Ep66 | Holding the Calm with Hesha Abrams Transcript

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upwork.com. >> If you work in healthcare, you already know this. Conflict is everywhere. In the O, 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.

Introducing Conflict in Healthcare

We learned procedures. [music] We learned diagnostics. But we didn't learn how to navigate the moments when cube professionals strongly disagree. That's why I developed the spark framework. >> [music] >> Spark stands for stop, pause, ask, don't assume, reflect, and response, and create a path forward. It's a practical system designed specifically for highstakes healthcare [music] environments.

Through keynote talks, residency workshops, and spark master classes, I [music] teach physicians, nurses, and healthcare teams how to turn destructive conflict into productive conversations [music] that strengthen teams and improve care. If your hospital, residency program, or medical conference is looking for a speaker on conflict, communication, and leadership, and 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 [music] well, it can make teams stronger, in every operating [music] room, in every ward, in every clinic and every team meeting. A silent battle bruise conflict negotiation identity. Welcome to the scalpel and sword podcast where I, Dr. Lee Chararma, physician and conflict analyst, explore the hidden negotiations beyond modern medicine. Let's trade burnout for boundaries and learn the art of healing with precision [music] and power.

Hello, my peaceful warriors, and welcome to the Scalpel and Sword podcast. I am your host, Dr. Lee Chararma, physician and conflict analyst.

Dr. Chararma's Resident Conflict Story

And I have this very clear memory of being a secondyear resident in obstetrics at Park Memorial Hospital in Dallas, Texas. And I was busy getting a patient ready for a cescareian section. And of course, I needed to make sure anesthesia was in the loop. Anesthesia was having a challenging day themselves. And as a result, I got angry. And I did not realize at that point because I hadn't had any kind of experience or training in conflict or conflict management that was probably not only not a good way to help get the patient taken care of. It didn't create the conditions necessary to have the best outcome for all involved. And it wasn't until much later when I started studying conflict that I understood and am continuing to understand how important it is to create a climate that is conducive for conflict resolution. And I can't think of anybody better to help us learn about this than our guest today. I am so excited to welcome Hessha Abrams. Hesha is a master at turning high conflict into amicable resolution and resolving delicate matters with diplomacy and skill. She is renowned for her success in resolving complicated and high risk disputes from corporate disagreements to political conflicts. She has resolved literally thousands of high-profile or difficult matters including mediating the case over the secret recipe for Pepsi. I would love to get into that by the way.

She has worked with Google, Amazon, Facebook, IBM, Verizon, Apple and other large multinational companies.

She is the principal of Hessha Abrams Mediation and she is also the author of the book Holding the Calm. Hesha, welcome to the podcast. Thank you so much. to everybody listening, you know, because this the conflict is like having a root canal without anesthesia or a colonoscopy without anesthesia depends on which end you're going from.

[laughter] So, the fact that you are all listening wanting to get a few there, >> God bless you. And I think this is such a big thing in medicine. You know, we are by nature conflict avoiders. If you look at Thomas Kilman in the health care profession, 25 to 30% of us are avoiders and another 20% are accommodators. We are not good at it. And so anytime we are in these situations, we tend to run away. We tend to just put our heads in the sand. And I think that's why the work that you do is so important because you're actually showing us how to create a really good environment, which makes it more likely we're going to get what we're looking for in terms of resolution and outcome. What convinced you? What was the first time that you really had the light bulb that holding the calm was actually something that we could learn to do? >> Oh, goodness gracious. That probably came from years and years of practice. And one day I went, "Whoa, this really works." And I want to comment on something you just said when you said basically a little over half of you are more gentle souls. And that's what I say. You're nice people. You're gentle souls.

Hesha Abrams on Holding the Calm

Someone who likes conflict, who enjoys arguing, they may be super skilled at what they do, but man are they hard to work with and difficult to be around. And I have dedicated my life.

