

Dr. Hartzell Schaff and Justin Vigile - HCM YouTube Audio

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SPEAKERS

Dr. Halena Gazelka, Justin Vigile, Narrator, Dr. Hartzell Schaff, Darrell Campbell

- N** Narrator 00:01
Coming up on Mayo Clinic Q&A, we'll hear from a man who has battled hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. We'll also hear from his doctor who will explain the disease, treatments, and how the two have forged a path to recovery.
- D** Dr. Halena Gazelka 00:16
Welcome, everyone to Mayo Clinic Q&A. I'm Dr. Halena Gazelka. And boy do I have an exciting story to share with you today. We have a patient story today that you are not going to want to miss, so settle in and listen. At the age of 15, Justin Vigile was diagnosed with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. This genetic condition causes the muscles of the heart to thicken and makes it difficult for the heart to pump blood. Justin had a cardiac defibrillator placed, but over time, his heart began to fail. When looking for answers and hope, Justin and his family turned to the Mayo Clinic. There, thanks to science, research, and an innovative procedure performed by the man who developed it, Justin got his life back. Joining us to discuss his inspiring story today is Justin Vigile and Mayo Clinic heart surgeon Dr. Hartzell Schaff. Welcome both of you to the program today.
- D** Dr. Hartzell Schaff 01:11
Thank you for having us.
- J** Justin Vigile 01:13
Thank you for having me. It's an honor.
- D** Dr. Halena Gazelka 01:15

Oh, it's such an honor to have you here today. I'm just delighted. Justin, take us back to when you were diagnosed. Did you say that you were 15-years-old?

J Justin Vigile 01:23

Yeah. So, you know, I grew up in a pretty normal childhood up until I was about 15. And I fancied myself an athlete even though my true passion I would later discover was, you know, music. And I grew up in a musical household. But I wanted to be an athlete, and I love football. So, I joined the football team, and I was like a little bit bigger than the kids in middle school. But like once I got to high school I was just a peanut, so there was a two year period where I had to decide. The coaches were like, hey, let's get you on the football field. And you know, I had a good junior varsity year, and then in ninth grade, moved up to varsity team. And in August before school started, we had, you know, summer practices, and we were running, you know, 40 yard drills. And I passed out. That was the first time that had ever happened. And there was a lot of people along my journey that have had critical, a lot of people that put their hand up that didn't really have to or could have just glossed by it. And I had a great coach who called my mom and said hey, something's up with Justin. He passed out. We don't know what's going on, and he's acting like he's fine but, you know, maybe come get him. And my mom took me to a local doctor, and they listened to my heart and said there's something weird going on here, I don't quite know what it is. So, they bounced me over to St. Christopher's in Philadelphia, I grew up in Bucks County, PA. And St. Christopher's, they took a look at me and they said we think you have this thing called athletic heart syndrome, and your heart looks a little thick. Let's just put you on ice for the next six months and see what happens. So, this was about a week before my 16th birthday. And I'm like totally thrown for a loop, but at this point I think I'm probably fine it's just like, because I had been lifting weights and going through puberty, and they're just like your heart is getting thick because you're doing too much, so let's just chill. Six months go by, February rolls around, I go back, hey, this didn't go away, it's actually getting worse. And I started having issues walking up the stairs, and, you know, then I started to think like, man, you know, I do get really winded when I'm walking. I do have an issue walking home from the school bus, like going up the stairs is a problem for me. I get lightheaded when I get up from sitting down, and I just thought everybody is like that. Everybody hates walking. Everybody gets lightheaded. And, you know, my parents didn't know to ask, I mean what parent is going around thinking like hey, are you lightheaded? You know? So, one by one, these little changes started to happen, and it escalated. You know, there's really two stages of my HCM and it was, you know, the initial uncertainty. And then my mother, Mary Beth, who comes up a bunch of times in this podcast. My mother is ferocious. She is tenacious. She does not give up, doesn't take no for an answer. And she was not getting an answer that she could sleep with. You know, she did not like this uncertainty. And you know, the Philadelphia Metropolitan area, I'm not going to name all the places we went, but rest assured every facility, children's or adult from Philadelphia down to Delaware, we went and it was like for a whole year going to appointments and not getting an answer. We don't know, we don't know, we don't know, until suddenly, you know, she did some research and she found Dr. Marty Maron, which was the first time we got any sort of clarity on what was going on, you know. Dr. Marty Maron, up at Tufts Medical Center in Boston, you know, his father, one of the pioneers of HCM, and I'll never forget. He got ahold of my paperwork, and he called my mother and was like, I'm very concerned about your son. How quickly can you get him here? So, my parents pulled me out of school, we got in the car, and that was the first of our many dozens of trips to Boston. And I'll never forget sitting in his office and going, okay, we know what you have. It's hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. It's serious, and you're trending in a direction where it's gonna get more serious.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 05:53

Justin, it sounds like that progressed really quickly from you not really having symptoms before that

experience that you recognized before that time on the practice field.

