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**Taren:** Dr. Carol Addy, welcome to the PharmaVOICE WoW podcast program.

**Dr. Addy:** Taren, what a pleasure it is to be here with you, and I have to say I'm honored in light of some of the amazing women who have previously joined Woman of the Week. So just thank you so much for having me.

**Taren:** It's completely our pleasure. Thank you so much for taking time out of your day. I would love to get a sense of your journey to your current position.

**Dr. Addy:** Oh my goodness. Well, I don't know if we have sufficient time, but I can give you an encapsulated version and I have to say, it's probably not the most typical of paths that have been taken by others who are currently working in the capacity of chief medical officer.

But long story short, I had a premedical degree in college and during college, I actually discovered my bicycle. And lo and behold, this became quickly a passion of mine, such that after graduating from college, I became a full-time professional bike racer (much to my parents' dismay, I'll add).

And this took me many places and more importantly, instilled in me a true passion for lifestyle and an appreciation for lifestyle and how physical activity and nutrition can really have an impact on health and as well prevention of disease. And this whole really served as my motivation to return to school at a later date, to go to medical school so that I could share my passion and interest in lifestyle with my patients, and really thinking of lifestyle as the magic bullet, so to speak, in terms of disease prevention and sometimes even treatment of disease.

And so this continued to be a real anchor for me going through my medical training, and I became fascinated with metabolism and regulation of body weight. And of course, we know lifestyle is an important component of that. And that served as the basis for my getting involved in clinical research and investigating the contribution of distribution of body fat and how it

contributes to disease states, such as type 2 diabetes, or now even what we know about body fat distribution and mass, which we'll be talking about a little bit later.

So I took my experiences from clinical research that I was doing as an endocrinology fellow at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, and I went to Merck who had at the time, an investigational drug that was being developed with the hopes of making it available to treat obesity. We know that in this country we're faced with an epidemic of obesity and hugely, an unmet need. And through that experience, I really came to appreciate science on the backdrop of drug development because we know drug development is, in some ways, its own science. I felt like I went to the Merck College of Drug Development, so I really came to appreciate all of the nuances of drug development.

Unfortunately, our drug failed, but I personally felt rewarded just by having gleaned that experience with the hope that I would be able to carry that forward with me in other capacities. And that subsequently led to my working as Chief Medical Officer at HMR, a Merck subsidiary company. This is a company whose mission is to work with individuals, to make behavioral changes in order to optimize physical activity and food intake for the purposes of weight regulation and weight maintenance and weight loss.

So it really allowed me to pull through that lifestyle piece that I'm so passionate about. It was in the course of that work that I had an interesting lunchtime discussion with some folks at GenFit, my current employer. I was hearing about the terrific work that GenFit was doing related to metabolic diseases, and specifically liver disease, as a manifestation of metabolic abnormalities.

This really rekindled an interest of mine as my work at Merck, I had worked on the development candidate for treatment of NASH and it made me really appreciate how getting back into the scientific aspects and looking for opportunities to fill unmet medical needs just really excited me and brought me to where I am today.

I had the good fortune to come to GenFit who was looking for a chief medical officer, and I joined GenFit in September of last year. I think that this has been a very atypical path, but when I look back, I think it all makes perfect sense to me.

**Taren:** I love that it really was a plan that all came together, and you were obviously in the right places at the right time. It's a combination of all of your passions.

**Dr. Addy:** I've met people, and I'm sure you have as well, who have been very methodical about mapping out their career paths and taking very specific steps along the way to develop their careers; where I think I'm at the other end of the spectrum and was really just heart-driven in terms of decisions that I've made and have to say that those gut-based decisions never served me wrong. And now when I reflect back, I think it all fits together quite nicely.

**Taren:** Like you planned it that way all the way along. Right?

**Dr. Addy:** Well, I would like to say that I did, but I guess that's kind of, for me, just following my heart and that's really gotten me to where I am today. Obviously, where I am today is at a very exciting time for GenFit.

