When You’re Scared to Believe You’re Getting Better Transcript

(Transcripts are generated by AI and may contain errors)

Intro

Something happened in my office recently Something happened in my office recently that I haven't been able to stop that I haven't been able to stop thinking about.

thinking about. A patient [music] was telling me how A patient [music] was telling me how much better he felt. The pain mostly much better he felt. The pain mostly gone, sleeping throughout the [music] gone, sleeping throughout the [music] night, and his mind was clear again.

night, and his mind was clear again. And then right in the middle of And then right in the middle of describing all this good news, describing all this good news, >> [music] >> [music] >> [music] >> his voice dropped and he said, >> his voice dropped and he said, "Honestly, I'm really scared." "Honestly, I'm really scared." Scared? Not because anything had gone Scared? Not because anything had gone wrong, because things had gone right and wrong, because things had gone right and he didn't know how to hold that.

he didn't know how to hold that. Welcome to Wellness Focus [music] with Welcome to Wellness Focus [music] with Dr. Bisma. I'm Dr. Bisma Elfyani, a Dr. Bisma. I'm Dr. Bisma Elfyani, a physician on a mission to help you break physician on a mission to help you break free from symptom [music] management and free from symptom [music] management and step into a life of thriving health.

step into a life of thriving health. Together we [music] will uncover simple, Together we [music] will uncover simple, powerful ways to prevent disease, powerful ways to prevent disease, restore energy, [music] and take control restore energy, [music] and take control of your health naturally. Your of your health naturally. Your I want to talk [music] about that today, I want to talk [music] about that today, because it's one of the least discussed because it's one of the least discussed parts of healing and one of the most parts of healing and one of the most human.

human. human. Let me ask you something. Let me ask you something. Have you ever wanted something so badly Have you ever wanted something so badly for so long that when it finally started for so long that when it finally started to arrive, you almost couldn't let to arrive, you almost couldn't let yourself feel [music] it?

yourself feel [music] it? Have you ever caught yourself bracing, Have you ever caught yourself bracing, waiting for the other shoe to drop, waiting for the other shoe to drop, >> [music] >> [music] >> [music] >> right at the moment you should have been >> right at the moment you should have been celebrating?

celebrating? celebrating? And [music] if you are living with a And [music] if you are living with a chronic illness, have you ever been chronic illness, have you ever been afraid to say out loud that you feel afraid to say out loud that you feel better, as if saying it might somehow better, as if saying it might somehow take it away? If that's you, I want you take it away? If that's you, I want you to know something right away. That fear to know something right away. That fear is not a flaw in [music] you. It is one is not a flaw in [music] you. It is one of the most understandable responses in of the most understandable responses in the world. And understanding why it the world. And understanding why it happens, and what to do with it, might happens, and what to do with it, might be [music] just as important to your be [music] just as important to your healing as anything that happens in your healing as anything that happens in your labs. [music] labs. [music] So, let's break it down and investigate So, let's break it down and investigate it. Where does this fear actually come it. Where does this fear actually come from? [music] from? [music] Because at first it seems to make no Because at first it seems to make no sense. You wanted to feel better. You sense. You wanted to feel better. You feel better. Why would that be feel better. Why would that be frightening? The first reason is frightening? The first reason is something I'd call protective pessimism.

something I'd call protective pessimism. When you have [music] been disappointed When you have [music] been disappointed before, when you have gotten your hopes before, when you have gotten your hopes up and then watched things fall apart, up and then watched things fall apart, your mind learns a lesson. It decides your mind

learns a lesson. It decides that hope itself is dangerous.

that hope itself is dangerous. >> [music] >> [music] >> [music] >> That if you don't expect too much, you >> That if you don't expect too much, you can't be crushed again.

can't be crushed again. So, when improvement actually arrives, a So, when improvement actually arrives, a part of you actually resist it. Because part of you actually resist it. Because believing in it feels like setting believing in it feels like setting yourself up to be hurt.

