Episode #33 - Transitioning Careers Whilst Retaining A Personal Life - with Jo Hartley Transcript

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Podcast Introduction and Mission

Welcome to the Startup Support Surgery podcast, where we light the entrepreneurial spark in medics and healthcare professionals. Join me, Dr. Jo Watkins, GP, business coach and co-founder of The How People, on a journey to discover where your medical know-how meets the business world.

This will help you find some clarity on how to balance work, passions and family so that you can gain more freedom and control over your life but also continue to help people, which is actually why most of us went into medicine to start with.

Embarking on this entrepreneurial adventure is not easy. It is a roller coaster of emotions, but it's hugely rewarding and exciting in the process. Drawing in on my 20 years of blending medicine and business as a GP, I am here to share experiences, insights and lessons.

Expect lively chats, expert interviews and real life stories from medics who have taken their own path. Let's break free from traditional healthcare norms and explore more innovative ways of making a real difference to people's health and wellbeing, along with paving the way for a brighter future for us as healthcare professionals.

Oh, don't miss my free PDF called From Stethoscope to Startup, which is an 11-page guide in the show notes full of practical help and advice. This is your roadmap to kick-starting your journey with us.

Enjoy the Show. I'm very excited about this episode with Dr.

Introducing Dr. Jo Hartley

Jo Hartley. As you will find out as the show unfolds, we go back quite a long way and she really trusted in me two years ago and I will always be grateful to her for that.

So, Jo is a career and life coach for doctors and a mum of three. After 30 years of clinical practice, she left her career as a consultant in emergency medicine almost two years ago.

She enjoys working in the NHS professional support and wellbeing service and runs a business offering one-to-one coaching and workshops, primarily supporting NHS consultants to build fulfilling and sustainable careers.

In her free time, She loves walks in countryside with her dog Mabel, collecting with friends, spending time with their family and planning their next family adventures.

As I said, Jo was one of my first pilot clients who came on board and I helped her with her website and her branding alongside my virtual assistant, Karina, who has all the skills in that department.

So my interesting fact about Jo Hartley, I have two, one of which we are going to discuss as part of the podcast. She went to seven schools before the age of 16. And as we discussed before we press record, that is definitely something that needs digging into a little bit more.

But what I loved about this random fact is that there's a bit of a story, but you were in the parachuting club at university. Is that right, Jo? Yeah.

Hi, Joe. Oh, thank you so much for having on the protocols today. Yeah, so it is lovely to be here. Okay, so yeah, I was in the parachuting, and those of you who know me, it probably is not necessarily what you would necessarily

first associate with my personality.

I tend to be a little calmer than that. But no, yeah I really enjoyed uni and it was the first time I felt like myself as an individual. And I had some good friends and I went off and did a backpacking trip in Kenya for five weeks at the end of the year.

I mean, goodness knows how my parents let me go off just for five weeks backpacking with some random guy who they clearly didn't know very well because they probably almost definitely wouldn't have let go with him.

And I just, it just opened so many doors. I became incredibly much more confident, much, more myself. So yeah, I fancy joining the parachuting club. That's what I did.

It's not as, you know, I did go off and do some jumps, but it was just great. We used to go up to, so I was at uni in Southampton, we'd go to Salisbury Plain.

There were a lot of weekends when you couldn't jump, there's quite a little jump training. So it's just very sociable and exciting and something that There's an opportunity.

I mean, that's the whole point of uni, isn't it? To do things that push you out of your comfort zone. Absolutely. And the ultimate feel the fear and do it anyway, jumping out.

Meeting at the Conference and Career Transition

Yeah, exactly. Exactly. Amazing. Well, thanks so much for your time here coming to chat to me today. almost two years ago when I started doing this properly.

So should we wind back to that moment when we met and connected? What were you feeling at that time? Where were at? I think we meet at Tom Dillon's conference, didn't we?

We did, yeah. Let's go there and then we'll go back further from that point. Where where we were when first connected. Well I actually saw you on LinkedIn.

I saw a couple of posts, I was aware of you in the background and I knew that you'd done some coaching with Tom and i think that's probably how the the connections linked.

