What if I'm not a Good Doctor?

Ten liberating realities I wish I knew 25 years ago.

Dr. Kelly Cooper
Founder, Owner
Reality Vet Coaching & Consulting

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The Lovington Daily LEADER

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Clarke Takes Down Shingle; 43 Years As Lovington Vet

W. H. GRAHAM

If dog is man's best friend, then Louie Clarke must have a lot of pals out there in dogdom. That goes for cats, horses, cows, and assorted other animals, too.

In his 43 years of practice in Lovington, L. P. Clarke, DVM, has treated thousands of animals, large and small, from back yard pooches to high bred horses, and managed to make friends with nearly all of them.

But his tenure as one of the best known general practice vets in Southeastern New Mexico and West Texas is winding down. At 74, he has decided it is time to call it quits -- or at least slow down.

He and his wife Betty have sold their home in Lovington, bought a house in Midland, and will move there permanently after he sells his business and fully retires.

Kelly Pope, DVM, has been hired to take over his practice at Lovington Veterinary Clinic.

Until Dr. Pope gets lined out in her new responsibilities, Dr. Clarke will back her up. He will stay in an apartment at the clinic throughout the week, returning to Midland on weekends.

The Clarkes have chosen Midland for their retirement because their daughter, Beth Stewart, and granddaughter, Jessica, now 10, live there. Beth is married to David Stewart, formerly of Hobbs.

"Dr. Pope will be the main medical person here," says Clarke, "until I sell my practice. Until then, I will be in semi-retirement, going back and forth between here and Midland."

Clarke, whose parents were from Pampa, Texas, graduated from Texas A&M in 1950, after being in the Air Force. He practiced veterinary medicine one year in Dallas, and then returned to A&M to teach at the veterinary clinic before coming to Lovington, which was in August of 1953.

"I had taken off the summer to look for places to go. I knew it would be West Texas or New Mexico, because I wanted to be up in the Plains area, with its altitude and cool nights, which I like a lot.

Clarke 2

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The Vet Is A Lady

"I wanted to be a vet since I was a kid."

So says Dr. Kelly Pope, who will get that childhood dream fulfilled in spades within the new few days in Lovington, as she takes over the practice of Dr. Louie Clarke.

Dr. Pope is licensed to practice in Texas, and has just taken her board exam in New Mexico and is awaiting her license in this state.

She is a native of San Antonio, and became interested in health care because her mother is a nurse.

"When I was a kid I was interested in wild animals, birds and rabbits. If a bird fell out of a tree, I would take it in and take care of it."

With Kelly's love of animals, dreams of becoming a veterinarian were natural.

After graduation from McArthur High in 1988 she went to a community college in San Antonio for two years, and then transferred to Oklahoma State at Sillwater. She earned her bachelor's in 1992 and her DVM on May 4 of this year.

She wanted to be in mixed animal practice, so is ideally suited for Dr. Clarke's general practice in Lovington. The two got together after the Lovington veterinarian contacted OSU professors and let them know of his interest.

Dr. Pope, who is unmarried, has moved to Lovington and says "I am excited to be here, and I look forward to meeting the people in the community.

"I hope I can be only half as good as Dr. Clarke is."

She is a member of the American Veterinary Medical Association, and a member of the American Association of Equine Practitioners. She developed a special interest in surgery and equine medicine in veterinary medical school.

