

## 12. Physician Couples And The Power Of Coaching



**FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT**

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**Arpita:** Hi, guys. Welcome to another episode of Doctor's Living Deliberately. Today I am so excited to have my bestie from residency here and her loving, loving, supportive, wonderful husband, Dr. Jon Parsons and Dr. Melissa Parsons. This is my husband, Dr. Michael DePalma. I have just been so excited about doing this episode with you guys to tell you a little bit about how I was able to discover the world of coaching and who I have always, I talk about her all the time, so she's here today. We know each other, us four, all of us have gotten to know each other since 1999. We did our internships and residencies together, and so we know the ins and outs and the details and the good and bad details of things and how we kind of handled things and have handled things in the past. And so I thought it would be great to have both Doctors Parsons here today as well as my husband, because we've all benefited from the wonderful world of coaching and how that's changed our lives. So I'm gonna pass it over to our, my co-host, Dr. Michael Hersh. He is going to have the platform to kind of ask whatever he wants, to dive in, and help you guys see how this has changed our lives. So, Dr. Michael Hersh.

**Michael:** Well, quite the task. I have two awesome couples here. And so, you know, I thought since our audience has not gotten a chance to meet Dr. Melissa Parsons before, and she is, for those of you that don't know, one of the OGs in physician coaching, she kind of has been on the forefront of bringing coaching to doctors. And first of all, welcome, hi Melissa.

**Melissa:** Thank you. I'm so happy to be here with all of you guys. I can feel the love.

**Michael:** Well, we are so excited to have you here. And so, you know, you kind of started on this journey and then along the way, brought in your best friend, your husband and then her husband into coaching. And I'm so curious, like what was that like for you in terms of you found this incredible tool and then how easy or difficult was it to kind of pull everybody into this and get them to see the benefits?

**Melissa:** So I think the first time that Arpita really got to see me, as someone who had experienced coaching was when she dragged me to a pediatric conference in Arizona and it was like early winter 2018 and I had already been through Katrina Ubell's weight loss for doctors only program. I did that group coaching for six months and I had just started working with my marriage coach Maggie Reyes who's amazing. And Arpita and I were staying at this hotel. She made me go to CME with her because, you know, I was still practicing pediatrics. She was not. She was managing Michael's office and she wanted to keep her CME up and so I just remember her and I like sitting in our room together and her being like, what the fuck is happening? Like, what is Melissa doing? Like, why is this happening? Like, she didn't get it. And you know and I think just that first time she was just like, I don't get this. Like, why do you need this? How is this helping you? Like what is it all about? She really wasn't honestly that open to hearing about it. Like, I don't know if you remember Uppy, but you, like you weren't that interested and which was fine. Like I wasn't trying to, I don't think push it on you at that time. But I was just, I mean, I was seeing huge benefits for it with my relationship with myself. And I was just starting to see the benefits for my relationship with Jon and you know, I don't

## 12. Physician Couples And The Power Of Coaching

know, I think Arpita ended up calling me. I don't remember when that was Uppy, do you remember when that was?

**Arpita:** Yeah. Well I just wanted to add like when, so what you were talking about in that hotel room, I remember you talking about it and I remember my brain going to, I don't know why she's doing this stuff. I don't know why. Maybe her self-confidence has really hit low. Like maybe she, I know she wants to lose weight. I just don't get it, but whatever. If she's happy and it's working, fine. But you know that... so that's my thought process and I think that's what a lot of people go through is that what the heck is this coaching stuff? Like, who needs a coach? Right? So much disbelief around it. And so that's where I was then. And spot on, I didn't ask a lot of questions cause I thought you were batshit crazy. So, so, but I love you. You know I love you.

