

55. Mantras for a Reset:
Doctors Living Deliberately Share Their Guiding Quotes



FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

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Michael: Hey, everyone, and welcome to another episode of Doctors Living Deliberately. Thanks so much for being here with us today. And hey, Arpita, how are you?

Arpita: I'm doing swell. Michael, how are you doing?

Michael: I am, I'm doing really well. Everything's going well despite the kind of gloomy weather here. And you know, sometimes people ask about, you know, what do you do when you are confronted with the gloomy weather and things aren't going so well? And I don't know about you, but I have kind of mantras and quotes that I kind of always have in my back pocket that I can kind of pull out when things maybe aren't going exactly as planned. And I can use those when I'm struggling. Do you have any mantras or quotes or things that you use when things are a little bit tougher than usual?

Arpita: It's so funny you should ask. No, you know, I do. I, I actually, I think part of, you know, starting to do this work and discovering how it unfolds is realizing that there are little sayings or beliefs that we can start to adopt that have really propelled me or given me the ability to keep myself pushing forward. And, you know, we all know that shit happens and things come up in life and we just sometimes can have a lot more of the negative than the positive that tends to weigh us down. And so the key I think is really trying to figure out what you can implement for yourself as a reminder little mantras or sentences or thoughts that help keep you going. And so, yes, I definitely have. I actually have it's a little something called Evernote. I think some people might use it for notes and I keep resonating quotes in there. And that thing has gotten to be so long. And so when we decided to do this episode, it was really hard for me to pick a couple that really are my go to's. But I think I, I think I got success. I have success with doing that. I could add about 20, 30 more in here, but we're going to kind of try to trim it down to some of the top favorite ones, I think, for us. But I will say before we even get started with that, all of these culminate with the remembering your why, with why we're doing things. And that ultimately is what this all sums up to leading towards. And we can talk about that more at the end as well. But, but yeah,

Michael: Here's what I want to say about these mantras and their end quotes is that you kind of have to be onto yourself. You kind of have to know yourself and where you tend to veer off course and that's where these mantras and quotes really come in handy. And so these are things that you and I use that I think are very widely applicable. I think we both tried to find mantras and quotes that could apply to most people in a variety of situations. Yet there are definitely things that are going to resonate more with some people than others, and it just is how we're wired and how we do things. And so keeping that in mind as you listen to this, how do these quotes and mantras apply to you? And always being onto yourself, where do I go off track and how can I use these in my life? I find that to be really helpful when I'm being curious with myself and why I do the things I do.

Arpita: I think that's 100 percent spot on, right? Like what resonates for one person may not resonate exactly for another person. And so maybe that's why when we picked our favorites for this, it's because these are the ones where we tend to find ourselves stuck in more often that help pull us out. So they're the more common ones in our day to day memory, I would say.

All right. So my first one that I really, really actually use a lot, almost every week, I would say is make one decision and then agree to be at peace with all that comes with it. ie choose your discomfort, right? And I think the biggest area for me where this popped up was when I had to start realizing I needed to let go of things being exactly my way with the people we had hired, specifically like the managers or the supervisors in our office, because I built this baby up right with my husband and now I had to release it. And so what I found myself doing is I'm hiring these people to do this work for me. And I was also always griping that it wasn't perfect or the way that I wanted it to be done. And so what I started to realize is that I had to decide, do I want to do this work myself, hire somebody to do this work myself, or do I want to hire somebody and take the negative that comes with it, that it may not be perfect. It might not be my way of getting it done. And it's still

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getting done, right? So choosing my discomfort, if I'm going to ride somebody's rear end about it being done perfectly, inevitably they're going to leave and I'm going to be in this discomfort of having to do it all. So choosing which one feels better for you, even though it may not feel great is key here. You might have two options, neither one feels amazing. But which one feels less uncomfortable if you went through with it, and all the things that came along with it?

Michael: That's fantastic, and interestingly enough, so you and I both picked kind of quotes, mantras about discomfort as our first kind of one to discuss because discomfort is super important. You know, when we were doing some of our beginning of the year episodes, we were talking about what are the feelings that you want to feel and many people when they are first asked the question of what do you want to feel? I want to feel comfortable. I want to feel happy. But the truth is, and this is one of the mantras that you and I really leaned into when we were doing our coach certification, is that discomfort is the currency of your dreams, right? So knowing that everything that you want is on the other side of a discomfort that you don't want to feel is highly motivating to lean into the discomfort. And as you were just mentioning, yes, you are met with two potential decisions. Both of which could be uncomfortable to you, the discomfort of letting go versus the discomfort of having to hire somebody else because the person that you were working with, it wasn't working. You know, both of those scenarios are uncomfortable. And so you're gonna have to lean into one of those discomforts. So choose the discomfort and know that on the other side of that very uncomfortable thing, you get what you want and need. Right? So if you can lean into the discomfort of letting go just a little bit, and it can be very uncomfortable, right, letting go a little bit can be very uncomfortable. You get everything that you want on the other side of that, and it can be a hard lesson to learn, but also so important.

