Introduction to Doctor Donna Coryell

I'm so excited to introduce Doctor Donna Coryell. She is the founder of Doctors on Social media.com, and super enthusiastic about creating this giant network of doctors to have conversations and cross-promote on things that doesn't necessarily exist fully.

She is a licensed physician, but she's so passionate about the things that she does, and I'm really proud to have her come on to talk about social media doctors or so many docs.

I'm so excited to have you on. Finally, welcome to the summit. Thank you so much. I'm so, so excited to be here. Yeah. So, you know, you have such an interesting story, but I rather you tell it to me.

So how did you come to where you are right now with social media doctors? So I was a practicing internist. I practice for a while, for around 15 years.

But during that time, I had some experiences that set me apart from, what other physicians, traditional experiences and that I took a break away from, from the clinical medicine setting.

And I was acquainted during that time with so many different, perspectives in life that I probably would have been, would not have been privy to if I did not take that break.

So taking a break from medicine allowed me to sort of look at life differently and see what's out there, and also experiment with some things in life that I just probably wouldn't have had had time to.

So that led me to discover the digital world and the power of it.

From Practicing Internist to Digital Entrepreneur

Yeah. Yada yada yada. I created my own personal online brand, and then I, basically opened up a startup in order to help other doctors in this world do the same.

Now, that's that's so great because I think reciprocation is kind of lost. Currently, especially with marketing and social media and stuff like that. And more importantly, I think that's, I mean, we're doctors are kind of trained in a very hierarchal format, right?

You got your school more school even more school, internship, residency and some fellowship for some people. And then you're out in the world and you're like, oh, that's kind of it.

And let me just practice medicine a little bit, right? And so I think we have to respect that everyone has their own journey. And I think part of the reason why people are even watching us right now is because they also have their own journey.

So if you have your own journey out there, go, go for it. But but specifically, you know, you decided that you took a break and you were like, you know what?

I want to help doctors, right? I want to help other people like myself have a voice so that I'm sure that's just started as an idea. But how did you even develop to what it is right now?

What is the power behind that? So first of all, it takes time for your idea to be baked into fruition. I always knew what I was creating. I just didn't necessarily have the steps laid out or the tools that I needed that I have now in my hands.

And there's still probably a ton of things I could do better to even to expand it even further. So, so yeah, I think that, I, we all, all of our ventures start from an idea and from like that random discussion that we have with someone, but to actually make it, to breathe life into something like this takes a really long time.

And I think the problem for us as medical doctors is that we've spent so much time earning our degree that a lot of us don't have the time, the energy, we're burnt out.

So who's going to really start right with a startup? I mean, you think about all the famous people that have had successful startups, and a lot of them started early because they really don't have a lot of talent, don't have a lot to lose.

They have a lot of time on their hands. They're dedicated. Whereas we're sort of like mid life. Many of us are midlife and we're going, wait, there's literally nothing else I can do right now because I'm working 80 hours a week for my employer, and I don't even have time to pursue a startup, which takes well over the 80 hours that I'm working currently.

So absolutely. And you're absolutely right. It takes time to bake. I really like the way that you say that, right? I used to call it, you know, the incubation, and you have to incubate in your head a little bit and then see what, what you know is out there.

But but it's a risk. You know, as physicians, we comes from sort of let's say we have a job, we have an employer or we're in we're in private practice.

Right. And then we decided to do something a little different and take that risks.

Why Doctors Need Time, Risk, and Incubation

There's the financial risk. There's to be a legal risk. And you're stepping into the unknown in midlife, like for the first time ever. And it's and it's pretty scary, right?

It's extremely scary and it's extremely risky. Which is why I go back to the point I just made, which is that this is why a lot of successful startups are actually created by younger folks.

Because when you don't have as much to risk, then you kind of give it your all and you just go, well, if it doesn't work out, it doesn't work out. So someone maybe who's younger in their career or younger in general and doesn't yet have a career can do this to see, well, where will it take me?

Or if you don't have a family that you need to support that's dependent for your paycheck, then you sure you could do that? And if you don't like have kids that you need to pay attention to, then you can work 24 seven, right?

Like I, I love pop culture, and The Social Network is one of those movies that are really stand out to me because he whether you like what Facebook has grown or or not, and I can talk about the positives and negatives, but, he is someone that grew something that that's extremely impactful.

But when you even just watching that movie, you see those scenes where he got his friends to be sitting there and working around the clock to create all those codes, to make Facebook work.

And that's what's needed with a startup today, because especially in the digital world, you have to constantly stay ahead of the curve because there's constant changes going on.

