Would You Walk Away From Success? | Gloves Off with Christina Plhak Transcript

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Introduction and Guest Welcome

>> Hello everyone. I'm Dr. Kalpana Sundar >> Hello everyone. I'm Dr. Kalpana Sundar and welcome to another episode of Gloves and welcome to another episode of Gloves Off. I think that this is going to be a Off. I think that this is going to be a very powerful episode because so many of very powerful episode because so many of us in midlife, we've had the career, the us in midlife, we've had the career, the title, the experience. We've done all title, the experience. We've done all the things that we're supposed to do the things that we're supposed to do because if any of you have followed my because if any of you have followed my story, story, story, that's exactly how my life went down.

that's exactly how my life went down. And then somewhere in the midlife area, And then somewhere in the midlife area, I was like, I was like, is this what I really even want? And I is this what I really even want? And I walked away from medicine. And that's walked away from medicine. And that's why this story stood out to me. So today why this story stood out to me. So today I'm interviewing Christina and the God I'm interviewing Christina and the God knows I don't even know if I know how to knows I don't even know if I know how to say her last name correctly. So I'm say her last name correctly. So I'm going to have her come on here and tell going to have her come on here and tell us.

us. us. >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> But she did the same thing. She had the >> But she did the same thing. She had the corporate job, all the accolades. And corporate job, all the accolades. And you know what? Was bold enough to walk you know what? Was bold enough to walk away from it and doing and is now doing away from it and doing and is now doing something that she really loves. So I'm something that she really loves. So I'm really excited to have her share the really excited to have her share the story with us today.

story with us today. Hello Christina. How are you? Hello Christina. How are you? >> Good. The last name was Plack. >> Good. The last name was Plack. >> I was like I was like I always >> I was like I was like I always >> It's what up. Don't worry about it.

>> It's what up. Don't worry about it. >> That's so funny. As long as I've known >> That's so funny. As long as I've known you, I was like I've come up with 17 you, I was like I've come up with 17 different renditions of your last name different renditions of your last name and I was like I actually don't even and I was like I actually don't even know how to say it. And of course when I know how to say it. And of course when I hit record, I realized that. I was like hit record, I realized that.

Leaving Medicine for a New Path

I was like >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> We're just going to have to just be open >> We're just going to have to just be open about it.

about it. >> Exactly. It's all good. >> Exactly. It's all good. >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> I was like that's It's one. I can't even >> I was like that's It's one. I can't even remember how to spell it half the time.

remember how to spell it half the time. >> My family can't even get it right. No >> My family can't even get it right. No worries. worries. worries. >> Yes, probably took a while cuz some Some >> Yes, probably took a while cuz some Some are easy and phonetic and others are not are easy and phonetic and others are not like yours, but Okay, so you had you had like yours, but Okay, so you had you had a life in, you know, the corporate world a life in, you know, the corporate world and you just walked away. So, I have to and you just walked away. So, I have to say that, you know, first of all, I know say that, you know, first of all, I know that that takes freaking guts because that that takes freaking guts because you didn't leave cuz you failed. You you didn't leave cuz you failed. You left while you're freaking successful left while you're freaking successful and then you're like, "But I want and then you're like, "But I want something different." which most people something different." which most people freaking do

not do. So, so tell us a freaking do not do. So, so tell us a little bit about how that went down.

little bit about how that went down. >> Yeah, it's >> Yeah, it's definitely a big change. definitely a big change. Um Um Um 25 years in corporate world, executive 25 years in corporate world, executive position.

position. position. Um as you said, just had climbed the Um as you said, just had climbed the corporate ladder, had all the success I corporate ladder, had all the success I had been hoping for and working hard had been hoping for and working hard toward. And yeah, just one day got to a toward. And yeah, just one day got to a point where I said to myself, "This point where I said to myself, "This isn't fulfilling. My health is suffering isn't fulfilling. My health is suffering because of the work. I'm not looking because of the work. I'm not looking forward to each day. And you know what?

forward to each day. And you know what? I'm responsible for myself. I can do I'm responsible for myself. I can do something about this. So, why the heck something about this. So, why the heck am I just settling for this?" And yeah, am I just settling for this?" And yeah, just just just started doing my research and decided started doing my research and decided I'm going to strike out on my own and go I'm going to strike out on my own and go into my own business, into my into a into my own business, into my into a franchising opportunities and really franchising opportunities and really just just just mapped it all out for myself and said, mapped it all out for myself and said, "This is it. I'm it's time for a "This is it.

