort of lifted off of my shoulders because I know it's coming. I planned when it is. I don't have to worry about it anymore. It's going to get done. So that helps me a lot and everyone that I've encourage to, you know, figure out when they're doing certain things that it has changed their life.

Yael Trusch: Yeah, you've encouraged me to do that and my husband also is a big proponent. I mean, I'm very big on the to-do list and then sometimes I got so overwhelmed, and you, because you're my friend, and my husband, he's always like, put it on the calendar, just open the calendar and just write out exactly when you're doing it. And it's really changes everything, cause it's there and that's when you're doing it. There's no going around it, like, there's nothing else that's going to go into that timeslot period.

Ali Katz: And then I think it's easier to release any pressure that you feel because you know it, you have space for it, and you don't have to worry about it until then.

Yael Trusch: Exactly!

Ali Katz: It just helps you relax a little bit, too, I think.

Yael Trusch: It gets rid of the overwhelm, period.

Ali Katz: Yeah.

Yael Trusch: Right. Ali, let's switch to some Jewish topics. We mentioned Shabbat already and the digital detox and so let me ask you, do you have any traditions that you hold dear to, that maybe you brought from home, from your parents home, or maybe your husband brought them into the marriage or maybe you adopted them as an adult? Anything that is very dear and that you incorporated in your home? Jewish traditions.

Ali Katz: Well, okay. I didn't grow up super religious but we did Jewish Shabbat growing up and celebrated all the holidays and I mean, some of my favorite memories are the way my mom used to decorate for Hanukkah and all of those special things that she did and it's so nice because Hanukkah is coming up. I would say what makes me feel the most present in my faith is really prayer.

Yael Trusch: Wow!

Ali Katz: Did you know, I wouldn't say I have a ton of you know, things that I guess more physical things that I do I, prayer is very, very important to me and I pray to God every day.

Yael Trusch: How beautiful.

Ali Katz: That makes me feel very connected.

Yael Trusch: How beautiful.

ALI KATZ. And then I am getting better about lighting the Shabbat candles and I'm enjoying it too much and actually when I've started doing it's become such a beautiful thing for my mother and I. I'll call her, she lives in Philadelphia and I'm in Houston, and I'll call her as I'm about to light the candles and she'll get hers and we'll light them together and say the blessings together.

Yael Trusch. Right.

ALI KATZ. Which is really nice and so that's been a beautiful bonding thing for both of us. So I'm excited to keep that flowing and, you know, really, celebrating the holidays with my family and just making them important to us and we have bar mitzvah coming up and so that's really special.

Yael Trusch. Yes. That is very special. All right, let's see some JLP fill in the blanks.

ALI KATZ. Okay.

Yael Trusch. And this is the part of the show where I give you an open-ended sentence and you fill it with the first thing that comes to mind. Okay?

ALI KATZ. Okay.

Yael Trusch. All right. I'm Ali Katz and I feel most spiritual when?

ALI KATZ. When I'm taking time for self-care and I allow myself the quiet space to connect with God and my higher self.

Yael Trusch. Oh, beautiful!

ALI KATZ. When I really just really get quiet and still.

Yael Trusch. Beautiful and I guess we didn't really define self care. Can you define it for us? Because I think it can take many shapes, right Ali?

ALI KATZ. You know, I sort of differentiate self-care and self-love in this way.

Yael Trusch. Uh-huh.

ALI KATZ. Self-care are the acts that bring more balance into your life and self-love to me, is all about acceptance. Accepting yourself and where you are right now. So really, self-care for me can be anything that makes you feel good, whether it's meditation or excising or spending time in nature or journaling or practicing gratitude or saying your prayer or cooking and really being in the moment with that or

anything that feels good to you that helps you to feel more centered and present and you know, and allows yourself the time and space to feel really good in your day. To me, that's self-care.

Yael Trusch: Beautiful. My favorite mitzvah or one I feel most connected with is?

Ali Katz: Right now, my favorite mitzvah that I'm doing is, one of my dogs is a pet therapy dog and we go visit a holocaust survivor. About every week or every other week, who is very elderly and she lost her animal, her dog and she's too old to get another one.

Yael Trusch: Mm-hm.

Ali Katz: She loves animal and so we go visit her. My dog sits on her lap and we played Gin and she tells me stories, and it just brings so much joy to her day, to her life and I think it brings equal if not more to mine because it's—I had a great time, I felt good, I'm with my animal, I'm making her happy, I feel great so that's my favorite thing right now.

Yael Trusch: That is so amazing! How did you even start doing this?

Ali Katz: It's unbelievable, you know the kind of divine intervention?

Yael Trusch: Yes, absolutely.

Ali Katz: So I had called Jewish Family Service and said I wanted to start volunteering.

Yael Trusch: Uh-huh.

Ali Katz: And I just felt called to doing something with the elderly and then I did put on my application that my dog was a pet therapy dog. And I turn in my application and they said that the day before they got a phone call from a family, this woman's family asking if someone could come visit with their dog. It just was like synchronicity as its best. And so they matched us up, and that was that.

Yael Trusch: I love it. It's amazing. It's amazing how divine providence works.

Ali Katz: Yes.

