

Ep #159: How to Stay Positive in the Face of Challenges



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Dr. Una

The EntreMD Podcast

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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, my friends. And welcome to another episode of *The EntreMD Podcast*. As always, I'm always excited to be in your ears. Thank you so much for listening. And I want to start us off by reading an amazing review by one of our listeners. I love shouting you guys out. I love doctors, I love supporting doctors, I love raving about doctors, I love promoting doctors, I love all of it.

So, this is Dr. Ryan and he says, "Amazing podcast." And again, those five lovely stars that I really, really love. And he goes on to say, "*The EntreMD Podcast* and Dr. Una are amazing. I have been so encouraged to listen and be inspired and equipped to go out and do amazing things. From discovering the podcast in March to starting my own podcast on physician wellness in July..." think about it, four months, "I have benefited greatly from her wisdom and experience. Thanks, Dr. Una for being willing to put yourself out there and equip other physicians, even as an introvert." And he says, "I am too."

So, all those physicians looking for encouragement to start to scale a business and be part of changing the culture of medicine, look no further. Subscribe to *The EntreMD Podcast* today. Now, this is Dr. Ryan. He is the host of the MedEdWell Podcast. I want you to write him a review after you listen to a few episodes and share his podcast as well. The world is a better place when physicians rise.

So, thank you so much for that, Ryan, I really appreciate it. And thank you for what you do. And thank you for taking the steps and starting your own podcast and owning your voice and being part of the change, being a doctor changing medicine. And I can't wait to see where this takes you.

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That's the beautiful thing about being an entrepreneur. You never really know where this journey leads you, but it's all good.

So, today, I want to acknowledge the times that we live in and the journey of an entrepreneur. So, the times we live in are challenging. And the journey of an entrepreneur is challenging. And if anybody has sold you some goods that, you know, if you have the right formula then everything's just a bed of roses, they lied to you.

Entrepreneurship is something that is full of challenges. But it's an amazing journey. I wouldn't trade it for anything. And there's so much fun to be had as well. So, it's not like it's bad. It's just challenging. And that's what it is. And I want to talk about how to stay positive in the face of challenges.

And I think what really triggered me wanting to record this episode is yesterday I had a live session with the students in the EntreMD Business School and it was so wild and exciting and everybody left encouraged. People came in encouraged and people couldn't wait to share their wins and all of those things.

But that doesn't mean there are no challenges. It was just such a positive, uplifting, inspiring experience, even though everyone had challenges. You know what I mean? And so, I thought about it and I was like, "You know what? Let me come talk about what you can do to stay positive in the face of challenges."

Now, this is not about pretending that challenges are not there. We don't pretend. They are there and they are challenging. But you can still enjoy your journey. Because if you think about it, the journey is never going to end. We don't arrive. That's the thing about being a human is that you are becoming.

You don't become. You're becoming, every day, you're becoming a better version of yourself, an upgraded version of yourself. And you just keep going. And so, if you're going to be on that journey of striving to become all

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you can be, then there's going to be challenges. So, what are going to do? Wait until the afterlife to celebrate? No, we're not going to do that.

So, I'm going to tell you three things: three of my best things. How about that? And so, the first is pretty obvious if you know me. The first is celebrate your wins. And you might say, "I've heard that before." Okay, but are you doing it?

And when I talk about celebrating your wins, you are celebrating everything. I celebrate – now, let me backtrack though, in the beginning as an entrepreneur, I didn't celebrate. I had so many milestones that went by. I don't have any pictures of them. I have to go back and think, "When did this happen?" I didn't acknowledge any of it.

And there were so many amazing things that happened. But guess what I was doing? I was focusing on all the things that weren't working or all the ways other businesses were better than mine and all that kind of stuff.

And it just made the journey a little more sucky. Now, I'm in a position where I'm loving all of it. There are challenges, but I have the ability to choose what I want to focus on.