yourself up to be hurt. When people who have been told for years When people who have been told for years >> [music] >> [music] >> [music] >> that nothing can be done, don't just >> that nothing can be done, don't just carry a diagnosis, they carry the memory carry a diagnosis, they carry the memory of every door that closed. Of course, of every door that closed. Of course, they flinch when one opens.

they flinch when one opens. The second reason is that for a lot of The second reason is that for a lot of people living with illness, the illness people living with illness, the illness has quietly become part of their has quietly become part of their identity. [music] identity. [music] When you have organized your life around When you have organized your life around managing something, your routines, your managing something, your routines, your limits, the way you [music] explain limits, the way you [music] explain yourself to others, getting better isn't yourself to others, getting better isn't only a relief. It's a kind of only a relief. It's a kind of disruption. Who am I if I'm not the sick disruption. Who am I if I'm not the sick one? What do I do with the version of me one? What do I do with the version of me that planned around never improving?

that planned around never improving? >> [music] >> [music] >> [music] >> This sounds strange until you've felt >> This sounds strange until you've felt it, and then it makes perfect aching it, and then it makes perfect aching sense. [music] sense. [music] And there's a third layer, one I find And there's a third layer, one I find specially important. Many people have specially important. Many people have spent so long fighting their own body, spent so long fighting their own body, experiencing it as the thing that experiencing it as the thing that betrayed [music] them, the thing that betrayed [music] them, the thing that failed, that they have lost the ability failed, that they have lost the ability to trust it.

to trust it. >> [music] >> [music] >> [music] >> So, when the body starts to do well, >> So, when the body starts to do well, they don't feel triumph, they feel they don't feel triumph, they feel [music] suspicion, [music] suspicion, and they wait for the betrayal to and they wait for the betrayal to repeat. Learning to trust your body repeat. Learning to trust your body again after [music] it's let you down is again after [music] it's let you down is genuinely one of the hardest part of genuinely one of the hardest part of recovery.

recovery. recovery. >> [music] >> [music] >> [music] >> It doesn't happen in a single lab >> It doesn't happen in a single lab result. It happens slowly as the body result. It happens slowly as the body proves itself again proves itself again >> [music] >> [music] >> [music] >> and again. Here's the turning point, >> and again. Here's the turning point, though.

though. though. The thing I most want you to hear, that The thing I most want you to hear, that fear, as protective [music] as it feels, fear, as protective [music] as it feels, has a cost. When you refuse to let has a cost. When you refuse to let yourself believe you're improving, you yourself believe you're improving, you also refuse to fully participate in the also refuse to fully participate in the improvement. You hold back. You don't improvement. You hold back. You don't build on the wins because you don't build on the wins because you don't trust them. [music] trust them. [music] And I have seen again and again that the And I have seen again and again that the people who recover the most fully are people who recover the most fully are the ones who eventually [music] take a the ones who eventually [music] take a breath and let themselves own it. Not breath and let themselves own it. Not arrogantly, not by pretending the work arrogantly, not by pretending the work is done, but [music] by allowing the is done, but [music] by allowing the truth to be true. I am better than I truth to be true. I am better than I was. I had something to do with that.

was. I had something to do with that. [music] Because here's a queer thing [music] Because here's a queer thing

I've noticed about healing. I've noticed about healing.

There is a moment that comes [music] for There is a moment that comes [music] for many people where they stop gripping so many people where they stop gripping so tightly, [music] tightly, [music] where they stop trying to control and where they stop trying to control and brace and defend, [music] brace and defend, [music] and something in them softens. And it's and something in them softens. And it's often right after that softening [music] often right after that softening [music] that the deepest progress shows up.

that the deepest progress shows up. And if the body needed permission, and And if the body needed permission, and if it had been waiting for you to stop if it had been waiting for you to stop bracing against it and start working bracing against it and start working with it, you are [music] allowed to with it, you are [music] allowed to believe you're getting better.

believe you're getting better. You don't have to brace anymore. So, You don't have to brace anymore. So, what do you actually do with this? Let what do you actually do with this? Let me offer a few things.

me offer a few things. First, name the fear instead of obeying First, name the fear instead of obeying it. When you notice yourself bracing, it. When you notice yourself bracing, [music] [music] [music] when you catch that little voice saying, when you catch that little voice saying, "Don't get your hopes up." Try simply "Don't get your hopes up." Try simply saying to yourself, saying to yourself, "I'm afraid [music] to believe this "I'm afraid [music] to believe this because I've been disappointed before." because I've been disappointed before." That's it. Naming it loosens its grip.

