EP56 | The Power of Narrative with Dr. Peter Crane Transcript

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Sponsor Messages and Podcast Intro

Quick question. Are you [music] paying more in taxes than you should? Most high-earning physicians overpay [music] by tens of thousands because their CPA only looks backward, not forward.

Gelt is different. Dedicated CPAs powered by AI that work year-round, [music] not just at filing time. Tax strategy and proactive planning for practice owners, [music] investors, and physicians with complex financial lives. Built specifically for professionals [music] who want to keep more of what they earn.

Check out joingelt.com. That's j o i n g e l t dot com. >> If you work in healthcare, [music] you already know this. Conflict is everywhere. In the OR, >> [music] >> in labor and delivery, in committee meetings, between physicians, nurses, administrators, and teams that are all trying to do the right thing.

But here's the problem. Most of us were never trained to handle conflict well. We learned procedures. We learned diagnostics. But we didn't learn how to navigate [music] the moments when two professionals strongly disagree.

That's why I developed the Spark framework. Spark stands for stop, pause, ask, don't assume, reflect and respond, [music] and create a path forward. It's a practical system designed specifically [music] for high-stakes healthcare environments.

Through keynote talks, residency [music] workshops, and Spark master classes. I teach physicians, nurses, [music] and healthcare teams how to turn destructive conflict into productive conversations [music] to strengthen teams and improve care. If your hospital, residency program, or medical conference is looking for a speaker on conflict, communication, and leadership in healthcare, >> [music] >> I'd love to work with you. You can learn more in the show notes.

Because in medicine, conflict is inevitable. But handled well, it can make teams stronger. >> In every operating room, in every ward, in every clinic, and every team meeting, a silent battle brews.

Conflict, negotiation, identity. Welcome to the Scalpel and Sword Podcast, where I, Dr.

Introducing Dr. Peter Crane

Lee Sharma, physician and conflict analyst, explore the hidden negotiations behind modern medicine. Let's trade burnout for boundaries >> [music] >> and learn the art of healing with precision and power.

>> Hello, my peaceful warriors, and welcome to the Scalpel and Sword Podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Lee Sharma, physician and conflict analyst. And I will tell you that I love stories. I love hearing stories. I love people telling about themselves when they tell stories. But more than anything, I feel like storytelling is an art form. And it's an art form that plays very powerfully into the world of conflict resolution. Stories shape identity. They build trust. They grow leaders, and they build resilience. And our guest today is definitely the ideal person to help us delve into the art of narrative and storytelling. I'm so happy to welcome to the podcast Dr. Peter Crane.

Dr. Crane is a graduate of Brigham Young University and he did his medical school at the University of Utah. He did his residency at Ball Memorial Hospital where he also did his residency not only in family medicine but served as chief resident. He is currently in practice as the medical director of Bear Lake Family Care and OBGYN. He is also a family physician at the Bear Lake Memorial Hospital and in addition to all of these things, he is the host of the amazing podcast Doctors Making a Difference.

Peter, welcome to the show. >> Thank you so much. That's a really flattering introduction. I don't know that I deserve any of that stuff, but thank you, Lee. That's kind of you. >> Oh my gosh, no, you absolutely all of that and

more, my friend. I have to say from the jump that I love Doctors Making a Difference. What inspired you to start the podcast?

>> Well, it's a long story. I've shared it on the podcast. So, those who may have heard my podcast have heard me kind of talk about this, but I'll share briefly.

Lee, I was privileged to come back to the same town where I grew up. I grew up in rural Idaho and I went to medical school and residency in Indiana and I had this opportunity to take the place of the doctor that delivered me. And it was like when I were finishing residency and the hospital administrator called and said, "We really need a doctor back in our hometown and the doctor that delivered you is getting ready to retire, Dr. Wolfe." So, I talked to my wife about it and anyway, she's from southern Arizona, so she's used to a little bit warmer climate, but she prayed about it and she felt like, "Well, that's where we need to be." And so, we came and have been here for 15 years and have been really incorporated into the community and have enjoyed serving a broad spectrum of patients for these last 15 years. And then just to shortly summarize why the podcast, I'm super inspired by doctors and I really feel like it's a privilege to be a physician. And when it came my turn to be a patient, I was just struck to a degree I can't even describe of how much what those doctors did for me impacted me. And you know, they spent thousands and thousands of hours cumulatively and individually learning this trade and the skills. So I had a large 26 cm tumor in my retroperitoneum. It's called a solitary fibrous tumor. And that was about 3 years ago. It was a terrible thing to go through. But as I went through the process of do radiation and chemotherapy and surgery and all the stuff that's come with that, I just was so struck by how much that those doctors did for me. And I realized that everybody gets to have doctors and we're doctors, we help people, but the impact of what physicians did for me and for my family, I just can't even state how that improved or how much that impacted me. And when I was recovering from that surgery, I wasn't sure if I would ever get to work again.