**Taren:** So what are some of those tools that you find that are most effective in leading and managing teams?

**Dr. Addy:** Yeah, I've experienced, as I'm sure you have, many different types of management styles, and I think we've all worked in situations where there has been very much a top-down leadership style, more directive in nature. And I don't know about you, but that was not really something that I was terribly fond of. And as I worked in teams, I didn't get a sense that our teams were very fond of that either.

And so I've always carried that with me, because I think the effectiveness of teams is really critical to the success of organizations. So one of the things that I feel very strongly about is ensuring that teams are empowered and that they are really encouraged to drive strategy, to identify issues, and to come up with recommendations for problem solving and to present those to leadership.

That's not to say that those recommendations are always going to be spot on, but rather, I think it serves, number one, as an important means by which teams can partner with senior leadership. And as well, I think it really helps to create a sense of ownership at the team level, relative to that top-down management strategy, which I think is perhaps less inspiring to those working at the team level.

**Taren:** Awesome. To switch channels just a little bit, you are a woman sitting in the role as a chief medical officer, and you're one of the few that is sitting in that role in a pharma or biotech company. What do you think some of those unique pressures are and challenges for women sitting in C-suite roles?

**Dr. Addy:** I think that's a terrific question, Taren. Firstly, I have to say one of the things that drew me to GenFit is their support of diversity and that includes gender parity. And I was struck by almost 50 percent of the board members are comprised of women.

And when we think about – and I remember asking this during the course of my interviewing for my position – having a better understanding of women in the workplace, and what I've learned at that point in time was that our vice president level and executive level is almost 50 percent women.

So I feel even though I'm among a handful of women C-suite leaders, I do feel that I'm very fortunate at GenFit, as I have been in previous roles, that I'm not feeling significantly unique pressures. That having been said, it's not without challenges. I do think that it can be at times isolating and maybe more so than it is compared to male colleagues.

That having been said, I make a point to maintain my networks to the extent that I'm able, Healthcare Business Women's Association. I know you're familiar with and had an incredible award last year. Congratulations, by the way.

**Taren:** Thank you.

**Dr. Addy:** My HBA network. I've also been part of an informal chief medical officer network that's comprised mostly of women. And these relationships and opportunities, just to bounce ideas off of people in an informal manner, has just been invaluable to me during my career path, and I would have to say more so recently. One of the invaluable programs that I participated in at HBA was the executive exchange program, which was comprised of senior leaders working in the Boston area and just a great opportunity, again, in an informal and protected environment, just to run ideas by people, to share challenges.

One of the things that I found in speaking to some of my women colleagues – and I think this has come up at a number of different forums – is that we as women sometimes are more averse to taking risks. I think that's one of the things that I've really learned along the way.

As I've thought back about my career in terms of what perhaps I might have done differently, is to recognize that opportunities that present themselves that initially may feel like were outside of our comfort zone or really just that's what we should be looking for because that's where the growth is happening, and really seeking those opportunities to push outside the comfort zone is, I think, a real critical success factor in my mind in terms of career development. For those who are thinking about how to climb the ladder, so to speak, I think that's an important pearl, and that's something as I've worked with more junior women, whether it be through HBA or through the workplace, really encouraging women to look for those opportunities, and where is there a chance to really step outside the comfort zone and to take on something new, even though it's very scary at the time.

**Taren:** Also very well said. I've been thinking about this quite a bit lately, and it's that correlation about being willing and able to take that risk or that next step or that leap, and how it relates back to somebody's personal network and the support they have. And so that, to me, makes that network even more important. And it shouldn't be confused with networking, very superficial, but that network that you've built and how important it is to give you, one, the confidence to go forward and opening up opportunities to go forward as well.

**Dr. Addy:** Absolutely. Absolutely.

**Taren:** That's excellent. Earlier on, you talked about your cycling career, which I thought was fascinating and I think it's so intriguing. But I also understand that you are a competitive kettlebell lifter. I don't know what that is. So could you tell me?