Burnout, Health, and the Wake-Up Call

I'm it's time for a change." So. change." So. >> I love it. I love it. And the wellness >> I love it. I love it. And the wellness space, what called you about the space, what called you about the wellness space?

wellness space? >> The wellness space uh is honestly my >> The wellness space uh is honestly my space. I um space. I um I feel like I've been able to do all I feel like I've been able to do all that I've been able to and with that I've been able to and with throughout my life and my career because throughout my life and my career because I've always focused on taking care of I've always focused on taking care of myself and honestly, that was really myself and honestly, that was really what alerted me to the fact that I was what alerted me to the fact that I was in a bad place. I'd always looked after in a bad place. I'd always looked after my wellness, health-wise, mentally, my wellness, health-wise, mentally, emotionally, physically, emotionally, physically, um and then my health started to suffer um and then my health started to suffer back in 2022. And that was truly the back in 2022. And that was truly the wake-up call of "Hey, for something wake-up call of "Hey, for something that's so important to you, why are you that's so important to you, why are you now allowing that to crumble? What what now allowing that to crumble? What what is it that needs to change for you to is it that needs to change for you to recenter yourself around something recenter yourself around something that's so important to you?" So, you that's so important to you?" So, you know, as passionate as I am about as know, as passionate as I am about as much as I believe in it, then it made much as I believe in it, then it made sense if I'm going to pursue something sense if I'm going to pursue something on my own, it needs to be something that on my own, it needs to be something that that is meaningful to me, um that is meaningful to me, um not just a career.

not just a career. >> I love that. I love that. And you know >> I love that. I love that. And you know what? Corporate America, and I'm just what? Corporate America, and I'm just going to say this cuz this gloves off going to say this cuz this gloves off and I can say whatever I want.

and I can say whatever I want. >> Yeah. >> Yeah. >> Yeah. >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> It's my podcast. So, but corporate >> It's my podcast. So, but corporate America, I think it's designed to suck America, I think it's designed to suck the freaking life out of you.

the freaking life out of you. >> Mhm. >> Mhm. >> Mhm. >> I mean, I see it over and over again. >> I mean, I see it over and over again. >> Yeah. >> Yeah.

>> Yeah. >> It did to you. I have friends that it >> It did to you. I have friends that it did to. I wasn't in a corporate did to. I wasn't in a corporate environment, but like still the practice environment, but like still the practice of

medicine sucked the life out of me.

of medicine sucked the life out of me. Like I know my sons have dealt with Like I know my sons have dealt with this, you know, in corporate jobs. I I this, you know, in corporate jobs. I I see it over and over again. You know, I see it over and over again. You know, I see people literally they look like they see people literally they look like they just had the their the light just went just had the their the light just went out in their eyes.

out in their eyes. >> Mhm. >> Mhm. >> Mhm. >> Because they and that's when I can tell >> Because they and that's when I can tell they're so bad. And I see it all the they're so bad. And I see it all the time, but we've normalized this time, but we've normalized this ridiculous culture around burnout, ridiculous culture around burnout, overdoing things, neglecting our health, overdoing things, neglecting our health, our emotional well-being, the whole our emotional well-being, the whole thing.

thing. thing. >> Absolutely. And listen, it's not to say >> Absolutely.

Identity, Courage, and Starting Over

And listen, it's not to say that there's not, you know, great things that there's not, you know, great things for us to learn in a corporate for us to learn in a corporate environment, but at some point if you're environment, but at some point if you're not protecting yourself and taking care not protecting yourself and taking care of your own well-being, of your own well-being, they'll they'll take and take and take they'll they'll take and take and take as you said. There is no boundary when as you said. There is no boundary when it comes to to the corporate career, and it comes to to the corporate career, and especially if you're climbing that especially if you're climbing that ladder, it's basically you should be ladder, it's basically you should be sacrificing everything to get to where sacrificing everything to get to where you want to be.