Finding Purpose Through Medicine

You can't know the end from the beginning on something so large as that. I thought to myself, and maybe it sounds silly or cheesy, but I thought if I got to do it again, I'd be a doctor. That's what I would do. I would want to join with this amazing group of healers. And so I just felt inspired to start a podcast and let's talk about people. Let's hear their stories. Let's not just drive everybody away from medicine with burnout and all the craziness that doctors have to deal with, but talk about the tremendous impact that you have as a physician. It's a really a unique and amazing job. I still claim that it's the best job in the world.

>> Amen. Oh my gosh. That is amazing. You go through this experience and I think for any of us being physicians and going through an experience like that, I think it would be very easy to not look at resentful, but to just you know, why me? I've done this my whole life. Why did this happen to me? And I think that's insight into your faith and who you are as a person and that comes through and how you tell that story. But also too, the gratitude that you felt for the people who cared for you got you even more invested in your chosen profession.

And one of the things I love about what you just said that I feel like we all need is that even on our worst days, we are grateful to have the positions we have. That it is an honor to do what we do.

And on your worst day, sometimes it's the day that you need to remember that more. Is that we are very grateful to be able to do this. That's amazing. And I think that directly connects to how you talk about the mission of Doctors Making a Difference. That you are helping people tell stories to connect them to their jobs, to connect them to what we do and to stay in medicine. The fact that you went through this experience and you felt led to stay practicing says a lot about it. But clearly you feel like doing this in the podcast does this for other physicians as well. How do you as a podcaster help doctors tell these stories? >> Well, again, I don't know if I have everything all figured out, Lee, but here's kind of my thought on this. So, there's this concept called radical acceptance where you accept the very worst outcome is possible and then everything else shy of that seems like, well, that's okay. So, during the time of that tumor and I still have to take chemotherapy and stuff that is not very fun to be a part of.

But I had accepted that this might be the end of my career. It might be the end of my life. And that was devastating and really hard to deal with. But I realized that if I I to live, if I got to do this and go back to medicine. I wanted to approach it from a perspective of gratitude and then also have the tools and resources to not feel like you're stuck

in this mindset where you can't go forward or that you're so focused on the day-to-day challenges that you lose sight of the big long-term objectives that you get to do as a physician. So, I still really blessed to be able to be a part of this and to tell the stories for other doctors. So, when we have those conversations we help coax a narrative out of somebody like, how did you choose this and why would you do this? And why do you still do this? And if you were your 18-year-old self looking at yourself now that you're a physician, you know, how proud you would be of that and kind of tell those stories. And I think it helps keep us grounded like, why do I do this? And what kind of impact it might just be somebody's follow-up visit and you feel like, well, I'm not making that big of a difference, but you need to be there and there's only so many of physicians in the United States. If you have the ability to stay engaged and help people to get better outcomes, the impact you have is tremendous and I think we don't say it enough. >> I 100% agree with you that we don't give people the space and the platform to really verbalize that. And I think it's one of the things I love about your podcast is that you do create the space for people to tell that story. You actually make a platform for them to share that with other people. And I think sometimes storytelling is like journaling. You don't really know what you think until you start talking about it. And when you're asking people these questions of, so what drew you to practicing medicine? What's kept you here? What was your inspiration for choosing these things? Then all of a sudden, even as you're answering the question, I didn't realize I thought that. I didn't realize that was something in me. And I do think that's one of the things that's powerful about getting people to tell their story is that sometimes you will help them discover things that maybe were just under the surface or they just didn't realize were there and all of a sudden they're verbalizing it to somebody who makes them feel safe. And as they feel that safety, they become more open to verbalizing maybe things that surprise themselves.

