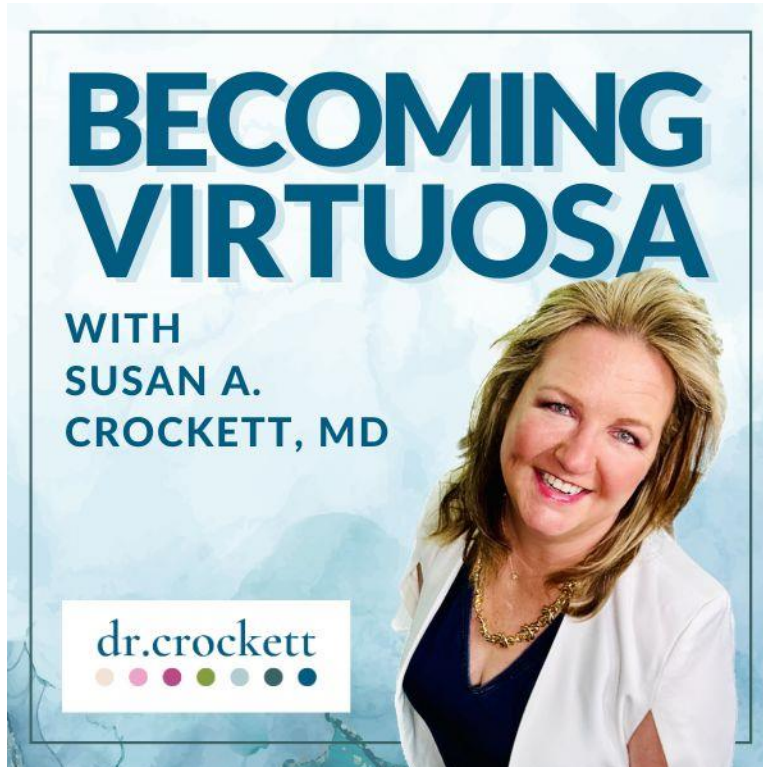


Ep #99: When Things Get Hard



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Susan A. Crockett, MD

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I think it's really important for you to take the time to grieve but I also think it's also time for you to double down on your self-care and make sure that you're not just letting your brain get away from you when we're dealing with really hard things.

Welcome to *Becoming Virtuosa*, the podcast that encourages you to become your best virtuosa self. Each week Dr. Susan Crockett goes where the scalpel can't reach, exploring conversations about how to be, heal, love, give, grow, pray, and attune. For the first time ever, she's bringing the personal one on one teaching that she shares with individual patients to you on this broader platform. A weekly source of inspiration and encouragement designed to empower you.

Alright, welcome back to the Dr. Crockett show. I'm your host, Dr. Susan Crockett. I am a board-certified OB-GYN in San Antonio, Texas and I specialize in minimally invasive or robotic surgery for women and today's topic is all about what to do when things get hard because inevitably in life things get hard and girl, boys, girls, women, all y'all, it's been a rough couple of weeks for me and a lot of people around me. And I know that a lot of y'all are going through the similar things because I hear you. I hear you in our comments. I hear you when you come in to see me in the office.

It seems like the world has just gotten a little bit crazier. Everything from internet snafus, our emails got hacked a month ago and it shut down our websites and we just now got them back up again. It's been like ghost in the machine all over the place. Very stressful at work. I had a friend of mine who was getting ready to go on vacation and got a call that her mom was critically ill and lost her mom by the end of that week. You know, what a hard vacation that turned out to be. Very unexpected loss.

Every day when I do surgery, I do stuff that's not like crazy critical. I don't do any cancer surgery or anything like that, but I do a lot of fibroids and endometriosis and pelvic pain and ovarian cysts and bladder lifts and pelvic floor stuff and all that kind of complex, benign women's stuff. That's what I do. But even though women aren't coming in thinking that they're going to

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be dealing with a cancer or something with me, sometimes they are. Almost everybody is nervous when I see them in the bay in pre-op for surgery. And you know what? It's hard. It's hard to think that you're about to go under anesthesia and you're going to let somebody take care of you the way that I take care of people in the operating room.

