



EPISODE 62 How Fun and Creativity are Key to Career Change

With guest Dr. Lara Salyer

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LS: “That's what I love about the mindfulness that creativity and play brings to our body and our existence because that's why we're here. As you said to me long ago, we're human beings, not human doings.”

HF: 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 founder of The Doctor's Crossing. As a master certified coach, I've helped hundreds of physicians find greater happiness in their career, whether in medicine, a non-clinical job, or something else. I started this podcast to help you discover the career path that's best for you and give you some resources and encouragement to make it happen. 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 back to The Doctor's Crossing Carpe Diem Podcast. You're listening to episode number 62. In the one-on-one coaching that I do, I'm often assigning homework to my clients. Being physicians, they typically respond by saying, “Oh goody, I like homework.” And they're usually very diligent about doing it.

However, sometimes a specific homework assignment will be met with silence, disbelief, even shock. They will tell me, “But Heather, I have no idea how to do that. I don't even know where to begin.” Can you guess what the assignment is? This harder than climbing Everest assignment is simply to have fun. Yep. That's it. Just have fun. No agenda, no goal to be met. No need to be productive.

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We are so used to being goal-oriented, checking boxes, and in go-go mode that an assignment of having fun can short circuit the brain. When I begin to explain why this homework is as important, if not more so than the homework we do on their career interests, skills and values, they begin to get a bit excited.

Our super fun guest, Dr. Lara Salyer, integrative family medicine physician, and author of the excellent book “Right Brain Rescue” is going to help us understand the connection between having fun, expressing your creativity, and finding true alignment in your career path.

Dr. Salyer has been studying the neuroscience behind creativity and health and wellness and uses these principles in her life and with her patients in her integrative private practice. She also has had her own personal experience with how bringing more fun and creativity into her life helped rescue her own career when she was extremely burned out and ready to throw in the proverbial towel. I am so super excited and honored to welcome Dr. Lara Salyer to the podcast. Hey Lara, how are you?

LS: Hey, skydiving buddy. Oh, my goodness. I'm so glad to talk to you again, Heather. You are instrumental in some of my shifts as well, and I'm just so glad that you are helping others. I'm sure I speak for all of them. You are helping people find their inner muse. So, thank you.

HF: Oh my gosh. You are so incredibly welcome and you didn't need me very much really, you had your own jet fuel, but I have to tell a little story, if you don't mind, of when we met.

LS: Please do.

HF: Okay. As you know we met at the Functional Medicine Conference in Austin. You came in from Wisconsin and I was looking around and this woman caught my eye. And I saw her from the back in the distance. She had on this really cute smock and these powder blue leggings. And I thought, “Oh my God, what a cute outfit.” And yes, that happened to end up being you.

LS: Yes, yes.

HF: And do you want to tell them why those leggings are so important? This is an important part of your story.

LS: It truly is. It's funny. It's funny how when you really take away the controlling grip that you have on the steering wheel of your life, and you just listen to your own body and what you are drawn to, you realize certain things about yourself. So that story began months, weeks before when I would receive a memo, you get updates from the hospital administration. And I was an employed family physician, just doing my day-to-day, but realizing something was changing. I was creeping deeper, deeper into burnout, looking at different avenues of how I could help myself recalibrate that internal compass.

And at the time, the email, although very innocuous, really struck a chord. It was basically mandating that certain items of clothing are now off-limits for any of the staff, including physicians.

And as a physician, we have worked a long time to get where we're at. And I get that you want to have MAs or PAs or other ancillary staff be identified by their roles so patients aren't confused, but when it comes to being an outpatient provider, I felt like that was the final straw. It was stripping me of all the expressions that I could. And I was a fan of leggings and tights and skirts and boots. And it was really cute. And so, I was just really grumpy and that really pushed me over the edge to go, "You know what? I need to look elsewhere."

HF: I know. That story sticks out in my mind because it's often something like that, that tips you over the edge. Like I'm done, I am done with this.

LS: Yes, like in isolation, it's not a big deal. In isolation, it's just an email saying we have new dress codes. But it just really hit me at that right spot where it was the final straw. So yeah. That was how we met. And I'm glad you caught me in a crowd.