J

Justin Vigile 06:04

Yeah, from about 15 to 18 is like, so that was like, it really escalated. By the time I was, I only went to, I think, maybe three months of my sophomore year. My junior year I think I went into school the first week, and then they pulled me for the whole year. And then by my senior year is when I got my first ICD. So, we were still going all over the place trying to find an answer.

D

Dr. Halena Gazelka 06:30

I want to jump in here and ask Dr. Schaff. Dr. Schaff, how common is hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, or HCM? And does this pathway that Justin followed, does this disease always lead to heart failure?

D

Dr. Hartzell Schaff 06:46

Well, the disease is present in between one in 200 and one in 500 people, so it's a relatively common genetic cardiac condition. Now, many patients don't have symptoms, and you can have a thickened heart muscle without having heart failure the way Justin did. And most patients who have what you were calling heart failure, have obstruction to the outflow of blood, so they have what we call obstructive hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, Justin had a very specific problem that is present in a minority of the patients with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. He had what's called apical hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. So, he didn't have obstruction to the outflow of blood, but he had this thickened heart muscle that was reducing the volume of his ventricle.

D

Dr. Halena Gazelka 07:37

So, he couldn't push as much blood out with each stroke because there wasn't room for it.

D

Dr. Hartzell Schaff 07:42

Right. That's right. So, each time his heart would beat and inject blood, it was not injecting a normal amount. And when it was called upon to increase the cardiac output by injecting more it couldn't do it, because it was actually too small. The ventricle was too small.

D

Dr. Halena Gazelka 08:00

Justin, how did you meet up with Dr. Schaff?

J

Justin Vigile 08:03

My mom used to bring these binders to our appointments when we were going to different doctors. And it was like it started as one three-inch black binder, it turned into like four or five. And she would have a little tote bag and she'd bring it and we'd be sitting there with the doctor. And we were like cardiologists at that

...the bag and she'd bring it, and we'd be sitting there with the doctor. And we were like cardiologists at that point. The doctor would say something, and she'd be like, hang on, like, flipping through the pages. Yeah, but like, right here, what is this, you know, like you're telling me, you know. And so, she was looking into everything, and she found a video on YouTube of someone at the Mayo Clinic talking about this procedure, the transapical myectomy. So, she was like, well, what's this all about? So, she gets on the phone with Marty, and Marty is like look, I don't know. I'll be honest with you. But let me see, make a call. And I think Marty had a relationship with someone there in the cardiology department, got him like right on the phone was like Hey, I got this kid. He's special he's stuck in the mud. He's not gonna do the transplant but we got to do something. Do you have any, is there anything you can do? They said send us your stuff, and I mean, it took like I don't know three hours. And they're like, how soon can you get Justin here? And this was like in November, and I'm like, my nieces I have two beautiful wait three beautiful nieces now, but at the time, identical twins and they were gonna be one year old in January that coming up. And I was like, well I want to have, if something goes wrong, I want to have their first Christmas. I want to be with them. So, I said, yeah, that's great you guys want to see me, but I'm not coming till after Christmas. And then people at the Mayo Clinic were like, dude, what are you doing? Like you got to get here now. And I'm like, No, I'm not. I'm gonna have this Christmas with my family. I want to be home for it. I want to see my nieces on Christmas. And that's what we did.

D

Dr. Halena Gazelka 08:59

A determined guy.

J

Justin Vigile 10:02

I am very stubborn. Yes. And those last two months were some of the hardest times of my life physically.

D

Dr. Halena Gazelka 10:10

I'm gonna ask Dr. Schaff to step in and tell us. Dr. Schaff, when you see someone like Justin, coming to the Mayo Clinic, what are some of the standard treatment options that are used for an individual like this? Justin mentioned a cardiac transplant. And what led you to develop a procedure to treat this, apical myectomy?