"My interest is in horses, especially," she says, "but I like it

Vet 2



DVM's Louie Clarke and Kelly Pope

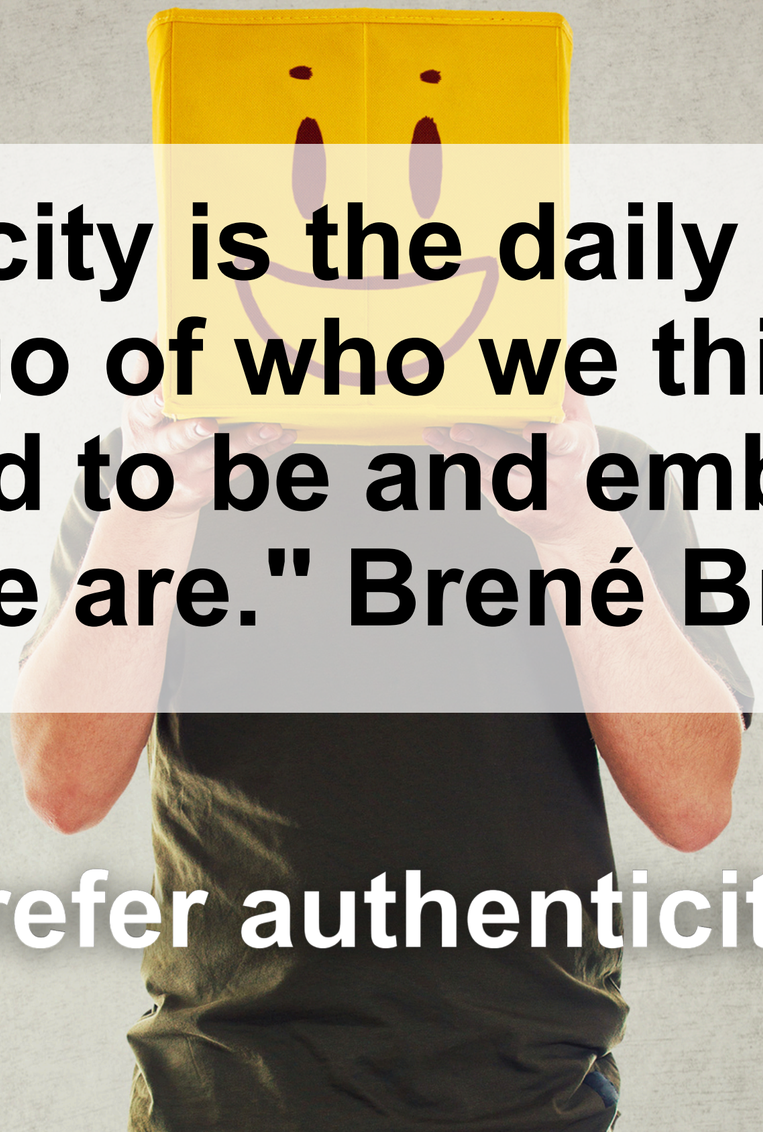
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Perception vs. Reality