An algorithm changes, etc., etc.. So yeah, and the pandemic changed everything. It changed the demand. It changed, I think digital media behavior, and it changed actually I think physician voices, as well, you know, there's a lot of things going on and censorship and stuff like that.

So I think we're we're in a ever, changing world that's going to be perpetually evolving. So, so enough of the difficult

stuff, let's talk about some of the more exciting stuff is that, you know, you are where you are right now because you took a big risk.

Right? So, I'm sure, just like myself, that I also took big risks. But what do you think are sort of the biggest mistakes that doctors do make? When it comes to social media and marketing, general. So.

First of all, I, I want to preface by saying that I don't think we can generalize and say this is a mistake for you because I truly, truly, truly I mean, everyone has a different trajectory.

And our like the customization of our business journey, our career journey, to be, needs to be stressed. Like we need to really say to ourselves, I am me.

And what I need may be different than Donna Coryell or than than change. You know, like it's right. Right. We we have different things that we're doing.

And so a mistake for me isn't necessarily a mistake for you. So. But I'm still going to generalize and say that one of the mistakes I see being done with physicians who tackle social media is to consider the social of social media is to think that social media is social.

Social Media as Media, Not Just Social

Now, social media can be social, but I don't believe that looking at social media, social is actually the key to our happiness or anything else. Social media is media and the second you truly grasp that is the second that you give yourself the the, chance to succeed by using this very powerful tool.

And I say that because it is so double edged, like it has so much power to, like, propel us to such heights and also the same potential to make us feel like we are the loneliest person on the planet.

And I've seen people sort of jump, you know, commit suicide because they felt like the whole world just turned upside down, right? You see teenagers that have a comment set about them, or some, you know, I've seen so many stories about someone being bullied online and then killing themselves.

And it's horrible because at the moment you're feeling like nobody likes you. The world is against you. And that can be really, really bad pressure. And really, we're humans.

So to me, the number one advice is probably to separate social and media and to really start understanding that, yes, there could be social components to it.

But at the end of the day, this is media. Your real friends are literally your real physical friends who know you, who know that you make mistakes, who know what you mean, who know that who you truly are.

Deep down inside. I think that's really, really important. And then other pieces of advice that I can give from there is that, you know, you should really think twice about pigeonholing yourself into a side, like when something comes up and you're sort of posting about your side, you are pigeonholing.

And people also make assumptions from your social media presence like, oh, if they're saying this, then it means they're that kind of person. Or if they are saying that it means this about them.

And the same goes for extreme viewpoints. Understand that people interpret and in media, remember, this is not social media, it's media in media. When you put yourself out there, you can't take it back.

So whatever you say can have consequences. So it's about thinking through. It's about remembering that the space is curated. And it's also at the end of the day, about forgiving yourself and remembering that life is more than just what exists in the digital world.

It's the real world. And so have people that you trust set up in real life that you regularly connect with to remind you about the human good that you represent.

Absolutely. And that's so beautifully put on. It's probably the best response out of that question I've ever gotten, but let's be honest, I appreciate it.

So so let me because, you know, I've been on social media for a while, too, and developing my, my, my direct to consumer channels. But what you said is powerful and, and that's, it's pretty emotional for me because I kind of went through that, that line of depression about seven years ago, when I first started going, like, every day on Facebook Live.

And at that point, I just wrote a book, I was working on a book and preparing for launch, and, and you're right, there is not necessarily clear separation between, like, you know, social media and the fact that this is social, but does it mean that, hey, the world is against me?

I've been there and it sucks. It's painful. But, you know, I got through it and I realized that, hey, you know, the family and the friends and the people that are around us, that's far more powerful than my Instagram window, you know, and and I and I actually and I actually see it the other way as well, because some people I'm seeing sort of fall into that trap of becoming an influencer and like hitting that high if you, let's say, become viral. But forgetting that you're still a human and just not acting nicely about certain things.

And that's where we sort of need to separate the digital world and what really matters in life. Yeah, absolutely. And one of the things I talked about on another segment with, with Brant Lacey actually, is that, you know, we talked about how whatever we're putting out there in the digital world, the digital media, our great, great great grandchildren are asking to see it because Google literally indexes everything, which is different from how our great grandparents are before that age.

So whatever we're putting out there, it's there. Whether it's behind the, you know, a private wall or whatever. But it's all it's there. It's indexed and, it's indexed.

It's print, it's on a digital fingerprint. So, you know, what have we put out there is really the energy that we want to portray.

Curation, Authenticity, and Digital Footprints

And knowing that like several generations down there, they're going to see this, you know, and it's gonna be a lot easier to to look for, you know, older relics, digital relics, I call it, of people from before and really have to take that into consideration.

