

Ep. 182: Beyond the Exam Room: Why Your Health and Wealth Need a Joint Checkup

Patti Brennan: Hi everybody, Welcome to the Patti Brennan Show. Whether you have \$20 or 20 million, this show is for those of you who want to protect, grow, and use your assets to live your very best lives. Guys, I am so excited to have our guest today. Dr. Brian McDonough has his own YouTube channel. He does amazing long form podcasts on topics that are just far reaching from leadership to financial stuff, and also medicine.

Patti Brennan: We were having a conversation, Brian, about the Pope, and we were talking about the fact that you're working part-time. I asked Brian, what's it like for you? He was working three jobs at one time, and he's the go-to person - the voice of Philadelphia when it comes to medicine. You're working at St. Francis Hospital, right? Right. tell folks what you're doing there.

Brian: Sure. I'm still doing KYW and 10 wins in New York. Then broadcasting, and public speaking, medicine, I've always been teaching in a residency program, I'm a family doc. For most of my career, it's every fourth weekend on call, or every fourth night on call, seeing the inpatients being in the outpatient. Then as I got into administrative work, moved up the ladder. you're on these calls and meetings did my time and actually was ready to kick back. Tried that for a while and my wife sent me back to work, but I've had an opportunity, I love to teach the residents, and I'm with them three days a week. it could be a 10, 12-hour day, three days. It's really intense. They bring their toughest cases to me and I'm seeing different patients, but I'm also able to read and focus only on medicine and only outpatient medicine.

So what I found, Patti, is that doing that, I feel more on top of things than ever before. And as you know, working in radio and in television, you gotta be on top of it, even to the point where you're addressing the latest recommendations. So when you mention the Pope, at this point in the time we're taping, the Pope is obviously very ill. the Vatican gives you a little bit of information here and there, but you can put the pieces together without speculating. But what is very interesting about it is in dealing with pneumonia and what's happening with the pope. Just from teaching so much, I can predict his struggles, what's going on without even knowing. Yeah. He's 88 years old and we're gonna fight things so. So from a standpoint of a career, it's been a nice blend and I don't know if everybody gets the opportunity to dial back from probably what would've been a 70 hour week and making it a 40 hour week. But for me, 40 is great.

Patti Brennan: That's much less intense. And how lucky are those residents to have you in their lives? It says so much about you because what you said before we started to tape was that, you know, in the beginning you were telling stories and you realized that wasn't connecting with the residents.

Patti Brennan: So you began to ask them questions and challenge them to think for themselves because eventually that's what they're gonna have to do.

Brian: Oh, you're so right. Initially I thought, oh, well I can talk about a case we had in 1997 and they're polite, but their eyes kind of glaze over. But when you give them something and say, okay, you told me this, what would happen if this happened? And you're giving information. Then when a resident, somebody, younger comes to you for advice, they do it on their own time. 'cause let's face it, they're in there seeing patients and they want to finish their day. And they don't want to hear a long-winded story. They want to get done, but when they have time is when they can approach you. And if all I have to do is teach them and worry about their patients and I don't have my eyes on 20 other things, I can really engage them. And I think that's great. And the other thing I think that we really need in healthcare more than a lot of fields, is I try to say to them that an opportunity. I'll give you an example. a patient was in last week, without breaking any HIPAA rules, and the resident picked it up.

The resident had a tough morning. The new resident had fallen behind, kind of had to say, and you gotta pick up the pace. They were really upset about that. And then in the afternoon in an exam, they picked up something that was very important. The next day we found out it could be a lifesaving pickup. I was able to say to him, and a couple of the other residents, please understand nothing I'm doing in my week is any more important than what just happened here.

Nothing you do in your week's more important, and this is the gift you have. As a doctor, you can literally save somebody's life. I don't care about the rest of your day. I don't care about what you build, what your schedule was. You save somebody's life. And that's the gift of this career. And I think they need to hear that more. They're not just going to work and grinding it out. They have an opportunity to help.

Patti Brennan: Boy, Brian, that is amazing that you are able to bring it home like that. Because what I'm hearing from so many doctors and residents is, they're stuck with the computers. they're typing, typing, typing.

Patti Brennan: They don't even get to look at the clients. They ask questions. They've got their back to the patient. it's just not what they signed up for. And

for you to be able to catch somebody doing something right and remind them, this is why we went into this profession, that's a gift to them. You are a gift to them

Patti Brennan: I think about you, Brian, as you were talking, you have so much emotional intelligence. that's a gift because, you've got your family medicine. Then you've got the surgeons who may not have that same bedside manner, may not be as patient with their residents, but that's how they're gonna learn.

Patti Brennan: And for you to recognize that, that's why St. Francis hospital's so smart to keep you around. We had a succession plan, so I used to be the chairman. We've got a chairman, so I can be there, I step back. I don't want to be making the decisions, but when something happens, you're kind of there to say, yeah, I would probably do this again if you're asked.

Patti Brennan: I think I had to learn, you know, like all of us, you want to But you gotta wait until you're asked. And it's the same thing dealing with your family. If your kids are married, like if they come you, you wanna say it. And it's really hard not to say, I wouldn't do this.

Patti Brennan: And of course you speak when something could be a terrible mistake. You'd be foolish not to. But all in all, let people figure things out. I found it also mentoring my team because what we have here is not only the gender diversity and the racial diversity, we have generational diversity.

Patti Brennan: So we've got me and a couple people like me, but then I find myself mentoring, you know, the 40 plus year olds and they're mentoring the 30 year olds. And then the 30 year olds are mentoring the 20 year olds. So we're back filling for capacity. 'cause I always wanna make sure that we can continue to deliver the quality advice that we've been delivering.

Patti Brennan: And what our reputation is.

Brian: Patti, I'm curious, do you find also that you're learning a lot from the twenties, thirties and forties? Like things that maybe you missed and now you've Oh yeah. See them?

Patti: Yeah. The reverse mentoring is crazy, especially with the technological advances and the software solutions that we've got available to us now.

They're the ones finding this, especially when it comes to the estate planning, the wills and trust, trying to interpret all of that and put it in words that clients can really understand. That's really important because the minute they leave the law firm's office, they forget what they agreed to, and that's really important.