I've been doing this my entire career to being a peacemaker. And I think that I probably in a past life was an old warrior because I'm tough. You have to be tough. You can't be win-win problem solving. Hey, that works between two accommodating people with low stakes. That works. Okay, that's great. What about all the other times? And that's really why I wrote this book because I've been doing this now for what? Turn it that way. so long that I thought other people need to have some quick tips because you're not all going to go get a master's degree in conflict resolution. You're not going to do thousands of cases. You just need a couple of quick tips to handle the jerk that you got to deal with tomorrow. Whether it's your brother-in-law, your neighbor, someone at work, the chief surgeon, the CEO of the hospital. I've done a lot of hospital cases, a lot. I understand the admin. I understand ego and politics and in the end what I tell people is it's just ego. We are giant meat suits doing bumper car egos into each other. I really don't care how educated you are, how old you are, where you come from. It's all the ego. And once you learn some of these tricks that I really want to share today with great specificity and then that's again what I did in this little thing is life just becomes easier because you're not panicked your amydala doesn't trigger with oh god you go oh okay I do this okay or oh I try that okay now the panic subsides then you're more skillful it's literally as simple as that and that's really what holding the calm is not being calm and zen like No, it's not.

It's you being the grown-up in the room, not reactionary and losing your cool and we lose our cool because we don't know how to get what we want done or someone's trying to push us and we bounce up against each other. So, that's why I'm excited to do this today and be able to share some of this with your wonderful listeners. >> Oh my goodness. And I love how you talk about this because I think this is one of the thing that scares people about conflict is, you know, as you're talking about all the different forces we encounter during the day, administration, time demands, economic demands. I mean, there's so many things, so many forces we're dealing with in healthcare. And I think sometimes it's tempting for us to say, I can't deal with conflict because I'm scared of it, but I also can't deal with conflict because I don't understand it. And so when you start breaking this down to something as simple as we're a bunch of meat suits that are bumping egos, it really starts to make it something that sounds more approachable, right? Because if we're actually just talking about this is literally what it is, guys. And you said something also really interesting that this is not two accommodating people in a low stake situation. We are not two people playing tiddly wings just for the fun of it. we are talking about unfortunately many times life and death situations when it comes to patient care and so the idea that it's even more important for us to learn these skills it's not less so it's actually way more vital for us to learn the things that you're teaching >> so why do really intelligent people because for the most part people who work in healthcare really pretty intelligent people why do intelligent people become irrational why does the amydala take over in conflict for because you're a human being. That's why that's the simple basic answer. And so I have this theory. I've been doing this now 35 years. I've done probably very close to 10,000 cases. I see the same patterns over and over and over again.

And so I have a theory that everything comes down to power. I'm trying to make you do something you don't want to do. You're trying to make me do something I don't want to do. You're not listening to me. You're pushing me. I'm not getting my own way. That simple dynamic, I guarantee you, is at the root of all conflict. And then depending on your skill level, your assertiveness level, your anger level, your exhaustion level, there's fear. And oh god, what if you make me do that? Oh god, what if you won't do that? Like in the example you used with a woman that needed a C-section and you can't get anesthesia, they're like, do what you want. Minutes count. It's something like that. And so your fear actually acts as a motivator to the amydala to say I'm doing the right thing freaking out here because if I freak out and lose my stuff, people will listen to me. And everybody comes from this with whatever has happened in their childhood because we all create adaptive structures. What worked for you? Screaming and yelling, crying, running away, pouting, passive aggressive, aggressive aggressive. What thing did you unknowingly unconsciously adopt? And most of us basically that's the MMO, right?

Why Conflict Becomes Irrational

Unless you examine it and say, is that the best for me now with my power level, with my skill set, with my knowledge base? Maybe that's not the best way I want to be able to handle it. So, it's just a habit. And we all know habits change within 21 days of consistent use, blah blah blah. So that's why literally when I did this thing in the book, it's 21 chapters designed to match what the learning curve is of the human brain. And I spend a lot of time in neuroscience. I probably know enough to be dangerous in it. And I find it fascinating how people think, what they do, what motivates somebody, what doesn't. And can I share just one quick story?

>> Yeah, absolutely. Daniel Conaman is a knowologist. >> Thinking fast and slow. >> You got it. You got it. And that was very good that book. But everything he wrote really can be distilled down to one. I'm a big believer in DNA. Everything is great. You're a man, you're a woman, you're black, you're white, you're Asian, you're old, you're young. Distill it all down. It's DNA. It's two lungs, two kidneys, a liver, right? And this is just what the meat suit is. And one of the things that he did and when he won a Nobel Prize in this in economics is that everybody thought it was Adam Smith's rational man. We make rational decisions. We're intelligent. We look at the facts and the information. No. Absolutely freaking not. No. And what's more important is that 80% of us are trying not to lose rather than trying to win. So think about that. We've been sold win-win problem solving is this great panacea. It's not. It's garbage. It really is.

