

# 1. WELCOME TO DOCTORS LIVING DELIBERATELY



**FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT**

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**Michael:** Welcome to the very first episode of Doctors Living Deliberately. We are so excited to have you here. Before we jump into the first episode, why don't we start by telling you why we're here. So there are so many shows out there for physicians that are focused on things like personal finance and real estate investments, and maybe even personal development. But we wanted to take this opportunity to highlight some of the incredible physicians out there that are changing the world. These doctors are blowing the lid off of things that they never thought were possible for them in their lives. They're creating communities for physicians. And they are changing the lives of the physicians that they are working with. And so we wanted to take an opportunity to introduce those people to you. We're gonna not only meet with physicians, we're gonna meet with the people that love those doctors and show how all of this work that they're doing is not only changing their own lives, but the lives of their family.

Well, that's just a brief introduction. Before we jump into today's episode, why don't we start with some introductions. Hey, Arpita.

**Arpita:** Hey Michael. How you doing?

**Michael:** I am doing great and again, so excited to be here. Why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself and what your life looks like right now.

**Arpita:** All right. Well, thank you. That was a great, I guess intro for our new show. So, I'm a pediatrician. I'm now pretty much retired as a pediatrician. I grew up all over the United States. I was born in Queens, New York, so kind of from your original neck of the woods and moved all over, like I said, the states with my family as my dad he was an immigrant. They moved here in 1970 to start their life in America. And he progressed by moving jobs and changing jobs to kind of really build his life and his career. And we followed him all over the country, obviously we had no choice. And that was a great experience because I was able to really see the entire country and the different, you know kind of dialects and personalities that exist even within our United States.

So ultimately I ended up going to school in the southeast and did med school there, medical University of South Carolina, where I met my husband, and then we couple mashed and I moved to Columbus, Ohio, where I trained at Nationwide Children's Hospital for my peds residency. And then I took a year off. After he completed his fellowship and that's the year that our first child was born. And so we finished fellowship and then we moved to Richmond, Virginia, where we currently are. We've been here for about, over a little bit, almost close to 20 years now raising our family and just, you know, the transitions of practicing part-time initially, and then creating a locums business for myself. And then really moving more into an administrator role for my husband's practice, while also starting a coaching business for myself.

So, you know, it's been a whirlwind of a ride. Definitely not what I would've pictured my career to look like had you asked me what I was gonna do in residency, and it's been amazing, quite frankly. I do have an awesome family that I love. My husband, he is an interventional spine physician and I

# 1. WELCOME TO DOCTORS LIVING DELIBERATELY

have two children. One is a sophomore in college and the other one has got a couple more years left in high school and we've got two lovely fluffy dogs and really that's my family. And my parents live here. They moved here. My brother and his wife and family live here as well, so I'm lucky to have family close by. So that's, that's a little bit about me.

**Michael:** Yeah. That's great, so talk to me a little bit. One of the things that you just mentioned was that your life and your career wasn't exactly how you had imagined when you kind of got into medical school, when you started on your journey. Talk to me a little bit about kind of what that has looked like for you and kind of what do you think about the life that you have now versus what you had imagined when you started.

**Arpita:** Yeah. You know, I think part of that is just how we are also raised and kind of the mental constructs that get created over time by the influences in our environment and quite frankly, our parents. And so I really thought that I would just work, go through med school, go through residency, and from the beginning I knew I'd worked part-time in pediatrics and then really wanna spend time taking care of my kids and staying at home. And that's what I envisioned for the rest of my life.

You know, never would I thought I would be faced with a situation where I was being asked to work full-time in a position that I'd never had that plan to do, and then have the guts to step back and say, no, I'm not gonna do that. Never would I have thought I would leave medicine gradually over time to become more of an administrator. And never would have thought that I would have started an entity to help other physicians who are struggling as well as a result of seeing things unfold over the years. So complete 180. You know, for me, when I went to med school and residency, I envisioned myself working hard until I retired as a pediatrician clinically. And there's so many other options and ways to do it out there. And that's part of what I think we're gonna be talking about over the course of the show with everyone. So, yeah.