HF: Yes. And I loved those leggings. They looked fantastic by the way. Anyway, would you like to tell the listeners just a little bit about your story, and how it came to be that you didn't really leave when you thought you were going to have to leave medicine?

LS: Yes. Actually, I think that's a really telling story. It's a very scary thing for a provider, or a physician to recognize something's wrong inside. That you don't feel quite right. It's almost like a grieving process of a relationship because you signed on to medicine for a lifelong career. This is based on terms and conditions that you thought were going to still be in place years later.

And as medicine has changed, I was shocked to find myself chronically unhappy. And I had tried all the doors. I'd gone to yoga classes, done Zumba, and I'd been sipping wine. I had vacation time. I tried blocking out extra days off and it just felt like nothing was helping.

That was just the pivotal point when I thought there's got to be something going on. And I had gone to different seminars. I realized, "Oh, I'm burned out. That's it. That's what it was." I went to a seminar. I learned about burnout. And even identifying that is very scandalous. You're told as a provider you should be grateful. It's not that hard. You're gritty. You can do this.

Taking away all those external narratives that you feel like you should be enjoying your life. And when frankly you aren't, I thought I was done. I thought I was done with medicine. That's what I thought. I was thinking, "Okay, I'm going to hang up my hat. I am just going to be finished with this chapter of my life. I've got a lot of other skills and we'll figure it out. Leap and let the wings grow on the way down."

And it was the final CME that I had signed up for when I met you. And I had signed up for this CME thinking, well, it sounds interesting. They promised organic food and yoga and it was in Austin. I've always wanted to visit. I thought, why not? I'll burn up my last CME as a physician.

HF: Your parting farewell.

LS: Yeah, my farewell. But what had already transpired before then was a series of interesting events. Because as you know, when you start listening to your whispers of intuition, you start noticing patterns.

HF: The clues are there.

LS: Yes. The clues really come up and the more you trust your intuition, the easier it gets.

HF: Yes, yes. So true.

LS: So by the time I had actually gotten on that plane, I had already gone down a path. I had already met you. I'd already sought out different things like writing, drawing, painting, running. And I was getting into a flow state, which is a powerful state of mind, which we'll talk about. And I was enjoying my life and I was getting more clarity. When I went to the CME, and I knew I was going to meet you in person, I was still curious, "Is this something that I'd be interested in doing?" And I fell in love with functional medicine. It was the Institute of Functional Medicine. And I thought this is something I would love to do as my second career. And it ended up, I didn't fall out of love with medicine. I fell back in love. So, we're still dating. We're still married.

HF: And you did write a great blog about "Dear Hippocrates: I want a divorce." And the betrayal that you felt in this relationship. Definitely, it's been cheating on you. And this wasn't what you had imagined for you. Not marital bliss.

LS: Yes, it was very much not marital bliss and it should have been a partnership made in heaven. All these things that we've really been studying for, and suddenly we're judged on whether we clicked the wrong or right box and all these mandates. And it just felt further and further away from that Norman Rockwell medicine that I remember seeing my attendings do in a rural setting. I knew it was possible, but it was now ripped from my clutches. So yeah, I was bitter.

HF: It's like those family portraits that you see where everybody is smiling, but you know behind there could be a very tragic story.

LS: Absolutely.

HF: But you can't see it. People don't necessarily know it from the outside.

LS: No. And it feels very gaslighting for physicians because here we have, not for the first time, but it started happening where there's direct to consumer commercials during



your Super Bowl of pharmaceuticals that now you're having patients come in with all these questions and Google and all these things, and you feel deflated because you want to explain to them, but you have 15 minutes. And then they're mad at you for not explaining it fully. And it's this weird dynamic that has never been seen before in medicine where we're almost regarded with suspicion. Patients don't understand what's really behind the desk. And what we're dealing with is that impossible struggle to help them understand in 15 minutes, the next best steps for them.

HF: That's impossible. That's the setup for failure. I hate failure. We cannot win there. Now, we're going to be going into these four stages of how to bring more fun and creativity into your career process. And as we do this, I want you to bring in your own story. But before we go there, could you give us an idea of this practice that you have now that's your own and how you're doing functional medicine. Because not everybody really understands functional medicine.

