

Jimmy:

Why do you stay in a job that you hate? Is there something else you think about doing, but you just can't come up with the courage to make the change? What's holding you back from taking that leap of faith? In this show we're going to talk all about it, and how you can overcome your inaction to find new heights and conquer your goals. Buckle up, it's about to get real.

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 two of the Physician Philosopher Podcast, where we take an uncurated and unapologetic look in physician life. Today's thought is this; if we wait until we're ready, we will never take the next step. You must start before you're ready, you must start now.

So you might recognize that wordage. It's the same line that comes from the intro for the podcast, right? You need to start before you're ready, start by starting, and start now. And you might wonder when you hear that for the first time, what in the world is he talking about? Why would Jimmy say such a thing?

Well, there's a reason for that. A lot of people that I know get stuck in inaction. They will send me emails, they will correspond with me, and basically mention how they don't like a portion of their life. It might be their marriage. It might be their job. It is oftentimes they're burnt out, or feeling overwhelmed or stressed. And so they reach out to me and they say, "Hey, I'm looking for some help. What are your thoughts?"

And inevitably, we'll get down to the fact that they have an idea of what they want to change. They have an idea of what's wrong. They have an idea of what they would like to be doing differently, and they just don't make any changes. So why does that happen? Why do we get stuck in inaction, why can't we just get the gears turning to move us in the direction that we want?

Well, the biggest reason is, is that doctors hate failure. We hate it. Right? We've gotten to where we are by being highly successful people. And so the idea that we could fail at something is one of the greatest fears in our lives. Now this is true for lots of different areas in our life, right?

We hate the idea of failing our friends and family, right? The idea of failing your spouse, or failing your children, or failing your coworkers, or your boss, or chair. You have certain expectations that have been placed upon you. You have certain expectations that you hold to yourself. And the idea of failing those expectations is sometimes paralyzing.

And a great book about this, Brenne Brown talks about Daring Greatly. And the name of that book comes from the Teddy Roosevelt quote that talks about the man in the arena, and being marred by dust and sweat and blood, and putting action in, and that the awards and the recognition should go to that person who's actually trying, as opposed to the people that are sitting on the sideline, right? The critic shouldn't get any credit.

And it's a great book, Daring Greatly by Brenne Brown. She really dives into why we hate failure so much. And for my male listeners, the biggest reason is that we feel shame. So Brenne Brown is a shame researcher. She says that we feel shame when we feel, or think that we feel, or have the potential to look weak. We will do just about anything that we can to avoid looking weak. So what does that look like in life?

Well, if you're a doctor, it looks like not asking for help. It looks like trying to do everything on your own, trying to be a hero, being everything to everyone all the time. And that will result in terrible outcomes, right? We know that there's a suicide epidemic among physicians. A doctor a day kills themselves, dies by suicide.

And so how does that happen? How does a strong, intelligent, resourceful, human being end up deciding to end their life? Well, that's obviously a complicated topic. But one of the big reasons is that we are taught, over and over and over again, that asking for help is shameful. And this is such a silly idea, right? We know that's not true. Because when we see other people reach out and ask us for help, we don't look at them and say, "Wow, you're such a weak person." Right?

When you have the single mom or single dad that asks for help with their kids because a commitment came up, or work called, or whatever, you don't look at that person and say, how weak. I can't believe you would ask for help.

You actually look at that person and say, wow, that takes a lot of strength to ask for help. Yet when it comes to us, we don't do that. And so what this does in the realm of making changes is that we are so afraid of failing, we're so afraid of asking for help, we're so afraid of the shame that might come from something not being successful, that we will often prefer inaction to starting something new.

Even if it's probably better than what we're doing, even if it's what we actually want. We will not take that risk because we might fail. That's a very powerful thing. Right? And so I mentioned that because there's a thought model we can think through here, right? The thought model, the CTFAR that we talked about in the first episode.

So what's the circumstance here? The circumstance might be that, let's say you're in an employed position and your employer, or your boss, your chair, whoever, has asked you to see twice as many patients in the same amount of time. They're not going to pay you anymore. They're not going to provide any scribes or any additional help. They are just asking you to do

twice the amount of work with the same exact resources that you currently have. That's the circumstance.

Those are the facts, verifiable. Email was sent. Documented. So this produces a thought, right? This is the T, the thought, that you want to open up your own clinic. Or maybe you want to start a side-hustle, but you don't really know where to start. So your thought is, I want to do those things. I want to make a change, but I don't know where to start.