**Dr. Addy:** Kettlebells, so if you've been to the gym and you look over at the weight racks, you see these funny things, they kind of look like bowling balls with handles on them. That is a

kettlebell. Apparently, this is a sport that was developed in Eastern Bloc countries many years ago, and they use these kettlebells as weights to put on balancing scales to measure goods, let's say grains, for example. And so over time, they became weights that were used for physical fitness.

I had been a long time runner during medical school and started with getting age-related injuries, and so I started working out with a personal trainer who introduced me to these funky things called kettlebells. And for whatever reason, it just really resonated with me. So I've been lifting kettlebells, gosh, I guess about 10 years now.

Interestingly, I didn't even know it when I first started lifting them, that there is such a thing as kettlebell sport competitions. So I have been doing competitions for the last few years and that's some ways on pause right now because we're so very busy at GenFit, but I'm very faithful to my early AM workout. In some ways, it's actually become my form of meditation because what I've learned is that when I hold a very heavy weight over my head, I cannot be letting my mind wander or think about work or anything else because I need to be in the moment otherwise, I'm at risk of dropping that kettlebell on my head, which of course would be a safety hazard.

**Taren:** Yeah, I just had that vision flash in my mind of you standing there thinking, 'hmmm, and today, what's the challenge going to be' and that kettlebell falling. That's the disaster.

**Dr. Addy:** So fortunately, no lessons learned. But to come back to, when I think about that, it really is – I know a lot of people do formal meditation. I think we all have our own means by which we meditate or have a timeout, but this is, I guess, what works for me.

**Taren:** That's awesome. And maybe you will incite a whole new movement of kettlebell lifters in our audience.

**Dr. Addy:** I'm not opposed to that by any stretch.

**Taren:** I love it. We've talked a lot about your various career components and the path that has led you to where you are. You mentioned a minute ago about perhaps taking bigger risks, but is there anything else you wish you had known as you were moving up the ranks that you know now?

**Dr. Addy:** I think looking back, I recognize in myself at times a lack of confidence, and I guess this goes back probably most magnified when I first started in medical school. I remember sitting in the auditorium thinking, 'my gosh, they made a mistake. I'm sure they got my application mixed up with somebody else's. They couldn't possibly have accepted me into medical school,' so of course, describing what we know as the impostor syndrome.

Every now and then that impostor syndrome does still kind of rear its head. But as I've developed, gotten older, I'm finding that I'm trusting myself more and more. And I guess I wish I

could have had a talk with myself years back to say, you know you're the real deal, and you've got this and trust yourself, just go with it. I guess that's probably what I wish that I had known back then and that I could have communicated to myself had I had the opportunity to do so.

**Taren:** Words of wisdom that are still relevant today for those of us who have those self-doubts and who does on occasionally, right, and so trust in yourself...

**Dr. Addy:** Well, Taren, I have to tell you, I had a little bit of impostor syndrome when I was looking at all the amazing women that you've had on Woman of the Week and I'm thinking, 'how could she possibly want to be talking to me?'

**Taren:** See, you need to get over that because you're an amazing woman yourself.

**Dr. Addy:** Thanks, Taren.

**Taren:** So finally, as we wrap this up, because this is the WoW podcast program, can you tell me about an accomplishment or something that changed your career trajectory, some kind of wow moment that has left a lasting impression on yourself?

**Dr. Addy:** Yeah, for sure, for sure. I would have to say I had a wow moment that I'll maybe categorize it as an almost wow moment. So I made mention of the obesity drug that I worked on at Merck. We conducted a full scale development program and at the very end decided not to submit the NDA because of an unfavorable benefit to risk profile. I was always... It was the right decision, but I was always so disappointed because there's nothing that I could imagine that would be as rewarding as being able to bring a drug to life and to fill an unmet medical need.

**Taren:** Thank you so much. This has been a delightful conversation. Thank you so much for sharing so many of your career moments and your journeys and really providing us some great pearls of wisdom. Much appreciated.

**Dr. Addy:** Taren, thanks so much. It was just a pleasure to be with you today, and I wish you wellness going forward.

**Taren:** Same to you and stay safe.

**Dr. Addy:** Same to you.

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