

**DR. KEESHA EWERS:** Welcome back to the Woman's Vitality Summit: Caring for Yourself, Body and Soul. This is Dr. Keesha Ewers, your host, and I am so delighted to be interviewing for this session Mary Agnes Antonopolous.

Mary Agnes owns a New York City social media consultancy having created over 1,000 successful social marketing campaigns for a variety of clients such as the New York Times bestselling authors Jordan Belfort (The Wolf of Wall Street), Jack Canfield (Chicken Soup for the Soul), J.J. Virgin, Christine Comaford and many others including me.

She's consulted and developed training programs for a long list of entrepreneurs, charities and corporations and graduated thousands of entrepreneurs from her private courses on social media and digital marketing. She speaks all over the country teaching social marketing tactics, SEO and audience conversion methods and teaches how to keep our kids safe online to anyone who will listen.

So Mary Agnes, welcome to the Woman's Vitality Summit. I'm so delighted to have you here.

**MARY AGNES:** Thank you. I am really excited to talk about this. It is my favorite thing to teach. I teach it for free all over the Tristate area in Catholic schools.

**DR. KEESHA:** So this Summit is the Woman's Vitality Summit: Caring for Yourself, Body and Soul. Our listeners may not know what social media and entrepreneurs and all of these have to do with me, but I find that one of the biggest drainers of vitality for mothers is if their children are not hale, safe, sound, and healthy, right?

**MARY AGNES:** It's true. When we talk about what I could share there are so many things, but as a mom, this is my passion. Really it's something I don't talk about often, but we talk about body and soul, and I feel like our children are our souls, you know? If they're not safe, if we're not confident, we're mentally distracted all day, every day.

**DR. KEESHA:** Right. So often I see female clients in my clinic and people that I work with online who, once I start digging underneath where their stress sources are, it's some kind of crisis with one of their children. It really can throw us into a tailspin. I'm a mother of four so I know this as well as anyone else.

We often hear in the news how we are not safe online. So I want you to start telling us what we can do to keep our teenagers, our little ones, our adult children safe online?

**MARY AGNES:** When I started teaching this, I was just teaching it *all* and it got really overwhelming for the parents. So I now teach the five rules for parents and the five rules for kids, so that you hold them in the palm of one hand. We expect them to hold themselves in the other. If they're going to be online they have to be responsible.

What I'd love to do is offer the five tips for parents and the five tips for kids and give that to you as a download to support everybody involved, if that's okay?

**DR. KEESHA:** Perfect. Alright. So on the speaker's page you can find Mary Agnes's tip sheet for keeping your kids safe online; tips for parents, tips for kids. It will take you straight to her gift that she's giving on her speaker's page.

**MARY AGNES:** So rule number one for parents is: open the gates. Let your kids online younger than you think they should be, because they will start that online experience with or without your permission.

If you don't let them go online and establish the boundaries that you want – what I call the no fly zones – it is so likely they'll use their friends' accounts and go rogue with no input from their parents. This also prevents them from sneaking around and establishing friendships that we don't know exist. My sister and I disagreed on this one. My daughter was only 11 when she asked for a Facebook account. I said "Absolutely, but we go on with my rules."

Rule number two for parents: forget friendship. It is not enough to friend your kid. You need to have their login information and go in as them and check their inboxes, outboxes, sent folders, and deletes. Just friending your kids on Facebook does not give you insights to what they're doing.

So that was my rule number two. If my child didn't agree to it, she was not allowed online. She was young enough that I could set that, but I really think most kids want to be protected at the core of their souls.

**DR. KEESHA:** Well there are so many stories, and many more that they are privy to, about things that go wrong in this scenario, on this scene and in this setting, and so I think that you're right.

Kids want to know how they can be protected and have autonomy at the same time. That's the stage of life the teenager is in; autonomy versus also being interdependent with the family and

trying to figure out what that looks like. So I think that's an amazing rule to start young enough so you're not setting them up for all that sneaking around.

**MARY AGNES:** That's right. So the earlier you put them online, the earlier you give them this idea that nothing is really private if it gets online. So you say "You have to give me your logins and your passwords. You just have to know that I'm in there. I'm not snooping. I'm not really reading your stuff. I'm really looking at other people and their behavior towards you."