Brian: The world's changed. You have to learn. Like for instance, I was planning a couple trips and what used to be so easy, now you're online and you're adding this, and you're adding that and you find that you're spending hours, Filling out forms just to go away and get flights and things.

Patti Brennan: It's really changed from the world we had 100%. You know, it's funny because We just recently lost my sister-in-law and it was so interesting, my own brother, I was having this conversation with him and I said, so tell me what you guys have.

Patti Brennan: What have you done? Does she have accounts in her name, by the way? Where are those accounts? You have the usernames and passwords? I've got it right here on a card. it was really interesting to bubble up some of the issues that he hadn't even thought about.

Patti Brennan: we have this thing, get your affairs in order. It's four pages of stuff that people who read it say, gosh, I never would've thought of this. Like, the usernames and passwords. with most of these financial institutions you have to change 'em every six weeks. So have you kept them updated somewhere.

Patti Brennan: You know, the cell phones, the social media. Have you appointed somebody that could take over your social media? What about all the pictures on your iPhone? Where do they go? What about your pets? Have you made provisions for your pets if you have pets at home?

Patti Brennan: People don't know to do. my son had a traumatic brain injury and how many parents don't realize that when their kids turn age 18, they're adults. so mom and dad have no rights anymore. if the kids go into the hospital, you're subject to HIPPA, right?

Patti Brennan: Mom and dad cannot authorize brain surgery, for example, or get into the financial accounts and figure out, you know, the kids have rent. How are they paying the rent? unfortunately the kids' FICO scores are gonna go way down because their bills aren't getting paid because they don't have a power of attorney.

Brian: So those are the little tidbits that I think are so important that you provide, that I provide in shows like this. it's interesting what you brought up. I

had an opportunity to read your book, which I'd recommend when I read it, a lot of these things came up and I thought, I haven't thought about that.

I'm thinking of things as a doctor. It's tough enough to keep the health stuff right, you know? and you have to learn to trust others or learn from others. Yes. funny you make that point, my wife and I joke about it, but we call it like a death file, that in a safe deposit box you have your listing of accounts and where money is and it's something simple, you know?

Brian: And actually, I have a funny death file. I say, well if you're reading this, this is not good news. I love that. but you have to, and there are things people don't wanna think about. And that's very true from a health standpoint. one of the things in talking with you is you can have all your affairs in order, financially, but if you don't take care of your health, if something happens to your health, it means nothing because you can't share it.

Patti Brennan: And I think part of that is, enjoying the youth of what you call your senior years. Making sure that you do those trips, that you have things prepared that you plan. It's so good for your overall health while you have it. it's good for your physical health and your psychological health.

Patti Brennan: I guess you and I are blessed with the fact that we do this all day long. I never realized how important my nursing background would be because I don't have a problem having conversations and really playing that, role of, okay. Let's pretend that I'm sitting at this conference table with one of you.

Patti Brennan: What do you see? What would you like to see happening? What do we need to think about with that? Where would you live? What would you want to have happen? So let's go through and have that fire drill. That lifeboat drill. people are kind of surprised, like, wow, we don't wanna think about that. Better to talk about it. Now, are you guys, while you're both healthy, doing the things that you wanna be doing? I tell people all the time, and Brian, this is for you and Diane as well. Hey guys, it's freshman year in college, right? Go nuts. You've got the time, you've got your health, you can walk, you can do these things.

Patti Brennan: Have fun with it because there may be a season of life when you can't do those things, if there's one of you, you're not gonna wanna go. You're not gonna have anybody to go with. So enjoy your money, enjoy your time together while you still have it.

Patti Brennan: I think couples have to have that conversation because there could be resentment. If one person wanted to go away and the other person denies it or just doesn't do it, right? And then something happens to either of them from the health, if it was the person who didn't wanna do it,

Patti Brennan: the person taking care of them is like, now I never got away and I'm taking care of you. There'd be a lot of resentment there. So if you talk about things and have that conversation. What do you wanna do? Well, it could be travel, it could be sports, it could be, going to theater, whatever it is. But take advantage of that.

Patti Brennan: I think it's so important. We're having this conversation because My husband and I talk about this stuff from time to time, and I am really busy and I love doing this. This isn't work to me. And he is in a different season of his career, of his life, and he's weaning down pretty much not working that much.

Patti Brennan: And I always go home and he's emptying the dishwasher, doing the laundry. I'm like, 'Ed, I feel so bad.' He said, 'don't feel bad. Enjoy it. You're on your game. You are at the top of your game. Don't worry about me, I'm doing this stuff because you used to do this stuff while I was working too. This is my way of giving back and thanking you for all those years that you did this stuff.'

Brian: That's great. And you're figuring it out. You know, you're talking and, and I don't, I think, you know, some, like for me, I don't know necessarily, when people say, well, you retire. Well, I don't see myself ever really retiring. 'cause I like to write and speak and the broadcasting and I see patients.

Brian: But there'll come a point where maybe I say, the patient care, it might not be my time. it's time to give it to someone else there's nothing wrong with that, but you have to figure out what it is you want. I know lots of doctors who have said, I'm just done and they're totally doing other things and they're happy.

Patti Brennan: What is your plan though? what are you retiring to? What are you moving forward to? That's exactly right, Brian. I'm so glad you said that because so often, we find people who, will walk down my hallway and they're like, Patti, please.

Patti Brennan: they're practically crawling, Brian, like, please, can we retire? I wanna retire, can we retire? And then I start asking questions, tell me about what it is that's going on with work. You know, oh, I got this boss, they're so

demanding, da, da da da, I've got this commute, you know, I don't wanna be commuting back and forth.

Patti Brennan: They're making us go back to work, yada, yada yada. So I try to reframe it, right? So if I hear you right, you have this new boss and you've got a commute. So you are retiring from a commute. Do I have that right? So when you do that. What are you retiring to? What are you gonna do with all this extra time?

Patti Brennan: And then they look at me like, well, I didn't really think about that. And then we have that conversation and say, you know, the worst thing that I find is that when people do stop working, they're bored to tears and they find themselves very lonely. And as you well know, Loneliness is a pandemic in and of itself, and that is really hard. We saw a lot of that during COVID with young people in particular who were working remotely. They're working remotely and they were used to, all the interactions, I mean, it's nice.

