

Ep #78: How to Build Unstoppable Confidence with Dr. Anyaoku



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Dr. Una

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Dr. Una: Hi docs, welcome to *The EntreMD Podcast*, where it's all about helping amazing physicians just like you embrace entrepreneurship so you can have the freedom to live life and practice medicine on your terms. I'm your host, Dr. Una.

Well, hello, hello. Happy new year. Welcome to the very first episode in 2021. And listen, I was trying to think of what I need to do to give you the nice push you need on our first episode. And I couldn't think of something better. So, I want to introduce you to a special guest. Her name is Dr. Anyaoku.

Dr. Anyaoku is a mentor of mine, she actually interviewed me when I was trying to get into residency at the hospital where I trained, Newark Beth Israel in New Jersey. And she is someone who's been in my life since then. I graduated in 2008, so it's been a while since then. And if there's anything I've learned from her it's how to be confident. It's how to be authentic. It's how to own who I am. It's how to not be a pushover. How to negotiate. I mean, she is so amazing.

So, she was a guest in the EntreMD Business School and I brought her in because I was like, "I need people to experience this. I need people to realize that they can have unstoppable confidence." And I'm going to be sharing a part of her interview in the business school with you. That's what our episode is going to be for today.

And what you're going to leave with is unstoppable confidence. Dr. Anyaoku is amazing, all her handles and all of that would be in the show notes. You should follow her. And I want you to just settle in and lean into this episode and get ready to be blown away.

All right, so here's the episode with Dr. Anyaoku.

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Dr. Anyaoku: I'm so thrilled to be here with you this evening. Dr. Una talks about me being the boss, but I'm here to tell you she's the boss. I don't get to argue. When she says, "I need you here." Here I am. So, I'm so excited to be able to talk to you today.

Like she said, I know some of you already, some people are my neighbors. But I am a physician executive. I've been a clinician for more years than I care to count. I've been a physician leader for about two decades, just going through a residency program, I ran the division of general pediatrics at the Children's Hospital of New Jersey. I left there as division chief, was recruited to Omaha, Nebraska to start up a pediatric service line for CHI in that state. And was ultimately recruited to Seattle to head up pediatrics for Swedish Health Services, which is a multi-specialty, multi-hospital system in the greater Pacific Northwest.

I've been a teacher, a mentor, a sponsor, a coach. I've had opportunities to build teams. I've been a business strategy development leader. I've been an advocate working with legislatures and with regulatory bodies. I am a public speaker, motivational speaker. I am a mom of two gigantic teenage boys who eat everything that's not nailed down and have a ton of energy and you have to marshal that. I am the first daughter in my family and I end up guiding and directing a ton of stuff.

And I say all of this because it adds up to a whole lot of experience, right? It adds up to a whole lot of power, but it only counts as power if you recognize it. If you understand that this is who you are, what you are, and it's right in the palms of your hands, right? And you wield it without even thinking about it. But then we decide one day that we're going to do a business and it's like, "Oh my God, I can't do this. How can I manage this?" And, "I can't start up doing videos. I can't start marketing myself. How can I do that?"

And I give you kind of my background because the first thing is to say, "Hold on a minute, you're doing a whole lot more than this already. Like,

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baseline, you are a boss, bad boss in all sort of spaces that you haven't actually thought about, right?" You're doing it, it's just done because, well, yeah, that's what I do. And you haven't actually thought about it. But this is not a unique problem to you, right?

This is a problem of women in general. Some men have impostor issues, but for the most part men, their criteria is, "Am I alive? Am I breathing? I qualify." And they're good for it, right? They're like, "Yeah, clearly, I'm here. And they wanted a human being, so here I am." But as a woman you feel like you have to have every qualification.

So, I'm guilty as everyone, right? I'm MD, MPH, MBA, right? I have a CPE, I have a Fellowship from Robert Wood Johnson Leadership Foundation. I have all of this stuff, right? Because you're constantly optimizing your bona fides, right? Because, clearly, if I don't have all of this maybe people won't see that I'm a bad ass and that I can get stuff done.

But by the time I got my MBA, which was only a couple years ago, I had basically decided that I just want to learn this stuff, I just want to be comfortable with the language. But I can start a business because I've started one, right? I can build a service line because I've done it. So, I don't need those extra three letters after my name to say that I can do it. But I'm a lifelong learner, I inherited that from my mother and have not been able to let it go.

So, I say that because people sometimes think that if you don't have all of those qualifications you can't do the things that you want to do and that's just not true.

So, I really want to spend most of this evening in a conversation with you. To share my experience, to share my journey, and to share what I've learned from talking to young physicians over the years, young men and women who have been just struggling in different places. So, in residency,

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“How do I make it through this service, this group? I can’t seem to connect.” And that’s phase one.