D

Dr. Hartzell Schaff 10:31

Sure. Well first of all, Justin had had very good medical treatment before then. So, there really wasn't an option to try a different drug. And for patients with apical hypertrophic cardiomyopathy and heart failure, medication does not work very well. So, he was at the crossroads. It's either have a heart transplant or try something different. At that time we had done this operation in probably 50 or 60 patients. But the idea came up because we were reviewing patients here with one of the cardiologists, and we do lots of septal myectomies for obstructive hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. And the cardiologist said, well it's too bad you don't have an operation for this type of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy because these patients are very difficult to manage. And the only option is transplant. And so, when we looked at several patient's images, we could see that this small cavity could be enlarged by going through the apex of the heart. And the physiology is similar to what we've studied in the laboratory for different kinds of problems. But basically,

it involves enlarging the ventricular cavity. So, by the time Justin arrived, we had done this operation enough times that we knew that it worked. We didn't have a long-term outcome, or we weren't able to tell him and his family that this was going to work forever, but we were optimistic.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 12:02

And Dr. Schaff, when you say myectomy that implies to me that you're cutting muscle. Do you actually cut some of the muscle out or thin the muscle?

D Dr. Hartzell Schaff 12:11

Right, we remove muscle to make the ventricular chamber larger. Yes.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 12:17

Now that was a decade ago. So, how many patients have had this treatment now?

D Dr. Hartzell Schaff 12:24

Well, it's a little complicated because the operation that Justin had is called a transapical myectomy to enlarge the ventricle. We've probably done that now in 200 patients. And we've written reports on this. The last time we reported it, we had about 110 or 115 patients. And we compared the long-term survival of those patients to patients who were waiting for heart transplants who had hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. And the patients who had this operation did a little bit better. Their survival was better than a patient waiting for a heart transplant. And in fact, their survival was a little better than a patient who received a heart transplant.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 13:04

Wow.

D Dr. Hartzell Schaff 13:04

So, we felt like it was very good treatment if the patients are properly selected. Now we also do the transapical incision for other types of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, and we've done that in probably 500 or 600 patients.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 13:22

Hmm, wow, it's amazing. Justin, what is this been like for you? What was it like to go through this experience? And how has it affected your life?



J Justin Vigile 13:31

I mean, the first day being awake my head was shaking uncontrollably because of all the oxygen that I was now getting to my neck and my brain. And I was like back. It was the craziest thing. My family hadn't seen me, you know, sharp and alert and aware like this in years. And I immediately was having ideas on like what I'm going to do, how I'm going to capitalize on this, I'm getting back into music. Like I've got, I got a whole thing, you know, and I was like, I'm gonna make, I'm going to do this within a year. And I, you know, started in a wheelchair, to walking with a cane, to going to cardiac rehab where I was the youngest person by 45 years without a doubt, to gentle yoga, to advanced yoga, to bodybuilding workouts, to running, and touring. And I mean, in that first 12 months. I mean, I look back at a video, Dr. Schaff you did a speech where you showed, I showed my fiancée Sam, and you said, Justin said we could share his story on the condition that we plug his band Extractus. She got a good laugh. She's like, that sounds like you. And I said, well look, even then I was still, you know, I'm still a promoter. And, I mean, you and your team Dr. Schaff, you change my life which is obvious. But it's the lives of my friends and family, my band, you know, my podcast partner Darrell Campbell in the Evergreen podcast. I was able to meet the woman that I fell in love with. My life, I almost look at my life, like there was a September 25, 1989, to January 23, 2012. And then every year, you know, we call it my rebirth day.

D Dr. Hartzell Schaff 15:26

We're very pleased when somebody has a great result that you've had. The viewers don't understand what you were talking about when you were saying that I shared your story. I did share your story. I also shared an image of you playing your drums afterwards, I don't know if you remember that little solo on your drum. And I show that every chance that I get because we talk about hypertrophic cardiomyopathy often. So, you're well known as a drummer as well.

J Justin Vigile 16:03

Yeah, and if I could just say, you know, Dr. Schaff, this is the first time I've seen you, you know, not in person but as close as we can get. And I just, I can't thank you enough for what you did for me. My family, you know, you have enabled me to pursue my dreams. But beyond that, the ability to share what you did for me with the world, and it's been my biggest honor to be associated with you, with your work, with the Mayo Clinic. You know, anytime the Mayo Clinic calls, I'm right there. And I just, you know, for myself, my mom, my dad, my whole family, thank you.