Patti Brennan: You could stay in your pajamas and work and put a nice shirt on. There was a lot of nice pluses. Yeah. But they're in the same room, in the same house, and they're not meeting other people. as a result, anxiety was up, depression was up. Because people, you know, we're social creatures.

Patti Brennan: Yes. And you get that. So it's really interesting that people in their twenties thirties and forties were experiencing the same thing as somebody in their sixties or seventies who retired. It was the same phenomenon. It was cutting out, you know, your work related friends.

Patti Brennan: 'cause when you retire, people want to talk to you, but they're busy. if your friends are from work. largely what you share is work. If you're no longer working, you may share some things, but what else do you have? Like what hobbies did you pick up? What are you doing? And where are you going?

Brian: That is so insightful of you because I think I was thinking about young people and what they were missing out in terms of their professional development, not being around other people, seeing how other people worked and it was impacting their career trajectory. And you're absolutely right.

Patti Brennan: They were by themselves. we often blame social media, For that fomo and anxiety and feeling like everybody else is moving forward. But just being by themselves alone and not having that immediate feedback. that's the advantage of having more than one child, I think when you've got an older brother or sister to say, you know, cut it out.

Patti Brennan: So here's a question for you. Tell me about your show.

Brian: So my son is really good at this stuff. he has a state of soccer TV podcast, which is in the sports world. It's jobs in the sports world and it's a lot of metrics and data and all sorts of crazy stuff that he loves. But he basically got started with a podcast 'cause he had interest in soccer. So when COVID began, I was frustrated because I felt there was a lot of misinformation and even when there was information, it wasn't necessarily explained properly.

Brian: So I started a podcast, it was called a Doctor in the Pandemic or the Dr. Brian McDonough channel. And I told everybody, you're gonna get a daily COVID report from me. But here's the deal, I'm not accepting sponsors.

Brian: No one owns me. And I'm gonna tell you exactly what I think. I have nothing to gain out of this. So I basically did about 450 reports on COVID, built quite a following. Because what I was saying is, you know, my wife was saying it was like COVID Central. I was in hospital when nobody, nobody's coming out. And I'm so, I'm, oh my gosh. You know, driving to work, you know, sleeping in the basement, dressing in the garage, wondering, you know, my age, am I gonna even make it through the week because there was no vaccine?

Then I'm coming home and I'm doing COVID stories. And I'm seeing firsthand people who don't believe it, people who are denying it, And I would just answer questions and stay focused and say, I understand, but, early on I started saying things like, look, there's no absolutes there.

Everything the government's saying it's partly true, but they don't know. I don't know. None of us know this is a virus and it's gonna change. So when the vaccine came out, I said. I find it highly unlikely the vaccine would work. We'd have to get the entire world vaccinated to eliminate it. So people are still gonna get COVID.

So when they say you're not gonna get COVID if you have the vaccine, that's doesn't make sense. You're gonna get COVID, but you won't get it as bad. It's like the flu shot. So early on, I was saying COVID vaccine will eventually be like a flu shot. You're gonna get it every year or twice a year.

And high risk people will get it more than those. And that's what we see play out. But I just played with the science and told people, or they're going back to college, what are your fears? So it started out as that. Well, you know, at a certain point, you talk about PTSD, you gotta move on.

I just can't keep talking about COVID. There's more to life than COVID. So what I did was I started just interviewing interesting people and realized I can interview anybody I wanted. I'm watching a documentary about Russia in the 1920s and leaders, and they interview somebody and I go, oh, this guy, Dr. Richard Ovary is in the UK. I wonder if he's still in the UK. And I look him up. And say, Hey, you wanna be on my podcast? And all of a sudden I do a whole story about Russia in the twenties. And I have the leading world expert, I can get anybody I want. I loved Johnny Carson.

Yeah. And Johnny Carson always used to talk about the Bombastic Kin, which was his lawyer. Right. And I went back and found out, you know, I said, I wonder if he's alive. Sure enough, he's alive. Wow. But not only was he alive, he's like 90, but he hates Johnny Carson. They had a falling out. Oh my God. And he wrote a book talking about Johnny Carson's life behind the scenes.

And I interviewed him about Carson. He goes, why do you wanna interview me? I said, well I just like to interview and learn interesting people. It's got like 3.1 million views. It's ridiculous. But it's all because you get these people who haven't talked in a long time and I'm having fun.

Yeah. So what I've done is anybody who wants to come on, we chat. Yeah. And then I just do basic health segments if I think it's important that are short form. Because, the way the internet of what I've learned from my son is, you know, you, you can have your long form like YouTube

and Apple Podcasts but the stuff that hits Instagram and other things have to be like 30 seconds. So I do a health tip. Just be aware of this. So I did something about, explaining why, why anxiety is increased by people if they drink too much the night before. What hormones are affected. And so I'm explaining to young people, if you're really anxious the day after you drink, here's why. I explain what happened with brain chemicals, and then I say, this is a reason why I need to cut back because this anxiety is only get it worse because these chemicals start to, and then it got all these people on Instagram sharing it.

Oh, that's so cool. Because you're using a tool that they're using. To reach a group you could never reach. So it's a two-prong thing, but I still don't accept advertising. I'm still doing it on my own. It's, it's for fun. We're just doing this for fun. We're interviewing great people.

Patti Brennan: I don't wanna be, I want no conflicts of interest. That is my middle name. And you know what? I don't know about you, Brian, but I find that, when we do podcasts on subjects, it's basically on stuff that we wanna

learn about. So, you know, it's the old Walt Whitman thing. If you wanna learn about something, write a book about it.

Brian: Right. And people come up and they say I'll be honored to interview you. And it's just the Dr. Brian McDonough channel. on YouTube, it has a certain number, but where it really picks up is the audio version. Like people in their car, They're the ones who, do you know how many people are listening on that? There's metrics. My son teaches me how to do that. he'll tell me some stuff and go like, oh, you're not doing well with this. Oh my God, that one blew up. Right. Because there's companies that do that. He knows how to do that, and they're evergreen that's the beauty of it. Like the Carson thing. I interviewed the guy like two years ago. It's still out there and it just lives. But you have to remember everything lives. So be careful about what you say because It gets out there.

