

58. Reflections on a Year of Deliberate Living with
Doctors DePalma and Hersh



FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

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Michael: Well, hey, everyone, and welcome to another episode of Doctors Living Deliberately. Thanks so much everybody for listening in and being here with us today. And, of course, welcome to my lovely co host, Dr. Arpita Gupta DePalma. How's it going?

Arpita: It's going well. It's been crazy busy, lots of travel, but it's been good.

Michael: Yes, absolutely has been crazy. And you know, what else is kind of crazy is we've been doing this for a year.

Arpita: happy birthday to us, right?

Michael: I still think back all the time to the first time we talked about the possibility of doing a podcast and you used some expletives that we're not going to use on our show today, but you are I am not doing a podcast. And here we are a year later. Talk to me. Tell me what has this been like over the last year recording this podcast with me? Be honest. What's it been like for you?

Arpita: Oh my gosh. So, you know, life is 50 50. We've talked about this. No, but it has truly been a pleasure because I think I realized when you asked me to do this initially, I didn't want to, because I honestly didn't want to deal with all the headaches that I assumed went into doing a podcast and I'm so thankful that you pushed me and you helped me kind of see, you did actually like push me with saying I can handle the tech stuff, which I was like, okay, fine. I'll do it then. But I really appreciate you for that because I wouldn't have been able to kind of get out of my own way and get out of my comfort zone of just not putting myself out there. I was hesitant. I think in the beginning about putting all the things out in public for everybody. But I think that was easy for me to get over. But there were other things I think, and I don't want to be the I hogging all the time talking about it. I want you to say some stuff to, like, in terms of what you've gotten out of doing this. Like, I'm still curious about your desire. Like what was your spark to actually say, I want to do this, you know, what sparked you to get out there?

Michael: I don't know. I think, I think that the stuff that we talk about here is so essential. And this is the stuff that we don't learn when we are in our medical training. And all of this stuff is so applicable to every aspect of our career and personal lives. And I don't think that there are enough people out there talking about it. And, you know, we have spoken before that there are a good number of female physicians out there that are talking about these topics and making them relevant for other female physicians. But there are definitely not a lot of male physicians in this space talking about these important topics and normalizing all of the things that we go through on a daily basis. And so I also know that there's a lot of people that are not on social media and so I thought podcasting was a great venue for having these conversations and keeping it real and also something that would be available to people who aren't on social media.

And I was an avid, I still am, I love listening to podcasts. I have an hour commute to work back and forth every single day. So I spend, you know, between an hour and a half or two hours a day in my car sometimes depending on traffic. And I love listening to podcasts, and I really feel like I get to know people, and I really hope that people have gotten to know us over the last year as we have engaged in these very open and vulnerable conversations, it's all real and it's not rehearsed, and so I really hope that people have gotten a little flavor for who we are and what we do.

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Arpita: Yeah, I think you summed it up amazingly. I think it's, it is, it's a piece of our heart in a sense, because we put so much, I know as we went through the different episodes and try to talk about topics or come up with topics that we were going to talk about, we both put a lot of effort and energy into selecting things that really changed in us, that really impacted us and our lives, because the whole purpose and the goal is to put it out there to share with people, physicians, non physicians, whoever. This podcast really is for everybody, because there's so many nuggets for how you can improve the way you live each day and how we can just honestly live a more fulfilled, happy life, being content and present and happy. Because a lot of us just get in that rat race and we don't even realize it.

And I will say selfishly is that I remember, I, I don't know if you had this and I would be surprised if you didn't, but every time we did record, I would have a thought go through my mind about, you know what? One day when I'm gone, my kids and their grandkids and on and on and on will have the opportunity to actually listen and hear from me. And that was super powerful and super important to me. And I didn't even realize that before then, you know, but now this is such a valuable asset for even our families. Not only other people in the world, but also our families to be able to go back and listen to. And I think that's really cool.