you want to be. >> It's almost like being in the matrix, >> It's almost like being in the matrix, really. Because the minute you see really. Because the minute you see there's another way, everything changes.

there's another way, everything changes. And And And I don't know. I I'm just I'm not putting I don't know. I I'm just I'm not putting going to not going to put words in your going to not going to put words in your mouth. I want you to tell us your story mouth. I want you to tell us your story about what it was like to have the about what it was like to have the courage to kind of start over. But I courage to kind of start over. But I think there's a real difference between think there's a real difference between the people who will just start over and the people who will just start over and the people who don't think that they the people who don't think that they have any other choices cuz I have two have any other choices cuz I have two people that are coming to mind right people that are coming to mind right now, two of my friends, and they're much now, two of my friends, and they're much younger than me. They're in their 30s.

younger than me. They're in their 30s. One uh she just looks like she's like One uh she just looks like she's like walking dead, literally. She's looks walking dead, literally. She's looks like And I I you can't tell somebody like And I I you can't tell somebody that cuz they don't see it. I just I'm that cuz they don't see it. I just I'm here for you. That's all you can do. Um here for you. That's all you can do. Um the other one, he's telling me he's the other one, he's telling me he's working 7 days a week, but it's okay working 7 days a week, but it's okay because it's only till January. And I'm because it's only till January. And I'm thinking, "Dude, it's September." thinking, "Dude, it's September." >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> How are you going to do this for the >> How are you going to do this for the next 4 months, you know? I next 4 months, you know? I >> Yeah.

>> Yeah. >> Yeah. >> And they say January might be later. >> And they say January might be later. >> It'll It'll be on January, I'm sure. >> It'll It'll be on January, I'm sure.

>> Of course. So anyway, so what does it >> Of course. So anyway, so what does it take inside of you to have that courage take inside of you to have that courage to know that there's a better life and to know that there's a better life and that you could do it on your own or you that you could do it on your own or you could do something different?

could do something different? >> Yeah. >> Yeah. >> Yeah. >> Where did it come from? >> Where did it come from? >> It's so First and foremost, I'll say I >> It's so First and foremost, I'll say I stayed in it too long. And to your stayed in it too long. And to your point, when you're in it, it doesn't point, when you're in it, it doesn't feel like that. It feels like, "Well, feel like that. It feels like, "Well, but I I have my reasons. I know what I'm but I I have my reasons. I know what I'm doing." And you justify and justify and doing." And you justify and justify and justify. And again, I I loved the career justify. And again, I I loved the career I had. I just feel like I stayed in it I had. I just feel like I stayed in it longer than I should have. And when I longer than I should have. And when I got to that point of sacrificing more got to that point of sacrificing more than I even had to give, um once you than I even had to give, um once you kind of start to see those signs, that's kind of start to see those signs, that's if you don't turn away at that point, um if you don't turn away at that point, um you will find yourself in some you will find yourself in some predicaments that you never expected.

predicaments that you never expected. And we've all got bills to pay. I'm not And we've all got bills to pay. I'm not negating that by any means. Uh but for negating that by any means. Uh but for me, as I said, it was really just when I me, as I said, it was really just when I didn't even want to get up in the didn't even want to get up in the morning. I mean, it was that bad where morning. I mean, it was that bad where the alarm clock would go off and I the alarm clock would go off and I thought, "Do I really have to do this thought, "Do I really have to do this again? Um, and that was again? Um, and that was that probably went on way longer than it that probably went on way longer than it should have. Um, but that was really should have. Um, but that was really when you're not having any joy, when when you're not having any joy, when you're not looking forward to what you're not looking forward to what you're doing. Listen, it's not good for you're doing. Listen, it's not good for your colleagues, either. It's not good your colleagues, either. It's not good for the business. As much as they'll for the business. As much as they'll think, honestly, it doesn't help anybody think, honestly, it doesn't help anybody because you're not able to give 100% of because you're not able to give 100% of yourself.

yourself. yourself. >> Not your family, not your friends, not >> Not your family, not your friends, not your spouse, not anybody. your spouse, not anybody.