>> You know, the other thing I've noticed Lee when we talk to people is there's a theme. A lot of people who you started off really kind of idealistic and it's all going to work out and then you realize that medicine will crush you if you don't care for yourself. And it's almost like people need permission to change. If you say like, "Hey, I need to work different hours or I need to work a different type of job or I need more support or whatever it is that you feel like is depleting you, you have the power to fix it." And it's really interesting to me to talk to people. They still find that core nugget of why they chose to go on this long journey to become a physician.

It still is really rings true to each of them. But they have to change something. If you just hate a job and you do it just cuz you're just trying to get to your financial independence number get out of there, it just feels like this slog. But once you find the purpose behind it, it suddenly becomes a joy.

Can I give you an example real quick, Lee? >> Yes, yes. >> A few months ago I had the privilege to meet a physician like an article that popped up in one of the Idaho newspapers and I called this guy. He is a emergency room physician who is nearing the end of his career and instead of retiring, he said, "I'm going to devote an entire one-year salary to cure blindness in Ghana." He worked with this organization.

Storytelling, Gratitude, and Physician Identity

And he just said, "I went from wanting to finish the work each day and dreading and kind of having to go out before you can start a shift kind of talk yourself into it being okay to just feeling joyful about showing up and going to work because I knew that every dollar I earned and every dollar I sent overseas to this curing blindness foundation replaced somebody's cataract and fixed somebody's vision troubles and helped them with their glasses and that impact will spread many, many times over cuz they're starting an organization to help teach people how to do the surgeries. And he just said I found this tremendous purpose for what I was doing. I didn't hate what I was doing anymore.

He's like, I might even try to talk my wife into letting me do it for another year because I didn't need the finances anymore. I needed the blessing of being able to help the person in front of me, but have a tremendous purpose for what I was doing. And it was just an example that kind of shows how different it is when what you kind of connect back with why you do what you do and you stop worrying about all the other barriers because you're so focused on the long-term objective. >> Oh my gosh, I'm so glad you shared that story. That is powerful. That he discovers his why and when you said, you know, you have to talk yourself into the next shift.

>> Yeah. >> I can't tell you how much that resonated with me and so many people I'm sure listening sitting in their core before they go into their office or go into the or go into work for their shift. And it's like, man, I just got to do this

one more time. I just got to get one more 8 hours out of me. And all of a sudden this doctor who is donating everything he's making to something so significant.

He's changing an entire country, not just in the short-term, but in the long-term. And all of a sudden now he's got his joy back. And so those are the kind of stories that we listen to that I think do two things. I think number one and we talked about this earlier before we started recording, but this whole idea of as we tell these stories that we connect and we ground in such a way that conflict goes away. I find that I'm connected with you in a very fundamental way.

We're not so different after all. When we start digging down into these stories and it's a beautiful place to start building that relationship and building that long-term peace is that I realize in a very fundamental way I'm I'm that different from you. What were we in conflict about? All of a sudden things start to go away at that point and I love that.

>> True. >> But the second thing that I love about that story is that as he's telling the story to you and he's clarifying his why he gets to relive that why. He gets to relive the joy of his why. We tell the story enough and there's something that bubbles up in us when we share something that makes us that happy.

And I think if you can get people to tell stories and you sort of allow them to relive that joy over and over that's infectious. That flows onto so many other people. >> You know, another concept on that I'm just thinking as you're describing that Lee is on the podcast of mine and probably you do talk about on yours when you are no longer doing it just to get through it and you're doing it for this higher purpose, suddenly all the dumb little things that drive you crazy about prior authorizations or dealing with administration stuff that you don't like suddenly that just becomes kind of a nothing and you're like, I don't care about that stuff. You can say no. You can be like, no, that's not right for me or my patient so I'm not going to do it and you can kind of stick it to them and if you want to fire me you can but even more than that, I think it gives you the power to say, we're in this for a higher purpose so if there's something you need me to do that we have to get through it together, we will but you stop getting so crushed by all those little things and you say no to the things you need to say no to and you do it for purpose and for joy and then that financial independence piece of it is really empowering to people cuz they find their way forward and they say, I'm doing this for the purpose of serving somebody and that's a very different place than saying, I got to show up cuz I've got to make my house payment and my medical payment and my boat payment and all the other payments people get. You do it because you want to serve it and that's a very powerful place to be in what I would want for every physician to find.

