

48. Setting Goals In The New Year with Dr. Michael Hersh



FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

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Michael: Hey everyone and welcome to another episode of Doctors Living Deliberately. So happy to be here with you today and as always love to introduce my co host Dr. Arpita Gupta DePalma. How are you?

Arpita: I am doing amazing. How about you?

Michael: Good, good. How's 2024 treating you?

Arpita: It's chugging along. It's busy. It's been full so far. So, you know, we'll see what all we have to bring as it keeps moving forward.

Michael: Absolutely. Well, so did you happen to set any resolutions for 2024?

Arpita: Dude, you know, we talked about this last week. I don't do resolutions. And I do my word, right? So we we, but that being said with resolutions, I think it's more of what I want to create for myself now. And I started doing this a little bit last year, so I don't do resolutions as much because I think it's a setup for me for not feeling good about myself, but I do create essentially goals for myself and I with that word that I picked last week or talked about picking last week. I want to center my goals around that. So I think that might maybe help answer your question.

Michael: Well, actually, I think it's, it's perfect, right? Because I kind of agree with you. I have never been a big fan of New Year's resolutions. And until not that long ago I wasn't even really good about setting goals for myself either. And, I kind of, you know, as I was going through schooling and training, you know, it always just seemed like my goal was to become a doctor. And so each step along the way, I was doing the things that allowed me to get to that goal. And somewhere along the way, I just stopped thinking about other goals that I wanted to achieve in my life. And it really wasn't until I found physician coaching that I realized, gee, you don't really have any goals, right? You had this goal to become a doctor. You had this goal to become a husband. You had this goal to become a dad and, you know, to have, you know, certain things in your life. What about the other things, right? I never really sat down to figure out, what are some other things that you want to create for yourself in your life. So, you know, reading or learning a foreign language or, you know, exercising or things like that. And I tend to agree with you about resolutions because those tend to be kind of commitments, right? Like I'm resolving to do these things this year. And I think that's part of the reason why we're so quick to let resolutions go, because they're not truly a goal that we fundamentally believe in. And so if we don't really understand the why behind why we want something, it gets really hard to maintain it. And as we all know, because we're all pretty diligent about achieving our goals, if you don't really understand why you're doing something, you're very quick to abandon your plan, right? Like you're very quick to just be like, forget it. I'd rather be, you know, chilling on the couch, watching Netflix.

Arpita: Okay. We're not Netflix and chill. We're not.

Michael: No, no, it's not that kind of podcast.

Arpita: Okay. Yeah. I mean, I, what I think about is like what you're saying, you know, that if you don't have goals and you don't remember your why or why you're doing stuff, you aren't able to move forward. And I also think that we have forgotten how to just dream, to think about things that we want to create for ourselves that might not be traditional, that are away or stray from mainstream. Right? So when I think about when I was a kid, what I wanted to do, what I wanted to create, things that I wanted to accomplish, it looks very different

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than what it was even a couple of years ago, because I had become so ingrained in this routine, this rat race of what we had created in our life and what needed to be, but I forgot how to dream. And so I really had to be intentional to go back to, if I had to burn it all down and start from scratch, what would it look like if I wanted to create just more joy in my life? What would it look like? What is important to me now, if I could create whatever I wanted? And I think what happens as you know, I hit the big 5-0 last year, right? And I've coached so many clients about it, but even myself hitting it, what I realized is that when we are working through the first half of our life. We're so busy with our own schooling, starting a family, starting our career, all the things, and then our kids kind of get older and we are getting older, our kids might be leaving, same for me too, empty nesting. And we start to realize like, what am I going to do next? Right? And so we have to be really intentional about what we want to create in the space of our life as it continues, because we're only halfway done with life expectancy, the way it is now, when we hit 50, we're really only halfway done. So how do we want to be intentional about what dreams we want to achieve in that second half? So that's where a lot of my focus has gone for myself primarily, but also when I work with clients about what do you want to create? What goals do you have? And if you had to start from scratch, what would it look like?

Michael: I think for a lot of physicians, sometimes there can be this thought, well, I'm a doctor and I can't do that, right? There may be these big ideas, these dreams that you've always kind of had lurking in the back of your mind, but you haven't really allowed yourself to embrace them because you're a doctor now and you can't do that. And I always love the question, is that really true? Right? If you have a dream of becoming a chef, is it true that being a doctor is holding you back? And, you know, some physicians might tell you, well, I don't really have the time. And the truth is we all know that if there is truly something that you want in your life you will find the time. We make time for the things that we genuinely want and so can you set yourself up for success, by number one being real with yourself and admitting to yourself those dreams that are kind of, have been lurking under the surface for a long time, but you haven't allowed yourself to embrace them. And number two, can you give yourself permission to explore it to see maybe you get in the kitchen for the first time and it's a disaster and you just decide, forget it, this isn't my thing, but can you allow yourself the opportunity to even get into the kitchen and see maybe there's something here.

