



Finding JOY in the Journey:

Avoiding burnout in medicine

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Objectives

- Identify why burnout occurs commonly in medicine
- Describe three key strategies medical providers can utilize to experience joy in their career and personal lives
- How does finding balance in medicine look different for:
 - medical student
 - resident
 - new in practice
 - later in practice



Gap Analysis

Gap Analysis: Identify Gap in Subject Matter from Your Perspective and What Is Needed To Fill the Gap (why additional education is needed):

Research has shown that burnout occurs commonly in medicine, more than in many other careers. It is important for those in medicine to be aware of the increased incidence of burnout so they can recognize it in their medical practice or personal life. By sharing research in this area, along with her personal experiences, Dr. Kaczmark hopes to enable attendees to employ strategies that may help to bring more joy to their medical practice and to personal life. Finally, a small panel of providers will discuss their own experiences with finding balance between career and personal life at different stages of their journey in medicine.

Is there a problem?



54%

of doctors
say they are
burned out.¹



88%

of doctors
are moderately
to severely stressed.²



59%

of doctors
wouldn't recommend
a career in medicine
to their children.³

1. Mayo Clinic 2014.

2. VITAL WorkLife & Cejka Search Physician Stress and Burnout Survey 2015.

3. Jackson Healthcare; 2013 Physician Outlook and Practice Trends.



Tips for Decreasing Burnout and Finding Happiness in Medicine

Steven Bradley, MD

- Know your why
- Setting realistic expectations
- Professional and Personal Hobbies
- Mindfulness and Mental Health
- The Power of 'No'
- **BLUF (Bottom Line Up Front) Prioritize your life because if you don't, someone else will. Being intentional about your professional and personal commitments ensures a balanced, fulfilling life. Show up for yourself so you can show up for your patients and colleagues.**

Bottom Line #1: This is not your practice life

*Doesn't everything die at
last, and too soon?*

*Tell me, **what is it you plan
to do with your one wild
and precious life?***

—Mary Oliver



The Summer Day

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean —
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down
—
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?
- Mary Oliver

The most famous lines of this poem are the last two: they're lines worth remembering. But the heart of the poem is a couple of lines earlier: "Tell me, what else should I have done?" What else, that is, besides "falling down in the grass, being idle and blessed, strolling through the fields all day."

Oliver's proposition is we should rethink what a "productive day" looks like. Maybe less tied to screens, email housework, and errands and more of getting to know a grasshopper.

If it seems difficult to be "idle and blessed," then this poem may redouble our efforts to build a world in which everyone has the occasional time to stroll through the fields, "wild and precious,".

Bottom Line #2:

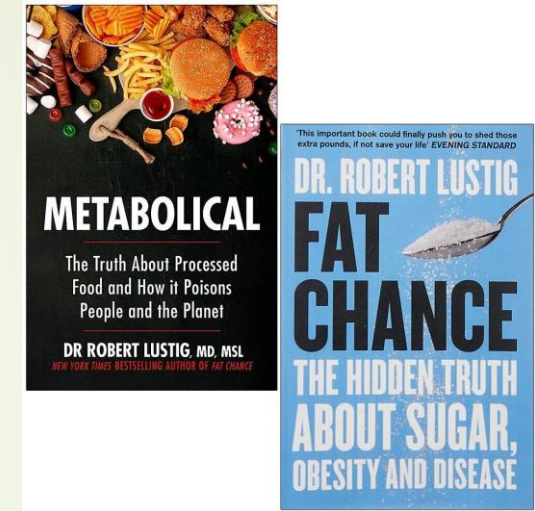
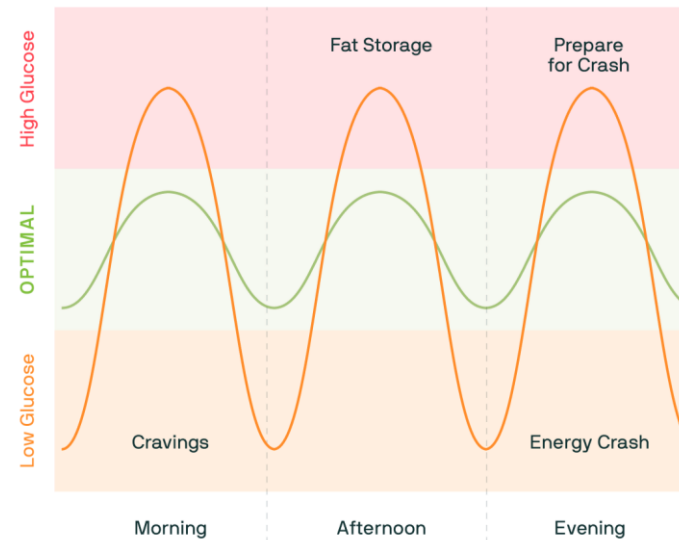
Take care of yourself so you can care for others



