McMaster Program for Faculty Development (MacPFD)

Spark Podcast

Official Transcript

Episode Number: 22
Title of Episode: Innovation in Healthcare with Sarrah Lal | Leadership in Post-Grad Education with Dr. Wasi
Producer: Nick Hoskin
Music by: Scott Holmes
Featured Guests: Sarrah Lal & Dr. Parveen Wasi
Interviewer: Dr. Teresa Chan
Date of original release: July 21, 2021

Dr. Teresa Chan (00:02):
Welcome to the MacPFD Spark podcast. This podcast is meant to inspire you to take the next step in your development journey as a faculty member. We're really excited to bring you all sorts of content, from inspiring you to teach or supervise differently, to leading and managing your team, to thinking about new creative ways or humanistic ways to actually do your work, and finally, to up your game in your scholarly practice. Are you excited yet? I certainly am. So sit back, listen and enjoy this latest episode of the MacPFD Spark podcast.

[music]

Dr. Teresa Chan (00:46):
Alright folks. This is Episode 22. This is so exciting. 22 is nothing special though. We're gonna be wrapping up with Episode 25 for sure. And so in this episode we'll be featuring two women who are champions of education here at McMaster. The first is Sarrah Lal, who is an MBA educator who has just been taking the world by force. Sarrah is helping with the Michael G. DeGroote Innovation Initiative, and she's been really working on how to bring innovation into healthcare, and so she will be reflecting with me about that.

Dr. Teresa Chan (01:18):
The second half of the episode is between one of my mentors, Dr. Parveen Wasi, and she is gonna talk about the transition from being a program director to an associate dean of Post-Graduate Education. That's a big leadership jump, and we reflect on a little bit how one goes through that process and what you have to think through.

Dr. Teresa Chan (01:34):
I think it's gonna be broadly applicable to everyone in any domain, regardless of whether or not you're actually that into post-graduate education. So, listen up.

[music]

Dr. Teresa Chan (01:47): Hello everyone, this is Teresa Chan, and I'm here with Sarrah Lal. You may have heard of her, she is an amazing person that is really trying to change the fabric of how we do business in healthcare. Sarah, can you say hi to everyone?

Sarrah Lal (02:01):
Hi. Hi, everyone. Hi, Teresa.

Dr. Teresa Chan (02:05):
Excellent, okay. So we're gonna have a conversation a little bit today about entrepreneurship and innovation in healthcare. So you're part of a bigger initiative called the MGDII, so Michael G. DeGroote Innovation Initiative, and it's meant to really foster an ecosystem of innovation and get people to think about healthcare differently. Is that correct?

Sarrah Lal (02:28):
Yeah, so the Michael G. DeGroote Initiative for Innovation and Healthcare, we're really focused on creating a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation, and what that exactly means is helping people understand how to create new value in healthcare. So it's a lot of thinking about the challenges that exist within the clinical setting, assessing different potential solutions that help to resolve those challenges, and maybe even thinking about creating a start-up or creating a new venture to be able to create a little bit more economic wealth from that great idea that's in your head.

Dr. Teresa Chan (02:56):
That's really fascinating. Alright, Sarah, so all of us sometimes think we have a great idea, and maybe we've asked our mom, maybe we asked our best friend, and maybe even my dog. Which I don't have right now, but some day if I were to ask my dog, he'd agree. And so the idea would be that on the back of napkins and sticky notes, I have all these great ideas all over the place, and yet they've never turned into something real. Can you walk me through the process of how I take some of these ideas that I have and turn them into something that's tangible, that's possibly marketable?

Sarrah Lal (03:31):
Sure. So Teresa, that's actually such a great description of how people usually come about and mull over their great ideas at the very beginning. People do very much jot things down on pieces of paper, they think about things with their friends, with their dogs, sometimes their cats, and of course, everyone's extraordinarily supportive when they're in your sphere of influence.

Sarrah Lal (03:51):
So one of the first and most important things that I ask people when they first come to me with an idea of some sort is, who have you spoken to who has provided you with some constructive but critical feedback on what you're proposing that you want to do? Because until you get into those conversations beyond, "This is such an amazing idea," until you get to those individuals who will be asking me questions that help you really focus in on what is the value that you're trying to create, you're probably not gonna be in the right headspace to critically evaluate your darling or your baby, your idea in the right way.

