

48. Your Word for 2024 with Dr. Arpita Gupta DePalma



FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

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Michael: Well, hey everyone. And welcome to another episode of Doctors Living Deliberately, the first episode of 2024. Thank you all so much for being here with us today. And, of course, welcome to my super sparkly co host, Dr. Arpita Gupta De Palma. How's it going?

Arpita: Going just swell. I thought I would bring out the sequins since it's the first episode and we all just celebrated New Year's. Hopefully we didn't have too many hangovers. People are feeling good, ready to go.

Michael: Ready to go. And yeah, and for those of you that don't know, we do record these episodes and post them on YouTube, youtube.com/doctorslivingdeliberately.com If you want to check out Arpita's sparkly top. You're reminding me of one of our good friends, Dr. Shideh Shafie with that she loves the sparkle too.

Arpita: Loves the sequence. This is in honor of Shideh, my buddy who actually I just recently saw as well. So we'll talk about that. Yeah, absolutely.

Michael: Excellent. Well, so we today are talking about your word for 2024. And I don't have a word for 2024.

Arpita: This is an excellent episode for you.

Michael: I'll be honest, I'm a little nervous to do this on the podcast, but we're, we're going to go for it. So, so tell me you make a word for the year and then you live by that word. Am I getting that right?

Arpita: Sort of, kind of, yes, kind of for the gist of it, but I started doing this a couple years ago because quite frankly, I never did New Year's resolutions. I hated them. I thought it was like all a bunch of bullshit, right? It's like lies that we made for ourselves to try to live up to, and then we never did. And then we feel like failures or feel let down or just, it just never worked for me. I didn't like doing it. It didn't seem real. So I never did it. And then as you know, I'm a Miraval fan. I love Miraval I go at least twice a year. And what I noticed the very first time I went is that each employee has their name on their badge. And underneath that a word, and they say throughout the resort, ask me about my word, ask me about my word, because they want you to learn from them why they pick that word. And I don't know how often they change it, but I thought that was pretty cool. Right? And so that evolved for me into me picking a word for myself for the year. And I really love doing this. I love doing this and starting to prep and think about it at the end of each year for the following year because it helps me really bring intention and focus and clarity to what I want to create in my life or what I want to settle into for the next year in my life. It's kind of like a guiding star in a sense for me. And I never really knew that this was a thing beforehand. After I started Googling and researching a little bit, I was like, Oh, God, there's a lot about this on the Internet that shows how much I'm like present in the Internet and stuff.

But people have been doing this for quite some time. This is a new thing for me, and I'm hoping that maybe it might be a new thing for others. But it really has become a way for me to reflect on my why, my intention for the following year and that's what kind of led me to do it. And so each year I try to pick a word that guides me through that year to be kind of like I mentioned, like that North Star so that I can come back to it when I'm not feeling like I'm hitting my goals or when I'm feeling kind of down in the dumps, depressed or just not in the best place for where I want to be. I kind of remind myself with using this word of what I'm trying to create that year. So, yeah, I think that's kind of the gist of it. I try to find a word that really makes me feel empowered. It might be comforting. It might be a little bit challenging, like daring if I want to create something new. And so it's varied each year based on what's coming up for me. And so I'm very deliberate about it. I really spend time. I've been thinking about this one for a couple of months now, actually, because there's so many things coming

48. Your Word for 2024 with Dr. Arpita Gupta DePalma

up for me in the next year or this coming year, and I guess the best way maybe to give examples is maybe start with the ones I've used in the past. What do you think?

Michael: Yeah, I think that's great. I, you know, before we get there, like, what's your process? Do you, do you come up with a list of possible words? You said you have thought about this for a couple of months before you land on your word for the year. Do you have a process or you just kind of, you just feel it in your bones and then you go with it that way?

Arpita: I have a process. You know me. Do you know me at all?

Michael: I do know you. I assumed there was a process.

