Episode #47 - Discover The Transformative Power Of Kindness - with Rani Bora 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. Today on the podcast, I am joined by the lovely Dr. Rani Bora. Rani brings to us today a refreshing and deeply human perspective to mental health, blending clinical psychiatry with holistic coaching-based approaches that focus on the whole person, not just the symptoms or the diagnoses.

Meet Dr. Rani Bora

In this conversation, we explore what holistic psychiatry really means and how mental health can be reframed as mental wealth and the how people can move beyond survival into clarity, resilience and purpose.

We touch on how Rani and I reconnected over an amazing, spontaneous speech that she gave that was picked up by somebody and sent on to Dave Hyatt at the do lectures, which meant that she came over to West Wales this summer to speak there, Which was a really, really wonderful opportunity for her that.

She took with open arms. This is a super powerful conversation about choice insights and what true well being can look like. And I'm really excited to share it with you today.

And the random fact about Rani, which I'm sure will come up when we talk about it, is that her and her husband not only live together, they work together.

They run a business together and they've been together since they were at school, like super young at. And I just think that's wonderful. So that your random facts.

How long have you been. Oh my goodness, like as partner since medical school, third year of medical, but before that he has been my best buddy for a long, long time.

Oh, that's wonderful. And you literally spend every minute of the day together probably now you're working and living together. Well, he walks away three days a week and I think it's good in a way because then like you like, oh, when is he coming back?

Oh you miss him. I do. Lovely. Well, we haven't had a proper chat, just me and you. We have made a zoom call together. I seem to remember where I was.

So you obviously made an impression. And I. Was I, was on the top of a mountain in a ski hut and we were on a call with a couple of other doctors and, and then I kind of followed you a little bit and something happened this summer that, that I just was like, I've got to get on, a cool with you and talk to you so tell everybody, let's go from the beginning, who you are, what you do, And then we'll get into it.

Right. So I have many roles as a human being, and my main role is a holistic psychiatrist. And I'm also a coach. I've written a book, self-published book.

But it's incredible, I would say. partner, all these different roles. I have got two lovely daughters. In fact, I can go on and on about like, but can I say Joe?

I know this is very, i know I love what you said about let's just go to the floor and what happens but I always knew my daughter, my eldest daughter 20 year old, she would be one of my great teachers because at one point she was just like me, you know, very like focused, I have Indian origin.

So I was like, oh, this is what we do in Indian culture. And obviously, I'm living in the UK. But I struggle with some of her ways of being and so on.

We had frictions until like two years ago. Something shifted. She has been doing her own journey, like inner journey. this morning we were hugging and she was telling me about how deep she sees meditation.

She has been journaling, she has done all her inner work, and I'm so blessed that I have grown up around people who are into personal development. And she's talking about me and my husband.

I was thinking, oh my goodness, I am learning so much from her because she is like I can't believe how she can be so organized.

Personal Growth and Family Transformation

She has been inspiring me in the gym, she has shifted her eating habits, her discipline around her studies, final year of uni. So I have become a student of my daughter.

So I just wanted to say like, when you say, who are you? I said, there's so many roles, but this mother-daughter relationship, I was thinking on the sofa, if we had record this chat, this informal chat.

People would have been moved like oh my goodness, This is life. This the reality of how we shift and become a better version of ourselves. So, just want to put that out there as well too.

Well, that is just beautiful. And she's final year with the university. So she is, what, 2021? She's 20. OK, and your relationship has shifted with her in the last couple of years.

I think, you know, I have an 18 year old about to go to university. A lot of my listeners have teenagers. We know that transition from those under 10 ages into that teenage life, i've found that quite hard, quite difficult.

And that's really beautiful to hear how your relationships developed since university, because we often see that as kind of the end point, right? yeah yeah that's beautiful i i know it's like she shifts it and and i noticed that because i have also shifted yeah and in i think it makes two yeah two people and we can really say that our relationship is so beautiful at the moment and all of us the whole family but anyway there is so much hope that's what i'm saying you know that even though we we always know, that a children never stop being our children but for a child to become a teacher like this is what I see her as and she's teaching me something that I need to see for myself.

Yeah wonderful fabulous well how much of this your own path from NHS psychiatry roles into what you're doing

now. How much of that is a journey of personal development, not just business?

It's a huge change, isn't it? How have you managed that along the way? Yeah. Wow. All of it, like, I, the person I'm elected person talking to you, Joe, is not would not have been the same person without her personal development journey.

