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Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple A Day, Lake Region Healthcare's health and wellness segment where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier life. I am Katie Johnson, your host, and my guest today is Wendy Billie. She is here to talk with me about our upcoming Living Well series on Monday, December 11th, a special holiday Gift of Self-Care for Caregivers session. Good morning, Wendy.

Wendy Billie: Good morning, Katie.

Katie Johnson: We are planning something a little bit special and a little bit extra for December as we talk about our Living Well series this month. We are expanding the hours. We're going to offer a session over the noon hour in addition to our regular time from 5:30 to 7:00 in the evening. For our listeners who aren't aware, the Living Well series happens the second Monday of every month and focuses on a different topic and a different segment or dimension of wellness each month.

For December, we are keying in on the caregiver and offering some perks or some special self-care tips and resources to remind yourself to give yourself that gift of self-care. Whether you're a caregiver for your family, for friends, for others in the healthcare field, it seems every one of us is a caregiver in some way, and regardless, it's important that we all give ourselves self-care in order to be healthy.

Wendy, I'm really excited that you're going to join us for this special day on Monday. I'd like our listeners to get a chance to get to know you a little bit. First of all, what's your background, your training? What's led you to your current practice? I know our bio about you says you're a highly attuned, intuitive and holistic healing practitioner.

Wendy Billie: It's a mouthful, right?

Katie Johnson: It is a mouthful, right? So tell us, what does that mean and how did you get there?

Wendy Billie: My background is very eclectic and diverse, and we probably don't have enough time to go into the depths of it, but really high level snapshot into what I am about and where I came from. I started off my service, my caregiving service in the medical profession, so in the Western field I was an occupational therapist and I honed in on psychology. I worked a lot with people that had disabilities.

What I like to say now is I work with able-bodied adults, professionals, teenagers even sometimes that have somehow adopted disabilities in their lives. They have taken this approach of disease because they haven't fed their self, so it's interesting how you just said, like this is a little tidbit this month on it's for the caregivers. I always like to say if we do not feed and nourish ourselves first, how we are doing as an individual is what is going to parlay onto the people we're working with.

When I was an occupational therapist, the people I spent a lot of time working with were the physicians, were the nurses, were the caregivers themselves because they

recognized the style and the approach I took with my patients. I worked a lot with adults with brain injuries and so there's so much retraining and helping them understand how to truly care for themselves from just the very basics of life. The approach I took with them, it took a lot of patience, and I tend to not be a very patient person in my own personal life. My red hair is real, I have a very spitfire personality, but when it came to working with others I had this unforeseen, unbeknownst to my family and friends, level of patience and calm about me.

I dove in even deeper to the occupational therapy aspect of it and I wanted to understand that other piece of me that was coming out more, and so I went back and did some schooling, and a lot of the schooling that I embarked upon then was how do I get into organization and work with those leaders that are stressing themselves out so much, not just doctors, not just nurses, not just support staff, but just everyone that is a self leader? How can I help them be healthier in their lives knowing that their impact of how they care for themselves affects others?

I got my master's degree in leadership development and organizational effectiveness, worked in the corporate world, lived on the East Coast, talk about fast-paced, feeding my fire personality, for I think about 24 years.

Katie Johnson: Wow.

Wendy Billie: I was in that really fast-paced environment and had to learn how to take care of myself knowing that that style of environment made me go even faster, made me have even more passion. I was in that arena for about eight years and I wanted more of that inner peace that a piece of me had left behind when I was on the East Coast, and so I took another major career change and I now have stepped into what I call my life's work. I went out to India and Nepal and I studied meditation, I studied yoga, and I took a really deep dive on how to understand how to heal yourself and be yourself from the inside out.

It is a beautiful complement what I do right now to Western medicine. All of my training that I had before with Western medicine to the corporate America to now being a really holistic practitioner, yeah, it's holistic based on where I came from, but it's really holistic in the approach that I take with my clients.

Katie Johnson: Right, and we have an established relationship with you we should note as well in that you teach yoga classes through our Health and Wellness Hub and through our Phatty Natties group fitness class offering, so when we started talking about what kind of components do we need if we're going to put together this Self-Care for Caregivers session? It was only natural for Natalie to say, "I need to call Wendy and see what Wendy can bring to this special session," and you're going to offer something really unique that I want to help explain to our listeners. You're going to offer energy readings at this session on Monday. Let's start at the beginning. What is an energy reading?

Wendy Billie: That probably gets into that highly attuned, intuitive piece of my bio. So energy, and you mentioned yoga and yes, the foundation of a lot of my learnings was the

true understanding of yoga and what it is as an energetic tool. Every time someone does yoga, you are focusing on your breathing and the breath is what moves energy through your body, right? So very simplistically, that's the tie-in with yoga and energy.

