

Ep #261: How I Overcame My Fears and Launched My Dream Business with Dr. Lara Hochman



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Dr. Una

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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.

Dr. Una: Well hello, hello my friends. Welcome back to another episode of *The EntreMD Podcast*. As always we are going to have a super amazing time. I have the Dr. Lara Hochman here. She is a family medicine physician and she's what I call a medical matchmaker. If you're like, I do not like my job, she is the person you talk to.

So I'm so excited to have her here, she's also one of our really loved students in the EntreMD Business School. In fact, after the first year she was like, I'm here for another year. So she's currently in her second year. And I am so excited to have her come on, we're going to share her story and you're going to have a blast.

So, welcome Dr. Lara.

Dr. Lara: Thank you so much for having me. I'm so excited to be here.

Dr. Una: I'm excited you're here. I love your energy and all of that stuff. So people are about to feel the Dr. Lara magic, that's what is about to happen.

So can you take a moment and introduce yourself to the listeners?

Dr. Lara: Yeah, so I'm Lara Hochman, I'm a family medicine physician and I'm the founder and CEO of Happy Day Health where I match doctors with practices that really fit with their value systems and with what's important to them.

Dr. Una: And you know that I love that, right? I tell you this every single time. And the reason why I'm stopping to say this is because one of the things that EntreMD is all about is bringing doctors to a point where we are back to being the leaders in the healthcare space, inside and outside of the

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exam room. Where we fall in love with medicine again and we have financial freedom.

And so there's so many doctors who are burnt out and want to leave medicine, but they love medicine, it's all the other stuff around it. And truthfully if they could be in a space they loved, they wouldn't leave. And so what you're doing is you're helping doctors fall in love with medicine again, you're helping doctors stay in medicine, you're helping doctors overcome burn out. It is beyond beautiful, I love it.

Dr. Lara: Thank you.

Dr. Una: Yeah, I absolutely love it.

Dr. Lara: Yeah, I mean I went into it with all of that in mind and it's kind of evolved into unofficial career consulting, which I really enjoy. And I have had physicians who were burnt out and found something better and they're just so much happier and it's extremely rewarding, that's why I do this and I just love it.

Dr. Una: She loves it. I love it too. And you said something that's important, I want to make sure nobody misses it, which is this evolution. When we start our businesses we will typically start with our own idea of what it would look like, it's not unusual for it to evolve into something else. Now, it's something that we would love and in the end people are like, "Oh my goodness, your business is s brilliant." Not realizing that that's like version 13, you know what I mean?

Dr. Lara: Yeah.

Dr. Una: Like version 13, at the core it's the same as when you started but it doesn't look anything like it looks when you started. So the important thing is to start so you can start evolving, right? So that's beautiful.

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So talk to me, because you're a family medicine doctor, right, they don't teach us about Happy Day Health in medical school, you picked this up. So talk to me about what your business idea, your business life was like before the Business School. Like take us back in time a little bit.

Dr. Lara: Oh my goodness, I am a completely different person than I was before. So before I joined EntreMD Business School I was a physician and I was in a leadership position. And I had already started just figuring out that I was someone that people actually counted on and could rely on.

And I had something to say, but I still didn't have that confidence that people actually wanted to hear what I have to say as far as the future of medicine, or how to advocate for ourselves as physicians, and how to avoid burn out and all of those things. And it took me quite a while to start my business for many reasons, which we don't need to get into today.

But I'm so grateful that I found the Business School and I actually went to one of your live events, three days after I had formed my LLC. And it was just a no-brainer. And so I joined the Business School and was so excited.

And I've evolved from feeling like I was an island and I was one of the only people working to try to change the system. And it takes a village because we all need to be doing something different. And having met you and all of the people in the Business School I have so much optimism for the future of medicine and so much optimism for the fact that there's so many of us that are doing this.

And you keep encouraging me and every time I think, "Oh my gosh, this is so hard, I can't do it," you're there to say what you're doing is important and it's needed. And everyone in the Business School is cheering me on. And if someone is mean to me on social media, as they are, I think I've cried in the Business School so many times. But you guys keep me going. And so it's kept me going, it's kept my passion for what I do and realizing that what I'm doing is important.