**Melissa:** Yes, yes.

**Arpita:** And so, That's when time like transpired. I knew you were doing it the whole time. And then fast forward to October of 2020 I think. Right? That's when I had the call with you. When I, you know, Melissa knows everything in terms of what's going on with the practice with us, and sometimes when I'm complaining about all my stresses and et cetera, et cetera. And so I did that again, I called her in October of 20 after Covid, because at that point we had lost so much staff. We had that major turnover of staff and that's when I called her to kind of complain about that, that my dependability is dependent on that of other people. And also telling her about how much I'm screaming at my kiddos at home and just always pissed off. And what was your, do you remember what your line was? What you said?

**Melissa:** I said something like, it sounds to me like you're not being very dependable at home. Like they don't know which mom they're gonna get, DePalma know which wife he's gonna get, you know?

**Arpita:** What's so funny Jon?

**Jon:** I know all the versions.

**Melissa:** So and I think even on that phone call, I was like, do you want a friend or do you want a coach right now? Because they're two separate things, right? Like your friend will listen to you vent and say, yes, this sucks. And you know, totally you should, you know, fire all the staff and rehire more dependable people and you know, just agree with you and you know, validate what you're saying, and that is not what coaching is at all. It's more, you know, asking questions and trying to get to the root of what you're really thinking about yourself that's making you act the way that you're acting. So, yeah. So yeah, I think pretty quickly after that you drank the Kool-Aid.

**Arpita:** Mm-hmm. Pretty much. Yep. I remember like the way I remember you said it is, well, how do you think you're showing up for the kids? Are you showing up in a way that's dependable? And then that's what was like, I remember I felt like my heart sank because it was so true that I wasn't

## 12. Physician Couples And The Power Of Coaching

showing up the way I wanted. And I was just Hershey to Michael Hirsch in the last episode that like Serena had a year and a half left at home and I was so scared about my relationship with her. So yeah, so I think that's it. And then I started learning all about the coaching, listening to podcasts, joining group sessions, and learned so much and said, this is what I wanna do. And you know, like you mentioned, I wasn't practicing, I was helping mostly with the office, but this was an avenue for me too, where I could help other individuals and see the light of what the heck this magic is, right?

**Melissa:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah. And then I think as far as, you know, getting Jon into it, when I hired Maggie you know, he was all in, to his credit, like when she gave us homework and that type of thing to read a book or to, you know, share appreciations for one another and that type of thing, he was like, I want to do that with you too. And I made the request of him instead of the demand, like, will you please, it would delight me if you would read this book with me and do these exercises and that type of thing. And I think we both saw how much it changed our relationship. And I think that speaking to the kids aspect, like my biggest want for our kids is that when they don't have to come home and hang out with us they still want to. And you know, we were at the point where, you know, we were bickering and arguing over the same things over and over and over again. Such that like, there's no way they're gonna want to come hang out and listen to this. Like, they probably couldn't wait to get the hell out.

**Michael:** Jon you know, I'm, I'm so interested because you, so you first had a chance to witness Melissa going through coaching and seeing the changes that she was kind of bringing home, and then you got to be involved in coaching through the marriage coaching with Maggie Reyes. So how were you experiencing all of this as you were going through it?

**Jon:** Yeah, so, stepping back, you know, I can still remember we were at my brother's house for Christmas a few years ago and we had way too much to drink. And so when we got up the next morning, Melissa and I were both hungover and we had had to take two cars because we had so much crap to have to transport up the that to the house. So and on the way home, she started listening to Katrina, who was, you know, weight loss for doctors, body image, confidence kind of thing and Melissa, you know, lost like 40 or 50 pounds, I don't remember how much... a lot of weight and was feeling so much better. And I was like, I don't know how talking to this person on Zoom is really getting you to lose weight. But I'm so happy that you're able to do it. So I was very impressed with the content I had. I had no idea what coaching was at that point in time at all. I'd never heard of it to be honest with you. And then when she came to me about working with Maggie and I was like, Hey, look, I thought, I think our marriage was pretty damn good. And it really was, but when I was a little cynical, maybe a little judgey, you know, in academic medicine, where's the evidence, where's the data? You know, show me why this works, kind of thing. And then,