**Michael:** For sure. And one of the other things I was gonna ask you about is, you know, you were, I think we have talked offline a little bit about how you, really when you were kind of in the early stages of raising your children, you, you kind of, your practice looked one way as a pediatrician, and then you were asked to kind of change what that model looked like while you still had fairly young children, and that was an indicator to you that you needed to kind of step back even more. Rather than, I think what a lot of physicians do, what I have done is kind of when people tell me that they need more from me, I have in my past just given them more because well they were asking for it and you kind of had done things a little bit differently. Can you talk a little bit about that?

**Arpita:** Yeah, I think it's a little strange now that you mentioned that, that I kind of have always been a little bit headstrong and you know, when I married my husband for example, he's not from our culture. And I knew from the beginning that this is somebody who I wanted to be with and I kind of was able to stand up to the obstacle or the challenge that was being placed in front of me for that. And similarly with how I practice and with the kids I knew before I even had kids that I was planning, I remember planning in residency, I think optimally it's gonna be two to three days a week,

# 1. WELCOME TO DOCTORS LIVING DELIBERATELY

so that way I can take care of the kids and I, I want to be involved, not just take care, I wanna be involved with the kids and that's very important for me, for my life. And I know a career in medicine can sometimes overwhelm and overtake everything.

And so part of that I think is just your knowing, you know, and being able to listen to your knowing for what you want to do and having the genuine guts and ability to stick with it. Because we do wanna keep giving, giving, giving to other people and helping other people. And when we do that, ultimately sometimes we are compromising our own selves. So, it's just something that I knew and I stuck with it. It was difficult.

There was a period of time where I didn't practice at all before I started my locums business, and that was where I was really fighting a lot with the self-worth issues, et cetera, et cetera. And that's the part where I was able to really reflect back later and recognize that the worth was there from the beginning. And I had the luxury of being able to know from the beginning what I really wanted and stuck with it. Where some people are not always able to do that, but still nothing has gone wrong. We can still help people get there.

**Michael:** Yeah. And just to highlight, one very important thing that you just said was that it wasn't easy. You specifically said it was difficult, right? And just because you had a clear idea about what you thought you wanted things to look like, it doesn't mean it's easy. And I think that is something that we are gonna, that is a theme that we are gonna see over and over again as we talk to physicians, that we can have clear ideas about what we want and it can be very kind of obvious to us, but it doesn't mean it's easy, right? There's a lot of effort that's behind.

**Arpita:** Totally. And the one point to that, that you kind of touched on is that with it not being easy, we're hearing and seeing everybody else kind of expecting us to behave a certain way or follow a path in a certain way. And that's where you kind of have to take a step back and be able to say, no, this is what I want and this is what I'm going to do. And it's not gonna feel great because maybe everybody around me is expecting something different, but it's okay, you know? And a lot of times those expectations that we are creating are also just in our head, because once we make that decision to stick with it, nobody really pays too much attention after the initial announcement per se.

So how about you, Michael? Tell me, I've been talking, talking. Now your turn. Tell me about yourself. Give me a little bit of background and tell everybody a little bit about your background.

**Michael:** Absolutely, yeah. So like you alluded to at the beginning, I was born and raised in New York. Did college and medical school there. And I was kind of raised in a family where I was the first person of my parents, in my family to go to college. But I knew from a very early stage that I wanted to be a physician. It was kind of just one of those things I knew from kind of middle school on that this was always something that I wanted. And you know, I think I realized from a very early age also that if I worked hard enough that I could make the things that I wanted happen, right? So I didn't

# 1. WELCOME TO DOCTORS LIVING DELIBERATELY

necessarily feel like I was always at the top of the class or that I had all of the ability to do these things, but I learned that if I just worked really hard, that I could make the things I wanted happen.

And it worked. I got into kind of the top college that I wanted to go to. And I was applying for medical school in the kind of mid to late 1990s when it was extremely competitive and had a backup plan just in case I couldn't get into medical school, because that's what they told us that we needed to do. And it just all kind of worked out. And then by virtue of the match got transplanted to the middle of the country. So I did my training at Wash U in St. Louis and I lived there for six years for my internal medicine and my GI training which is where I met my wife.

But she was living in Chicago. We dated long distance for two years. And then I moved to Chicago to start my practice, to start in my practice. I joined one other Gastroenterologist in a kind of small, multi-specialty group and it was great. I, you know, employed the same kind of technique that I had always used, if I just work really hard, I can build things up really quickly. And that's exactly what I did. So the multi-specialty group was quickly bought out by a hospital system and over time has been bought out again and we went from being two to being nine Gastroenterologists part of a very large hospital system now.