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I have absolutely found my voice. A part of why I didn't start a business in 2017, which is when I realized that I wanted to be a part of the change, is because I had thought no one wants to hear what I have to say. No one is going to listen to me when I'm telling people to negotiate with their contracts and they're telling me, but I had to sign this. No one wants to hear what I'm saying, no one listens to me.

And I've gone from there to being able to get my voice out there, I even have a YouTube channel, which I was not on social media before I joined the school. I have learned to say what I advocate for, which is us standing up for ourselves and the ways we can do that without just throwing that out there and saying, "Everyone listen to me. Everyone listen to me."

And the people that are ready for that change or wondering what's out there, they're at a point that they can listen and I'm able to say what I'm thinking, which is something new for me as well. I was not a speaker, I'm more of a listener. But I'm able to take things in and get my voice out, which is absolutely wonderful.

Dr. Una: Absolutely wonderful. I love it. So I was not a speaker, now I'm a speaker. I was not a YouTuber, now I'm a YouTuber. I was not on social media, now I'm on multiple social media platforms and I'm getting my message out there.

Now, before you signed up for this school, I'm always curious about this, did you have any hang ups? Well, this costs too much, or I don't have the time, or will this work for me, any of those? And what did you do to overcome them? Because, obviously, you joined the school.

Dr. Lara: Yes, I had two hang ups. The small hang up was time. It was in the evening we do dinner with the family every night, so I was a little bit hesitant to give up dinner with my kids once a week. And the big one was the cost. So I didn't have a business, I didn't have any income from the business yet and so that was the biggest one.

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What I did to overcome it, you know, that's interesting because I saw the value that the Business School could bring, which was the networking, which I actually had no idea how good the networking was. But it was networking, the fact that it would keep me on track because I would have that accountability, and learning something new because I did have a little bit of background in business because I have another business that I work on with my husband, but this is a whole nother level of business.

So I saw the value, but the cost was very, very scary. And I essentially over analyzed it and talked about it with everyone that would listen and everyone that wouldn't listen and tried to come up with it. And essentially it was just what my gut was telling me was the right thing to do. I spoke to the poor people who were around me that week I was deciding, that was all I could talk about and all I could think about.

But whether they were encouraging me or discouraging me, what it came down to was, you know, if they encouraged me I was like, I know, right? I know, right? And if they were discouraging me I was like, "No, you're wrong." And so it really just came down to listening to what I knew was right for me.

Dr. Una: So that means that you still had the fear, but you knew it was right so you said yes. That's what it's sounding like.

Dr. Lara: Yes.

Dr. Una: That is fascinating. I'm sure you've used that in every, you're using that in other aspects of your business because it's the same thing, right? We feel the fear but we know that's the path. And so we say yes to the path, even though the fear isn't even what the fear does.

Dr. Lara: Exactly.

Dr. Una: That is so powerful. That is so good. Okay, so you came on in and you're a matchmaker, right? I think in EBS we voted that that's who you

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are, right? You're the medical matchmaker. And I want you to think somebody who you've helped, so either a client or somebody who's watched you on YouTube and stuff, what kind of difference does your work make for physicians?

Dr. Lara: It's a little bit different for everyone, but the overarching theme is finding a job that you can be excited to wake up in the morning. I think all of us that have been in practice have been through a phase where we just feel the sense of dread when we wake up because we're burnt out or whatever reason. And I've really been able to give them their life back, essentially. When you're burnt out at work you're not present with your family and all of that.

So I had a physician recently who, actually they contacted me through LinkedIn and said, I'm trying to figure out what to do with my career. This was a physician in fellowship and we had a couple of very long conversations just about what he wants to do. Does he want to continue his fellowship? Does he want to go back to primary care? And he ended up deciding or realizing that primary care was really where his passion was.

And we talked a little bit about what he would be looking for in a practice and I ended up actually finding him an incredible practice. So excited, he hasn't started yet. He's going to absolutely love it. But he said to me I've changed his life. And that was, oh my gosh, it was so rewarding.

But he went from being burnt out and miserable and knowing he was doing something he didn't want to do every day, from evaluating what was important to him, what were his values in every realm. Whether that's what he wants to do day to day, his salary expectations, and just putting all of his priorities in order. And we found him something that works well for him and he's so excited and his wife is so excited. And everything, hopefully, should line up pretty perfectly because he's so much happier.