And it's like the thing dour and it works low stakes. It works when everybody agrees and we can talk about it. That's great. That's 20% of the time, 25% of the time. Let's be generous. What about the other three quarters of the time when I hate you and I don't trust you or we're so different and I'm an introvert. You're an extrovert. You're a big picture. I'm a detail. Just those small little things are enough to just make us go caddyywamp us off the rails. But if you start looking at any complex situation and think it's not that they're trying to win, it's they're trying not to lose.

Complete paradigm shift. Complete. Now the fear drops down because now I'm aware of your fear. If you're trying not to lose, then fear is motivating you.

You don't want to look bad. You don't want to look stupid. You don't want to make a mistake. You don't want to be pushed so that you do make a mistake.

Now I have more tools when I look at it that way. And honestly, the big ego obnoxious orthopedic surgeon, neurosurgeon types, it's exactly true for them as it is for the meek little girl in the back of the thing just trying to help and save her jaw. It is exactly true because it's a human experience. That's what's so effective about this is once you understand that I don't need to understand the buyer's braggs and all the complicated I don't have to do any of that you can I have to because in my world I'm a professional at this but if you just want to get better at it let's go for some quick and dirty things everybody to just make you better today right now 100%. So, one of the things that you said that I think is really hard, especially people in healthcare, but I think maybe for all of us in professional realms, is the idea that we're still just human. Even if we're playing these parts, even if we have titles, even if we have rules, we're still just human and we're going to react in this way. But I absolutely agree with you on this idea, especially when you get clinicians in conflict with each other. You are getting into this right and wrong. I'm right, you're wrong. I win, you lose. And so that does contribute absolutely to this power dynamic because then we start bringing in identity. I've been doing this longer than you have. My specialty is harder than your specialty. I see more patients

than you do. My patients are sicker than yours. All of the things that we use to bolster that identity leads to bolstering power. And so the more we start to drill down on that, the more we start to actually intensify the conflict. So, how do you get people to walk from winning and not losing? How do you get people to see that those are two completely different things and make that paradigm shift?

>> So, you usually don't say that to people. This isn't an educational podcast, so people are listening to it, but in the midst of a scenario, you're angry, you're upset, your amigdala is triggered, and we all know when the amydala is triggered, the prefrontal cortex goes dark. You don't think, you don't have logic anymore. You don't explain anything. You want to stop the train from running. And what happens is that we statements. We don't ask questions.

Asking Questions to Defuse Tension

Just immediately number one just start asking questions because if you ask questions, the other person number one feels automatically respected. >> Amda calms down, doesn't it? Yes.

>> And you need amigdala. I can't talk to you if your amydala is crazy. There's no point in doing that other than me holding you and going, "Oh, poor baby.

the old poor baby. There's nothing that can be a couple. But what's interesting because neuroscientists have, you know, shoved people in MRIs and freaked them out and watched the brain and the amydala work. The amydala, if it's triggered and then not re-triggered, guess how long that cortisol bop goes?

20 minutes. >> That's it. 20 minutes. So, it's not a long time. So, you just calm down yourself. Hold the calm yourself. start asking questions. Why is that important to you? Now, you don't make it uh third degree. Well, what experience you have that justifies that explanation?

You're a human being, >> right? Why do you think that's the best way? Have you considered other options? Do you have experience with other options? Do you think we should bring in a consult with somebody else? Like with your anesthesiologist example, you can't get here for the next 30 minutes. What are the barriers in your way? what's preventing you from doing it? Maybe I can help remove those barriers. >> Completely changes the tone. And what happens is that when the amydala gets triggered, it's friend or foe. You're foe. You are not friend. You start asking questions in a gentle way. Maybe you're friend. Maybe. Let me see. Maybe. And it starts to calm down. Then you can start talking about what you think as well. Have you considered? I've had really good success with this. Do you think we should try it? Now, I can say, "You're an idiot. You're a resident. I'm the lead. I know what I'm talking about.

We're going to do it my way." You can do that. You can, but there's consequences to that. So, why not learn this other way, which gets you exactly to the same place. And maybe it takes four minutes longer. Maybe.