Patti Brennan: So that is interesting. how do you come up with the topics and the ideas? Or maybe people would be interested in knowing why anxiety is really, you know, increasing in young people.

Brian: Right. And there's a lot of people I've reached out to who don't get back, right? Like there was somebody I saw, I don't know what show they were on, but as a 4-year-old, they were in Mensa and now they're a 45-year-old professor. And so I tracked them down in another country and said, you were on this show. Would you want to do a thing? And they never got back. But it's cool when you've got something like you can show a clip from decades ago. And then bring that person. 'cause you always wonder what happens to people.

Patti Brennan: You're interested in other people genuinely. Like, I remember when you and I first talked and connected you really, really wanted to understand how I went from nursing to becoming a CEO of a financial planner. And I felt that from you. It was legit. And I think that's great because you're translating that. To your patients, to your residents and everything that you do, and everybody that's lucky enough to be able to listen to KYW and to your podcast.

Brian: Well, it swings back to what we were talking about, which, kind of comes back to even somebody who's thinking of retiring, think of what you've done or I've done in my life. You have multiple interests in your career. That means you might say, I am done with being an accountant. I'm done with being a lawyer, but maybe I wanna work in a home and garden store. maybe I've never done that. This is the time to do that. I was talking to my wife, I said, one of the things I definitely want to do at some point,

I would love to just be a ticket taker in Clearwater. Oh my goodness. And bring people to their seats. I just think that would be so much fun. Just chatting with people And those jobs are tough to get, by the way. Yes, they are. But do that. I seriously thought about, and my wife was laughing. I said, no, I'm serious. I was thinking at one point, I think it'd be fun to be at Costco. And just, greeting people meeting people is important.

Patti Brennan: I think everybody should look at what they want to do and Write a book. I mean, whatever it is, I'm reminded of a story about my own father. My dad worked for IBM, he was a really smart guy. Went to Wharton worked at IBM his entire life. when it came time for him to retire, he got really bored. So he was really handy with his hands.

Patti Brennan: my husband had his own business. He was in the office furniture business. my husband needed some help because when he went into a large company like DuPont or IBM he needed somebody to supervise the installation of the furniture. my father was in sales, so one thing led to another and the two of them had a conversation

Patti Brennan: my husband said my dad, as you probably know, my sister was in the Olympics. My dad was a diver. he wanted to follow her, to the different diving meets when he retired and they had the conversation, he just wanted a brainless job.

Patti Brennan: He just wanted to work with his hands. So Ed offered him the job. He would show up at these, you know, big companies. be the ambassador for the company. He would supervise the people installing the furniture. He'd get in there on the floor with the screwdriver and his drill and help. The guys loved it every minute of it.

Patti Brennan: And he didn't feel any pressure. He was just grateful to be able to go somewhere and he felt like he was making a difference. And he did. In fact, I will tell you, it's never been the same since my dad has passed. So, to your point, it's really trying to discover what it is that you like to spend time doing.

Patti Brennan: it could be gardening, it could be reading, it could be just hanging out. you don't know until you're in it often, and that's okay. The first stage of retirement is the period of ambiguity. How's this really gonna work? And that's when anxiety tends to be very high. you and I get to talk to these people and say, you know what?

Patti Brennan: we've worked with people for decades. We've helped over a thousand people retire, stay retired, and go through the four seasons of retirement. It's been studied, it's been quantified, and it really tends to be the same for a lot of people. The first age is that period of ambiguity. Once the honey do list is completed, you know, what are we gonna do today, honey?

Patti Brennan: And honey is saying, listen, I got lots of stuff to do. I'm gonna have lunch with my girlfriend. I'm gonna do my thing. Have fun. And that's when anxiety, depression really set in. And so let's understand that in advance and have plan B, what are you gonna do with your time? What are your interests? do you wanna do birdwatching?

Patti Brennan: Do you wanna volunteer somewhere? You know, it's not just for old people, as my husband says, it's for everybody. And it's that social interaction, you know, I think we all wanna feel like we are making a difference in another person's life. You and I get to do it. Even with these podcasts.

Patti Brennan: It's amazing to me. And it's really nice to know that it's making a difference. Well, and even for your own children, if you can handle this stage and it shows them that there's something for them too, down the road. 'cause they'll reflect on that. Yes. They'll say, gee, mom and dad did this, or whatever.

Brian: And we're very honest, open with our kids. we'll say I don't know, I gotta come up with something else to do. And they'll say, why don't you try this? And you work on it as a team. and you look at things do it as a family and also with your friends.

Brian: So you do it with your kids also, Oh, I'll talk to them and say, now that I have more time, what else can we do? Interesting. we're talking to my daughter about pulling my grandson outta school, like daycare one day he's like three, just take him somewhere.

But you can do things like that. that's what we're talking about from health. Taking care of yourself, your body. Because if you don't, you gotta watch your heart. You gotta make sure you're eating properly. You gotta resist temptation.

you can eat really well and you can eat out often, but what do you do to try to minimize that? how do you make something social that's healthy for you it's tough.

Patti Brennan: You know what I've learned about with that is the environmental eating is that could be a killer.

Patti Brennan: if the goodies are out easy to get to, I'm eating them. But to your point, the working out, the doing the exercise, that's something that you almost have to plan, right? For me, I do it first thing in the morning before I come into the office, and then I know it's done. I've done something for my body.

Patti Brennan: But not everybody has that luxury, they don't have that flexibility. They gotta figure out something that's part of their daily life. And you know, and, and from medical standpoint, study after study after study shows if you do 150 minutes in a week of exercise, that's important. And the big thing I tell people as they get older.

Patti Brennan: I think it's maybe the most important message I give, it's strength, balance, and flexibility you have to work on. What takes out a lot of people in their seventies and eighties in particular, broken hips, falls issues. So how do you avoid that? You gotta keep your muscles strong.

Patti Brennan: So maybe you gotta do some sort of weightlifting twice a week. And that doesn't have to be expensive. It could be pushups, sit-ups, getting up and down from a chair, strengthening your legs like that. Or it could be more intense. But you work on your strength, flexibility, stretching and obviously balance is key.