And so I really feel for my patients when they're going through that and I always tell them it's okay for them to be nervous because they're going to go to sleep. And then the main thing is that I'm not nervous. That always kind of makes them smile. But I wanted to talk with you guys today a little bit about some strategies that I use when life gets hard. And I wanted to start by talking about a couple of things, a couple of different scenarios when things are hard.

And one of those is when there's a deadline that's approaching. So deadlines are interesting things, whether it's a big change in your life like a wedding date or whether it is a closing date on a house or maybe you're a soldier overseas and you're getting ready to leave to come home, there's a date for you to come back home.

When we have a date, oh gosh, I went through this when I went through my divorce, the date kept moving. Do you remember that? Oh my gosh. There's a certain amount of heart or a certain amount of stress that happens when we are approaching a deadline and it's looming and it seems that things often get harder and more stressful before they get better.

And what's happening in our brains is our brains are doing what they're supposed to do, which is to warn us of danger. Like when we were cavewomen and cavemen, we used to go out and we had to make sure we didn't get eaten by things that eat people, or used to. And now the dangers that we're facing are a lot different, but now our brain is offering us suggestions of things that could be catastrophic because your brain is trying to help you see and avoid a danger. So our brains are evolutionarily

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biologically trained to feed us all of the scariest stuff when we're approaching a known situation or a known deadline.

Two things that I really find helpful in this scenario, and first of all, I want to thank all of our women and men and women in uniform, especially those overseas. The two things I want to tell you are. Number one, you're safe. I want you to ground yourself and where you are right now. I want you to feel your body, feel the floor or the dirt underneath your feet. Know that you are safe right now. And I want you to tell your brain that you are safe.

And thank you for, you know, letting me know that things might go a certain way, but I want you to step back out of that catastrophic viewpoint and get away from the thoughts that your brain is offering you and step back into where you are and in your body and be very mindful right now of where you are and that you are safe.

And the second thing I want you to remind yourself is that you are not alone because no matter what your deadline is that's approaching, there are other people who have similar deadlines that are approaching and they are all feeling the same kind of stress that you are too. And sometimes that's helpful to know that we are not alone when we're going through hard things.

The second kind of when things get hard is the one I touched on about grief. So especially unexpected grief or loss, I think that's a different type of when things get hard. I've had prior episodes where I talked about grief and I'm going to refer you back to those. But again, you can still offer in the thought that right now you are safe and also you're not alone because you are surrounded by your friends and your family and people who love you and you are still here and you need to be here for the people that need you.

And so when we're dealing with a tremendous amount of grief or loss or the fear of grief or loss it's easy to get trapped up and take it all the way down to the worst scenario and I think it's really important for you to take the time

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to grieve but I also think it's also time for you to double down on your self-care and make sure that you're not just letting your brain get away from you when we're dealing with really hard things. So how do we do that? How do we double down on our self-care?

The first thing that comes to mind and probably some of y'all are gonna say why didn't I say this first which is pray? Somehow people get a belief in God when they're things get hard. They're like, "Oh god, why" and "Oh god, please" and "Oh god." So even non-believers or people who say they don't believe in God that word comes out of their mouth when things get really stressful. And I just think that's a socialization norm in our life.

But when I talk about praying or reaching out to a higher power, there is value in that beyond just the blurting it out type of reaction to when things are getting hard. When we intentionally take time to pray, meditate, do verbal petitions where we ask for what we want or we've made a decision in our brain about what we are asking for, when we take the time and do those things and journal. Every time we reinforce what we're thinking and desiring and wanting, we're doing a couple things. One is we're not just wallowing in the fear and the hard, we're actually taking steps towards figuring it out.

And part of getting through the hard is figuring things out, strategizing. And this is something that's taken me a long time to figure out in some parts of my life, but it's really helpful because you can't strategize your way out of everything that's hard, but you can strategize your way through a lot of what's hard. And there's a difference, and there's a lot of wisdom in knowing when things are looming where you have a deadline and you need to have your ducks in a row, and having backups in Plan B and Plan C, and when things are just circumstances that are happening to us where there really isn't a strategy yet to get around it.