Nutrition

- My own experience – was exhausted and depleted all the time, thought I had a healthy diet
- Read books by Dr. Robert Lustig – eye-opener!
- Each meal has protein, healthy fats and vegetables
- Began a sugar-free diet and saw changes in one month – now have energy to complete my tasks and think clearly

How *Big Swings* Impact Cravings, Energy, And Weight



Pillars



Know your why

Patient care
Teaching
Involvement
Quality initiatives
Research



Set realistic expectations

Start small
Achievable goals



Professional and Personal Hobbies

Faith
Fitness and recreation
Outdoors
Creativity



Mindfulness and Mental Health

Perspective
Gratitude
Massage therapy
Mental health support
(online)



The Power of 'No'

You are the ONLY one
that knows your
schedule!



Know your why

Patient Care

- Back to basics
- Write out why you went into this career
- Interact with local medical students



Teaching



- Local elementary, junior high, high schools
- Colleges
- Medical schools
- Residencies: IM, FM, Pediatric, Psychiatry, PM&R, Transitional Year
- Career fair days

Involvement



**SPOKANE COUNTY
MEDICAL SOCIETY**



**Washington State
Medical Association**

2025 WIM Conference



Join us in Albuquerque, NM
August 21-24, 2025 for the
40th Annual Women in
Medicine conference for
lesbian, sexual minority
women, and gender
expansive physicians and
medical students.

Submit an Abstract!
REGISTER NOW!





Set realistic expectations

Start small



What brings me joy?

