Introduction to Marriage and Money

All right. We have, my good friend, that's Brant Lacey here. That's her. Brant Lacey is a gas anthropologist who's really passionate about helping physicians succeed with business and personal finances.

And he's got this really awesome summit called Marriage and Money and and, it is, what, November 15th through 17th, right? Yeah. November 15th, 16th and 17th.

That's that's fantastic. And, and as a physician, that's Lacey really understands how overwhelming it could be to really step out of clinical training and into career and being in private practice and and being a leader and all the nuances that comes with it, and also trying to have a relationship with people that's around you, your family, your spouse, your significant other, your kids.

If you have kids and also manage finances at the same time. It's like a juggling act and I'm trying to juggle all this. And so, I'm having daughter Lacey on because I think this is such an important topic to talk about, because it is the roots structure of how we're able to get our, ourselves mentally prepared to succeed and to scale and doing the things that we want to do and to be fulfilled by it.

And I think that fulfillment is not something we talk about as often when we think about, you know, doing the business and stuff like that, but it's really about fulfilling fulfillment.

And that really stems from the relationships. So really what we're going to talk about today. So, hey, thanks for coming on, I appreciate it. Oh, yeah, I'm super excited.

I'm really passionate about this topic. I feel like this is one of those things that we just don't talk about enough. I think, you know, not to stereotype us, but especially as men.

I feel like it's one of those things that it's just not talked about enough. And it's something we all struggle with. So here we are. We should talk about it.

Yeah. And I might be a little uncomfortable talking about it, but, hey, that's what this summit is for. So. So, but let's talk about the summit, really quickly.

You know, in order for you to even put on a summit, you have to be passionate in that topic because it is a lot of work. And so marriage and money and is pretty specific, and it sounds like I know what it's all about, but can you kind of describe it real quick?

Yeah, I mean, the name was chosen very specifically. It's about marriage and it's about money for physicians. So and it's those are two topics that don't get talked about enough.

And every physician couples struggles with at some point, I mean, the medical career or medical training, they're just they're just hard. They're hard on relationships are hard. They're stressful.

They're time consuming. And it can be very, very challenging to maintain, a healthy relationship, really have adequate time with your spouse, with your kids.

Why Physician Relationships Struggle

And, you know, on top of that, you got all the money. So if you're starting on average, $300,000 in the hole and you start earning, you start your earning years, your primary earning years a lot later than all your classmates who graduated high school and college with you.

So you're starting later and starting farther behind. So, I mean, when we come out of training that we are just we're stressed. We're, you know, a lot of people have had real, very serious relationship struggles, and they're just swimming in debt and not sure what to do.

So the, the summer to help people just, you know, get some tools, get some resources, get some encouragement from physicians and physician spouses who are really expert in their fields, talking about communication, setting expectations, setting up an investment plan, how to get out of debt, how to relate to your spouse, how to stop having fights about money or how to stop having fights generally, how to manage your time together?

It's it's going to be awesome. I'm so pumped. The speakers are phenomenal. It's just going to be a great time. So, you know, I think that, because this is not talked about, and because there's very few light really shining on this topic, it really leads to a lot of burnout, within our careers.

And it leads a lot of stress. And it leads to, a lot of negative thoughts. Right. And so you know, and that can have a subconscious effect on our brain, all these negative thoughts, maybe not being good enough for the spouse or the significant other or maybe not being good enough because I'm not making enough money.

Maybe making more money will justify maybe working more and understanding that, hey, maybe I have to sacrifice this for that. So I think that balancing act is just extremely hard, and especially if you are a two physician family like me and my wife, we came out with a lot more than 300,000, double that, more than double that, in debt.

So that could be very, challenging as well. Right. So I'm so glad we're kind of talking about it. So let, let me, let me start off by asking you this question.

Why is it that whenever we sort of step into our role as physicians, why is it that it's so commonplace for relationships to suffer? And why is it that no one talks about it?

What do you think that is? Well, it's it's a they're great questions, both of them. I think the reason that it happens is because medicine is a is an all consuming profession.

Unless you've been through it, you it's very hard to explain to someone just how, engaging, how engrossing, how encapsulating a medical career is. I mean, it consumes every bit of you.

So, I mean, everyone's all everyone listening to the summit. If you're in medicine, you've experienced this when you were in medical school and your buddies that weren't for medicine are like, hey, listen, you're we're all going to go, you know, float the river this weekend.

Hey, we're all going to go, you know, road trip to Chicago this weekend. Whatever. And you're like, I'm sorry, man, I got to spend like 25 hours in the library, and I only have 20 hours that I can even be awake this weekend and know, like, what the heck are you talking about?

And so it's it's hard to understand, but it is just that consuming. And because we have such an ingrained sense of duty and sense of and sense of obligation to our craft and to our patients, and the work we're doing genuinely matters.