This goes for every computer in the house: their iPads, their smartphones, their tablets, all of their gaming networks, the blogs they're on and communities. You really have to think out of the box because anything that can connect outside of their body with another body you need the logins for.

**DR. KEESHA:** Great, ok so next rule?

**MARY AGNES:** Rule number three: build a fence. Everyone thinks of setting their restrictions online, but many families don't do it. It's very simple. We have our kid use one browser – we use Chrome – and we set restrictions through Google.

We protect her from explicit or unwanted pop-ups or things like that. You know, the last place I want my kid to learn about sex is online. It's not exactly the introduction I want her to have.

We build a fence. We set up restrictions. It's the simplest thing to do. It takes five minutes. It'll annoy you when you're looking for things, but that's fine. I'd rather be annoyed and keep her safe.

**DR. KEESHA:** Now that's a really good point. I've had a couple of guests on this Summit, Dr. Patti Britton and Dr. Gina Ogden, who are sex therapists. We talked about where people are getting their sex education these days and so often it's online. Particularly boys are learning how to be sexual partners from porn. So if that's the direction and the place that pops up and that curiosity starts and your kid goes in there and they start learning about sexuality from that environment, that sets them up for disastrous relationships later potentially.

**MARY AGNES:** Especially our boys.

**DR. KEESHA:** Yes.

**MARY AGNES:** I just think it ruins the intimacy. I think it ruins all the intimacy and the whole process for them is lost. It makes them the victim of early sexualisation much earlier than they used to be.

If we think about a mere 50 years ago, sneaking a girly magazine was a really big deal. Now they're privy to almost anything and everything that you can think of.

**DR. KEESHA:** Oh, for sure.

**MARY AGNES:** That's one way you can protect them is to set those restrictions on Google and remember to set them on their phone also.

**DR. KEESHA:** I have to say that Google didn't exist when my – well maybe it existed, but I wasn't tech savvy – or Chrome didn't exist for sure when my son, who's now 26, came to me one day. I don't know, he'd probably been online for about a year, and we had set up whatever we knew to do in terms of what was available for monitoring at that time. He came to me and he obviously was really, really bothered and very emotional. He said "Mom" and I said "What's going on?"

Now this is my oldest son, he has Asperger's and everything is pretty black and white for him. He had a really hard time getting it out, so I said "Son, what's going on for you right now?" And he said "I have so much shame and self-loathing." And I said "Honey! What is happening?"

Someone had invited him into a chat room. He loves to chat with people online and he didn't think twice about this. Apparently it was stuff that was sexual. He was so afraid. Here it was in our living room, and here were these people typing things on his screen that he knew he didn't want to be looking at.

Right after that he came and got me, and he was so afraid that he was in trouble. I said "Oh son, no you're not in trouble. But this is a really good lesson. This is really fantastic that this happened." He said "Oh, it is?" And I said "Yeah!"

This just shows you that this is a non-policed environment out there. It's the wild west right now. There are a lot of fences built right now, so we have this great way to talk about it. Nowadays, it's a lot easier, isn't it?

**MARY AGNES:** It's so much easier, and this brings me to a really great tool for parents. Rule number four is: be a spy. There are one or two recommendations for parents if something feels wonky – I really love these tools – they're called WebWatcher or mSpy.

What you do is you're not literally going to read every word. They do track every word they type, but you can set them for alert words. So I don't necessarily want to spy on my daughter – she's a writer so I think that's wrong. I would never read her journals, for instance. But online is not private, it's public whether we like it or not.

I'm not really spying on her, but I have it set up for alert words so that if she was to type something exactly like that, it would just give me an alert. It's stunning stealth software. She doesn't know I've done it. I check it through an online portal. It doesn't send me email alerts or anything, it's seamless. It's not something I go in and look for at all. I just have those alert words. If something happens, I'm alerted and able to protect her.

It feels really spy-like, but I think it's one of the safest things to do to not be a spy, just to be very aware and very protective. Mine is the most unlikely interview you've got in this whole series, and I just hope every single mother listens to this.