>> But then people don't walk around going, "What a jerk. you can't get anything done with him or her or geez drama queen or whatever it is that they say right about those barriers about that as a difficulty of getting stuff done being known as a person that's difficult to work with that's miserable and if you do this kind of stuff then no one's going to say oh my godly you know how to hold the calm no they're going to say you just get stuff done >> I don't understand how you do that. Everyone just likes you and you need to get stuff done. >> And I quite frankly I'm all about results. When Google hires me or a big hospital hires me to get something done, they don't want to feel your feelings and know that you feel okay. They want the darn thing done. Okay? So, you've got to be resultoriented. So, this is not kumbaya let's all feel good together stuff. No. [laughter] No. This is real life. Let's get this sucker resolved. Okay. This is so awesome and there's so much I want to talk about. Okay. So, one of the things you just talked about in this idea of using questions as kind of the door that openings this place to getting results. This is one of the themes in the book. This idea that curiosity is more powerful than certainty. The idea that when we are curious, when we are asking these humble questions, that we are getting into a place that the person across from us, they can let their guard down. they can actually have that space. We can have this conversation. But there's something else that you said in here, too. Because I want to do a big circle around this. I think a lot of the idea of, oh, we're all going to be holding hands and happy after this is done is still this concept of we want to try to preserve

relationships in the course of resolving a conflict. And what preserving relationship may look like is that since I have expressed curiosity to you and I'm asking you a question and all of a sudden you're buying into my process that the next time we have a conflict because we will the next time we have a conflict maybe we will get to this space of calm and getting results because that's what this is about actually getting a result a little bit faster than we did the first time. >> You're right. And what I'd like to offer to our listeners, because people are saying, "Oh, that's hard or this or that." I want to do the advanced course. What if I hate you? Okay, >> what if you're a liar? What if you cheated me? What if you screwed me out of blah blah blah blah, whatever. I mean, let's do the advanced course here.

This is what real life is when we do that. >> Or let's say that you're a quieter, more introverted person and the other person is flailing emotionally vomiting all over the place.

But what do you do? How do you handle that? They can't even handle asking a question. That was in regards to like with the analogy you did of the two doctors saying, "I want to do it my way." Right? Well, let's say you get somebody who's just freaking how do you handle them?

Validating Emotions and Building Rapport

Never in the history of calming down has anyone ever calm down by being told to calm down. Just think about that for a moment. And we all do. Every once in a while, I even fall it. Calm down. Calm down. Oh my god, it's like putting oil on a fire. If I could calm down, I would. Clearly, I have lost control. Clearly, I am disregulated and I can't. So, pointing it out to me doesn't make me cal. It makes crazier, >> right? So, this is the trick for everybody in the that is just so good. I have a whole chapter on it called Vox.

Validate, understand, clarify, summarize. It's a four-part thing that you can do literally in five minutes to get to the essence of instead of saying what's wrong, what's wrong, >> this is a better way to do it.

>> Number one is validate. Now, it's hard to validate somebody who's losing their stuff, >> right? It's just very hard to do. So, you know, a cheap low rent form of validation is naming the emotion.

>> That's it. Wow, you're really angry. I am not angry. I am frustrated. Okay, you're really frustrated. Tell me about it. >> One, two, boom. See how fast that was? And that's how it h and you don't get don't tell me what to do. And who do you think you are? And you know, all that kind of garbage. Name the emotion. You seem really sad. I'm not sad. What are you feeling? A little depressed. What's going on now? What does your amydala say? Friendo. >> See how easy it is?

So name ocean is a spectacular trick and it's part of this fourp part thing that I've got in the book validate understand clarify summarize that's a problem solving technique but the naming the emotion thing is a standalone baby I mean it's a standalone baby that can work anytime anywhere at Thanksgiving dinner with that crazy uncle who won't shut up right now let me give you another just a correlary of that because I think about this with the crazy uncle at Thanksgiving You know the guy that either is so stupid stuff >> or he's smart enough to know he's getting your goat and he's just doing stuff to push your buttons. Either way, right?

>> This is what I do. I turn and I look at him and I smile and I say, "You know what I admire about you?" >> What? What? You could hear a pin drop. No one is going to say a word, much less the loudmouth blabbermouth who's taken over the meeting or over the dinner or whatever. You know what I love about you? You know what I respect about you? You know what I admire about you? Those are sentence stems that you have right here, right? Like we're like snakes with like things in our jaws, right? That is right [laughter] there. They want to hear what you have to say. Now all of a sudden you are the most important person in the world and then you say something valid, true. You're so convincing. You have such strength of conviction. You're so passionate. you're so interested in trying to do the right thing, who cares? What difference does it make? People will say, "Well, I don't know how to validate him or I think nothing good about this person." And I say, "Would he pull your kid out of a burning car?" Yeah, there's something redeeming there. Right now, maybe I'm saying he she is a low skill set. That's what I look at. When people are vomiting all over the place, it's just immaturity and a low skill set. They just don't know any better. And so what would you do to a 5-year-old screaming and yelling? They just don't know any better, right? So that's

what you have to do. So the way to do it, though, is a 5-year-old, you pick up in your arms and you go like that. What do you do with an adult? >> Yeah. You know what I admire about you?