The Ten Perceptions

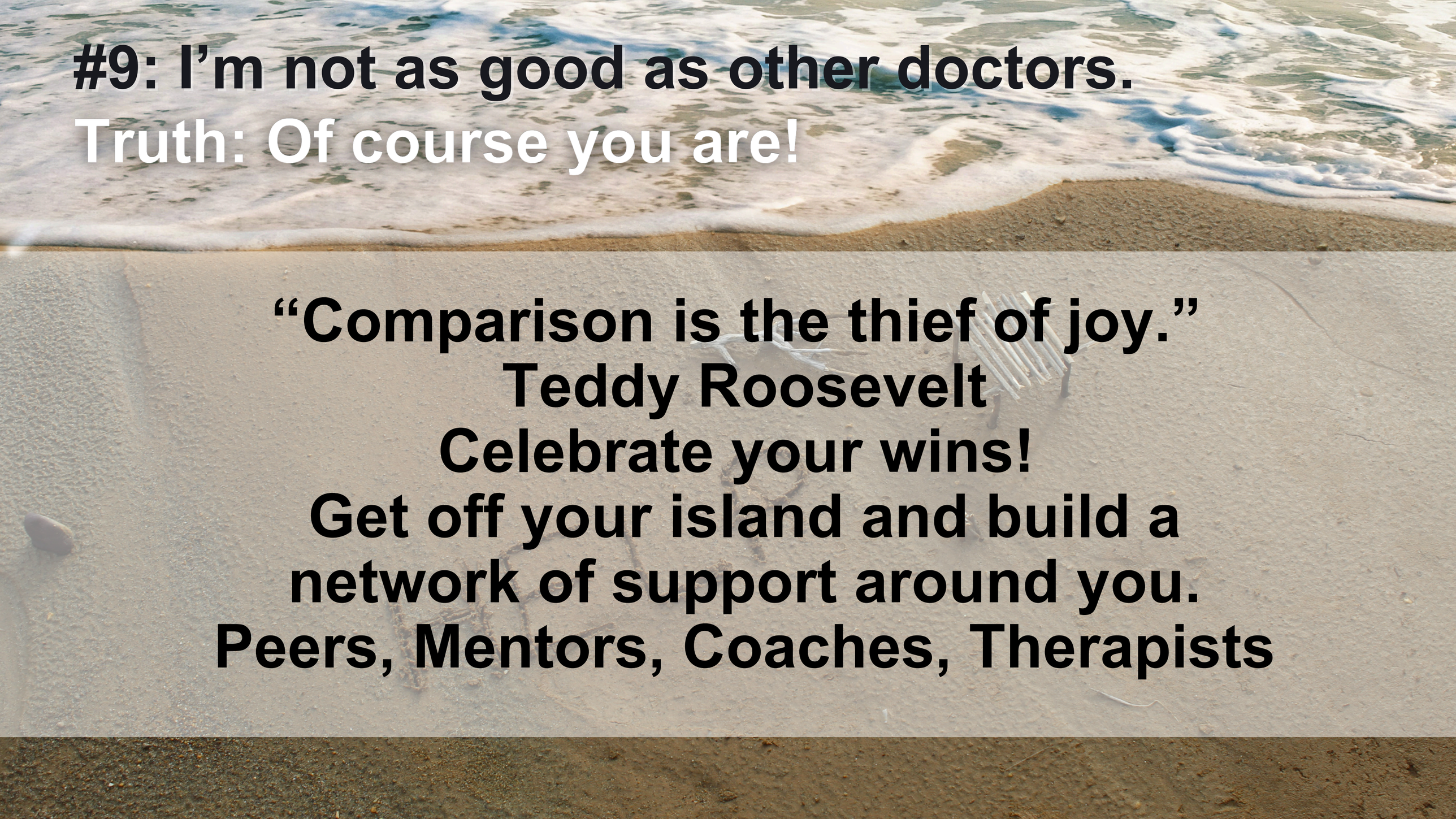


#10: I should always have my “game face” on and show up how people expect me to.



"Authenticity is the daily practice of letting go of who we think we're supposed to be and embracing who we are." Brené Brown

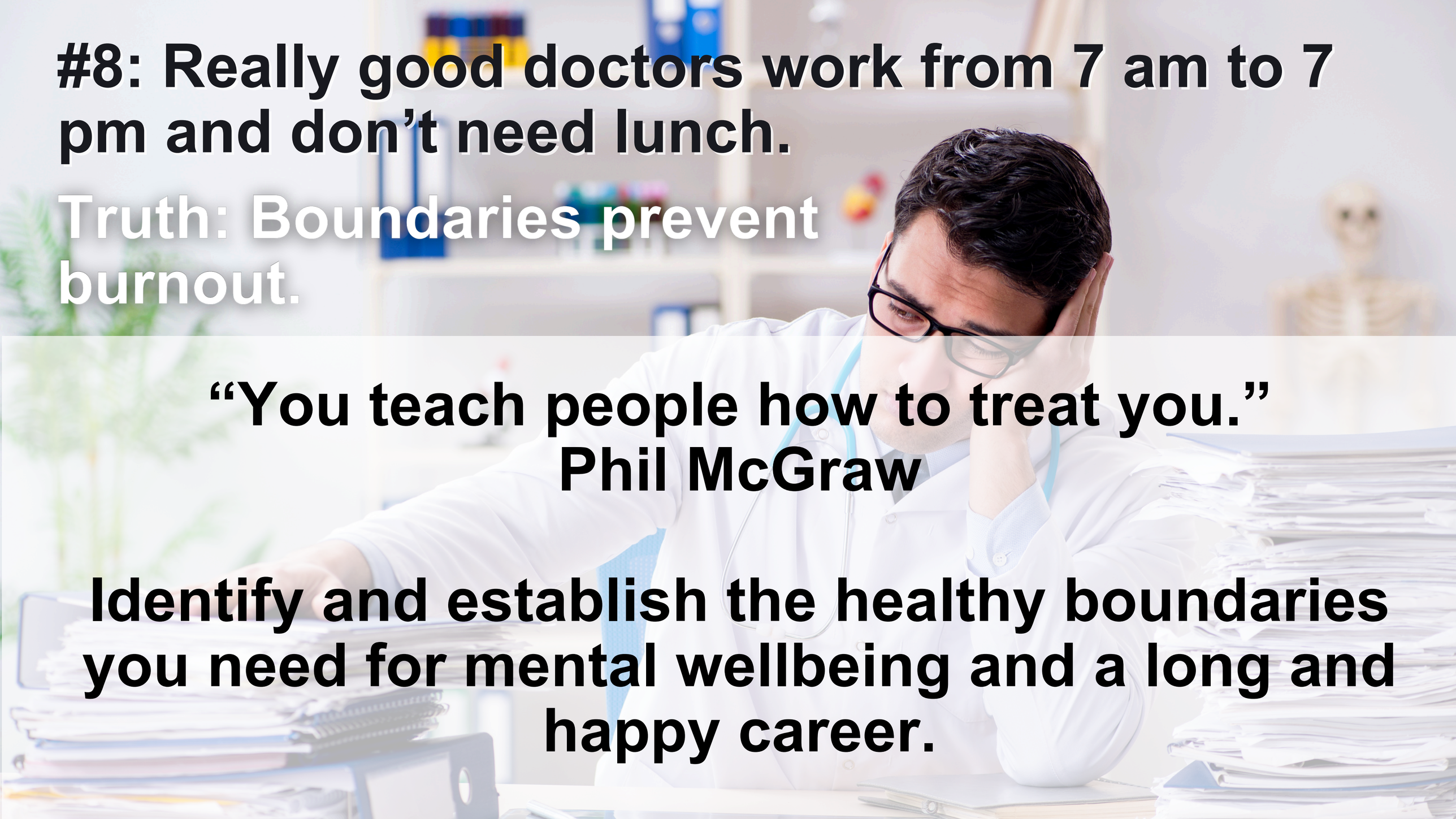
Truth: People prefer authenticity. You be you.