And then we were at Tom Dillon's conference, yes we we're having breakfast and so it was random I just happened to sit next to you I think at breakfast wasn't it?

And we got chatting and and realized that your keen on business coaching and where was I at that point? So I had just left clinical practice So I've done 30 years clinical practice.

I was an emergency medicine consultant for 16 years and I had taken a very brave, very bold and really quite scary decision of leaving clinical practise predominantly for wellbeing reasons.

So, I loved my job. But I just wasn't working for me as an individual. And so I left. I think the conference literally two weeks later. And so I was just tentatively sitting there in that space of wondering what I'm going to do next.

I mean, I am quite lucky. Um, had built an educational portfolio over the previous 10 years or so. So I worked as a program director, head of school, um, and did some national work.

and also I'd started working in the professional support and wellbeing unit with resident doctors in training who need a bit of support along the way.

did have something to step into, so that was medical education. But what it looked like and where it was going, I wasn't quite sure, but it is going to provide a bit of income to keep me over while I decided what I wanted to do.

So we were chatting, weren't we really? And so I met you and that is great. And as that time settled, and I think any time you make a career decision which isn't necessarily what you'd have chosen.

I would have loved to have made it to retirement. That was my goal and I just couldn't get there. After the dust settled, I had that bit of time of recognising what I'd lost and what i needed.

The only real thing in my career that I was missing most was the coaching. i'd done Tom Dillon's course back in 21. Um, i've been working as a trust coach in addition to my educational portfolio.

And I absolutely loved it. And you know, usual NHS kind of, no, we can't keep you on in that because your coach salary is paid for in your SPA time. You know usual kind thing, not enough money to keep me going.

So therefore I couldn't coach. I started thinking that actually I wanted to coach and I want it primarily to offer kind support to people like me. that were going through this kind of thing, because actually I think, you know, going though the coaching course with Tom Dillon, we meet like-minded people.

You recognise that life's journey is not always straightforward. Quite often when people are coming on courses like that, they're looking, there are a bit of a transition.

And I felt I wanted to be in that space offering a big of support, almost like I do with my resident doctors in training, but actually for the wider workforce to work with them.

to give them some time to think about their careers and their lives moving forward. Amazing. And that is what you have done today, isn't it? This is where you're up to.

This the day job now. You've made this happen. Yeah, absolutely I have. So I was really lucky. I mean, that was an amazing connection that morning at breakfast.

and I think you, I thinking about it and then your offer dropped into my LinkedIn mailbox And I offered to be a VIP and that's always a nice offer, isn't it?

Oh, I'd like to a be VIP. And it's a bargain. So all of those marketing techniques got there and I went, Ooh, maybe. But this was in July for me. I had already decided I was going to have the summer off.

so I wasn't sure that that was the right time for.

Building a Coaching Business After Medicine

but another colleague who'd met you, he messaged me and went Oh Joe, this is exactly what you're looking for And I think that's what it was. That's, what I needed.

And, I, think I told you, that I wanted it, even before I spoke to you about it. Didn't I? And then I can remember having a conversation with you as you were packing to go to Canada.

Yeah. and you told me what included, and I didn't really know, but what, knew the offer I was going to get from you was someone to walk alongside me as I started setting this up.

because actually the more I'd looked into it, business was really daunting. I really didn't know what I wanted to do. And you were also at that point sending an offer which actually was website and logo and all of those bits and pieces, which clearly going into a new business, I was going to need immediately and you are going set that up for me.

So, you know, it did what it said on the tin, tick box, got that sorted, had the summer off, and then we met in September to get things moving. Yes, the raised tinted spectacles dropped even further from my eyes and I realized how much I didn't know.

I mean, I really, didn t even know how to have a Google account, how Google Drive, set up my own emails. It was so far back. Massively institutionalized.

And I hadn t really seriously thought about what it entailed at all because I knew you were going to sort that out for me. And we did. But it's a lot, right?

And I think what you've described there is exactly how people often feel. It's that, well, hang on a minute. I need a logo. Let's go back a few steps because before we even bother doing that because that's a wait, right?