And when you think about that idea, that thought, I don't know where to start. The feeling that produces is that you feel overwhelmed, and you feel frustrated and potentially stressed out by the fact that you don't know where to start. You are in this situation you feel trapped in, and now you feel overwhelmed because you want to make a change, but you don't know how to do it.

And the action that ultimately produces is inaction. You don't do anything. So then you are now stuck in the job that you hate. You don't like. That they're making you do twice as much work without paying you, or providing any additional resources.

And so it's this cyclical model where you don't like something, you realize you need to make a change, but then you have a thought that you don't know how. Because you're not ready, right. That causes overwhelm, and then that overwhelmed feeling causes an action. So you just sit on your couch and eat potato chips and pound a pint of ice cream, whatever you do to buffer your negative feelings, right? Maybe you have a drink or two.

This is a really deadly model. And it's one that we get stuck in all the time. And it's one that most readers and listeners, when they email me and reach out they say, "Hey, I really, I would like some help." And we talk about what their problems are, we figure out what a potential solution might be. And they say, "I'm just not ready. I don't know how to move forward. I don't know how to act or make a decision. I just don't know how to do any of those things you're talking about."

And this sounds logical on the face of it, but it's actually an excuse. Because just like anything else in your life, you are a resourceful human being. You can probably learn how to do stuff. And we can do hard things, right? That's important to tell yourself, I can do hard things.

So one way that I like to think about this, that I've been taught, is to fail forward. In other words, to accept failure as a part of life, any time that you are trying something new, anytime that you are looking to make a change, anytime that you are being a human being, right?

This morning I was making changes to my website, right? And I made a change, and it basically made my website crash. My menu bar got all screwed up, and this was about the same time that my three-year-old came downstairs and started asking me to get her some breakfast. And my nine year old was asking me about something else, and now I'm stressed out and looking at this computer because my website won't work. It was just a bad situation, right?

So I start snapping at my two girls. I failed. I failed as a dad. I fail all the time. I fail as a dad. I fail as a husband. I fail as a doctor. I fail as an entrepreneur. But when you look at failure, not as the

end all, be all, terrible thing that we're trying to avoid, but you look at it as an opportunity to improve.

So in that situation, I looked at it as an opportunity to show my girls that you can make mistakes, and that you can then apologize to people you love, and that they're going to forgive you. And that it's important to mention when you fail, particularly in relationships. I turned that opportunity that could have just made me feel like a bad dad into an opportunity to show my girls how to set an example by apologizing when you make a mistake, and that we shouldn't expect anybody to be perfect. And we should have some grace and forgiveness in our lives for those people.

It doesn't make it okay, what I did. I would never ask them to say, "That's okay, dad." But I do hope that they forgive me. Right? And so that's the entire process. Thomas Edison said this a lot better than I can, but the idea that he didn't fail, he just found 10,000 ways that won't work.

When you start looking at failure in a positive light, you can fail forward. You can fail towards your goals. And you're not going to look at that as the ultimate thing to stay away from. It's all about shifting that mindset, that thought. And when we can fail forward, then we're not so scared of starting. We're not so scared of doing something before we're ready.

That's the point at which we can say, failure is part of life. It's something that we need to experience. And actually, it's good for you. If you're not failing, I would argue that you are not pushing yourself hard enough. You're not trying enough new things. You are not looking to be a better parent, physician, partner, whatever your role is in your life.

The other thing I want to kind of get across, why would I call it this tagline? Start before you're ready, start by starting, start now. The big picture is that you're never going to be ready enough. And you've taught this to yourself so many times in your life. At least I have.

I wasn't ready to have kids. I wasn't ready to get married. I wasn't ready enough to go to medical school, or start residency, or become an attending physician. Right? All of those things, every single step along that way, unless you have some major personality disorders or major arrogance about you, you had a thought in the back of your head, I'm not ready enough. I'm really well-trained, I've worked really hard to get to where I am. But man, like this just feels really daunting.

You get anxious or nervous about the upcoming shift, the first day you're an attending. And that's because part of you is like, maybe I'm not ready. But when you get forced into that hot box, right, you get forced into the line of fire, all of a sudden you find out you are ready. All you had to do was get that first foot forward, start by starting. And then you found out, wow, I'm actually not a terrible doctor. I'm actually pretty well trained. And I can help people.

