

Jimmy: They say the truth can set you free. Welcome to the world of hard truths, my friend. I don't promise it will be easy, but I do promise you it will be worth it. Are you ready to be set free?

This is The Physician Philosopher Podcast. I'm Dr. Jimmy Turner, an anesthesiologist, personal finance blogger, and life coach for doctors. The Physician Philosopher Podcast teaches you how to create the life you deserve one thought at a time. Start before you're ready. Start by starting. Start now.

Hey, hey, hey everyone. Welcome to episode number one of The Physician Philosopher Podcast, where we take an uncurated and unapologetic look into physician life. Today's thought is this. Your circumstances are not responsible for your feelings, actions, and results. Instead, your feelings, actions, and results are determined by you and your thoughts. Let me say that one more time. Your circumstances are not responsible for your feelings, actions, and results, that is determined by you and your thoughts. Recognizing that truth truly changed my life. I had a very interesting and drawn out journey to getting to where I am today going from becoming a life coach from working as an anesthesiologist.

I still do that. I still practice pretty much full-time, but I'm also branching out into coaching for doctors. I want to talk a little bit about my journey personally and what led me to recognize the value of coaching in my own life. When I was, about three years back, I started to have some symptoms. And I didn't recognize them as symptoms at the time being a doctor, as everyone listening knows, we are the worst patient, but I started noticing that I was just sweating when other people weren't. I was kind of hot. I'd walk into the regional work area where I work for regional anesthesia. I'm a regional anesthesiologist. So I do thoracic epidurals and blocks and stuff like that. We have a procedure area.

And within that procedure area, there's this little lounge that has two closed doors and a thermostat. And whenever I'm working with one particular nurse, she likes it to be particularly warm. I started noticing that every time I came into the office, I would actually turn the thermostat all the way down. And I knew immediately when she was there and working. And so it was interesting because I never put that together. Why would I always just come in, turn the thermostat down? Well, I started recognizing that I was getting hot when other people weren't all the time. My tremor started getting worse. I knew one time I was at a dinner with some friends, there was about eight of us maybe. And I was at this house and we were eating dinner.

And the reason for the dinner was because my buddy was starting to date a new girl and we were all being introduced to her. And so we're going to get a chance to say hi, and it gets nowhere a little better, we're going to have dinner as part of that. And as we sat down, I just started breaking out into just sweat. The tee shirt that I was wearing was drenched. I looked around and I noticed no one else is sweating. And I was thinking like, why in the world is this person keeping their house so hot? Don't they have a thermostat? Can't they turn it down? So

that was the first time that I realized, oh, this is not normal. Something's going on. I don't know what it is, but something's going on.

And like two weeks later, I'm on the golf course with my buddy, Mike, and we are playing, and we always, we play golf a lot. We play nine, play 18, whoever wins buys the other person a beer. It's just something that we love to do. Well, I have an essential tremor. I take propranolol for that tremor. I always have since the end of my third year of medical school give or take. I ran out of propranolol. So we're playing golf, I'm not worried about it. It's just an easy day. We're going to drink a couple beers, play golf, low key relaxed, no stress. We play the first hole and I think at that point I actually went up by a stroke on Mike. I think that I got a bogey and he got a double bogey or something like that.

And we go to the next tee, we tee off. And we're in the fairway now after we've gotten to the ball after we teed off. And all of a sudden this group behind us tees off into us. So they hit the ball, we're in the middle of the fairway and the ball lands about five feet past my head. And I immediately am just on fire. I'm angrier than I've ever been in my life. And so I'm kind of, I just all of a sudden start having a panic attack basically. This group just hit a hundred mile an hour golf ball right past my head, which if you play golf, you know is a big no-no. You just don't do that. If someone's in the fairway, you do not tee off. You wait until they get to the green.

Well, I couldn't control my emotions. I started having a panic attack, started hyperventilating. I told Mike I couldn't deal with them when they came down, which was not my typical forte. I have no problem with confrontation in life. I don't seek it out, but I've got no problem with it. And I realized on the golf course at that time I had an issue. Fortunately, my primary care doctor is awesome and so she had already put the message together when I told her my symptoms. I told her things were rough at home. We were getting into arguments. I'm getting hot all the time. I can't sleep. I hadn't slept through the night for more than like 10 days in the last year. I told her about the panic attack. And of course, naturally she ordered some thyroid tests.

Well, lo and behold, I have Graves' disease. My TSH comes back, it's undetectable and I have Graves' disease. And so I started realizing that all of my anxiety and anger and irritableness could be chalked up to a medical disease that had probably been going on in the background for the last six to 12 months. During that time, I thought it was all due to burnout. I was stressed. I was anxious. And so that's what I chalked it up to. Well, I ended up getting put on Thiamazole. It got better, my Graves' disease that is, but my burnout didn't. I noticed that my burnout stayed the same. In fact, after some time after my, I became euthyroid, my burnout got worse and I started having depression.