D Dr. Hartzell Schaff 16:58

Well, you're welcome. It's very kind of you to say that, and as I told you, we tell your story often when we're giving talks on hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. And we appreciate your staying in touch with us. And although we've not talked directly, I think in some ways we've communicated through Tracy.

J Justin Vigile 17:19

We have, and I don't know if you can see this right here, Dr. Schaff, but this handsome man right here in the black and white, that's you, buddy. That's one of the articles they wrote in the Philadelphia Inquirer, and I had my drums and anytime I'm practicing, I have that there. I look up at it.

D Dr. Hartzell Schaff 17:38
That's fantastic. Thank you.

J Justin Vigile 17:43
I think about you a lot. Let's put it that way.

D Dr. Hartzell Schaff 17:46
I appreciate it.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 17:47
I feel a little negligent that we didn't have your mother here today, Justin.

J Justin Vigile 17:51
Oh, man, she, yeah, that would have, well, you know, I spoke with her. I'm a Mama's boy like I said.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 17:59
Good for you.

J Justin Vigile 18:01
Our thing was, we never wanted to lose the memories of where we were to appreciate where we are now. And like, we're getting ready for this wedding. And it's gonna be beautiful. But there's, everybody knows stress that comes with it. And like today, it was just like, reflecting, you know. And like I said before, I used to spend every waking moment of my life reflecting on this surgery, this moment in time. And as I got further from it, it got easier. And instead of spending 12 months out of the year thinking about January 24, it became eight months, then it became six months. And now I've gotten to a place where I've got it buttoned up into one 24-hour period every year where I'm an emotional wreck.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 18:49
Well, congratulations on your upcoming marriage.

J Justin Vigile 18:53
Thank you. And it's got to be progress. But you know, this just in a nutshell goes to show, you know, the power of not only the power of the Mayo Clinic's reach, but when this this conversation, I guarantee you, there's a mother or father or an aunt or an uncle or whatever is going to watch this. And they're going to

there's a mother or father or an aunt or an uncle or whatever is going to watch this. And they're going to have someone in their life that has HCM, and maybe it might not be the thing I have, but they're going to be like hey, I need answers. And now they're going to know, you know, who to call. It's like the Ghostbusters.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 19:29
Well, thank you both for sharing with us today.

J Justin Vigile 19:31
Thank you.

D Dr. Hartzell Schaff 19:32
I have one favor I'm gonna ask Justin.

J Justin Vigile 19:36
Yes, sir. Anything for you.

D Dr. Hartzell Schaff 19:37
All right. Well, listen. You have the wedding coming up, and I'd appreciate some wedding pictures.

J Justin Vigile 19:44
No problem.

D Dr. Hartzell Schaff 19:44
For my own information, but I'll substitute those wedding pictures for you playing the drums. Okay?

J Justin Vigile 19:52
I will do that. I will do that. Yes, sir. Not a problem.

D Dr. Hartzell Schaff 19:56
Alright.

J Justin Vigile 19:57
Thank you so much.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 19:57
Our thanks to Mayo Clinic cardiovascular surgeon, Dr. Hartzell Schaff, who truly embodies the primary value of the Mayo Clinic, that the needs of the patient come first. Thank you for being here today, Dr. Schaff.

D Dr. Hartzell Schaff 20:10
Thank you.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 20:11
When we come back, Justin Vigile stays with me, and we were going to talk about something we both love, podcasting, Justin's podcasting partner, Darrell Campbell, DC, will join us. So, we'll be back in a moment. Welcome back, everyone to Mayo Clinic Q&A. I'm here again with Justin Vigile, and now we are back with Darryl Campbell, Justin's podcasting partner. Welcome gentlemen.

D Darrell Campbell 20:39
Hey, what's going on Halena, good to see you.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 20:41
We are here now for the fun part to talk about things that we both enjoy, which are podcasting and silver linings.

J Justin Vigile 20:48
That's right. Thank you, again, for welcoming us here on the Mayo Clinic podcast. It's really, it's an honor, and we're excited to be here.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 20:58
Okay, I need some tips from the experts about podcasting.

