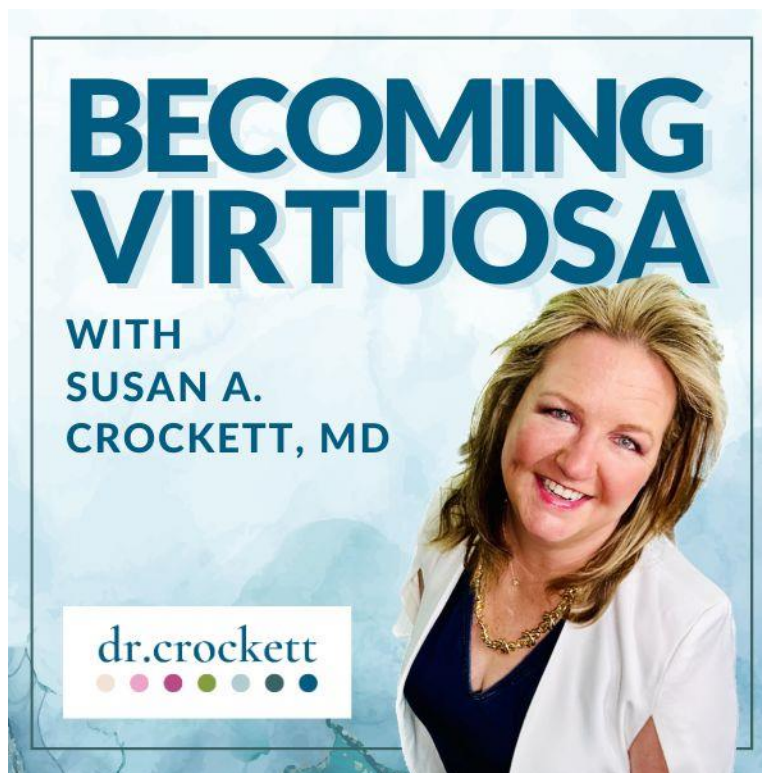


Ep #104: How Community Helps You Reach Your Health Goals with Malcolm and Michelle Cook



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Susan A. Crockett, MD

Ep #104: How Community Helps You Reach Your Health Goals with Malcolm and Michelle Cook

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Dr. Crockett: Welcome to *Becoming Virtuosa*, the podcast with Dr. Susan Crockett. You are listening to episode number 49, purpose driven community drives purpose driven fitness, a very special interview with fitness experts and the owners of LivingStone Athletics, Michelle, and Malcolm Cook.

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.

By evolving ourselves as individuals. We influence and transform the world around us. Please help me welcome board certified OB-GYN specializing in minimally invasive GYN surgery, internationally in the top 1% of all GYN robotic surgeons, a certified life coach, and US News top doctor, your host Susan A. Crockett, MD.

Dr. Crockett: I have been waiting to do this show for you guys for a long time. When I say a long time, I think Malcolm and I started talking about this maybe six or seven months ago. I would love to introduce you to my very special guests today. This is Malcolm and Michelle Cook. They are the owners of LivingStone Athletics here in San Antonio, Texas. Yes, they are an adorable married couple. We are going to have a very special interview today. Welcome.

Ep #104: How Community Helps You Reach Your Health Goals with Malcolm and Michelle Cook

Michelle: Thank you. Thanks for having us.

Dr. Crockett: You're welcome.

Malcolm: I'm so excited to be here.

Dr. Crockett: Me too. So I know you guys are dying to know why I'm so excited about this. So we're going to start out with a little bit of conversation about how we got to know each other, what they do. But the gist of it is we've had shows for you guys already about eating healthy, about managing our stress, about our money, about all kinds of stuff.

But here's the thing that we haven't done yet, exercise and fitness. These people are gurus. So they are the owners of LivingStone Fitness here in San Antonio. I'm going to let you guys talk a little bit about your gym and what you do.

Malcolm: Sure.

Dr. Crockett: Yeah, tell us a little bit about it.

Malcolm: Well, first of all, I would just like to say that I am very grateful for you. I know this is something that you didn't expect me to say. But well, it is something that does need to be said. I told Michelle that I wanted to do this. It's just how you blessed our life. You've definitely helped me in the OR as far as being patient with me because we also work in that space together as well.

Dr. Crockett: Yeah, so we've known each other since 2014 is what we figured out today. You've been a surgical tech for me. You were at the beginning of when I was doing robotic surgery. You've seen me from learning curve on through, and you've you matured as a surgical tech and part of my team right along the way. Yeah.

Ep #104: How Community Helps You Reach Your Health Goals with Malcolm and Michelle Cook

So Michelle and I have a special relationship too. I think we're going to talk a little bit about that more maybe in your interview because we are going to do, in addition to this group interview, a solo interview with Malcolm and a solo interview with Michelle. So yeah, but that's just a little bit of background for you guys. We've known each other for a long time. Dear friends.