Patti Brennan: Balance. Get up on one leg and, and try to see what if you can do it.

Brian: And one of the things, for instance, I'm looking into, my wife was laughing, I'm looking into yoga. Yeah. But I was at the Y and they had paddleboard yoga, where you stand on a board. my wife goes, honey, why don't you just try to do yoga without standing on a board in water?

Patti Brennan: Yeah. And see if you like it. But then that's your flexibility and strength. it's so interesting 'cause there's even these little tests that you hear about. Stand up on one leg and see if you can stand on one leg. for 30 seconds. I found I couldn't do it.

Patti Brennan: It's really hard. I was wobbly. you think you can do it, but you haven't pushed it or with grandchildren getting down on the floor. Getting up, getting down, getting up, getting down.

Patti Brennan: I think people have to understand nobody's an expert. We're all struggling through stuff. I hang out with doctors all the time. we do a lot of things that are probably not as healthy as we tell our patients to do. Yes. people have to understand they're not perfect.

Brian: It's a struggle and you've gotta keep working on it. I think it's an effort as you get older. part of what you wanna do is make yourself healthy as part of the time you spend whatever you're doing.

Patti Brennan: You know, I often tell people, my job is not to should on you.

Patti Brennan: And I tell clients, please don't let anybody should on you. Here's some ideas. You could try 'em, you could choose not to. Totally up to you. This is what I found has worked for me, or it hasn't worked for me. I do the balance test with them all the time. I said, let's try to do it together because, and then I wobble right in front of them to show them that these things are easy to avoid.

Patti Brennan: Let's just try it. this is the year of try. Let's try this stuff. And that's when we discover that, maybe it's just a simple thing of trying it once a day before you know it, you're good at it and you're standing up for a minute. on one leg.

Patti Brennan: And that will pay dividends in your seventies and eighties Absolutely. You keep working on it. keeping yourself strong, and obviously there's other things you have to worry about. For instance, if your blood sugar's elevated make sure you get it controlled because that starts to work on your body and can work on the nerves and different parts of your body.

Brian: Yeah. make sure that your cholesterol and triglycerides are good and your blood pressure is fine. we think about how we take our cars in and we're so religious about changing the oil and doing all these things right. But when's the last time you actually were checked out and what have you given as far as your time or your significant other? Like, are you the person you're living with? Is that person taking care of themselves? Mm-hmm. So make sure you're watching out for that too.

Patti Brennan: You know, Brian, I had heard recently that you can actually go to some of these labs, like a LabCorp, and just order your own labs. You don't necessarily need a doctor's order. So much more with the internet is becoming easier to do. there's a lot of different things that we used to not be able to do 'cause it wasn't accessible to us.

Patti Brennan: one of the other things you can do if you have a healthcare provider, they also now have the portals. Where you can write in and say, I'm curious about this. I wanna set up an appointment, but can you order this?

Patti Brennan: That's, your doctor's gonna want to know those things anyway. Right. And then it's more likely to be covered by insurance too, if you do it that way. it'll help. And if you can't get medicine now, you can go to Walmart, you can go to other places.

Brian: I deal with a very, challenged economically group of patients. And what I saw with COVID was where those preexisting conditions and other issues took out. A lot of those people, they were some of the ones that were dying because their bodies weren't what they should be. Yes.

Because of the other struggles in life. Well you can make sure that people get their medicines a lot cheaper. There's ways to get these things done, and I think that's important. do your own searches, but. take advantage of somebody who's taking care of you.

Patti Brennan: what I worry about with that kind of stuff is if not going to a nationally recognized company, but just ordering something online, you don't know where from. It could be filled with fentanyl or something like that.

Brian: I just did a story for KYW, we're talking about liver damage, and I was talking about the obvious stuff, like if overweight, you can have fatty liver. And then I was talking about alcohol and the herbs that you take over the counter, they're not regulated.

Patti Brennan: Right? they may not necessarily be as pure as they say, or the concentration. more importantly, there's certain things that will just attack your liver. So take it and it can be impacted.

Brian: They don't even know. And their Dr. May not even know because. we weren't taught a lot about that in medical school. The only reason I know is because I'm always reading studies But most people, if they're out in practice, they don't necessarily know the latest herbs.

Brian: You know, does this extract do this or that? And that's important. So when you think about let's say that you've got somebody who's getting an annual physical. Would a regular family doctor, normally order the typical liver, test? we used to say like, these are your annual labs.

Brian: Now we have labs focused on what the person is bringing up. So to answer your question, we would get basic liver studies. Especially if somebody gives you a hint. let's say I ask somebody, how much you drink and. everybody lies about the drinking, right?

There's a joke that you double what they say. But the reality is if they say they're drinking, you say, listen, lemme just get some baseline labs. Yeah. Then you at least have a sense. Or if they point to a part of their body that's bothering them or whatever

Patti Brennan: So now it's more of a, it's a calculated thing. So there's certain things you're obviously gonna get. Yeah. We have bundles of tests, but Right. The chem to Right, right. Those things. But a lot of times now we're looking more at people, thyroid, other issues. That might be bothering people.

Brian: the more we know we're figuring that out. and then you can kind of see over time, blood sugar, it's so easy. the hemoglobin A1C is basically a snapshot of a whole period of time as opposed to the blood that morning. everybody could just make sure their sugar is fine for that morning, they just have a good week.

Brian: Right, exactly. But the hemoglobin A1C will be three months. And I would imagine, 'cause you know the meds that on, so if they're on statins, you know that they're wicked on the liver. So that would be that trigger say, right. You gotta watch that. You gotta check make sure things are there and interesting.

Patti Brennan: The pros and the cons. Is there anything in particular that you're finding very challenging now with medicine?

Brian: I think the challenge, and I see it with my residents is there is a demand now to see more and more people in less time. And what you're finding is. More and more centers are now being run by businesses. Medicine has become a big business. And what might have been a doctor's office 35 years ago where it was a doctor and maybe their spouse or the nurse, or there were two people. And their only expenses were really, you're now bolstering eight or nine people by the patients. there's all the paperwork, the clerks, the legal department, if you work in a healthcare system, for instance, there's so many administrators. And there's only a few people actually seeing the patients and everything's gotta be covered.