You think oh god, what am I going to post? I should post I shouldn't do this I Should do that. So yeah, you it was right at the beginning and I was aware that there were lots of people offering websites logos Business coaching.

I think the record amount of money. Somebody told me they'd spent was fourteen thousand dollars which equates to You know about eight thousand pounds for just the business coaching element and then various packages, you know, three thousand five thousand for websites.

And I thought this is crazy. Actually, it's only when you get going that you can really you really know what you want to do and who you wants to help.

The other thing just to point out that you said in that story that I think is really important for people to hear is that those people that are in business already, what helped you make that decision that he wants to work with me was actually a message from somebody else.

And I bang on about this all the time. All you need is one degree of separation, two, three, four degrees of and somebody else to be able to say to you, actually, this is what you need.

Somebody you trust and you know who says, Actually, This person is really genuine. They're not trying to just sell you something that's not going to Be right for you.

This is What you Need. And as soon as somebody says that that you make that connection and You make That purchase. So from a marketing perspective, this is why it's important to put your offer out there for people to know what You're doing who are in your wider circle, which is something I bang on about all the time, isn't it?

Yeah. Absolutely. And you're right. That's exactly what happened. The fact it was that offer, it's bespoke. It sounded exactly like what I needed. I think at that time, and it has become much more obvious over the last couple of years, but actually I was in a really quite tough place at the time.

So the feeling that I had somebody, an advocate to walk alongside me and navigate what felt quite complicated was really important. You're great, aren't you, Joe?

It was easy. We connected from a medic perspective, you kind of got me, got the things that I was bringing to the table, the perfectionism, it wasn't good enough, lots of trial, all of that stuff.

And the fact actually, although I, to a certain degree, niched because I actually wanted to work with consultants, I had a skillset that helped me work.

I working across the multidisciplinary team as a trust coach, and actually the need is massive. So therefore I wanted to do all of that. But actually very, very rapidly you helped me focus down on my target niche.

And in fact, I've been very lucky, from a business perspective, is that my niche works for me and actually my first one that I hit on was, and I thought about this before, am I lucky?

Because I know lots of people who are going into business do spend a bit of time doing that, but you know what? I've been working in that niche for the last seven years.

I kind of developed that need. That's where my skillset lies. The leaving clinical practice was not an easy decision. It was quite close to burnout back in 2016 and realized that the things were quite tough and I wasn't sure I was going to get to the end of, to, get retirement really.

And so I had spent lot of time working out what I enjoyed, what i needed to do, and what was right for me in life. I'm playing to my strengths really, almost doing what what encouraging other people to craft a career that felt sustainable.

And I got myself through another seven years and I developed some fantastic skills during that period of times, one of which was coaching, another of it was career development.

So during the time I built up that portfolio, I wasn't that far off where I needed to be, I just needed it to clearer about it so I could market it. Yeah, absolutely.

I love that. You've been doing it already, you've gone through that self-coaching process to work out what you want to doing and who you wanna be helping.

And this combination of lived experience, plus I say to anyone that is a hospital consultant particularly, your level of expertise in one area, A and E, an ED at your level, you have so much to give to those people that are that little bit behind you.

And I speak to people all the time that want to leave clinical medicine, and I'd like to just come back to that point, because I work with various people.

A lot of people are still in clinical medicines. There are people who love their clinical roles and they want something to go alongside it. I would say that's predominantly the people I've worked with.

People who are looking to which has another story, but how difficult was it for you to detach yourself from that identity and leave a career that you'd been in for 30 years?

Massive. And in some ways, Jo, I don't think I have. So from the perspective, you know, all my clients are NHS doctors, actually. I'm employed still in my professional support and wellbeing unit.

It's just that the other half of my practice is my business, but my clients are NHS consultants and I work with local employed doctors as well. So I don't think I have, it's that actually I'm allied to it.

Am I in clinical practice? No. But in fact, over the last two years, I really genuinely feel that I've a really important role in supporting doctors to stay and work.

Because if we don' have a workforce, that feels valued and supported and whatever, then we're not gonna have a functioning NHS, and there's not enough investment in support services.