LS: Yes. Understandably. The term is even morphing and evolving because 25 years ago, I think, 25 to 30 years ago when Dr. Jeff Bland founded "functional medicine" as a term, it's basically precision or personalized medicine where you have access to biochemical testing, looking at the Krebs cycle metabolites. Like things that are a little deeper, genomics. Things that just aren't really done in conventional medicine. It was more of just a personalized precision type framework.

Functional medicine is one name. You hear integrative, holistic. And so, what my day looks like now is very much a consultant. Having the hat of primary care that I still wear, I can talk with the other primary care doctors and explain to them about their patients. Patients will partner with me for a short time. It's like a class, basically. A three-month membership. And I work with them and we do some additional testing. I help them sequence some behavior changes and food and lifestyle, and then I graduate them and they have an action plan. And that's just how my personal practice runs. It's very efficient and creative because I get to enjoy them one on one. And then we have a group visit every week that we come together and learn. So, it's very much like a college course in your own physiology.



- HF: And now, I don't want to go too deep into this because we have our other topics. However, a lot of physicians these days feel they can't have a private practice on their own and have it be financially sustainable and make it work. But is it working for you?
- LS: Yes. I think this is the thing. It's not a Pollyanna view. It's not going to be easy. You can't expect to hang up a shingle like in the '80s or '90s and say, "Okay, I'm a doctor. Come visit me." We have the internet, we have all sorts of things that when you decide to do a private practice, you have to practice skills you may not have needed before, such as being more bold in social media. Being more open to collaboration with like-minded businesses, being innovative. And that's what I liked. I really like that.
- HF: Being creative.
- LS: Yes. And being creative.
- HF: Thinking outside the box.
- LS: Totally, thinking outside the box. And that's the part that I love. So not every practitioner, if that makes them feel a little nervous, then maybe they could partner with somebody else or have somebody help them with that. But that's the part I really enjoyed. And it's a wonderful time to be a practitioner in this world because of technology. Gosh, 20 years ago we didn't have cloud-based EMR. We didn't have the ability to have automated reception. I don't have reception.
- HF: Scheduling, automation, virtual assistants.
- LS: Yeah. Automated, virtual assistants. It's perfect. I am a one doc shop and it's really fun.
- HF: Yeah. Well, you look really happy and your office is gorgeous. I just want to jump right in there and join you. Okay. So, we start with the first stage of bringing more fun and creativity into your life and career, which is waking up the muse.
- LS: Yes, yes. Waking up the muse. First of all, waking up the muse is recognizing when do you get lost? And you might even just start with the simple question, "What did I do

when I was little? What did I do as a child that completely had me lose track of time and I loved doing it and it brought me joy?"

And just sit with that question and that helps you wake up your muse, which is still there. You have your creativity, your default mode network going 24/7. It is always talking to you, but are you really listening? And that's the second stage, listening. What does that muse say when you ask when was the last time I got completely lost in time? When was the last time I was having fun without any agenda? Then listen to those responses openly, and then just embrace that.

HF: Could that be just hearing your inner voice in a way? That still small voice that's gotten tapped down and put in a closet and tied up and told, "I have work to do. Don't talk to me."

LS: Yes, that is a great metaphor. It really is. And especially when we are driven to the evidence-based log rhythm, very algorithm derived, like this is the standard of care. This is what we do. We don't question it. We're very double-blind placebo-controlled research. Our little intuition gets pushed off as well, that's woo-woo. You don't count that. It doesn't count. That's your intuition. That's not something you can rely on. In fact, that actually yields better decision-making. When medical students are enrolled in art courses, they are better observers. They actually heighten their skills. When we learn to morph the creativity and the logic, you actually become a better clinician. And so, part of that is waking up your muse and then listening to it.

HF: Do you remember some of the things you did to wake up your own muse?

