



ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN MEDICINE:

Building Startups and
Proving Physician Impact
Beyond Clinical Work

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify physicians' unique value in healthcare innovation
- Recognize common mistakes when entering the startup ecosystem
- Understand three key pathways for physician innovation
- Apply the LAUNCH™ Framework to leverage clinical expertise
- Develop an action plan aligned with your entrepreneurial goals

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES

I have the following financial relationships within the past 24 months:

- **Equity Interest:** Imagine Pediatrics, Alison Curfman MD LLC Consulting, Startup Physicians
- **Consulting:** Multiple healthcare organizations (via Alison Curfman MD LLC Consulting)
- No other relevant financial relationships to disclose

This presentation will reference experiences from these organizations and consulting engagements.

THE PULL TOWARD INNOVATION

- Physicians feel constrained by traditional practice models
- Growing desire for meaningful voice in healthcare transformation
- Seeking flexibility, fulfillment, and amplified impact

PATHWAYS YOU **HAVEN'T** CONSIDERED

- Stories of unexpected opportunities await
- "I've never done that before" — the universal first reaction
- A movement: physicians applying clinical expertise in revolutionary ways

WHY DOES THIS **MATTER** NOW?

- Health tech evolution demands physician leadership
- One requirement: challenge beliefs about your own potential
- Clinical knowledge + entrepreneurial skills = **unprecedented opportunity**

The reality of *burnout* in traditional practice



Feeling overwhelmed, undervalued, and *limited* in your ability to create meaningful change

The *transformation* and opportunities awaiting you



Use your expertise in *new ways* that create value beyond clinical care



Unlock the freedom to design the life you've always dreamed of

Hi, I'M ALISON



I'm a practicing pediatric emergency physician,

mom of 4 in a dual physician family,

co-founder of a multi-9-figure healthcare startup,

and serial entrepreneur.

MY STORY

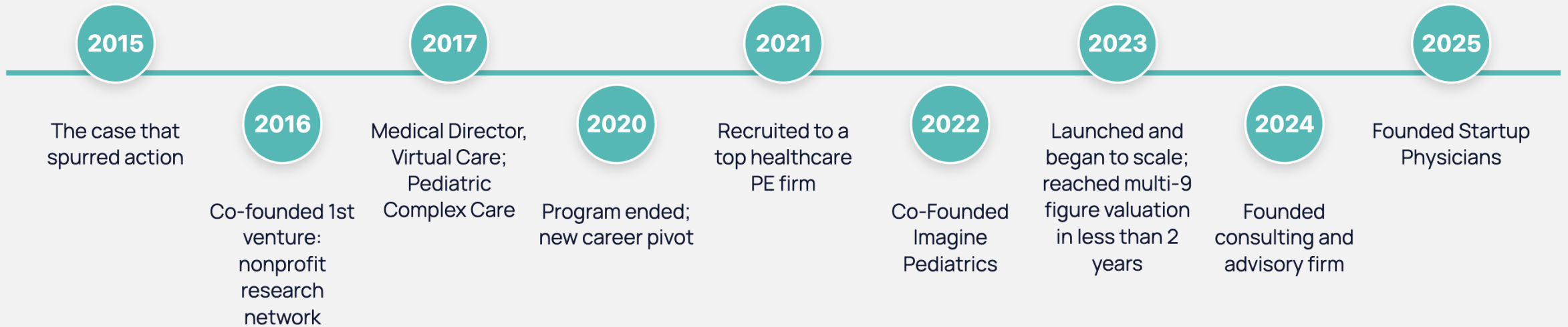
- Struggled to balance an ER schedule with raising a family.
- Felt constant frustration with a failing healthcare system.
- Wanted to use my creativity to find new solutions, but felt stifled and discouraged.

FLASHBACK TO 2015

- A critical case.
- A devastating patient outcome.
- A deep knowledge that things could be better.



MY CAREER PATH



From **frustrated physician** to **impact-driven entrepreneur**

MY NEW REALITY

- Profound impact at scale.
- Unleashed creativity and innovation.
- An intentionally designed career and life.