>> Absolutely. I was very grateful as a young doctor just opening my practice. My dad was a general surgeon and a man of just tremendous faith and he gave me lots of advice through my life, but one of the things that he said before I opened the practice, he says, you never have to worry about the money. You take care of the patients, the money will come. And I can still hear him saying that and I have shared that with many people, but the people that I have shared it with probably the most commonly is my staff. Because we don't have to look for the next patient. We're not booking surgeries to make money. You take care of the patient, the money will come. And the Lord has never ever failed us on that. And I always come back to that. It's like he has always looked after us, but I can still hear that in my head and it kind of goes back to again the reason why I love the fact that you encourage people to tell these stories because I think my dad could have showed me statistics. He could have showed me numbers. He could have showed me, if you do all of these things, you'll be fine, but that's not what he did. He told me a story that became a point of alignment and I used that point of alignment with my staff and thus we are now all aligned. We are all on that one point of agreement and that like you said, once we're all aligned on that, we all feel that very profoundly, the other little things that you can get upset about go away. You know, even the things that you are tempted to be in disagreement about, we come back to our North Star. This is our North Star. We take care of the patient, the money will come. That's it. And all of my staff know because I've shared this with them that the reason why I have this is because of my father. Because this is a story that he shared with me. His picture is up on my wall in my office. So, it's beautiful like you said, how when you have that alignment, the little things that we think are so disruptive just really lose their importance.

>> Yeah, I think I've heard it first from Dave Ramsey, so I don't know if he's the original person that made this comment, but the comment is if you do a really good job, people will give you lots of pictures of George Washington

to say thank you.

Well, I chuckled at that and that's true. When you put the person first and you say, "Look, the outcome's for the person and their family." If that's your first priority, you just don't worry about the rest of it. Like you stop worrying so much about well, all the complexities of the electronic medical record system and all the insurance garbage that you have to deal with.

Those things are truly frustrating, but you can learn to see past it and say, "Well, I'm here to serve something better. And if I need to change it, permission granted. Change it." You know, you're the doctor. You're the one that went to medical school. You're the one with the credentials. You're the one with the ultimate liability responsibility. So, ultimately, it's you that gets to change it. And you don't want to be disrespectful to administrators and that kind of thing. That's not the point. The point is regain your power. You have that power and the power isn't to make you something great. It is to help your patients. And you can be a tremendous advocate for them. And when you feel like you're in that job, you're like, "Man, I'm here to help these people get through this and get what they need." And when you're that kind of a advocate or a voice for people who maybe can't speak as much for themselves, it is a tremendously empowering thing. And then I think people are willing to see past the difficult moments and continue on in a challenging career. And I find it inspiring to talk to people who have done that, for sure. >> Oh, absolutely. And one of the things you just talked about, I want to go back to this cuz I think it's so interesting.

And when you talk about being an advocate for patients, that the art of storytelling really can move the needle.

Why Narrative Matters in Healthcare

And I actually think whether you're advocating to legislators or you're advocating to administrators, whoever you're advocating to, I think very often that stories are more powerful than data. I can show you a page of statistics or I can tell you the story about the one patient that had to drive 3 hours to a hospital to deliver her baby because this rural hospital closed because they couldn't staff this hospital. I can give you all the numbers in the world, but if I tell you that one story about this one poor woman who had to drive 3 hours to deliver her baby, that will stay with you. And so, if I'm really trying to move the needle, that becomes a bigger tool in my toolbox sometimes.

As physicians, are we losing the art of storytelling? Is this something that we feel like we need to resurrect in our medical education? >> So, I don't know. That's a good question. I find that it's variable.

I definitely would say my podcast audience are mostly people who have found their story and they're willing to talk about it. But, I also know lots of people who feel like they're just sort of floundering and they don't quite know what comes next and you just kind of feel like you're sort of in the weeds and stuck in the moment. You're helping, but I always tell my wife and like on those busy days where you're seeing so much and you can't even breathe. Like when like the doctor bought 2,000, I just went through the motions again and again and again and again. And you don't even have a minute to sit back and enjoy the beautiful moment. Like I just delivered a baby. I just saved somebody's life in the ER. I just figured out a diagnosis that nobody figured out for 5 years and we figured it out. And you don't even have time to process these amazing moments. You're just like, "I'm on to the next one." So, I do think it's important from the storytelling standpoint to write it down, talk to a colleague, write it in your journal.

