

# Redefining Health & Wellness

## #13

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi, Nicola Salmon

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**Shohreh Davoodi:** We are about to embark on episode lucky number 13 with the lovely Nicola Salmon who is a fat-positive fertility coach and the author of the book "Fat and Fertile." Nicola is the sweetest person, and she is so passionate about supporting people in larger bodies on their journey to get pregnant.

We chatted about the obstacles people in larger bodies face trying to get pregnant, how people in larger bodies can advocate for themselves at the doctor's office, and more.

To access the show notes and a full transcript of this episode, head to [shohrehdavoodi.com/13](http://shohrehdavoodi.com/13). That's [shohrehdavoodi.com/13](http://shohrehdavoodi.com/13). Let's go talk to Nicola.

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**Shohreh:** Hey y'all. Welcome to the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast. I'm your host, Shohreh Davoodi. I'm a certified intuitive eating counselor and a certified personal trainer. I help people improve their relationships with exercise, food and their bodies so they can ditch diet culture for good and do what feels right for them.

Through this podcast, I want to give you the tools to redefine what health and wellness mean to you by exposing myths and misconceptions, delving into all the areas of health that often get ignored, and reminding you that health and wellness are not moral obligations. Are you ready? Let's fuck some shit up.

For those of you who know me, you're probably gonna be a little bit confused about today's guest because those who know me really well know that I have pretty much zero desire to ever have children. I have siblings who wanna have kids, and I'm gonna be like that super badass aunt, but mothering is really not for me.

However, that being said, I have so many friends and so many people in my life who are just really excited to be mothers and starting families at this time. And so this is a super relevant topic for them, and I think it's just really important in general for all of us. So today, I get to have Nicola Salmon on. How are you, Nicola?

**Nicola Salmon:** Oh. I am so well. Thank you so much for having me on. This is super exciting.

**Shohreh:** Yeah. I am also so excited. I get to talk to you all the way from London, right?

**Nicola:** Mhmm.

**Shohreh:** I think you're actually my first international guest. So I feel like I'm moving into the big time now. [laughs]

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**Nicola:** So I'm honored, absolutely honored.

**Shohreh:** Amazing. So why don't you start by just telling me about your own fertility journey and how that has contributed to you becoming a fertility coach.

**Nicola:** So it started a really long time ago now. I can kind of pin it back to when I was 16. I was diagnosed with polycystic ovarian syndrome. And for those of you who don't know, it's like a metabolic and hormonal condition which a lot of people have these days. And it meant for me that I didn't get periods or they were super, super irregular. I had acne. I was in a bigger body. And I had kind of excess hair on my face. So all these really wonderful symptoms for a 16 year old to have.

And then when I was with my doctor, she's telling me this diagnosis, and she said that I wouldn't be able to have kids. And at 16, obviously, that wasn't on my agenda, but it had such a huge impact on my personality, on who I became, on my confidence in my body, on how I related to my body.

So for all my teens and twenties, I thought that getting pregnant was gonna be really, really difficult for us. And it's something that I really wanted - to become a mother. So I was anticipating it to be really, really hard.

And when it came time, when I'd met my husband and we'd got married and we decided it was time to start having our children, it was super easy for us. And we were so lucky. You know, I count my blessings every single day. But that was one of the kind of turning points for me. It's like, I have been told time and time again that it was going to be really hard for us, that my weight is going to play a huge role in getting pregnant, that it was unhealthy, that-- all these things, X, Y, Z. And actually, we got pregnant really easily.

And it really just kind of started niggling at me, you know? Like, "Why was it so easy for me when it's so difficult for so many other people in a bigger body?" And, you know, just, like, all around this issue of, "Why me? And what did I do differently? And what was really going on?"

So it kind of sparked this interest in me. And kind of for all that time for while I was in my teens and my twenties, I was a yo-yo dieter. So I would go on a diet, lose some weight, go off the diet, gain more weight and go on this huge kind of cycle, and it completely took over my whole life. And it never stuck.

So many people who have been in that experience, you know, you would always go back and gain more weight. And it was when my kids started their own kind of eating journey, so when they were like six months to a year that they started experiencing food that I really realized that I didn't want to pass on my own issues around food and

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my own issues around my body to them. So that's when I gave up dieting.