And then they get out and, “There’s other jobs that are facing me, what should I do? How do I decide which of them I want to do?” And, “Oh, I’m in my job and they’re accusing me of being an angry Black woman.” Or, “They’re excluding me from meetings, how do I navigate my space?”

What I came to recognize over the years as I’ve had these conversations is that as leaders, and as women, or as business developers over the years, you have to evolve. You have to evolve from thinking of yourself as just a clinician, as just anything, right? Just fill in the blank. But I’m just... No, you’re not just anything, you’re pretty damn awesome, right? So, the just piece has to go away.

You have to evolve from that way of thinking. You have to lead yourself, right? You have to get to a space where you can lead yourself, lead your team with confidence. And you do that by owning your expertise. And you own your expertise deliberately. It doesn’t happen casually, because like I said, most of what we do we do as second nature to ourselves. But when you want to own your... You have to stop for a minute and think to yourself, “Wait, these are the things that I want to do. What skills does it require? Do I have them?”

And one of the techniques that I’ve found very helpful to do that is to imagine that you’re having this conversation with somebody else, right? Because if your sister came to you and told you she wanted to start a business you’d be like, “Oh, sure. Totally, you’ve got this.” Right? But when it’s you, you’ve got 500 reasons why, “Oh, but I’m really just good at primary care. I’m really just good at being a rheumatologist, I’ve never tried doing mental health. How does that fit into this bucket?” Right? “I’m really just good at being a dermatologist and I’ve never thought about how I get people to eat healthy for their skin. And that’s just something I do on the side.”

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But all of it is who you are, right? That whole package is you. And how do you distill all of it and bring it as an offering to the world, who benefits from your expertise and all the years of experience that you have. And I think when I was on the call the last time I talked about Joseph Campbell, does anybody know who that is?

So, Joseph Campbell is an author who wrote the book called *The Hero's Journey*. And the principal of *The Hero's Journey* is that the journey of life is not a straight path. It is winding, it has dips, and highs, right? And every time you go into a dip, whether that dip is illness, whether that dip is loss of a job, whether it's isolation, or whatever thing that has befallen you. You go into that dip, but when you come out of it you come out with a gift that you could not have gotten if you didn't go into that dip. And the purpose of that gift is to take you to the next level because your life's journey, every step and every experience you have is designed to enrich you for the next phase of the journey.

So, what a lot of us are is, having gone through 59 dips of countless hours of studying for medical school, applying to tons of them, going through medical school, practicing, we're going through all these dips, learning all the things and we arrive at the fifth station just to pick a number and we're like, "Oh my God, I can't build my practice." Well, you know what? You've been through a bunch of dips and you've learned so much along that way, bring it to this platform because that's what the purpose of that journey was.

And so I always say that the first thing you have to do is just reflect. And as a leader, as an entrepreneur, as a business person you need to give yourself time to just be silent, be still, just think about what it is you're trying to do and what tools you have. Because when you're running, you're only operating on autopilot. And so if you haven't stopped to think about it you don't realize that you already have everything you need because you're only accessing the things that are built into autopilot. And some of those skills are built in but you've just never had a chance to think about it.

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So, you have to force yourself to take some time to reflect. Just be still. Be still in the morning, be still on your way to work, be still on vacation, carve out time to just think. And I know that having worked with Dr. Una, you've had lots of those conversations overtime, that you have to really just think about what it is that you want to do and focus on it.

And I'll tell you the thing that helped me the most to get over impostor syndrome is think about how mad you'll be when somebody less qualified than you goes ahead and does it, right? You'll be like, "Really? I'm over here trying to get this, this, and that together and this little two by four piece of person who doesn't have a fraction of the experience I have has done it and they're over here talking it up and I'm thinking, you have got to be kidding me, right?" And so I say just let that motivate you.

It motivated me to learn to drive at age 24 because I was struggling to drive. Everybody has been driving for years and I'm like, "Oh my God." Then I said to myself, "All these cab drivers on the street who can't keep a car straight, who drive like maniacs, they're driving, why can't you drive?" How annoyed are you when somebody who is so imminently less qualified than you are is doing, with apparent ease, what you're struggling to do? So, for me, that's been a great motivator so I thought I'd just throw that out there for you in case it helps somebody.

And the third point that I focus on is that you recognize that what you want to do, your business idea, your expansion idea, your marketing, it's a gift. It's a gift that you have been given and it's a gift that you have a responsibility to share. And if you see it as a gift then you have urgency to not hold it to yourself, right? You have some urgency in your mind about sharing that gift that you have.

And if you don't think about it that way it's just like, "Oh, okay, I'll get to it at some point." But, if you recognize that this is something that has been given to me that I need to share, that I need for people to get the benefit of,

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then it gives you the impetus and the energy to keep going forward with it. So that's the third step that I think about.