Arpita: Okay. You know me. All right. So as some of us know, I hit the big 50 in October, right? And so for me, that's actually when I started because I wanted to do a lot of reflection of what I had created in my life, because quite frankly, we don't spend any time in that. We just kind of move on to the next thing as we've talked about. So I reflected on what I'd already created in my life and also what I wanted to create. And so the process, that's why I started earlier this year was just because of the birthday. But otherwise I would say give yourself and you'll kind of get a feel for how long you need, sometimes it might just come to you. This is what it's going to be. And other times you might not feel like it really sticks or is hitting the right spot. So I guess the process, the process is number one, I reflect on the past year, right? So what served you well in the past year and what didn't? So asking yourself questions or prompts to maybe even do thought downloads if you want, that might be a great way to get started. So what served you well and what didn't? What do you want more of in your life and what can you do without? And maybe what are the three top feelings that you have each day currently, and what are the three top feelings you would like to have instead? So that's the reflection portion of it, where I really kind of dive into what's happened and what I want to create.

Okay, the next step is just visualizing, anticipating what is coming my way or your way in the next year, right? Is it already planned and you know what's going to happen? Or is it something that you want to create? What are some words that drive you to handle the situations that might be coming up or drive you to accomplish the goals that you want to achieve in the next year. And what feeling do you want to carry with you as each day passes in the next year? So these are all kind of tying into the reflection and then your visualization of it. Really put yourself there and think about if you had to think of a word when things were going south in any of the examples that we, that you're considering, what word will push you through or help remind you of what your purpose is behind it?

Michael: just want to pause just for one moment and say, cause you know, you're talking about looking at your feelings. What are the three feelings you feel most commonly? And what are the three feelings you want to feel? And this, this is a little bit of a tricky question. And so for anybody in our audience who plans on doing this work, you may think that the things that you want to feel are happy and content and light and joyful and all the things. And if all you ever feel is happy and light and content and joyful, you're probably not going to get big projects done because you feel content and you don't want, you know, you're not going to feel the need to go and push yourself to do those things. So really be intentional about what is the thing that you want to feel. If you want to feel motivated, just know that the drive is going to require you to kind of lean into some fear and some discomfort and all of those other things. So really be mindful of that as you're working your way through this process and trying to figure out, like, what do I want to feel? Like, what do you want to accomplish? And then figure out what you want to feel. Sorry. I didn't, I didn't mean to cut you off in the middle of your process,

48. Your Word for 2024 with Dr. Arpita Gupta DePalma

but I just, I thought that that was a really important detail. When you said that, I was like, Oh, I've been tricked by that before.

Arpita: Well, like you said, like, if you're wanting to feel motivated, you might not want your word to be motivated, but what word can you think of for what you're trying to create that generates that feeling of motivation for you? So is it, you know, success? Is it accomplishment. Is it contentment? Being present? Like you get to pick here. What generates that feeling for you?

So yeah, now the next step is to actually create the list, right? So, and this is where I really spent more time this year to figure out which word creates the sentiment that I'm wanting to have for the entire year for all the things that I want it to kind of embrace. And so the list of words is important, right? Which words align with your why? Just write. I want you to just come up freely with words and words and words. You don't have to commit to anything now. You just want to let it flow when you're writing them down. And keep doing it until no more words really resonate for you for what you're trying to achieve for that year. And then after you've got your list, I want you to circle the top 3. Okay, if you go back and review your list of all the words there, which are the top 3 that you can see in the scenarios that you're putting yourself in for the next year really can serve as your guiding star, right? And you're probably going to see a theme amongst all the words that you wrote one way or the other, but you're going to know when one really resonates with you, when it kind of excites you, it motivates you, it sticks out, makes you feel empowered, whatever it is that you're going for. Right? I want you to remember here that it's okay if you want to pick a word that just lets you settle in and it's comfortable and it's also okay to pick a word that challenges you to do more, right? Because comfort doesn't change us. We've talked about this. Comfort doesn't change us. So if you envision a year of growth ahead, pick a word that drives you towards that. So it might be a little nauseating is what I'm saying.