And through that, that's kind of where I found this whole movement. I found it on Instagram, but, you know, this has been going on for so many years now of people rejecting the diet culture and figuring out other ways of looking after themselves and other priorities around their health and well-being. And it completely blew my mind. And that's kind of what shaped me into doing the work that I'm doing now.

**Shohreh:** So you went from being told, like, that you would literally never be able to get pregnant to now, not only being able to get pregnant very easily, but now having children of your own which is such a big shift from what 16-year-old probably imagined your future was going to look like.

**Nicola:** Completely. I, you know, couldn't see anybody even wanting to be with me in a relationship because I couldn't have kids, you know? I thought it meant that I was broken, that my body was broken, that I was never going to be successful or happy or-- you know.

I made it be all these things, but actually, you know, for us, we got pregnant straight away with both our kids, and we had such easy pregnancies, relatively easy births, you know? I can't imagine my life any differently now, but I know it's not like that for everybody.

And people in bigger bodies have such shame and guilt around getting pregnant that it's something that people don't talk about because the blame is placed squarely at their feet. They're told that if they want to get pregnant, it's their responsibility to lose weight. It's their fault that they can't get pregnant in the first place. And all that shame and that guilt just kind of amplifies this already incredibly difficult time for them. And it's something that really needs to change.

**Shohreh:** So talk to me about some of the obstacles that people in larger bodies specifically face when they are trying to get pregnant and have a baby.

**Nicola:** So the biggest obstacles they face are the fact that they really can struggle to get any kind of access to support or tests or treatments or anything because kind of the first port of call are going to their doctor if they've been trying for a little while and nothing's happening. And most doctors-- kind of 99 percent of the stories that I hear, the doctor will turn around and say, "Okay, well you need to lose weight first. So go away, come back in six months to a year when you've lost X, Y, Z amount of weight, and then I'll be able to help you."

**Shohreh:** So my understanding too is that BMI cutoffs are very prevalent for different kinds of fertility treatments as well.

**Nicola:** Yes. That's completely right. So all across the world, clinics and doctors implement these BMI cutoffs which are completely arbitrary, you know? We all know that's BMI is really not a great indicator of health. And the

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way that they kind of put people into different kinds of groups, and these cut-offs, these limits, are really just completely arbitrary. There's no evidence, no research to support them being a particular point in the BMI scale. And it's yeah, it's just a way of discriminating against people in bigger bodies.

**Shohreh:** Yeah. And I want to speak to the arbitrariness especially because there was a section in your book where you discussed how increased risk for certain conditions in pregnancy, such as gestational diabetes and preeclampsia, that those are not what doctors kind of indicate that they are. So I think a lot of people forget the difference between absolute and relative risk, right?

**Nicola:** Completely, yes. So a lot of these risks are kind of almost sensationalized so that it sounds like this huge leap in risks. Like, it doubles your risk and it makes it sound like something really scary, but it's still kind of a jump from, like, four in 1000 to seven in a thousand.

So although the risk is increased for sure, and that's something that people need to be informed about, it is still a really small risk, and it's something that, you know, for people in bigger bodies, that is for them to decide their decision to, you know, weigh up the risks versus the benefits of them starting their family and then being able to make that choice.

**Shohreh:** Right. Because essentially, with having a BMI cutoff at a clinic or for different things, the doctor is making the choice for the patient and saying, "Well, we've decided that you're too fat to have a baby, which is utter bullshit."

**Nicola:** Yeah. Completely.

**Shohreh:** And one of the other things you talked about in your book too was kind of the shame around people thinking that if you're in a larger body that you will be a bad mother. Can you talk about that a little bit and how you personally were able to overcome that?

**Nicola:** So I mean, when people are starting on this journey, there's already kind of a stigma around being in a bigger body, you know? When you say that you want to start trying for a baby, people are already talking, you know, your family, your friends, like, "Oh. Maybe you should start being healthier, and maybe you should do this, and do that." It's really code for "Maybe you should be thinner."

So people are already starting this journey to become parents with this idea that they're not good enough already, that they need to be thinner, that maybe being in a bigger body is going to stop them from, you know, running after their kids or doing this or doing that.

And it just really sets them up to feel that they're not worthy enough to become a parent. And it's one of the biggest barriers that I see with

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people when they're working with me is that they really struggle to even understand that they are worthy of being a parent in the body that are in. They feel like they're never going to achieve that until they look a different way.