So, you can celebrate your wins. You can celebrate all your wins in the face of adversity. So, in the group yesterday in the EntreMD Business School, there were wins like, "Oh my goodness, I did my first Facebook live," and the crowd went wild because we celebrate all of it.

And then we had one doc who was like, "I did my last day as an employed physician and I'm ready to launch my practice," which was so crazy. And we celebrated that. You might be like, "Well, she hasn't started the practice yet. She hasn't made her first 100K," or whatever, but we celebrate that. Why? Because that's what's coming next, and we're going to celebrate that too.

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And then as if that was not enough, another doc says, “Well I’m going to follow up with her. Tomorrow is my last day.” And we celebrated that. And we had a doc who was like, “I’ve been stalling on launching my business and this is the date I’m going to launch it.” So we celebrated that too.

What were we celebrating? A decision. And you might say, “That’s just a decision.” Yeah, but do you know, most humans haven’t made that decision to start? So, we acknowledge it and we celebrate it. We had another doc who was like, “Oh my gosh, I crossed my first 100K,” and the crowd went wild.

I mean, I’m telling you, this is like the first 10 minutes of our session. And the thing is, that was just so crazy to celebrate all of that. And so, to see them come up to own it and celebrate it by themselves, it was just too good. Too, too, too good.

And the reason why I’m pausing to say this is, if you become a person who celebrates, you will enjoy your journey as an entrepreneur. There’s going to be challenges, but you’ll enjoy it.

So, I want you to stop, maybe even pause this, and I want you to look back at the last week, the last two weeks, the last three weeks, the last quarter, this year. What has worked? And I want you to own that. Don’t say it’s just X, Y, Z. There is nothing just about it. Because there are many people who haven’t done what you did, and you before now haven’t done what you did, so celebrate it all. So, that’s the first thing is celebrating all your wins. Celebrate all of them.

The second is really closely knit, but the second is, stay in the right community. My husband describes it this way. He says, if you’re going to be a big dreamer, don’t be friends with people who are fire extinguishers, right?

So, here you are celebrating or here you are owning your dream or here you are owning your voice and you’re around people who are not doing the

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same thing, who are very critical, who think physicians shouldn't be entrepreneurs, who think that making money is a demonstration of greed and nobody should be doing that, we should just be helping people, you know, people who are like, "No it's not that serious. We shouldn't be celebrating that." Then those are fire extinguishers.

Because you're going to be at home, you're going to journal, you're going to write all your wins and you're going to go talk to one person who's just going to put out all the fire, who's going to flatten your tire, you know what I'm saying? So you have to be in the right community.

And you might say, "Well, the community is not there." Well, first of all, it is. Listen, if you are a physician, if you are a physician and you want to start a business or you want to grow a business, or you're a physician who's frustrated with the process of being an entrepreneur, or you say things like, "Entrepreneurship is too lonely," there is a place for you. It is called the EntreMD Business School.

Now, granted, it's not open year-round, but it is open twice a year and there is a waitlist, entremd.com/business. Go get on the waitlist so when it does open up, you will be the first to know. But I am telling you, that is the most positive place for physician entrepreneurs, period.

Like, I get inspired when I go in there. So, there is a place for you. I'll just throw that out there to start with. When you say there's no place, there is a place. There is a place where we celebrate our journey, where we learn to do the hard things, where we cheer each other on, where we go and do scary things, where we take on big challenges, whether those are speaking challenges or whether it's a challenge to write a book or whatever it is, a challenge to hit a certain revenue number in your business.

We take all the challenges. And we do all the celebration, so we're getting massive results, but we're enjoying the journey. Next week, we are going – next week as of the time of this recording. But next week, we are going to

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Hilton Head for our first in-person retreat. I need you to imagine, over 50 doctors in one space dreaming up the next 12 months, getting laser coaching, networking, doing the formal dinner, the whole nine yards. There is a place. Okay, so that was my little, “There is a place.”

And secondly, if you don't have access to that place right now, then create it. Find people who are like you. Find people who are developing the habits that you're developing. Find that and create that community. But you cannot be in relationships with fire extinguishers and expect to stay positive in the face of challenges.