Boom. Now, there may still be the problem solving piece that has to be dealt with, but the animus around it that's contaminating the radioactive circle, the radioactive decay, you calm that sucker down. Look at 30 seconds. How do I do that? I walk into a case with, let's say, Google or Amazon, and somebody says, "I want $500 million." And Amazon says, "Here's 5,000. Go away." Right? How do you always settle that? It's not with logic or reason or rationale being smarter. It's this stuff to get past all the fluffy garbage down to what is the real issue. And now we just problem solve. We problem solve. All solutions.

>> All problems are just solutions to be found. But we can't find them because we make ourselves crazy. So we got ourselves calm. So, one of the things that I love about this idea that you are validating people's emotions, and I want to really make sure we got to really take time on this because I think this is such a valuable to you for clinicians, especially if you are in a situation with a patient. I have done this several times where the patient's clearly upset with something and it's like, I can see you're really upset about, "Oh, no, I'm not upset. I'm frustrated." Like when you said that, I have actually heard that come out of somebody's mouth before. And it's like, okay, you're frustrated. Tell me what you're frustrated about. And then all of a sudden, you have brought that room down and you do have that person willing to actually interact with you. So in the book where you have this, this is one of those things that everybody medical student, resident, intern, physician, if you've been doing this for 20 or 30 years, that is one of the greatest things I have ever heard. So we're definitely going to put the book in the show notes, but I also want to make sure that we put that chapter in the show notes because that's something that, like I said, people can actually walk away and they can use tomorrow. I love that so much. every single bit of that.

I'll tell you that's why Schwar little chapters you could read it all the way through. I mean, it's a two-hour book, 15 bucks on Amazon. I purposely did that cheap and fast and easy so they can get it.

Using Calm Skills in Real Time

You can flip that and just go, "What's that? What's that?" to anything and get one technique and say, "Huh, I'm gonna try that one today. I want to see how that works." >> And the thing is like with the patient that says, "I'm not angry. I'm frustrated." The labels are irrelevant. They are emotionally vomiting. They are emotionally out of their comfort zone. They're sad. They're angry. They're frustrated. They're scared. People usually don't want to admit, "I'm scared. I'm sad." It's easier to be angry or frustrated. So, absolutely. >> Okay. But you know what it really does when you do that? There's a little switch right above your heart that you flip on. I call it give a darn meter. >> Okay. And when you take seconds to literally say, "I see you. I see what you're going through. Maybe I can't solve this, but my give a darn meter is turned on." I'm telling you guys, that's medicine. People will say, you know, because I've done a lot of hospice work. I've helped a lot of people die. I've done hospital chapency work in hospitals. So, I've done a lot of this stuff. You can't fix a lot of things. You just can. >> But you can care. You can act like you care. You can act like you see them and that you're not crazy because you're going through what you're going through. You're not crazy because you're feeling what you're feeling. That, my friends, is Prozac right there. [laughter] So, as you've taught people how to hold calm, how to actually get themselves in a place where they can be calm enough to have these conversations, to ask these questions, to create this understanding.

Do you feel like that's contagious? Because you had talked about earlier, it's like the people who are around you who see you using these things, they're not going to say, "Oh, look at you holding the Kong." That's not what they're going to say. They're going to say that how effective you are at your job, how environments change around you. So, you definitely feel like that's something that's contagious. >> You are completely correct. And I go to the DNA on everything. The reason is because neuroscience has proven I think at this point I think we're up to like 127 biases. And what's so interesting is the bias of reciprocity is very strong in about 85 to 90% of us.

you have 10% that are kind of, you know, I don't care about you at all. Okay? I can't fix everybody. But for the 85 90% of us, there's a bias of reciprocity. If I do something for you, you don't want to be in my debt. You want to do something back for me. So, if I listen to you first, you kind of sort of want to listen to me. And now I'm friend, not oh, and it's a pure neuroscience thing.

just forget it. Cuz some people will listen to this and say, "Oh, well, it's being manipulative." Well, if you're evil and you're twirling your mustache and you're, you know, manipulating people to get what you want, that's not ethical and good. Okay. And, you know, people do that. That's what used car salesman kind of a thing. But this is listening to people. This is I see you.