And, part of my training was I was very interested in it. I was good at doing order sets and anticipating how you would treat different. So I was kind of voluntold to help out, with the different computer systems, Cerner and Epic.

I got heavily involved in the building of them. And what I've learned is that when they sold these products to hospitals and medical groups, they sold it to the CEOs. These machines are really good at billing and capturing charges and coding and doing everything the insurance companies and the billers want. They're not as good at patient care because they weren't being sold to the doctors and nurses and caregivers. They were being sold to the people who wanted to say, what money are we gonna get out of this investment?

a lot of organizations bought the product and they're stuck with it now they can optimize, But they don't have the money for optimization. So they got the original tool they bought. Which is a great billing tool, but it's not as good at. Patient care. what you have with physicians, now, is they call it pajama time. They go home and they're spending three and four hours on their own time writing notes. And seeing as many patients as they can, and the numbers keep getting ratcheted up. Now there is AI and things coming in, but the ai, you gotta make sure. Is accurate. Because it's still learning. So there's a lot of problems with the technology the industry I think we kind gotta revamp it. And that's why I tell the doctors, stay happy and realize what you can do. You have the best job of anybody.

Patti Brennan: Nurses have the best job of anybody. But the problem is, even nurses will tell you they're more interested in putting everything into the chart. They can't spend their time with their patient and they're frustrated. when I was a nurse on the floor and in the unit, one of the things I did every single night with my patients is I gave 'em a back rub.

Patti Brennan: Can you imagine going into a hospital today and a nurse giving you a back rub? That was standard, mandatory. I, to this day, give the best back rubs of anybody. And I know I learned it as a nurse. There was a lot of nursing, really hands on.

Patti Brennan: And the thing that I used to love, inpatient, which has kind of gone away with all the technology Was a nurse would write a nurse's note I would see a note from four in the morning, which said that the person wasn't able to have bowel movements. And I said, wait, it's been three days or, I would read the note or the family hasn't been in, there's no support.

Patti Brennan: They were all in the note. Now you just get a lot of data, which are great metrics. But they don't tell me the softer things, what is going on in that patient's life? What are they doing? And where are they?

Brian: That's important because as you know, patients, the people they bond with have always been the nurses.

Doctors come in for a few minutes, but the nurses provide the true care. And I've always said that, they provide the best care, but that's being pulled away too. So we have to get technology controlled. And I think people are working on it. I see positives.

Patti Brennan: I think that they recognize it and see what is happening to the actual care of people, I'm so lucky because I own this company and I get to do this the way I wanna do it. Nobody's telling us what we have to do, how many clients we have to have, none of that.

Patti Brennan: I would never tolerate it. We take care of people, not money. And that's medicine.

Brian: And I do talks on physician engagement. I go to healthcare organizations, and talk to them. How can we keep our physicians? most of them only care about two things.

They wanna make their patients better. That's why they went to all those years of school. They want to help people. And two, they need a sense of independence. If you've done something and you have 10 years of training, beyond college and you've done all these things, it's very hard to listen to somebody telling you, I want you to do this, this, and this. I've been in healthcare forever. I find that the disconnect is the doctors say the administrators don't know. And the administrators don't respect what the doctors think, and they never get together. And there's always that battle. Until you have the two sides talking and truly understanding each other's side and respecting each other, those organizations are the ones to succeed. the surgeon needs to come in and totally trust and respect the COO and the CEO. Has to really respect, but in many cases they don't.

They look at each other as opposition, and that doesn't work.

Patti Brennan: It's so interesting that you say that. I was on the main board for Chester County Hospital that has been purchased by Penn. I will never forget being in a board meeting with Mike Duncan as our CEO and head of Medicine

speaks, and then the head of surgery speaks, I'll never forget the physician who was the head of medicine spoke to the board.

Patti Brennan: He started to cry because he was telling a story of one of his patients who had to make a choice between his medicine or food. And this doctor started to cry in front of all of us on the board. It was a moment I don't think any of us will ever forget. It's just so cool the way they run the board meetings and the fact that they, in that hospital,

Patti Brennan: Being on the outside looking in, they really walk that talk you're talking about. It sounds like that's a place that's getting it right. And that's what I'm seeing.

Patti Brennan: In my industry, we talk about best practices. I get on these lists at Forbes, at Barron's, and they highlight Key Financials, best practices. This is what we believe everybody should be doing. And that's pretty cool. You have in your mind, an ideal of best practices.

Patti Brennan: And what I love about you is you're telling that story, you're giving ideas, you're sharing these ideas with administration as well as the physicians themselves, so that they can retain the hope that there is a solution, that they should stay with this and continue to plow forward. Because change, it's not gonna happen overnight, but change will occur.

Brian: I always remember what my dad told me. He was a businessman and a really bright businessman, we were debating about something and he said, I'm gonna tell you something now and I just want you to believe it. He goes, you're very bright.

He goes, you're really great. You've always exceeded. You wouldn't be in med school. He goes, but you have to understand there are people just as bright as you and brighter. But not only that, there's people who might not be as bright as you, but they're doing something different than you. And they get better at it 'cause they do it all the time. If you're in the business world and somebody presents you with a business idea, do not think you are smarter than they are just because you're a doctor. Understand, they're smart. Always think they're smarter than you and always believe they know more than you and you won't get hurt because they're gonna play up to you and they're gonna say, you're so smart, you're so great, and you will fall for it.

Patti Brennan: He says, especially if it's an unethical person, just as long as you go in with your eyes open and respect others. That has helped me in dealing

with hospital administrators. these people, obviously you don't get to that level if you're not skilled and you probably aren't in healthcare, if you don't have passion for people to begin with.

That's why you chose that path. And as I've learned about healthcare, if you're a business person, it's not necessarily the best paying of the administrative jobs. So these people probably are very interested in helping. And if you can connect on that level and if they can connect with the physicians, it's that. It's the egos finding that common ground. Yeah.

Patti Brennan: Yes, exactly. Finding the common ground. And I think that is so wise. I often think that, you know, in a way, the biggest advantage I have is that I didn't go to college for business, that I didn't have a finance background because I know that there's so much that I don't know, Brian.