#9: I’m not as good as other doctors.

Truth: Of course you are!

“Comparison is the thief of joy.”
Teddy Roosevelt
Celebrate your wins!
Get off your island and build a network of support around you.
Peers, Mentors, Coaches, Therapists

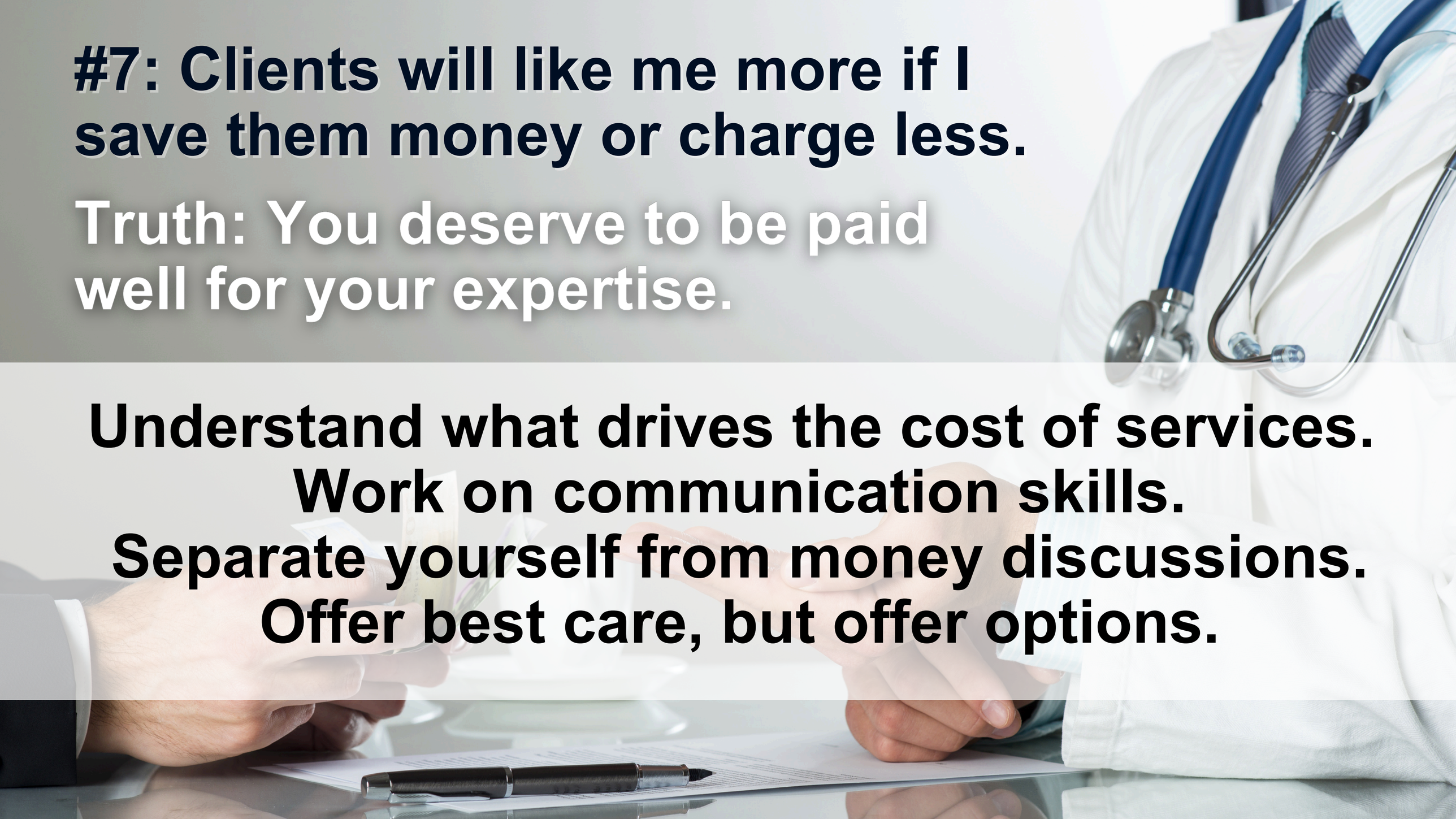


#8: Really good doctors work from 7 am to 7 pm and don't need lunch.

Truth: Boundaries prevent burnout.

"You teach people how to treat you."
Phil McGraw