Sarrah Lal (04:27):
So what I encourage people to do is again, talk to people who will provide you with some critical feedback, and then go through the head space of you will not be able to design a solution to what

you're trying to solve, but you're trying to find something else where that already exists and you wanna apply that solution to what you're describing as the idea.

Sarrah Lal (04:47):
A lot of the time in healthcare, what we do is we have a lot of "me too" environments, where you want to create a similar solution to someone else just because you want to make it slightly better, but there is benefit to cooperating with others to make it a slight improvement on what's already been created.

Sarrah Lal (05:04):
A lot of time the energy goes into creating new technologies, new programs, new applications, so collaboration is sometimes actually the most effective strategy. But anyways, look for solutions that already exist because you don't want to do over work that's already been done.

Sarrah Lal (05:19):
If you find that in speaking with individuals and doing some market research, there is nothing out there that actually solves the problem you're trying to solve, then that actually provides you with a good understanding of the fact that your idea is something that could have real value.

Sarrah Lal (05:34):
So real value means there is no solution quite like what you're describing. It means that people are providing you with critical questions that you are able to answer, and ultimately you're also going to be able to, in speaking with people who provide you with critical feedback, ideally, people who are from different disciplines, you're gonna be able to create a bit of a fan base, if you will, or the early stages of a team that will ultimately help you not just advise you on what aspects you should be considering, but also ideally people who can help you build it, what you're proposing.

Sarrah Lal (06:06):
Now as clinicians, as researchers, we often don't have the skill sets to be able to build out an application, a device. A program is usually more feasible for us, but a device or an application, typically that's a bit more technologically advanced, so collaborations with engineers, with computer scientists, with programmers are very much in high demand, but you're not gonna come across those individuals unless you try to make those connections.

Sarrah Lal (06:28):
I encourage you to go out there, talk to people in the Faculty of Engineering, talk to people who are within the entrepreneurship landscape and make those connections, ask them about what they think a about your idea, and then you'll get that further validation and team members to boot.

Sarrah Lal (06:43):
So three-stage approach is, first, try to find people who provide you with critical constructive feedback. Second, to try to solve the problem using what's already out there, and if there's nothing out there, then maybe you've hit on something that has real value. And third thing is, try to expand your sphere of influence or your sphere of people who know about your idea to those who can actually help you build something out.

Dr. Teresa Chan (07:08):
It sounds like you're telling me there's three key steps that I'm hearing. Number one, is that you need to do your research and really understand whether or not your product and idea are gonna hold water when you get outside of your little bubble. Just because you have a great idea, it doesn't mean that it's gonna be great to everyone, and so if you're creating a new flavour margarine that you really like, doesn't necessarily mean that everyone's gonna like that, doesn't mean that there's gonna be a market out there, so you need to do some market research and really understand who the people that might end up buying it will be.

Dr. Teresa Chan (07:42):
Number two, it sounds like you need to do your other kind of research, kind of similar to a lit review. You need to get out there and see who's done something very similar to what you've done, to really understand the nature of your competition, right? What else is out there and who else might people be going to to get the same solution solve. What's the job for your app, your product, your service, and is someone else already in that space?

Dr. Teresa Chan (08:10):
And then the last part, it sounds like is form a team to do some early prototyping, so it gets your idea from maybe even just on the back of a napkin into something that's a little closer to reality, so that you can really understand the ins and outs of what it might look like. Is that correct?

Sarrah Lal (08:26):
I'd say that's a great way of breaking it down, Teresa, and it's just important to be able to shop things around the way that you're describing to different audiences, just to make sure that you have all the resources and thinking in place to make sure that what you're creating will provide some sort of impact down the line.

Dr. Teresa Chan (08:44):
Okay, that's great. So it sounds like there's three beginner steps that maybe you could take towards fleshing something out, and maybe we should bring you back again later once you've got a prototype to try to talk about what that looks like in the future. But I think for most of us who've got some back of napkin drawings, maybe this is a good start for us to challenge people to get something out into the world, maybe get it a little bit more prototyped and mapped out in your head, and then maybe then that might be the time to find out about some of the programming that Sarrah has, that helps you take your product to the next step. So you have something called the Health Ventures Program, is that correct?