So I've been able to reframe it. Whilst I'm not clinical, it's my lived clinical experience that makes me credible.

Identity, Burnout, and Leaving Clinical Practice

And whilst Tom Dinnon will tell you that you can coach anyone, I'll tell that doctors quite often like to talk to doctors, just as you're seeing in your coach business.

I mean, you I am sure you could coach any one in business, but actually there is a resonation of getting it. There are things that come up as medics. And we really, really do, we are committed to our careers.

I mean, you talked about before, didn't you? And I know you're possibly going to bring it up about the seven schools, but as I talked to you right at the beginning, it's only as, I've started reflecting as my time and my times gone on.

and I got a little bit more to think about what's been going on with me. of self-exploration over the last few years because it has been incredibly challenging leaving.

But actually a lot of my self worth was tied up in my academic achievement. You know, I'd moved from school to school. I wasn't always terribly social.

It took me a while to make friendship groups, but the one thing that continuously sort of supported me was my economic achievement and so my career has always really been the same for me or has felt similar to my worth.

So my careers going all right, my life goes all Now I'm hugely well supported by a fantastic husband and in three kids who I love very much. And, you know, I really lucky that that's a stable big support, but it wasn't enough from a self worth perspective until I started to one pick why and understand the sort of traits that I've got.

Um, and, Yeah, and I think now I'm beginning to come, so I am going to take this into two pieces. One is that journey about leaving. It took me a long time to realise it was there.

Mixed up with menopause for me, lack of self-care, quite close to burnout and actually just not thriving in a system. I quite like things to be in control.

The ED is not the most controlled environment, but the NHS ED environment has just got to the point where actually it's very difficult to deliver the kind of quality care that I wanted to in that situation, and that did not resonate with my values.

And it took me a long time to realize why I was finding it more challenging than other colleagues, because I good at it. It's just that, I used to take it home.

it impacted on my life. I think the writing was on the wall. I had a year or so of really not being very well in work. And I talked to a colleague in working, I remembered, look, i don't want to be that person who's just hanging on to the last minute.

i want jump before i'm pushed. and actually, over about six months or say, realized that i was going to need to leave. But I was lucky. I had this educational portfolio I could step into and that provided a stepping stone for something to go to.

And at the same time, another colleague offered me some education and training in a local trust, and that was something do. So I was able to build work in that period of time to feel like it was safe enough to jump.

I don't think I would have had the bandwidth to have built a business up during that time. The thought of even setting up a never even met. And I think I was running to stand still a lot of the time.

I said I would take it into two parts and I can't remember what the second part was going to say from a journey perspective. But I it's taken me a long time to give.

Oh, I know what it is. Give myself permission to enjoy the journey. I don't feel anymore that I have to do something better. Now, one of those features of burnout is that classic early stage of your burnout, people do more to prove they're good enough.

You know, I had that sort of slight imposter syndrome, the inner critic sitting on my shoulder, you know you're not really enjoying this because you are not great.

So I did more and more, and to proof to myself I was good. And actually what I've had to do now is I, did a little bit of that when I stepped into my new business and I took on lots of clients in the professional sport and wellbeing unit.

I set up a new that actually was a hugely challenging time because I wasn't particularly well resourced going into it

in the first place. And I had not recognized how hard the business journey would be and how much learning and much of those things like perfectionism and all those that you hold secure, you know, your expert knowledge.

We talk about in career theory, we're talking about career capital, and I'd suddenly worked out of one place where I've had a lot of career capital and self-worth tied up in my professional role.

And actually I was then walking into a situation where I, oh, you've left clinical practice, have you? And there was quite a lot of judgment, probably most from myself.

But I spent a long time trying to prove that I wasn't good enough and it was okay. I think this is fascinating and this will resonate with a lot of people and I hear you loud and clear and we were saying before we hit record that I'm seeing a looking into themselves a little bit more, self-reflection, understanding, looking at their past.

And there were two buckets of people in my life. There's one bucket of that are like, oh, why would you want to go and pick that apart? Why would want think about that?