Michael: I love that you said that. And I will say that was not something that I really thought about. I think as we've talked about many times on this show, our minds immediately go to the negative. So, of course, you know, we've talked a little bit about the strength and vulnerability. And for me, the reason why that's been such an important topic is because my mind didn't go to all of the gifts that we would be bestowing on our, on future generations of our family by letting them hear our voices and our wisdom. It immediately went to, I don't want to be seen. I don't want to be heard. I don't like listening to my own voice. I don't like watching myself on video. And what is it going to be like to reveal all of these personal things about me to the world? And it has been a very pleasant surprise, right?

So the thing that brought me to coaching was my physician burnout. The thing that kept me in coaching was kind of my desire to not be seen and my lack of ability to really be vulnerable. And I really enjoy, maybe this is going to sound almost like self centered and I don't intend it to. Sometimes we have our conversations and I finish and you see me, I kind of like slump over and it's exhausting to me to have these like very vulnerable conversations. And I wonder like, how did this sound? And then I intently listened to every single episode over the last year, every Wednesday morning while I'm driving to work and I learned something from our conversations that even though I was taking part in the conversation, I gained something from listening to it. And so, yes, the vulnerability of this experience has been challenging to me and I feel like I'm a better person on the other side of this year for having allowed myself to do it. And I've learned so much from our conversations. So I really appreciate kind of everything that we've kind of worked on and talked through and, and discussed. And you were talking about how I pushed you in some ways that you were feeling uncomfortable and vice versa here. I think we both learned so much from each other in kind of pushing the boundaries of our comfort zones. It's really been incredible. It's been such a great experience.

Arpita: And I, I will commend you on your growth because I have the, the joy and the pleasure of knowing the Michael Hersh prior to this for some time over a year, honestly. And I know your fear of putting it out there and that vulnerability factor and you have grown a ton with it I will say. I mean, it's just amazing. And now when I see like your blog posts and other posts, I'm like. Shit, look at him go, you know, so it's kind of really cool to see how we have evolved and how we've kind of practiced what we're preaching in a sense. And I will,

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I'm going to get to that too how we don't always practice what we preach so we're not like all like we're not bullshitting in any way. But before I get to that even I wanted to talk about how you know, it's important for us, you were saying that you did all this work and you've been able to kind of change with that vulnerability. What we've also created is something that we continue to have these nuggets to revisit when you listen in the morning on your way in it inevitably was something that you were learning from. What I always felt when I was listening in the morning was, oh, I really needed to hear that today, even though we might have recorded it a little while ago. Right? It was uncanny how it fell on the time exactly when we needed to hear it again for something happening. And again, I think that's the universe always working for us on our behalf. But yeah, to like, shift a little bit it wasn't all freakin rainbows and daisies, right? It freakin sucks.

Michael: For sure not. Right? We love to keep it real. We want to keep it real. And, you know, there is a lot of work that has gone into producing this podcast and coordinating our schedules. We're both busy people. And for sure not all rainbows and daisies.

Arpita: Yeah, not, and I mean, it, it is, it goes to show that we are human, right? That, like, we got caught up in the, oh, we're not really enjoying the journey right now. We're just kind of busting the grind to make it happen, let's pause and step back and like, call each other out on it, right? And, you know, but I think we had that yin and yang with each other, like where I might be a little bit more verbal and like, I don't really give a flip about what you think from the beginning and you're more compassionate and kind. And, hey, did you consider this other perspective? And I'm like, oh, yeah, probably not, you know, so I think we really did well together to even it out and balance it out because we both have our strengths and, you know, areas of growth.

Michael: For sure. Well, I mean, it's all in the title too. I mean, right? Doctors living deliberately doesn't mean doctors doing it right every step of the way. It means being deliberate and intentional in the choices and the decisions that we're making. And as you were alluding to, we are human beings and we fall into our old patterns. And thank goodness we both not only are coaches, but have coaches. And we are able to also coach each other, which I think has helped us to grow in ways outside of, you know, just the podcast in and of itself. And I think that that's been so valuable for both of us.