1. _____

2. _____

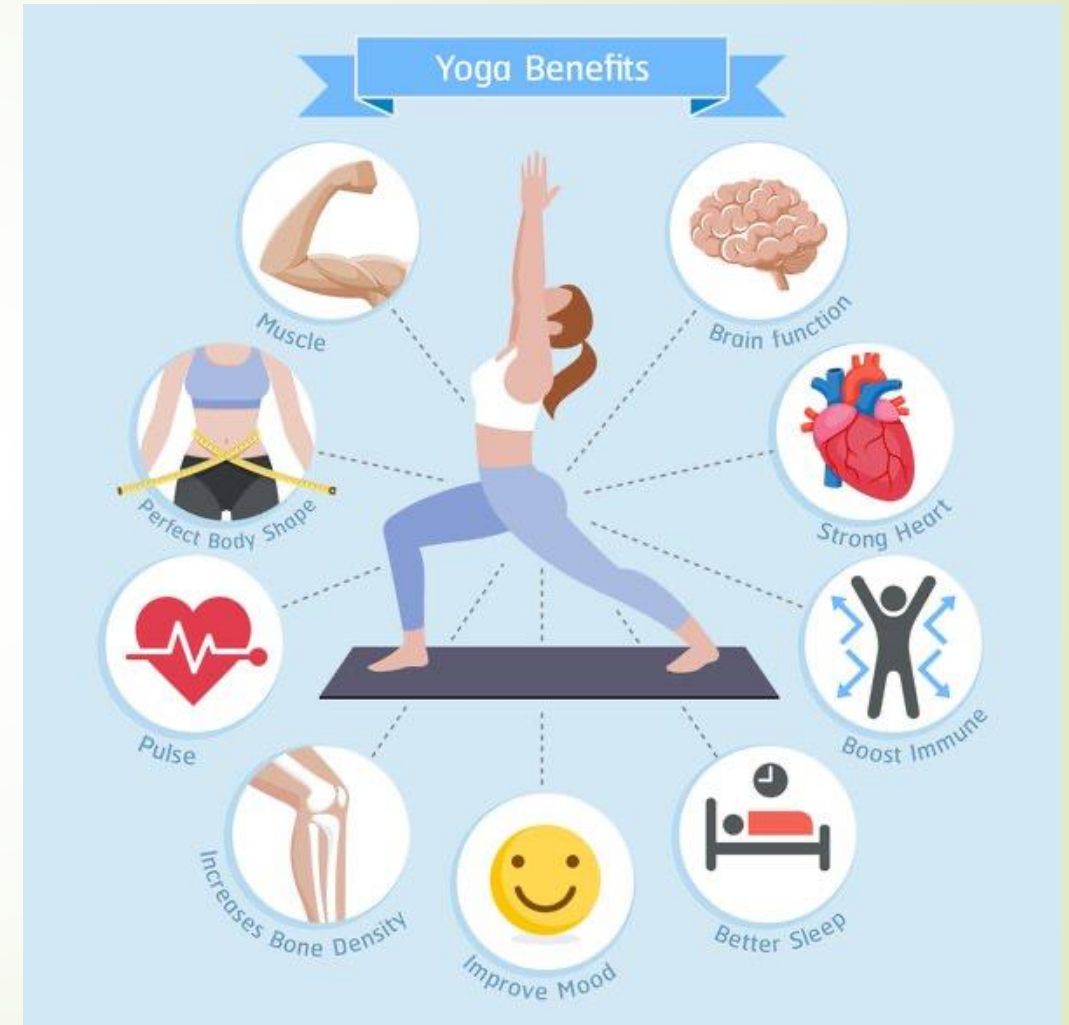
3. _____



Professional and Personal Hobbies

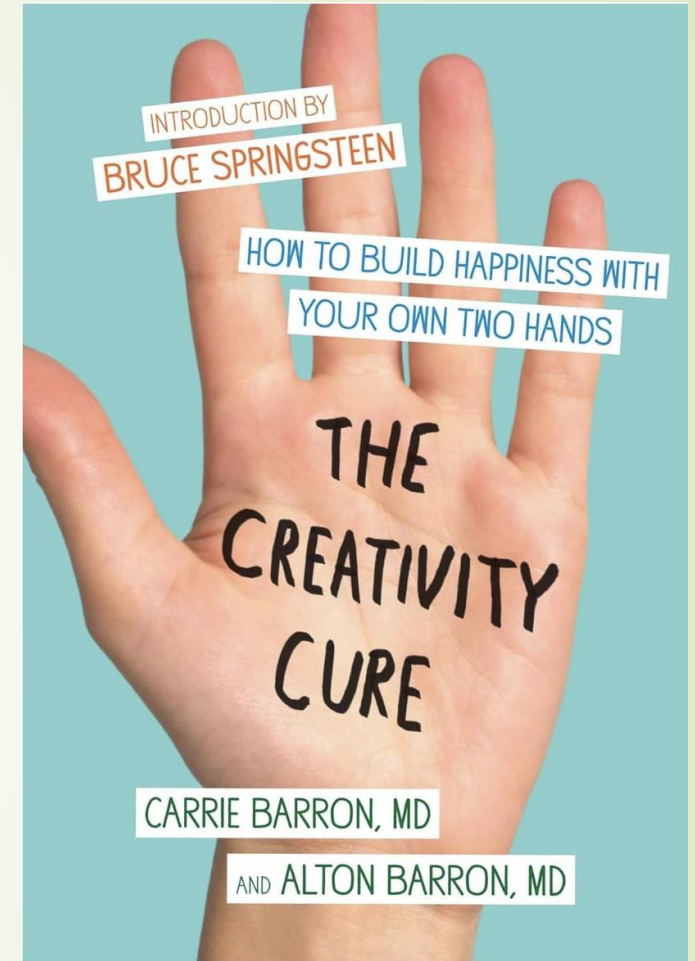
Yoga

- Fitness, Stretching, Meditation, Mindfulness
- Try it once - if you like it, come back and if you don't like it, come back
- Dopamine, oxytocin, and serotonin are elevated in yoga practitioners.
- Yogis exhibit higher levels of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), which plays a key role in the down regulation of our stress response.
- Many different types for everyone
 - Hot yoga
 - Yin
 - Outdoor
 - Traveling/Vacation
 - You Tube or App (Down Dog)



Creativity

- This insightful book from wife-and-husband physicians Carrie and Alton Barron presents an innovative, highly achievable five-part plan to find happiness and alleviate depression and anxiety by tapping into creative potential.
- A gifted psychiatrist and a premier hand surgeon, Carrie and Alton Barron draw upon the latest psychological research, a combined forty years of medical practice, and personal experience to demonstrate how creative action is integral to long-term happiness and well-being. The Five-Part Prescription for the Creativity Cure—Insight, Movement, Mind Rest, Your Own Two Hands, and Mind Shift—leads the way to a more meaningful, fulfilling life by simultaneously developing self-understanding and self-expression
- The perfect self-help book for our handmade, homemade, crafting culture, *The Creativity Cure* has a simple yet profoundly inspirational message: that you can find the authentic, contented life you crave by taking happiness into your own two hands.