Michael: Well, before we get to your word for 2024, let's talk a little bit about your word.

Arpita: There's one more step in the process!

Michael: Oh, I'm so sorry! Of course, see, guys, when I said I was sure that there was a process, it's very clear. I knew there was a process, but it's also very clear I don't know what the process is. So, sorry. Please continue.

Arpita: You picked your top three, and now you have to decide on the one that you want to commit to. Okay? So that's the final step. For the full following year, which word can you commit to that really sticks. I don't want you to be flippant with it or fluctuating or kind of like, you know, not really there. It needs to be a word that will help you get through whatever you're trying to get through in the next year when you think about it. Okay. All right. So that's the process. Do you want me to summarize it?

Michael: Yeah. Why don't you give us a quick summary and then I've got a follow up question for you. Okay.

Arpita: Summary. Number one, reflect on the past year, right? What served you well, what didn't, what do you want more of in your life or what can you do without and your feelings, current feelings, what feelings you want to generate. So that's number one, reflect. Number two, visualize yourself in the future for what things you're anticipating in the next year and what emotion you want to generate to help you get through that. Number three, create a list of words that create that feeling for you, that generate that feeling in your body and just write. Number four, circle the top three and make sure that the top three are driving you towards what you're trying to create. And number five, pick one damn word and go with it. Okay. All right. That's the song.

48. Your Word for 2024 with Dr. Arpita Gupta DePalma

Michael: Okay. Well, I have a couple of questions for you. A couple of important follow up questions. Now, what if I pick a word and I get a couple of weeks into, you know, my word of the year and I just decide it's not doing it for me. Can I go back and repick my word?

Arpita: No, you're married to that word forever like you're married to your wife. Of course. Okay. Now I want you to be onto yourself. We're not going to change our word every month of the year because it's just not sitting. Okay? Cause that means maybe we need to go back and do a podcast episode on decisions and commitments. I don't know, but yeah, if you feel like it's just not doing it for you, definitely go back and reassess and, and decide, but just be mindful not to be doing that every couple of weeks. Cause then you're kind of defeating the purpose.

Michael: Got it. Now, can you tell us what your word, do you feel comfortable telling us what your word for 2023 was?

Arpita: Okay, I'm gonna start with 2022. So 2021 was the first time I went to Miraval where I got exposed to this. And so I started doing my words for 2022. And that's also kind of when I started doing this work. 2021 is when I started ThoughtWorkMD and started doing a lot of the mindset work. And so one of the biggest things and also related to our podcast, Doctors Living Deliberately is living with intention. So for 2022, my word was intentional because that's how I wanted to shift how I was living my life. I wanted to build more awareness around how I was choosing to think about things. And that required me to be intentional. And so that's what I lived by 2022.

Michael: Well, I was going to ask you, like, how did you use your word? So, there were decisions that would come up, and you would be weighing options, and you would be oh, my word is intentional, and so, I'm going to do this because this is my intentional choice.

Arpita: For me, really, where that came in, the word intentional is when I would kind of assess things that were coming up for me and what truly felt authentic and how I wanted to show up. It was a reminder for me to do that, to be intentional with how I was showing up. And so being intentional with, you know, and it's not like we're perfect. We have the setbacks. For me, there was a lot of still dealing with anger and working through how I can show up the best way. And so how can I be intentional with the way I was showing up? I need to prepare in advance. I need to really do some work on myself to figure out why I was getting activated and angry. So that's where the intentional showed up for me.

So, but like you, this is a great point that the way I pick a word and what it drives me to do might be totally different than that exact same word for somebody else. Right? And so that's why that, you know, reflecting and visualizing what you want to create is super important here, because you want the word to drive you to do that, and it might be different. That same word might drive two different people to do two different things.

Michael: Okay, I love it. Yeah. Yeah. And then, okay, so then, 2023...