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Dr. Una: Wow. So you changed his life, you changed his marriage, because if the wife is happy, everybody's really happy, right? And put him on a path where he'll enjoy his career, he has a joy in medicine. And he's in alignment because you helped him determine what his priorities are and then you found a job that will allow him to live in his priorities. So that is really good.

And the reason why I asked you to share that, one, is I wanted to know. But it's also for people to see, you know, that business that you're like, is this really a business? Does anybody want to hear what I have to say? The potential impact of it is so big that if you could see it, you would not wait on your business another day, right?

And so with what that experience, how many times would you want to experience it? All day, every day. Like for someone to say, you have changed my life, right? And so that's so beautiful. I'm happy that you said yes to your business. I'm happy that you put yourself out there, even though sometimes it's, maybe not terrifying, but there's some hesitancy there because we're human. So thank you for doing that.

So now you decided to join the school and you started doing all the things right? And you're getting these kinds of results. What are some of the practical things that you had to do? So things maybe you picked up in the school or some aspect of the school, you had to apply them to create the growth in your business.

Dr. Lara: Oh, so many things. There's a lot of work with getting over myself that I had to do. I have a huge fear of speaking to people that I don't know. So practically speaking, I just had to do it. And there were definitely days when I just couldn't. I just couldn't, but then I just had to get myself back in there. And that's a little bit along the lines of what we spoke about before, is just getting over your fears. Or even if I don't get over them, I just do it anyway.

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A big part of it was learning how to do what I'm doing, you know, just from the practical aspect of reaching out to people who potentially are going to see me as a spammy recruiter, when part of why I'm doing this is to kind of fight that spammy recruiter thing that we all experience 5, 6, 7, 8 times a day.

So learning how to reach out to people and learning to just be okay with people unsubscribing or saying, you know, I got one text message one time back saying, if you're even a doctor. I'm like no, for real, no, that's me. Because you can't, by text no one knows who I am and no one knows if it's actually me that's messaging them, which it absolutely is.

So practically speaking, I had to learn to do what I'm doing. And I'm learning something new every day. I had to get over myself. I had to be okay with being imperfect because as physicians we are not used to not being perfect. I had to be okay with not knowing what the path was forwards.

So this is something that I've figured out a lot with why we're stuck as physicians is because we don't have that set path we are so used to. We go to college, we study for our MCAT, we go to medical school, we study for our step exams, we go to residency and the path is just set for us. We don't have to ever think. And so we're not I got comfortable with that uncertainty in so many parts of that.

And so that has been tough. And in a good way it's been challenging and I've grown so much from that. And so that's been absolutely huge and something that I hope to teach everyone. Uncertainty can be a good thing. And I do see the potential of where this is going, the potential impact it can have.

And there's a lot of uncertainty about how to get to that point, but I know I can get there. And it's just, you know, I know I have that vision. And I kind of see that 5, 10 years from now. And I just hope to keep having an impact.

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So yeah, practically speaking, I had a lot to overcome to get to where I am today.

Dr. Una: Thank you for sharing that. I'm sure somebody that's listening is like, "Oh." Because this is what telling stories does, this is what community does. It normalizes our challenges, right? I'm sure before this you thought, I have an issue with putting myself out there. I have fear. I am a perfectionist, like it's this unique issue that I have, right?

And then when you hang out with a community of entrepreneurs, and you're looking at them and you're like, "They're all rock stars." And they start talking and you're like, "Wait a minute, we all have said problem," right? It's just varying degrees and some people have overcome theirs to an extent, some people have overcome less, some more, some are just realizing, wow, I thought I was alone, you know?

And so that's the power of of sharing those stories. So thank you for taking us behind the scenes. I'm happy this is not just a highlight reel, that people can see it's available to you, it's available to everybody.

So you talked about what it could look like, can you share a little bit about that? So five years from now what does the Happy Day Health look like?

Dr. Lara: Yes. Okay, so there's a few things. So what I'd love to do, so on a person to person basis is, of course, I'm hoping to help doctors find practices where they're happier. So I hope to impact a lot of people in that way.