Arpita: Totally, totally, and as you mentioned, right? The discomfort is the currency of your dreams that we can't expect everything that we want to achieve to come to us easy. I mean, we can expect it, but we probably are not going to be happy because it's probably not going to happen. Right? So we have to be willing to experience that discomfort, like you said, and sometimes that discomfort is because we don't know necessarily how to do all the things. It's not all mapped out for us. It's not been handed over to us on a platter to, hey, follow this road map and it's done for you. And it's not easy, right? We got to figure it out. And so part of that discomfort is, realizing that we have to figure it out along the way, and we may not be perfect while we do it. It might be riddled with mistakes and errors. It reminds me of that meme where the success arrow is not straight up and down, but rather it's a curvy line like this before you get to the end point. That's part of what we're talking about here is that the discomfort is in the, is the currency of your dreams because it's not going to be easy getting there.

Michael: Yeah, for sure. Yeah, I love the book by Jen Sincero called You Are a Badass and any of the listeners that have not read this book yet, I, I really, really enjoyed it, and this isn't a verbatim quote from her, she says your job isn't to know the how, your job is to be open to discovering the how, right? So, obviously, if you knew how to do the thing, you would have already done it. And so, allow yourself to be uncomfortable with not knowing how to get it done, understand that there's going to be some discomfort there, and then just being open to figuring it out. So important.

Arpita: Well, I'm going to move on to my next one. Another area where I really found myself struggling a lot of the times despite having everything I wanted, a beautiful life, house, kids, husband, career, dogs, everything. I always felt like things weren't always amazing and perfect and happy. I wasn't always happy, right? I was always looking at how things did not go my way or things had gone wrong. And what I realized is that this is normal for our brain activity to do this. It's seeking out all of the bad things, all of the dangers in efforts to try to keep us safe. But what happens is when we continuously feed into that, all we notice is all the negative in our life. We don't give the positive any airtime. So one of the, the most powerful mantras that I also adopted for myself is what if nothing has gone wrong? What if everything is exactly how it's supposed to be? How can I start to be okay with this phase of my life? Because this is just a phase, right? And this mindset for me really started to help me shift to embrace using my word for 2024, it helped me shift to embrace what was happening

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in my day to day, and maybe even start to recognize that there might be gifts that I'm not recognizing at that moment that became much more apparent down the road. So when something isn't going my way, where is there a gift in that? Maybe I might not see it now, but it's coming soon. Potentially.

Michael: That is such a powerful question. What if nothing has gone wrong? Because you're right, right? Our brains are just so geared to the negative. We're always searching for where things went awry. Why did things not go the way that I wanted them to? And what if everything worked out exactly like it was supposed to, right? And we've talked before, you know, for me, one of the most devastating days was match day. Because I had a thought in my mind about how my life was supposed to go. And looking back now, almost 21 years later, hard to believe, it was the best possible thing that could have ever happened to me. And that day was really difficult for me. And I love, you know, so now I can look back in retrospect and say, Oh, thank goodness things happen the way that they did. But what if I had had the insight 21 years ago to look at my match day letter. And recognize like what if nothing has gone wrong here? What if everything is exactly how it was supposed to be? I could have had so much more peace in my life at that point in time. I could have the same peace that I have right now in my life 21 years ago. And so bringing that insight to your current life, just it gives you so much more bandwidth and so much more ability to see all of the good that we have in our life, and it does take work, right? This is not the natural path that our brains want to take, and there's so much that we can gain from doing that.

Arpita: It's funny because the immediate thing, when you were talking about that, that comes up for me is, and it sounds so cliché, but it's totally, it's COVID, right? For us, like we had to shut the practice down. We've talked about this in episodes and financial hardship and personal hardship and, you know, medical hardships. And we honestly were like, what the heck are we going to do? And the gift that came out of COVID was the ability for me personally to slow down and recognize that I needed to make a change in my life, right? Which led me to the coaching and led me to my own personal development, as well as now being able to help others. And I would say that's a huge gift that there is no way in hell I would have seen when we were shutting down that office and didn't have our paychecks coming in, right? So it's, it is amazing. And it is true when we say you may not see that gift right there in that moment, but you will see it at some point in time. And it's just having that hope to remember that it's coming.