And when you do have those little moments, it's helpful to reflect back. I'm not very exemplary on journal writing, but I do find that it's helpful if I write it down. Like, "Oh yeah, I remember how things were so uncertain and then this worked out in this way and how much you learned." I think all of us need to kind of recapture that because whether it be journaling or talking to somebody else or leaving yourself audio notes or What it may be, we do need to recapture that ability to tell stories because it's about a lot more than statistics and numbers. It is about the patient in front of you and why that person has entrusted their care to you. And that like you said, that's way more powerful than giving somebody a list of data points. They don't care as much about that, but they do care about people.

>> 100% and I'm glad you talked about you know, the idea of journaling and also too, there's so many different ways to do the self-reflection. You know, I never thought about the idea of recording an audio note to myself, but I am going to do that now cuz that's a great idea. I carry a journal around with me. I have pens with me all the time. My office staff laugh at me because I love my pens. But the discipline of sitting down and writing something down,

something comes to your mind, you had a really beautiful interaction with a patient, something really great happened in your day or something maybe you did that didn't fall quite where you wanted it to fall.

That's something we need to kind of journal and unpack as well. Sometimes the stories that we need to tell are the ones that are more cathartic and so the idea of being able to have that discipline I think is so important. And I think this is something that the younger generation is doing better than us. I think they are learning this out of the gate. I think we're having to incorporate this later in our careers. Some of these younger kids I think are better at journaling, self-reflection. They have been encouraged to do that for a longer period of time. So I love that. One of the other things I also think is really cool about your podcast and I think especially Doctors Making a Difference in general is really as you're spending time with your guests, this is definitely more of a long-form storytelling platform. You really have time to sit down and really encourage these stories to come out of people. And one of the challenges I think sometimes in doing that is that unfortunately, we live in a short attention span world. That we live in a world sometimes that are based in sound bites and 30-second TikTok videos. You're not going to capture the essence of somebody's story in their joy in 30 seconds. I think that's really hard to do. So, how do you help people who have developed You've got a guest on your show. They're telling these stories and you're really having to encourage them to embrace this longer platform of telling the story. Do you do specific things to help them learn or help them sort of embrace that experience?

>> So, well, let me just jump back 1 second. You all have a superpower journaling thing in your pocket. These phones have a journal like the iPhones at least have a journal app that's password protected. And sometimes when I'm just driving home, I'll just turn that thing on and I'll just like audio, you know, voice to memo on that thing. And that's how I do a journal entry without sitting down and like finger typing the whole thing. So, that was one thing I wanted to to say cuz it's a really useful tool. You have it in your pocket. You don't even have to spend very much time just You want to catharsis right there, you got catharsis.

>> Yep. >> I love it. >> Pertaining to the question of how do you coax a story out of people? You know, your podcast focuses a lot on conflict resolution. I think that's the root of it is you have to get to why people do what they do. And most people I find are willing and pretty interested in telling you their story. You know, you've heard that before. You want to get someone to talk and they're going to talk about themselves. And I think it's not that people are vain. I think they know their story. They live it. And we say, "Why did you become a doctor in the first place?" Or "What would 18-year-old you say about you now?" You know, "Would you be proud of who you've become?" And And some of the people will lead ends have been really helpful for people to think about, "Why do I do this?" And another one I've asked people a lot. I've tried to think about it myself a little bit. Okay, you're a doctor. You've been at this X number of years. And you're still a doctor. You're a tremendously talented person. You could do a whole bunch of stuff with your degree or with your intellect and your motivation. Why do you still choose medicine now? And I think that's a really good thing for all of us to think about, but it does help people tell the story like, well, why am I here doing this thing? Even though it's not always straightforward, it's a hard job. You know, doctors are generally well paid, but it's because it's a really hard job. I'm trying to gloss over the difficulty of it. But it when we celebrate that and celebrate the wins and get people to talk about some of those things, there's tremendous things that come out of it. And people find joy, they find motivation, and I personally find it very inspiring. So, I enjoy talking to people about it. And I hope the listeners also enjoy hearing about it cuz I think it's fascinating.