Mindfulness and Mental Health

Perspective

- The longer I live, the more I realize that 99% of your joy in life is dependent on your perspective
- Try to become a “glass is half full” person

**What's Right With Healthcare**[+ Follow](#)



What's Right With Healthcare

The U.S. healthcare system is often criticized as broken. However, there are people, programs, and technologies making a positive impact on our lives every day influencing both the quality of care we receive and the manner in which we receive it. The purpose of this podcast is to educate and inspire listeners by focusing on what's right with healthcare.

Gratitude

- When you have a positive thought about a person or an occurrence, share it! This is contagious and can set a positive atmosphere in your workplace.
- Phone call – takes less than 1 minute!
- Practice daily gratitude – 3 things everyday (can be done individually, but also with staff, family members, children, etc.)



Coaching

- Coaching and therapy both offer support for personal and professional growth, but they differ significantly in focus and approach.
 - Coaching - helping individuals achieve goals and improve performance
 - Therapy - mental health concerns and emotional healing
- Coaching opportunities are available specifically for physicians and others in medical field
- See me afterwards if you want more information or visit the registration table

Life Coach vs. Therapist: What's The Difference?

Therapist

CREDENTIALS

- Must have an advanced degree and license to practice therapy

TOPICS

- Focuses on mental health

TENSE

- Rooted in the past & present

STRUCTURE

- Sessions vary based on the treatment modality

DURATION

- Not usually time-limited

INSURANCE COVERAGE

- Services covered by insurance or eligible for reimbursement

FIT

- Look for a therapist you feel comfortable opening up to, and who has experience treating your concerns.

Life Coach

CREDENTIALS

- Anyone can call themselves a life coach; certifications are available

TOPICS

- Focuses on goals

TENSE

- Focuses on the future

STRUCTURE

- Sessions often have clear structures

DURATION

- Often short-term

INSURANCE COVERAGE

- Services are paid for entirely out-of-pocket; insurance coverage does not apply

FIT

- Seek a life coach who has qualified credentials, and whose philosophy inspires you.



The Power of 'No'

Saying No

- We often fall into the fallacy we are the only one that can accomplish a task
- Truth – there are often many people that can accomplish this task
- Realized I was often being asked because it was known that I would say “yes”
- Saying “No” takes practice – I commend others both when they say no and say yes!
- Now – when faced with an opportunity:
 - Take time to assess
 - Talk it over with family and friends
 - Will it bring me joy?

Nice ways to say NO:

1. “I really appreciate you asking, but I can’t.”
2. “Thanks for thinking of me, but I’ll pass this time.”
3. “I’m honored, but I have to say no.”
4. “I wish I could, but it’s not possible right now.”
5. “I’m flattered, but I’m not available.”
6. “That sounds great, but I can’t commit.”
7. “I’m focusing on other priorities at the moment.”
8. “I’m not the best person for that.”
9. “I’d rather not, but thank you!”
10. “I’m going to have to decline, unfortunately.”
11. “Let me think about it and get back to you.”
12. “I don’t have the capacity to give it the attention it deserves.”
13. “I’m currently overcommitted.”
14. “That’s not something I can take on right now.”
15. “It’s not a good fit for me at this time.”



Maintaining Balance at Every Stage in Your Career

- Medical School
 - Trinity Wood, MS2 at Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine
- Residency
 - Hanna Meek, DO, PGY-II, Internal Medicine Residency
 - Marjorie Schoen, MD, PGY-III, Family Medicine Residency
- Early in Career
 - Stephanie Posten, DO, FAAP, Pediatrician
- Late in Career
 - Kristi Rice, MD, Pediatrician 23 years, UW Professor, APD Pediatric Residency
 - Julie Kaczmark, MD, FACR, Radiologist 19 years, WSU and UW



References



1. Changes in Burnout and Satisfaction With Work-Life Balance in Physicians and the General US Working Population Between 2011 and 2014 Shanafelt, Tait D. et al. Mayo Clinic Proceedings, Volume 90, Issue 12, 1600 – 1613.
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