



EPISODE 4 Do you have transferable skills for nonclinical job? AKA You're not chopped liver!

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HF: *It's almost better really when you look at a job description for there to be a bit of a match but you don't want a full match at all because if you already know how to do all those things, you're ready for the next level job.*

Hey there and welcome to the Doctor's Crossing *Carpe Diem* Podcast. If you're questioning your career in medicine, you've come to the right place. I'm Heather Fork, a former dermatologist and this podcast is all about helping you find your best path forward and how to make those changes in medicine or beyond. You don't need to get stuck at the *white coat crossroads*. So, pull up a chair my friend and let's *carpe* that *diem*.

Hello, hello, and welcome to episode number four of the Doctor's Crossing *Carpe Diem* Podcast. I can't tell you how often I hear this phrase, 'I'm just a physician. I don't have any transferable skills. Who would hire me?'

This is coming from highly educated doctors who are doing the demanding and highly skilled work of caring for patients. They're worried that if they want or need to do something else, they're not qualified! The immediate thought that pops in my mind when I hear this is, **you're not chopped liver!** There are many, many, things you can do with your training. I see it all the time. In my coaching practice it's very common for my new clients to be worried that they're stuck in medicine because this is what they were trained to do. They will say, *All I know how to do is see patients.*

Today is all about debunking this belief about not having transferable skills to do something different, such as a non-clinical job. First, we'll look at the skills that you do have. Then we'll talk about the transferable skills in relationship to non-clinical jobs, and address this catch-22 of needing experience to get the job but not being able to get experience because you're not in that job.

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And I'll also share a funny story from my past, related to transferable skills. Now, if you're thinking you don't have any transferable skills or you don't have enough, let's examine what you do in a typical day. For a lot of you, you are seeing patients in clinic. You go into this room, you have 10 or 15 minutes. You have to quickly establish a rapport. You're doing deep listening, at the same time, you're typing into the EMR and trying to analyze the information that's coming in, and analyzing information in the chart.

You're making decisions, a treatment plan, diagnoses. Meanwhile your staff may be interrupting you for a call about a patient in the hospital. Or you may be worrying about a patient that you just saw 5 minutes ago and then also thinking about how patients are stacking up in the waiting room! And maybe the patient brought this laundry list of things, so you have to figure out how to manage time, set boundaries, manage expectations and then it's time for the next patient.

You do that all day long while you're also interacting with your staff so you're not just in a vacuum. There's all these relationships, nuanced relationships, and maybe managing some conflict. Maybe there's some drama that blows up. Someone doesn't show up.

You could also be doing surgery in the operating room. You're managing that team, you're managing a life on the table. There's other people involved here. Or you're in the emergency room. You're having to triage, run in a code, manage multiple crises going on so you have to prioritize and then in the heat of emergencies, you're trying to stay calm and you're trying to figure out what to do next. Go through your algorithms. It's kind of a crazy job.

Because, who else, there are a very few other professions where not only is it incredibly demanding but lives are at stake, and that just changes everything too. Because of the responsibility that's on you and then the loss of autonomy about how you actually do that job. So if you brought someone else who was a high professional in their field and you had them do your job for one day – and I'm not even talking about the medical management – I'm just talking about the sheer number of skills they're having to use just to do all these things to take care of patients, they'd probably decompensate, run off and be glad that they're not doing what you're doing.

So when we think about transferable skills for a non-clinical job, even though you would be doing something different and not seeing patients directly, so many of the skills that you have and use already are listed in these job descriptions. And I went and looked at a bunch of different ones just to review and some of the common ones that you'll see are communication. Almost every job wants excellent communication – verbal and written - which you do all the time. They want excellent interpersonal skills. Well you're interacting with people all day long.

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Then they're also looking for the ability to analyze, make decisions, collaborate with others, develop guidelines, present, teach others. Many of them mention being really good at multi-tasking and setting priorities which you do all the time. Now, granted when you do look at these job descriptions there are going to be the things that you don't even know what they're talking about, like a lot of mumbo jumbo.

I looked at one the other day, it was for drug safety, and this is what is said. It said, 'You're going to need to be able to review an author study report, CSRs, CCSIs, DSURs, PSURs, PBERs, PADERS, RMPs, REMs, data monitoring committee reports. I mean a lot of this just sounds like gobbledygook! And much of what you see will just look foreign to you. But just think about when you started medical school, what you knew and what you didn't know. You've learned everything that you do now.

And so you're a life-long learner and you're also like a ninja learner. You can learn these things that you are not familiar with in these jobs. Now, to address this catch-22 of how do you get a job when you don't have the experience, but you can't get the experience because you don't have the job?

A lot of these job descriptions when you just go and look on Indeed or Glassdoor or LinkedIn, or wherever, when you just randomly look, often it will say, three to five years industry experience required. Sometimes it's five years, ten years and then you get discouraged. But if you look hard enough, you will see jobs in the same industries that may say, 'prefer to have' some experience but it's not a requirement. I often will search on the industry that I'm interested in, say for a client, and I'll put in 'entry level,' or I just do a lot of looking and if you look enough, there's usually a range where there's a more entry level position where experience is preferred, but not required.

Then the next level up like for senior director versus a medical director, they require a couple of years' experience, or three to five, and then higher levels where it's even more experience. So, within each non-clinical sector that you might be considering, there is a range and if you've never done this kind of work before, you want to try obviously for a more entry level.