MOST IMPORTANTLY...

- Your career options are not binary; opportunities are limitless.
- Your clinical perspective is essential for driving meaningful change.
- You can design your professional and personal life.



THREE MAJOR MISTAKES

to avoid when entering the startup world as a physician

MISTAKE 1: NOT UNDERSTANDING YOUR VALUE

WHAT IT IS: Failing to articulate the business value of your clinical skills.

THE COST: Feeling stuck, missing opportunities, and feeling undervalued.

THE SOLUTION: Your expertise is a highly valuable asset; learn to speak its language.

MISTAKE 2: APPROACHING WITH A RIGID MINDSET AND HUBRIS

WHAT IT IS: A rigid mindset and unwillingness to adapt.

THE COST: Missing collaborative opportunities and being perceived as difficult.

THE SOLUTION: Start with humility, build relationships, and gain invaluable experience.

MISTAKE 3: GIVING UP TOO SOON

WHAT IT IS: Expecting immediate high-paying roles and getting discouraged by the growth curve.

THE COST: Giving up on your dreams and being overlooked for future roles.

THE SOLUTION: Build resilience and a robust portfolio of diverse experiences.

HOW TO AVOID THESE PITFALLS

RECOGNIZE YOUR VALUE

Reframe clinical knowledge as business expertise:

- Patient insights translate to user experience
- Diagnostic thinking equates to problem-solving
- Medical leadership equals team leadership

EMBRACE CURIOSITY

Balance expertise with entrepreneurial humility:

- Seek mentorship from business veterans
- Ask questions before offering solutions
- Learn new vocabulary and frameworks

BUILD RESILIENCE

Develop sustainable engagement for success:

- Start with advisory roles to build experience
- Celebrate incremental growth and learning
- Create a portfolio of diverse opportunities



THREE PATHWAYS TO INNOVATION

1

Innovate In Place

2

Consulting & Advising

3

The Founder Route

INNOVATE IN PLACE

- Champion innovation initiatives within your organization
- Lead quality improvement with entrepreneurial thinking
- Bridge clinical needs with institutional resources