LS: Yeah. What I did is exactly that. I actually started painting again. I'm not a trained artist. I enjoy drawing and painting, but I've never had a formal class. And I thought I'm just going to paint some things that I see on Pinterest. I had collected a Pinterest board over the years. I thought I'm just going to take down one of those projects and try it.

And then I started running. Now, if anybody knows me from eighth grade, I am not athletic. I am not a runner. And so, for me, that was something to move my body. And it gave me a little goal. And I just kept moving that goal further and further, and eventually

ran a marathon in this body, which is shocking. But it gave me that flow. It gave me that ability to have the endorphins and realize, "Hey, you know what? This is fun."

These little experiences woke up the muse because after each episode of whatever I was doing, there was always a gift at the end. And I used to call them my running gifts. Like I would start the run with a problem in my head, and it could be a personal argument or a dilemma with parenting, or maybe a patient case. I'd be thinking, "Well, I don't know what that is." And I would meditate on that problem as I ran. And by the end of running, I usually had several solutions or ideas. And so, that's one part to encourage your little muse to come out of its closet.

HF: And part of this is just doing something fun. Like you said, in flow that doesn't have to be goal-oriented. It could be about learning to run better, but you said you're not an artist. You're not a trained painter, you can just paint for fun. It could be just cooking, putting on new outfits, dressing a little differently. Recreating the house.

LS: Absolutely. Self-expression. Yes. Rearranging your furniture. It could even be changing the lyrics of a song to make your kids laugh. All these things are just doing something differently and that's the weird paradox of flow and creativity is, it isn't generally driven by goals, but goals are helpful because it keeps you gamified in that experience, which is why when I started walking and it turned into running, I did gamify my own flow by saying, "Well, I wonder if I could run those two blocks a little quicker than I did yesterday." And it makes it fun because our brain loves to be engaged in that kind of competition with ourselves but in a fun, playful way. And that's how you can start waking up that muse.

HF: Great. Well, I'm already having fun already talking about this. The stage number two is listening to the interview.

LS: Yes. After you've woken up that muse, you're starting to experience new blips of intuition. Maybe sometimes it happens when you're in the shower, 72% of us have those epiphanies in the shower. That's when your alpha brain waves jump forward and say "Hey, hey, remember when we talked about cupcakes and you smelled vanilla? Did you remember you didn't buy those at the store?" You start having these ideas come together.

Listening is giving yourself space to listen. Honoring that, being curious, don't reach for your phone. When you go for a walk, maybe just see what comes up in your brain. Listen, give the muse some center-stage time. That also means keeping a journal by your bed. I had a junk journal for years and I still even have something on my phone where I just pop in a few little thoughts. That's how I wrote my book. Every so often I go, "I remember that story that would work really well to explain this concept." And I think people would laugh. So, I'd jotted down. The number one mistake people do is they'll listen to their muse, but then they don't have a way to contain those brilliant epiphanies. So, make sure you have some way to keep track of that.

HF: Those are excellent suggestions. And part of that is just becoming present.

LS: Correct. It's very mindful.

HF: So, you can actually listen. And this reminds me of the podcast I did that was based on "see one, do one, teach one." And it was a way to become present. We use this mantra of "see one, hear one, feel one." And it's something you can do really quickly. Like you're maybe just driving down the road or you're even entering a patient's room. You note something you see, and then something that you hear, could be the air conditioning, and then something that you feel. It could be tactile or an emotion. And right then you're present.

And I noticed that's helping me with just awareness. For example, I was looking at these little hand towels I had bought with snowflakes on them. And if you'd asked me before what the snowflakes look like, I couldn't really tell you, but I said, I did that see one, hear one, feel one. I said, "Let me look at them." I really studied the patterns. And it's so different when we actually are present.

LS: I love this, Heather.

HF: It's a gateway into our creativity.

LS: It is a gateway drug. It really is, Heather, because the more you're present, the more fun it gets. And that's where I find it fascinating myself. I love that you do those senses. I

similarly do something where I just center with my breath and just feel my body. Like you said, "What am I feeling? Am I stiff anywhere?" And it's just that thought reset of our human meat skeleton. We're all walking around on this Earth and it's amazing how mindless we are. We just do things automatically. We think things automatically. We behave automatically. But when you study that towel and suddenly you study it almost like you'll be asked questions on it.