And for me, from my own experience, I spent my whole first pregnancy in complete fear that something was gonna go wrong because, in my head-- Because I thought it was going to be really difficult for us, I kind of had this, you know, grand life plan where, "Okay. If I start losing weight at this point-- And then I'll be, you know, an acceptable "weight" at this point, and then we can start getting pregnant at this point." And, you know, everything will be beautiful and hunky dory.

So because I hadn't lost that weight before I got pregnant, I was expecting to get all these complications and things come up in my pregnancy. So I was anxious for the whole nine months that something was gonna go wrong.

And that had such a huge negative impact on my mental health going into becoming a mum when it really didn't need to be because, (A), nothing went wrong, and (B), even if it had, it wasn't to do with me being in a bigger body, you know? These things happen to all people of all sizes, regardless of their BMI.

And, you know, we are really setting women up to fail, for things to be way more difficult than they need to be when they start their families and they start their journey to parenthood because they're already thinking that they're less than and they're less worthy and that they need to change something about themselves before they can become a parent.

**Shohreh:** Right. And that is just so depressing to me because I think that anyone who wants to become a parent is going to be a dedicated parent, is excited about this journey. Like, to suggest that someone, just because of their body, is going to be a worse parent or is going to jeopardize the health of their kid is just so wrong and so incredibly judgmental. And it just really distresses me that, as a society, that is a viewpoint that people hold.

**Nicola:** It's so sad. And, you know, this even leaks into our adoption processes. Like here in the UK, I know for sure that, like, parents are judged based on a huge number of factors around, you know, whether they're eligible to be able to adopt people and adopt children, but one of the factors is put in as health, but people are denied being adoptive parents because of their size and their BMI. And that just to me just completely drives me bonkers. It's just unbelievable.

**Shohreh:** That is truly fucked up. Wow. I hadn't even thought about that, how much-- you know, it just goes to show my own privilege in not having to think about that. So thank you for bringing that up because I think that's

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really important for people to know that this does have a real effect on people's lives and ability to have families.

**Nicola:** Yeah. Whatever shape and, you know, way that you create your family, it's this kind of fatphobic rhetoric around it kind of infiltrates it. And there's so many arguments around, you know, why we shouldn't help people in bigger bodies and, you know, all these reasons that they kind of trot out. But each one of them, you can kind of dig a little deeper, and you can see that, behind these arguments, is this core belief that fat is bad, and fat is wrong, and fat is, you know, unhealthy, and people are greedy, and all these horrible things that we've made fat mean when actually none of that is true.

**Shohreh:** Yes. And so most people who are in larger bodies are probably going to experience some of those erroneous beliefs in their experiences with going to doctors, going to clinics, and things like that in their pursuit of getting pregnant.

So I'd love to hear some of your tips for people in larger bodies, both those who are trying to get pregnant and those who are not, for being able to advocate for themselves at the doctor's office.

**Nicola:** Yeah. I mean, advocating for yourself is one of the biggest lessons I learned. So I got pregnant really easily, but when I was pregnant, I had to advocate for myself, and it was the first time I even learned really that I could advocate for myself.

So I think just being aware that you have the power to advocate for yourself is a huge kind of first step. But once you kind of can come to grips with the fact that, you know, you are in charge of your own health, it's not your doctor's responsibility, it's not your kind of any one on your healthcare team's responsibility, you know, you have the power to say yes, say no, say what else can we do? Having that knowledge and that understanding is critical.

But the things you can do, so if you're with a doctor that, you know, makes you feel like crap every time you go and see them, if they make you feel judged, if they make you feel ashamed, if you feel bullied, if you feel-- even if it's just small things that you kind of almost go, "Oh. Well, maybe they didn't mean it like that," or, "Maybe, you know-- It was just a joke," or however we kind of play it down, if they made you feel that way, then that is completely okay to then change doctors if you have that privilege.

If you are able to look for a doctor that is going to support you in your body and not bring up your weight or your diet every single time you go in with a, I don't know, a sprained ankle, or flu or, you know, all these things which are completely unrelated.

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I mean, a lot of health concerns that doctors raise aren't related to weight. But these completely arbitrary things that are no way in relation to the size of your body at all. Yeah. Get a different doctor if you can.