Arpita: Yeah. And I think that's where being intentional about wanting to create something is key is really important, right? And so this goes back to why we have to set goals for ourselves. So if we have recognized or kind of built the awareness around the fact that we want to add something new to our life. We want to enrich our current life, or maybe you want to change it completely and have a completely different career or home situation, whatever it is, we have to be really intentional about setting those goals. And we do this for multiple reasons, but unless we sit down and say, hey, I need to set these goals. We're not actually gonna be able to move forward. Our brain needs that direction, that supervision to be able to guide us towards moving forward in that direction. And we want to do this by creating these goals so we don't keep reliving the past, right? In order to move forward into our future and create that future, we have to have a goal there in mind that we're moving towards otherwise we stay stuck in that past.

And then we also have to be very intentional towards taking those steps towards moving forward. So it's a stepwise process for creating the goals and then taking those actions with intention to move ourselves towards them. Right? But inaudibly nobody wants to set the goals. I mean, have you ever found yourself thinking about that? Like, okay, I want to do this, but I'm not really going to sit there and set the goals or write them down. Like, why do we resist the goals?

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Michael: I mean, we resist the goals because it's uncomfortable, and it seems hard, and we don't know how, and yes, right, because if you already had the know how and the desire and the motivation and the will, if it was just automatically there, you would have already done it, right? So it's difficult to make the decision, yes, I'm going to set this goal, and yes, I'm going to follow through on it, when you don't know how you're going to get it done. And of course, of course, you don't know how. And you are a hardworking, motivated physician who has done so many things and accomplished so many goals in your life. And, of course, you're going to figure out how. It's just a matter of time.

Arpita: Yeah, I was going to say badass physician, but... yes. I mean, I think that's totally spot on, right? We, we resist it because it's uncomfortable, there's the uncertainty of even if we put this as a goal, what if it doesn't happen? Right? So there's that doubt around not being able to accomplish it. There's the uncertainty of not knowing how, like you said, and it's just we've gotten so used to our routine and our day to day that shifting away from that requires more energy. It requires more effort. And so you really have to do some self reflection on what it is that you want to create, what your why is behind it. So that can be your driving force for when you get into these little you know, stagnant areas where, hey, I don't know if I want to do it. What is your why there? Why are you wanting to do it in the first place? Right? You have to have a compelling why.

Michael: The why is your crutch. Because inevitably, things are going to get hard. Things are going to get challenging. And you are going to want to give up on your goal. And the thing that is supporting you in that moment, where you just want to throw it all away, is your why. And so it's so important that you know why you want to accomplish your goal so that when the going gets tough you can keep going. Yeah.

Arpita: And I found like, how do we actually move towards those goals? I think the number one thing that we have to really start thinking about is not worrying about what the hell other people think. Right? I think that holds back so many people about what we are supposed to do as physicians, how we're supposed to behave, what that life looks like, and we need to let all that shit go. Like when we can stop worrying about what other people are going to think if we change paths or add something different into our path, what that means about us, that's when we're truly living an authentic life when we're having the freedom to do what we truly want to do that brings ourselves joy.

And we also have to unlearn that we don't have to be so damn hard on ourselves, right? Because we think we have to work harder, harder and harder to get better at something. And I actually just coached myself with my coach today on this about how I feel like I'm really kind of not tired, but I want to settle into the ease of not working so hard in the second half of my life yet still achieve the benefits of it. So how do I do that? How do I work a little bit less harder, but still reap the benefits? So that requires intentional thinking and just reflection again on how I'm going to create that for myself.

Yeah. And I think the most important thing, like you said, when we're trying to shift toward these new goals is expect that it's going to suck half of the time, right? And be okay with sitting with the negative shitty feelings that come with it, that, yeah, you're going to fail. We talk about it takes a hundred fails to get a win, right? So it's not going to feel good. So don't expect it, right? If you're expecting it to be rosy and beautiful, the whole path, you're missing half of your life. So expect it to suck half of the time. And then as you're working through it, when those times come, you're able to just kind of be present with it and then move forward. A lot of times there's so much fear about being in that negativity that that holds you back from even starting. And yeah you just have to kind of ask yourself, do I want to be one of those people that doesn't even start because I'm scared

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of what it's going to feel like, or do I want to suck it up and deal with the negative side of it so I can get to my ultimate goal that I'm trying to create?

Michael: Yeah, I mean, I think this is the big thing here, right? So many people want a detailed map on how to get from where they are now to where they want to be when they've achieved their goal. And the truth is there's not one direct path that gets you from here to there and it is about trying things and seeing what works and as you go out there and try things to achieve your goal, you might mess up, it might not work out right and you might downright fail and the beautiful thing about that is that all of those obstacles show you exactly how you have to go to achieve your goal, right? If you try something and it doesn't work, well, you clearly know that that was the wrong path, and so now you get to pivot and try something different. And so just know that the, that the obstacles that come up for you on your way to achieving the thing that you really want, they're just lighting the path up for you. They're just showing you how to get to where you want to go.