Identify and establish the healthy boundaries you need for mental wellbeing and a long and happy career.



#7: Clients will like me more if I save them money or charge less.

Truth: You deserve to be paid well for your expertise.

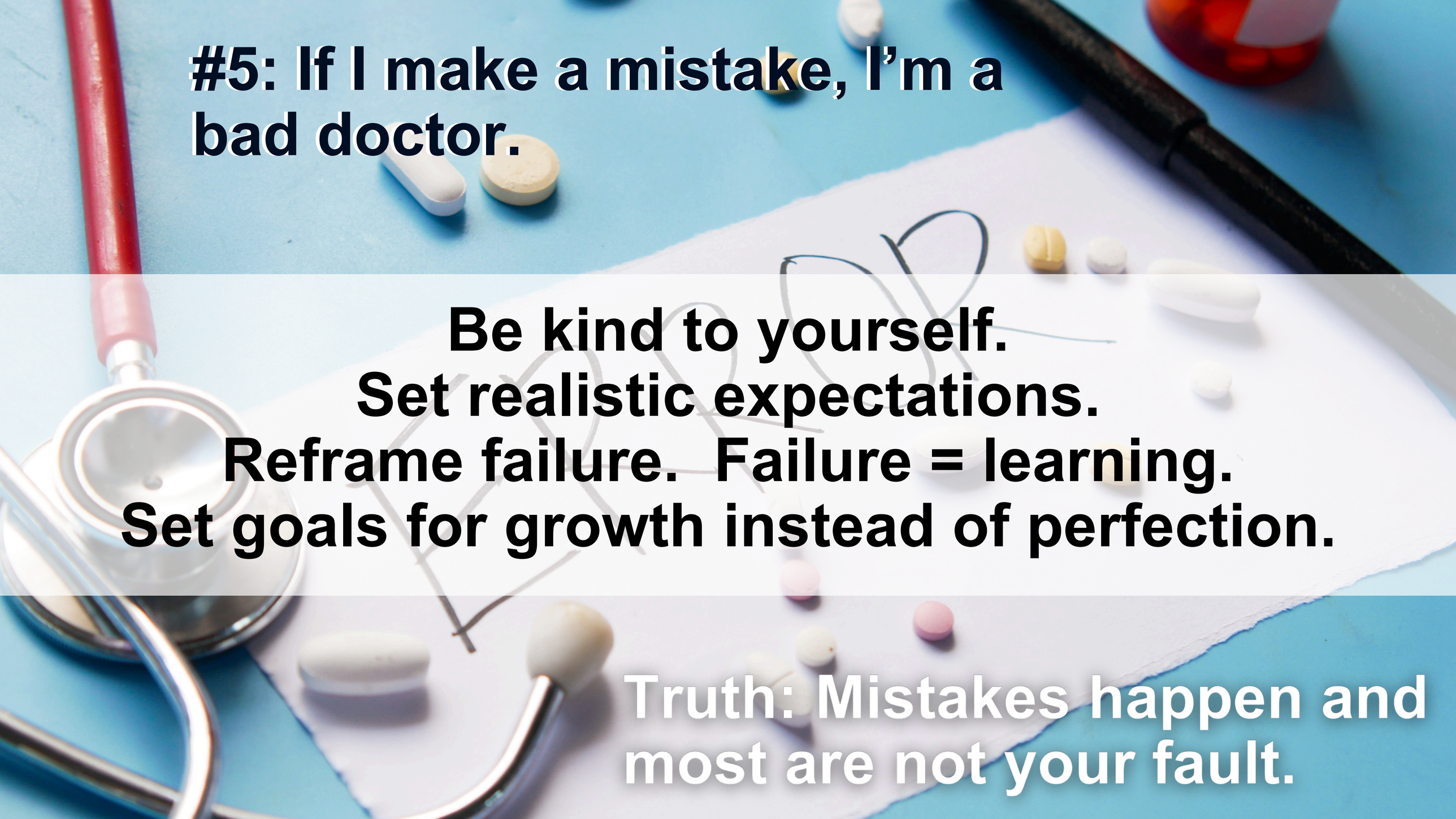
Understand what drives the cost of services.
Work on communication skills.
Separate yourself from money discussions.
Offer best care, but offer options.