I mean, it is legitimately life and death. And so if we choose to just not go to work, people could die. And that's just not okay. So it it becomes the number one priority in our minds because it is so important.

But the problem is that when that takes on that number one priority, something else is going to take a backseat. And everything else takes a backseat to that.

Your health often takes a backseat to that. Your family, your kids, your attention to your personal finances. You're on your continuing education, all that.

And I think the reason we don't talk about it, frankly, is because we feel guilty. We feel ashamed. We feel like we're

the only ones that are going through that.

Like we see all of our colleagues and everyone's putting on a good front. Everybody's got a facade and you're like, man, I guess I'm the only one who doesn't have this together.

You know, and you feel like you can't talk about it because you're like, well, no one else must be going through this. They all seem like they're fine.

No one else is talking about us, so I guess they're good. And the truth is, we're all just bottled up in our little silos and no one's talking to each other.

And that's why we all should be talking to each other. We need to be supporting each other. Yeah, you're absolutely right. So I think there's also a lot of distractions that we put on ourselves.

Right. So instead of, you know, talking about relationships, we talk about, cars, we talk about, you know, sports cars and stuff like that. And, and there is a stigma, I think there as well is it's almost like a, hey, I'm, I'm a physician.

I'm in my profession. I'm supposed to have a good relationship, the money's supposed to be there. And so if I don't meet that image, like I feel and I think that's that's a very subconscious dwelling in our mind.

Don't you agree with that? Yeah, 100%. It's it's it's very easy for us to want to try to fit a certain mold or try to try to live up to an idealized version of what we think we should be or what society thinks we should be, or, you know, to just to just be constantly striving to meet this impossible goal that, frankly, nobody else is able to meet either.

So we're putting unnecessary pressure on ourselves. And it's it's very harmful, I think, in the long run. And if we would just sit back and give ourselves a little bit of grace and take that, take that, that step of faith and say, you know what, I'll bet there's someone else struggling with this, and I'm going to talk to them about it, and we're going to figure this out.

You know, I'm I'm glad you said that because I do think that as a profession, you said earlier it's an all in type of profession. Right. And all means all.

And we put our heart and our soul into it.

Setting Expectations and Protecting Home Life

And a lot of times when we put so much invested time and energy into something and when something doesn't work out, we take pride in what we have built, but the end result is not where we want to be, and naturally, we naturally just don't want to talk about it and have distractions.

And I'm guilty of this as well. And, and when distractions occur, all of a sudden you realize that you become this automatic robot and you just try to look for more distractions and just doesn't necessarily work, you know, and and unfortunately, very often times we start to see our family as a distraction, you know, when when we come home and all we can think of is, man, I've got like an hour's worth of charting I still haven't done.

I get six notes that I wasn't able to. I've got to I've got to think about what I'm going to do tomorrow. I got to call six people in court. So, like, you're thinking about all these things you need to do, and then your family's your family's there and you're like, well, they're preventing me from getting the stuff done.

And it's it's this terrible push pull that we do with each other. Why? So again, I think it comes back to that sense of a sense of duty, that sense of obligation.

You know, we we know that our work needs to be done. We know it's important. And we we we go for it, you know, with with full force. And I think this is where we can start to leverage some of those strengths, because I think our great strength in that area is that when we focus on something, we can really focus and we can we can we can

knuckle down, we can go, okay, we're going to we're going to get this done.

I'm going to sit there and study for six hours. I'm going to sit here, I'm going to go on all my rounds. I'm going to sit here, I'm going to do this ten hour surgery.

We can do it. And so if we can start to separate work and home and say, okay, when I'm at work, I'm gonna be wholly focused on work, I'm gonna be completely, 100% all in on the work and not thinking about anything else.

And then when I get home, work turns off. And, you know, I had an attending one time tell me that, you know, when you go, I forget exactly how he said it, but it was something like, leave your leave your your mad hat at work right early, leave your work hard at work.

So when you go, when you go into work, put your work hat on. And now you're at work and then take your work hat off, take the white coat off and you go home.

Put on the husband hat, put on the wife hat, put on the dad hat. And that's all you're doing. You're not thinking about stuff. You know, this going on at work, you're just focused on on the family.

So be focused wherever you are. So I want to talk to you. Really? From, an immigrant perspective, I think. So I'm Chinese and then, met a lot of, you know, I, I actually, I was born in China some zero generations.

I was born in China. And I came to the US. And the idea is this. And the idea is that you work your ass off, no matter what, to achieve this supposed American dream.

Right? And and and you and you put forth every effort to do it, even if it's at, the price of some, some relationships and, and honestly, that's, it's a, it's a very cultural thing.