>> And there's something also very interesting. I agree with you. I think it's always so great to encourage people to tell their stories. And when I do conflict resolution training, a lot of times like I will in labor and delivery or on the ward, and one of the things if you're in a conflict situation with a patient and you're not really sure where to start, I think it's always a good place to start tell me your story. And I do agree with you. I think people really enjoy telling their stories. But one of the things that I have found with physicians, which I think is so interesting, is sometimes physicians are hesitant to tell their story. And I think some of that goes back to we're servants, we like to help people. We value other people's stories, but sometimes we do forget to value our own.

We forget that our stories are meaningful and can bless other people. And so, sometimes we're not as willing to do that, which is even one of the other reasons I love your podcast, is because you're creating a safe space for people to do that. I do think people need to feel safe to tell their story. I think people need to feel like they're in a place that it's okay to tell their story, but also helping for people to feel empowered and that they are empowering other people by telling that story. I think sometimes as doctors we don't realize how, like you said, what we do is

challenging. What we do is hard, you know. This is a very difficult profession. It's full of reward and so much wonder. But at the same time, it's very hard.

And recognizing that in such a way by saying, "My story is important." And I should tell my story. I think it's one of the hardest things to get doctors to do.

>> People are fascinated by doctors. You know, I'm a physician, but I remember thinking it's interesting but it's a listen about why people do what they do.

But think about all the books and all the TV drama series and all the movies that have um something related to being a physician as the core of it. And there's lots and lots of examples of that. And I don't think it's necessarily the doctor they want to know about that person's personality, but it's because you get to do something so unique. You're right there. There's no job like it. You're right in the middle of the specific details of somebody's life.

They'll tell you as a physician things they would never tell another soul. Because you're their doctor. And there's this this incredible level of trust that people put in us. You hope it's merited and deserved and that we can be worthy of that kind of uh trust of our patients. But I think people are really interested.

Authenticity and Leaving Medicine Better

And so, even as fellow physicians, when you hear a doctor telling their story and this is why I do what I do, I think there's a power that comes from it cuz it's easy to think I'm the only one that feels this way. How could anybody else be dealing with this? And yet when you ask and you talk to people, doesn't matter even what specialty they're in, there is so much similarity across the spectrum of caring for human beings. And you know, whether it's a surgical subspecialty or a primary care or if you're doing international work, there's just all these themes that run through it. So, I think back to that question about narrative, people love hearing the story of another person. And physicians, I like to hear the story like, "Oh, I'm not the only one that thought that.

That's really interesting." Our legislators, you know, they are interested in what the physicians think. They don't always do what we say, but they're interested in what we're experiencing and what we're seeing because there's nothing quite like it. And so, even though you may think your story is boring or somebody else has already had it and you're just this or just that, none of that is true. You went through something that's incredibly difficult. Most people don't go to medical school or can't get into medical school and then it's a really big uphill climb and you're in it for years. And I've talked to people who have not gone through medical training and they still have no idea how many years that is. And it's a tremendous amount of dedication.

So, when you talk to a physician and you hear their experience, it is really interesting to most people. And I think that giving those people a place to talk and having those voices be amplified is powerful for our profession and I think for our patients to hear it, it's powerful for them as well.

>> 100%. And as you were talking, one of the things that I think, especially for doctors who are not sure if they want to start telling their stories and how and whatever shape or form that takes, however that, you know, if you're going to be on a podcast or however you want to share that, one of the things that I do think makes it so important for us to share it is it does build trust in that physician-patient relationship. When patients see that we are human, when they are able to sort of look at us telling these stories as like, "Oh my goodness, there's a human being in there doing all this amazing stuff." That does nothing but augment that relationship. And so, I think again, a lot of physicians may be, you know, shy or reticent to tell their stories, don't realize how much that bolsters that relationship when they are taking that step sharing that narrative.

>> You know, the other piece of it is we want to do a good job. And I think everybody starts out as a young aspiring medical student, you want to change the world and have all these aspirational statements in your personal statement.