#6: The client is always right.



Work on communication skills.
Know how to diffuse an upset client.
Observe the client's behavior.
Respond, don't react.

Truth: You are not responsible for a client's decisions, their emotions, or bad behaviors.



#5: If I make a mistake, I'm a bad doctor.

Be kind to yourself.
Set realistic expectations.
Reframe failure. Failure = learning.
Set goals for growth instead of perfection.

Truth: Mistakes happen and most are not your fault.

#4: I'll probably be sued or lose my license

Most actions come from miscommunication and client frustration.

Control what you can control:
Be a great communicator.
Learn how to diffuse an upset client.
Keep records current and accurate.

Truth: The likelihood is *very* small.

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AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference

#3: I don’t have time for selfcare.

Truth: You do have time, if you make it.



You get to decide how you spend your time.

Prioritize = Put First

Selfcare is necessary for a healthy balance.

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#2: I’m not a good doctor.

Truth: You’re a great doctor!

You deserve to practice.
You do so many things well!
You are a unicorn!
You care!

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AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference

#1: My inner critic tells me the truth.

Truth: Your inner critic is a liar.

Impostor Syndrome: A psychological condition that is characterized by persistent doubt concerning one's abilities or accomplishments accompanied by the fear of being exposed as a fraud despite evidence of one's ongoing success.

Reference: Merriam Webster Dictionary

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Break the Critic / Imposter Cycle