The only difference in those situations is that there's a timeline, right? You set a date for a wedding. You get pregnant, there's a nine month timeline. The kid's coming. You finish your job in June as a resident, and July 1st, you are an attending physician. In all of those situations

where you didn't feel ready enough, you were forced to make the step. Anyway. No one gave you a choice to back out. Not one that seemed real anyway. Right?

And so, because of that, you find out that you are ready, and you start by starting. You put that first foot forward, and then the second one comes along with you. And then all of a sudden, five years later, you've been an attending physician for five years. It's the same thing in any other area of your life. And Kierkegaard, Søren Kierkegaard, called this a leap of faith, right? He is the one that's been made known for the term or the phrase, leap of faith.

Søren Kierkegaard basically said, at some point you just have to trust yourself, trust your faith, take the leap. And shockingly, you'll wind up on solid ground on the other side. And start by starting is a little bit like that. You have to trust yourself. You have to know who you are, what you're about. You also have to know yourself enough to know that you probably needed a little bit of pressure, right?

Set the date, set the deadline, set a time by which you are going to make this decision. You're going to make this change. Or you can pull the good old, personal finance, behavioral finance kind of tactic and make a purchase, right? You buy a membership, or, I'll give you an example from my life. You buy a \$3,000 Peloton, you're more likely to use it. That's just the way that that works. If you put three grand into something, you are more likely to use it.

And after you get past that first hump of the hard work, and not being fit, you eventually might like it. Right? And so I ended up loving that bike. But the big reason I started is because I spent a lot of money on it. Now, I bought it from my wife because she was looking to get one, and she loves cycling. I had always hated it, but now I'm addicted to the thing.

So I took a leap of faith. I made the purchase. My family and I have used that thing a ton. And it's because we just started. So if you're having a hard time starting, then make a decision that you can't come back from. Right? So make a decision to make a purchase that may be not be refundable. Make a decision to get a coach. Make a decision to start the side-hustle, buy the website, buy the LLC for your state. Get your employer identification number, EIN.

And if you do that, if you start by starting, you're going to find that you are ready, and that you are resourceful, and that you will figure out how to do things. Or, how Marie Forleo says, "Everything is figure out-able, right? You will figure out a way to create that life that you want to get away from that job. So instead of having that thought, I want to open up my own clinic or my side hustle but I don't know where to start, I'm not ready.

You could say, I've started lots of things in my life where I haven't felt ready. But I was, and this is just going to be another thing. Right? You just have that thought, I'm going to start this. No matter what happens. If I fail, I'm going to do this. At least I tried. And I'm going to put my effort into it, I'm going to try a hundred percent, I'm going to get things done. And if it fails, so what? You found a way that didn't work, guess what you get to try to do again? Something else.

And as you do that, as you fail forward, as you take that leap of faith, as you start by starting, you're going to find that ideal life that you've been wanting. You're going to get rid of the job that you hate. You're going to be able to walk into the office and have that tough conversation. You're going to be able to be a better partner, a better parent, a better physician, a better serial entrepreneur, whatever your thing is. It's all about changing that thought. So that thought for today, if we wait until we are ready, we'll never take the next step. So you must start before you're ready, you must start now.

Remember, you probably didn't feel that way when you started medical school, or residency, or life as an attending. You didn't feel ready. If you're married, you have kids, you probably didn't feel ready for them either. But it worked out, right? It ended up turning out okay. You ended up being ready for those things because you got forced into action.

Only when you recognize that you don't have a choice will you find out that you were ready. And you'll be able to start now. So I encourage you to make those tough, tough situations, those tough decisions, and to fail forward. It's not shameful to fail. It's actually something you should strive for. If you're not failing, you're not pushing yourself. When you fail, you should say, "Found it, pushed myself hard enough."

So thanks for listening to this episode. I would love for you to subscribe and automatically download these things to your player, whether it's iTunes, Stitcher, Google Podcasts, wherever you listen.

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Disclaimer:

My dad, Dr. Jimmy , 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.

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Jimmy:

You know, I've always had a hard time saying thephysicianphilosopher.com, too. I've gotten used to it now, but I don't blame my nine year old, there, for having a hard time with that.

Jimmy:

Thank you so much for listening, and I appreciate all of you giving your thoughts, your constructive criticism, feedback, what you want to hear. Shoot me an email, editor@physicianphilosopher.com, should you have any questions, comments, or concerns. I'm here to help you. And I would love to hear from every one of you. Thanks. Take care.