You know, I know I'm Chinese was not just a Chinese thing. But it's even in American culture as well. So it's really depending on, on our upbringing. So I have this almost like sense of guilt and like, I you shouldn't go on vacation.

I really should be going back to work and make some money. Right? You know, have you come across that? Well, I've, I've come across it in my own life. Really?

I mean, just in the last year, I got out of the military last summer and then joined a private practice in Dallas last fall. And then in May, I started looking.

I was looking around. I was like, oh, this is awesome. The kids are out of school, and, what are we going to what? Do we have a plan, anything. We should do a trip or something in the summer.

And I look back and I realized I've taken zero days off since I started this job. I'm like, that's not good. That's poor planning. So, I mean, we were all guilty that I mean, I've done it in the last six months.

Yeah. It's one of those things that, you know, I, sometimes it's easier to say things than it is to do things. But, you know, once I recognize that as I talked to my wife, I was like, look, we we got to take some time off.

And so, you know, we got together with some friends from med school and just had a staycation. It was awesome, was a great time. So. But but if you don't make that time, if you don't deliberately plan for that, it won't happen.

Yeah. So I think the other thing is, is this communication. Because there are some times where I think I'm dedicating my time to my family and then I sort of borders to myself, okay, well, it's it's 8 p.m..

I got to do some 8 to 845. I got to do this now. And so I have to like switch switch it back again. Right. And then, what I find is especially for my kids is that there's a lot of resentment towards sort of that, that limitation as well, and I think is maybe, perhaps I didn't really set up the expectations to begin with.

And so I think that really, you know, really put a damper on the communication there. Right. Well, I think you've actually hit on something that's probably at the core of every marital challenge, and that is a sense of unmet expectations.

And so that almost always arises from one of a few things. Either the other person's expectations are too high or the expectations weren't clearly stated, or the expectations were were out of sync.

And so your expectations and theirs were different. And so that that unmet expectation, that's what tends to lead to disappointment. And so what I always encourage people to do, and as you start thinking about, communicating with your spouse is be in the habit of continually revisiting and updating and reassessing what your expectations for each other are.

So I'll give you an example. So when my wife and I were in residency together, every rotation, every time we would switch a rotation, we would sit down and say, okay, this is your rotation, this is my rotation.

Here's the nights I'm on call. Here's the nights you're on call. Here's what we're going to be able to do. And so, like on a month where I'm in the ICU and she's on night float, we're pretty much not seeing each other very much that month.

But we knew that going into it. So it's so when we've got when we got our 13th day in a row where it's literally, you know, I'm leaving just as she is arriving and and vice versa, we get to see each other for 20 minutes a day.

It's, it's it's sad, but it's not devastating. It's not unexpected. It's one of those things that we're in this together. And we've had the communication, we've had the conversation to say, okay, this is what it's going to be this month. It's just going to be rough.

We just got to fight through it. Next month is going to be great. We're both on outpatient rotations and we're going to make up for lost time. We're going to go on date night every week.

We're going to take a weekend trip to go visit someone's parents, you know, whatever. But we can set those expectations and then we're not disappointed because we didn't meet up with some standard.

And so being in the business of continually updating those expectations is just so important. And it may be months to month when you're in, you know, training, when you're in residency and fellowship and maybe it's, quarter to quarter or maybe it's at the beginning of a school year, or maybe it's the beginning of a major season change, you know, or, you know, Christmas time or when, you know, when the call schedules come out or whatever, but constantly be in the business of updating each other and setting those expectations.

And if you find that you're if you find that you're experiencing disappointment, either you or your spouse, it's probably because you're just missing each other on expectations.

And so it's time to sit down and go, okay, honey, I understand that you're disappointed. I think that you're that we didn't do a good job of figuring out each other's expectations.

So let's sit down and you tell me what you were trying to achieve, what you wanted out of this situation, and then I'll understand how I didn't measure up.

And then let's let's see how we can figure out whether that's mutable and if so, then let me work towards that. So but have that deliberate conversations. Very important.

And I think it takes a level of authenticity and humility to to do that as well, which I think is a lot, a lot of things that are lacking because of this, sort of this nagging self-worth feeling.

You know, I think the other thing is, if you have a great relationships outside of, work, actually, I think it actually makes you a better doctor. Your sense of connection and empathy with the patients is is dramatically higher.

The communication is higher with your staff, with the other doctors, with other practitioners in the practice and makes you become a really good leader and a really good communicator as well.

And so I kind of, I, I stumbled upon that a little bit accidentally because I took a lot of training, over the last two and a half years. And spit up tons of money on just understanding leaderships and, and team building and working together in company culture and stuff like that.

And I realized that, you know, I'm working so hard is on this business. I can sort of make the same structure at home. So when I started making the same structure of home, there's almost like, this is like home, but kind of when I was like, what the hell didn't I do this before?