Arpita: Completely. And I think it's always a learning experience when we do something new. The fact that we opted into this optional adversity to put it out there, I think that's huge. And now, you know, when we start to recognize we've done a year of this, it's been amazing. We've had some amazing guests that I love dearly. And some of them are friends now, some of them were friends before and are still now. We really got to experience a podcast in a way that most people really enjoy listening to, but may not have the experience creating themselves. And so I want to just put out there that it's not that hard. There is logistical work to it. There is, it's time consuming for sure, but this is an example of you doing whatever you want to do for your life in your life, just doing and putting it out there and it may not be perfect and it might look messy and that's okay. You know, we've gotten so many props and followers and compliments on what we're doing and it all makes it worth it.

Michael: I'm going to put you on the spot a little bit now. I know we've we've discussed before that none of this is really planned out or scripted. Did you have a particular episode that is a favorite of yours or a guest that you really enjoyed meeting or talking to or that opened up kind of a new thought process for you that maybe you didn't have before?

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Arpita: Okay. So my, I, there's two different answers for that. So my favorite episode, I have to say, hands down is going to be the one with Melissa and John, my bestie and her husband and my husband, Michael, where you're interviewing us on the power of physician couple coaching because it just really hit a lot of points that were tender to my heart. And seeing these people that are already getting me choked up. People that are so important to my life who changed my life. Be able to talk about it was amazing.

What else? My favorite guest, other than Melissa and John and DePalma, would be, oh, my gosh. Let me think. There's so many good ones. It's so hard to, to pick, but I actually, if I really want to go back and pick, I would say maybe Dr. Sarraf, because she helped explain from the get go why we're so effed up the way we are. Like, why we may not even recognize that we need coaching and why we are the way we are because what we experienced with our training and med school and residency are essentially our micro traumas, if not major traumas, depending on each person and what situation they were in. That really blew my mind open for the possibility of how much we can heal our colleagues and help them just building that awareness for them. So, yeah, that was an awesome question. I'm gonna pitch that one right back at you.

Michael: Well, the bad news for me is I had kind of already thought about, like, while you were answering, and then you actually chose my episode, right? So, you know, my question backfired on me, but the truth is, those episodes three and four with Dr. Kemia Sarraf you know, I had never, prior to that episode, thought about the impact of medical education and trauma. If you had posed that question to me before having that conversation, I probably would have, you know, my, my routine automatic response of an eye roll. And if you go back and listen to that episode, she literally is watching me as my mind just explodes during the episode as I am thinking back to all of these different parts of my training. And I just, it was all unfolding to me in the middle of the conversation. And that was the first time I had ever met Kemia. And she's like blowing my mind and I have to be interviewing her and listening and paying attention while I'm reliving the traumas of like my intern year. And so it really was an incredibly impactful episode. And I went ahead, I know you had done her trauma informed professional coach certification prior to recording that episode, but after we recorded that episode, I went ahead and completed it as well. And it has been so impactful for me, and I really enjoyed that a lot.

Arpita: It is, it actually significantly changes the way we approach clients now, because we have this extended understanding of how our training was traumatic for us and how that's impacting the way we show up previously and even currently, and how we need to make adjustments if we want to change, like, how we want to process through those traumas. The other thing that I think why it's one of my favorite episodes, the 3 and 4 with Kemia is because I think it really helped open up the pathway for the rest of the episodes, like for all the ones that followed, for why it's important. Each little episode after that kind of contributed to the overall wellbeing for changes that we can make with the understanding of why we are the way we are in the first place because of the traumas too. Yeah, that's so funny that we both picked the same ones, but that made sense, right? The reasons why so.

Michael: And I feel like I've learned so much from all of the guests, it's incredible to see, you know, there's, what is there, like a million physicians in this country, and we all go through this rigorous education and training, and the way that so many physicians have chosen to kind of, I don't even want to say pivot, but direct their career in such a way. It really has been incredible to have all of these conversations. It's been such an honor to be a part of these conversations and to learn about aspects of medicine that maybe I had never really

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considered before. And so the whole year has really been so eye opening and I've just enjoyed these conversations so much.

Arpita: So, so much. So good. So what's your plan? What's next, Michael Hersh?