Now, I don't know if that's related to the Grave's disease still, or if it's related to my job, but I started having a really, really hard time. I went to a pretty dark place, ended up getting put on an antidepressant, took Lexapro for six or nine months and it was hard. I was not in a good place. I constantly blamed my unhappiness on my job. I blamed it on not having a schedule that I could determine or predict, not getting to have any say when I got to work or when I got

home. It was just little nitpicky stuff. And it really bothered me. I just felt like I wasn't in control of my own career or of my own life. And so I was struggling and this was after I was euthyroid. So I couldn't blame it on that anymore.

Well, as it turns out, this started my journey into figuring all this stuff out. I don't know if any of you out there know what an Enneagram is, but an Enneagram is a personality test that I actually got turned onto in the last couple of months by a friend of mine. So David, this friend, pointed out the personality test. I went and took it and it's actually something that I give to all of my clients, my coaching clients, is this Enneagram personality test. And I think it has a lot of insight into really how you tick, what makes you work? What are your motivations, your fears in life? What can your life look like when you're doing it really well? What does it look like when your personality type is struggling?

And so I'm what's known as a type three personality type with a wing two. So what that means is my main personality type is a type three. There are nine personality types. Everybody fits into one of them. So I'm mainly a type three. I also have a wing two. So the type three in most personality tests for Enneagrams is called the achiever. So what did this look like in my life? Well, this is how it looked. Outwardly, I looked extremely successful. And the reason why is because of basic fear, this is something I found on a website actually from Crystal Knows, but she explains it really well. So a type three wing two, also known as the charmer, right? Their basic fear, my basic fear is we are afraid of failing and being unworthy of love.

And we do this, we avoid this fear by setting and accomplishing goals in order to feel successful and worthy. So basically what that means is that I achieve things when I'm not doing well because I feel like if I don't achieve things, people won't like me, people won't look up to me. People won't talk to me or want to be around me. I am a worthless human being if I'm not accomplishing any of that. And so when I was going through all of these dark times, nobody knew, and I hid it pretty well. And it's because I'm in academic medicine, I'm publishing randomized control trials at relatively prolific rates for my department. I'm winning teaching awards. I won the Golden Apple in my first year as an attending. I got the top teaching awards last year.

Everything on the outside looked good. It looked fine. In fact, I was achieving in very high levels, but that's because my personality type is the achiever. And so I was bailing into my personality type in order to avoid dealing with all of these negative emotions that I was having. And that was just at work. So I'm also a serial entrepreneur. I started a blog three years ago. I have a podcast. This one actually is my second podcast. I started branching out into making courses. I wrote a book. And people look at me and they always ask, "Jimmy, how do you get all this stuff done?" And I always think it's funny because for me in my personality type, there's no delay. I recognize that something should be done, it ought to be done, and I can do it, so I just do it.

And the reason why is because if I don't do those things, I feel like I have no value. I feel like I'm not enough with my weaknesses and my quirks and features, and just the ins and outs of

my personality and who I am. That I'm not enough if I'm not achieving in this world. And so I really bailed into my work as a form of a buffer. We'll talk about Enneagrams in another episode and buffering and what I mean by that. But basically what I mean by buffering is that I was overachieving and everything looked fine on the outside. And I was overachieving because I was trying to avoid the anxiety and the depression that I had in my life. So this was my way of coping if you will. A buffer is a coping mechanism that is typically unhealthy.

So you might over-drink, you might overeat, you might be an overworker where you stay at work and would prefer to be there as opposed to going home to your family because that's harder for you. All of our buffers are different, but for me, my buffer is my business. My buffer is staying busy, being an achiever. I did that and it was okay until it wasn't. I got to a place where things weren't okay. I was having thoughts that I shouldn't have. I was anxious. I was irritable at home. I was treating my family poorly and things were just not going well. And so that's when I finally reached out for help. And back then, I didn't know that asking for help is actually a strong thing to do as a guy.

Many of us think that if we have to ask for help, we're weak. And it was until I read Brené Brown's *Daring Greatly* that I understood that that's just a form of shame, that ideology that if we ask for help, that that's weak. Yet when we look out at anybody else, when our patients ask us for help, they're not weak. We don't view that as weakness. When someone's struggling, when you've got a single mom or a single dad caring for kids and they ask for help, you don't think they're weak, right? You just look at those people and you say, "Yeah, of course, I'd love to help. Thank you for asking." And you view them as a strong individual. But when it comes to us in our life, when we ask for help, it feels like weakness. At least for me as a guy, at least for me, it felt like weakness.