Sarrah Lal (09:22):
I do, yes. So Health Ventures program is one of the key programs that are on offer from MGD Health ICE, which is a subset of the MGDII initiative, and Health Ventures specifically focuses on on people who have an idea or have an ongoing project and they're trying to evaluate it for commercialization potential. So by the end of the program, you should know, yes or no, this is something that could go into the market and have some level of success.

Sarrah Lal (09:48):
And if it's no, that's fine. Typically, there is an ongoing desire to put out a publication or go to a conference, put together a poster, so you can still do all those things, but by the end of the program,

commercialization, yes, no. And then we match you with the resources that you need to have in place in order to make sure that you're able to actually do that.

Dr. Teresa Chan (10:09):
Alright, and so it sounds like that would be a next step program once you've got something that you're really trying to flesh out to take it further. And so what does it entail? How long does it take in total and what kind of things do you get out of it?

Sarrah Lal (10:24):
So the Health Ventures program is really designed to be as accessible as possible. It went through a variety of different iterations, actually, just like you would with a prototype.

Dr. Teresa Chan (10:35):
That's great. You're doing exactly what you just told us you should do. [chuckle]

Sarrah Lal (10:40):
So that that we're meeting the needs of the people we are intending to serve. So the Health Ventures program was really designed for those who have full-time commitments, people who are clinicians, people who are medical residents, people who are researchers at the grad student or postdoc level, or even PIs.

Sarrah Lal (10:55):
When they come in with a project, they are given access to online modules, so video modules and assignments on a weekly basis for 12 weeks. A key thing is that even though you get those notifications as a reminder on a weekly basis that the program is still going on, those assignments aren't due until the very end of the program.

Sarrah Lal (11:14):
And so what I find is that a lot of clinicians, a lot of researchers really take advantage of that additional flexibility, and they do things on a monthly basis that do it perhaps moreso towards the end of the program, but the key is that everything that we do throughout the program culminates in a presentation at the end of the cohort's time with me.

Sarrah Lal (11:34):
And so we go through the material, we go through their coaching, we go through self-assessments, but at the end, the true test is, can you put together a presentation of seven minutes for the value that you're trying to create, and does that actually hold up against a panel of representatives from our innovation ecosystem?

Sarrah Lal (11:53):
It's not just me, it's folks who are from the hospital, from the tech transfer office, people who are successful entrepreneurs or innovation coaches, and we all provide the feedback necessary and we ask the questions necessary for you to really think whether this is something that you want to commit your time and resources to and bring it to commercialization.

Dr. Teresa Chan (12:12):
So it's basically like a Dragon's Den, eh? [chuckle]

Sarrah Lal (12:15):
At the end, yes. I don't like to say but in a way, it's a friendly Dragon's Den. We're not intending to ruin dreams or anything like that, we just want to make sure that you're putting your time and effort into things that will be successful if you want to pursue commercialization.

Dr. Teresa Chan (12:31):
So it's like the dragon from Mulan, like little tiny dragon that kinda, it's a friendly... [chuckle]

Sarrah Lal (12:37):
A friendly dragon that whispers things in your ear, but please listen to the little friendly dragon. [chuckle]

Dr. Teresa Chan (12:43):
Exactly. That helps you along our way, but not... Isn't scary at all. Just it's like Mushu, basically.

Sarrah Lal (12:47):
Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Teresa Chan (12:49):
Alright, I love it. Okay, so bottom line is, think about doing your research, get your product into a prototype, think about whether or not it's gonna resonate with someone other than you and your mom, and then maybe take it to the Health Ventures program, work it through those 12 modules over the 12 weeks, and then create a pitch that helps you tell people what your product is all about so that others can understand in a succinct way.

Dr. Teresa Chan (13:15):
And then you can decide based, on the advice you get from the little dragons in your Dragon's Den whether or not this is something that's worth investing more of your time into. Is that correct?

Sarrah Lal (13:22):
Correct.

Dr. Teresa Chan (13:25):
Well, that sounds like a really exciting way to go about it. It sounds like there's a lot of structure, and for those of us who are familiar with doing that research, it's all of all about the structures and process sometimes to be successful in that way. And so it's really cool that you're bringing the structure and rigour to mechanisms that maybe seem mysterious to us from the outside and actually bringing that into our ecosystem here.