Michael: Yeah, and it's a great mantra to remind you in the moment where you feel like everything is just devastating and it's, you know, what, nothing good can come from this, remembering like, what if nothing has gone wrong? This is exactly how things were supposed to be. can help to transition you into that mindset. You know, weeks, months, years before your brain is ready to accept that there was some good in that situation.

Arpita: The universe is always working for us. What's your next one, Dr. Hersh?

Michael: Well, so, you know, I love how this is, I don't know if this is intentional or not, but these are kind of all feeding one right into the next. Right? So, you know, I love the mantra, there is not better than here. So, you know, back in episode 16, we talked about the arrival fallacy, and this played such a pivotal role in my own physician burnout and what led me eventually to find coaching. Was every step of the way I just imagined that I would feel better when I got to the next stage, right? This followed me throughout my career, throughout my education. Every time I just thought if I can just get here things will be better. And I think it's such an important reminder that there is not better than here. And we are reminded of that. If you just take a look back at your life and think back to all the times that you thought things would be better once you accomplished the thing and recognize that things were not necessarily better, maybe some things were better, but new challenges arose.

And so you don't have to wait to accomplish the thing to feel good. Right? You don't have to graduate from fellowship and be in attending to be happy. You get to be happy as a fellow knowing that you are getting to do this career this amazing career can be such a huge gift and the fellowship may be grueling, but it's setting you

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up for a career that you're really going to love. And so not waiting to finish fellowship to be happy, really is so important. And so this is something that I need to remind myself over and over again, because I am so prone to just going back into that like, Oh, if I can just get this done, I'm going to be so happy. And I do need to remind myself there is not better than here fairly often.

Arpita: Yeah, my version is, you know, I need to enjoy the journey, because if you don't enjoy the journey, you've missed the entire whole purpose, the entire way. I'm reading the Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle. I'm a little bit, a little bit behind, I think a lot. Well, I'm not behind. I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be, but but that book, yeah. That book references like when we're perseverating on the past, when we're persevering on the future, when really the only thing that matters is the presence of mind and being in the now because that's all that really matters and that's when we can separate where our mind is from who we truly are and what our inner knowing is for who we want to be. And so it's a little bit meta the book, but it's very, very good. With kind of covering this concept of not really being able to enjoy your life if you're not just living in the present moment, which unfortunately a lot of us get sucked into having to do, especially when we're, you know, starting out in our careers, starting families, et cetera, et cetera.

Michael: I, you know, I used to think that things being a little bit meta, that would have been an immediate trigger for an eye roll for me, but I, you know, there is so much to be gained in the meta. And I, that has been an evolution for me because three years ago, if you had said meta, I totally would have rolled my eyes and so that is my own personal, again, evolution because I think that there is so much to be gained by kind of taking a step back and really evaluating yourself, right? Being the watcher of you so that you can sort through kind of why you show up the way that you do and being present in the current moment is such a huge issue for doctors, right? This comes up over and over again in coaching sessions is how do I be more present, you know, with my family? How do I be more present for myself? How do I be more present at work? My mind is always going in all of these other places. And some of that lies in the meta and taking a step back and really figuring out where you are losing kind of your ability to be present.

Arpita: I will say I think a lot of us live in this also question of life when we have circumstances hit us in our day to day, what if this happens? What if I don't get that promotion? What if my kids get hurt? What if, you know, what if, what if, what if, and what happens is when we're constantly living in this, what if scenario, it actually really holds us back. And it creates this fear for us that we are not able to move forward. And so what I found really, really enlightening is a lot of times when my brain had the what if, it would go down this doom spiral, this scenario of the oh shit, but it wouldn't really let me kind of recognize that, so what? Right? So what if that even happens? So one of the things I started doing is shifting my what ifs to even ifs, right? And that gave me this power to go to the worst case scenario, and then maybe even recognize the worst case scenario really was still figureoutable, right? And so. I think what happens to us is when we get in these what if spirals is it keeps us from even exploring further. We just sit in this panic of worry and fear and it holds us back. So I challenge you to go there, right? Let's say even if the worst case scenario happens, then what? Allow your brain to solve for it, to move forward through it. And you'll see that it might not really be as bad as your brain is making it out to be right. So that's been a game changer for me. A big one.

Michael: Yeah, be onto yourselves, right? Asking yourself what if? Go ahead and answer it, right? Because a lot of times we ask ourselves these questions, what if this happens? But we never actually answer it. And so I think it's so powerful about shifting what if to even if, is it forces your brain to answer the what if question, right? And so if you can't be on to yourself enough to actually answer the what if question when you shift to even if, you're basically forced to go down that rabbit hole and figure it out. You know, so many physicians talk about like, what if I lose my job or what if, you know, what have you, my, my system gets bought, things like that. The point is, at the end of the day, you're still a doctor, you can still find another job. So even if those

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things happen, I can find another job, right? And so forcing yourself down that path. And answering the questions it makes it so much less heavy, right? It just, it lightens the load enough to be like, okay, I got this.