J Justin Vigile 21:03
Well, Darrell and I co-host the Everyman podcast, which is available everywhere you listen to this podcast, you can find our show. And we kind of got together, and we wanted to kind of express our philosophy,

which is generally be positive, and shine your light with other people that share that passion.

D

Dr. Halena Gazelka 21:28

I like that.

J

Justin Vigile 21:28

And then Darrell and I had this mutual interest in what each other's good at. And from there it kind of developed into a whole, you know, here check out this guy, and oh, I know this guy, and I know this guy. And we started recording these conversations, and, you know, it's turned into a beautiful thing.

D

Darrell Campbell 21:49

Yeah, I mean, if I were to add anything to that, I'd say that we are bros. We're brothers. It's one of those things that's really, our relationship is real tight. We really play off one another well when we are podcasting. And I think the key aspect of what it is that we do is just being genuine, just having natural moments and natural conversations that people really identify with.

D

Dr. Halena Gazelka 22:14

I love that. I think that podcasting is one of those silver linings of COVID that we have seen just blossom over these last 18 months or so. What other silver linings do you guys enjoy about COVID?

J

Justin Vigile 22:27

So early on, it's interesting you say that because Darrell and I had been, we always set goals every year for the show. We will be coming up on our 200th episode in several months.

D

Dr. Halena Gazelka 22:38

Wow, congratulations. That's wonderful.

J

Justin Vigile 22:40

Yeah, thank you. And for our first goal is we want to do this every week, you know, without fail. And now that's turned into we're gonna do it for two years straight without missing an episode. And then you just keep building on these things. And when COVID came, we were like, well, we're gonna like, it was rare for Darrell to have that kind of downtime. And me, and we're just like, we're going to maximize this. And I learned everything I possibly could about live streaming and recording and just getting everything to the best possible quality that we could get remotely. Because the problem was, we were doing everything in person, and then we had to figure out how do we do this remotely. And we tried everything, like, if you name it, we tried it. And ultimately, we figured it out. But we pushed ourselves to like think outside the box

with what we were doing with this show. And then which turned into the Everyman podcast live on Twitch and on YouTube in visual format, which has turned into like a storytelling version of the show now where we integrate, you know, our guest's content into what we're talking about. So, you can kind of experience the person who made that, talk about it in real time, like it's commentary. So, we're like, it definitely created a set of problems that we had to solve, and it's made us tighter. Wouldn't you agree Darrell?

D

Darrell Campbell 24:05

Oh, well, I would definitely say that. But I'd also say that, especially Halena when you mentioned silver linings right, so brother J just said that you know our podcast's central thematic is about positivity. So, for me, I would think that, and I'm pretty sure brother J agrees. The silver lining especially with COVID everybody being pent up during that time was the height of the COVID death toll. People were just really, and I'm being honest with you, and I'm pretty sure you understand this. It was just a miserable time. You couldn't go outside. You know what I mean? Just everything was so distant from people.

D

Dr. Halena Gazelka 24:38

So much uncertainty.

D

Darrell Campbell 24:39

Oh, my goodness. And I know for me, some people, a lot of people say I'm a social butterfly. I just love people, and I just love the love that being personable, being in the moment, being next to your brothers. Even like with brother J, like that. Like hey, bro. I mean I love you, man. We got to do it from a distance, just trying to be safe, you know, that type of deal. So, you know, but at the same time, like the silver lining for us was that this is a way for me to see him every day. This is a way for us to interact every day. And then also, you know, project that positivity to everybody else, which, hey, you know, it's a resource, a place for people to come and bring their whole selves, and just talk to us, so we can talk to them and just learn about different people, different things, talk about music, you know, all the things that we love in life. And, you know, that was the silver lining throughout that whole process.

D

Dr. Halena Gazelka 25:30

Yeah, I love that. I think it's been a great time for people to kind of engage in things that really are meaningful to them. Maybe even things they enjoy but didn't have time to do before because we were so bustling everywhere all of the time. And there's, I think there have been a number of changes to life that might be good.

D

Darrell Campbell 25:54

Well, there are blessings, right? Like I look at it like this. We meet like, we affectionately call it the cosmic canoe, right? We get people to come on to the show when they're in there. They're in a canoe with us going on, on a journey. You know what I mean? You're in it right now, Halena. Yeah.



J

Justin Vigile 26:11

We bring it with us anytime.

D

Darrell Campbell 26:13

You've been in it, and that's another blessing. You know, it's just the universe at work bringing positive people together. And you know, we're making meaningful moments along that journey. So, this is another one. Which is why I'm really jazzed up to be on this right now.