And so it's fascinating. I came to the UK in 2001, very insecure. Of course, I left my psychiatric training in India to just, my specialist training, in psychiatry in, India, to get married, got married to Suresh, who came here a year ago.

And I was very insecure, but it was so easy, right? Like, oh, you're a doctor, I'm very, very secure. So 2002, We started with Tony Robbins. Tony robbins like unleashed the power within and I was like, what the hell is this, but I got fascinated by this and that's okay let me look into self help.

And I started reading self books and loose hey and all that kind of thing. And then it occurred to me like, hey, why don't I train to be a life coach?

This was back in 2007. At that time, coaching was not hard in NHS. Now, like you hear, many doctors are coaches and like it's well known, right? Health coaches.

But back then, I guess it was only like the top managers and the CEOs would have some coaching experience. And I did that back then, not because I was thinking this is going to my career, but it's like, I want to like see what tools are out there so that I can take it to Saikat to help my patients.

And I struggled with that. I thought there were two different worlds. Oh, this is the world of personal development and this for normal people. And this the one of psychiatry.

This is not going to work.

Leaving the NHS and Following a New Path

And things have shifted because I have started to see deeper and deeper into know all human beings are exactly the same, except that they might be more lost.

Some people might have more trauma than others. And so I got fascinated in what makes us common, what is common among all humans beings. And I think because of my own evolution, I have been able to practice psychiatry in a very different way than I had been trained in my whole years of training.

And you continue to practise in that way now, in this different, more personal way between you and your husband and you own clients. Are you working in the NHS still or not?

No, no. I left about, I think, more than 18 years ago, almost coming to two years. Yeah. Because until then I did a year of locum after leaving my substance abuse post.

And the reason why I took that step was, you know, there was this, at some point, really, like when we really put our hands on our heart and say, is this really me?

Am I selling my soul in a way? you know, just to get some money in a paycheck at the end of the month or something. And some of those things, I knew I was making an impact on some my patients, but it was very incongruent to my journey where I and how I wanted to serve.

So it really made sense without any plans. I would say, don't do that. Don't go cold turkey, have a plan. But it's like my husband said, You know, you can leave your job.

Like we were driving back from a well-being conference in Devon where I was speaking and I think, why am I doing this? Because I wasn't even allowed to take one day, like work for long days to do what I wanted to.

And I said, Why am i doing it? And he said you know you're going to leave a job and it was like until then I really didn't think so. So so That's the answer.

I know sometimes I go long and mine is like, yeah, but I felt there was something moving through me. It was not like I have a plan. i'm going to do tenages.

Of course people can have plans, But there is something else moving trough me to say, Rani, it's a time. You'll settle for any less than who you are and how you want to show up.

And I've been following that ever since. Yeah. And even before, but I think it came very strongly, Jo, then. Okay. Amazing. I've got so much I want to ask you about.

The first thing I wanna start with is that you write about and you talk about mental wealth rather than mental health. Can you tell me a little bit about what you mean by that?

My audience is a mixture of practicing doctors or people that have moved into business. And I think more and more, I'm seeing people come out from either psychiatry roles or mental health roles, seeing the movement in wellness.

I just love this term mental wealth. So what does it mean? I just wanted to come up with a term that I use where I am saying that this is what I mean and there is no noise, there's no contamination there, so to speak.

So I would like to talk about three paradigms that i see in mental health today. In the field of when we say mental help. One is the traditional mental-health paradigm where the main question we ask people is, what's wrong with you?

Okay, What's Wrong with You? And we are trying to fix that. And I'm not saying it's bad or wrong. I am just saying this is what it is. Like, and they say, there's a role for that, I know that when we asked those questions, at least in the acute setting, we might be able to solve something for people.

But there's still a lot of limitation in my view when we say what's wrong with you what strong with your we always like focusing on what wrong let's fix it.

And a higher paradigm to that is upgraded version is the trauma informed paradigm. Which is like, no, what if there's nothing wrong with this person? What if something happened to them?

So we are being more trauma informed. So I do think it's an upgraded version. Like when you say, you know, What happened? Tell us a story, because then it is a compassionate and really good.

But I also find that there are some limitations to that because then people think, oh, because this happened to me back then, this is why I'm stuck. This is my possibility.

There's a limit to what's possible for me. And I think that's so not true. That's not so true in your unlimited potential. So the mental wealth paradigm that I see is the main.

The question is what is already within you? so yes things could have happened and you know you you behave the way you behaved you have some symptoms and things happen to you but what's already within you and i'm obviously talking about spirituality so i feel that in mental health when we talk about mental help we are putting in, mental illness and we have putting into mental wellness practices and, we're talking, about stress and overwhelm to You know, schizophrenia or something like that.