And as I just kept working and working everything seemed like it should be good, right? Like I had all of the things, I married my wife. We have two amazing children. I have this practice that's bustling. And so on the outside; picture perfect. It was everything that I had wanted my life to be. And then I just kind of started to realize like this is it, right? Like this is the picture perfect life that you had been working so hard to get to. Yet things were not all that I had imagined that they would be. And I think we're gonna probably, we're obviously we're gonna talk a lot about this because I think coaching changed both of our lives in different ways but transformative nonetheless.

**Arpita:** So that's interesting that you said that cause I'm thinking back to, you mentioned like, you know, that I worked really hard, I knew that I just had to work really hard to get what I wanted. Tell me, did you have any hesitation or time when you were thinking about, is this the path? Were you hearing from people or people saying that this is not something you can accomplish? And then similarly overcame that by just forging through. Do you have any comments on that? Like when you first started, when you decided you wanna do medicine?

**Michael:** Yeah, I think like all of us, I think, yes, every step of the way there were people telling me, right? I mean, I kind of alluded to having a backup plan because every step of the way people would tell me, you know, even in high school, the guidance counselor telling me oh, that's, you know, a very lofty goal for where you want to go to college. You should aim lower. And then I would be like, well, what about this school? No, I think you should aim even lower than that school and then getting those things, getting my top choice and the same thing. I specifically you know, a lot of pre-meds or biology majors and I didn't do it because I was like, if I don't get into medical school, you know, everybody's saying it's gonna be really hard and I might not get in. So I went with the harder track. I was a chemistry major because I knew like I could go into industry if I couldn't get into medical

# 1. WELCOME TO DOCTORS LIVING DELIBERATELY

school. So it was all of these, you know, almost forcing myself to work even harder to kind of appease the naysayers, right? To kinda get at the people who were telling me I couldn't do these things.

**Arpita:** Right. And that's like, it's similar where you just kind of, you knew what you were gonna do regardless of what people were throwing at you in terms of the negativity and you still did it and persevered. And so part of that is, I was trying to just kinda draw that parallel that a lot of times we feel like we know what we want to do and we're gonna do it no matter what people are saying around us. And that's what kind of helps us push through. So learning to listen to that voice in a sense, you know?

**Michael:** Absolutely. And then also, you know, in a lot of ways, made my life more difficult trying to appease the naysayers. Right? So I was doing all of this extra stuff because people kept telling me that there were things that I couldn't do. Whereas if I had just listened to myself and trusted in me, honestly, a lot of this journey could have been easier. And I'm a better person for having done the things I've done. But when you do things with the sole purpose of trying to kind of appease the people. Then sometimes you're not living your most authentic life. Right? You're doing things for them as opposed to for you.

**Arpita:** And I'll just throw out there that maybe it all happened exactly how it was supposed to.

**Michael:** A hundred percent agree with that.

**Arpita:** So, well, very good. Yeah, I mean, I think it's interesting. So now you touched on also where you are in your career and you've had this kind revelation that, is this all there is? And that was also very telling and insightful because, you know, we, you work so hard your entire career, your educational career to get to this point of this dream that you had envisioned and now you're here. But it's not quite what you were expecting. So talk a little bit about that.

**Michael:** For sure. Yeah. I mean it's, it's hard to say out loud that I'm mid-career.

**Arpita:** I know. We're young, we're young.

**Michael:** I try not to say those words out loud. But yeah, it's just, you know, and I think that this is, you know, we do, we work so hard. We are kind of on this linear just kind of forging forward and then we get to this point where our day in and our day out is virtually the same. A lot of, you know, the things that we're doing, the patients we're talking to, it tends to turn into a little bit more of a routine, some of the excitement, some of the things that were maybe a little bit, challenging or different at the beginning of our careers just ends up being more of a routine and so you kind of look at what is there and you're like, oh wow. I used to do all of these challenging different things and now I'm just kind of on this path moving forward. And almost to the point of asking yourself, is this it? Right. Yeah.