**Melissa:** And at that point we didn't have the data. Like the studies hadn't been released.

**Jon:** So we worked through, met with Maggie and then, you know, we just didn't fight anymore and we didn't bicker and we respected each other's lanes and all of that. And so in the process of working

## 12. Physician Couples And The Power Of Coaching

with Maggie, I started you know, in my job I was in charge of basically running the covid response at Ohio State, and my work-life balance was starting to struggle and suffer. I was working 17, 18 hour days of seven days a week, and I was still trying to work out, but no personal time, work-life balance was horrible and I sort of became off the rails, to be honest with you. I was buffering with alcohol too much and you know, not sleeping enough in all of it. And so I finally you know, Melissa and the boys were like, you're a mess. You need to do something. So I found my personal coach at that point, Dex and started working with him. I had worked with him over two years and, and I'll let Michael DePalma speak for himself, but I found that paying it forward with Dex to other, not just Michael, but several other of my friends and colleagues in medicine, really was one of the gifts I could give, not just helping people with medical care, but just sort of their own personal care. So that's sort of my little nutshell story.

**Michael:** Yeah. What do you think your biggest takeaway from coaching when you think back about your life before coaching and then kind of where you're at now, is there one kind of major thing that you think that coaching brought to you?

**Jon:** Yeah. I would say my mantra now is I can't fix what happened in the past and I can't really control what's gonna happen in the future, all I really can control is what's happening right now and how to experience that. So I still have my issues from time to time with that, but I really try to focus on experiencing the present day because the future's not guaranteed and I can't do anything about what happened in the past. So physicians aren't really good at that, especially people who are upwardly mobile very professionally, you know, advancing types of people, they always think the next step, what's next and sometimes they don't pay attention to what's happening now.

**Michael:** That's so important, I love that mantra, right? Because we do, I think as physicians, but as just people in general spend so much of our time, effort, and energy thinking about things that either have happened or can happen in the future, but not as much time kind of right now. And the truth is the only time we actually have is this moment right here. So I think, I think that's great. And then Michael DePalma, so you have had you know, you've gotten to watch Arpita kind of go through this process as well. And so from your standpoint as a husband, what have you noticed just in your wife as she has gone through her coaching?

**Michael DePalma:** Well, thanks Mike. It's a great leading question, but we've kind of gone in order of, speaking here this morning in the past half hour, the same order that, that our individual personal evolutions have gone in over the past several years. Melissa starting off and then her getting Arpita to understand where she was at the moment and then perhaps better yet where she could direct herself. So, On the one hand I'm, I'm always grateful to you, Melissa, and then, and then you Jon as well, because if it hadn't have been, frankly, for the path that you guys forged me personally, I'd probably be in a different spot right now.

**Melissa:** Don't make me cry DePalma. .



## 12. Physician Couples And The Power Of Coaching

**Michael DePalma:** That's why I wear my glasses. Like, but to your question, Mike, eventually over time, I did witness firsthand Arpita's or actually the return of Arpita to the young lady that she was when she caught my eye several years ago. But what I mean is she laughed on a daily basis, she just was more fun to be around, frankly. She had a twinkle in her eyes. She had her shine back, and yeah, there were ups and downs. That's the reality of life. Good days and bad days. But the important takeaway for me was like, I never was against coaching or never was disinterested, I was intrigued. I think with everything, there's a time lapse that has to occur for something to happen and change to occur. So I saw this transformation in her and eventually started thinking more and more about how it, how it applies to myself and sidestep for a moment, I mean, we all knew or thought we knew how to take care of ourselves. We're all physicians, eat right, get sleep, don't smoke, occasionally drink, exercise. And we were doing, I was doing all that. But yet, eventually over time, years and years, I just was not a happy person; angry, anxious, began to hurt. And I failed to understand that although I thought I was taking care of myself, I wasn't completely, and the whole mind body connection component was a foreign concept to me, even though I was a physician and involved in research.