I, you know, and that comes from, that comes from communication, setting expectations, stating the expectations, not assuming the other person knows what you're thinking, which is always, always a big deal for me, for most of my relationship to my adult life.

And then once we were able to state it and then and then we plan things out, I was like, okay, well, this is this is what's expected is done. And after it's done, I was like, oh, that's that's not a big deal.

Where I'm like, you know, my spending too much time at work. I was in my home. I'm like, what? I just asked for permission and then asked for, ask for guidance.

On what? What target are we trying to hit as a family or spending time together? Or your friends are spending time together or your parents and, And what are we going to do the next month?

You know, I still need to do a better job with that. Me and my family. But I think what we're trying to head to towards that direction.

Managing Stress and Financial Infidelity

So how do we, do I mean, private practice is hard. And not just private practice. And medicine is hard in general. So there's this, there's this resentment that I, that I see honestly, in a lot of the physician forums like Facebook.

Is that, there's a perceiver rating thoughts on things that we can't control, especially during like coronavirus. Right. And these persevering thoughts become these sort of negative triggers.

And I see a lot of my friends, a lot of people almost like bring it to their personal life and bring it home. How do you how do you shut that off? I mean, it's it's a hard thing to do.

Like, is there a way? So I would say that you don't necessarily have to shut it off, because I think that I think that your spouse can be your greatest advocate and your greatest cheerleader.

I know my wife's one of my wife's spiritual gifts is encouragement. I mean, she's the best, greatest encourager I've ever seen. She wasn't a cheerleader.

But I mean, that's kind of who she is at heart. I mean, she's she's she's my biggest cheerleader and she's everyone's biggest cheerleader. That, that, I mean, and so I don't think you have to completely shut it off.

I think you can bring some of that home, but that needs to be another conversation with your spouse because your spouse may only be able to handle so much.

I mean, as a physician, you know, we deal with life and death stuff. And so if you're if you're dealing with, you know, death every day, your spouse may not be able to handle that.

There may be too much sadness for them. And so there may be other it may be a requirement that you cultivate additional relationships where you can start to have some of those conversations with people who, you know, so

friends at work or friends at church or whatever, that you can have some of those conversations.

And so you can it's a way that you can love your spouse by not, placing that burden solely on them. But your spouse can also, you know, show you love by accepting some of that burden so that you can have that way to to let off steam and to and to, you know, kind of vent some of your feelings about that.

And, you know, maybe even come up with some ideas that you haven't thought of or, for how to fix things. But again, I think it comes back to that conversation about setting expectations and say, listen, I want to be able to talk about this stuff, but how much can, how much of this can I bring home?

You know, how much of this is is too much for you to be able to handle and just being very intentional about that? Yeah. So so that's behavioral communication and teamwork.

Right. And so let's kind of jump into the second part of this talk, which is money. Because I do think relationships of money actually go hand in hand.

But there's this concept that I, that I've heard before is that, if you're, if you're hiding your finances or whatever you're spending money on from your relationship, your spouse, whatever it is, and there's no transparency in there.

That's also, creates a level of, of resentment and trauma, within a relationship. You agree with that? Yeah. We call that financial infidelity. It's, you know, instead of an affair of the heart.

It's an affair of the wallet. It's how I think of that. And so it's it has the exact force and effect as having an actual affair. And so if you're if you're hiding someone, if you're hiding something from someone on a, on a either a one time basis or a regular basis, it's a breach of trust.

It's something that you have sequestered, that you have said, I don't trust you with this, or I don't think this is something I should share with you.

I think I need to keep this to myself. And that is incredibly damaging to relationships. And this is a definitely a problem. We've seen a rise in this in the last about 10 or 15 years.

You'll see folks that are struggling with online gambling addictions or actually gambling addictions, or you see people that have, secret credit cards they don't tell their spouse about or they have, you know, they have an Amazon account that they, that they don't have connected to the family account, and they always deliver those packages at work for, I don't know, for, for whatever they're buying, or they're, you know, they're, they're buying upgrades of different things or different hobbies or different toys and just not telling the other person.

And it's it's problematic from a financial standpoint, a lot of cases, because it'll it'll impede your ability to make progress on your other financial goals.

But the big problem is that breach of trust that it represents. And so when the spouse when your spouse finds out about it, it's it's incredibly harmful.

It's incredibly hurtful to the relationship. And I have seen I've seen relationships really crumble from that. It's it's devastating. It's hard to walk that back.

But yeah, it's, it is incredibly damaging thing. And so what I find is that that usually stems from one of a few things. It's either lack of communication where the spouses are just not talking about things.

And so that often happens where one spouse is kind of managing all the finances, the other one's kind of hands off. And so the one spouse is handling all the money, just kind of does everything.