Michael: Well, speaking of episodes, at the beginning of this year, you took me through a framework for creating a word of the year, and you put me on the spot of the episode, and I did not have a word yet, but after the episode, I did go through your framework, and I have landed on my word of the year for 2024, which is "pause". Which I think for me doesn't mean inaction. It doesn't mean to stop what I'm doing, but it means to really just take a moment, as we say in the title of this podcast, Doctors Living Deliberately, to be deliberate. Not only about the things that I'm choosing to do, but also the things that we are actively doing. And I think that you and I have kind of come to the agreement that for the time being, it might be a good time to pause Doctors Living Deliberately while you and I kind of sort through and figure out kind of what's next for both of us. And I just love applying the word pause to kind of not only the things, the opportunities that are coming my way, but also the things that I'm actively doing just to make sure that they are still aligned with how I want to be doing things.

Arpita: Yes, feel that 100 percent. because I think you may start to sense when there's a little bit of a push or pull in a direction and it's not coming with ease. And I think that's always my reminder to kind of check in because when I feel like there's this urgency in one way or the other, rather than it just kind of not coasting, but just being comfortable with what I'm doing. That is a reminder for me to verify, is this really where I want to be? And I think what I sensed over the past year as we did these episodes is that I was able to have these discussions with you in a way where we were giving the knowledge and the nuggets to all of our our listeners in a way that we truly feel will help them and benefit them if they listen and implement. And I'm also still super busy with our medical practice, even though we have an amazing director now, I'm still super busy with the kids and embracing this year as my last couple months with having them home and I have decided that I think I'm going to shift a little bit and maybe focus on the talks that I'm giving at some of the conferences. Because I really enjoy talking to women one on one and having that time with them to be able to explain in detail how this is applicable to them. I also love just sharing that knowledge in that sense in person.

But most importantly, I think that one of the areas where I've really grown and improved over this whole journey is with my anger. And with how I manage that anger when it stemmed from that urgency. And for me, like we've talked about the urgency came from all the things that I had to do as a busy professional physician, mom. The time management, the calendar, all the things. And so what I am thinking about and leaning towards doing, I am going to do it, it's not I'm going to try it's when I'm going to do it is maybe consider launching another podcast directed for women physicians and professionals called "From Pissed off to Poised" to help you all with dealing with the anger and also dealing with the calendaring component of it. And, and I think, you know, we know that I have these courses online, the anger management course, and the time management course. And so that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to try to put this in, in bite sized nuggets in a podcast so that we can start implementing that on a day to day basis as well. So lots of things coming, but the pause allows us to reflect and kind of decide where we want to go. So I appreciate your word. I love your word. So I'm going to pause and I'm going to embrace what's coming up next in this year of 2024.

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Michael: Yeah. I, I love, you know, how those two words can kind of work together and be synergistic right and how you can pause and embrace and really fall in love with all of the things that you're doing right? And I think, you know, I think that there is a part of me that has really been surprised to learn how much I enjoy doing these podcasts and, and having these clips and recording the video and, and being able to share so much of what we have learned. And, and again, as we were talking about at the top of the episode to normalize how common this all is, not just for physicians for all people and how choosing a more deliberate life can get you more of the things that you want in your life and less of the things that you don't. So I don't think you know, this is a pause and I this is certainly not the last time that you are going to hear from us because I know we both have things that we are working on moving forward. And so, you know, if you want to stay in touch with us, you know, we both send out weekly emails that are updates. We try to be informational and, and give nuggets and takeaways in those weekly emails. And so you can go to our websites and sign up for those weekly emails so that you can stay in the loop, be kept in the loop when we are kind of launching our next thing. And if you want to be in the know for both of us.

Arpita: Yes, totally. And I will say I'm going to circle back to a little bit to the coaching component for this because honestly, that's why we do this. We're doing this because we benefited so much. Well, I'm not gonna speak for you, but I know it's true. I'm going to speak for me, but yeah I think I can say we both benefited so much from the power of coaching. And there's something to be said about listening to things like listening to the podcast, getting some of these tidbits and nuggets and applying them. But it's a complete 180, if not 360 degree game changer with regards to doing it yourself, doing the work yourself with a coach. Whether that's one on one with an independent coach or as a group. I personally think that group was great to get initial startup with to get a feel for what's going on. But the 1 on 1 is where I really got the impact because I was able to focus on the issues that were pertinent to me in my life. And I loved doing that with my coach. And that's why I still have a coach. There was only a, maybe two or three month period, since I started doing this work that I didn't have a coach. And you can tell obviously why I went back. So I will always have a coach because the beauty is they help you see the shit that you can't see because our windows are clouded with the mud of what we already know. And it's really, really hard to get outside of that. It's really, really hard to move past these obstacles that we have when we're set in certain ways.