**DR. KEESHA:** I do too because I was devastated when my son was so ashamed and so upset. His reaction was so in line with what the Asperger's sensory processing does. I was so sad for him and so sad that we didn't have something that we could keep closer watch. So I am glad to know about this because I really want parents to clue in because you want to save your kid from an experience that they feel upset by.

**MARY AGNES:** It's weird that it's called spyware – these two tools, WebWatcher and mSpy – because what they really do is free you from having to be a spy. It's setting up an attack watch dog so you can give your child freedom and really be a great parent.

I want to share the second piece of this which is for parents who want to go to any length, like I said, I'm all about privacy. In the most extreme situation, if you think your kid is at risk from not just sexual things, sometimes they're being bullied, sometimes they're at risk for drug abuse, or all the things that used to happen in the school yard now happen online.

**DR. KEESHA:** Gambling.

**MARY AGNES:** Yes, gambling, that's right. There's software called Veriato. It's an employee monitoring software actually. Corporations can snapshot the screens of their employees and really protect themselves, the corporations, from things like sexual abuse cases.

It's also a perfect tool if a parent thinks their kid is in trouble. It's under \$300. It's a great investment if something feels off. It'll snapshot their screen every ten seconds. You can just review it once or twice and you'll really know if something is off.

I'm not saying slay your kids' privacy, but nothing online is private. I'm in social media, I see a lot of shit go down, so I'm really happy to share these tools.

**DR. KEESHA:** Good advice.

**MARY AGNES:** Rule number one for kids is: who's in your room? I want them to think of social media as their room. Never let someone into your house or your bedroom without your parents saying that person is okay. Don't accept any friend requests without letting the primary parent check it out first. This is a really strong recommendation about primary parenting because one person should be in charge of their online behavior.

The consequence with that for my child was if you've accepted a friend request and I haven't approved that friend, you're not allowed online again. She was young enough that I could set up that hard and fast rule, but you've got to set that 100% when they're little.

When they're old enough, it's almost enough to follow rule number one when they're in boxes that you just check – I check once a week now – but you still have to okay every friend they have. I call that rule 'Who's in your room?' It's a pretty easy rule for them to follow.

Rule number two for kids: put on your armor. Remember nothing is private. This is where you teach them about their own reputation. There are two parts to this rule. It's very unlikely they'll understand the consequences.

The first one is about not giving away your personal information. What I like to say is when we teach them to cross the road, we teach them to be afraid of the car. This isn't where we sugar-coat the fear. We want them to know what the danger is and then give them a list: you never give out your name, phone number, email, passwords, zip code, hometown, school, date of birth, pictures, and even things like posting that you're going away on vacation.

You've got to explain to them and go down that list of information. I did it a lot with my daughter. When she got online about five years ago, I would say to her "Remember, you can't

even say your name if you're chatting with someone you don't really know in real life." So we picked her favorite character from Harry Potter, and that was the name she used because she was blogging in fan fiction. People would comment on her blog, and she would comment back.

**DR. KEESHA:** No, that's really good advice. Anyone can see when you go on vacation, what a great invitation for anyone who wants to come and rob your house.

**MARY AGNES:** No kidding. Part two of their online reputation is if you wouldn't do it face to face, don't do it online.

**DR. KEESHA:** This makes sense.

**MARY AGNES:** Kids are cool online and will have a throw-down that we'd never have over coffee. If you wouldn't flash your boobs at the coffee shop, don't flash them on your smartphone. Never ever. That's sort of my joke about it, but it's not really a joke. It doesn't feel the same as face-to-face.

When they finish college, employers will take an infinitely-close look at social media and profiles when they're researching potential candidates. Some of them even demand your passwords to check out inside. Isn't that crazy?

**DR. KEESHA:** Yeah, I didn't realize that. We have a plethora of examples from politicians as high school kids who wind up having those seemingly private moments that they just shared on their phone go public.

So it seems like we've got enough examples now that we can show to kids and tell them this isn't such a great thing. The Internet is never private. And I didn't realize you could ask for passwords, or that an employer could do that.

**MARY AGNES:** Yeah, it's crazy. There was a lawsuit recently where someone asked for their online passwords, and look at that, the bell goes off. That emphasizes how important this is. That's the thing. Once it's online, it's never really offline.