Patti Brennan: There's just so much out there to know. And so I'm always out there trying to learn, trying to understand. And in a way it's given me a real advantage because as I say to all of my really smart people who work here, listen guys, remember that you're talking to a former nurse now, I'm not a nurse anymore, but give it to me in words that I can reframe so I can explain it in a way that people can actually understand.

Patti Brennan: when people understand things, they have buy-in and can act on it with confidence 'cause they get it. And I think it's the same with medicine. I know that's why you're so effective. Why you have become the voice of medicine in Philadelphia, in Delaware, et cetera.

Brian: one of the reasons I believe, it's important is if you don't connect, then you didn't achieve your goal. if people don't understand what you said, you could use the highest language and look like you're great. But if the person leaves and doesn't know why they're taking their medicine or what it's for or why they don't need medicine, half my conversations are why people don't need an antibiotic explaining to them it's a virus and this isn't gonna help. And explaining to them so they don't leave angry.

I'm just telling you this is what you need to do. But it's a conversation. and if you don't have that conversation, in healthcare I know people usually tell me what's wrong with them by what they've told me.

they come in and pretty much say what they have. if you listen to them, if you cut 'em off, you may never hear it, when you talk about the computers, I always remember a story. We were talking about this early on, about the computers.

I had a mother of three and I was doing the physical on the three children. I was not the mother's doctor. as I was doing the physicals, I just saw the mom was like, so depressed looking. And just kept seeing it. And I finally stopped and said, are you all right? she wasn't. And we got her in to see a doctor. But the point was she was just totally depressed and overwhelmed. Wow. But when you're on a computer, You may not notice, And that's something that scares me It's the interaction, the conversation, reading the room, Exactly what you are saying,

Patti Brennan: Well, I forget what that saying is. it's just the nonverbals. I just think the nonverbals are so important because you could pick up so much. it is just amazing. And not everybody has that skill. You and I kind of take it for granted. I always love it when people leave the office and they say, Patti, I always feel so much better when we leave.

Patti Brennan: It's because they feel heard. You do that, Brian.

Brian: One of the questions I had for you was when people are of that retirement stage, How do they get to move from a saver to a spender? they spend all their time building this so-called war chest, but Now have to transition to using it. Is that a hard thing to advise people about?

Patti Brennan: It is hard because everybody's different. So I start with asking a bunch of questions We can do option one, which is, we'll set it up so that you get a monthly deposit or a biweekly deposit just like it's a paycheck and we'll withhold the taxes

Patti Brennan: Or do you want us to set up a pool of capital that you draw from whenever you want? You can give us a call and say, can you direct deposit \$25,000 into our checking account? That's an option too. So it's really understanding what works for each client. And I think people really appreciate that.

Patti Brennan: And the beautiful thing about it, Brian, is we can change it. It's an easy thing to change. Let's try to work this way. And if it's not working for you, no big deal. We'll go plan B. Just like everybody's different.

Patti Brennan: their approach to finance, same and that's why, I often tell people, you're not a pie chart, We have so many clients, hundreds of clients, we don't have one portfolio that is the same as the next because everybody's situation is different.

Patti Brennan: Some people wanna stay here locally, some people wanna move closer to their kids. That's the stuff that will really determine what we do in the end, is what they want to do with their lives. So it's really exploring what's important to them. not just about their money, but day to day. 'cause again, we've done this for over 30 years.

Patti Brennan: we kind of know some of the things that might happen in their life and we get to encourage them. I tell people all the time, we're in the hope business, there's so much to look forward to and there are some landmines out there. Let's make sure we understand you could be vulnerable and make sure that we can transfer that risk ahead of time before it actually could happen.

Brian: Well, I know in your book you addressed this, but one of the things that was shocking that I saw on a YouTube video was somebody saying that when you're 60 years old. You have 1000 healthy active weeks. And if you start to think about that, like what are you gonna do with those? And that's if you're lucky, what, you know, what are you gonna do with those healthy, active weeks?

Patti Brennan: Yes. And what do you want them to be? not put pressure on yourself, but how do you give yourself the best chance of having a thousand, if not 1500 healthy weeks. Exactly. why cut yourself short? And again, where you come in is, it's not just a thousand healthy, but quality of life.

Patti Brennan: Again, the mobility, the strength, the balance, the eyesight, everything. making sure that you feel confident in your ability to do the things that you wanna do. Because you know, we started this, Brian, having a conversation about the similarities between healthcare and financial care.

Patti Brennan: And you can't have one without the other. Well, that's why I was excited about doing this podcast. you don't see many people dealing with both. Mm-hmm. Like you can certainly, for instance, YouTube or any of these podcasts, you could get hundreds of people giving you financial advice.

Patti Brennan: Or medical advice, but rarely do they combine the two and say the value of both. And it's cookie cutter also. It's, generalized advice, generalized ideas, and it's so cookie cutter. And like medicine, it can be really dangerous if you start going on Dr.

Patti Brennan: Google for an answer to your healthcare issue. Same thing with your money. there's a lot of lousy advice out there. So everybody is different. Everybody is unique. That's why we are so closely aligned. And they're very

similar too, in that if you got a certain amount of money and you make a mistake and blow it, you got health.

Patti Brennan: You could not be doing the right thing and blow it. And you don't get a second shot at either. 'cause you're probably not gonna be making a lot of money in those years. And if your health is getting worse, it's hard to recover. It's very similar. You gotta maximize the information, you have the decisions.

Patti Brennan: You know, in the book I tell a story about two gentlemen on a park bench one guy says to the other guy, you know, I got a 8% rate of return on my portfolio last year. the other guy said, oh, that's nothing. I got 11. what neither gentleman understands is that it doesn't really matter because they're both gonna be broke in about three years.

Patti Brennan: So we have to be careful what we focus on and make sure it's the right thing to focus on.

Patti Brennan: like hypertension. You know you have it, but it can kill you. Over time. so much, and that's why, you know, again, the healthcare kind of helps because a lot of people understand. Because of people like you that you know, yeah, I gotta watch my blood pressure, I gotta watch my blood sugar.