Malcolm: Yeah. I just wanted to make sure that you guys knew how amazing she is. Yeah.

Dr. Crockett: So we've talked a lot in the operating room. When we're in the operating room, there's all kinds of conversation that happens. People think it's sometimes like Grey's Anatomy where it's all serious. But a lot of life happens there. We start having conversations about life outside the OR and what's important to us and our families and our lives and our businesses and how we think about things. I've known about your gym for a long time. I haven't been to your gym. That needs to change clearly after today's conversations.

But Michelle, I wanted you to tell us a little bit about how your gym has also gone through this maturation process and what it would be like now for somebody to come in and where your heart is with all this.

Michelle: Yeah, definitely. We've always had a love for fitness and movement. We've seen it in different spaces. Where we used to have a homeless ministry, and we used to bring equipment, and it just brought people together. So we always knew that movement was something that everybody could just be on this equal platform.

So when LivingStone came out, it came out of a ministry that we did under the bridge downtown. We'd just go and feed people and homeless. We would show up, and you would see all the different cliques. We would get

Ep #104: How Community Helps You Reach Your Health Goals with Malcolm and Michelle Cook

there with a basketball court bench weights, and everybody just came together. It was just this equal illness.

So years later, we just were fortunate to start LivingStone Athletics. We didn't start with the name. We started with a group of people that were like we asked if they would come and join us and see if this would kick off. It did. I think our priority has always been people and relationships.

Dr. Crockett: I can see that so much in our conversation.

Michelle: Yeah. So I always tell people it's people first and then the sport comes second. I think that when people show up to do life in a fitness space with community, they're going to show up to do that because they're comfortable. They feel safe. So I think it's just been that common ground for us that we just love people. We love relationships. We've seen how much movement has not only helped us, my mental health, but the stories that we hear of others.

Dr. Crockett: I think this is so interesting because a large part of what I've done in my own personal wellness journey has been around food. A big thing that I've learned, and we've taught to our audience from some of our other interviewees, like Deborah Kesten. Larry Scherwitz and their research talks about how it's not just the food itself. It's not the calories in, calories out. It's about the culture around it. It's about like what we did today where we had a meal and had conversations and sharing the stories with each other and got to know each other.

I've known so much about you guys, but there was so much that I learned in our conversations today. I didn't really understand how your intentionality about building community and relationships with people was such a big deal in your gym and your fitness industry. I think that's where the show, that's the heart of the show too.

Ep #104: How Community Helps You Reach Your Health Goals with Malcolm and Michelle Cook

So it was making me know like even more on target I needed y'all to have here. So this I know this is kind of background story and just kind of getting to know this. We're going to get into more detail on the personal interviews about the actual fitness and supplements and menopausal female fitness and all that. But well, what were you going to say?

Malcolm: No, I was just going to say originally when we started, we were just figuring it out though. It was more of a hobby that we knew we wanted to be in, in that space, right? We wanted to serve people at first, but then people started showing up. We started experiencing the relationships around us, and that grew on its own.

We just realized like whoa, this is something that we can actually do. Like facilitate a space for people to come in and to be around people that also want to do the same thing that'll help encourage them. Our big thing is purpose, purpose driven training. That's what we talk a lot about.

Dr. Crockett: What do you mean by that?

Malcolm: Yeah, purpose driven training, it's simple. It's whatever you are supposed to do in life and whatever you feel, whether it's relationships, vocation, finance, fitness affects that in some way. So what we want to do is we want to allow you to have the physical ability in order to fulfill those roles.

So by having a community behind you, you're able to do that. People that believe in you, people that push you. People that know that hey, if you show up every day at least to some capacity. You don't have to show up and do like a two hour long workout but it's creating the rhythm in your life to help you become healthy so that way I can love my wife. I can do things like that for many, many years to come and do well in.

Ep #104: How Community Helps You Reach Your Health Goals with Malcolm and Michelle Cook

Dr. Crockett: Because you've taken care of the muscle and the fitness of the body so that you're able to do more of the things that your purpose in life is supposed to do.

Malcolm: Absolutely. Yeah.

Dr. Crockett: I think this is a really great like twist on the whole fitness industry. I know for myself, I have barriers to getting into the gym. You and I've talked about it. One of them is as I've gotten older, my recovery takes longer. So the incentive to go and do a really, really hard HIIT workout or something. I've got a very physical job, and I'm just like I don't want to do that at the gym and then be sore trying to do my job and all that.

My experience with gyms has not been anything around community like this. I know there are pockets of places where that exists. But my experience with fitness in gyms has been pretty solitary, except for just maybe joining a fitness class. But I've never really plugged into a place where people said hey, this is about making the rest of your life healthier and better and supporting your purpose like that.