If you share a photo with your boyfriend that's compromising under any circumstances, he can share it in any way he wants. You never know how relationships end up, so we have to practice good online hygiene. Protect yourself. If you wouldn't do it in a coffee shop, or in front of a million people, don't do that online.



Number four: our kids use the friendzone, and it's so important that it gets its own number. I like to say this: remember friendship isn't just click and you accept them. Real friendship is work and long-standing.

Your kids should not open emails from people they don't know, they should not accept friend requests from people without your approval. Most important, they should never agree to meet someone they don't know in person. They should let you know if someone is disturbing them, bullying them. The most important thing is that they don't meet someone they don't know.

If they're really compelled to go and meet that friend, you need to meet them first. This is the last shred of protection we have with our kids. It's what happens when they meet somebody in real life that they've only met online. This is where predators strike. I give it its own rule, and I call it the friendzone. Really, I should call it the unfriendzone.

**DR. KEESHA:** This is where scary stuff happens. It's the same as what we used to joke about, the van with no windows, or the ice cream truck. It's the same thing; it's luring someone out of a safe space into a potentially dangerous situation.

**MARY AGNES:** My dad was a police officer, and NYPD has a cyber-police force that goes into chat rooms as, say, a 15 year old girl. They'll start conversations and they'll find a predator on the other side of the conversation. It's really terrible.

The very last vestige of safety we give them is never ever meet someone in real life. If somebody can't find you face-to-face, you're safe.

I have one rule, which is number ten and this is for everybody in the family. You'll really like this one: lock up at night. You wouldn't go to sleep with your doors and windows open, so log out of everything. Log out of every software and shut down all computers, and then shut off your wifi at night. This is just really good computer hygiene, but it covers a myriad of issues: your wellness and health and being hacked.

What people forget is that wifi runs on a frequency, so there's no need to have that running through your house and your body 24/7. Shutting it down protects us from things we probably will never experience, like wifi cancer, but it also lowers anxiety to have all those frequencies just shut off at night. It's a solid win-win. It protects you on every level. Just lock it down and shut it down.

**DR. KEESHA:** Huh? I don't do this. I'm going to start doing this.



**MARY AGNES:** I don't either, but I don't know if you know Karen Teramo?

**DR. KEESHA:** Yes.

**MARY AGNES:** She teaches a great course on anxiety and I started to take the course. The first lesson I really learned was about shutting down the wifi at night and I sleep so much better. I don't know if it was power of suggestion, but I noticed my own daughter too, she would sleep more hours, and more deeply, when I remembered to shut the whole system down.

**DR. KEESHA:** Ok, that's good advice. And it decreases your risk of getting hacked.

**MARY AGNES:** Hackers, for whatever reason, I've been hacked twice, both times from overseas, both times in the middle of the night when I've left the computer on and unattended. So, there it is. It's just a good thing to do.

If you leave open things like Facebook, I don't know what else there is, even on your smartphone, I literally shut down all my apps at night.

Chalene Johnson, one of the leaders in our field, she's in the fitness field actually, but also a leader of online digital marketing, she got hacked on Instagram, lost 150,000 followers who she never got back, and they hacked into everything from there. She lost six figures in revenue because they got into her banking. Can you believe that?

**DR. KEESHA:** Wow. Well, it sounds like shutting down everything is going to be the new order of business in my household. I never log out of everything because I can't remember my passwords. I think it's so convenient to keep it open. I'm just going to have to be sure I don't do that anymore.

**MARY AGNES:** I know it's a lot of work, but we in my household, because I'm in the industry, we use LastPass, and we keep all of our passwords in there. All you have to do is open LastPass and click "log me in" and it'll open everything.

If I change a password, all I have to do is change it in LastPass. As long as I log out of my computer and shut down LastPass, no one can get into my stuff. So that's my solution for you on that. It'll really help.

**DR. KEESHA:** Yeah, great advice. Well, this is great. I don't want to go into all the deep and dark things that can happen if you don't do some of the stuff, because I think we've all been exposed to some of the stories that can happen, and they're not good. They're horrifying.