Patti Brennan: Same thing. But they don't quite understand how that relates to their money. they're trying to get these, quick ideas and they're, reading this magazine or this one article with decisions like. Social Security. Now the thing is, everybody should wait until they're 70 to start collecting social security.

Patti Brennan: Well, I'm here to tell you, not always. Sometimes it's better for someone to take Social Security at full retirement age. Because we don't know how long we're gonna live. And by the way, you've gotta make up that cash flow from somewhere. if most of your money is in your 401k, you're probably gonna wanna take your Social Security and not take it outta the 401k, yet run the numbers.

Patti Brennan: It's different for everybody. So, you know, the cookie cutter stuff is just, that's where I think when you know our brains, we wanna make things easy, right? We wanna have a quick answer. But you know, it's not always the right answer. In fact, it could be financially devastating.

Brian: if I was giving somebody advice, a 60-year-old watching this, or a 40-year-old thinking about their parent watching it. I would say, the balance, the strength and the flexibility are key. I would say that you probably wanna reduce the vices, whatever they are in your life, you know what they are. And then if you can work on your personal relationships and not stress, understand that you're not perfect. What would you say from a financial standpoint, what would you say other people should do?

Patti: There's different seasons of life. I say the fifties, the forties, depending on how old the kids are. That's the most expensive period in a person's life. There's not a lot of money left over. So a lot of people don't have a lot of savings.

Patti Brennan: by the time they get to be 50 they turn around and say, oh my goodness, I've got 10 years to do this. My suggestion for young people who are watching and listening when you're in your twenties, before you get married, before you have kids, 10% into the 401k is my line in the sand.

Patti Brennan: Save the money before you buy the house, because there could be periods when you can't save and the sooner it gets invested the better. in the book, I break it up into decades in the thirties, these are the things to consider in your forties.

Patti Brennan: These are the things to consider people tend to wanna kind of look at how old they are and what should I be thinking about? And you know what, there's no one right way for everybody. My suggestion is, and people don't wanna hear the word budget, it's kind of like the word diet. sends the message that you have to give something up.

Patti Brennan: Let's define, how you wanna spend your money even while you're working. Instead of wondering where it all went, tell it where you want it to go. Just keep track. And that I find Begins the process of, wow, I had no idea I spent this much money at Amazon.

Patti Brennan: Maybe I don't wanna do that anymore. the clickbait stuff is really addicting. that's where people get into trouble. So be aware, increase your awareness. Take a look at what you spent at Amazon last year. You can look at your previous orders. So again, it's understanding where the money is going and what you want in your life.

Patti Brennan: Some people really get a lot outta retail therapy. As long as I can keep on spending what I'm spending, I'll continue to work till I'm 70. there was a book I read when I was probably 30 years old called The Millionaire Next Door. it was fascinating and I read it, it was great because you're always looking at, don't fall into the trap of looking at other people

Patti Brennan: And I think it's on steroids now because people look at Facebook and first of all, young people. See the best picture everybody has of themselves. So they think they look terrible because nobody puts a bad picture of themselves on. people in their thirties, forties, fifties, see everybody traveling always a picture at some beach resort.

Patti Brennan: they're like, what have we done? We've done nothing. It used to be somebody had a nice car, you saw 'em driving through the neighborhood. You would be jealous of their car. Or maybe their house But you didn't see a lot of people. Now it's everybody.

Brian: Yes. And I think that that is also a source of anxiety and stress for people. it might. Go against their, ability to save because they just want to keep getting more.

Patti Brennan: I worry about that generation a lot. Because they are doing things that you and I never did. They are going on vacations.

Patti Brennan: They are buying these McMansions, and they're not thinking about, gee, the kids are gonna be growing up. We gotta pay for college, and by the way, we gotta start thinking about our own retirement, our own healthcare, et cetera. They're not doing the things that we did.

Patti Brennan: We worried about it. We thought about it. the other thing that they don't realize is they may have a parent who had a pension plan. They're not gonna have pension plans. a regular pension plan basically has a couple million dollars allocated to that person for the rest of their life.

Patti Brennan: So the kids that are in their twenties and thirties and even their. Forties, they're not gonna have that. They've gotta make up for that themselves. it's a reality check. And I'm afraid that they're gonna get to their sixties and realize, oh my goodness, I'm never gonna be able to retire.

Patti Brennan: And that is really difficult. you don't wanna give advice when it's not asked for, but you can see the writing on the wall. That's really hard for me to keep my mouth shut. That's a great point you make too. we're talking

about the struggles of retiring, but there's so many people, and you know the numbers better than I, but I think a significant percentage of people have less than a hundred thousand dollars.

Patti Brennan: Saved. If they even have that and then they got the rest of their life, it's how do you retire? You got social security. But that's only enough to get the basics. It is hard. 100%. And even that's in jeopardy, Right. Now a lot of people who are older, they're that are worried about their social security.

Patti Brennan: And I get to say, you know what? Based on all of the proposals that we've seen, people who are in their, sixties and seventies, you don't have to worry about your social security, the kids that have to worry about it because, based on the way now, it's gonna be very different for them.

Patti Brennan: They're not gonna get what we're getting or what we're projecting no pensions, no security. And if you haven't done it yourself, where's it coming from? there's nothing. And those kids buying McMansions who have seen the value of real estate go up, they're gonna realize when they get to sixties, everybody else is selling their house because they have to.

Patti Brennan: that's the only source of capital for their retirement. And they're not gonna have that liquidity event because the value of the housing is gonna go way down because they'll be so many of them. Yeah. Right. You know, it's really interesting to and anticipate. Nobody really knows what's gonna happen.

Patti Brennan: You and I get to have these conversations, Brian, and I'm gonna end it here. So Brian McDonough, thank you so much for joining me today, and thanks to all of you who are watching and listening. I thought this conversation was fascinating, had no idea. I sat down with you, Brian said, so what do you wanna talk about today?

Patti Brennan: And you said. We'll just talk and see where it goes. thank you so much for joining us.

Brian: I really appreciate it and I hope you got something out of it if you've enjoyed this, thank you.

Patti: I'm gonna work on my balance, Brian. I'll end at that. That's great advice. Thanks to all of you for joining us. I Hope you all have a day.