It's all in a mix. And people are just talking about, oh, we have more mental health problems or you have to look after your mental.

Mental Wealth and Holistic Psychiatry

So I find that there's a lot of noise and people say, what exactly is mental house? I just wanted to say that's on the surface. There are lots of stuff as we need to.

Look at as human beings. But I to me if I were to practice psychiatry and coaching just from a let's just fix your symptoms It's like okay. We are giving them a tool a quick fix, but it's not sustainable for me It is like preventative and sustainable well-being.

It' like what's already within you. Is like it allows people to just like oh I haven't even thought about it spirituality. What does it mean? I'm not religious, people might say, and I used to get scared of, you know, talking about spirituality because I thought people will think, oh, Ranibora is religious and this is religion.

I am not for religious. deeper, there's something else going on that I'm connected to. And most people talk about it, like talking about nature, talking how our well-being, our mental health flourishes when we are in nature.

I said nature reminds us that nature does not wear any disguise. Actually, nature remind us of our spirituality. Of a deeper connection with the universe.

So, so this is why you know this, is how I practice and I find that that is what the people are looking for and especially inside cartridge or people have existential crisis.

You know, when I see people in psychosis or in struggles, they're really suffering and they are what I would call existential crisis of some kind and we can give them medications and you can get them CBT and that might give temporary relief, but it's also like what is really going to nourish our soul?

What do we really want to listen to? And that's where to me, spirituality and mental well comes in. And I noticed recently you've been finding other people, other doctors talking about this, because this is a conversation I've had with a couple of people.

Emma Presson, who I think you have connected with, she's a wonderful doctor up in Bala, and she talked about sort of coming out as a spiritual doctor, felt like it was one of the hardest things she has ever done.

Have you kind of Have you found that you've been on your own in this journey or are you pioneering this within psychiatry or do you think there is a lot of people that understand this or how is this being brought into our work as clinicians?

Oh, that's such a beautiful question. I'm sure that people coming from that place, but they might not be so vocal. They might be articulating and they may not showing up on social media because of fear of GMC and what people think.

And I was there like myself, like in an offense, what do people thing? I see this so like a part of being human, I say, you know, when we say human being, we focus a lot on human and say oh, i'm just human.

I am just a human But what about the being aspect, you know? To me, being is a spiritual. When we explore being, and obviously when they say, oh, I'm being silly now.

So we use being in the context, but being also like there is deeper element to being. It reminds me of is-ness that people talk about or presence. Or you can even put it as love, you know, when people talk about unconditional love and we don't use those kind of things in clinical language, clinical terms because we like, oh, as clinicians, we should not be talking about love.

We don' t need to talk abut love but we could bring the energy of that. And I have met many, many doctors and many health care professionals that I didn't know exist.

And they said, oh my God, you are there? If I can do lectures, I met a chem psychiatrist. After my keynote speech, she came to me, and she was shaking.

She said Ronnie, i am a Chem Psychiatrist. I said oh, my goodness! And then we connected, And she is amazing. So we are all doing our own bit, Joe, and like now I'm seeing more and more since coming out of the NHS, I've seen that there's so many more who have not articulated that because they were also scared like me and now they're saying, actually I am not alone.

And then you feel more inspired to share more. Yeah, absolutely. I love now that when I In my GP surgery, I am thinking about other professionals that are out there sharing on Instagram stories, sharing it on LinkedIn.

Maybe they've got free lead magnets or PDFs or eBooks or YouTube channels and actually being able to signpost patients to trusted medical practitioners doing amazing things in a different arena that isn't medication.

We're going to come back to this because I love that this is part of your talk. But, you know, there are other ways. I saw a young man yesterday who is 27 and he's on antidepressants and he's been signed off sick for a couple of years and nobody's ever stopped to look any deeper than signing that Med 3, keeping on the repeat prescription.

And he came in yesterday and said, I didn't want to phone conversation because I wanted to sit down and talk to somebody. I knew that that was my opportunity to make a difference and try and change his trajectory because he was asking for help.

And he doesn't believe that he can go. He very much feels in this trauma-informed space where something difficult has happened to him and he does not see that there is any future for him.

And it was wonderful to be able to signpost him to things that weren't. medication and I actually sent him off and asked him to come back in a month's time and having done three things like walking someone else's dog, volunteering somewhere, showing up in the soup kitchen and helping out for an evening, doing one thing.