So started working with you a little bit, remember? And then through Jon was introduced to Dex and worked with Dex for quite a while. Shortly after that. And what struck me, several things did, but one takeaway was that I learned more about the evidence behind how our thoughts control or affect our gene expression. And holy cow, all of a sudden I can understand that our thoughts actually are an epigenetic influencer and can influence the expression of catabolic genes or anabolic genes. And it started to kind of come full circle and I enjoyed reading several different books. One by Bruce Lipton, one by Joe Dispenza and a more recently one by a Japanese researcher, I'm blanking on his last name, Emoto, I think. But he actually photographed water as it was freezing and could individually photograph each water crystal and demonstrate or document how water crystals change relative to being exposed to positive or negative thoughts. These photographs he has published, these symmetric, beautiful crystals when they're exposed to positive thoughts and quite the opposite when they're exposed to negative thoughts. But we're 70% water. So again, that helped reinforce the concept that physiologically this makes sense, our thoughts can actually have physiologic changes and therefore we can influence our thoughts as well and adopt positive mindsets and have a positive impact on our bodies. And that brings us back to the mind body connection.

And so now my daily routine includes well it's, it's a coherence breathing. I used to do a lot of meditating, that kind of transition to the heart math program I'm doing now. But anyway, that was a long-winded response, but if it hadn't have been for these other three individuals, I would not be here in this position I'm at now. Would've had a completely different answer for your question, probably, but I'm in a better spot because of them.

**Michael:** Yeah, what you just described as a long-winded response left like all the tissue boxes empty in your respective household. So I mean, absolutely don't undermine what you just said because I think it is super powerful and also incredibly impactful, especially to the people that know you so well. I mean, this is such an amazing story. I mean, two couples, you guys have all known each other for so long. I, I won't put out the exact number of years you know, to respect everybody's,

## 12. Physician Couples And The Power Of Coaching

but how has this impacted your friendship, like the four of you, when you think back about where you guys started intern year to where your friendship is at now, what, how does that look?

**Arpita:** I will say, I think in the beginning there was just a lot of the, I mean, I, I wouldn't say even in the beginning, Melissa was there from the get-go for me, like that first year of residency, we did our very first rotation together on the renal service with our attending who was, you know, it was a unique experience that month, but, you know, that was the first month where we had just moved there as well. So my hus, Michael and I were there. We weren't married yet, and so kind of navigating through the relationship with her, that's what really kind of cemented our friendship because she became my, who I leaned on for whatever was going on then. And you know, our story that, you know, I had to talk to my parents because it wasn't a traditional marriage for our culture, and so she kind of helped a lot with some of the ups and downs that we were going through at that time.

**Melissa:** I was coaching even back then. I just didn't know it.

**Arpita:** Didn't know it. Yep. So I think we were just always just, it was the rat race, is what I remember. We're going through residency, we were rat racing and I feel like there was always a lot of competition, not just amongst us, but amongst all the residents and what we're creating in our life. And that really kind of stopped and changed when even after coaching, or even after residency, you know, I stopped practicing and I was going to these conferences, like she mentioned, because that was my way of proving my worth in a sense that even though I'm not practicing, I'm still doing this, I'm still keeping my licensure and everything up to date. But it almost felt like I was not as good as she was. Like I was not good enough because she's actually practicing. And so that still level of comparisonitis was there. And then we started with the coaching and then I just, it just was like this whole world blew up with just unconditional love. Right? And you know, not that we didn't love each other before. And Melissa, you you might have a completely different take on this, but I did feel like there was always some like just comparisonitis, and that was gone. It's just like, oh my gosh, I'm just so glad that I have you in my life and that you're here to support me with whatever I need help with, and vice versa. I'm here to support you. Although I still feel like she's miles ahead of me, so she doesn't really need my support other than just, I love you. But just, you know, just I think that changed with our relationship over time and now it's just like, it doesn't matter how much time goes in between us seeing each other or talking to each other, we can pick back up. And a lot of friendships are like that. But what I mean, I guess with her is maybe that wasn't always there before that I would be curious is like, is our friendship as strong as it was? And there's not ever a question in my mind that it's not.