Dr. Teresa Chan (13:48):
So thank you so much, Sarrah, for being a leader and a change maker in our network of people that are around, and thanks for being a great faculty member that's sharing her knowledge with everyone.

Sarrah Lal (13:58):
Thanks so much for having me, Teresa. If you're interested in learning more about the Health Ventures program, feel free to go to healthinnovation.mcmaster.ca. There's a Health Ventures program site that specifically describes what the different modules encompass, and I'd be pleased to

have people sign up for the fall, winter or summer modules, whatever really works for your schedule.

Dr. Teresa Chan (14:17):
Excellent, and we're gonna be working with Sarrah to cross-list that within macpfd.ca in our event calendar, and also work with her to try and figure out how we can turn her product into other kind of versions so that it can fit into everyone's lives. So thanks so much, Sarrah, this is amazing. I'm so looking forward to working with you and seeing this grow.

Sarrah Lal (14:39):
Thanks so much, Teresa.

[music]

Dr. Teresa Chan (14:41):
Wow, that was a really awesome first segment of the MacPFD Spark podcast, and now, on to our second segment.

[music]

Dr. Teresa Chan (14:56):
Hello, everyone. I am here with Dr. Parveen Wasi. Dr. Wasi has been a shero of mine, a mentor of mine, a sponsor of mine. She's been a wonderful person in my life, and I just wanted to take some time to, A, thank her publicly, but also, B, introduce her. She is the associate dean in the Post-Graduate Medical Education side of things for Faculty of Health Sciences, specifically within the School of Medicine.

Dr. Teresa Chan (15:24):
She is basically in charge of the training for, making sure the training happens for a large catchment of people, so that would be the resident physicians in the hospitals, in the clinics, around town, and they're also all across in Mac, the three campuses. And definitely someone who has a real birds-eye view on what it takes to be a leader in this kind of field.

Dr. Teresa Chan (15:45):
Parveen's previously been the program director for the Internal Medicine program. The core Internal Medicine program is a fairly large program, and one that we're very proud of here at Mac, and more recently become the associate dean. Parveen, welcome to the show. Can you say hi to everybody.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (16:00):
Thank you so much, Teresa. Thanks so much for those kind words. Really lovely, thank you.

Dr. Teresa Chan (16:04):
So Parveen, I know that you have had a lot of experience yourself in being a program director, and I think that's probably shaped the way that you think about your job now as associate dean. Can you tell me a little bit about what your vision for this job is and where you see your role in all of this?

Dr. Parveen Wasi (16:24):
You know, I'm gonna just start off in terms of my previous life as a PD and lessons learned. I guess what I came away from my program director role in internal medicine is how much of a steep learning curve it is, and how much you actually have to do by yourself to learn the skills, not just in terms of the resident curriculum, etcetera, but lots of other things to help support residents through their training.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (16:50):
And basically not really having any support structure that, within the university at that time, to really help me develop the skills. Or even actually to help me identify the skills that I needed. 'Cause sometimes there's things that I actually didn't know that I needed. When I came away and I learned a ton over 11 years as PD, and often learned by mistakes.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (17:13):
The other thing I learned when I stepped down as a program director is that I had developed a skills, and after stepping down as program director, and I think this may go for a lot of leadership positions in medical education, is that when you step down is that there is no avenue to use those skills anymore, is that there is not a process within the university to really kind of say, "Okay, this is a person that stepped down from an important role, and how can we utilize them in other ways that will help move the vision of education forward?"