And then they, they just kind of get used to making all the decisions on their own. And then six years later, they've opened up ten credit cards, and they're $70,000 in debt.

And a spouse is like, well, how did that happen? And then what happened is nobody was talking to each other. Sometimes it happens from lack of knowledge where one spouse just doesn't know what's going on, and they they feel in the dark, they feel like they're rudderless and they just they just feel like they're twisting in the wind and they don't know which way they're going.

They don't know if we're meeting our goals. They don't know if or if we're we're failing to live up to our expectations. And sometimes, frankly, it's just lack of money.

And almost always that means that people were just spending more than we make. And it adds a layer of stress and layer of, of tension. And then that can generate, people's need for release.

You know, it's like squeezing a water balloon, right? If you squeeze a water balloon, then, you know, wherever you squeeze in, one place is going to bulge out in another place.

And so there's, you know, if you put tension on one part of your relationship, it's going to squeeze out and, and leak over into other areas of your relationship.

So, you know, speaking of squeezing the balloon. So, you know, I think that if you're trying to juggle something, and I think this is one of the, the assumptions is that, okay, so is my role in our relationship is that I control the finances.

Hey, I should be able to do whatever I want without telling you. And then, the other the other, the other, the other side of this is, hey, I'm, I'm, I'm helping with this.

And, this is the things I'm doing. I spend a lot of time on taxes and and and paperwork and stuff like that. And therefore, because of that, I deserve to have expenditures on on this and this.

And that creates a lot of resentment. Right. And so can you comment on that a little bit. Yeah. And so the way to combat that, because you're right, it's, it's incredibly, harmful.

The only way for this to work is for you to be united. You ought to be united about everything in marriage. You got to be not united about your parenting style.

You got to be united about how you want to spend time with your in-laws. You got to be united about money. You got to be united about, intimacy. All these things are important that you have a united front.

Money's no exception. And in fact, money is arguably the most important aspect of that, mainly because money just touches everything, not because money is the most important thing in our lives, but because it intersects with everything in our life.

And so one of the ways that you can combat that, that I've found is very helpful is to have one person in the house be designated, as I call them, the household CFO, okay, the household chief financial Officer.

So in the relationship, there's usually going to be one person who is more interested, more adept at handling the actual technical aspects of the money, balancing the checkbook at submitting the, you know, investments, at thinking how about how to do taxes and things like that?

That person is the household CFO, and their job is simply to manage the books, deal with the details. But then both both spouses have to come together to actually agree on financial decisions.

Okay. So it's very important that the household CFO not become also the household CEO or, you know, you know, dictator in chief or whatever. And so both spouses are responsible for making decisions.

But one of them handles just the mechanics of it. And I think, that's how you can start to bridge that gap. Yeah. So so it's almost like, someone is sort of collecting the data.

You make decisions from a united front on what to do with that data. Right? Yeah, exactly. And so if you're making a budget, let's say, let's say you're setting up, you know, a plan for what you're going to spend your money on, then one person is going to make the budget and then present that to the other person, and the other person needs to adjust it and make some changes and have some input.

And then you both agree on it. So neither person's input is more important than the other. It's it's got to be two people moving together. Because if you're moving in parallel lines, you're moving towards your own goals, then you're not moving towards each other.

If you're moving towards each other, then you'll end up merging in the same goal as the only way this can work. And so that means that you have to be coming together to make those decisions in a shared way.

Well that's powerful. So parallel line versus merging together. That's that's pretty good. So, you know, I think that when we start thinking about, you know, these behavioral patterns and things, and how it affects us, it really relates to business as well, because in business, you know, there's there's an office manager that sort of manages the finances.

But then, you know, he or she, you know, presents that to the physician practice or the practice owner. And then there's decisions that's really made on that.

And the, there's a lot of communication, between that to make a business successful. But business is the same thing as, as relationships, you know, it's a different type of relationship than you and your spouse, and you just think of another.

But it's it's a it's still a relationship. And so we bring that sort of the structure, into the home. And that's where I realize a lot later, after I got a lot of training on business, it becomes this layer of certainty, like, you have this, this you have this, this feeling that there's there's certainty here.

There is and I feel significant as a spouse. And I want you to feel significant as my significant other. And that drives a that drives passion, I believe.

Building Shared Financial Goals

Right. Yeah. And there's like like you were saying, there's really just no substitute for communication. And that structure works everywhere. I mean, it works in business relationships.

It works with your neighbors. It works with your family. It works with your extended family. You know, it works with your kids. That constant communication of just just talking about things, not being afraid to have difficult conversations, you know, it gives you a level of confidence and a level of security that can really overcome a lot of shortcomings.

So for example, when you have tremendous trust and tremendous confidence in your spouse, or in someone at work, then when something happens that makes you go, this was this was really bad for me.