That's it. Naming it loosens its grip. It turns an invisible reflex into It turns an invisible reflex into something you can actually look at something you can actually look at instead of something that quietly runs instead of something that quietly runs the show.

the show. Second, keep a record of the wins. When Second, keep a record of the wins. When you're afraid to trust your progress, you're afraid to trust your progress, your memory will conveniently lose track your memory will conveniently lose track of it. [music] So, write it down. The of it. [music] So, write it down. The night you slept through, the morning the night you slept through, the morning the pain wasn't there, the afternoon you did pain wasn't there, the afternoon you did something you couldn't do a month ago.

something you couldn't do a month ago. [music] [music] [music] On the days the fear comes back, and it On the days the fear comes back, and it will, you have a record that says, in will, you have a record that says, in your own words, [music] your own words, [music] "This is real and here's the proof." "This is real and here's the proof." That log is just not for your doctor, it That log is just not for your doctor, it is for you.

is for you. And the third, let yourself say it And the third, let yourself say it [music] out loud. There is an old [music] out loud. There is an old superstition that if you say something superstition that if you say something good, you'll jinx it. I understand the good, you'll jinx it. I understand the impulse, but I want to gently push back.

impulse, but I want to gently push back. Saying I feel better doesn't take it Saying I feel better doesn't take it away. If anything, it does the opposite.

away. If anything, it does the opposite. >> [music] >> [music] >> [music] >> It tells the people who love you >> It tells the people who love you celebrate with you, and it [music] lets celebrate with you, and it [music] lets your own nervous system register that your own nervous system register that you are in fact safe enough to feel you are in fact safe enough to feel good.

good. good. >> [music] >> [music] >> [music] >> You are allowed to be happy that you're >> You are allowed to be happy that you're better. You have earned the right to better. You have earned the right to feel it. Here's what I keep coming back feel it. Here's what I keep coming back to.

to. to. We talk about healing as if it's only We talk about healing as if it's only physical. physical. physical. The labs,

the numbers, the symptoms.

The labs, the numbers, the symptoms. But there is an emotional healing that But there is an emotional healing that has to happen alongside it. And has to happen alongside it. And sometimes it's the harder of the two.

sometimes it's the harder of the two. Learning to hope again after you have Learning to hope again after you have been let down. Learning to trust a body been let down. Learning to trust a body that hurts you. Learning to set down the that hurts you. Learning to set down the armor you put on to survive because you armor you put on to survive because you don't need it the same way anymore.

don't need it the same way anymore. That work is quieter than any test That work is quieter than any test results. But I think it might be the results. But I think it might be the most important work there is. So if you most important work there is. So if you are getting better and you are scared to are getting better and you are scared to believe it, I see you.

believe it, I see you. That fear means you have been through That fear means you have been through something real. something real. And the fact that you are improving at And the fact that you are improving at all means something real is possible.

all means something real is possible. You're allowed to let that in. You're allowed to let that in. If this conversation resonated with you If this conversation resonated with you and you want to explore what might be and you want to explore what might be possible for your own kidneys, possible for your own kidneys, not as a promise, but as a real question not as a promise, but as a real question worth asking.

worth asking. You can learn more about our approach to You can learn more about our approach to precision nephrology. precision nephrology. However you got here, I hope you leave However you got here, I hope you leave with a little more permission to believe with a little more permission to believe in your own progress.

in your own progress.