D

Dr. Halena Gazelka 26:29

Darrell, before you came on, Justin was asking me what was going on at Mayo Clinic right now. And I was telling him how we have really entered a concentrated effort to show gratefulness to our employees because we recognize that people are exhausted, not just from taking care of COVID patients, but we have a lot of sick patients in our hospitals, and everyone has just been working really hard to keep the clinic running and to take good care of our patients. And so, one of the things that leadership decided to do, Gianrico and Jeff, to close the clinic the day after Thanksgiving, which will mean that a lot of patients are inconvenienced from having their elective procedures and surgeries, etc. And I'm hoping that they can see the silver lining in that, that our employees are spending an extra day with their families and having some restorative time. But I think we're engaging on a whole program of gratefulness and wellness for employees. And I think that's really important. But it reminds me, I was reminded of that when you said about taking care of each other and caring about each other.

D

Darrell Campbell 27:37

That's huge, and I'm glad you guys are doing that. Because the one thing and you do it even on your podcast, is you pour into people information, whether it is, you know just like you say, practices, information. That's the type of stuff that realistically, you know, gives people hope. It gives people information that is a huge, huge thing, especially in the medical field. And as you well know, and we do it at our job at NFL films too. It's one of those things now. A silver lining right now, us being together right now in this podcast, a silver lining now, afterwards is we are more present, we are more purposeful we are more into the fact that hey, we have to pour into one another. Just like we need to have that restorative time, what you guys are doing right now after Thanksgiving. It's totally understandable.

J

Justin Vigile 28:26

Yeah, I get all pumped up after we do podcasts. It's like, if I'm having a rough day, or you know, whatever it is, it's just we, this kind of thing that we have it's almost like it's a ritual experience, you know, that we're connected in, and then you're putting this energy out there, and it comes back to you. And I'll tell you a quick story. The other day my dad has gone into the grocery store, and we're big fans of Dream Theater. And we've had, it's crazy to me as a little boy, a little young drummer man. They're my favorite band. It's crazy to me that I'm friends with these guys now, and Darrell and I are friends with them, and we have them on. And my dad was wearing a Dream Theater shirt to the grocery store. And this guy walks up to him, and he was wearing a Dream Theater shirt too, which is rare because it's, you know, it's not very grocery store band. And he's like, oh, that's cool, you know. Right, so then my dad is walking the dog the other day. This turns out this guy lives in the neighborhood. He's like, hey, you're the Dream Theater guy.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And he goes, you know, he says to my dad, you know, there's this podcast I listen to that the guys from Dream Theater are always on it, and I love it. I listen to it all the time. And he goes, oh yeah, what's the name of it? And he's like the Everyman podcast. And he's like that's my boy. That's my son.

D

Dr. Halena Gazelka 29:37

That's incredible.

J

Justin Vigile 29:39

And it's crazy. It's like, and we've been at concerts and people come up to me and be like, dude, I listen to your show, at you know, working on a forklift in a warehouse and I'm like, dude, that's, we're doing that for you. Like we want to take your mind off whatever it is you're doing, you know, whether you're driving or working or exercising, or whatever it is, and give you a little bit of joy and like Darrell saying, like, share information. And we were joking before like, sometimes this podcast is like, an excuse to have fantastic conversations with really interesting people that you normally don't carve time out for. And like, we just had Dylan Dickstein on, the guys in the final 400 of the NASA astronaut applicant pool. And it's like, it's incredible. And then, you know, we connect with people like yourself, or, you know, some of these amazing athletes that Darrell played with that are now lawyers and filmmakers, and referees and actors. Like, it's amazing. And we talk about the cosmic canoe. And it's just like, we're getting informed, you know, just like when we listen to your podcast, you're getting informed. You're getting educated, but you're being entertained. And it's like, on your time and how you want it. And it's a great thing to be a part of.

D

Dr. Halena Gazelka 31:03

At Mayo Clinic, we talk a lot about bringing hope and healing to our patients every day. And so, I kind of have a ritual while I'm driving, and I've got a 15-minute drive to work. The first part is gratefulness. So, I list at least five things that I'm grateful for. I try not to repeat things every day, except for my grandsons Liam and Owen they get mentioned every day, because they're special. But after that, I try to think about the patients that I'm going to see that day, or the meetings that I'm going to have, and I consciously pray and ponder and think about how I can pour myself into them and hopefully make a difference in someone else's life that day. And that's what you guys are doing too, and I just love. That's a silver lining to get to meet you guys with totally different career paths than I have had but doing amazing people blessing work.