Your thoughts don't immediately run to they're trying to sabotage me. They're trying to destroy me. They don't care about me. They're not interested in me. It's.

It's, This is probably an oversight. I wonder if they would just go. I wonder if they're okay. I wonder if I wonder if they got distracted and something was just.

They're not. This isn't what they're usually like, right? It completely changes the dynamic. And so having that bedrock of that, that just confidence, that security of having all that trust in that person and building that relationship over time, through that shared communication is just, is just so crucial.

It really allows you to bridge some of those gaps when they happen. So are there other sort of, guides or books or

some sort of outline to create the sort of the structure within a relationship?

Yeah, probably about 5000 or so, but I'll tell you a book that I really love, for marriage. For marriage specifically, a really, really great book is called The Five Love Languages by a guy named Gary Chapman.

It's it's a book that my wife and I read, when we were doing our premarital counseling, almost 15 years ago now. And it's it's fantastic. And so the book posits that every person has, five different love languages.

And so words of affirmation, gift giving, acts of service, etc.. And we we hear and we express love through those different languages. And so it's, it's important for us to learn how to recognize and how to express love in a way that our spouse can understand.

So, for example, if, if I express love through acts of service, okay, so doing the dishes, mowing the lawn, you know, helping with the kids, things like that. But my spouse, her her love language is words of affirmation.

Then me doing those acts of service is not as important as me, just, you know, constantly being very encouraging and supportive. You look so nice today.

You know, you're so good at helping with the kids. I love the way that you are so encouraging to everybody that you meet. You do such a great job, you know, keeping our house in order, you know, things like that.

And so learning how to express our love in ways that our spouse can understand is really important does a huge, huge help for communication. So that book is called The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman.

It's actually it's so important we we actually dedicated an entire video to it in the online course that we created because it is it is just so helpful.

I can't tell you how many times that I have watched people through that. And I just go and the light just goes on like, oh, that's why she doesn't care if I bring her flowers, because gift giving is her number five.

And so I need to be doing something else instead. It is just so helpful to know how to express love in a way that our spouse can understand. Yeah. No. Absolutely.

So me and my wife, we have completely different love languages. So. So, that's a fabulous book, by the way. But the other thing is to really identify the language of love.

Right? And so, if, if, if someone, someone's number one is access service, but my, but like my number one maybe it's touch or something like that. Right.

But when that's when that someone that, you know, maybe does things around the house and clean or whatever it is, I have to receive that as a love language.

It's like, oh, wow. This is actually they're they're expressing love to me. And so it makes me more appreciative of the acts of service. Right? So yeah, I mean, think of it think of it like having a foreign exchange student at your house. Right?

So if someone's visiting from, say, you know, Romania or something and you don't, you don't speak Romanian, you know, but but you see them going around and trying to be a helper and trying to do different things.

You can appreciate what they're trying to do, even though they can't really tell you what it is. They're trying to do. So. So learning to appreciate that, learning to recognize that is yeah, just as important. Absolutely.

Yeah. And that's that's all relationships and all humans. You know, half of the love language is not spouse. And so what we see in the workplace too, you know, we have to recognize that as well.

And then we combine that with the this personality profile and for for a winner there. So, you know, more more on the topic of, of money a little bit because, it's nice to see money grow.

And it's nice to see money grow in a way where there's also communication around it with your spouse or with you, with your loved one. And so earlier you said that, you want to be on the same page.

You want to like, you know, rather go together in the same direction and come together to do it. How do you have that conversation with the significant other, if maybe one of you is more number savvy than the other one?

Like is what? What do you do? So I think one of the places where it's where is helpful to start is to just talk, not about specifics in terms of the, in terms of the practical, you know, 401 K and Roth IRA and, you know, tax this and things like that.

I think it's more helpful to talk initially when you're having these conversations in broad concepts. And so, I call this I call this first, the first conversation, you can call it whatever you want to call it, the the dream conversation or the goals conversation, but it's just what do you want?

What do we want? So what do we want out of life? What are our goals? And so let's say you're let's say you're a couple that you're in your residency or you're early in your career.

You're five years in and you've got hopefully 30 or 40, 50 years ahead of you. And so where do you want to be? Age 50. Where do you want to be at age 60?

Where do you want to be at age 70? What do you want your life to look like? What are your kids doing? What schools did they go to? What kind of traveling are you doing? Are you working?

When did you stop working? If you're not, what kind of lifestyle do you have? Start having some of those conversations and just start to start to dream together and just start getting just start to build that shared vision for your family.

You know what is it that you guys want out of life? Those are things that people can really get behind. You start talking about money and taxes and Roth IRAs, and the person who's not the money person is.

Their eyes are just going to glaze over and you're going to lose them. So just talk about something that that is enjoyable, that's exciting. That's something you can both get behind and then start to start to say, okay, well, if that's where we want to be, what do we need to do in order to make that happen?