But you but you talked about earlier, you know, separating, the fact that social media is still a medium. And I think what, what you're trying to get at is, maybe that, whatever that's being portrayed on media is intentional.

Right? And so someone may seem to have a really good life and do X, Y, and Z and be an influencer. But behind the, the, the digital wall is still a person with the same struggles.

And we really have to remember that as well, because if we don't, it can create a lot of resentment and a lot of negativity as well. So. Right. Yeah, I call it curation.

It's absolutely a curated a platform and, you know, I see a lot of like the buzzwords of like authenticity. Be authentic and be transparent. And those are very important.

But remember, even the people that are saying that you should be that and sometimes even the people that are that are still curating their present. So you can be authentic but still kind of be following a script or following a narrative.

So just always remember that. And again, like, it's a very complicated world out there and anything that you do online may represents curation and not necessarily represent the person as they are in real time, in real life.

Yeah, absolutely. And you know what I have, I have I have three beautiful daughters. I have a seven year old, a five year old and a three week old. So, issues in the other room right now and it's and, and, you know, seeing the five year old and the seven year old, they're sort of in this generation where they really think the content that's curated for them, on media, you know, YouTube, YouTube, kids, whatever is, is part of, of reality.

And, and I constantly have to really remind them, say, hey, this is not necessarily reality. This is just what they put on. There's like a show. It is a show for you. You have to understand that.

And, and I fear for sort of that generation, being a father of three girls that, I want them to, like, not have self-image issues, knowing that this is rampant even in adults, you know, and doctors are, are not immune to this process, because deep inside, we're all human as well, you know?

Oh, 100%, one of the most important things that I hope to pass on to my own three children. And I have three boys that are old, much older than yours, but one of the most important things that I want my kids to grow up doing is thinking for themselves.

Because what I see is a huge problem that's beginning to take shape, and unfortunately, it has infiltrated into medicine and is affecting physicians. Is this concept of groupthink?

And I'm not even talking about a specific topic. It's just in general, this whole mentality that if that if we're not thinking like you, then we're somewhat defective or somewhat should, like, not be followed.

And it's this really vicious circle of that I see playing out on platforms where someone will become an influencer and oh, and and call over their influencer buddies and then they almost like group, they form like a group response on someone else.

And then that person feels little and again it becomes beyond a child's game. Now it becomes, adults are affected and you're affecting an adult life, an adult who is free to maybe say something.

And even if what they're saying is wrong or is a mistake, you have essentially created a bullying type of, response, which is making that person feel really small.

So yeah. Yeah. And so, you know, we really have to come together, you know, now that now that we're talking about this and I've even thought about this before then you just mentioned this just now.

I think there's a responsibility, of people coming together and, curating, messages, that are positive and that are very fruitful. So, but let's talk about your platform because I'm excited about your platform, and I've been in that, in your Facebook group for, for, for a little while now.

And that was starting to, to pull out all sorts of different things. And we had a really fun session last night where I actually pitched the summit, and 45 seconds, which is really hard to do in 45 seconds.

But, I think the energy and and by the way, the female physician representation is on point. So congratulations to you on that. My wife's no bigger. And so we always talk about, underrepresentation of female physicians in larger societies and stuff like that.

But let's talk about your platform. So, let's talk about the different elements of your platform, because if I were to go to your website, there's so many different elements there and all very pretty, by the way. So congratulations on that.

But let's talk about, you know, what's what and a little more details into what you do.

Building So Many Docs and Doctors on Social Media

Yeah, I think that what really stands out about so many docs and doctors on social media.com is just the vast amount of resources that we have built in such a small amount of time.

And so, the main point of so many docs is really to just help physicians to expand their career. We do that through different mediums, through different resources is a maybe an easier word to understand in that there's these interactive spaces.

So it's important for me to have a place where, where doctors can easily, freely and transparently exchange their work. So there's interactive spaces.

There's also a platform, building on the website. And the reason I'm doing that is because the interactive space is using Facebook's platform. But Facebook's platform is not decentralized.

It is owned by Mark Zuckerberg. So I don't get to make the rules Mark does. So he's limiting how much people can see what I put out there for a various amount of reasons, but I can't help that.

But if I build my own platform online, then I can make the rules. And I if it's important for me, for everyone to get seen, then I could start doing that there. So there's the interactive spaces, the website, doctors on social media.com.

And then there's also what's really important for me is that there's both free and paid options, because I do want to make sure that everyone is sort of included in different ways.