As I started to practice my yoga more and teach it more, I became more alive within myself. I could feel energy moving within me. I understood the foods to eat that had the right energy that helped me to keep in balance, the activities that I chose in my life to keep my energy in balance. I started to speak a language of energy, and so once I decided to, "Okay, how am I going to be offering some of these things that are coming to me very intuitively and very profoundly that I knew I needed to share with others?" I started to work one-on-one with individuals that came to me, and there was no yoga, no rolling out a yoga mat. It was actually they came into my presence and I was able to understand energetically what was going on with them, what was going on with them mentally, physically, and spiritually. That's where our conversation started.

Then I was able to take a whole body scan and to read their energy and then start to balance it. When I was in the midst of doing this and still do these out of my home, these one-on-one deep energy healing sessions, then I was able to go inside and get an inside snapshot of why their energy was becoming stuck. When our energy within us becomes stuck, we're not flowing. Stress becomes a disease then. Stress is great. A natural level of stress is great. You just ask any runner or any caregiver that's listening to this. We operate on this beautiful natural adrenaline. It's just when our adrenaline becomes overly taxed, and so when the adrenaline becomes overly taxed within our body, that spills out and it starts to affect our energy centers within us, these energy centers we can't see, but I can feel within people. Once you become more attuned yourself, you'll be able to feel your energy centers and what they need as well.

These body scans that I'm doing, yes, people come to me and it's like a full fledged hour and a half full body scan, deep conversation, giving them tools, helping them heal and balance. What I'm offering for your staff and your caregivers is something as simple as 5 to 10 minutes where I use my hands, which is able ... My hands themselves have so many energy centers, so do yours, and so I use my hands to scan a person's body to see where I may be picking up on some heat or some cold or where something feels a little bit different from what I am just picking up standing in front of them. I literally scan a body from head to toe and I see where something is a little bit off, and then I stay with that, and then that one person that comes to me, that one area that spoke to them, I'll give them a little feedback of what that energy center is about.

When you come, maybe I'll be able to identify one or two energy centers that are a little bit off, or maybe three or four. That's what I'm doing is just these quick reads to help people understand where their energy may be a little out of balance, because the more we are out of balance for a longer period of time, that's what leads to disease. A component of it leads to disease.

Katie Johnson: Right. I love in your description of this how you use the words, "There's nothing woo-woo about this," because you have to believe that in us there's a little piece of us that's likely to go, "Woo, woo. That sounds a little woo-woo."

Wendy Billie: Oh, yeah.

Katie Johnson: But the way that you described it hopefully helps to dispel that a little bit and really puts into perspective how important this can be, understanding your energy and where it might be stuck to truly taking good care of yourself.

Wendy Billie: Absolutely. There is so much wonderful research and focus around the physical and the mental components of who we are, but there is still another component of us that weaves and webs in with that in synchrony, and that is our energetic body. We understand the power of energy in technology and how that affects us, we understand the power of energy in nature, but guess what? We have that within it as well and so we're able to step more into our power and we are able to access peace at a more depth and profound level than just waiting for a massage only or just waiting for one yoga class or just waiting for a time to go and have a detox bath. How? We can tap into that by just focusing on our breath and harnessing our attention on our energy within our body.

Katie Johnson: And what a powerful tool that is. That's really what this whole session on Monday, December 11th is focused on is giving you ... This is just one of the many components we want to give you if you stop by to take control of that time and that power and that energy that you have to take care of yourself, so Wendy's energy readings will be offered between 11:30 and 1:00 in the clinic lobby unfortunately only at that session. We will have a second session from 5:30 to 7:00 and all of the other items will be available at both of the sessions, including chair massages by Molly Nelson from Poppy Seed Massage. We're going to give away some fantastic prizes, we're going to have a gratitude wall, self-care resources from our chaplaincy department, our spiritual care leaders here, and some fantastic healthy refreshments from our staff in nutrition services.

We hope that you will join us Monday, December 11th for this special Living Well series event, The Gift of Self-Care for Caregivers. Again, it's 11:30 to 1:00 and 5:30 to 7:00 in the clinic lobby right here on 111 West Vernon Avenue in Fergus Falls. If you come between 11:30 and 1:00, you'll have the opportunity to meet Wendy and have that opportunity for an energy scan as well. We're really looking forward to having you there Wendy, and thanks for being my guest today.

Wendy Billie: Thank you so much, Katie. This was fun.

Katie Johnson: Wendy Billie, my guest today on Apple A Day and we invite you to, again, the Living Well series this coming Monday, December 11th. Wendy and Katie remind you there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.

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