Dr. Parveen Wasi (17:46):
So those were kind of the two takeaway messages for me when I stepped down as PD, is how much there was to learn, how little formal educational activities there were for PDs, and number two, how we didn't really have a way of harvesting the skills after a program director has stepped down.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (18:06):
So coming into this role, aside from all the administrative aspects about it, and aside from all of the resident advocacy parts of the role, one of my big things that I wanted to ensure was that I was able to develop a structure within post-grad that would really help program directors develop the skills that they needed early on. And not so much... And perhaps reduce having to learn it by mistakes.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (18:35):
That's what I've tried to do over the past four years. I don't think I've been 100% successful in formalizing it as much as I maybe could have. I think in the last four years I've developed a network, and that of course includes you, Teresa, in faculty development, and I am really hoping in the next couple of years that what we develop in post-grad is much more robust, that program directors, both who are faculty that, number one, are interested in being a program director can avail themselves of.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (19:09):
And number two, is that we really have an organized system for program directors to develop the leadership skills as well as any other skills that they require for really doing their job well. I think doing the job well really adds to the satisfaction of the job, is that when you know when you have support, you have the necessary skills, you can really be more efficient, first of all, but also really enjoy all the aspects of the job.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (19:31):
I'd say out of everything I have done in my career so far, is the program director role was my most fulfilling. I try and think back on it and think, "Why was it so fulfilling?" Is because obviously the residents, but number two is how much I learned from it. So that's kind of my go-forward plan for the next year or two years of my job as post-grad dean, is to really formalize some of the education for program directors.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (19:58):
The other big part of the job, I think is to really emphasize how important this role is. We know time and time again from accreditation activities, from hearing from program directors themselves, is this role is not given enough time in a lot of departments or the university, not given enough support.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (20:21):
If we want to have in the excellence and training that we aspire to at McMaster and say that we do, we really need to put the resources in these people. They're, by whole, a lot of them are selfless, is they do a lot of the work after hours, they do it because they're so invested in residency education, they're so invested in residents, that it is a bit of a labour of love, but there's only so much you can expect from people.

0:20:49.2 Dr. Parveen Wasi:
I think my big advocacy is really towards the department and the university to really help our program directors have sufficient time and support, and also at the college level, say, a lot of things that the college comes forward with such as competence by design is put on the shoulders of our program directors without necessarily having rules or about the amount of support that a program director needs to have in order to fulfill their job.

0:21:21.3 Dr. Parveen Wasi:
Basically, I think that those are the two big things, that is advocacy for PD support and time, and number two is a real strong, robust and educational framework for PDs to develop the skills. Lastly, I think program directors that have stepped down, a huge, huge resource for us that we don't utilize well.

0:21:37.9 Dr. Parveen Wasi:
Again, I don't think I've developed a really strong way of making sure that we still continue to engage them in medical education, and that's again, something I wanna continue to work on, but they would be amazing as mentors, as coaches for program directors, and you really, really help build, continue to build their careers within medical education.

Dr. Parveen Was (22:02):
I did feel when I stepped down that I really didn't have a role in medical education after I step down within the university, and I didn't really know how to make that happen, or who to approach to make that happen. You sometimes feel a little bit abandoned. I would really like to have someone be able to kinda call us up at post-grad and say, "You know what? I've stepped down. I'm really interested in this, I'm really interested in that, and I would really like to kinda continue to work within post-graduate medical education."

Dr. Parveen Wasi (22:33):
And for us to be able to facilitate that very easily and also be able to reach out to PDs that have stepped down and to ask them for their help and things that we are engaged in. So that's kind of where I see the next few years for me, is to continue with that and get as much support as I can from some amazing individuals that we have here at McMaster.

Dr. Teresa Chan (22:56):
That really resonates with me, 'cause I think that we're really good at sometimes getting people involved, and increasingly with all the training that you're suggesting, that's gonna be amazing, right? Even if you don't end up getting the program director job, if you got the skills development from post-grad to do some of that work. I think you could take it in any direction. You could take it into other leadership roles.

Dr. Teresa Chan (23:16):
I think that's really awesome to think about what the skill sets that you could really glean from those kind of development opportunities. On the flip side, I think that... What I'm hearing from you is that I think that all of us even... And if there's trainees listening to this, they're probably shocked and awed that you're thinking all the way to people who are post program director, and how we can still continue to connect with them and foster them, and to foster their growth for their next phase, and what's next after they do this big job.

Dr. Teresa Chan (23:39):
I think that it really speaks to that kind of growth mindset that we're trying to build within health professions right now. So whether you're in the School of Rehab or School of Nursing or undergrad in medical education, or midwifery or PA, I think that the field really in health professions has been shifting to thinking about how we can always up our game, that the learning doesn't stop once their training technically stops, that we can always be better, and you're such an example of that, so thank you so much for that.