These things happen, and aren't we lucky and move on? And then there's another bucket people that really intrigued about this sort of stuff. For me, I found it I found that self-reflective piece really helpful to understand who I am.

And I think if we're going out there in a world where we are trying to help others, we have to have a really true understanding of who we I want to link that into something that you said at the beginning about, about coaching and having an advocate and have somebody to walk by our side.

I think what I see in medics is that we have this path, right? We have these very linear path into an education system, but mostly along the way this, there's somebody around kind of along way, whether it's teachers, mentors, parents, friends and colleagues and our peers at university.

And then through our junior doctor years, and even when I was doing GP reg training, there was a load of us that did it together. And then I think there's this period of time where everyone kind of settles into these like jobs for life.

You become a consultant, you become partner and then you kind forget to check in about stuff and their normal life takes over and you have kids, whatever.

And there is nobody by your side unless you've got your supportive family around you, great. But from a business, from medical point of view or if you are in business or whatever, your walk of life, you have your appraisal every year where you just like rock up and try and make sure you fill in all the right forms.

How important do you think it is for all medics to have some coaching or how, you know, can you explain to somebody the value of coaching in terms of that advocate and mentor helping you along?

Yeah, I think, there's lots of things about what coaching does, but fundamentally what it does is it creates time in your week where you can sit and think, and it gives you the opportunity to explore things in a safe space.

You know, a coach's job, I don't need to know anything about what you're doing or what's going on for you because my job is to facilitate your thinking.

Why Coaching Helps Medics

And not thinking at a superficial level, it's actually the opportunities to think a bit deeper about, you know why would I like to do that? What it is going to give me?

what direction I'd want to move in? What is it actually I fundamentally want? So many of the people that I have a coaching session with are looking for, oh, I want to go and do another job, or I'm a bit bored with this, where do I wanna go?

But if we can pull some of those layers backwards, often it's about I don't feel like I am using my skills. I do not feel I can be my best person in work anymore, You know, I actually want to spend more time at home with my family, but I can't give myself permission for that because it feels selfish.

Self-care is selfish in the medical world, and it's most definitely not. If you don't look after yourself, how can you look out to other people? And I think it is that recognition that the NHS unfortunately does not look to its staff.

And just because of the workload and the pressures, the natural trajectory in our careers is to work harder and harder And actually the thing that gets pinched, because family tends not to, if you've got kids and dependents that doesn't get pinch, the things that get's pinch is you, your personal identity, you time, Your sense of self-worth and understanding.

So coaching is an opportunity to reset, to regroup and look at what you want to do. And often it isn't big things. A lot of the conversations I will have is about permission.

to look at the hours that you're working and recognize, you know, just reflect. Oh, I'm working every night and every weekend, doing admin. Okay, my hours are only such and such, but I am doing all of that.

And it's permission to take what you need. Permission to make tiny tweaks. They are often really big ones. I think sometimes the word career coach is worrying.

You know they don't want to change career. majority of people I work with don't want to change their career. They love their work they do, they just want get back to doing stuff that they really enjoy.

And it's all that noise around that. It's an opportunity sometimes to develop skills and self-awareness and understanding, the pressure in management and leadership roles with that conflict.

So that's opportunity to talk about. It's that, I mean, think back to when you had a really good educational supervisor during your career. It is a little bit of that.

Its that sort of going, okay, that's interesting. Where are you going now? What are the reasons for that? Um, what do you need next? And so you're getting that opportunity to regroup.

And it may be that you are giving yourself permission to have some better time at work and give more time to your family. you have that urge that's not being fulfilled in your day job.

So perhaps you want to build a business or a niche or focus, or perhaps what you wanna go and do is do pottery and painting because you know what, as medics we had to lose loads of our stuff that was great all along the way.

And actually that the bit that you need to re-energize you. Yeah, so quite a lot of conversations really is talking about energy. What's the good stuff in you day or your week?

what's the stuff that you'd like to get rid of and do a bit more of the good stuff and a little bit less of stuff. Actually, medics love nothing more than having to do that for somebody else.