J

Justin Vigile 31:56

Thank you.

D

Darrell Campbell 31:57

Well, we love that, and we love you. And it's also a thing too where you find a kindred spirit like the last podcast we had you on and I find out, ey, you love gerbera daisies I love crane flowers. I'm like, what? That's just the cosmic canoe. We're just flower loving, you know, patrons together. That's just amazing.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 32:15
That's right. That's right.

J Justin Vigile 32:16
Yeah, it's funny, and it's we don't really know when it came about. But at some point during our show's illustrious path here, we came up with the cosmic canoe in this shared journey. And it's stuff like that happens in the grocery store, or a concert, or just these connections and we're proving it, and anytime they happen we share the story because we want people, I think it's easier for people to feel connected. Because I think a lot of people suffer from feeling disconnected right now. And whether it's, they were already kind of on the edge going into it, and then now you add this on top of it. And that's difficult for a lot of people. And I think that's overlooked when it comes to like, what problems we're facing, in my opinion. And there's a lot of people that are looking for a connection, and they're isolated, and that's why things like Twitch, and podcasts are so special that are different than a book or like a broadcast on cable or film. Because it's like this living, breathing thing that interacts on either a daily or weekly whatever basis. And that's why you're seeing like people gathering in groups around ideas, you know. I think positivity is one that everybody's like catching on to.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 33:45
it's contagious.

J Justin Vigile 33:46
Yeah, it's like this is actually not that hard, and it's fun. And like yeah, once, you know, I consciously made a shift to be in that direction it's, you know, it's a real thing.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 33:58
Yeah, you know, compassion fatigue and burnout are topics that we talk about all the time in healthcare right now and have even before COVID. But I do think that one of the antidotes to energizing people is positivity. And so, you know, it's great. Days off after Thanksgiving are wonderful and very, very important for a fatigued staff. But being a positive force, you know, we were talking about how we want to provide good information that is factual, that is scientific, and that individuals can depend on. And I know you guys do the same thing on your podcast.

D Darrell Campbell 34:33
Absolutely. Absolutely. Positivity is paramount. Taking care of one another is paramount. Me and brother J, you know. Making sure that we check in on all our guests, like I mean it's a family thing. Halena, you don't know this, I have you on my prayer board at work. It's just like that.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 34:50

Aww, I love that.

D Darrell Campbell 34:51

That's just how it is, you know what I mean. But like we put it out there in the universe, we make it plain so we can see it, and we just go towards those goals. And we bring everybody with us. And I just love it.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 35:02

I love that. Well, who would have known that when you came here as a patient, Justin, that the three of us were going to get to sit around and have a conversation later and that Dr. Schaff was going to get to speak and visit with you again and hear about the amazing things that have gone on in your life as a result of some of the caring that he poured into your life. It's like a circle. It just keeps going and going.

J Justin Vigile 35:29

What a pod.

D Darrell Campbell 35:30

And I say what I wish. I wish I could have been in on that pod just to thank Dr. Schaff, because without him I wouldn't have my bro.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 35:39

Isn't that something. It's amazing?

J Justin Vigile 35:42

Yeah, it's wild. And it's interesting, you know, I'm getting ready to get married here as we're recording this podcast,

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 35:50

Congratulations.

J Justin Vigile 35:52

And it was cool to have my fiancée get to pop in and see him and say hello. And, you know, she's been able to, like, learn about it through these conversations, like in that podcast. And it was cool on a personal note, which is very cool for me to see that. It's kind of mind blowing like, I was there, and now I'm about to

marry this woman. And this is great and like, it's just hard to kind of put it into a coherent sentence, but I know people listen to this understand what I'm trying to say. It's something special.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 36:36

It's a good thing probably that we can't see ahead and control things because we'd probably mess it all up.

D Darrell Campbell 36:41

Oh my gosh.

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 36:42

Look at the places we are and the silver lining. Thanks for being here today, gentlemen.

D Darrell Campbell 36:48

Thank you Halena.

J Justin Vigile 36:48

Thank you

D Dr. Halena Gazelka 36:48

Stay in touch.

N Narrator 36:51

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