So what I like to do is I like to ask for help, not just from God with prayer, but part of taking care of myself is verbalizing and communicating with my

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team and the people that support me, like my employees, my friends, my family, the people who love me, because it's very interesting how you start to come up with a broader net of ideas and ways to get through the difficult or the hard, not to mention that it feels better to have the support and love of the people around you.

And I think if you're somebody who is looking to serve and love in your life and you've been there for those people, that it's a really natural thing for them to want to collaborate and co-create with you to get through the hard to what's better on the other side. And do you want to give you that hope? There always is something better on the other side. It's just hard is what we go through to develop our character and to go through the growth patterns that our soul is trying to learn at this part of our soul journey.

So a couple of things that I do for self-care, one is I ask myself just to get through this single day that's hard, this one day where it seems like everything's just slapping me upside the head and everything is scary and I'm living in that kind of hyper-sympathetic nervous system thing, I ask myself what are the things that I can do to take care of myself for my best and highest good. So what are the habits that I've worked on before that I want to reinforce, maybe ones that I've let fall on off.

Maybe it's eat well. Maybe it's go for a walk. Maybe it's go out and get some sunshine. Maybe it's listening to Vegas nervous stimulation meditation music on YouTube for an hour. Maybe it's take a nap with your doggie. That's something Ali loves to do and he's a great comfort for me.

So if you just have to get through one day, this one day, what are the things that you can do right now that are actionable, that can take care of yourself and help ease that flight or fright sympathetic nervous system going off the charts and bring it back down into a parasympathetic or more balanced nervous system. The second thing is, I want you to ask yourself, what can you do today to set yourself up for success tomorrow?

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So you probably already have a plan for what you need to get done tomorrow. So what can you do tonight in your evening routines to set yourself up so that you have the best tomorrow possible to take on the dragons. I think that's a really important mindset for us going to bed.

The other couple of things that work for me are, number one, serve somebody else. So in case y'all didn't guess, I've been going through a really hard day today, and I've had a series of hard days, and I almost didn't film this episode today. I almost called it in, and I'm like, "I just, I got too much stress, I can't handle it." And I thought, no, I have an obligation to you as my audience and my patrons. I thank those of you that are supporting the channel. I've heard so many great things from you, my patients who see us on YouTube and in the office, and I'm just really grateful for your encouragement and your support.

And to be honest, putting my makeup on, it's the evening right now, I put my makeup on and sat down and decided that this was an important topic, and maybe even more so since I'm struggling with it right now, and it's actually helped me feel better to come on camera and to talk with you guys because I'm serving you, and that helps me feel better. It helps me get out of my head about the scary and the hard.

Some of you know, those of you who know me, those of you who don't, my first husband passed away very suddenly of a heart attack about seven years ago, and that was hard in a whole bunch of different kinds of ways, but one of the things that really helped me was getting back to helping take care of my patients. It wasn't a distraction type of thing where I was avoiding the grief and the hard. It was more of a, I found that through that hardship that serving people and helping take care of other people and loving on them, love and compassion are the ways, those are the best ways for us to get through hard.

So this week, if you're dealing with something hard, my heart is with you. Much love and compassion for yourself. Do some self-care. And for those

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of you who are in a good place, be compassionate and loving for those of us that are struggling with all of the electronic stuff going on the internet and the traffic and the crazy this and that and all of the hardships that we face as just being human. And I thank you for tuning in to *The Dr. Crockett Show*. I hope to see you next week. Thanks for liking, subscribing, and sharing. Y'all have a wonderful week.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *Becoming Virtuosa*. To learn more, come visit us at DrCrockett.com, or find us on YouTube for the Dr. Crockett Show. If you found this episode helpful or think it might help someone else, please like, subscribe, and share. This is how we grow together. Thanks, and I'll see you next week. Love always, Sue