And so I finally got to the point where it was just unacceptable for me not to ask for help. And so I went to my PCP again, I got put on Lexapro for six or nine months and things got better. They weren't great. They were better. And I still struggled. And so I continued to look for the strategies and just ways to deal with where I was at. And honestly, it all came back to this idea when I found self-coaching. So I found the Life Coach School with Brooke Castillo. I was pointed onto that by Bonnie Koo. She is someone that is obviously a personal finance blogger, as well she's a coach, she's a certified coach as well. And I was messaging with her and she pointed it out to me.

And so I started reading about it and I ran across this thought model. It's the thought model that Brooke teaches at the Life Coach School. It goes by an acronym. So it's CTFAR. C is for circumstance. T is for thoughts. F is for feelings. A is for actions. R is for results. So CTFAR. And the idea is this, right? Most people, we have this idea that our circumstances determine our thoughts, feelings, actions, and results, as if we're just a bystander that has no way of controlling any of this. So the person cuts you off in traffic and you're angry. That jerk just cut me off. I'm mad. It places the power into the person driving that car and takes all of the power,

strips all of your autonomy from you because you're saying that I'm angry because that person cut me off.

That's the feeling, I'm angry. So what's your action? You shift into the left lane, you speed up and cut them back off. And the result is that you're in this road rage battle that's completely unnecessary. And I'm sure when you woke up that morning you were like, you know what I want to do today? I want to go and cut somebody off and get into a road rage battle. I mean, that's, none of us want to do that. But it happens. And the reason why is because we don't intercept the circumstance with our thoughts. So we just let them automatically happen. And what's really going on there is that there is a thought. So it isn't just circumstance that leads to feelings, actions, and results. It's circumstances that you're in. And then you have a thought and that thought is what leads to your feelings, your actions and your results.

So the thought you might have when someone's cutting you off is they don't respect me. They don't care about my safety. They don't care about my kids in the back of the truck. And because they don't respect me, I'm going to show them who's boss. That might be your thought, that makes you angry. That leads to you cutting them back off and being in a road rage battle. And also I'll give you examples of this from my own life, but what it ultimately boils down to, CTFAR, right? This thought model, if you can stop and change your thoughts, which you can control, then you can lead your outcomes to different feelings, actions, and results. So that's where coaching is. That's where the strategy is, is overcoming our circumstances through our thoughts.

And so I'll give you some examples from my own life. A couple of years ago, maybe a year ago, I got passed up for a leadership position at work. And it was a position that I thought I was pretty qualified for, that I thought I'd do a good job at, that the people I would have been leading would have been happy with me being put in that position, but it didn't work out. And so the circumstance was that I didn't get chosen for the job. Now you might say, well, I disagree with you, Jimmy. I really think that your circumstances do cause your feelings, your actions, and results. I think that your thoughts are just automatic sometimes. And let me give you an example from this one that shows that that's not true.

So I had actually already been passed up for this position by the time I found out. I found out kind of word of mouth later, there was no interview process or decision-making that went into it. There was no application that was made public, I should say. And so the decision had already been made and I found out two weeks later. And for the two weeks that I didn't know about the decision and I thought that the job was still available, I wasn't mad. I wasn't disappointed. I wasn't angry. I was just me. I was just going about my business because I didn't know any better. The circumstance had already happened. I just didn't know it. And it wasn't until I was told that I had the thought, huh, I really wish someone had told me about this or that I'd had a chance to interview for the job or submit an application or something to that extent.

The person that they chose ended up being one of my best friends and he's incredible. He's great at it. And I think that he's done a wonderful job in the role. But initially I was upset because there was no process in my mind, that I didn't have a chance to interview or whatever. But the point being is that the circumstance had already happened. It wasn't until I found out about it and had a thought that it led me to being disappointed and upset. And then the action that came from that was that I had a meeting with my chair and that resulted in some changes in my career trajectory that have now led me to where I am today. So the end of the story here is happy because I ended up doing exactly what I want to do with my life. But at the time I was disappointed, but I wasn't disappointed until I had my thought.

And so the thought for this episode, right, is your circumstances are not responsible for your feelings, actions, and results. Instead, your feelings, actions, and results are determined by you and your thoughts. So what I want to teach you and what has changed my life is that you have control of your thoughts. There are not thoughts that are true or false. There are only thoughts that serve you and thoughts that don't. And when I learned that I could choose the thoughts that serve me to improve my life, it changed everything. It changed my life. It helped me deal with my anxiety. It helped me deal with the stress at work. It helped me become a better dad and a better husband. It helped in every facet of my life.