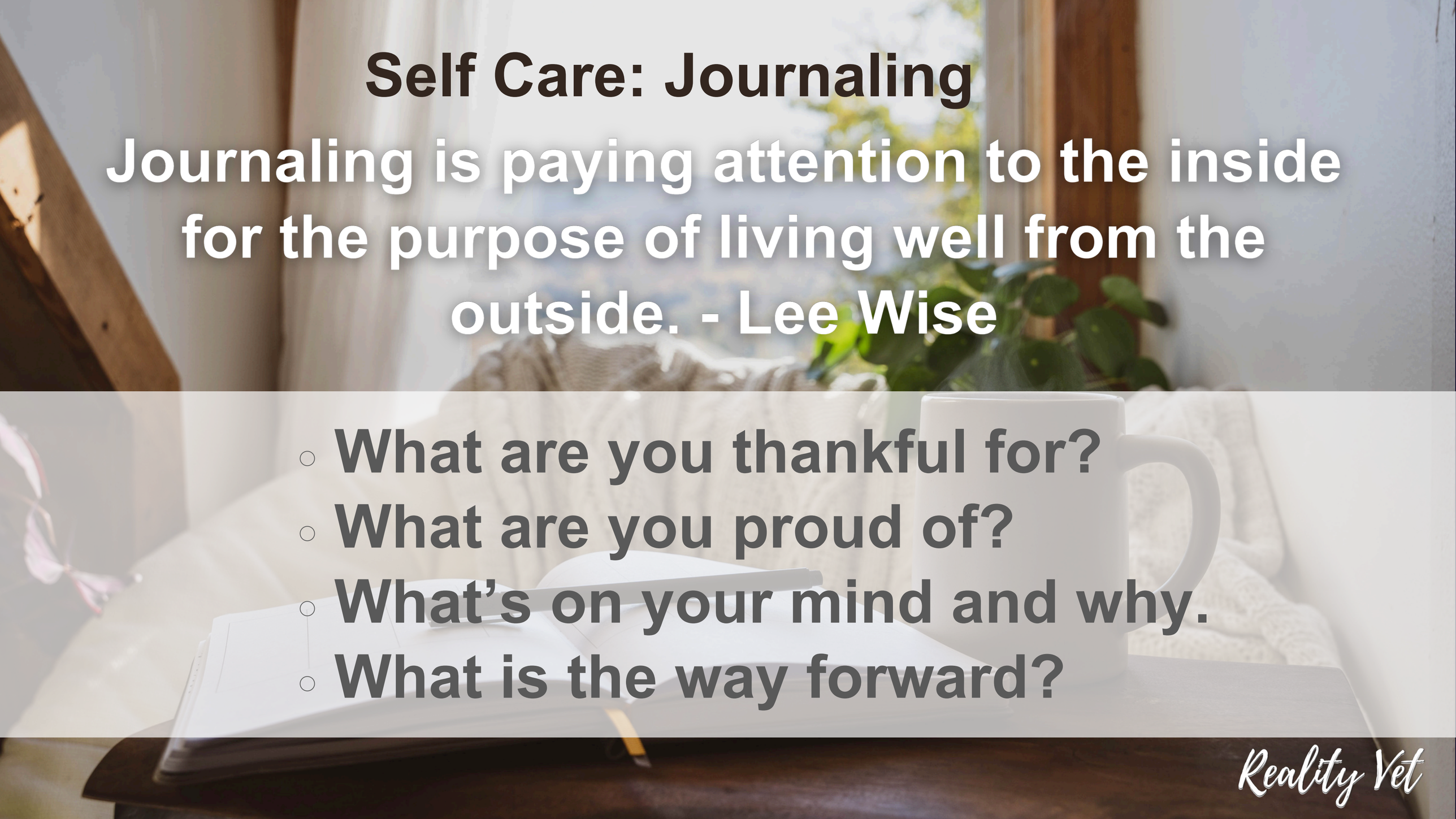
Recognize the inner critic’s voice.
Develop a realistic, compassionate self-view.
Celebrate achievements.
Seek support.
Focus on growth and learning.

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Self Care: Mindfulness & Meditation

Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present and aware of your thoughts, feelings, and surroundings in the moment, without judgment.