And this is where the person who's better with money can start to say, okay, you know what, let me sit down. Let me take let me, let me run some numbers.

Let me figure out how much we would need to save and how much we would need to invest in order to achieve that goal, and then bring that back to the other person, say, okay, here's here's the setup that I have.

And if we do that, if we want to have this at age 70, then we need to save this much per month. Until then, which means that we're going to have to set aside this amount, which means we have this much time left each month for spending on other stuff.

Is that something we can live with and then start to break that down? But but start with that initial conversation being just about what do you want out of life?

You know, setting some reachable financial goals, right. And then that's and then there's another portion to that, which is risk tolerance, because, I think that, usually, you know, one person in the relationship, has a very different level of risk tolerance.

So the other person may want to take risks with money. You know, entrepreneur 1st May be very entrepreneurial,

1st May be very not. Right. And so how do you have that conversation as well?

So I think it depends on to what extent each person is knowledgeable about money. So if you've got one person who's really knowledgeable and the other person is really not and the, the not the the one is not knowledgeable, really trust the other one, then they can just kind of let them run with it potentially.

That's a that's an example. But let's say as a more common example, let's say you have two people that one person kind of knows a little bit, and the other person really doesn't know very much, but neither person has just a super high level of financial literacy.

This is where starting to read some books, listen to a podcast. Maybe you've been talking to a financial planner, or a financial coach of some kind can really be very helpful.

And so and sometimes that takes the pressure off the situation. So you're not. So you're not trying to be the one with all the answers and be the one that comes up with the perfect plan.

You know, you're depending on someone who's got some expertise and has got some knowledge in this area, who's a third party, who's dispassionate, who can help kind of coach you through and guide you through some of those conversations.

I think that's an area where that kind of thing can be very helpful for folks you know. When in doubt, go to a third party to be the mediator, right? We're smarter than you.

So no, that's that's that's a great topic. And so, when whenever we're trying to, to sort of synchronize our finances and synchronize our, our relationships, there's really another factor, I think, that a lot of men don't necessarily talk about.

And it's the, when I say men, I meant, like if, if, if in a relationship, I feel like a lot of men hold a lot things in and. Right. And, the woman is really trying to dig and pull and stuff like that.

But part of the holding things in is because there's sort of this perceived masculine energy, right? That's there. So. And so how do you sort of, not overcompensate, overcome, how do you adapt, to that and just have more humility, be more open and do stuff like that?

Well, the thing that's great about marriage is that it is a process of, of two continuously becoming one. And that doesn't mean that either person has to give up who they are.

It doesn't mean that both people in the relationship have to adapt to one person's exclusive style. It means that you're coming closer to a center point.

And so for for women, it's helpful to understand that sometimes when you're when your husband is saying, you know, when you say, hey, what are you thinking about?

And he says nothing. Sometimes he actually means nothing. But sometimes he's saying that and he's just he's thinking so many things and he's just not sure what to say.

And so he says, well, nothing. And hoping the conversation will end. And so I think, I think it's a trial and error process. I think that there's, there's a continual learning aspect to it, and it's just, you know, starting to ask probing questions.

Hey, you know, I say you say you're not thinking about anything, but you've got this look on your face or you've got that pensive sort of mood. It just it just you look like you're really lost in thought.

I'd love to be a sounding board. Tell me what you're thinking about, you know? But but but doing it in love and doing it in a way of saying, you know, I would like to be there for you.

I would like to support you. How can I help you? That kind of thing, as opposed to, you know, how come you never talk about anything? How come you don't want to say things to me?

You know, like you approach any conversation that way and it's not going to be helpful. And so the same holds true from the other side. So for guys, you know, women like like you said, it's very is very true.

Women tend to, pull out feelings more. They tend to talk about feelings more. This is just a reality of biology. This is absolutely true.

Love Languages and Closing Advice

And so it is very important adaptation for men, I think in a relationship to start to recognize, hey, it's very important to my wife. And this again is a generalization.

But say in any relationship, if it is important to your spouse that you talk about stuff, to start to adapt to that and say, okay, sometimes I'm going to need to step outside of my comfort zone because this is something that he or she needs, and this is a way that I can show them love by, by allowing myself to be to be vulnerable.

I mean, and that's really what love is. Love is allowing yourself to be vulnerable to the point of being hurt and having the confidence to know that you won't be.

It's it is a very, very delicate balance to watch, to walk. And so it's, it's one of those things that very often it's a matter of both, both partners trying to come together.

And a lot of times that just involves stepping out of their comfort zone, even if it's just a little bit. Well, I can't wait to to listen to this a lot more on the, marriage of money and this summit you got going on.