If you need this in your life, if you sign up to a session with Joe or with Belinda or Katy or any number of amazing coaches that are in my world, just send me a message and I will signpost you because there are lots and lots of great people out there and you sign up for two or three sessions then you have that accountability that that is what you're doing and it's almost like gifting yourself the time like you would do with a fitness trainer or somebody that was helping you organize something you know you allow yourself permission to have time and It's like shining a light on some things that are really obvious sometimes.

And I have friends that have now normalized doing blood results at home in the evening, for example. That's not okay to be doing over and above practically another day's work on top of their full-time job, but it's become normal.

And I think when things are normalized in our lives, we sometimes need somebody else to highlight that. It's not about telling people what to do. You can't tell someone what do because actually, ultimately, and medics are so resourceful, in fact, almost too self-sufficient and self resource.

The present is we don't even give ourselves permission to go off sick quite often. So how are we going to give ourselves permission to have some time to ourselves to do what feels really, really a bit airy fairy in ourselves?

Why do I need to be self-aware? why do i need know any of those things? Often when people seek out coaching is when life's got really quite tough. And in fact, what we should be doing is having a regular review, proactive, tiny steps.

You'd like to talk about this in business, don't you? Small steps are easy, constantly refining. And what I've noticed in the last two years, so I spent my first year building that business.

I had fantastic support from you as a business coach, but also really good support, from Karina to build my logo, to do my website. And it was all done and dusted within about nine months, which was great, But actually it, was really hard work.

and I kind of realized that I'd gone from, in order to sort of prove myself worth and, I would be okay outside my clinical practice. I'd taken on far too much.

And actually I was replaying those same old habits of doing more and more to prove myself and actually, I wasn't spending enough time doing it. So I spent a lot of time this year looking at what I need.

I went on your business retreat and it was great. My vision board, which should all have been about business, was about more self care and time for me and doing things that actually…

I had friends going, oh, you're retiring or something. If you've got time to coffee, I know I'm really sorry, I am really busy. I can't. And so this year I desperately trying and it's still habits of a lifetime.

But my accountability part, as you say, there's a degree of accountability in that. Recognizing and so, you know, and I talk to people and go, are you still not done it yet?

No, have you? Well, yes I have. So I will build it in, or I'll timetable it. This year for me is about enjoying that journey. Okay, I don't need to do any more.

I've got really fulfilling work that I think makes a difference. So it ticks my sense of purpose. It brings an income in, it's great. But actually I am keen to spend more time with my family.

My boys are getting older. You know, at that stage where, well I'm close to being sandwiched like lots of us in regeneration, but I got boys that are beginning to leave.

but actually it is important to spent quality time when I can, they are.

Hard Parts of Starting a Business

They need me to be my best self. And actually, I spent a lot of time not being with them at weekends and stuff because of the the rate I've done. So it's, yeah, trying.

Good work. I know that you have your dog walk every morning. You've just said you're meeting friends for coffee. It's prioritizing that stuff. is really important.

And I have to remind myself all the time. So it's okay to find this stuff hard, but actually we need to do this to look after ourselves. You talked about hard and I want to go back to that because I wanted to talk a little bit about the sort of good things and the flip sides of business.

Talked about it being hard. What are the hardest things that you found? What if we found difficult and then we'll go into what you've enjoyed? What have I found hard?

Okay, so it was like opening Pandora's box, how much I needed to do, literally just the amount of workload. And you encourage us to a small amount every day, but I'd already filled my life up by then with other work.

and actually I couldn't do a little bit every. It was so out of my comfort zone that I didn't like feeling at the beginning. So I felt I should be running before I could walk.

Um, and I thought impatient with myself. I found the fact that it didn't switch off like the rest of my work did, that I was waking up in the morning thinking, oh, I should do a bit on my, there's lots of shoulds.

I shouldn't do it on this. So I do that. And actually it required a different bit of brain. It required quite a creative process, a little bit writing, those logos, all of that stuff, which is so I am not a particularly, interestingly I'm probably more creative than I think I But it's not my, you know, where most of us are left brained.

Most of our medical roles are very linear, tick box, go through all of those things. And I just think some of my preferences are that way anyway. So to sit back and take the big picture and going, what colors would you like to have on your website?