And right now, nothing else exists in the world but you. and what's going on for you is important and it matters. And that takes me five to 10 seconds to fully accomplish with you and you get an hour of medicine out of it. And what does it cost me to do? I do it all the time in my personal life always. And I just blow through stuff and people say, "How do you do that?" And like I don't remember that person's name. And someone will say, you know, I'll get a call and say, "We had a case. Something happened and you helped me with my kid and it was miraculous." I don't even know who you are. Because that's just how I choose to flow through life. And that's what I'm saying to people here. Choose to flow through life with a little more grace and a little more elegance and a little easier. This is sort of like Basset Tracer or Baseline on the railroad tracks of life. Oh my god. Baset tracing on the railroad tracks of life. That needs to be on a poster in every doctor's office. I'm actually probably going to take some bath tracing to work tomorrow and put it on my wall. Just take the tube on my wall. So, I think this is really important because you talked about this that this whole process takes a few seconds. It doesn't take long to be able to do this to use these techniques you're talking about in holding the calm. It doesn't take long. And I think one of the biggest roadblocks to clinicians using these kind of things regularly actually employing these kind of things in their daily lives is we really do think we are so busy that we don't have time to do this. And the sad part about it is yeah, the not having time to choose to flow >> to not thinking we have time to put some Vaseline on the guard rails of our daily schedules and our daily lives and especially our interactions, our professional and personal interaction is we don't realize that not putting the baset on, not choosing to flow, not holding the calm has short-term and long-term consequences. The patients that we don't do this with that are clearly angry because we can be avoiders choose to say like I know she's angry but I'm scared. I don't want to have this conversation. And so you have a patient who's visibly angry that you're not choosing to meet and actually have this conversation with. And that may be the patient that turns around and sues you. You may choose to not do this with your spouse or your child. And you know, your spouse is clearly upset with you.

And I love this, by the way. I love the emotional vomit analogy. I think such a perfect visual, but they are emotionally vomiting all over you. >> We've already had a hard day at work, and so we don't want to deal with it.

We're going to go walk away. We're going to sit by ourselves. We're not going to deal with it. >> Our children are visibly very upset. And that affects us profoundly, emotionally, but we don't know how to have that conversation without getting upset ourselves. So, what do we do? We don't have the conversation at all.

Making Conflict Skills a Daily Practice

How do you help people understand that spending the five or 10 seconds to hold the calm to ask the question to validate the emotion? How do you show because you have to do this all the time with what you do? How do you get them to understand that 10 seconds may mean 10 years? >> You said it so beautifully. Let me give a gross visual because I find that gross visual help on these things. Think of a huge morbidly obese man sitting on a junky sofa that's boowing underneath him with bags of chips and ho and Twinkies and whatever rappers all around him saying, "I don't have time." >> You're all healthcare professionals, right? I don't even have to tell you more than that.

>> That's analogy number one. Analogy number two is flossing. Any of you are dentists or married to dentists or you go to the dentist a lot? The first thing they're going, "Are you flossing?" Flossing is the number one thing that stops disease. And we know that the bacteria in the gums can cause heart attacks. We know that. So flossing is the number one thing, but I'm too busy.

I'll brush quickly and get out of there because the extra minute and a half to floss is too much work. So I explain this what we're talking about this holding the calm stuff. If I had thought about that analogy first when I wrote the book, I might have called it human flossing. This is flossing. Yeah. That's what this is. >> And you do have the time. What you don't have the time for is big huge ugly conflicts >> or people that want to talk to you or being called down to HR or not getting what you need or all the other little things that accumulate around the little tiny things. Now I I

have to always be honest too with people. Will it take you a little longer in the beginning? Like any skill? Of course it will. It's a skill. You're learning it. Then you get it. And then say to yourself when you walk out of that patient's room, you know what? I was in there for 6 minutes.