So I want you to recognize that there really is power in your thoughts. And so how this happened, well, I got some self-coaching. I read about the thought model. And then I ended up joining self-coaching scholars, which, or SES at the Life Coach School and I get coached every week through that. I'm starting to have individual coaching outside of LCS. And really I started diving into the ideology. And I learned that if I could just change my thoughts, that I wouldn't end up with feelings, actions, and results that I didn't want. And so I started to change my thoughts. I started to focus on other things. So for example, instead of saying, I have to do something, I now often reshape my thoughts into, I get to do something.

So it's not, I have to work out, I get to work out. I don't have to eat healthy, I get to eat healthy. I don't have to deal with my three year old screaming at me while I'm doing something or that she doesn't want me to put her to bed, she wants mommy instead, I can say that I have to deal with that. Or I can say, you know what? I get to deal with that. I have a three year old who is spunky and feisty, and awesome and I get to deal with that. I get to be a dad. I get to experience the ups and downs of life. And when I get to do that, when I have a reframe of my thought process, it all of a sudden doesn't make me angry that I'm having to deal with something right now. It is a privilege to be a husband. It's a privilege to be a dad and a doctor, and a coach.

These are the things that I get to do. Now, are they hard? Yes. All of those things are hard. I struggle with all of them, not all the time, but I struggle with all of them. I'm successful at all of them at times. Life is 50/50. You're not going to just have an awesome life 100% of the time. Now, you can design a life that you want and the life that you deserve, which is what this show is all about. But first we must take responsibility and own the fact that it is up to us and our thoughts in that we get to determine our feelings, actions, and results. And when we take

responsibility from that and we stop running from it, and we stop blaming everything on everyone else and assuming the victim card, particularly at work when it comes to burnout or stress.

When we start to realize that you can be in a tough situation and either learn to change your thoughts first, usually, but that you also have a choice to change your circumstances if you need to, if the thought work has already been done, that provides all the power you could ever need. And once I started doing that, the anxiety got better. The stress got better. The headaches that I was having got better. I didn't feel overwhelmed. I started deliberately and intentionally deciding what I wanted to do with my life because I chose my thoughts. After I realized what my personality type was, that I'm this type three achiever, I had to start working on the fact that I provide value in life whether I'm achieving something or not.

Honestly, one of the things that helped me with this is that my wife one day, knowing who I am, she put a note up on the fridge that I woke up to, and it's still taped to my fridge because it's a good reminder, but it basically says that I'm not Superman and that I'm enough, and that she loves me, and that my kids love me. Without anything else, without me achieving, without me being a doctor, without me being a serial entrepreneur, doing all the stuff, my family and my wife love me just the way that I am. And I had to learn how to love myself first and to respect myself first, and to view myself as strong even if I wasn't achieving stuff. So it was through those thoughts that allowed me to do that.

And so now I no longer blame my circumstance. I no longer blame my circumstances. Instead, I work on my thoughts. When necessary, I change my circumstances. And you guys can do all the same too. So this is the first episode of the show. I just wanted to get this out there. And I'm sure that the show is going to mold and adapt and change to what you need. The goal is to provide value to the listeners of The Physician Philosopher Podcast. That's the entire purpose of this being here. And so if you have questions, we've got a SpeakPipe account that we're going to set up and make available to you on The Physician Philosopher. So if you have a question, you got something you're struggling with, whether it is life, career, or money, those are the three topics that we're going to hammer out on this podcast.

Please go to SpeakPipe, leave a question, and we'll have an ask a coach segment on the show each week that we have a question. In addition to that, if you could, just go ahead and subscribe on your players. Whether it's iTunes, Podcast, Player, Google, Stitcher or wherever you're listening to this podcast, it's going to be made available to you. If you could subscribe and leave a review, send me comments, questions, concerns, criticisms, I'm all open ears. I love hearing helpful feedback. Even if it's harsh at times, that's part of what life is about. So if you have thoughts about the podcast, send them my way at editor@thephysicianphilosopher.com, and I'd love to hear more about what's going on in your life. And if I can be of help to you, don't hesitate to reach out.

And now I'm going to toss it over to my little girl to read the cutest disclaimer, probably ever.

Disclaimer: My dad, Dr. Jimmy Turner, is a physician, first personal finance blogger and a life coach for doctors. However, he is not your physician or your life coach. He also isn't a financial advisor, financial planner, or accountant. Anything discussed in this podcast is for general education and entertainment purposes only. Life coaching is not a substitute for therapy, medicine, or medical treatment. However, if you are a doctor looking for a life coach, you can reach out to my dad at editor@thephysicianphilosopher.com.

Jimmy: Thanks everybody for tuning in. I appreciate you being here and listening. I can't wait to put some more episodes in the book and get to some more thoughts that we get to change to create the life that we deserve. Don't forget to tell your friends, I'll see you next week.