Oh my goodness. Oh, my Goodness. You know how do you do that? Actually, I was quite creative about that. I found a picture I liked and used those colours and it's worked really well.

And you now have a brand jumper, can I point out? Yeah, that was exciting. Well, you know what, Jo? I had my colours done last week. You know, all my friends were having their colours on 20 years ago, but I always too busy to do something like that, so I treated myself to go and have my colors done.

and I'm wearing a colour today and you can all look and see whether… But actually, yes, it is. It's one of my colour. Who would have known? Amazing.

So the creative process, all of that stuff, new things, like say Pandora's Box, there's so much stuff that you don't know is going to be thrown at you.

But what about the good things? I feel sometimes like I spend a lot of time pissing on bonfires and telling everybody how hard it is to run a business, which is not very good, A, for my business or B, people generally.

There are good thing, right? So what have you enjoyed? There's loads of good about it. And some of the things that I got from it, I didn't So you are fab and you get it.

You know when we're being medic in our imperfectionist type left brain heads and trying to tell us that just small steps, good enough, all of that stuff.

And that's really important to have that accountability, that advocacy as you're moving forward. I was not anticipating, and as I started, I wasn't anticipating your e-learning, your modules that you do.

That was fabulous. So for someone like me who actually from a learning perspective, quite likes to have it all out there. Those resources I can move on in my own time.

That was really grounding and that was great. And it starts right back at the beginning. For me, that's actually how I like to learn things. So that it was right to do that.

Interestingly, the website stuff of course was happening far too early. I was doing that with Karina and then having to come back to the begining and I found that quite challenging.

You know, I still find my social media difficult. I'm pretty settled on LinkedIn now because it feels the most

professional of all of them. It was the least out of my comfort zone and I've done some writing for it.

And I think gradually some of the things that I found more difficult, I just organically let grow. Because life goes on, doesn't it? And there are times There've been times in the business where I felt massively energized.

I can move things forward, but there's also times when I've had to park it for a little while because it takes too much out of myself. And I'd been really, really lucky that I have been able to let it grow organically.

One of the things really early on about my niche is I was then able use an opportunity. So whilst I had private clients through my business, actually, I was able to use the discussions I had with you and the opportunity I got from a local trust to do educational workshops.

And I now do coaching for consultants in a Local Trust. That actually is quite a big proportion of my business. I've had income coming in and it's given me people to work with to build up my understanding, my core skill set.

What Worked Well and Growing Organically

And so I've been able to evolve it organically in a way that actually feels very true to myself. And I think you've given me permission for that. So yeah, I it's able be my own journey in way is what I need.

I didn't have time to be honest, to do it full time. Yeah. And that's one of the great things, isn't it? People come into business sometimes for flexibility and freedom.

Initially, it can actually be about creating a job that is even harder than the one that you had because no one else can do it. But ultimately, if you build what you want, which is why even when people come to me quite further down the line, I'm like, right, let's rewind right back.

What is this all about? I started a granola business and nobody ever checked in with me about my values, what I was trying to do, I want to run a business outside being a medic.

I wanna be able to spend more time with my family. You know, wants to be to travel. If somebody had asked me, i would have come out with all of those answers at the time.

And what i was actually doing was creating a monster that required me to employ people and to ran a factory just outside Swansea and never ever go away on holiday.

and to never be with my kids and never even be able to cook them a meal in the oven because it was just full of granola all the time. And it just didn't align.

But no one ever asked me those questions. So by digging into this stuff at the beginning, hopefully you are going to build something that is robust enough to grow with you as you grow and learn along the way.

It's not quick, but it's all possible and it is just an absolute joy to see you two years down the line, which is still early days in business. doing exactly what you wanna do, helping people in the way that you want to help them and living a life that is aligned with you being a mum to three growing boys and actually enjoying what your doing, which it feels like that's the case now, is that true?

Yeah, I think it's predominantly true, isn't it Jo? There are still some of those traits within me that pushes me harder, feels I need to do that, all of that stuff and I have a real tendency overwork, partly because I love my job.