This is not a business example, but I want to throw out this story real quick. When I was pregnant with my first child, when I was 21 weeks pregnant, she was diagnosed with a congenital diaphragmatic hernia. And the initial thing was the OB was like, “Okay, you need to go see the maternal fetal people in Philadelphia.” That's were they sent me, to Children's Healthcare of Philadelphia. So, CHOP.

And when I got there, they were like, “Listen, this is really bad You guys are young. Just abort the baby and start over.” And my husband and I had made a decision that we're not going to do that. We're going to go the course and they're like, “Okay, it's going to be a long course. She's going to have to be in the ICU for nine to 12 months and all this stuff.”

And I had decided, “Well, I'm going to go through this. I'm going to do my part. I'm going to hold only my faith,” and all of that. And that's what I did.

Now, because I was a resident at the time and I was working 80-hour workweeks, I was doing NICU calls and all these things, I had to be away a lot because I had to go to Philly for all my prenatal appointments and stuff like that and I lived in New Jersey at the time. So, we're talking a two, two and a half hour ride.

And I told one person because I needed this person to cover for me. I told this one person. I was like, “Look at what's going on. So, I'm going to need

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to be gone a bit and some places I'll need coverage, maybe you cover some of my stuff, I'll do it afterwards."

And she was like, "What are you doing? Go abort the baby already." And I realized that I was going to have to quarantine my dream. I was going to have to quarantine my dream, which means I was going to put people around me who were able to stand with me or encourage me or show me things I could do and stuff like that. Your relationships matter.

She, after her, I had one friend who was on the same page with me that knew. Other than that, no other person in my hospital, nobody knew; nobody. What was I doing? I was quarantining my dream. And in the same way, your business dreams, you're going to have to quarantine your dreams. I can almost hear people going, "Wait, wait, wait, so what happened to her?"

So, yeah, I had her at 38 weeks and she had surgery on the day of life. We got discharged from the hospital on day nine, which is a total miracle. We call her our miracle baby. And we named her Cheta Chukwu, which means remember God and his mighty acts. She's 13 years old today. She's never had any complications. She's just amazing.

So, that's my dream child and you have a dream business. I had to quarantine my dream and you're going to have to quarantine yours because you already have the self-doubt that you're working through, you already have the insecurities that you're working through, you already have the challenges.

The last thing you need is somebody else coming up to tell you, "This is not going to work." You don't need that. So, you need people that you can run with, people who will inspire you, people who will motivate you just them doing what they do on a daily basis, you are inspired to go the extra mile, people who can be there when you're discouraged and say, "Listen, this is the path of an entrepreneur. It's not a bed of roses, but you've got this.

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People who remind you of the obstacles that you've already overcome and they're like, "Listen, this is just going to be one of those." So, you surround yourself with those people and you quarantine.

So, if someone has the sniffles and a fever and a cough in the middle of COVID, you don't bring them in to be your roommate. You play some separation. In the same way, when people have business COVID, you need some separation. So, stay in the right community. That's the second thing.

Then the third thing is recruit your habits to help you. And I'll tell you what I mean. Recruit your habits to help you. There are some things, some basic things that really help your mood and help you to stay centered and help you to stay positive. And those are things that you should just continue to do.

And it's different for different people. But think about it, when you are sleep deprived, you're cranky. If you're cranky, it's hard to be positive in the face of a challenge. If you ate in a way that you know is not good for you, maybe ate a lot of junk or you drank a lot of coffee and whatever and you're snapping at people, you know that happens on a good day, then that's not something that helps you to be battle-ready when the challenge shows up in your business.

So, recruit your habits. So, if meditation is something you do that is very calming for you and helps you – it's almost like it fills up your tank so that when the challenges come you're in a position to handle them, then that's something you want to build a habit around. That's not something you want to do when the challenge shows up. That's just something you want to do, period.