Let me give you an example. One of my clients, he's a surgical sub-specialist. He started working with me and right from very early on he found this job on the internet and it was for a pharmaceutical job and they were looking for someone in his town. And he said, Heather I looked at that job description, I have no idea what you are doing in this job but I'm curious, I want to apply.



He applied and he got the job and what they told him was for the first six months, you're not going to know anything and don't worry, that's normal, we will train you. So, this is common. These companies who hire physicians routinely, they understand what your skillset is and they understand the potential gaps and it's in their best interest for you to succeed.

Often, they have boarding programs for training. They'll have someone above you who's going to mentor you, who you can ask questions of. Others have formal training programs where you go on site, say if it's a remote job. For example, I had another client who went two weeks on site to the company and she was in a peer group of the new hires and they were all there for several weeks. And they're taught, they learn how to do that job and then they go back home. They get a computer and work remotely.

But even then they still have a mentor, they still have trainings. Again because these companies want you to succeed because they want the job done well. In upcoming podcast episodes, I'll be talking about specific non-clinical jobs and give you guidance on things that you can do while you're still in practice to enhance your skillset and enhance your experience to make you a more viable candidate for a job you might be interested in, in a non-clinical job. Because there are specific things that you can do and you don't have to leave your job.

Another thing that we want to look at is, how do you translate the skills that you have to fit the job description? This is something that's done when you convert your CV to a resumé. I created my *Carpe Diem* Resumé Kit so you have a great tool for guiding you through this process because it can make a real difference when you are applying for a non-clinical job. In that kit, it has something called the, 'You're Not Chopped Liver Skills Builder' which goes through and helps you identify skills that you have and learn how to write the bullet points for putting on your resumé, to translate those skills for the recruiter so they can see how you fit that job description. That kit is available on my website at doctorscrossing.com for sale and you can also find a link to it when you go to this podcast episode on my website.

You can find the resume kit [HERE](#).

Oh yes, I was going to tell you a story. Alright so this was before medical school. I got a job in this very well-known hotel in Austin and I was going to be cooking for the employees that worked for the restaurant. It was the top of this big building and it was in this windowless kitchen, way high up.

I had to get there at six in the morning and when you get hired, well they're so lovely, they say, 'By the way our clientele do not want to be eating with the help so you are not allowed in the

dining room except for on your birthday when you can be our guest'. Great, I thought, let's just make that reservation right now. I wouldn't want to miss it! I was already feeling great about this job, uh-huh.

Well I started working and my boss, I don't think she liked me very much, but I was trying hard but we just kind of, I don't know, I think I rubbed her the wrong way. But I knew how to cook. I had transferable skills. I had grown up cooking, my mom let me start a baking club in second grade and when I was ten-years-old I was cooking lasagna for dinner and I just loved to cook.

Then in college I lived in a co-op and we cooked for a lot of people. So, I thought I had this job down. But random chefs would come by and say stuff to me. I would be steaming the cabbage and the chef would come by and say, Don't steam the cabbage, sauté the cabbage! It will taste so much better. So then I would sauté the cabbage and then another chef would come by and say, Don't sauté the cabbage, steam the cabbage. It'll be so much healthier. And I just, I don't like people telling me what to do and so, I was a little on edge I would say. Then my boss goes away for a week and she comes back and she says to me – she didn't look like she was in a good mood - I was thinking, well, did you have a bad vacation? And she goes, What did you do when I was gone Heather?

I'm like, What do you mean? I was feeding the people. I was cooking for the employees. They ate the food, the food's gone, what's wrong? Should I have been stacking canned goods or folding napkins? And she just gave me this look and I just, I was just over it, and I quit that day. I was really upset. I felt like I was a good worker.

I was in the bathroom in the stall, trying to compose myself, and these two people come in and they're talking and it was my boss and the woman who hired me and they were saying, Yeah, Heather just wasn't the right fit. We really need someone like Rosa. Where can we get a Rosa? And Rosa was the girl who I replaced because she got promoted. And I come out of the stall and there's this dead silence, and I just look at them and walk out. And I wish I had just said something such as, Yeah, you're right. I was so the wrong person for this job. Have a nice life.

Well, shortly after that, I got another job, and this was as a veterinary technician at this animal hospital and I looked at the job description and I had hardly any of the skills that they were wanting. I had worked for a vet when I was in High School but that was, I just cleaned everything and I did the spay neuter packs. I autoclaved them and that's all I really did. But they ended up hiring me, partly because I had had a little bit of experience, they needed somebody and I was available. In that job, I learned so many great things, and it was before medical school, so it was great timing. I learned how to intubate animals and I ran the anesthesia during



surgery. The vet even taught me how to suture and I did all the lab tests and took care of the animals - the lab tests that we did inhouse.

I tell this story to make the point that it's almost better really when you look at a job description for there to be a bit of a match but you don't want a full match at all because if you already know how to do all these things, you're ready for the next level job and you're not going to be learning and growing and it's probably not going to be as interesting of a position for you. So don't let that bother you if most of the stuff looks a bit foreign to you on the job description. I want to just emphasis that you do have amazing skills and a platform. Having an MD or a DO, this is a platform that most people do not have and you also really know how to learn. You've been learning in an exponential fashion for a long time so this will serve you well in any new job. I've seen my clients go into pretty much almost every non-clinical career sector and most of them did not have prior experience. And they're doing really well and I know you can too.

So, thanks so much for listening. Until next time, don't forget to *carpe that diem!*

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END OF TRANSCRIPT