HF: Exactly. I was saying, what if somebody asked me a question, "What are these snowflakes on the towel?"

LS: Yes, you could spend an hour. Like what shade of blue or purple or lilac was the background? How many little peaks of those snowflakes? Was it delicate? And that's what I love about the mindfulness that creativity and play bring to our body and our existence. Because that's why we're here. As you said to me long ago, "We're human beings not human doings."

HF: Right. I have to remind myself of that a lot. Now, this is really fun and I'm excited to go onto stage three. But before we do that, we're going to take a quick break. Don't go away. We'll be right back.

If you are applying to a nonclinical job, it's a great idea to convert your CV to a resume. A well-crafted resume helps recruiters see why you are the right person for the job. My resume kit is a downloadable PDF that walks you step by step through creating an impressive resume of your own. You'll have everything you need, including templates and a bonus on writing a winning cover letter.

To get immediate access to this kit that I use with my coaching clients, go to doctorscrossing.com/resumekit or simply go to the Doctor's Crossing website and hit the products tab at the top of the page. Now back to our podcast.

Hey there, we are back with our wonderful guest, Dr. Lara Salyer, and we're discussing the third stage of bringing more fun and creativity into your career. Stage number three is getting curious.

LS: Yes. Curious. My favorite word. Oh, I'm so glad we talked about this. I just remember one of the earliest little painting projects I did. Again, not trained, I'm not an artist formally trained. I decided to try alcohol inks. Have you ever tried alcohol inks? What they are, are very thin watery alcohol inks that you can drop on a paper and you can actually draw with them, but you can put down latex, almost like sticky clingy paint, and then you can rip it up afterwards and it leaves a negative white space. It's a really cool technique. It's really pretty.

But one of the first projects I did years ago when I was going through this transformation is, I loved the words "stay curious." That was my mantra. Stay curious, stay curious. And to me, it means really just looking and being curious in everybody you meet. Everything that comes into your path because it may not apply to you. But if you're curious, you might take away lessons that might help you in your path moving forward.

Try not to judge anything as good or bad, as right or wrong as, or that's stupid or that's smart. That's not going to work when you're trying to retool your life. And so, for me, those words became that beacon of a compass where I kept saying, "I need to stay curious." Because doors will start opening.

The more you wake up that intuition and that creative muse, you're going to notice a lot of things. It can be actually overwhelming because you'll see all the connections and possibilities of this new path that you're doing. Wow, I didn't know so and so worked five towns over and they actually have an office I could rent. All these things start to emerge, and it's wonderful to just stay curious. And that also separates you from clinging to every single thing as the next step.

HF: Yes. You've made a brilliant connection there because curiosity is a great antidote to judgment. It automatically takes us out of that hard rigid energy and has us go back to being more like a kid. Kids are so curious, always asking why, why, why, why?

LS: Right. And I can't blame us as doctors. We are told to make quick judgments. I can see somebody walk in the room and I know that their left psoas is spasming. I know that they're a smoker by the way that their face looks. I know that they probably have diabetes or maybe some lipid deposits under their eyes. We are taught to make these judgments and to be efficient, and serve our patients.



So, it's such an atrophied muscle of curiosity. And I think when we start on stage three, just to be curious about what is our muse bringing us, what is that intuition telling us? And what are we noticing? That's a wonderful way to compile those patterns.

And that's where the true magic happens. The more you're curious, the more you are listening and you're keeping track of what's going on. You start to see those patterns and that's your muse talking because you're noticing the things that you should be noticing. And that's giving you your blueprint right there.

HF: And it feels so much better. It's a great energy to be in. And it makes me think too, of what they call the beginner's mind or Zen mind, where you become more as a child of letting go of preconceived notions and also being critical about your rate of learning and your pace of learning. Like a little toddler isn't falling down and saying, "Oh my God, I'm the slowest toddler in the world learning to walk." They just get back up. They do it again. They fall down. They're just in their lane, they're in their process. And it's just being, it's being a beginner and a learner. And when you give yourself that permission, it just makes you a better learner.