That brings me a little bit onto this keynote speech that you gave at the Do Lectures, which is what made me say we've got to chat. The Do lectures is an organization out in West Wales.

You can tell us a bit more. I followed them for years. I've been going out to that part of Wales since Dave and Claire Hyatt had Howie's, their first clothes shop out there.

It's an amazing organization, but you had the opportunity to stand on the main stage there in the summer and give you a talk. How did that come about?

Oh my goodness.

Spirituality, Clinicians, and Community

I know thank you so much because this is again what I would call synchro destiny you know I did not know anything about do lectures at all, until only like three months before the do lecture that I spoke to.

I have been part of this coaching school for coaches called AJC Coaching Career School. This was my final time. I've been three times. So this was back in March this year, 2025. And we were watching a Wayne Dyer, very short video about kindness.

And he was talking about how kindness is very, like, is so potent. And she was taking about antidepressants. He said it the way he said and I heard something else because I'm very fascinated about my special interest in psychiatry is de-prescribing people of psychotropic medication safely because now the research is that it really people really struggles if they've been taking it more than a year or so.

So anyway. So I immediately started this iPad. I love my iPad, you know, I started writing down what came to me and I loved to play with distinctions.

So, oh, AD means antidepressant, and AD is act of kindness. And after we watched that, Ankush, the leading, just

said, hey, anyone has any comments? And I was like, ha, and I said can I come in front to share?

So it was all recorded. And then I went in the front and then shared from the heart what I just saw in this small clip. Sitting there was another coach, amazing coach called Sam.

Now he happened to know David Hyatt. And he said, after the talk, he says, Rani, I was so inspired. And everyone was like, about the standing ovation and everything, because it was, like impromptu speech.

They knew my passion. So anyway, so after that, He said Rini, once this clip is ready, send it to me. I would love to send you to David, who does the two lectures.

That's how I ended up speaking at the because he, said I love what you said about kindness. Can you come? And I say, what is this two lecture? So there you go.

So it's what Synchrodestiny is. And that's where I met again that chempsychiatrist and many amazing people. I think, wow. Again, my friend, Sam, and my colleagues, act of kindness brought me to do lectures.

Then I just posted on Facebook, anyone wants to watch the clip? And then he said, Rani, I would love to see the clips. Your act kindness, brought straight to here.

We haven't even spoken before, Joe. I know, I love it. So that's, it was brilliant. And the little clip on YouTube is just magical because, like you say, you were beavering away, creating something completely organic on the spot, something that had been triggered by what you are watching.

And then when somebody said, would anyone like to share? Like maybe Rani of medical student days would have probably just sat there. I mean, I'm not saying I would've done, but I'd have shut my book and thought, oh, well, read about that when I get home.

And I never would run to the front of the class waving my arms around in the air. That is taking the opportunity, right? And that's what you did. Would you say that previously you might not have done that?

Oh, 100%. The old insecure Rani, you know, she wouldn't even like trees before. I mean, yeah, it's nice. It's like, but something came through me. When you talk about opportunity, like I could not like hush it like who are you to speak?

No, forget all of those like noise. Like I just felt it just like my hands went up. So yeah, you know what, when you talk about opportunity, what I've come to see, Jo, is opportunities are constantly knocking on our door.

The Do Lectures and the Power of Kindness

We might not say, yeah yeah forget about it, forget it. You know, who am I? Who am i to do this? I'm seeing that more and more, that the doors are all constantly opening and shutting, but we are, because it's in front of us, they are opening.

the doors behind us are shutty but what we mostly do is like we keep looking at the person why is this door closed rather than saying this this store has opened let's walk through this yeah absolutely well you certainly walked through that door and you got that you know that clip was sent off and Dave Hyatt signed you up and he went to talk about this distinction between or this differentiation between antidepressants and acts of kindness and how we how using acts of kindness instead of antidepressants.

Can you just tell, for the many doctors that are out there, and I know that listening to that little clip has had an impact on the way that I operated and spoke to the young man yesterday.

I'm not sure I would have done that had I not listened to your clip. So there is a possible knock-on effect here that would be really powerful for you to just share that on As a possibility, Joe, in your resources, maybe we just put the

link to that.

Yeah, or YouTube. Yes, I'll send it to you. I think you have got it, but I send to all I would say is that people are looking for help. And because we want to help, sometimes we, you know, we are trying to rush to health and we think, oh, but I have a pen and I've a prescription and.

I am a prescriber, I can prescribe something. So we're all coming from that, like, let me do something straight away to. Help you with your suffering, to to, help you deal with the suffering.