And then there's services that are existent to help docs build whatever they need to build, digitally in order to get seen. So, there's so much I can touch on, but just something that's really important to say is there's a lot of interactive spaces out there right now, especially on Facebook.

There's a lot of Facebook groups, and I give respect to everybody that has built a group. It's really hard to build a group, but it's even harder to nurture it. Yes.

The reason why I think that we stand out is because we truly facilitate the exchange of information without censoring anybody. And the reason it's important for me to state that out loud is that that's I opened it because I felt censored.

There are other groups in existence where I felt extremely stifled because if someone asks about a resource and you're growing that resource and you're in a group that's meant to highlight that resource, you should be able to answer with your resource without feeling that censorship or without feeling like you have to do something that's not clear.

So it's that like overall sense of transparency that to me, as a, you know, an entrepreneur I'm frustrated with and I'm trying really hard to set that up on doctors on social media.com so that everybody feels comfortable depending at what level they're engaged.

Absolutely. And so, I share that, level of feeling of censorship, with you, been there many times. You know, you're right. The very large groups, large, very, very, very large group, Facebook groups, for doctors in different categories and stuff like that.

And, you know, most of it is, most of it's really there's, there's people presenting that they have challenges. And if me, like my brand, you know, I coach businesses and, and I provide the value there, but you're not necessarily you can't say that us to provide the actual value.

There's that level of of hush hush since that does go on. So I really do appreciate the platform. But the I think the, the best thing about your platform, it is the authenticity and the transparency.

Because, you know, I was on there last night, 1 a.m. I can show my brain off. Well, that's part of the reason because because I had a I had to feed the baby the newborn.

And I got on there and I looked and I saw so many doctors were doing so many, like, beautiful things with doctors in mind. So why would we not put that, you know, out there?

Right. Well, that's my problem, is that I see us as being stifled. If there isn't a place where we can fully share what we're doing. And again, I am not saying it because I want to hurt anyone else who's doing that, because I do respect all the other entrepreneurs.

But I think there's a big difference between setting something up entrepreneurially and having rules within that entrepreneurial venture that make sense and are transparent, versus setting up something where everyone gets it and there's there's rules to actually follow.

And so that to me is very important. And that being said, I know that everybody who sort of has these spaces grapples with the fact that we don't own it, and that makes us sometimes seem like we are petty or making rules that are annoying.

But we also grapple with all these algorithms that push us down. So we got to make different rules. But my issue is just that the physician community needs a space that they trust, where everybody can come together and be represented in an equal way.

And so I'm hoping that so many Doc's the Facebook group. And again, we have various spaces, but the physician only Facebook group is at least a place where we can openly kind of just share the links to our work.

And if someone asks about a resource that they need, if someone needs a business coach or a business website, then everyone should have the chance to put the links to their business, websites.

Why Every Doctor Needs a Digital Presence

And if you want to use marketing language in the comment section, then great use marketing language and if you want to not, then don't. But everyone should sort of have the option to be visible for whatever work they're, putting in an effort to.

So again, there's, there's free options. And then it was important for me to also build a paid option because some people actually want us to help them.

They want help with marketing. They want to help with the website. They want help to get their word on on their new podcast or book and just putting their stuff down in the comment section is not enough.

So we give them an extra space and ways to do that separately. Absolutely. And that's part of the reason I created the summit as well, because we have, six large companies here.

Those MDS started and the owned and run, and, and it's beautiful because, it was all of this was really designed for, for, for doctors to, really, decrease the burnout, decrease fixed costs, stay in private practice, and also have personal growth, and also personal finances.

I mean, those are those are all the things that really plague most doctors that I know. Right. And why not feature doctors who have curated this very thing for the pain point that they've experienced before?

So I really want to congratulate you on that, and I'm very appreciative. So I want to thank you as well. I appreciate that. And maybe a good thing to add here is that, because I do know that the people that are coming to your summit where this is going to be heard, are building their own practice, are looking for a way to get their voice out there for their practice.

And they say, why should I care about digital presence? This isn't for me. This is for someone who has a podcast or has written a book. But that could not be further from the truth, because everybody should be using the digital space to be bringing in their clients and their patients.

So really, again, it goes back to the beginning of this interview, which is don't look at it as social, look at it as media, and then leverage this, really this free space online where you can bring eyeballs into who you are and what you're creating and then convert those eyeballs into actual paying clients or coming patients, you know, patients coming to your clinic.

This is how marketing works. And life is about marketing. And succeeding in life is about marketing. Yeah, absolutely. And I want to add another detail to that, which is there's a lot of doctors who are listening to this who have plenty of patients.