So I know this conversation has started off kind of being, it sounds like an infomercial for your gym, which is awesome because your gym is great. But our listenership goes a lot wider than that. So I'd like to kind of broaden the discussion. The kind of like love draws a bigger circle kind of thing.

I want to talk a little bit more about what do you think that our listeners who aren't in the San Antonio area could do in their own areas or in their own mindset? How can they take what you're doing and have a better understanding of fitness so that they're more encouraged to take care of their bodies?

Malcolm: That's a great question. I believe it's one of those things where whether it's a running group, whether it's a biking group because I just

Ep #104: How Community Helps You Reach Your Health Goals with Malcolm and Michelle Cook

believe relationships are one of the most powerful tools for encouraging you, helping you to show back up.

One of the things I tell my athletes all the time is I always tell them that you're not only receiving from this group, but you're also giving to it. So just realize that when you show up that the space of view that you're filling is also giving life to an individual. You know what I mean? Helping them to feel like they're validated and loved and those types of things.

So, I mean, it can be from biking to yoga to whatever it might be, and even smaller groups like two to three, five people. I just believe in the gathering as a powerful tool for us. Because we talk a lot about like doing training on the side and stuff like that, but it's really the community of like the people going to that space that's going to be the powerful driver for them to be consistent, and that's really the thing.

Dr. Crockett: Yeah. What I heard you say is that they have some ownership or responsibility in contributing too. It's not just them going and getting coached or run through a workout. It's they're contributing to the whole process and all that. What a wonderful idea. That's so cool.

Michelle: I think, it makes me think of our bring a friend day. We have that every first Saturday of the month. We have this sense of community where our members are, and it just happened organically. Where they're there, and they just want to welcome people coming in. They want to serve. It's like that concept of everybody's on the hospitality team. But they're just like, they're just so great.

Malcolm: It's true. Yeah. Our actual members with new people coming in, they take ownership on their own. They really, really care about like.

Michelle: Their space.

Ep #104: How Community Helps You Reach Your Health Goals with Malcolm and Michelle Cook

Malcolm: Conveying that to them and it's just beautiful to watch that. It really is. Like we notice it. It's a great thing.

Dr. Crockett: I'm going put y'all on the spot because this isn't something that we talked about before. But do you have any stories about people that have come through your gym that just stand out to you as this is the kind of transformation that we've seen? Do you have anybody that comes to mind?

Michelle: So, I have one person that comes to mind. We have so many, but this one person that's kind of happening in real time is we have goal settings with athletes. We talk to them. Really, to me, it's more like it turns into like a little just me holding space for them. We're not even always talking about fitness but just about life.

So we have this one athlete who has had the life and not one positive experience. So I asked what is that one thing you want to do? That one thing. This athlete said, "I want to get my GED." So we are in the process of doing that with him. Making sure that he has a ride. Like it's more than a gym. It just is outside of our space. I think that people, they feel the realness and the love.

Dr. Crockett: The family.

Michelle: So I just love it because it doesn't even have to do with the gym, although it does because it's the first space where he's felt like he's been seen and just validated in this. Just invested. We believe in him. I believe in him. So it's just so cool to see how he's just become so comfortable with us and just really truly believing like I matter. Like somebody is truly cheering me on.

Dr. Crockett: Well, I think that's really the example that you're setting. Like you're setting a bar for whatever our purpose is, how we could be interacting as people in this world, right? Take care of making people

Ep #104: How Community Helps You Reach Your Health Goals with Malcolm and Michelle Cook

healthier, making them seen and heard, giving them space and home. I know we talked before. We're all empty nesters, which I find that really hard to believe. Y'all look so young, but that's what fitness does for you. Maybe I should start working out more.

But what you've done in creating in your purpose, which is a gym, in creating that space where people to drop in and feel like they're family, and they're seen and loved and cared for is I try to do that in my practice too. It's just a different extension. We try to do that here on the show.

So I want to encourage our listeners to think about how they can incorporate those kinds of things into whatever their purpose is or their life. What is your purpose? How can you build that kind of love and relationship into your work and what you're called to do here? So I want to thank you guys so much for the interview today. This is really, really fun.

Malcolm: Yes. Thank you for having us.

Dr. Crockett: You're welcome. I wanted to give our listeners a way to plug into you guys on social media because, like I said, a lot of people that are seeing this are in the area, but then a lot are not. So where can they find you?

Michelle: On Instagram, LivingStone, Facebook. We've got both platforms. Then our website is LivingStoneAthletics.com.

Dr. Crockett: We will put all of that in the show notes. Y'all don't have to worry about that. Thanks for joining us, and I hope you'll tune in in the following weeks. We're going to have individual interviews with Malcolm and Michelle individually about fitness. Have a wonderful week. Thanks for joining us.

Ep #104: How Community Helps You Reach Your Health Goals with Malcolm and Michelle Cook

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.