And if you can't, then the best, best thing you can do is to go into your appointments with a clear idea of what you want, a clear idea of what you want to talk about, write it down if you need to, and a kind of clear idea of what you need from that appointment so you can set specific boundaries around the conversation that you have with your doctor, kind of go in saying, "I don't want to talk about my weight today. I don't want to be weighed today. I don't want to talk about my diet today. But I'm open to talking about health-promoting behaviors that will assist me in this condition."

So kind of setting the stage straight from the ask and making sure the doctor or the healthcare professional you're speaking to knows what is and isn't okay for you.

**Shohreh:** I think some of the other ones I've heard too are if they refuse any tests for you, asking them to document that.

**Nicola:** That's really good.

**Shohreh:** Yeah. Because I've seen that one kind of making the rounds on Instagram, and I'm like, that's really smart because it does make a doctor think. Because everything that goes on that chart is going to be available. And so they're like, "Oh. Do I actually want to refuse this test and write that down?" So any time you're being refused anything at a doctor's office, like, just being like, "Can you please note in the chart that you did this?" because they don't want to put that in writing.

**Nicola:** They don't want to be accountable, no. It's a really good one.

**Shohreh:** Exactly. And then I always tell people, too, under many circumstances, you don't need to be weighed and you can request not to. And if they're absolutely adamant that, like, you need to be, then asking them to turn around, to not see that weight, to not have it discussed with you I think can be really important as well.

**Nicola:** Yeah. And really, the only reason they need to weigh you is for medication purposes, so to know how much medication to give you. So, I think being really confident in your reason that you need to be weighed, again, it is really empowering when you can make a decision and say, "Actually, you know, I know I don't need to be weighed for this. We're not going to do that today."

**Shohreh:** So I do want to hold space for people who maybe they live in a small town or their finances are limited. And so maybe they're trying to get pregnant, and they're stuck with a location that has a BMI limit or something like that. When you have a client who's in that situation, what is your advice for them? How can they deal with that if you know

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they're above that BMI cutoff, but this is their only option, and they really, really want to have a child?

**Nicola:**

It's such a difficult position to be in because weight loss in itself is such a kind of nuanced topic because, for people in this situation if there's a weight limit and they don't have any other option, then they may decide for themselves that weight loss is the right way to go for them. And, although I am so anti-weight loss in terms of the culture and diet culture, you know, I have to respect people's autonomy in choosing that if it's the only way that they can have a family with the current climate, you know? I am doing everything I can to change that climate, but we can only work so fast.

And for fertility especially, you know, as time goes on, these people are getting further and further away from their family. And it's one of these things that, although I don't personally support people in weight loss, I just really help them in understanding the risks and the benefits in whatever path they choose.

So if that's the path that they don't feel like they have any other option except to go down that route, then we talk about exactly, you know, what's gonna happen if they decide that they want to go down that route. How can they do that in the safest possible way? What is going to happen after they get to that point of hopefully being able to access the treatment that they need?

And then understanding that it's highly likely that the weight's going to come back, and that's okay, and that's a really normal response to go through any kind of intentional weight loss. And it doesn't mean they're a terrible person or that they failed and that they're wrong.

But yeah. It is such a difficult topic to talk about because I am so anti this whole weight loss culture. And I would never, ever want to put anybody down that path because it can lead to so many issues. But for people who want a family more than anything and will do anything to get there, and they only have limited resources, then we just have to explore every avenue for them and for them then to decide what is the best possible scenario for them to come out with at the end.

**Shohreh:**

I think that's a really beautiful way to support people who are in that position because, as you said, it's such a tough position to be in. And obviously, I'm the same way. I don't personally coach intentional weight loss, but I also recognize that there are some situations that I personally will never be in where there are people who will decide that that is what they need for themselves in that moment.

And I'm glad at least that you can support them in a way that is loving and healthful and with the reality of that decision because I think so many doctors, you know, tell people, "Oh. Just go lose this many pounds and come back." And they don't tell them, like, "Here's all the things that can happen. Here's what's gonna make that difficult. You'll

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probably gain the weight back," etc. etc. So people need to be informed of that information if that's the choice that they ultimately have to make for themselves.