If you're a person of faith and prayer is a thing that you do, again, you don't want it to be something you do once in a while. You want this to be a habit. Why? You know that, when the challenges come, you need the strong faith

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so you can weather that storm. Sleeping, you know, they say seven to nine hours, Dr. Funke Afolabi-Brown is our sleep expert. She's the founder of Restful Sleep MD. You can check her out. She's all about sleep.

I did an episode with her on sleep. The link will be to it in the show notes. But sleep seven to nine hours. What you eat, a lot of junk, a lot of coffee, all that, do you want to take all that out and eat cleaner? Walking, oh my goodness, if you're like me, it is so inspiring for me to be walking. It is so refreshing. It is so – it gives me such mental clarity. I do not know how to explain.

I've tried to figure out, like, why am I like that? And then I stopped asking the question. I just am. So, I'm going to take advantage of something that's a thing for me. So, walking. Journaling. Now, that one is not for me. There are many people who journal. I've tried it for all 42 years that I've been alive, since I've been an older teen. And I've just not been able to do it consistently.

So, if you have a secret, you can DM me and let me know. But it's just not my thing. But for people, that's so relaxing. And so, those habits, you build up those habits. And what happens is, when the challenges come, it's meeting somebody who is whole, somebody who has a full tank, somebody who has the ability to weather storms. When you're sleep-deprived and your diet is upside down and your mind is cluttered because you're not journaling or walking or taking the time to think or meditate and all of that, when a challenge hits you, it's like everything falls apart.

So, recruit your habits to help you. One of the things – I take the time to study successful people. I do that a lot. And one of the things I've noticed is they all have habits, they have morning routines and stuff like that. The thing about morning routines is that they're easy to do, they're easy not to do.

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You don't see the results right away, so it's kind of like, why am I doing this? But if you will take the time to look at your life over the years, you will find out that these habits have really changed your mind.

You guys have heard me talk about my daily five, my habits, I talk about that a lot. And those habits, those five to six habits depending on the year have absolutely 100% changed my life. The fact that I would take the time to pray and meditate every day. I would do the MTWK, which is meaningful time with kids. I would read, I would review my goals, I would listen to a podcast, I would exercise.

And I'm doing this – I mean, sometimes it falls apart, especially if I travel and things like that. But I'm doing this five to seven days a week. It has changed my life completely. And so, recruit your habits.

So, what do you need to do so that you can be an entrepreneur even in the midst of a pandemic, or any other crisis or recession or whatever, and you can stay positive, you can weather the storm, you can manage the challenges? You need to be that person who celebrates wins. You need to be that person who stays in the right community.

And I feel like I need to emphasize this again. Your community will make or break you. You have to be in the right community. And you cannot let people choose. You choose who is in community. And then the third one is recruit your habits to help you.

So, I want you to get off this with a commitment, "I'm going to celebrate my wins. I'm going to stay in the right community." And for you that may mean take one friend off, bring one friend in, bring someone who's inspiring, who's on a journey just like you in. It may be getting on the waitlist or signing up for the EntreMD Business School. It may look like that. And I want you to recruit your habits.

So, look at a habit that maybe you didn't realized that you'd let go of. You thought you were still doing it, but if you look you're like, "Wait a minute, I'm

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not doing that anymore.” So, look at your habits. Look at what fell off. Look at what you haven’t been able to do consistently. Make a new commitment. Get a new accountability buddy and get this done. It will change your life.

We’re going through life. We’re becoming. And there is nothing better than being able to enjoy the ride. You have the challenges, but you focus on the wins, you focus on what is working, you enjoy your journey. And that’s what I want for you. This doesn’t have to be depressing. This doesn’t have to be terribly sad. It can be hard and great.

So, as always, I’m rooting for you. Thank you for listening. This will be so helpful. I cannot tell you how many entrepreneurs quit. And it’s because they don’t realize that, listen, you can go through this in a different way. You can go through this and it can be fun, for want of a better word.

So, I want you to share this with the doctors in your life. Tag me on it, #entremd and I will see you, my friends, on the next episode of *The EntreMD Podcast*.

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