



Episode 167 QD: Why We Become Terrible in a Crisis

Experiencing high-pressure, high-stress situations daily can develop a readiness for other emergencies. However, this does not always translate to good crisis management skills for all stress-inducing circumstances. Complacency in thinking otherwise can lead to overwhelming consequences affecting others and oneself. In this episode, Rachel explores how to deal with the crises we experience.

Rachel discusses the different reactions we typically have to stressful situations and their consequences. Compared to trained responses, we tend to forego compassion and empathy for others and ourselves. The lack of care during intense moments can lead to regretful actions and words. Unravel your thoughts and emotions to learn the 4-step process in preparing yourself for times of struggle.

If you want to develop good crisis management skills to prevent added stress and regret, this episode is for you. Learn to be kind to yourself and others when pushed into a corner.

Podcast links

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Quote to remember:

'The mistake that we as doctors, and other professionals dealing with high-stress situations and high-stake situations, is that we feel we need to act quickly. We think that being good in a crisis means being very decisive. The reality is that the only thing that is truly urgent is CPR.'

What You Will Learn

There are typically only a few types of crises any one person trains to handle. The situations you find relatively easy to deal with may not be the same for someone else. Similarly, there may be situations you find trouble managing. Responding with a 'no', providing and receiving constructive criticism, and balancing responsibilities are examples some find stressful to deal with.

This activity will help you explore how you manage a crisis. There are generally four possible reactions to stressful situations: fight, flight, freeze or fawn. Discover which one is your go-to response and understand why it is the case.

In times of crisis, we experience extreme emotions and thoughts. They influence and affect how we react and respond to stressful situations. When we allow this to happen, our actions can hurt ourselves and others. Reflecting on your thoughts and emotions before and during a crisis can help prevent making decisions while in distress.

This activity will help you re-evaluate how you handle stressful situations to avoid regret and harm. You will learn the 4-step process in dealing with a crisis. Take a pause and be kind to yourself when necessary. Doing so will bring happiness.



Activity: The 4-Step Process to Crisis Management

Q1. Evaluate your crisis management skills. What situations are you confident in handling? What situations do you find difficult?

Q2. For each response, describe a crisis where you opted to:

- a. Flee
- b. Fight
- c. Freeze
- d. Fawn

Q3. Choose the response above that is generally your automatic reaction. Explain why you believe that is the case.

Q4. List emotions that you have experienced today. Try to describe them to your best ability and state the events that triggered them.

Q5. Look back to a recent crisis. What were the thoughts that came to your mind? How did you end up dealing with the crisis? Who was affected and how?



Q6. What is the importance of compassion and empathy during crisis management? Why should you avoid making decisions out of fear and stress?

Below is a 4-step process to help deal with crisis and stressful situations. Learn to step away from making decisions out of fear. Instead make decisions with a clear mind and in a place of love. Nurture yourself so that you are ready for any crisis.

1. *Recognize early warning signs.*

Q7. How does stress and crisis manifest in your body? What are the physical and mental indicators? This can include changes in behaviour, attitude, or communication.

2. *Take a step back and hit the pause button.*

Q8. How will you hit the pause button during a crisis? Where is your safe space? What activities help clear your mind?

3. *Investigate your thoughts and emotions.*

Q9. What triggered the crisis? How will you reflect on your emotions and thoughts? This can include writing it down, leaving a voice note, or calling a friend.

4. *Nurture the right state of mind for making decisions.*



Q10. How can you keep positive mindset during stressful situations? How can you speak to yourself in a better way? How can you treat yourself and others with compassion?

CPD time claimed:

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