Can I do it in three? I'm going to give a challenge to myself. That's what I started doing. I'd be listening to my world. It's longer. So I'm have to listen to someone for an hour just verbally vomit and vent. I went, can I cut it in half? Can I cut in half again? Can I still get 90% of the results with a fraction of the time? And it became a game to me. And I kept doing it more and more and more until I'm real good at it. If I choose to stay longer, it's because my give a darn meter is on and that person's lonely and I have some time and so I'm going to spend some more time with. But if I don't have time because I got to go room to do whatever it is I have to do, I'm good with 85 to 90% efficacy. I really am. How quick can I do it? Then it becomes a game. How fast can I do it? How better can I understand it? Your marriages will be better. Let's put this way. I'm 67. I have a fantastic relationship with my husband and my adult children and my grandchildren. And there have been times when they'll say, "Oh, God, Nana, don't give me that mediation garbage. Just tell me what to do." Right? And I go, "Okay, okay." If you practice it, it's a basset tracing through life, guys. It's just easy. I love your idea like that. Who was that crazy artist that taped a banana on the wall and then somebody bought it for a million dollars? You could take some surgical tape and tape some trac opener. It's the baset on the rails of life. I flow. I glide through life. It was one of those. What is it? Someone told me, "Horses sweat, men persspire, women glisten, >> women glow." >> But I'm laughing a lot. >> I make it fun. And I say this to everybody. I had a horrible childhood. So, lots of therapy. Lots of therapy.

Okay? And so now I laugh all the time. I find everything funny. I'm joyful because I choose to so that I'm happy and I'm full. So I have room for you.

And then because you're not giving me grief and aggravation and misery and I know how to turn your you didn't do this into oh I'm happier. I'm cleaning up less verbal vomit all day long. So in a way it's extremely selfish getting good at this kind of stuff and learning these secrets and like that's why you and I called it the secret learning these secrets.

>> Yeah, >> it's weirdly a little selfish because it makes you better for you. >> Everybody else is just the beneficiary. >> That's really the way to look at it. That's so beautiful. And I think that's a really important message for people in healthcare and caregivers in general is the idea that doing these kind of things, learning these secrets, you are doing it for you, other people benefit from it, but you're doing it for you. I think it's really important people to hear your message about having laughter and the idea of laughter making it easier for us to make space for other people. I think definitely in healthcare and I will freely admit this is something I work with is taking everything in myself too seriously and so at the end of the day you take yourself too seriously and what are you you're exhausted at the end of the day and I think it's really good my husband I always say this first thing my husband says to me every day before I leave the house I kiss him goodbye and then he always says to me remember to laugh it's what he says to me every single morning remember to laugh and I love it that you're saying that That's so beautiful.

>> It's very cool. >> I want to say something else about what you just said about this idea of how fast can I do this. if we have people who are listening who want to do these things and feel like they don't have time and I think you've made a great case for you have 10 seconds you have time you can do this is the idea that we can turn this into a skill set that we are literally I want to see how quickly I can do this because I think anytime you give a challenge to a doctor or a nurse we're going to take that challenge you want me to do it faster okay >> I'll take that challenge you want me to do this case faster Okay, you want me to see this many patients in this amount of time? I can do that. So, I love the idea of as you are challenging yourself and using these skills that people can actually say, "All right, I did this in five minutes and that was awesome. I had a great outcome and the patient's happy and I'm happy. Can I do it in two and a halfs?" You really can benchmark yourself in that way, but what you're actually doing is you're fine-tuning the skill. >> Good for you. Well said. And look, life's hard and especially in healthcare. My god, the consequences are hard. You know, in sales, all right, you make the sale. You have very serious jobs and if you don't find ways to laugh and lighten the load, you're going to burn out. And first of all, it's not right and it's not fair to you guys who do so much work. So, if you make it a goal every day to laugh and be aware of it. So, at the end of the day, how much did I laugh today? What did I do?

Sometimes I listen to music in the car. Sometimes I listen to comedy in the car. And I find things funny. And then

this is the other piece too. When you laugh, when other people talk, what are you? A great audience for them.

That feeds their amydala.