And I wanted just to speak a little bit about even with Michael, like that relationship with him. From my experience with coaching, it was one of the biggest shifts that I had was what is being right costing you? Like the cost of the intimacy to be right. And that was a lot between us because there was a lot of bickering and it's not totally gone. We talked about that too in the last episode. We're not perfect, but, it's so much better. It's so much more improved that I don't really need to be right here

## 12. Physician Couples And The Power Of Coaching

or, you know, I can see his perspective in this situation and I honor that. And I'm willing to listen to that and look at Jon's eyebrows going up.

Like, Are we sure?

**Jon:** Well, I just can't believe that you don't always have to be right anymore. It's, it's a miracle.

**Arpita:** But is that true?

**Jon:** The miracle of coaching

**Melissa:** It just goes to show that like we're always thinking about ourselves more than we're thinking about other people. Because to be honest, I've never had comparisonitis to Arpita other than you know, she and Michael make a shit ton more money than John and I do, and they travel way better than we do.

**Arpita:** I don't think that.

**Melissa:** But anyway, so that just goes to show like, I've never had that thought before. And maybe it was because I was practicing and you weren't, I don't know. But, and then to speak to the, like, needing to be right. I mean, I think that by virtue of being a physician where you're at work all day and people are taking orders from you and you're the person who's in charge and that type of thing. And then you come home with that energy of I'm the one in charge. I'm the one who's right. And you also are married to someone who is having that same energy at work and that type of thing. And it makes it tough unless you are very deliberate about, you know, how you wanna handle yourself and that type of thing. And I think that both of us are more willing to say like, I was wrong or you were right. And certainly when I say to Jon you are right, he's always like, oh, a little louder for the people in the back, like.

**Jon:** It happens so rarely. Like, I mean, I gotta take advantage.

**Michael DePalma:** Celebrate every win.

**Jon:** Yeah. Very quickly. You know Arpita and Melissa, you know, were in the same training program. Michael and I were not, we were a little bit like plus ones when we first met each other. But Michael, you know, I'm a pretty discerning person in terms of who I want to hang out with. And Michael's a good dude, always has been and really helped me through a couple of, of my own unrelated medical problems with my spine, which, you know, really was something I really was grateful for. And so when a time came for me to talk to him about coaching, it was something that I felt like I could pay him back for helping me.



## 12. Physician Couples And The Power Of Coaching

One last thing or one other thing that Arpita and Melissa both touched on sort of in their own unique way. I think one of the things that for us is we just stay in our own lane a little bit better. You know, we're not, we don't have a manual for the other person to live their life by that we expect them to abide by. If that makes sense. They have their own manual we're along for the ride. You can't write the manual for them. If you do, you get, you get yourself into trouble. So again, there's no scoreboard for being right anymore. And she's doing her thing as Arpita has told you. She's all over the place with these conferences and this coaching and, and I'm doing my own thing and we just happen to be in, in the same house

**Michael:** This is, I mean, this is great. I, you know, there is, I think the one kind of underlying thing here, except for maybe Melissa, I think there was a ton of skepticism around coaching before kind of leaning into it. Right? Or maybe just like not really clear on this unknown entity, Michael, like when you think about like the skepticism around coaching, what would you tell other physicians that are like, curious about coaching but also a little bit skeptical?

**Michael DePalma:** I, I think I have a pretty straightforward answer and that is sitting here now looking backwards that I wish I had done this a long time ago. And I don't dwell on this, but I think frankly I, I wish I had, because I think I would've made more out of the time I had. Personal relationships would've been different. I would've been a happier person. So I would say to a colleague, look, I would briefly share my experience, why, how I thought I was taking care of myself. All these different things that we were taught and trained to do, but there's a missing piece, and that's the mind body component and our thoughts. And don't hesitate. You will benefit. So go all in. We, we tend to, I say we, maybe my, I'll just focus on myself, almost can't get out of our way sometimes, and you guys know what I'm talking about. You can count as much more frequently than I do speaking to potential clients. But once someone can get outta their own way and start to experience the, the positive changes, then, then it's you know, it's downhill after that, so to speak.