You know, have you had the quote like if you give a man a fish you feed him once but if You teach him how to fish. You feed them for a lifetime to me Antidepressants is like it's needed, you know from time to time and it is Like something and we all know that there are some cases that we might give it But again, like, it might be like okay Let me take the pain away from you that that might Be the what we're saying.

Let's get the paint away From you all you have to do is take that to the person and that's it For example, now I know that they are like I am hot on informed consent before I prescribe any entity presence, which I haven't prescribed for a long time.

I would really make sure that you really understand all the side effects and everything, including, you know, that sexual dysfunction and everything, which we don't talk about, but also like the chances are that if you continue it for longer than six months, you might have problems coming off the medication.

That kind of thing is hotly informed concept, I could still give it, right? Because it's about what the person wants and what their autonomy, what they want.

But if we just say, yeah, did the presence go off and, you know, just like go into the life, they think that, oh, that's my clutch. You know that anytime something happens, I'll pop a pill.

And that is the danger of it. But what you did there, it's a so beautiful joke. When you say do this instead, You gave him a lifestyle prescription in a way, right?

In a away like and it is more like the connection pillar of the lifestyle medicine that you have a connection and do something and make a contribution.

So what I and that in a way you taught him how to fish like for you. Well, big this is all it might seem like a small gesture, but coming from a doctor is huge.

But why would the doctors ask me to do that? You know, then they might take it seriously. So I think it's very important that with the messaging, because we know we talk about chronic, you know, chronic health conditions and non-communicable diseases, how it is under rise, not just for physical health, I would say even for mental health.

More people are struggling with stress and overwhelm and anxiety and depression. And if they think something's wrong with me, I have to fix it just with the pills, they've got it wrong.

I think it's like looking at even an act of kindness from their part because or towards themselves. Sometimes we might have take the pill of act kindness to ourselves.

Most important, when we start doing that and we know that our being a certain way is making an impact, even a small difference to our path. to the stranger we smiled at, those are, you know, they just stack up, Joe.

They are the natural antidepressants. And basically, this is what the video is about. I talked about something else out there in the Joe lectures, but this small clip was part of my talk.

Kindness in Business and Closing Reflections

And we will be linking that below for sure. So just to wrap up, we've talked about kindness in a medical sense. And obviously you're a medic, you are now a business woman, a keynote speaker, visionary.

You are doing some fantastic things out there. How important is kindness as we start off in business and on that entrepreneurial path that's very different to what we have learned in medical school?

Oh, yeah. Oh absolutely. Absolutely. You know, that's one of the… It's not a secret at all. The businesses which are really doing well, they definitely have the kindness everywhere, right?

And you know the whole team is flourishing. They won't say it's a toxic culture because it is the energy of kindness, everywhere. One of the things I'm seeing more and more is like, when we serve people, rather than try to please people.

You know, we are always going to come from a place of kindness, or we can choose to. Come from at least a kindness. But the most important thing is less.

We can never overdose. That's what I one of. The thing I said, you can. Never overdose with kindness And when we are kind to ourselves and we use kind words to like say, hey, that's also okay, I forgive myself.

I know I judge myself and I forget myself for judging myself that I'm stupid. But it was just a random thought. The more we're taking like double, triple, you know, massive doses of kindness for ourselves, It oozes out, it ooze out to a business, to our child, our pet.

And then you know that you serve people more powerfully when you are armed with that spirit of kindness, that energy of kindess. So 100%, I think, I love the kindness.

This is something that's coming more and more to me and I'm seeing that in you as well, Joe. Oh, well, I really appreciate it. I know you've got a client, you got client coming and a dog at the door and not the dog of the doors, someone at door in the do and so I think we'll wrap things up.

But I have absolutely love speaking to you. And I'm sure we can do another one of these in six months time, but please look out for Ronnie. All I'll link everything up in show notes below of how people find you and I thank that whole concept you can overdose on kindness.

Just get out there, take the opportunity, wave your hands in the air if you've got to say something, you never know what will happen. And thank you for your time.

I really appreciate it. You are very welcome. Take this with you, Gio. This is how I feel about you. Yeah, You're amazing. Lots of love. Thank you! Take care.

Transitioning from medicine to business is not easy. It's about adapting our skills while embracing the unknowns of entrepreneurship. for support and don't forget to grab the free PDF from the show notes from stethoscope to startup, which is your go-to guide and resource for diving into entrepreneurship.

Many thanks for tuning in. I will see you next time. Thanks for spending your precious time with me. This has been a Monkey Pants Productions Podcast.