



Episode 172: How to survive a toxic system - on both sides of the pond

with Dike Drummond MD

No matter where you are in the world, doctors face the same challenges: burnout, overwork, and an overwhelmingly strong sense of values. Those values determine who we are and why we do what we do: to save lives and alleviate suffering.

But the system in place tends to exploit those values. It makes us think we don't have a choice.

Every doctor needs to care for themselves before they can care for other people. Overwork and burnout don't just harm you: they harm your patients. The more tired you are, the more prone you become to making a mistake. Sometimes, it's really better to refuse.

Find out more strategies to overcome a toxic work environment from this episode. question is; what changes are these and how do you implement them?

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Guest links

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Quote to remember:

“You don’t get what you want in life. You get what you tolerate.”

What You Will Learn

As healthcare professionals, we navigate a demanding landscape that can sometimes be tainted by toxicity. The constant pressure, excessive workload, interpersonal conflicts, and a lack of support can all contribute to a sense of helplessness and frustration. However, it is crucial to remember that we are not powerless. We always have choices, and it's those choices that can profoundly impact our well-being and professional fulfillment.

In the midst of a toxic work environment, it can be easy to feel trapped, overwhelmed, and disheartened. The challenges we face as healthcare professionals can take a toll on our mental, emotional, and physical well-being. The constant pressure to deliver exceptional care, coupled with an ever-increasing workload, can leave us feeling exhausted and burnt out. Interpersonal conflicts and a lack of support further exacerbate the toxic dynamics that surround us.

This activity will push you to confront several things about your career: what choices do you have? What boundaries do you need to set? Is there a system in place keeping you helpless? Can you overcome the system and disobey it?

Activity: Establish Boundaries, Disobey the System

We'll first establish where you are having difficulty by using Dike's scoring method. Take a look at your current career and work environment, and score your satisfaction from 0-10. 0 is the worst possible score and it couldn't be worse, while 10 is the best possible.

Your Career Satisfaction Score: _____



Take a look at your satisfaction score and think about it for a few minutes. Are you satisfied with your score, or would you want it to be higher?

What are the five worst things about your career that decrease your career satisfaction score?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What would the five easiest things to fix in your workplace be that would increase your score?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Think of ways to fix the five easy things. Then work on the five worst ones.

Five Easy Fixes	Five Difficult Fixes

Q3. For each of the moments you mentioned above, describe your state of mind. Were you stressed or calm? Anxious or in control?



It's time to Get Rid Of Stupid Stuff. What meaningless daily tasks do you have that you could remove without it making a significant difference in your workday? List them down below and work with your co-workers to remove them. It would also be a good idea to get them to list down tasks they'd like to remove too.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Sometimes, you may need a support system to help you get over burnout. Remember: you can work together with your peers. Even if the medical training system encourages the idea that collaboration is cheating, the real world doesn't think that way.

Try to organize a support system or support group with your co-workers. Write out your plan below.

CPD time claimed:

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