And, And I start, I kind of realized, I recognize when dealing with other folks sometimes their thought patterns. And I'm not even trying to, I'm just like, oh gosh. They're thinking about it in a way that they could think about it differently and they'd have a better experience. And as a quick example, my daughter was upset or concerned about something with a, a friend. And I said, Hey, if you think about it this way, and there's a different way to think about this, and that might create a more positive experience for you. And that would, you know, Your, your thought is probably equally plausible as your negative thought, but when it's a positive thought, it's much more pleasant experience for you. And so I, I kind of with myself, choose to think in a way about situations that are believable for me, but clearly create a more positive experience for myself. Back to the decision making thing, I, again, when we want to control, because we fear the outcome, therefore we feel like we have to control the decision as much as possible. And for me, that fueled anger. Because I was trying to control and, you know, we can't control everything. Well, once I could step out of that mindset, our decision making became a little more smooth.

## 12. Physician Couples And The Power Of Coaching

**Michael:** This is great. What, what about you, Melissa? When you think about, you know, the skepticism around physicians and coaching, I see a lot of when I am like reading stuff on social media and stuff, people really still are... We're seeing a lot more physicians looking into coaching, but there's also still a lot of, you know, can't I just talk about this with my friends? Like why do I need a coach? So how do you talk to physicians around that?

**Melissa:** I mean, I think it's just like anything else that you are skeptical of. You're afraid of what you don't know, and I think there's a lot of disbelief that like life could really be as good as we're purporting it to be and people thinking you know, that like you can't possibly as be as happy and as fulfilled as you are, as you're portraying yourself to be. Right? So I think it's just like anything else that we have bias against, it's just because you, they just don't know and they don't think it's available to them. And I think that a lot of people think that those of us who've gone before are like special unicorns or something like that. And we have some secret that we're not sharing with the universe. But I think it's just, if you just give it a chance and give it a try, and like, you can always go back to not having coaching. Like nobody's gonna hold you down and, you know, make you do it. But I've never met anyone who has invested the time or the money in themselves or coaching that hasn't been changed for the better.

You know, and speaking to Michael, speaking about gene expression, like, I like to think that we are like stopping intergenerational trauma. Like of course, you know, we're gonna screw up our kids in some way, but it's not gonna be in this way. You know, you can see it happening. Like, I'll give a small example the other day Jack, our oldest, who's a junior in college was home and he said, you know, mom, I just don't think it's fair that they expect a 20 year old to know what he wants to do for the rest of his life. And I was like, oh, buddy. I was like, you just have it wrong. Like you don't have to know, like you can try what you're doing now and if it doesn't work out, you can do something else. Like you don't have to do this for the next 20, 30, 40, 50 years. Like, it's okay to fuck up and not know and make a mistake. And you'll learn so much more by failing than you will by just going straight through and like having it be easy, quote unquote. Right?

**Michael:** I think you bring up an excellent point and one which is even if you're not doing this for you, when you lean into this experience, when you sign up for coaching, the impact that it has on everyone around you, and for me, speaking personally, the impact that this has not only had on my wife and my children, but my patients and how I show up at work. And literally, there isn't anybody that doesn't notice a difference from where I was before I started on this journey til now. And, you know, I have, my children are much younger than yours, and so my elementary school aged kids, I see a lot of me in my daughter and how she responds and, and how she reacts to certain situations. And I get to make sure that at eight years old, she knows all the stuff that it took me 40 plus years to figure out for me. And so saving her the struggle and letting her figure it out at a young age to just make her life better forever. I mean, you can't, I personally can't put a price on that. And even if I had gotten nothing out of this, the fact that I can gift this to my children is everything to me.