And the fourth one is advice that I was given years ago, and that is to own your expertise. Just own it, it's not... You know how we do, "Oh, you look so nice." "This old thing? This dress that I just picked up for five dollars?" "Ah, you really handled that patient well." "My day's work and I do it. I just did this, it's just this stuff."

No, you're pretty awesome, own it. Just step into it and just own it. Don't apologize for it, don't explain it. It just is, you haven't gotten here by chance, you've worked pretty darn hard to get where you are. Own it. Step into it because if you don't step into it nobody's going to step into it for you.

You're thinking that, "Oh, my work speaks for me." The very first coach I ever had in my leadership fellowship, she said, "I'm going to tell you something." She was from the south. She goes, "I'm going to tell you something, women are always thinking that your work is going to speak for you and so you don't toot your own horn. And I'm here to tell you work does not speak. All it does is generate more work. So, you have to speak. When you do it, you say you did it."

It can be a humble brag as my kids call it. They're like, "Yeah, mom, way to humble brag." They like to say that to me but hey, that's their problem. But you just have to say it. Say it even if you only say it to yourself, "You did that, girl. You did that. That was hard and you did it." Because marking that accomplishment helps you to own it. Helps you to tell the story, right? Because when you meet people you need to be able to tell you are story, who are you and what do you represent?

So, you have to market, you have to make a point of documenting it and saying, "You know what? I did that. People thought it couldn't be done or maybe they thought they could..." But you did it. Check. And then you keep moving, right? And you're like, "You know, when was the last time I did

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something like that? You know, I did something like that a couple years ago, I did that too.” Oh yeah, if you don’t do it, if you don’t help yourself nobody is coming to do it for you.

And you will look around and people are talking themselves up and you think, “Oh, that’s so immodest.” It’s not about being immodest, it’s about recognizing that you have that skill so that people don’t act as if they’re doing you a favor when you step into your own space that you’ve earned. More than earned, right? You’ve done it, you’ve done the work, you’ve practiced it. Nobody is doing you a favor; you are bringing your gift to them.

And you have to think about it that way. Because otherwise you’re like, “Oh, well, maybe they’ll just give me like five minutes to talk and then I can just sit over in the corner.” Well, if you talk for only five minutes the rest of what you had to share doesn’t get shared. And as you’re sitting in that room...

I’ve worked in corporate health institutions for a long time, so I’m used to a big conference rooms. And so when I go in, initially I’ll go in and go, “Oh, I’ll just say this one thing so that I’ve made some contribution and I’ll just be quiet.” And then I’m quiet and I start hearing what everybody else is saying. I’m like, “Well, I have better stuff to say than that. What are they talking about? Okay, you know what? I have something to say.” Right?

But that’s kind of the way you have to think about it, how do you own your expertise? It was not stolen, it was bought and paid for with your blood, sweat, and tears; own it. You’ve done the work, step into it.

I look at men, I have two sons, and I think that honestly, genetically, they just don’t have this problem. They just totally feel like, “I washed the dishes and everybody should be clapping for me because I washed the dishes.” Like, “Okay bro, I’m glad you washed the dishes today. Remember that it’s still your turn tomorrow.” Right?

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But they can be strutting about the most random stuff, right? If you've ever seen a man who cooked a dish and he's just bragging about it and I'm thinking, "Really?" But for women, especially, we tend to just... We're getting it done. We just do it and we keep moving. Which may be okay in normal life because we're doing so many things. But when you're trying to promote yourself in a business, in a corporate space you actually have to stop and remind yourself that all that stuff you did, it wasn't without cost. It wasn't easy and benign; you actually did stuff and you need to recognize it so that other people can recognize it.

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Dr. Una: All right, well there you have it, Building Unstoppable Confidence with Dr. Anyaoku. So there was so many nuggets. I mean, I took notes when I was there live, I took notes when I listened to it a second time to get it ready for you to listen to it. And so this is what I'm going to tell you. One of the best ways to learn is to teach.

So, what I want you to do is I want you to think, "What are my biggest takeaways from this? What am I going to do with what I got?" And I want you to take a screenshot of this episode on whatever app you're watching it on, and I want you to put those three takeaways or five takeaways, whatever they are, and post it on social media. Tag me, tag us, EntreMD. #EntreMD and I would love to check those out.

Okay, so when you do that you'll be learning it more, you'll be teaching it to others, so you're paying it forward. And then you'll be setting yourself up to be held accountable because hey, you said you're going to do all of this stuff. Okay, so do that but I don't want you to just hear this and say, "That was cute and she's amazing."

I want you to hear this and I want you to change your life. I want you, in the next 90 days, to say, "Oh my goodness, I did not know I could be this confident. I did not know I could be this unstoppable. That's what I want to

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hear from you. Okay? So, go do it and I will see you on the next episode of *The EntreMD Podcast*.

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