It's really interesting. I did this job on the side when I was an emergency medic and I used to think this was the easy bit of my jobs. Now I bring it into the big part of life and realise that actually the work we do, working with people is tough actually sometimes and it's important to be my best self going into those conversations.

So I'm learning to live. and recognize that I need to re-energize, that, I needed to do that and giving myself

permission to it. It doesn't feel selfish anymore.

it feels a necessity of part of my life. And non-negotiable. Yeah, non negotiable and I was just thinking about this when we were sort of knowing that we're going to be talking today.

What is it? I've worked with a couple of clients recently who've just finished their coaching sessions and they've come to a place of acceptance And I think that is actually quite a comfortable, they're happy with their lives.

They're with what they've doing. And they have done some tweaks from it, but they got to a point where they are comfortably resting. We are all as medics going to drive ourselves quite hard in different directions because that's what we naturally do.

But we are doing it from a position of strength. You know, you are happy what's going on. That's a much, much more comfortable place to be. I love that.

Thank you so much for sharing that before we wrap up. I always ask everybody, you've been brilliant at sharing the highs, the lows and everything in between.

But what would be your advice to somebody in this sort of wanting to go into the business space, wanting start their own thing? What would you be? Your advice?

To your kind of early entrepreneurial self? Well, I think I did it right, to be honest, because I hooked up with you really early on and that actually is what I needed.

I had no idea what, and there's no way I would be here doing what i'm doing now in that comfortable space of growing the business how I want to, if I hadn't been working with.

So I've had that accountability, i've have the skill set and I have that opportunity to move forward. And to honest and not only that, Joe, the thing that I wasn't sure I wanted was the community.

But again, that's that recognition that we're all, it is a tough, It's really isolating to do this by yourself because you are doing something a bit strange, a little bit different from the majority of medics.

So that has been quite self-affirming as well too.

Advice for Medics Starting Out

You've got some lovely people that I have met along that way. And also, there's an element of, you're the business coach and doing it. If I've been taking some time or a break, and you were very supportive when we take time in the break.

but I've been able to go to say to someone, oh, no, I'm just gonna, you know, not gonna do it for a couple of months ago. Yeah, that's okay too. So there's a naughty school kid back at the back of the class as well, which again is really lovely because it's lovely to be a part of a group.

And then also then you've got the wins when you see someone else do something amazing, and so be so proud, so of us all doing it together. I think my three are almost within that.

apart from I think what would I let myself know is just recognize that actually often the reason why you're coming into business is often from a place of challenge.

And actually that journey is far harder than you would anticipate. It's going to be worth it, but it's not going be easy. Actually just be very gentle with yourself.

There'll be good days, there'll days when actually you just need to switch off and put it on a shelf. pocket for a little

while until you're feeling more resourced and ready.

Brilliant. It's going to be worth it, but it isn't going be easy. I love that. That's a great place to finish on. Jo, you've been an absolute superstar.

Thank you for everything and for all your kind words and sharing all of your knowledge and your journey into the future is huge for you, I think. You don't strike me as somebody that's winding down to retirement any time soon.

The next 10 years, who knows what you'll do. Thank you, Jo. Well, thank you so much. I'm very, very lucky to have worked with you. It's been a really, really fantastic part of my journey.

And you're a friend as well as a business coach these days aswell. Yeah, well, the feeling is mutual and it was all over breakfast, which is great. So there we are.

One is exactly amazing what happens over your breakfast. Thanks, Joe. All right, Thank You, Joey. Take care. Bye. I hope this episode has sparked some new ideas or challenged your thinking.

Transitioning from medicine to business is not easy. It's about adapting our skills while embracing the unknowns of entrepreneurship. it can be nerve wracking but remember you are not alone on this journey.

Please feel free to reach out to me via direct message on LinkedIn or Instagram or just shoot me an email at joe at bendylegs.com for support and don't forget to grab the free pdf from the show notes from stethoscope to start up which is your go-to guide and resource for diving into entrepreneurship many thanks for tuning in i will see you next time thanks This has been a Monkey Pants Productions Podcast.