And those are really good. The other thing that helps when you hear these narratives and you hear people like my friend that was donating a year's salary, you hear people that are doing it for these tremendously positive reasons. I

think it helps us to be better physicians. We hear that and you say like, well, that person is dealing with the same kind of challenges I'm dealing with and they're still doing this. And oh, when we hear about someone that maybe would had an unkind patient interaction or the patient perceived it as the person was in too big a hurry or dismissed them, all the negative stories you might hear. It's helpful for us to hear that there is a different way to do this. When I hear so-and-so, the way they treat a patient and how they care for someone and how they create time to do the things that are of greatest importance or volunteer their time or whatever it may be. I think it inspires all of us cuz, you know, we don't want to just speak in platitudes. Want to give people specific examples of this is a fellow physician who works in your same field and this is how they're doing this and look at the tremendous success and personal joy they derive from this. So, I think those stories are more powerful than just telling people about it. Go through and say, this is someone that working in 2026, this is their story. You can contact them and hear if you want to get involved and change your life, do this. I I think that narrative a telling is really powerful, Lee. >> Oh my goodness, absolutely.

It makes me think if every doctor saw themselves as a living story, how would medicine change? >> Yeah, you hope you'd stick with the positive features and not give in to the if You have the bad angel and the good angel on each shoulder. Try to do good.

And because you do want to say, if I had to report to somebody, I would want to say I did a good job. Like I shared at the beginning, a terrible moment of having to recover from a surgery and realizing that I may or may never work again, it was just really impactful to me cuz I did really realize that I wanted to be a physician. I didn't want to leave this group of healers who do nothing but help other people. That doesn't mean doctors are perfect or that we get everything right every time or anything like that. But there's nobody else that has that degree of training. And so we have to do what we can to protect the lives and the well-being of those healers rather than burn them out and say you hit your fine number, you're 45, get out of here. We need people that have that depth of experience to stay in medicine and find a way to be relevant and find a way to find joy in what they do. And like I said, it's been a really wonderful experience for me to be involved in.

>> Oh, it's amazing what you've done and how you've been able to bring your life experience into this work of being able to create this platform people to tell those stories. It's beautiful what you do, Peter. It really is.

>> Oh, thank you. >> If you could think of one word that defines great storytelling, what would it be? >> Authentic is the word that comes to mind. And I know that's kind of a buzzword in 2026, but I think it really does mean something to people. We don't like stories that are just platitudes or somebody's, you know, Instagram perfect life. You want to see, hey, this is a person like me. They have struggles just like I do. And you realize after a while when you talk to people, everybody's broken in some way. There's nobody that has it figured out. And you all just get to live a few decades on this life and you hope you make them good ones cuz you're only going to be around for so long. Right now in 2026, this is our time to carry the baton. We are the doctors of this time. And one of the themes of my podcast is to try to leave medicine better than we found it. And we do that by empowering doctors and making lives a little bit better for the physicians and do things better for our patients. But after a few years will go by and we'll pass that baton on to the next generation. We want to encourage the best and brightest to become physicians and we want to be able to leave it just a little bit better than we found it. So that authentic self and when people describe that, their own personal lived experience, that is really powerful and inspiring for most people who listen.

>> Absolutely. Peters, thank you so much for being here. Thank you for the work that you do on Doctors Making a Difference. I love your podcast. I listen to it and I do get inspired. It's one of those things I can listen to and if you're not having a great day and to listen to these stories and you do really start to resonate with these people who have found joy in practicing medicine. And like you said, this is our time. This is our time to be in this system and caring for the people that we are honored to care for. And hopefully be able to have a generation that comes behind us that will feel just as blessed if not more so than we do. >> Yep, thank you so much Lee. I'm similarly inspired. I love the work you're doing. I think conflict management, narrative medicine, I mean all that stuff is really important to talk about and the more we talk about it, the more people will do it and I find your podcast also inspiring. So, thank you for what you're doing.

>> I appreciate that Peter. Thank you so much. For all of our peaceful warriors who have joined us today on the

Scalpel and Sword podcast, thank you so much for being here. If this podcast has resonated with you, please like it, share it, give it to a colleague and also share with them Doctors Making a Difference. Encourage them to listen to the podcast. And until next time, be at peace.

>> [music] >> Every episode is an invitation to speak, to negotiate, to choose. [music] I'm Dr. Lee Sharma. Join the dialogue by subscribing [music] to Scalpel and Sword. Until next time, peaceful warriors. May your choices [music] be sharp and your voice be even sharper.

This podcast is a reflection of lived experience and research in conflict resolution. The Scalpel and Sword is not intended as medical or legal [music] guidance. For personal matters, please consult a qualified professional.