Sometimes they think they have a little too much and they don't think I don't need to really market. But here's the thing. When a patient comes to a doctor's office or you see them on telemedicine, they already know you through your reviews, they already know you through your media presence or lack thereof.

They are pre primed and they're attitude towards you is already predicated. But what they saw on the first and probably second page of of Google search, right.

And so and so the way that we are communicating to the patients in that patient buying, there's subconscious cues that the patients don't tell you about because they've already seen your digital presence.

And we see this all the time. And so, for if you do have a great digital presence and put a lot of just positive things out there, be part of the community, guess what?

When the patient sit down with you, when the patients, you know, see you on telemedicine, you know, they'd be like, hey, doc, you know, I just saw you last week at this fundraiser and this is so cool.

I just want to say that before we start the visit, we get that all the time. And it actually just puts a smile on our face, and it puts a smile on the patient's face no matter what situation that they're in.

Because now there's there's a built in level of connection that's that's really there. And I experienced that in my previous practice when I was part of a walk with the doc we expenses currently because we built our free online digital courses, for the whole world to see on different, disease states.

And they really appreciate that we build meditation courses, tai chi, and we're starting our culinary one as well. So we're starting to get a lot of feedback from our current patients like, hey, you know what?

I haven't been back in a while. Just saw that you did this cool thing online, but now I'm ready to to change my life. So I'm going to stop smoking. I want to get get fit and stuff like that.

So I do think that there's a there's a huge level of presence from a digital media that that pre determines the engagement that doctors have with their patients.

And it's really beautiful to see that that transition. And I encourage all doctors, if you even if you're like bursting at the seams with patients to build and curate their presence.

And I think honestly, the probably the best place to start is, is there's so many docs starters on social media.com. Just get in there to see what other people are doing, look at best practices.

Look at the Q&A within the Facebook group.

Networking Lessons and Final Takeaways

And it's something that that I really cherish, you know, even at my stage and what I'm doing with the media, I still went into that group and I saw there's just some really cool stuff going on.

So we want to be learning from each other and also making sure that we are supporting each other, reciprocating the support no matter what our beliefs are.

But actually we're simply going to support because we're all physicians trying to survive and do the right things. Make sense? Absolutely. Amen, Amen.

And so, having said that, let's how can how can people find you? So we talked about the website. You just repeat that URL one more time. Yeah. It's spelled out it's doctors on social media.com.

And the tag is so me Doc's. So me doc asks and the reason is it's short. So me is social media. So it's social media docs, doctors on social media. So it's at so me Doc's and then me personally, of course, we have to distinguish now between a company and me personally.

I'm personally at Doctor Coryell. That's abbreviated DRC, oh RDL and perfect. Excellent. And finally on LinkedIn and social media and all those places, right.

Absolutely. Well, okay, so, before we go, I'm going to ask you a question that I ask pretty much all the speakers. What have you learned recently that you wish you knew maybe five years ago?

And you think one thing. Oh, that's hard. I didn't one thing that I learned, I think that it would probably be the benefits of networking. And I know that that sounds very simple.

And people listening might say obviously networking is positive, but I really don't think that many of us truly grasp the the power in truly opening yourself up to meeting anybody and everybody.

And to also actively joining networking efforts. And part of that is what you mentioned at the beginning, that networking event that I put together for so many docs that I hope to do regularly, the whole purpose is that I suddenly recognized it, and I was like, there really isn't something similar for doctors where it's so open and so transparent that I'm going to try and head it and see if it's if it works and if doctors like it, you know.

So it's probably the power of networking. Excellent. That's very well put. I agree with you. The power of networking is something that, I learned recently.

In a different way. And because I, I used to network to actually bring in patients to build the practice and, you know, we have multiple, clinicians that within the practice and stuff like that.

But the power of I recently discovered the power of networking with people in the medical space has really changed my views on medicine and politics and, and things that actually can be done and really free my soul, a little bit, knowing that there are things that we can do to change things, actually at the federal level.

So, but I'm very, very much appreciative you, of saying that. So listen, thank you for being on here. Once again, guys go to, doctors on social media.com, all spelled out.

There's no abbreviations here. Check it out. And then there's so many cool things, on that site, there's online courses and all these different things.

And then if you guys want to participate in the next, what do we call rapid fire, like 45 minute pitch, high speed networking, speed networking. I actually signed up for the next month's event, so I'll, I'll try to be on there as well.

Just to practice, my, my, my pitch for 45 seconds and then I'll see you there. So once again, thank you for so much for coming on the summit. Appreciate you.

Oh, absolutely. And thank you so much for having me on. And anyone who wants to reach out to see if we have resources that fits you, please do so. Don't hesitate.

Excellent. Thank you.