So, and so I think that, we're going to come towards the end here and I'm going to ask you this one question. It's really ended is what do you know now that you wish you knew at the beginning of your marriage?

So I can only pick one. This is it's an easy one. It's a super easy one. And and I think I understood this to a certain extent when we were first married.

But I've learned this more over the years, and that is this, this axiom that love is an action verb. And it's a very important concept for us to recognize.

It's not passive. And so to just feel love for someone is simply not enough, okay? You have to be willing to demonstrate love. You have to figure out what the other person's love language is.

How can you show them love? How can you express love in ways that, are meaningful to them, that show them how much you care, that make them, that make them feel loved and appreciated and cherished?

And so, you know, I'm reminded of one of my all time favorite quotes by Augustine. And he said, we become brave by doing brave things. So bravery is not something that we feel.

It's something that we we become because we have we have overcome that fear. It's not the absence of fear, it's it's overcoming fear. And love is the same way.

I think we become loving by doing loving things. And so as as you're going through your your day or as you're going through your week, I would encourage you to do a simple exercise just right now, just go to your phone.

Okay? So if you guys are listening to summit, if you're watching, pull out your phone right now, okay. Pull your phone and look at the text string to your wife, your husband, your significant other, and just start scrolling through and take a mental catalog of what percentage of the text that you sent are something that you need them to do, or something that you're telling them, factual knowledge or something that you're making some kind of a plan,

something that is for, you know, if you'll call it sterile versus something where you just need to send them a text to say, you know what?

It's it's 233 on Tuesday, and I was thinking about you or, you know, hey, you looked really pretty when I, when I left this morning. I love that color shirt on you or.

You know, I'm so excited that you're you're doing so great with your, your new your new job. You know, so what percentage of your texts are those are those really loving things and what percentage are just, you know, those factual things.

And if the answer, which it is for most people is less than 10%, maybe start punching that up. You know, that's a very simple thing you can do just once a day for no reason at all.

Just send a text to tell them, hey, you know what I was thinking about you. I'm really glad I have you in my life. Or start to talk about the your spouse when you're at work.

You know, when other people. Because I see this drives me crazy. I see this all the time. Will be, you know, you'll be in the or you'll be in a, in a in the doctor's lounge or whatever.

And people are like, oh, my wife did this, my husband did this, and she's always nagging me and he's always, you know, bringing his friends over. And it's like, you know, anytime that kind of thing happens to say, you know, that must be really frustrating for all you guys.

My wife's amazing. I love her so much. She's fantastic. You'd be amazed at how quickly it lets the air out of the blue. It's so hilarious to watch. You know, when you just say, okay, you know what?

I'm not going to engage in that. I'm going to choose to show love. I'm going to choose to talk positively about my spouse. So, so just remember, love is an action verb.

And so the more of those actions that you take, the more your spouse will start to feel that, wow. Now that's that's a very powerful thing. And we actually do that in our, medical practice for patients as well.

So, you know, we don't really have, crazy labels like crazy patient labels and stuff like that. We're like, wow, this patient has received a lot of trauma, traumatic experiences.

And, you know, it it must not feel very good to be in this particular situation. Let's just let's just focus on that for a second. How can we overdeliver value to this patient.

Right. And so and so that one thing leads to the on my employees also saying hey, well, you know, you're in a situation, you know, you're, you're your father died and, and I want to be able to, to reach out to you.

Let's communicate that as well. So it's a it's a very addictive thing. Once you let the air out, once you put it out there that there are languages of love, that we're we're permitted to say and permitted to have that effect on people.

And I think some people just need a little bit of permission, you know, once they have that permission, like, okay, you know, let's be positive about this and we can talk about this as well.

So it's very powerful thing. And my gosh, that that one thing dramatically reduces burnout because there is a sense of purpose, with human connection, even with between our staff and our patients and everything like that, and especially at home as well, you know, so it's yeah, it's this thing.

Absolutely. And it gives you that bedrock of confidence and security that we were talking about. It's huge. There's no substitute. Absolutely. It was well thanks for coming on man.

This is such an important topic. So once again marriage and money and November 15th through 17th and this is

an online summit right. Yeah. It's it's a it's entirely free.

So, so, you know, definitely sign up. It's, the website is Marriage and Money md.com and yeah, it's free to sign up. There's going to be 18, physician and physician spouse speakers, some, some big names are coming.

It's going to be awesome. We've got nine subjects of money, nine on marriage, and we're just going to ping pong back and forth for three nights. It's going to be absolutely fantastic.

It's free to sign up, so everyone would definitely need to sign up. Even if you can't catch the thing live, you'll be able to get the replays for, for the rest of the week.

And it's it's going to be awesome. So, yeah, marriage and money. Md.com. And you can sign up for free. Awesome. Well, thank you doctor Lacy for hopping on.

We will be signing off now. Have a good one.