And so just having somebody that can really present you with the questions that make you think is important. And so your personality has to click with the coach and you have to like, just overall, the vibe that you're getting. Go with your gut. Do a couple of discovery sessions with multiple coaches. Most coaches will offer that to you at no charge. That's your opportunity to really feel them out, get a sense of their personality, get a sense of if you like the way they work. And if you don't, go to another one. But ultimately the continuity with picking one coach and sticking with them for most of them do six months, 12 month packages, whatever. That is so crucial to you having an involvement, I think, in the transformation. And so, and I think we're both happy to actually speak to anybody. If you have questions about how it works, if we haven't explained it already in these episodes or whatever, feel free to reach out to us in our, yeah, our emails or our websites. And we're happy to answer any questions that you guys have about that.

Michael: Absolutely. And you know, I think skepticism is normal. We've touched on this in a number of our episodes. There's always the, you know, does this really work? Is this really a thing? And I will bring you back, the thing that really made me click the button, pay the money, and sign up for my first coaching session, you and I have talked about many, many times, is if you don't do this, what will change? And, you know, I think

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both of us found coaching in kind of a, I don't want to even call it a post COVID world because we're still living in it. But in a, in a world where we had just been inundated by COVID and our entire worlds have been upended and we were just trying to figure out which end was up, and I think that's when we both kind of leaned into it. And, if I hadn't done this, I can't imagine where I would just be, circling in the same pain that I was experiencing at the time. So if you don't do this, what will change? And we had mentioned in our, in the episode that we did on mantras, all it takes to change is making the decision that you're going to change. And, you know, for me, coaching played a pivotal role in that. I think I had this underlying belief that I can't change, and coaching has taught me that I can change. All I have to do is want to change. And that has been such an incredible lesson for me. I think I had told myself all of these stories over and over again about who I was, and coaching really made me question all of it and really see I get to be whoever I want to be. Yeah. That's been amazing. Amazing.

Arpita: I know for me, I had this, I wore this sweatshirt. It says, I don't know if you can see, it says, remember your why. Right? And we talked about that also in the last episode that when you're down in the dumps, or when you're feeling stuck, what is a compelling why that you have that's going to pull you through and push you forward through that? So, you know, this is what also part of what coaching helped me evolve and figure out, what is my why for what I want to create in my life and how am I going to enjoy the journey as I'm getting there, right? I think it's super important.

So Michael Hersh,, I want you to tell our listeners what offers are you putting out there right now? How can they get in touch with you and work with you? What are you offering to them? Because quite frankly, we're going to say come and coach with us because we're bad ass coaches. So tell them why you're a bad ass coach.

Michael: I love this. You know, Arpita knows that this is my discomfort zone. I am not very good at selling myself. And so Arpita is pushing me to do that. And I, I love you for that. And I appreciate you so much. So, yes. So, you know, I am still all in on my one to one coaching program. I offer, you know, a 12 week one to one coaching program where we meet. for, you know, 45 minutes a week. And we really get to dive into all of the ways that you want to see change in your life. And for me, this has been so fulfilling and you can go back and listen to the testimonial episodes. There is so much impact that comes from one to one coaching. I agree with you, you mentioned earlier, group coaching absolutely has been phenomenal for me. And I have leaned into some of the discomforts of group coaching as well. But I really love the one to one work. And so that's where my focus has been in my program. And you know, for those of you who have not checked out my website [www. betterphysicianlife. com](http://www.betterphysicianlife.com). There's some freebies on there. If you want to go back and look at some of the blog posts, all of our podcast episodes are there. And I do have this great design your life worksheet to really help you sort through kind of where do you want to really see your life? And how you can go about making that happen for you. So, thank you so much for forcing me to do that. Because I, I appreciate that very much. And, and what about you? What are you putting out there? What are your offers that you are doing right now?