**Nicola:** Yeah. I think it's completely unethical to send people into that scenario without a complete, you know, list of what is gonna happen and the risks and everything that's going to go along with that because, otherwise, it's just not an informed decision, and it's not consent-based medicine.

**Shohreh:** I loved in a recent post, you mentioned that you want people to consider themselves a quote-unquote difficult patient if that means getting their needs met. I love that post because you're right. Especially women I think are socialized to not be difficult, to be people-pleasers, to not speak up when we're upset about something or something is not going the way that we think it should be going. So I just thought that post was so great how you were just like, "Nope. I want you to be difficult."

**Nicola:** Oh. It's something that I've had to unlearn again and again and again how to try and not conform to this idea that we've got to be seen and not heard, and we've got to do as we're told, and we've got to listen to our doctors and all these people who are in power positions. It's hard.

I mean, it's really hard sometimes for me to keep remembering to do that and to keep questioning my kind of automatic responses and how many times I say "sorry" in the day, you know? It's just bonkers.

But it's something that I think we all need to unlearn and to realize what we're doing and the language we use every day. Like, I think I read a really good example I think a couple of years ago now of how many times we put kind of "just," you know—"I'm just sending you this email. I'm just doing this for you" to kind of almost belittle our own actions.

And I think the language that we use around this and just really putting ourselves in a position of taking responsibility and ownership for this and being able to understand that we don't have to make ourselves smaller and do as we're told I think is so powerful.

**Shohreh:** Taking a critical look at language is something that I've been really working on for myself in these last couple of years. And especially you mentioned the saying "I'm sorry", which is something realized that I did so often.

And I got this really great advice. I can't remember who I think it's-- It's gone around a couple of times of kind of turning your "I'm sorry's" into "Thank you's."

**Nicola:** I love that.

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**Shohreh:** So for example, instead of saying, "I'm sorry I was late to the meeting," it's, "Thank you for your patience in waiting for me to arrive."

And I have kind of had this in my brain now where, when I notice the "I'm sorry's", especially in writing, that I will go back and change it. I will literally edit it and be like, "How can I turn this into a "Thank you"? Because yeah, I did find that I was constantly apologizing for myself for whatever my situation was. And I was like, "This is not a position of power. Like, this is not how I want to be coming to this space."

So I think that is one of those small, little changes that can really just change your whole tone as an individual.

**Nicola:** It changes who you are kind of fundamentally as a person because you show up with more-- I don't know. It's almost like you feel more like you are showing up as a person you want to be. It's like you are not apologizing for yourself. You're not sorry that you were late or this happened because these things happen all the time, right?

And we shouldn't have to apologize for every little mistake we make and everything that kind of goes wrong that's out of our control. So I think it's almost like we're coming into ourselves and just, I don't know, living in our own bodies and being more confident and more comfortable with who we are as people.

**Shohreh:** So one thing that obviously definitely doesn't help with trying to get pregnant is added stress. And I'm wondering, what would you recommend for people in larger bodies who are stressing themselves out essentially through their own internalized fatphobia and beliefs about their bodies? How can they overcome those to be on the same team as their body, so to speak?

**Nicola:** I mean, this is one that is so powerful. When you start working on this kind of "stop being at war with your own body", it can just kind of ripple effect into every area of your life, but my favorite kind of starting point for this is forgiveness.

So it's really just taking some time to really look at kind of how you've treated your body, what things you've been saying to your body whether kind of out loud or in your head constantly in your kind of own internal chatter, just really forgiving it for everything that it's done wrong, for everything it can't do, for everything that's happened to it, or maybe your hormones aren't working the way they should, or maybe you don't like the way something looks, and you don't like this, and you don't like that, and just saying out loud that you forgive it, just saying out loud that, you know, it's okay, that you don't hate it anymore, that you are not kind of so at war with it anymore I think can be really powerful.

And this speaks to, you know-- Instead of going for all the body-positivity, it's finding that body neutrality and just being okay with it and

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just, you know, you don't have to love it. You don't have to go from a place of hate to love. It's more finding that neutral space of "it is what it is, and that's okay for now."

**Shohreh:** Have you found in a lot of your clients that the experience of actually getting pregnant helps them to kind of, like, respect and appreciate their bodies more than they did before?