Dr. Teresa Chan (24:06):
Because I think even in this role, you're learning on the job and you're creating new ideas and you're getting feedback from people, and you're fostering others to come along the way, so I think it's about the role modeling of that. Any final thoughts on any advice that you have? The other thing, the reason why you're in such a role model to me honestly, is that you're a woman in leadership.

Dr. Teresa Chan (24:30):
I know that that this might not be as big of a deal in some of our other schools, like we have in nursing where women are probably regularly leaders, but in medicine isn't always the case. Do you have any thoughts on bad experience and any advice for us who are maybe a couple of steps behind you, maybe just aspiring new faculty members that are interested in maybe pursuing a leadership track in health professions and health professions education?

Dr. Parveen Wasi (24:53):
That's a great question, and I'm gonna tell you, I have not thought about that by myself or have been introspective and thought to myself, "I'm a woman in a leadership role, how did I get here, and what advice do I have for residents, female residents, female faculty members in terms of leadership roles?"

Dr. Parveen Wasi (25:16):
I have actually developed over the last year or so because of the whole equity diversity inclusivity initiative at Faculty of Health Sciences, a lot of mentors for me to really think about it. People like Sonia Anand from the Department of Medicine. You know, people ask me that, and I'm not, I have to be honest with you Teresa, I'm not sure what advice I could give them based on my own lived in experience about this role.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (25:44):
Medical education is a somewhat... A little bit different than, for example, deans and chairs of departments, in which it's very much male-dominated. If there's any leadership that is actually has more gender equity is actually medical educational leadership, associate deans, post-grad medical education.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (26:02):
In the US, there was actually a study from the US to say that the associate deans, the deans part is the ones where it was more approaching gender equity, was in medical education. I look across to my program director group, and certainly we have gender equity. I look across post-grad deans across Canada, certainly, it's not 50-50, but there is certainly a number of women that are associated.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (26:26):
So I don't know whether at this point in time I can really... What advice I would give to members on this. Is just the reason I did it was because I loved medical education. When I applied for the post-graduate dean job, it was really with that focus and with that lens, is that I was passionate about it. It felt like that I could make a difference just because I really felt strongly about it, and then being kind of a role model for equity or gender equity in a leadership role, I appreciate that, but I don't know whether I have earned that.

Dr. Teresa Chan (27:03):
Well, I would point out that I think that what you've just said there is exactly why you're a role model. Because you did step forward, that you took something you're passionate about, and you didn't let things hold you back, you didn't let who you were or how people reacted to you, necessarily.

Dr. Teresa Chan (27:21):
You honed in on what drove you, and then used that to propel you into this position. And I think that that's great advice, because a lot of people sometimes look to others for validation about whether they should take a step forward, and I think that what you're maybe not even... You're so expert at it and you're not conscious of it, and that's what expertise does to you, I guess, is that...

Dr. Teresa Chan (27:45):
I think you've always been someone to step forward and over your years as program director and having that leadership role, and now in this leadership role, stepping forward comes naturally to you. I think for some people it might not. So to hear you talk about how you take your internal passions and channel those outside and then be your best self that way, I think is probably the advice I was looking for.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (28:07):
That's a very good way of putting it, Teresa. That's actually really... And I guess you're right, that would be... That actually would be the advice I would give people, is not to... Is to really decide what they really wanna do and then go for it. Thank you for kinda rephrasing that, but I appreciate that.

Dr. Teresa Chan (28:23)
I think that there are about junior people that sometimes look at... People question them or or suggest, you know, people are unable to step forward because maybe they're fearful of how they will perceive them, like, "Am I going for this too early?" Like putting up my hand, "Am I being loud or bossy?"

Dr. Teresa Chan (28:43):
I think that if you're doing it for the right reasons, the perceptions of others, as much as you might eventually need to reconcile them a little bit, especially when you are the leader, when you're just aspiring for leadership roles, I think that your voice should be heard and that you should be validated if they're for the right reasons, and I think that that's something that people battle with.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (29:04):
I totally agree with you, and I do think that we see that. In all my conversations with women within, certainly within the Department of Medicine, is that that fundamentally comes out, is that self-doubt sometimes about whether they're the right person. I'm not sure where that comes from, given what their performance has been to date. So sometimes that insecurity part, I see much more often.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (29:28):
I have to say from my own experience, and I can only speak from that, is that it comes much more often from women than it does men, is that insecurity of being the right person for the job. I can't say that I hadn't struggled with that though, Teresa. I have struggled with that many times to say, "Am I the right person for the job? And am I gonna get it?"