Finding Joy, Resources, and Closing Remarks

They think you're awesome because you think they're great. And then what had happened out of it? I laughed. I mean, look at this podcast. How many times I've laughed, you've laughed. We're talking serious stuff. Conflict. We're talking about conflict. Trust me, my friends. is listening to this, you are too good. If you're listening to this, you are a good person who really wants to get better and get skill set. You don't deserve to break. You don't deserve it. >> So, think of as self-preservation for you. And then besides, the more I laugh, I hope as I get older, my wrinkles will go up, not down. >> Oh, laughing is definitely the medicine for so many things. Oh, it's so true. So you we do have a lot of health care people who listen. These are people that are going to go to work tonight. They're going to go to work tomorrow. If there was one thing from holding the comm, if there's one thing that you would encourage them to do when they go into their shift or go into the operating room tomorrow, what would it be? every time to try to find something that inspires all. Find something miraculous because I guarantee you something miraculous is happening every single day around you. I don't care if it's a flower that blooms, that's miraculous. I mean, the fact this little green thing out of nothing blooms into this gorgeous flower, that's miraculous. You know, the fact that so and so showed up for work on time, God bless. Okay. Right? that this room is clean and I didn't even have to ask someone to go in and clean it. If you look for the miraculous, you look for the joy, you're a half full person as opposed to a half empty person. Both are true, equally true, but the half empty person has a harder time going through life. And it's the baset. And I personally love your idea of everybody getting a tube of Vaseline, based Grayson, you know, whatever they want and having it around as a on their desk to say because this is one of the things I tell people too. When you get into conflict, it's logs, it's stuck, there's a boulder, there's quick sand like that. Now, you can try to log your way through it. >> Or we can try to go around it. So focus on what are the barriers that are happening too. And if you train yourself in being light, you will be light. Now, is that hard? You bet. Did I have a lot of therapy to get to that point? You bet. I'm not making this anything easy.

But a thousand mile journey begins in a single step. You start. And that's why I wrote this light little. And I told the publisher, I don't make any money on this. I don't get a dollar a book. You know, like even then it's ridiculous. I wanted it cheap and I wanted it easy so that people could read it and do something today and in the back of the book. The publisher wanted me to do a whole training workbook. I said no I want to give away for free in the book.

So I put it in the back of the book. So all you have to do is get a few people together. You all read the book. You talk over lunch and then what happens is someone will say well I thought that was stupid. And then someone else will say oh I was very inspired by that. Really? Why? Boom. team building, boom, understanding of each other, boom, seeing it in a whole another way and you can get continuing education credit. Just apply through your organizations and get continuing education credit for it, you know. And I'm always happy if people call me. I can do Zooms. I'm happy to do stuff to just help with larger groups to kind of get people jazzing going because people don't know what they don't know. And it's like before we had glasses, we said, "Squint, what's wrong with you? Look harder." Well, how about giving me a pair of glasses? That's what this is. Glasses and dental floss and basset trace. What other analogies did we do today? >> This is great though because I feel like now everywhere I look, if I have my reading glasses there or if I have my basset trace on my desk or I have my dental floss by my sink, I have multiple reminders. number one of how to carry myself.

>> Yeah. >> Of how to choose to flow, but also recognizing that I have this really unique opportunity to create a calm space. I have an opportunity to learn through your book and through this experience of actually telling my amydala to slow down and actually be able to choose a place of calm. I think that's really cool. Hesha, if people want to find you, if they want to get the book, if they have questions about your work, what's the best way for them to find you?

>> Books on everywhere, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, you know, Amazon, I think, has it on sale now for like 12 bucks, something like that. Okay. >> Then I have two web pages. One is holding the calm.com.

I've been on 200 podcasts. All of them are on that website as well as a ton of articles, all free, just free resources.

And if you can get continuing education credit by listening to stuff and doing it, just apply and if you need me to sign something, I'll sign something for you. So this way you can be working on your own skill set involvement. And then my mediation work is heshaabsmediation.com. And that's where I do my highlevel, very intense, big personality, giant ego, huge conflict kind of stuff that you have to laugh because I'm not going to get sucked down into the bowels of despair. No, first of all, just saying bowels of despair makes me want to laugh. >> Absolutely.

>> Oh, and I think I'm on Facebook. My secretary has a Facebook page on holding the comm and I have tons of resources there just for free. Listen to them, read them, do stuff. I mean, and if they're interested in anything, all my contact information is on that. And I'm a big believer in high tide raises all ships. How can we help? How can we make our society better? We can't talk to each other anymore. How can we do that to make it better in my little tiny circle? I do it in mine. You're doing it in your little tiny circle. And if our little circles go together, then we're like cells in a healthy body. See, I did a medical analogy. >> I've got to say, you are borrowing. This is great. It's like we're going to have so many great images by the end of this.

There's no way anybody's going to forget anything they learned today because they've had great visuals to go with it. Hesha, thank you so much. This has been wonderful. >> Pleasure. Thank you everybody for listening and for doing the good holy work you do, you know, healing human bodies. God bless you. >> Thank you. So for all of our peaceful warriors who have joined us today on the Scalpel and Sword podcast, if this conversation resonated with you, share it with a friend, share it with a colleague, and until next time, be at peace.

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