**Nicola:** Definitely. I mean, it's kind of equal parts complete awe and kind of amazement at this thing, this incredible miracle that their body has done and also still kind of equal parts terror because they still believe that, you know, something could go wrong or that, you know-- they're still going through the medical system which, even, now is like telling people in bigger bodies that are pregnant to lose weight and still, you know, giving them all these ways of making them feel bad about themselves, even when they are pregnant.

So there's definitely more room for supporting them through that and helping them to come to terms with being pregnant and, you know, living in this culture that we do of the doctor saying, "Well, you shouldn't put on too much weight, and make sure you don't eat for two" and, you know, giving them all these stories and all these messages that what they're doing is wrong and just kind of supporting them in learning how to trust their bodies because their bodies have got pregnant. It's done an incredible thing, and, you know, they can trust it and it's gonna be okay.

**Shohreh:** Honestly, the advice to lose weight in pregnancy is absolutely horrifying to me. Like, it's, again-- and this sort of shows the difference between the work that you and I do which is where we look at health-promoting behaviors outside of weight and the work that so much of the rest of the world does which says, "Oh, weight loss is what is going to equal health" whereas, like, if you just prescribe people like, "Hey, you should just lose weight" there are so many horribly unhealthy and harmful ways that people can embark on that as opposed to being like, "Hey. Let's just take a look at what you're eating and how you're moving and your stress levels and things that are actually helpful and relevant to a person who is pregnant." Like, to just have advice out in the world that's like, "Oh. Nope. You're too big in your pregnancy body. You need to lose weight." I'm like, "That's exactly the last thing that a pregnant person needs to be worrying about."

**Nicola:** I know. And it's just-- Ugh. In the UK, Slimming World is, like, collaborating with the British Midwifery Unit, whatever it's called, and it's just like, oh my god. Like, please people. Can we not see that, you know, this big company who obviously wants to make heap loads of money is doing this for a reason?" And it just makes me so, so, so angry.

**Shohreh:** Yeah. That is such a harmful collaboration. We don't have Slimming World here that I am aware of, but I follow a lot of people in the UK who

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talk about how horrible it is. It seems like the UK's version of Weight Watchers, essentially.

**Nicola:** Oh yeah. We've got both. It's a pleasure to be in this country.

[laughter]

**Shohreh:** So tell me about what the experience of working with you as a coach is like and who could most benefit.

**Nicola:** So for working with me, I'm very gentle. I'm very kind. I'm a very nurturing person. So I like to think of it as kind of like a virtual hug that people are getting from me. I'm not one of these people that's going to be, like, really strict and really kind of cross and, like, shout at you. I'm one of these people who's like holding space and encouraging you and just really talking about—

We talk a lot about your priorities and your needs around your healthcare because, for so long, for everybody that I work with, weight loss is like their only goal around their health, you know? Like, it is the one thing that they focused on for their whole entire life is lose weight.

So opening up that conversation and really asking them, "Well, you know, what would make a difference for you and your life in terms of your health? Like, what would really make your life more enjoyable, more joyful? How are we gonna bring more of that into your life?" And then they're like, "Oh. I can think about that?"

Like, it kind of blows their mind that they can think of their health in terms of other things. So, like, increasing your energy, getting better sleep, just these really simple things, but once you get these things and can change them and make them work for you, then it can just improve your life on so many levels.

So we talk a lot about that. We talk a lot about kind of relationship with food rather than what we're actually eating and just kind of bringing some more peace and more awareness and more love to that relationship.

Joyful movement is one of my favorite things because that had such a huge, positive impact on my life going from never exercising ever because I was so terrified of entering a gym, or, like, going to a yoga studio with mirrors, or even kind of seeing my body in a swimming costume, and then kind of transforming my relationship with exercise from changing my intention around it from "I have to do this to lose weight" to "what movement is going to make me feel good? What am I going to enjoy? What, you know, is going to make my life more fun?"

So yeah, a whole host of things that we talk about, but a lot of it is based on changing the way that you look at your health, learning to advocate for your body, learning how to trust your body again, and

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**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi, Nicola Salmon

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changing kind of how you perceive this whole journey to parenthood and your worthiness around being able to become a mother, which is really important.

So anybody in a bigger body who wants to get pregnant and feels like they need support that they're not getting the support from the doctors, and they're not getting support from maybe their family or their friends who kind of don't understand that they don't just need to lose weight and then they'll get pregnant. Anybody who's in that position who feels they could use the support would definitely benefit.