## 12. Physician Couples And The Power Of Coaching

**Arpita:** Yeah. And I just wanna add the one little piece. I think Melissa, Michael, you both kind of touched on it, is, you know, like the perception is that we're living this amazing, joyful, happy life and we are, and there's still also the bad, negative, crappy times and we have experiences that make us feel horrible and upset and angry and sad. They all still happen and we're able to kind of work through it in a more productive manner. So they still happen. We still experience the shitty 50 /50 is what we call it, the shitty 50 of the 50 /50, but we're positioned in a way where we can be much more productive in dealing with it. And that doesn't mean that we don't have those setbacks, but we're able to just, you know, be more happy in the end and recognize where we still have areas of growth.

**Melissa:** Mindful how long we're gonna stay in the muck of it.

**Arpita:** Yeah, exactly.

**Jon:** Can I say one thing about physicians that are, I think, specific to physicians is you know, we've all done this. We're an undergraduate. We gotta tailor our entire undergraduate career to get into med school, then to get to residency, get a job. And so, and it's so competitive that we feel blessed to be able to do what we're doing. But when things don't go well, we have bad feelings or we're struggling, it's almost like you're not entitled to have those struggles because everyone else wants to be in our position and we shouldn't be feeling any negativity about anything. So that's one big hurdle that I've found that physicians really struggle with. And the other one is there's this really unfortunate stigma for physicians, especially male physicians, to say I need some help. You know, I mean, I need someone to help me navigate this. And so those two boundaries really for me when I talk to other guys at my job who I can see are struggling a little bit, are things that always come out. And so that's the, that's what I speak to when I talk to them about coaching.

**Michael:** Yeah. I mean a hundred percent. I think that is what kind of motivated me so much to get out there and to start talking about this more and more because there are not a ton of male physicians out there talking about like, this is all normal. I remember the first time I ever sat through a group coaching session with other physicians and there were other male physicians there. And the biggest takeaway I got from that group coaching session was, oh my gosh, it's not just me. And I think when we do, you know, lend credence to this, when we start talking about it, when we start showing everyone that this is so common, we can bring male physicians into the fold so that they can start getting kind of, they can start upleveling their life in the same way that we have. And, and I think female physicians have been a little bit quicker to adopt this, to accept the help, to make the changes. And I think, you know, male physicians are just starting to kind of start to see it also. Michael, you, you've had some experiences with this too. What do, what do you think?

**Michael DePalma:** Yeah, I think just reflecting on my personal experience, as I mentioned, I wasn't resistant or disinterested. I just kind of knew eventually I would turn to coaching, but it wasn't until I was into it, I fully understood and appreciated the positive impact and now thinking, well, gosh, I wish I'd done that much, much sooner. But, and that was after people very close to me whose opinions and judgments I trusted and valued. And I saw their experience. So I think, yeah, it's

## 12. Physician Couples And The Power Of Coaching

increasing level of awareness and making these resources like you guys available, accessible to peer physicians who need that sort of, not just support, but help in helping themselves and to realize that, it's not by asking for help, it's not a sign of weakness. It's just, I mean, look, if you're gonna commit to eating vegetables every day and getting up in the morning and running or exercising and not smoking, it's just the same commitment to doing something for an additional variable, that is you mind your thoughts, and that's gonna have an additional positive impact. So yeah, there's probably some resistance, maybe stubbornness because there's, what is this? This is not therapy. I'm not unwell. So I think, yeah awareness, which is what you guys are talking about and, and working to expand.

**Arpita:** I just said to him earlier it's because the, when you said the women we're a little bit ahead. It's just, I just mentioned that we're smarter. That's why I'll just leave it at that.