Arpita: It gives you the opening to explore the other perspectives, right? And that's I'm actually doing a talk right now, finalizing a talk on awareness. And part of that, what I realized is that just reviewing the notes. I'm like, Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Like, you know, it's kind of fun when you haven't done it in a while in terms of revisiting all the details that you put out there. But giving yourself the opportunity to consider the other perspectives. Like that's kind of what we talk about with the thought download when you can just kind of dump it all out there. Looking at all the other options that you may not even consider because your brain is on such a highway that is it's used to being on. Right? So the perspective is key here and you're allowing yourself to do that when you switch it from what if to even if.

Michael: Love it. And so, I think the last kind of mantra that we have today, and I think this is a good one to end on, is you need to go from wanting to change your life to deciding to change your life. So there are so many things out there that we want. And the question is what are you doing to turn your want into have, right? How are you committing to yourself to make the change? Because the truth is, once you decide that you are a person who has the thing, then it's as good as done, right? When you decide, I am just a person who flosses my teeth every night. I am not a person that goes to bed without flossing my teeth, right? Then all of a sudden, it's just that thing that obviously you do, right? If you are not a smoker, you don't then all of a sudden start considering like, oh, I, you know, it just becomes a thing. I don't smoke, right? And so once you've committed to that thing, then you don't have to make any more decisions about it. Then you just are that person. So committing to yourself, making the decision to change something, to change your life, is so important because it is the very first step that you can make in creating the life that you want.

Arpita: I like that a lot. And it reminds me of the, I'm going to try to do this, right? That I want to change it. I'm going to try to do this. No, we're just going to eliminate those words from the vocab, right? Because try means you're giving yourself an out. That if I, I'm going to maybe make an attempt, but I'm not really all in. So you want to show up all in if you've decided you want to make a change. And you alluded to the fact about the smoking cessation, right? And it is kind of interesting I've got actually have a couple of friends who have relatives who once they got a diagnosis that was doom or gloom, they immediately stopped right? So we have the power to make a change, we have the power to do what we will not it's whether or not we are going to continue to give in to those urges and desires or if we're going to be able to sit with it and just say, I am going to do this and I'm moving forward and I'm going to feel some of that discomfort and I'm going to keep pushing through. It's okay.

Michael: A hundred percent. Any final thoughts on mantras and how to incorporate them into our lives?

Arpita: I think ultimately it goes back to, like I was saying at the very beginning for me, it's just remembering your why cumulatively with all of this stuff. What is your why? And for me, when I was doing this work, when I decided I want to coach other physicians and women professionals that I really wanted to help other people, number one. Number two, I wanted to be able to create another source of income for us. So my husband doesn't have to work so hard. Those are my two why's. So they're powerful, compelling why's for me that keep me going. So when the going gets rough, I think about my husband and me wanting him to be able to cut back and to be more healthy and not be exposed to radiation. Right? So I think about all these things. So what drives you, what compels you as this why that you can go back to when the going is rough, when you're having a shitty day, when it's doomy and gloomy outside, whatever it is. So yeah, that's mine. What's yours?

Michael: Awesome. You know, I'm going to go back to what you were saying about the I'll try. And I learned something really amazing from one of my first physician coaches Milene Argo, Dr. Milene Argo. . And you know, I, I said something about I was going to try and for those of those of you that are watching this on YouTube, I'm going to do a demonstration, but even if you're not, she asked me to take out a piece of scrap

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paper. And then she told me that I should try to rip it. And so I did. That. And I ripped the piece of paper. And she very quickly informed me that I had failed at the exercise. Because I didn't try to rip the paper. I actually tore the piece of paper. And so when you are committed to doing something, I'll try is a bit of a cop out, right? When we actually try to do something, we go ahead and make the effort and do the thing. And so, don't just try. Be committed to yourself. Make the change, do the thing, and incorporate these mantras, these quotes, things are going to get tough, things may get difficult at some point. Find the words that you need to hear, and tell them to yourself, so that you can keep going, because this work is so important.

Arpita: Yes, 100, 100%, for sure. Well, thank you, Dr. Hersh. I think this was an excellent episode. It's a great idea to go through. And like he said, they may not resonate with you. You pick yours, find yours that really push you to do what you're wanting to do, moving you towards your goals and go from there.

Michael: Absolutely. Well, thank you all so much for listening to this week's episode of Doctors Living Deliberately, and we'll see you next time. Take care.

Arpita: Bye.