LS: It does. And permission is absolutely a wonderful thing and kids don't need it. You see a five-year-old kindergartner and they're just overjoyed with their little greasy finger paint. And you have to ask them, "What is this?" You have to ask them what they are drawing. But they don't care. It's so gorgeous to them. They had a great experience. They're not worried about the product. They're worried about the whole process. They loved it. And that's the curiosity that I think all practitioners should have when they're investigating whether their tectonic plates have shifted and maybe they're exploring new options. Just stay curious.

HF: And in my mind, I'm going back to thinking some listeners may be wondering, well, how does this really connect to my figuring out whether I should leave medicine, stay in medicine, go into pharma, be a medical writer, whatever. I know how it connects from my vantage point as a coach. But how would you like to speak to that?

LS: I think what it does is when you are listening to it, you've woken up your muse, you're listening to what it's saying, you are embracing your curiosity and noticing those

patterns. How that's going to drive your decisions is very helpful. It's like giving you a cheat code. You're noticing, "Wow. Look at all the things that I'm interested in and I'm curious about. And look at all the things that keep coming up in my world. I must be good at that."

That's part of having that challenge for you as a coach, to encourage people to see all the different skills they have. It's not just "I am a doctor." No, you're also an empathetic listener. You're also probably a writer. All these other things that can be translated. That's the beauty of doing this and playing, because you kind of want to design your next steps to be in alignment with those values of whatever you're noticing is coming up for you.

HF: You said another keyword that I really agree with here, Lara, is that this is helping us become aligned with who we really are. Because often in this process of becoming a physician we've compartmentalized a big part of ourselves, that more childlike, curious, creative part. And when we don't have access to that, it's hard to go forward in a way. It's like we're handicapped.

When we can become integrated again with the wholeness of ourselves, that alignment comes on board. And so, you're making decisions from who you really are and not from a piece of yourself. Because that piece of yourself could be a little bit warped. So, it could take you in a skewed direction. That's not where you really want to go or who you are.

LS: I love that. And I think that's probably the most important thing that you're highlighting, it's congruence. We haven't really given, let's just say, most administrators, hospitals, residencies, they don't give professional development courses to physicians. They don't check in on you and say, "How's your core values?" They don't check and say, "Are you fulfilled? Are you happy?" They don't. I mean, that's the hard truth. And so, we are left in this world and suddenly 10, 15 years later, I never had checked my core values to see if they had changed.

I loved my career as a family doctor and I feel that to embrace all chapters of our life is part of a healthy process because I don't regret my time being just a paper puncher kind of "Let's get in out and do some factory family medicine." I loved it. It paid my bills. But

that chapter is done. And my core values at that point was safety, predictability. I had young kids, it worked really well. And then when I got older, I suddenly wait, I want more innovation. I want more fun. I wanted more creativity and it didn't fit. I think you're right. It has to be congruent. And it starts with you and figuring out what you need.

HF: Yes. Beautifully said. All right, this takes us to our fourth and final stage, committing to change.

LS: Oh, my goodness. Yes. This is where most people I think get scared. They drop the ball. They're scared of committing because look at what happened. They committed to a career in medicine. Look where that got them. They're triggered by all of these very amygdala stored memories of past traumas. Like, "Oh, I don't know if I want to commit." Maybe they just got divorced, maybe now they're divorcing Hippocrates. They're not sure.

I don't know about committing, but when I say commit to change, that's all I mean. It's just committing to even a small time frame. One of the best presentations I ever attended was a doctor who had done a resiliency seminar. And her name was, Deborah Lathrop. She had us mail our own letter to ourselves three months later. In the class, she said, you need to write yourself a postcard to your future, three months later.

And it's a simple exercise, a lot of people do it. But it's so telling because you're seeing time passes. And if you don't commit to anything, time is going to keep passing. So even if it's three months, which is a short timeframe, you can accomplish a lot. Even if it's a tiny chunk of, okay, I need to commit to change. I'm not sure what that change looks like. So, I'm going to commit to signing up with a coach. Or I'm going to commit to scheduling a week off for my whole practice to really dive in and take a look and maybe get some extra therapy or maybe look at this other conference that is interesting to me. And that's what I mean by committing to change is you don't have to know the end product. Be like a five-year-old and just fall in love with the process and just commit to change.