Arpita: In 2023, I picked breathe. Okay. And I picked breathe because I knew there was a lot of shit going down that year. We were building a brand new building for a medical office that I was pretty much in charge of, we were moving our medical practice after 12, 13 years now to the new location., We had my mom having surgery, my son was beginning his senior of high school. There was just so many things, opportunities for me to speak, public speaking, my business growing, et cetera, et cetera. There were so many things that I knew I

48. Your Word for 2024 with Dr. Arpita Gupta DePalma

was going to have to be intentional with taking a breath. I was going to have to be intentional with pausing and spending time to just let myself be. And so that's why I picked the word breathe because I knew I was going to be running like a chicken with my head cut off in 2023, which truly has happened. But that was helpful because I have, I actually have a poster, a sign in one of my rooms. It's not in this room that says breathe. And it talks about a mom running and doing all the things on top of working and so that was part of the inspiration to it. For me to remember that you have all the things going on and. You have to take care of yourself first in order to make those things happen.

Michael: So that's fantastic. I really like that. And, you know, I think we all know how important breathing is. And I think as you get into this work and learn to be intentional and deliberate breathing becomes all the more important. It's not only life sustaining, but it's sanity sustaining right to take a moment to pause to breathe gives you just that little bit of space that you need to carry on. So I love that. That's great. Well, I think we built up the suspense enough. So tell us about what the word for 2024 is.

Arpita: All right. So for 2024, I am preparing again for a lot of transitions this upcoming year. I am going to be an empty nester. Both my little minions are flying out, right? My husband is moving towards a new way of practicing or building a new arm within his practice. I'm shifting more outside of the traditional practice that we have. My parents are aging. My kids are becoming adults. I have again, talks and travel coming up, new friends, new connections, new adventures that I'm intentionally creating. And so I picked the word embrace for 2024 because I want to embrace all the things that are happening, all the emotions that are going to come with it, the good and the bad, the bittersweet pain with the kids leaving and moving my son out. And the joy of seeing them fly because we've done an amazing job as parents. We don't give ourselves credit for what we've done. So getting a little emotional. Thanks, Michael Hersh. But that's how I picked it. And it took me a while because I wanted to pick a word that really helped kind of exemplify what I'm going to be doing with the highs and the lows that I'm going to have next year that I already know are coming. So, but yeah, so that's, that's my word. What's your word for 2024?

Michael: Well, you know, it looks like we are just out of time. And so it has been so great speaking... I'm teasing, but I, you know, I think hearing your process you've given me a lot to think about. So I don't yet have a word for 2024. And I think as we conclude this episode, I am going to sit down and start, you know, thinking through this part of the reason why I wanted to know what your previous words were is, you know, I was looking for ideas for myself. And I think that there is, there can be so much power in these words. And it's really just about reminding yourself and then living by those words. And I love the idea of you embracing all the 2024 has to offer because there's gonna be a wider range of emotions and it's all, it's all great in, in its own way. And so being able to identify that, embrace it. You've now given me a lot of homework that I now have to start out my 2024 but I am excited for the process. So thank you for that.

Arpita: Awesome. Well, thank you. Well, I would like to challenge everybody who sees the podcast or witnesses it on social media and all the different platforms to just leave your word. If you've done it great. If you're working on it and you come to it, leave your word in the comments, tell us what the word is and why you picked that word in a couple of sentences, that would be awesome to see it. And it will really show that this episode resonated with you guys if it does. So I appreciate you guys doing that. And while you're there, like us and leave us a review, please.

Michael: Absolutely. Yes. And share this episode. If you have friends or colleagues that you think might benefit from this, we really encourage you to share this work because this can really help so many physicians

48. Your Word for 2024 with Dr. Arpita Gupta DePalma

as we embark in the new year, trying to kind of promote all of the work that we do. And again, there's so much, there is so much knowledge and power in our profession and learning to embrace it and promote this work really just amplifies the message. So thank you to all of you for the work that you do, for helping to share this message, for being a part of our community. And thanks so much for listening to this episode of Doctors Living Deliberately. We'll see you next week. Take care, everybody.

Arpita: Happy New Year.

Michael: Happy New Year. Bye.

Arpita: Bye.