The Internet has been such an amazing tool for joining us together as a people, and it has also been a tool for people to get into some severe mischief that's very harmful. So I think these are some great tools and tips for keeping some of our most precious and beloved treasures safe, right?

**MARY AGNES:** Yeah, it's our soul, right? Body and soul, this is our soul. They're our kids. This is like a no take-backs thing. You've got to get it right because you can't undo it if it goes wrong. Vigilance.

**DR. KEESHA:** Right, right. Well Mary Agnes, do you have any tips about the world of cyber living we can all benefit from to increase our vitality?

**MARY AGNES:** I want us to be careful too. We're so careful with our children, but I really want us to be careful with ourselves, especially if we're single.

In the world of online dating, just bring a friend with you the first time. Tell them to bring a friend. Hook up the friends. Just be as careful with us and our precious lives and souls as we would be for our children.

Also I want to say, I learned this from you recently, self-care is just a smart thing to do. Take a rest. Get off the computer. Walk around. Like me caregiving for seven straight years and you said to me "Don't make your daughter the next caregiver."

Also, when you shut everything down, leave your smartphone on the table and go for a walk without it. We never had these 20 years ago, and now we're afraid to leave the house without them. What if someone needs us? Well so what, it's an hour. I want to learn how to completely unplug. I've started doing that since you became my mentor, and it's really made a huge difference. It allows me to take a shower without the phone in the bathroom.

**DR. KEESHA:** Yay!

**MARY AGNES:** I'm really grateful for it. At 10:00pm, I put my phone on "do not disturb" and my closest people know how to get through that. Just call twice, you know? So that's my tip for all of us; protect us like we're our own children, and remember hygiene online and offline.

**DR. KEESHA:** I love it. Thank you so much for saying that because I am so happy to hear. I'm so happy someone listened to me.

**MARY AGNES:** I'm just going to take this opportunity, and please don't edit it out, you are one of my favorite mentors in this space, especially around health and advocacy for women. Being a single woman, so many aspects of my personality to look at that were different and changing, you have been a mentor.

Just with little things like that; don't let your daughter become the next caregiver – I was like “What?” I was so mad at you that day, but I acted on that immediately. Just the things to honor myself you've taught me from the top of my head to the tips of my toes. For anyone listening to this, take someone you didn't know and let her love you. She has so much to teach us all, so thank you for letting me be part of this.

**DR. KEESHA:** Aww, my heart! Thank you, Mary Agnes, and thank you for sharing just a tiny bit of wisdom you have in that amazing head of yours.

We're putting your tip sheet on your speaker's page on the website now for people to access and download. For any entrepreneur who's listening to this, Mary Agnes is the one who's teaching me to be tech-savvy, how to do the things that are not in my skill set. I'm good at telling people how to take care of themselves, but I'm not very tech savvy. She is a rock star at this, so if you know anyone who needs that kind of help, she has an amazing boot camp that they can attend and learn it from the ground up.

**MARY AGNES:** We didn't teach anything social media because I felt like this was so much more important, but if anyone wants to go to the social media boot camp, why don't you let them email you and I'll give them two VIP guest passes to use, and a code for \$100 off everybody else. What do you think?

**DR. KEESHA:** I think that's just very generous and beautiful. Repeat that so that everybody understands what we're saying.

**MARY AGNES:** I teach a boot camp on social media marketing and digital creation, and it's really powerful. It's just a really great space, great people, and I bring in some guest speakers to teach things that I don't even know. So this is comprehensive online learning.

I think it's on September 23-24 2016. We do them twice a year, one east coast, one west coast. What we're going to do is give Dr. Keesha two VIP passes to give away that are worth \$500 a piece, and as many tickets as she wants for \$100 off for the rest of her people.



So for everyone listening to this, we can only sell until we fill up a room that only holds 100, but I think I would really like to do that to support you all.

**DR. KEESHA:** That's very generous, thank you, Mary Agnes. Of course, that is your heart. You're so generous. So we'll have all that information, it's already on the website, and you'll be able to access that. So thank you again for sharing your wisdom with us.

**MARY AGNES:** Thanks, talk to you soon!

**DR. KEESHA:** Okay everyone, remember to live, love, laugh, keep on learning, and be the most fabulous version of yourself, until next time.