# 1. WELCOME TO DOCTORS LIVING DELIBERATELY

**Arpita:** Yeah, exactly. Exactly. And I think that's a great kind of point to also bring up how maybe we, and I think we're gonna talk about this in future episodes, how we build our awareness around that, that that's what's happening, that's what we're feeling, and then how do we decide if we wanna continue with that versus moving down a different path and making a change. And so that's I'm excited to go through these talks now with a couple other physicians that we have had this life changing experience with, so we can really dive into what was their incentive and what led them also to make that change and how they had the desire and the ability to do that and really move forward with it, so awesome.

**Michael:** Absolutely. Yeah. Do you wanna tell people a little bit more about kind of what we have in store for them over kind of the coming episodes?

**Arpita:** Yeah, sure. I think if I had to really think about what I wanted to put out there is to really help people see that they have the ability to dream again. You know, if we go back to thinking about when we were young, before we had any real inkling, I mean, some of us knew what we wanted to do, but if you go back to when you were 10 years old and you had a dream of what you wanted to do and it didn't need to necessarily be your career, like what other things you wanted to do with your life, can you sit back and ask yourself, are you doing any of those things? Are those dreams still in your dreams? And are you doing any of them? And if not, what are your dreams now? Have you given yourself the opportunity to dream and think about what other things you wanna do? You might be early in your career, in your late twenties, early thirties, mid-career or late career.

But the point is you still have a lot of life to live. And we spend the first 20 years of our life really going through the routine of getting the education and getting the certifications and then starting a family and getting our job settled. And then we are just so on this track to do so. And as Michael said, we get there and then we're like, now what? So I really want to have these discussions with Dr. Hersh and our guests to start talking about how we can start to dream again. And I want also to bring some awareness around recognizing that what if everything is happening exactly how it's supposed to be happening? And I kind of mentioned that with Michael with his educational history and how he worked so hard to get to where he is. And maybe there's a question of maybe I did more than I needed to because I already had that belief in myself that I could get there. But a lot of times in our day-to-day struggles, we focus on that negative, and if we can kind of shift and start recognizing that what if everything is happening exactly the way it's supposed to be and we are either learning from it or getting stronger from it, or we'll see the gift in that somewhere down the road.

That's an amazing way to change the way we think about things. And I guess ultimately, lastly, the one thing I wanna mention is that we get to choose how we wanna live this precious life. We get to choose how to live deliberately and with intention and do the things that bring us joy and do the things that we need to do in order to achieve our goals. And we get to do this for our own sake. And so when we recognize that we have the power of choice, that we're not necessarily stuck in this day-to-day routine that we've created for ourselves, that's what is ultimately the most freeing thing because it allows us to move and consider the possibility of other options in our life or other things

# 1. WELCOME TO DOCTORS LIVING DELIBERATELY

that we wanna add into our life. In addition to doing our are practicing medicine, which we love to do so much. Because we are amazing. Physicians are amazing. We have worked really hard. We're resilient. I know that people think of that as a plus minus type of word, but we power through. We persevere because we work hard and we've done that our entire lives. And so now we get to decide if we wanna take it to the next level. Now, Michael, how about you? What are your thoughts?

**Michael:** Absolutely. I think, you know, when we titled this Doctor's Living Deliberately, I think it was because we both found that when we expanded our goals to be purpose driven, that our lives became so much more fulfilling. And one of my favorite references, and I'm probably gonna say it over and over again, is, you know, if you were getting on an airplane and you overheard the pilot, you were walking past the cockpit and you heard the pilot say, well, gee, I don't, I don't really know how we're gonna get to San Francisco today. You would probably think twice before getting on that plane, right? Yet most of us live our lives without any clear idea of how we are going to get where we want to be going.

And so our goal here is to show physicians and the people that love them, that, you know, life can be whatever you want it to be. So many of us have these stories about who we are, but really they're just that, they're stories, right? And you at any point in time can change your story. This is choose your own adventure time, right? Where you can just decide, I'm skipping to page 25. I don't have to go to the very next page. And you get to do that because we all just have this one life to live. Like you were just saying Arpita.

And so yeah, so that's I think what our, what our plan and our goal is. We're so excited that you have all joined us for our very first episode. We hope you'll tune in to our next episode where we're gonna continue some of this discussion. We're gonna talk about how coaching has helped to transform both of our lives in different ways, but in completely transformative ways. And we're so excited to share more of our stories with all of you and we look forward to seeing you next time.

**Arpita:** Okay, we'll see you then. Take care guys.

**Michael:** Bye.

**Arpita:** Bye.