Yael Trusch: And based on the story because I knew these from before, somebody recently told me that her mother is lonely, and even though she lives at home with her but she has errands to do during the day, she just turned 98 and she's a woman who speaks many languages. French, Portuguese, English, Yiddish, very, very cultured woman. She's an artist and I thought of what you did, and I told my friend,

you know what? Call Jewish Family Services and tell them about your mother's profile because there might be somebody out there who's speak French or who speaks Portuguese or who's an artist or who's just like kind has a same interest in your mother who would love to visit with such a cultured woman, you know?

ALI KATZ. Yes! Did they find someone? Do you know?

Yael TRUSCH. So I'm... no, no. After we got off the phone I'm going to follow-up with her. I just have this conversation with her this past week, so I'm going to follow-up with her to see if she would.

ALI KATZ. Oh, great!

Yael TRUSCH. Because I thought it was very—and I learned it from you, so thank you!

ALI KATZ. Oh, awesome!

Yael TRUSCH. I'll let you know what happens, all right! My fondest, sweetest, Jewish memory is?

ALI KATZ. Well, I mentioned Hanukkah, but I think that the way my mom decorated for Hanukkah is something. Like this bright light that I can see it in my childhood. Of growing up... you know what she did? She put this twinkle lights around the fireplace where all the Hanukkah decorations and all the presents and it just is the most beautiful memory in my mind.

Yael TRUSCH. Oh, that's so sweet! Hanukkah is such a special holiday. We're also excited around here.

ALI KATZ. And you know I remember one single present that I ever forgot growing up because that's not what's so important.

Yael TRUSCH. Not so.

ALI KATZ. But I remembered the way she decorated and took the care and the love t make that feel special. That's what sticks in my head.

Yael TRUSCH. You know it goes to show that the woman sets the tone of the home, that's why you remember that but just the tone that she was setting, how she was making it so special because it is special. Something I wish I had learned about Judaism growing up is?

ALI KATZ. Everything! My Hebrew School, they did this thing, looking back is such a shame. They said anyone that wants to learn sit in the front, and anyone that wants to just talk go sit in the back. I guess

they we're like sick of us talking. So I mean of course I was like 10 years old, I went and sat on the back, and now I want to know everything that I missed!

Yael Trusch: You see? That's why we're friends. We can learn together.

Ali Katz: I know. You know it's great because I'm learning through my kids and what they're doing and I'm always trying to learn and expand my horizons and one thing that was amazing for me was I started teaching some Jewish meditation.

Yael Trusch: Hm.

Ali Katz: And they asked me to do it at my synagogue and I was like, what's Jewish meditation? So I really had to learn about different Hebrew mantras and what they mean, and I would talk to my Rabbi about weaving Judaism into the meditation and that's actually been a really special experience for me.

Yael Trusch: Very interesting. All right. Finally, I'm Ali Katz, and today I'm most grateful for?

Ali Katz: Today and everyday I'm most grateful for connection. I love connecting—really being present and connecting with my family, with friends. Like this kind of conversation that we're having really, really being in the moment and connecting. I think that's what life is all about. Connecting with other people and learning and expanding and I think that's just what I pray. Every morning I say, let me be a vessel for the right words and the right deeds and let me bring true love, light, and connection into my day and my life. And so I think really connecting with other people.

Yael Trusch: Ali, you're so wonderful. You're so beautiful. This was so special. Thank you so much. Tell us—

Ali Katz: Thanks for having me!

Yael Trusch: What's coming up? Did I hear that you're working on another book?

Ali Katz: Yes! Oh, my goodness. I'm working on my third book which is very exciting and it's called, right now the title's called, One Minute to Zen, and it's all about one minute meditations thinks that you can do really quickly in your day to come back to center and balance. So I'm working on that. And then right now I'm actually travelling the country talking about my first two books, Hot Mess to Mindful Mom and Get the Most Out of Motherhood, so I'm really enjoying that.

Yael Trusch: Beautiful.

ALI KATZ: I will be all over the place in the next few months and–

Yael TRUSCH: Beautiful, and you're planning a bar mitzvah, very special.

ALI KATZ: Yes! We're bound to Israel in two weeks.

Yael TRUSCH: So exciting!

ALI KATZ: He's having a bar mitzvah there and then we're going to do one in Houston, also.

Yael TRUSCH: That was very, very exciting.

ALI KATZ: Thank you!

Yael TRUSCH: Ali, thank you, thank you so much!

ALI KATZ: Thank you!

Yael TRUSCH: Isn't Ali a beautiful soul? We enjoy each other's company a lot. We met in Houston through a friend in common and we now make time to have a date every month or every other month. Did you notice the word make time? We were totally helping each other consistently and lifting each other up. You remember that interview with Wendy Sachs on episode 31? Yes, 31. Well, yeah! That's spirit of camaraderie and collaboration. Ali and I both embrace that. Ladies, we all need friends like that. Ali and I learned so much from each other. Thanks Ali for stopping by. The book again is, *Get the Most Out of Motherhood: A Hot Mess to Mindful Mom Parenting Guide*. You can find Ali at www.hotmesstomindfulmom.com. All of this and more including the transcript to this episode. Yes! We have transcripts now. So if you ever want to go back and find what a guest said, or you're more of a reader than a listener, we have transcripts. They are free to download. All of that at www.jewishlatinprincess.com. Have a great day!

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