Arpita: And I will go as far as to say that a lot of times we create these goals for ourselves because we think it's going to feel amazing when we get there, we are anticipating how good it's going to feel for us when we reach that goal, we overcome the obstacles and get to our final destination. And what happens is when we're only working through it in the anticipation of getting to that positive feeling at the end, we're missing the journey along the way. Right? And so instead of waiting for that positive emotion that we want to get when we get there, I ask you to instead consider how can you create that emotion for yourself now as a driving force to help push you towards your final destination, right?

So if you think that, you know what, if I create this amazing business and I sign clients so that my whole panel is full, that's going to feel so amazing. I'm going to feel so proud of myself and so successful. How do you create that feeling of provide and success for yourself now? What can you start to think about what you've already done and what you're doing that creates those emotions so that you use that fuel to drive you to where you want to be?

Michael: It's hard. I mean, I, you know, I know we are here kind of talking about the process and, you know, I think you and I are kind of in it. We have these goals that we want for, you know our businesses and our life and and how we want things to go and it's so easy to get caught in that belief that like when I get all the things that I want like then finally it's all gonna feel so much better and the truth is it's always gonna feel like this, where there's always going to be, right as you continue to achieve your goals, you're going to create new goals for yourself, you're going to want new things. So learning to be happy now with the things that you have while you're working towards these big new goals, it's so important. And I'm saying this as somebody who's trying to do that as well. I am far from perfect at doing this, and I get stuck in this arrival fallacy all the time of believing that there is better than here, and I need these types of conversations to pull me back in and remind me, like, no, your goals are great, keep working, keep going, and there is not better than here.

Arpita: No, like how can you enjoy the present moment? I think the best analogy was anticipation of Christmas morning, right? Like how exciting? It's like a nervous sided energy that we have that we're excited about it, but we're also nervous about it. As we're going through it, the steps that we're taking. So that's such a good feeling, quite frankly. So why not just embrace that? Ooh, I use my word. Why not embrace that feeling so that you can be really, truly joyful as you're going on that path. And that's, that's so much of the goodness, right? The anticipation of getting to your final destination and your goal, that's so much of the goodness of, of having the goal itself.

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So how do you settle into that, right? And just remembering, we, like I said, we're on this path, zero to a hundred, we're only halfway there. So I also challenge you not to just say, I don't have any more goals. I've kind of done everything. The kids are grown. I'm just going to settle in. Is that good enough for you? And it might be, and that's fine, but what other things would you like to create and achieve if you could do anything you wanted now?

Michael: One of the ways that I have tried to do what you're saying to remind myself and to enjoy kind of the little moments is, and you and I have talked about this before, I actually keep a document right in my Google drive of month to month what I've done that month toward achieving my goal, right? So I will, you know, like say in March of 2023, you know, released first podcast episode, so that as I'm making my way through, I get to look back and say like, Oh my goodness, I forgot that I did all of these things because it's so easy to look and see how far away we are from achieving the thing that we want. And if you don't pay attention to all of the steps that you're taking along the way, and you're just always looking forward, it just, it all feels so, so hard and so impossible. And if every once in a while, you just turn around and take a look back and see how far you've come, you know, it really does help to keep moving you forward. And this is kind of the underlying principle of Dan Sullivan's, the Gap and the Gain, right? So it's so important. So many times we are so focused on how far we are from our goal that we completely lose sight of how far we've come.

Arpita: I think it's, it's definitely important to celebrate the wins along the way. So we don't lose sight of all that we have accomplished. And that's important. And that's the other thing we did today. We, today I had my 50th birthday celebration with my coach and she did a super gifted me an amazing session where we talked about, let's go back and think and look at all the things you've done in your life, and then we'll talk about what you want next. And it was powerful really to do that, to spend some time thinking and looking back at all the things I've created from a bird's eye view. Because we don't relish in it, we don't give ourselves the props for just being able to celebrate all those things. And it takes a moment to go and, and be intentional about doing it.

So I challenge you guys to do that. This is the beginning of 2024, right? So maybe spend a little bit of time this week, looking at all the things you've already created in your life and what you want to do next, in the next phase. What are some of the things, the goals, the things you want to achieve for yourself? I mean, one of the things on my list is I want a Bernese mountain dog. So we're not talking like they have to be huge. One of them was that I want to have a life of intention with my kids, where they come back and we visit and we are, we're planning at least two trips a year together, like it can be anything, but literally I want a Bernese dog to bring me joy because it brings me joy. So what do you want to create for yourself in your life in 2024?

Michael: And, just like you were saying, right, these can be smaller goals, or they can be transformative, life changing, seismic shifts from where you are now, and let today be the day that you decide that these are the things that you want in your life, and then start making small steps toward making them a reality for you.

Arpita: Amazing.

Michael: Awesome. Very good.

Arpita: I had fun talking about it. Now we have to implement it and make it happen. And I think also, aren't we picking our winner soon?

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Michael: We are! Yes. And we are going to be contacting our winners sometime in the next week. So look out for an email from Doctors Living Deliberately. So excited to get that stuff out to you guys. All right. I'm gonna go and start brainstorming my goals for 2024. And thank you so much to all of you for coming and joining us for this episode. And we look forward to seeing you next time on Doctors Living Deliberately. Have a great rest of the week. Take care. Bye.