HF: I love it. Because that's also the C of the Carpe Diem. The first step is to make a commitment. And I have my clients write out a commitment statement. And it could be anything. It could be just "I want to have more fun in my life. I just want to enjoy what

I'm doing and feel like I'm making a difference." Commitment doesn't have to be super-specific like you said.

LS: Yes. I think that's what scares people. It's the idea they have to have it all figured out. Because then all the "what ifs" come in and the fear-based self-limiting beliefs. "Well, I don't know if I could do that. I don't know how to do that." Well, guess what? Somebody will help you. There are always people. There's always a "who" that can help you figure out the "how." All you got to do is just commit to tiny pieces of change every so often.

HF: There's this book I love. And it's called "The Answer to How Is Yes." And you don't even need to read the book. The point basically is don't let the "how" shut down the process. You'll figure out how. Just say "Yes, I'm on board."

LS: Absolutely. It's very much a creative-based improv technique. "Yes and." That's what one of the exercises I do in my workshops is having residents continuous stories with "yes, and." And you just go through that. That's what your brain wants to do. You might not have the full staircase, but you just need that first step.

HF: Yes. Yes. I love this. And I saw a quote that popped up on my meditation app the other day that was just perfect. And it's by George Bernard Shaw. He said, "We don't stop playing because we grow old. We grow old because we stop playing."

LS: Yes, absolutely. I love that. And I love Insight Timer. I use it as well.

HF: Yeah. It's a great one. So, here's a good anti-aging thing besides Botox. Keep playing, start playing more.

LS: Yes. Laugh more. Yes.

HF: I'd love it if you could review those four stages Lara and then tell folks a little bit about what you might have to offer. I'd love for you to tell them about your book and anything else you want to mention and where they can reach you.

LS: Absolutely. Thank you so much, Heather. Let's review those four stages of the care and feeding of your inner creative muse. Stage one, wake up your muse. Remember to do



something that might get you lost in time. Whether you try a new art project or poetry or running or walking, do something to change up your body.

Number two, listen. Your muse is going to start talking to you. So, capture those ideas somewhere in your phone or better is a hardcore journal. Writing pen to paper is always the best.

Number three, make sure you're staying curious. Approach whatever your muse is telling you with curiosity. Don't judge. Just notice those patterns. Maybe there is something you didn't even know is living there.

And number four, commit to tiny bits of change. It doesn't have to be the full-on future that you know exactly every detail, but any little step of change is going to help you move forward.

And I love helping practitioners of all stripes to learn how to be more creative in their delivery of medical care. And I would love it if you read my book, "Right Brain Rescue." It'll be fun. There are stories to make you laugh and certainly relatable as a working mom of three.

And if you'd like to contact me, you can go to drlarasalyer.com. And I have a free five-day magic lesson series that can spark that inner creativity. So, you get five emails of little fun exercises.

HF: I will definitely link to your book and how to reach you in the show notes, because I want people to be able to find you and I have to put in a plug for your book because this is what helps start me on doing something for fun. Because I let myself indulge in your great story. And Lara really talks about medical school and residency and how this burnout all transpired.

She is a fantastic writer. She has this gift of metaphor. It's a fast read. I laughed. I cried. The part about the metaphor with the carnival hot dogs. I mean, my sides were splitting. Carnival hot dogs. Oh my gosh. So please check this out. And I just want to let you know that I'm here waving my pom poms for you as you're having fun, doing creative things, not worrying about what anything looks like, but just letting your beautiful self express

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its spirit in this world, because that's a great vibration to live in and it's going to take you good places. Trust me, it will.

LS: Absolutely. You are the best sky diving buddy for anybody that's jumping and letting their wings grow on the way down. So, thank you for having me, Heather.

HF: Oh, it's been so much fun, Lara. It's just a pleasure. I'm sure we'll have you back. Guys don't forget to carpe that diem and I'll see you in the next episode. Bye for now.

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Podcast details

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