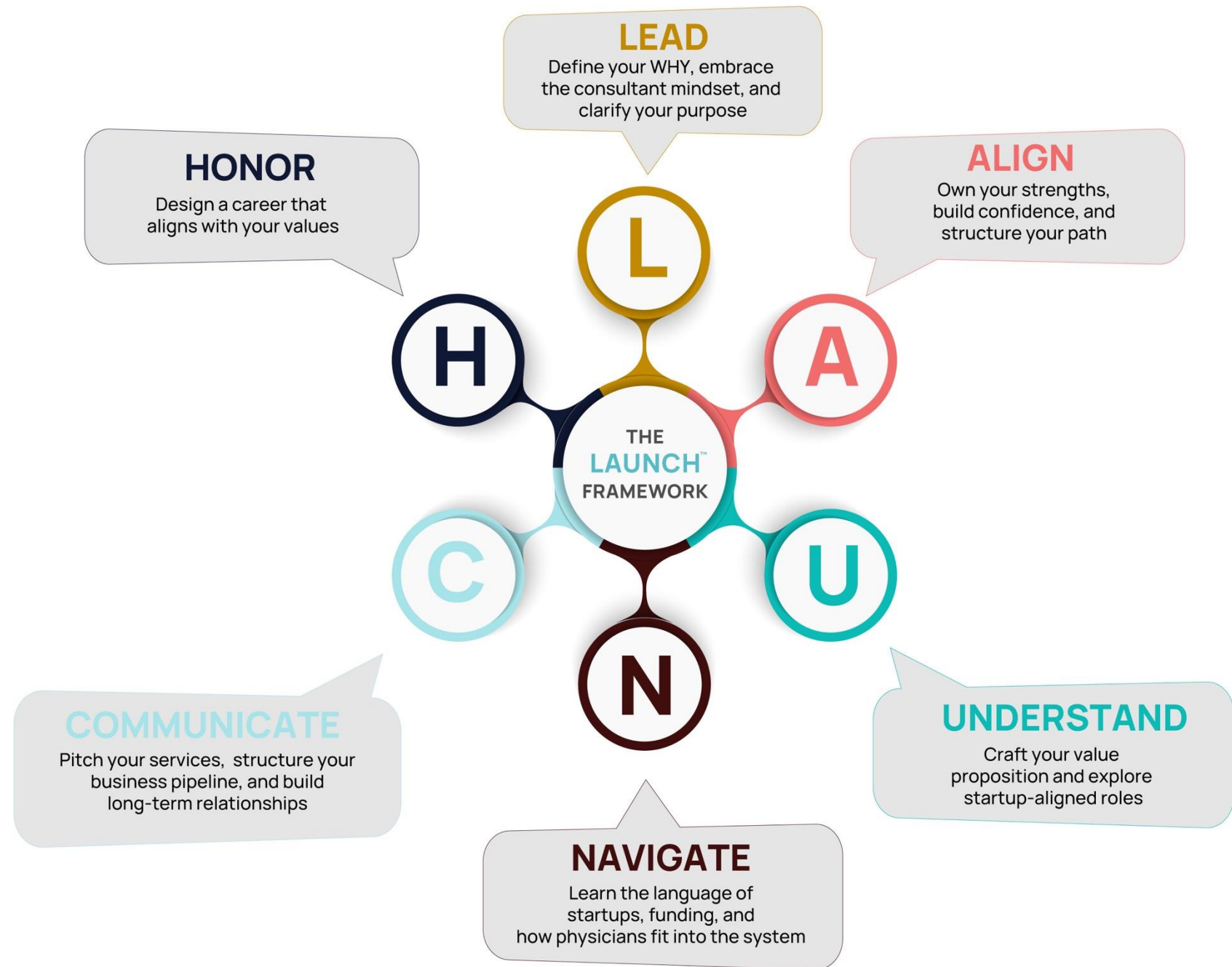
CONSULTING & ADVISING

- Guide health tech startups with clinical expertise
- Shape product development for healthcare solutions
- Monetize knowledge while maintaining practice flexibility

THE **FOUNDER** ROUTE

- Build companies solving problems you've witnessed
- Scale clinical insights into transformative solutions
- Create the change you want to see in healthcare

THE LAUNCH™ FRAMEWORK



THE LAUNCH™ FRAMEWORK

L

LEAD:

- Define your WHY
- Embrace the consultant mindset
- Clarify your purpose

A

ALIGN:

- Own your strengths
- Build confidence in your expertise
- Structure your entrepreneurial path

U

UNDERSTAND:

- Craft your value proposition
- Identify your unique offerings
- Explore startup-aligned roles

N

NAVIGATE:

- Learn the language of startups
- Understand funding structures
- Discover how physicians fit into the system

C

COMMUNICATE:

- Pitch your services effectively
- Structure your business pipeline
- Build long-term client relationships

H

HONOR:

- Design a career that aligns with values
- Create sustainable work-life balance
- Make meaningful impact in healthcare

CONCLUSIONS

- Your **clinical expertise** has tremendous value beyond traditional practice—it can **transform healthcare** through entrepreneurship.
- Physicians have **three distinct pathways** to innovation—each valuable and aligned with different goals and lifestyles.
- By recognizing your value, embracing curiosity, and building resilience, you can **avoid common pitfalls** in your entrepreneurial journey.
- Healthcare needs physician leaders who can **bridge clinical expertise with innovative solutions**—your unique perspective matters.

IF YOU TAKE AWAY ONE THING...

You can make a **profound impact** and design a career you love, using the **clinical expertise** you already have and applying it in a **new way**.

THE BIG QUESTION

How can you apply this to your own career and begin to design a life that aligns with your values?

THANK YOU

Get in touch – www.alisoncurfmanmd.com

Find us on facebook – 'Startup Physicians'

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