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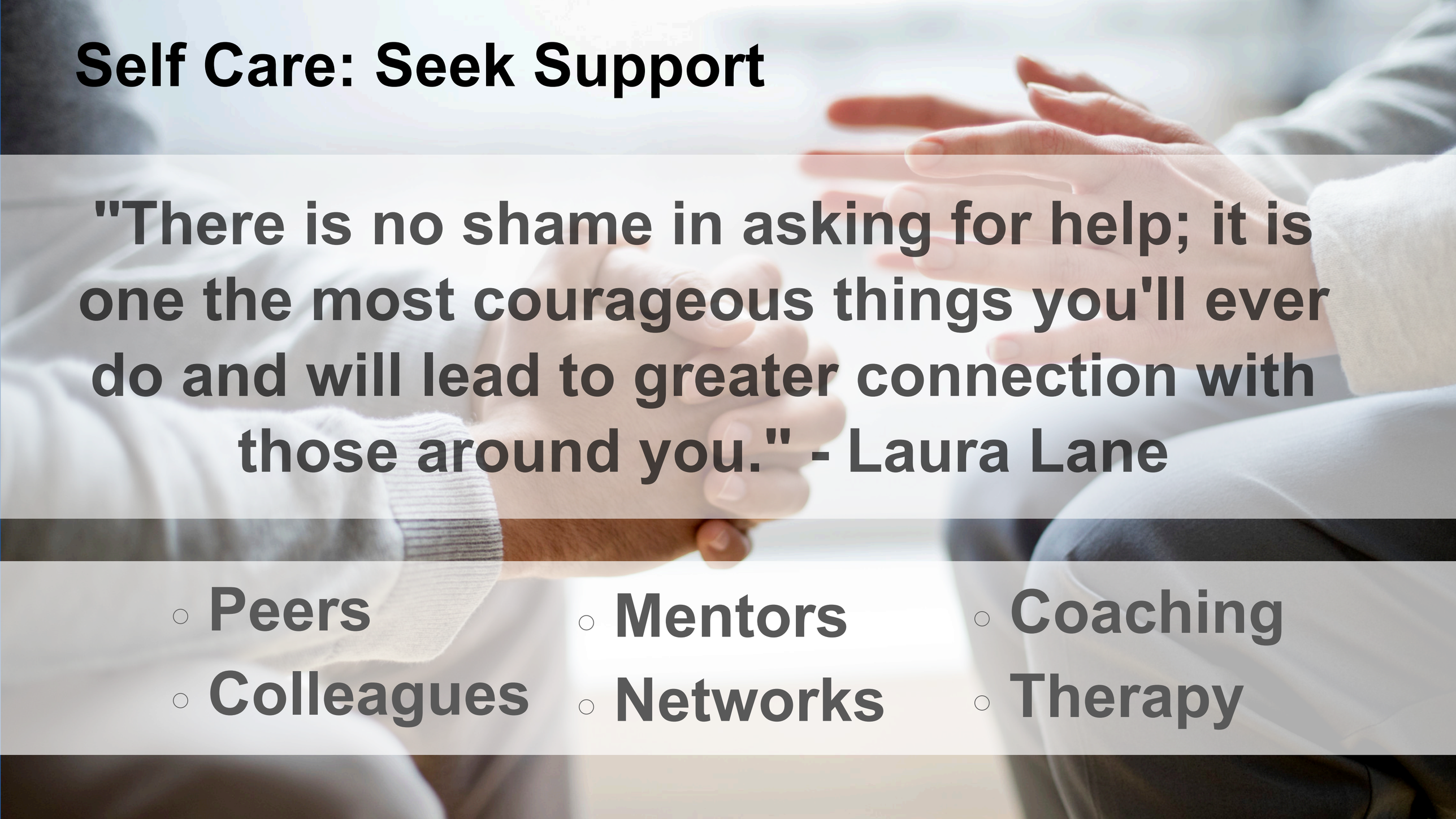
Self Care: Journaling

Journaling is paying attention to the inside for the purpose of living well from the outside. - Lee Wise

- What are you thankful for?
- What are you proud of?
- What's on your mind and why.
- What is the way forward?

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Self Care: Seek Support



"There is no shame in asking for help; it is one the most courageous things you'll ever do and will lead to greater connection with those around you." - Laura Lane

- Peers
- Colleagues
- Mentors
- Networks
- Coaching
- Therapy

Self-Care Resources

- BetterUp.com - affordable, expert coaching
- Self-Compassion.org - learn how to be kind to yourself
- PositiveIntelligence.com - mindfulness and saboteurs
- Headspace - mindfulness and meditation app
- *The Gifts of Imperfection...* by Brené Brown
- *Atomic Habits* - James Clear
- *Full Catastrophe Living* - Jon Kabat Zin
- *Boundaries* – Dr. Henry Cloud

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Conclusion

- Yes, you are a good doctor!
- No, you are not alone
- That voice in your head is a liar
- Understand yourself
- Develop yourself
- Be yourself



Be Happy!

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for the presentation
THANKS
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