



The incalculable cost of not paying the small price today for tomorrow's success



Coaching sounds good, but who has the mental bandwidth, let alone the time?

When I set out in search of a coach for myself, I had two main criteria – reliability and convenience. I was working at least 70-80 hours each week practicing medicine as an OB-GYN and another 20 hours as the physician lead of two multi-specialty clinics. Along with professional commitments, I also had responsibilities at home. Being a wife who was emotionally present and a mommy who read bedtime stories were no less important than my career.

There are 168 hours in a week and the overwhelming majority of my week was already committed. Everything had to fit within a fixed schedule. Because time is a commodity that I couldn't buy more of, I needed a coach who could accommodate my schedule. I also wanted a coach who understood the challenges and awesomeness of being a physician.

I had experienced coaching as part of a leadership program, so I was familiar with the concept and the benefits of physician coaching. I knew that the purpose of coaching was to help me identify and accomplish meaningful goals. Group coaching was one of the perks of the program, and I enjoyed the relaxed, societal atmosphere with other physicians. We all aspired to achieve our personal definitions of success and were rarin' to work on ourselves as leaders and as individuals.

But coaching was baked into the program. It didn't feel like it was taking up my time.

When the program ended, I knew I wanted more: More insight into my strengths as a physician leader. More prioritization of what matters most to me. More leveling up. More time (there's that pesky word again) to be heard and supported by someone who gets me. I told myself coaching had to work for me because I had a full schedule. I had a career, patients, practice calls, work projects, practice meetings, a husband, kids, sorority meetings, church service, spinning class, etc., etc., on the calendar.

Of course, I didn't want to lose the momentum gained. But maybe it wasn't the right time for me to engage?

That's when I decided to stop persevering on why it wasn't the right time and instead asked the questions, "What is the real cost, – the real loss – of waiting?" "And if not now, when?" "Or if time were an unlimited resource, how would I make the absolute most of it?"

Waiting for the "perfect" time is an excellent distraction because it's easy to convince ourselves that there will be a right time. Like the happy ending of a fairy tale, if we are patient, it will come. Months and years can pass by while we wait for the imaginary perfect time. Let's face it, my responses were excuses and I was trying to avoid the risk of actually doing. There was safety in not doing because I didn't have to worry about making a mistake or potential failure. I didn't have to worry about not achieving my goals because I wasn't actively pursuing my goals. I was procrastinating and avoiding.

I made one of the shrewdest and most successful decisions of my career – I stopped waiting for the perfect time. I realized that the all or nothing thinking plus a 100% fixed schedule, rarely gets us "all" that we desire. I could start with starting. From right where I was, with what I had, I could start right now. My journey to becoming a better communicator, an inspiring influencer, and a stronger physician leader, could begin with a single, incremental step. It was then that I signed up for coaching.

What is the conversation that you are having with yourself? What commonly voiced beliefs are you repeating like a mantra? I need more experience. I don't have what it takes. It would be irresponsible to my family. I'm not ready yet.

This summer I strongly encourage you to permit me to give you the gift of leadership coaching with programs customized for you. Come as you are, from wherever you are. Your continued success is in the smallest of steps. Learn more about my Summer Spirit Programs, created with your needs in mind, by visiting [here](#).

SUMMER SPIRIT PROGRAM ADVANTAGES

COACHING	SUPPORT	ADVICE	MENTOR	DEVELOPMENT
SKILLS	TRAINING	KNOWLEDGE	GROWTH	SUCCESS

As we reflect on our lives and careers, we all regret our lost opportunities. I sincerely hope we can create some career-long breakthroughs for you.

*Teresa Dean Malcolm, MD, FACOG, MBA, CPE, CPXP, is zealous in her belief that an exceptional experience in clinical care, the human(e) experience, is achievable through meaningful and authentic relationships with others. She has served in executive positions, integrating people with process and purpose, and successfully aligning the ideas of the team with a compelling vision. Her coaching philosophy, **The Malcolm Method**, is rooted in trust and supportive accountability. Through thought-provoking conversations, she strives to deepen the awareness of her physician clients and further their actions, thereby helping them to thrive as they lead. Dr. Malcolm (known to her friends and family as Terri) is a loving wife to her husband, Nate. Together they have three charming and athletic boys, Nathaniel, and twins, Roman and Colton.*



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