**Shohreh:** And of course, you're not guaranteeing that people can get pregnant because that's impossible, but rather it sounds like you are creating a peaceful environment for them to increase their chances of being able to have a pregnancy.

**Nicola:** Yeah. I mean, there's no way that I'm gonna be able to help you get pregnant. You know, that is between you and your partner or however you're creating your family.

**Shohreh:** [laughs]

**Nicola:** But yeah. I mean, I'm here to support people. And I'm here to help them figure out what is going to make the difference for them because, so often, like, with Google, God bless it, we send ourselves down this rabbit hole of, "Oh. This magic fertility foods, and this special fertility diet, and this, you know, all these magic things and magic supplements and all these things that we think are going to be the key and the thing" when actually, you know, there's loads of things that could be the thing.

But looking after yourself and prioritizing your own health is going to be, not only the thing that's going to get you closer to getting pregnant, but the thing that is going to make your life more enjoyable to live now while you're waiting to get pregnant. And it's gonna have a huge impact for the rest of your life, you know? This is things that are going to have a positive impact forever, so it's well worth doing.

**Shohreh:** Yeah. To me, it almost sounds like you're kind of like a pre-pregnancy doula. Like someone who is-

**Nicola:** Yeah. I love that.

**Shohreh:** -holding space for her clients, who is helping them and providing support. So that's really cool.

**Nicola:** Mmm. And one of my biggest kind of "why's" for doing this work is by helping people unlearn this, like, diet culture crap that we've been fed, we're cutting that cord to the next generation. So these people are gonna raise families that aren't gonna be obsessed about their bodies

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and about the food that they eat. And it's just, you know-- it's gonna spread in such a beautiful way.

They're gonna create these beautiful babies who are gonna be our next generation, who are gonna not give a crap about the diet culture and are gonna, you know, just be really confident, happy human beings.

**Shohreh:** What a magical little side effect to what you do, right, is by helping these moms, you're also helping their children to be raised to not deal with any of that bullshit.

**Nicola:** I know. It's just the best "why" in the world.

**Shohreh:** So I always wrap up my interviews with the question how do you define health and wellness for yourself at this moment in your life?

**Nicola:** Great question. So health and wellness for me right now is keeping it really simple. So I've got little ones now. They're three and five at the moment, and I'm running my business. And I'm trying to, like, juggle, you know, taking them to school and doing the whole, you know, mom thing.

So for me, it's making sure I drink enough water, make sure I get off my phone and leave it downstairs when I go to bed so I get enough sleep, and make sure that I just take time for myself - make it non-negotiable so that I can just spend some time not being mom, not being the coach, just being me.

And for me, like, those three pillars at the moment are the things that are making the most difference to my health.

**Shohreh:** I appreciate you mentioning simplicity because I think people so often believe that it has to be complicated, that we have to overhaul our entire lives to have better health and well-being. And that's just not true. Like, it can be little steps one at a time.

**Nicola:** And I think it's best with little steps because the big ones are scary. The big kind of life overhauls are terrifying, and they're often the ones that we'll do for two days and then get freaked out and turn back to our normal habits. So just by doing them in real slow increments and taking those tiny, tiny baby steps, you can walk miles before you know it.

**Shohreh:** Well, thank you so much for being here, Nicola. This was a lovely conversation. This is going to help so many people who are interested in becoming moms. How can people find you and work with you?

**Nicola:** So my website is [nicolasalmon.co.uk](http://nicolasalmon.co.uk), and my favorite place to find people to talk about this stuff is Instagram and I'm there @fatpositivefertility.

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**Shohreh:** Fantastic. I'll put both of those in the show notes so that people have access to them. They need to go follow you. I love your posts. Again, even as someone who does not even want to be a mom, I still learn so much from your posts, and I find that they're really awesome. So thank you for being here. This was great.

**Nicola:** Oh. Thank you so much for having me.

[music plays]

**Shohreh:** And that's our show for today. I appreciate you listening to and supporting the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast.

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And if you're looking for more information on what I'm all about and how to work with me, head on over to [shohrehdavoodi.com](http://shohrehdavoodi.com).

Hope to see you for the next episode.