Where I see that going, is that right now the small physician-owned private practices are having a hard time attracting doctors because the hospitals are so attractive to them because of salary and all the other shiny benefits that they can give the doctors. Five, maybe 10 years, but probably five years from now what I see happening is that doctors are empowered and doctors are educated.

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And at that point, the tables have turned so that the hospitals have a hard time attracting doctors compared to the private practices because now the private practices are back in control. So that's a big part of where I see this going.

I see all the other changes, and this is where everyone, you and all the people in the business school and even outside the business school come in, is that doctors have taken back that control and that enjoyment of medicine so that, you know, it's a little bit like old school when back in the 90s a doctor would join their practice and they'd be there until the day they retired. And so I hope to bring a little bit more of that back, rather than us jumping job to job to job because we're unhappy.

And then I have these other ideas that I'd like to do once all of this is set where, you know, right now we have an issue in the practices of retaining the medical assistants and the receptionist, there's a lot of turnover. And so I have a solution, but I just need to do one thing at a time. And once this is built out and perfectly running and set, then that's the next step.

Dr. Una: Oh, you're going to be changing stuff.

Dr. Lara: Oh yeah.

Dr. Una: You're going to be changing a lot of stuff. That is amazing. Okay, I'm happy for you, I'm rooting for you, you know that. And doctors need all hands on deck so I'm happy that your hands are on deck, like big time.

So somebody's thinking, they either have an idea they're working on or they've started a business, but it's not optimized. And they're thinking about the business school and they're thinking, I'm not sure about the time, I'm not sure about the money, I'm not sure it's for me. I don't want to be in a group, I'm an introvert, like all of those kinds of things. What would you say to that doc?

Dr. Lara: Oh, just join. That's not even a question.

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Dr. Una: She's like, enough said, just join.

Dr. Lara: Join us. Join us, it's so much fun. It's fun, it's empowering. I've made my best friends in the business school. I've met my people. It's a community. I think we need more communities, I think that's the issue in a lot of what's going on these days. And there's nothing like it. It's incredible. Just join us, it's fun.

Dr. Una: She says just join us, it's fun.

Dr. Lara: Just join us, yeah.

Dr. Una: Okay. She said what she said. All right, thank you for coming to share your story. Some people are like, where can we find her because I have some career stuff that I'm working on. Where can they find you?

Dr. Lara: Yeah, so there's a contact form on my website, please do reach out to me. My website is www.happydayhealth.co. And if you want to include your phone number I'll call you there, but I'd absolutely love to hear from you. Even if you're not sure if you should contact me, contact me, we'll chat, it's okay. You can find me on LinkedIn. My name there is Lara Hochman MD. And if you want to check out my Instagram and TikTok and Twitter, it's Happy Day MD.

Dr. Una: All right, so find her on her website if this is something you're like, wow, I didn't know that was a thing. I would love to talk with her rather than the spammy recruiter. I want to be able to say that I have my life back, I want my spouse to go like, "Oh my goodness, this is amazing." So reach out to her.

And then you can follow her on YouTube as well, because she has a lot of fun videos. If you're listening to the podcast, you're missing out on seeing her because she's just like a ray of sunshine and, you know, bright and happy and all of that. So what you hear in her voice is like 300 times that

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on her face, so it's so much fun. So you can follow her on YouTube and you'll get all the action.

Thank you for coming to share your story. Thank you for taking us behind the scenes. Thank you for being willing to be vulnerable, as opposed to just giving a highlight reel. We like the highlights, and I'm happy you have the business, I'm happy you're getting clients and you're speaking and you're doing all of these things. But thank you for normalizing the challenges for someone who's listening.

Dr. Lara: Oh, you're very welcome. We all have challenges and I think the more of us that share that, the more of us that realize that's okay, that's normal.

Dr. Una: That's normal, yeah. All right people, this is an episode that I want you to take the time to share with another doc in your life because you have no idea about the ripple effect that it's going to have. Somebody's going to say yes to starting, growing, or seriously up-leveling their business because of this and you would have been the person who made it happen.

So you're a part of the EntreMD movement, we can't do this without you. So thank you, thank you, thank you for sharing. And if you're like, yeah, I recognize this, I've been afraid but the business was where I should be, come join us. It's entremd.com/business, we would love to have you.

So thank you for listening, again, don't forget to share, and I'll see you on the next episode of *The EntreMD Podcast*.

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