**Michael:** Well, you know, I honestly, I, I've said before, you know, women have this kind of you know, are known for being nurturing, for being the caretakers. And I had been asked previously, why do I think that, you know, female physicians have opted into physician coaching so much sooner than male physicians? And my answer was you know, right now the female physicians in particular, the female physician coaches are caretaking our entire profession, right? Like they are kind of helping us to kind of see what's going on here. And, and I know this because most of my physician coaches when I first started were female physicians, right? There weren't a ton of male physician coaches in this space, and so hats off to our female physician coaching colleagues who have gone out and started to show everybody that change is possible and that you don't, you know, like, yes, struggling is normal, but you don't actually have to be struggling to up-level your life through coaching. There are so many different aspects of your life that can be improved. And Melissa, you've been doing this for a long time. You're one of the female physician coaches that I'm referring to when I say this. So what do you what do you think?

**Melissa:** Yeah. I mean, I'm honored to be part of a group of women and men who are wanting to show other people that there is so much possibility. And you know, I think for most of us who go into medicine, not a hundred percent of us, but a lot of us had that dream since we were little kids and you know, it's okay to like have another dream now and to want to change it up and do something differently. And either in addition to practicing medicine or instead of, right? So I think when you think about the great need that there is to, you know, we obviously wanna keep as many physicians in medicine as possible because, you know, we want smart people to stay and to be able to take care of us and our loved ones and, you know, for the health of the planet and the health of the world, right? But it's pretty awesome to be part of a movement. And, you know, I don't think of myself as an OG but I'm glad that you guys do. I have been doing it since 2020, so I mean, it has been three years. And you know, when you think about three years, like changing four people's lives so drastically in three years, and then changing their family's experience of life and then all the ripple effects and like all the people that you've coached Uppy and all the people that you've coached, Michael, like just the ripple effects of it, there aren't enough of us. We need more for sure. And you know, the more the

## 12. Physician Couples And The Power Of Coaching

merrier, the better. Like the more people that receive coaching, the more people that become coaches, I think the better all the way around.

**Michael:** Well, this has been, I've loved talking to all of you. I am honestly very inspired by kind of just the relationships, how long you guys have all known each other, and just the evolution of your relationships over time, not only as married couples, but as friends and it's really inspiring to see and to hear. Melissa, for people that might be interested in your coaching program, can you tell people how they might find you?

**Melissa:** Yes. You can find me at my website, which is [Melissa Parsons coaching.com](http://MelissaParsonscoaching.com). I'm on Instagram coach Melissa Parsons, MD. Facebook, Melissa Parson's coaching. I have a podcast, it's called Your Favorite You. It is available to you on all the different podcast platforms that you could possibly think of. I am transitioning right now, I'm starting a new group coaching program that's going to commence in May. I haven't talked about it much except to my current and former clients and it's not going to be all physicians, it will be all women. But you know, unsurprisingly, a lot of my clients are physicians just because they relate to me. But there's gonna be some other amazing powerhouse women in there too. So you can sign up to be on my email list or just go to my Instagram or Facebook and follow me there.

**Michael DePalma:** Amazing.

**Arpita:** Awesome. And I just wanna add that this episode is airing right before our anniversary. It's what number 20...

**Melissa:** Who knows?

**Michael:** You can't put a number on these things. Oh, wait, no, actually yes you can. Okay, go on.

**Michael DePalma:** You just can't get it wrong. You just can't get it wrong.

**Michael:** No problem. It's okay, my wife doesn't remember our anniversary either. It's fine.

**Arpita:** But so it's just kind of neat, all the things coming together and celebrating and just being able to talk to our old friends and good friends and just lifelong friends. So thank you for you guys all showing up today to join us on the podcast and share our stories.

**Melissa:** Thanks for having us.

**Michael:** Absolutely.

**Jon:** Thank you guys.



## 12. Physician Couples And The Power Of Coaching

**Michael:** Yeah, absolutely. Doctors Melissa and Jon Parsons, Doctors Arpita and Michael DePalma thank you both. I thank you all so much for being here today, and we will see everybody next time on another episode of Doctors Living Deliberately. Take care, bye.