>> That's the ripple effect. Exactly. So, >> That's the ripple effect. Exactly. So, as as supportive as my family was, yeah, as as supportive as my family was, yeah, I'm sure they endured quite a bit just I'm sure they endured quite a bit just trying to prop me up. Um, as I continued trying to prop me up. Um, as I continued to think in my own mind, this is to think in my own mind, this is justified. I I got to keep going. I got justified. I I got to keep going. I got to keep going. Um, so yeah, I think I to keep going. Um, so yeah, I think I think when you feel, at least for me, think when you feel, at least for me, when I felt my health crumbling, when I when I felt my health crumbling, when I lost that joy and inspiration, lost that joy and inspiration, and when I could see, to your point, and when I could see, to your point, that ripple effect on my colleagues, on that ripple effect on my colleagues, on my family and friends, it was like, come my family and friends, it was like, come on. How on. How How much How much more do I need to How much How much more do I need to recognize that this is no longer working recognize that this is no longer working for me nor anyone else around me. So, for me nor anyone else around me. So, um, and then as far as that courage, um, and then as far as that courage, that's a whole 'nother that's a whole 'nother layer that I know we'll get into, but it layer that I know we'll get into, but it first starts with that wake up of first starts with that wake up of you're done. This is this this isn't you're done. This is this this isn't working anymore. So, working anymore. So, >> Oh, that's great. No, it's true. It's >> Oh, that's great. No, it's true. It's And And I would say I would think, I And And I would say I would think, I don't know the numbers on this. I don't know the numbers on this.

Titles, Connection, and the Private Segment

I haven't looked at the statistics, but I haven't looked at the statistics, but I would say that I'm guessing people stay would say that I'm guessing people stay in a career at minimum of a decade in a career at minimum of a decade longer than they should.

longer than they should. I'm guessing. Could be. I don't know. I I'm guessing. Could be. I don't know. I think I stayed way more than a decade, think I stayed way more than a decade, but I didn't know how to extract myself.

but I didn't know how to extract myself. It was like I was in so deep, I wasn't I It was like I was in so deep, I wasn't I

couldn't just quit a job because I had a couldn't just quit a job because I had a practice. It was like, how the hell do I practice. It was like, how the hell do I get out of this cage that I created for get out of this cage that I created for myself? I I didn't know. It was a myself? I I didn't know. It was a >> the cage we created, right?

>> the cage we created, right? >> Yeah. >> Yeah. >> Yeah. >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> I think it was a corporate job, I would >> I think it was a corporate job, I would have quit a while back. I just didn't have quit a while back. I just didn't know how to leave, so that was a lot of know how to leave, so that was a lot of the problem for me. But, yeah, maybe the problem for me. But, yeah, maybe we'll have to deep dive into the in the we'll have to deep dive into the in the private segment about the courage, where private segment about the courage, where we're going to talk more about a little we're going to talk more about a little more specifics about what Christina's more specifics about what Christina's done, and you know, what she's doing done, and you know, what she's doing now, which again, that's where we have now, which again, that's where we have the private episode. So, the private episode. So, do you think it was actually scarier do you think it was actually scarier walking away from everything that you walking away from everything that you built, or like was beginning again built, or like was beginning again scarier for you?

scarier for you? >> Honestly, it was walking away from what >> Honestly, it was walking away from what I built, and not because of the I built, and not because of the trappings around it. Um, trappings around it. Um, not because of the the money, per se. It not because of the the money, per se. It was really because that had been my was really because that had been my identity for so long.

identity for so long. And that was the scary thing, and to And that was the scary thing, and to strike out on my own felt very very strike out on my own felt very very vulnerable to me. I didn't have that vulnerable to me. I didn't have that shield anymore. I didn't have that that shield anymore. I didn't have that that title, and this is my corporate world, title, and this is my corporate world, and this is my desk, and this is what we and this is my desk, and this is what we do, and all those things that I thought do, and all those things that I thought really defined me, um, to strip all that really defined me, um, to strip all that away and say, "Okay, I'm I'm just here away and say, "Okay, I'm I'm just here on my own. I'm Christina. Let me Let me on my own. I'm Christina. Let me Let me try and tell you what I can do for you.

try and tell you what I can do for you. Hey, let me let me tell you what I'm all Hey, let me let me tell you what I'm all about." That felt so vulnerable. That about." That felt so vulnerable. That was really tough for me.