Dr. Parveen Wasi (29:50):
Even from the post-graduate dean position, I spent a lot of time thinking about whether I should apply for it, not from the sense of that I really... I felt I could do a good job, but what if I didn't get it? And then what would that feel like? I think my advice to people is that if there's something that you really want, you really aspire to, is that there is actually no harm done in reaching for it.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (30:16):
It seems like a bit of motherhood advice, but that has been my, again, my experience. If you don't try... As someone once told me when I actually did... When I actually was applying, I said that to someone, said, "What is it gonna feel like if I don't get it?" And they considered, "Well, you know Parveen, there's no guarantee that you're gonna get the job if you apply for it, but there certainly is a guarantee that you're not gonna get the job if you don't apply for it. And which one is gonna make you feel better or worse?"

Dr. Teresa Chan (30:44):
Yeah. Well, I think it was Wayne Gretzky that said, "You miss 100% of shots you don't take." I think it's a similar thing to here, like job applications or award nominations or chances, or even people

when they're applying to med school. You don't get into med school if you don't apply. And so I think it's taking that step forward is really key.

Dr. Teresa Chan (31:08):
As someone, and maybe, I don't know if I'll keep this in the podcast in the end, but as someone who applied for a job and had you turn me down. [chuckle] I do know that part of it is that sometimes being experienced in the process itself is a learning experience, and though you might reach for a job that maybe you don't get, in the mental preparation, in the self-analysis and putting yourself forward and be able to do the interview and have the job pitch and all that stuff, is so formative, so that when another job comes along, you're more ready. That's just my personal advice there that I'm gonna sneak into this as well alongside yours.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (31:46):
Right. I think medicine, being in medicine and being around such constantly amazing people who do so much, is that it does tend to create... Self-doubt does sneak in to all of us. You always have to be aware of that, and it's so important that we are resilient, and it's so important that we maintain self-esteem at all times.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (32:10):
That's my biggest advice to actually learners in difficulty, or learners overall, is that self-esteem and faith in what you are and who you are and what you can do is so important to keep at every step of your career, so that if you don't get something, that it's not a major hit to your... That it's just one of those things that you've learned from.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (32:32):
As you've just said, you've learned from, you've gained some experience and then you're ready for the next opportunity. I think that's really important and that's something it's much easier said than done. Really we just need to keep working on that.

Dr. Teresa Chan (32:46):
But again, I think that's that growth mindset. I think it really cycles back to the idea that even faculty are just learners, we're still learning every day. I think we're learning until the day that we aren't with this world anymore. So I think there's a way for us to reframe those missed opportunity sometimes, or maybe better phrasing would be those opportunities that don't manifest as ways to learn and advance ourselves in other ways.

Dr. Parveen Wasi (33:14):
Absolutely. Absolutely, Teresa. I think that's really important.

Dr. Teresa Chan (33:18):
Alright. Well, this has been such a great conversation. Thank you so much for your time, Parveen. I really appreciate you taking any time out of your busy day. You're one of the busiest people I know. So between being a hematologist, an oncologist, a post-graduate dean, and just being a mentor for so many people.

Dr. Parveen Wai (33:38):
Thanks so much for inviting me. As we talked about at the beginning, I was a little bit uncertain about what I was gonna talk about, but I have to say you're just a wonderful moderator and I totally appreciate that. Thank you.

[music]

Dr. Teresa Chan (33:50):
Thank you so much for tuning into the MacPFD Spark podcast. Just so you know, this podcast has been brought to you by the McMaster Faculty of Health Sciences, and specifically the Office of Continuing Professional Development and the Program for Faculty Development. If you're interested in finding out more about what we can offer for faculty development, check out our website at www.macpfd.ca. That's www dot M-A-C-P-F-D dot CA. Many of our events are actually web events that are free. Finally, I'd like to thank our sound engineer, Mr. Nick Hoskin who's been an amazing asset to our team. Thanks so much, Nick for all that you do. And also thank you to Scott Holmes for supplying us the music that you've been listening to. Alright, so until next time, this is MacPFD Spark signing off.