Arpita: Okay. Yes. Well, similarly, I am doing a 12 and 24 week one to one coaching package. And that is again, like you said, you get to work with me one on one. There's no other coaches in my, my company, because I really enjoy doing this. And so I do have a limited number of spots because I'm still doing all the other things, but. Get on the wait list or send out inquiry. Maybe there's an opening right now. If somebody is falling off, I would love to do that with you. I also on my website have an online course for anger. So if you

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want to do a little bit of self study and just see what it's about, feel free to go onto the website, you can click on the course, learn a little bit more about it and then go ahead and purchase it. And it's online module self study at your own pace. So that's another option to getting to work with me in a sense.

I'm doing a lot of talks across the country at various conferences, a lot of physician wellness conferences and other meetings and events. So feel free to go to my website on the events page. And it tells you what's coming up for me and where I'm going to be. If you want to look into any of those conferences.

And then lastly, I would offer, if you're a hospital administrator, physician, or even not related to medicine, any, any organization that's looking for a speaker or looking for a group coaching for your employees, I offer group coaching programs as well. 6 weeks or 12 weeks where we work together as a group to kind of teach some of the foundational concepts to everybody and then do group coaching, which is also very powerful because when you have employees or people that are not willing to speak up, they can get so much out of hearing other people getting coached because those issues and concerns that they have are applicable to them in one way or the other.

So there are so many different ways. And again, my website is www.thoughtworkmd.com. And I'm also on LinkedIn, instagram, Facebook, all the things, Michael Hersh as well with better physician life coaching. So follow us, listen to the podcast, share the podcast with your friends and relatives and whoever that you feel might benefit from this, because this is going to stay there while we're on pause so that people can continue to benefit from it. We're going to continue to promote it because this work is timeless, quite frankly. We can apply it no matter. How old we are, my kids benefit from it. I can't wait to see Michael Hersh's kids because they've kind of already got it in their water. But it is super impactful.

Even my daughter. I was just talking to her the other day with a friend and she said on her own, not even cued that yeah, it's kind of like we've gotten lucky. It's kind of secondhand that we've gotten to see how you do this now and implement it. And I'm like, you're actually kind of lucky. It's not secondhand. You're getting it firsthand, right? That's the best gift because now if this is your new way of life and how you can kind of live each day. You're going to model that for your children, and it's going to hopefully create this world where we're not so angry, so aggravated, so frustrated, so not loving and kind towards each other. That's what we really want to do.

Michael: And I will add one thing that we both neglected to say was that we both offer CME for our coaching. So if you have CME funds those can be applied to the coaching because you do get CME credit for that, or Arpita's Anger management course as well.

Arpita: Awesome. Well, thank you.

Michael: Absolutely. This has been an incredible experience. Thank you so much to you for, you know, bearing with this process and leaning into everything that this last year has been. Thank you to our audience for tuning in, for supporting us, for messaging us, for commenting on, you know, the clips that we post on our social media. It has meant the world to us.

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Arpita: Yes, it has. And thank you, Michael Hersh too, for pushing me to do it because I wouldn't have done it. I, you know that I wouldn't have done it and for putting up with me and for being my friend. That's the most important part. See, you did it. You made me cry again. Um, and I want to just say thank you to everybody. Like you said, the audience for listening and we are going to be there one way or the other. We're going to be out there still. So just keep a listen and you'll get to hear from us again soon.

Michael: Absolutely. And you know, we didn't thank all of our guests that we've had on our podcast. We're so appreciative to all of you for coming on our show, sharing your story. And again, as a reminder, this is a pause, so you will hear from us again, and again, thank you all so much, we, we appreciate you.

Arpita: Bye bye. Have a great I don't know, year, week, month, whatever. Have a great, do your thing, do you, do you, and remember your why.

Michael: Absolutely. Take care everyone, thanks again so much for listening to Doctors Living Deliberately. Bye bye.

Arpita: Bye.