was really tough for me. >> Gosh, I love it. It's like we have to >> Gosh, I love it. It's like we have to have the sim We've had such a similar have the sim We've had such a similar story, but in different careers, because story, but in different careers, because I felt the same way. I mean, when I I felt the same way. I mean, when I walked away from medicine, I was like, walked away from medicine, I was like, "What am I now?" I don't even know. I "What am I now?" I don't even know. I mean, I'm still a doctor. I earned the mean, I'm still a doctor. I earned the degree, you know, but I'm not practicing degree, you know, but I'm not practicing as a doctor, because now I tell people as a doctor, because now I tell people people, you know, I still have doctor in people, you know, I still have doctor in front of my title, obviously. But, front of my title, obviously. But, people are first question, "Where are people are first question, "Where are you practicing?" I don't practice. And you practicing?" I don't practice. And they look at me, and they're like, they look at me, and they're like, "Well, what do you do now?" You know, "Well, what do you do now?" You know, they're so confused.

they're so confused. >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> Well, the thing is, yeah, especially >> Well, the thing is, yeah, especially here in this country, we really we here in this country, we really we really tie ourselves to titles. Titles really tie ourselves to titles. Titles matter way more than they should, matter way more than they should, um, rather than to your point, "Who are um, rather than to your point, "Who are you?" It's It's not about that title.

you?" It's It's not about that title. It's about everything that you've It's about everything that you've experienced, your expertise, what you experienced, your expertise, what you have to offer, how you engage, how you have to offer, how you engage, how you contribute. And too often we reduce it contribute. And too often we reduce it to the title. So, yeah.

to the title. So, yeah. >> 100%. You bring up so many great points >> 100%. You bring up so many great points because yes, we put so much I mean, because yes, we put so much I mean, first of all, I hate I hate networking first of all, I hate I hate networking events, okay? So, I'm just events, okay? So, I'm just >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> I hear you.

>> I hear you. >> The first question I mean, I've gone to >> The first question I mean, I've gone to a couple that I've actually liked cuz a couple that I've actually liked cuz the first question out of people's mouth the first question out of people's mouth was not what you do. If I get asked that was not what you do. If I get asked that within the first 2 seconds, I'm I don't within the first 2 seconds, I'm I don't even want to talk to you anymore. Cuz if even want to talk to you anymore. Cuz if you don't care about who I am, this is you don't care about who I am, this is going to be transactional and I don't do going to be transactional and I don't do transactional at all. So, I'm not transactional at all. So, I'm not into it and I walk out. I've I've gone into it and I walk out. I've I've gone to networking events and left. I'm just to networking events and left. I'm just like, I can't. But I like to know who a like, I can't. But I like to know who a human being is. That's how I run my human being is. That's how I run my business. That's how I run my life. I business. That's how I run my life. I don't want superficial interactions. I don't want superficial interactions. I only want real only want real connection.

connection. connection. >> Yeah. >> Yeah. >> Yeah. >> And we lost all that. We lost all of >> And we lost all that. We lost all of that in over all the years. We lost it that in over all the years. We lost it even more during COVID and I really even more during COVID and I really think it's about time we bring that think it's about time we bring that back.

back. back. >> Yeah. >> Yeah. >> Yeah. Yeah, it's it's true. Now, it's Yeah, it's it's true. Now, it's interesting you brought up COVID. I feel interesting you brought up COVID. I feel like that was a time when we got a like that was a time when we got a glimpse into each other's worlds, glimpse into each other's worlds, especially in corporate, that we especially in corporate, that we wouldn't have gotten otherwise.

wouldn't have gotten otherwise. Because we're always we've always got Because we're always we've always got that mask on, so to speak, that armor that mask on, so to speak, that armor that we carry around in that role.

that we carry around in that role. Um, but when everybody's at home and Um, but when everybody's at home and you've got your kids and your pets and you've got your kids and your pets and your family and there's so much going on your family and there's so much going on at the house and you're still trying to at the house and you're still trying to do be present at work and you're on the do be present at work and you're on the computer, on these Teams calls or computer, on these Teams calls or whatever have you.

whatever have you. Um, it's it was interesting just to be Um, it's it was interesting just to be able to see people in a whole different able to see people in a whole different light because they didn't have that light because they didn't have that office trapping. And now all of the office trapping. And now all of the sudden we're talking, you know, and sudden we're talking, you know, and someone's saying, "Hey, can you just someone's saying, "Hey, can you just give me a minute? then to go check on my give me a minute? then to go check on my baby. Or someone's at the door and it baby. Or someone's at the door and it just COVID to me really put us in a just COVID to me really put us in a place that we connected where we in a place that we connected where we in a way we hadn't before, but way we hadn't before, but >> It's like the human-ness of the >> It's like the human-ness of the interaction cuz many of you go to the interaction cuz many of you go to the office and you can bring a different office and you can bring a different persona and a different identity into persona and a different identity into the office the office >> Yep.

>> Yep. >> Yep. >> and yet you're a different person at >> and yet you're a different person at home. And I actually experienced this home. And I actually experienced this too. When I put on that white coat, I too. When I put on that white coat, I was a different version of me.

was a different version of me. >> Yep. >> Yep. >> Yep. >> I was not really me and that was part of >> I was not really me and that was part of what I had such a hard time with. Just what I had such a hard time with. Just going to work every day pretending I was going to work every day pretending I was somebody that I wasn't. I mean, in some somebody that I wasn't. I mean, in some ways yes, but I had to change my ways yes, but I had to change my

personality and I thought I don't know.

personality and I thought I don't know. And towards the end honestly I didn't And towards the end honestly I didn't change my personality. I started just change my personality. I started just being who I was. I started to enjoy it being who I was. I started to enjoy it more. But at the end of the day I knew more. But at the end of the day I knew whatever business I built it was going whatever business I built it was going to have to be built on who I really am to have to be built on who I really am that there wasn't going to be this that there wasn't going to be this identity shifting that I this role identity shifting that I this role [clears throat] I change and I go back [clears throat] I change and I go back to being me. No, no, no. They both have to being me. No, no, no. They both have to be integrated.

to be integrated. >> Yeah, absolutely. >> Yeah, absolutely. >> And in corporate we have all these >> And in corporate we have all these departments and teams that we can point departments and teams that we can point this way and distract that way.

this way and distract that way. When you step out on your own there's When you step out on your own there's there's there's nothing but you which at there's there's nothing but you which at the end of the day is a great feeling the end of the day is a great feeling but can be very scary when you enter but can be very scary when you enter that space because you don't have that space because you don't have anything else to point to or distract anything else to point to or distract with.

with. with. >> One. >> One. >> One. >> Only you. >> Only you. >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> [laughter] >> 100% 100%. Okay, I am super excited now >> 100% 100%. Okay, I am super excited now because I know I'm excited deep diving because I know I'm excited deep diving into this conversation with you. I knew into this conversation with you. I knew it was going to be a good one. But I it was going to be a good one. But I want to really talk when we get into the want to really talk when we get into the private segment about the identity private segment about the identity shifts, the fear, the courage. What do shifts, the fear, the courage. What do we do to get past that? And how do we we do to get past that? And how do we know within us we're built for something know within us we're built for something more than just being a corporate slave?

more than just being a corporate slave? I think those are the topics we're going I think those are the topics we're going to deep dive into. So for those of you to deep dive into. So for those of you who have not joined the private who have not joined the private community, check it out right here.

community, check it out right here. Here's the QR code that you can scan and Here's the QR code that you can scan and join. Um so if you want to see the rest join. Um so if you want to see the rest of this episode and of this episode and um also um also in there I'm going to actually tell in there I'm going to actually tell everybody how I kind of stalked you to everybody how I kind of stalked you to be my friend.

be my friend. >> [laughter] [laughter] [laughter] >> I didn't just stalk you, but it was >> I didn't just stalk you, but it was super fun. That is a good story that super fun. That is a good story that >> It was great. Yeah.

>> It was great. Yeah. >> It's a good story and I just literally >> It's a good story and I just literally just remembered it and I was like, "Oh just remembered it and I was like, "Oh my god." my god." All right, so you guys are going to have All right, so you guys are going to have to hear about that um to hear about that um in the in the private segment. All in the in the private segment. All