

## Wichita Chamber Business Accelerator

Episode 144

### Dr. Larry Mitnaul

Don: [00:00:00] Welcome to another exciting edition of the WCBA powered, of course, by Evergy. First, thank you for listening. Don't forget to like us love us share us. We truly appreciate you checking us out. Today, we are excited to have Ascension Medical Group in the house for a special edition of the WCBA going to highlight small business and mental health, E.

Ebony: That's what's up. We have my dear friend, Dr. Larry Mitnaul in the house. How you doing doctor?

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: I'm doing great. So thank you both for having me on the, on the podcast. I am, I'm really, really excited to be here.

Don: Before we get started. Can you, can you co-sign on that friend thing? She, she said your a friend.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: I can, I, I will, I will say this outside of my family, there are a handful of people that if they call on me, my answer is yes. Without any reservation, Ebony she's on that list. So, so it's, it's true. It's real. It's real.

Don: Okay. Okay. Proceed.

Ebony: He thinks I only have imaginary friends. I have real friends.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: I can vouch. They're real. They're real. I've done. I haven't done a formal psychiatric evaluation, but, but they're real. They're real.

Don: Excellent.

Ebony: Thank you for the confirmation. Well, again, welcome to the podcast and we're really excited to have you here. So tell us a little bit about who you are.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Sure. So, you know, I, I, I feel like I wear a couple of hats primarily outside of being a dad and husband, but a child and adolescent psychiatrist, meaning that I see in my, in



my work week, typically kids from the age of five to 18, who might struggle with a range of different concerns from ADHD to depression, anxiety, trauma, autism, that sort of thing.

And, and the goal is to. You know, rally the gears of support around kids to help them to be the best that they can be. and so often that does involve not only kind of thinking about the child and sometimes getting, you know, tests and things like that, but also, helping parents to interface with schools, helping family systems, maybe it'll work a little bit stronger together, which probably relevant to, to, you know, business life too.

And, and, and, corporations and businesses as well. and so I've had some interesting conversations around that where, where the two intersect. but that's, that's largely, that's largely what I do and what informs me. And so from that there, that being kind of the hub, there are a couple of outfits.

that also help my work of spreading this mission of, you know, people understanding what mental illness is and working on wellness in general, for individuals, for kids, for families. And so that that's led me to use social media as a means of also reaching people where they are, with the hope that, you know, I I'm, I'm always appreciative for the families that come and see me, but if there's a way for me to reach people before they reach the door and they find the solutions that are impactful in their lives, then all the, all the better, you know?

so trying to, trying to play the prevention, role too.

Ebony: Yeah, I love that. Cause your social media is pretty popping. I must say, like on all platforms, it's almost good as Don's

Don: Oh, wow. If he gets, if he gets past a sign-on, he's better than I on Facebook. So he's good.

Ebony: No. So let's, if you don't mind, let's back up a little bit and tell us a little bit, because you're not from Wichita originally, right?

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: I'm not, I'm not, but I, you know, like the bumper sticker say I got here as soon as I, I could. I'm a, I'm an army brat. So grew up, you know, kind of moving here and there. I was actually born in Germany. My dad did a couple of tours there, but mostly, grew up in Texas. So central Texas, just outside of Austin. Actually, I anticipated that that's where, you know, the story would kind of complete. That I, after, you know, school, and in Dallas and then I did some, grad schoolwork and then medical school and residency that I probably had back to Texas, but we had some friends here. so that [00:05:00] meant that Wichita was on my list of places to consider.

And when we came, we just loved it. I mean, there are just so many facets about that. And so, so this is home, this is my home. I'm not moving, we're done with that. And, And as you know, I've, I've been able to recruit some family to move here, to which has been great.

Ebony: And we love that you are a huge advocate for our community. And, thank you for the work that you do and recruiting more people here as well. So Dr. McNall you, in addition to your practice and your social media work, you, are like all over the place. We hear your name, we see you. you're very visible in the community.

Can you talk to us a little bit about why you're visible? you know, I, my assumption is that you want to help break down some barriers, right? so just up to us, you even have a TV show. I think.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Yes. Yes. So I had a PBS TV show cause for hope where we did our first season, you know, I would say, Hey, sometimes when people kind of lead in and there's something exciting in the works, but, but, I've been talking to some other folks kind of in the music space too, about, doing something similar where, the theme of the show might be just speaking.

You musicians of various types and, and, and bringing the subject matter of, you know, mental health and music and using that as one of the tools to help people, to get to where they need to go. So, so I, I think you're spot on, you know, one is to break down barriers within and outside of the community, as well, you know, I, I, probably, you know, like similar to many other people, you know, my own extended family has had, has had their share of struggles too.

And I know that. It can be difficult, difficult to talk about depression, difficult to talk about, anxiety, you know, and parents will say, To me, individuals will say that to me. You know, I, if I can tell my friends that, you know, I have, you know, they found a mass and I might have to have surgery or, you know, my child's in the hospital because of pneumonia.

But if you say, you know, my child's in the hospital, because you know, they're really struggling with, you know, heavy emotions or, you know, thoughts of, of not wanting to be here or alive. I mean, that's a, that's a harder conversation to have and people can feel. You know, judge that maybe they hadn't tried hard enough or they hadn't done the right thing.

And so I think just understanding that this is, you know, this is brain chemistry and biology at work too. And, and that we need to respect it just as much as we do, you know, kind of other physical ailments and here's how it can affect individuals in their lives and their community. So, so, yeah, so I think just, it's been really easy here to find a chorus of people who see that as well. Whether it's because they've had personal experiences or they work with people or people within their, their company, their business, their church, they're, you know, that say, Hey, are you willing to talk to us about, you know, what this looks like?

Are you willing to come to the news station and tell us about, you know, this rising trend? And is there something that we should know about it? And so I've tried to just make myself available as much as I. You know, as much as I can, to, to do that. And so that's probably why you see me too much. I'm around a lot of the, a lot of the media is that, is that I, I want to be there and also want to be sharing hope.

I think that's the other thing too, you know, they're often we can get the messages of, of doom and despair and what the stats look like, but we don't often get the other piece, which is we have great things that. You know, therapy's really great. Our medications have gotten better, what we understand to about faith and community and all these other things can really contribute to a person's wellness.

And so, and so we need to shout that out for the person who, again, may never come to their doctor or say this to them, you know, that they're struggling in this way that, Hey, there's hope for you. And here's some stories of victory that I want you to hear.

Ebony: I love that. I mean, that's so powerful because hope is so important right? In everyone's world. And, as a business community, we're beginning to talk a little bit more about what mental health and mental wellness and behavior health, all those different terms. And I don't even know, and we may need to talk about that because we use those interchangeably.

So, so what does it really mean? Like, in my, from what I understand, behavioral health is like a combination of habits, you know, in physical activity and mental wellbeing. I don't know how many, if I'm right,

I am right, but.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: You are right. That I think there's a, you know, maybe the overarching umbrella is, is wellness, right, And by wellness, we mean doing those things that, that really help an individual to, to thrive and in all dimensions. So, both from a, you know, you can think of wellness in terms of, you know, diet and nutrition.

So being sure that all the ingredients going in are giving you the best access to, you know, energy and vitality, that, that you can, that you can have, you know, we can talk about kind of the physical [00:10:00] aspects of wellness too. So that might be, you know, exercise. And the things that you do to keep yourself in good condition, then we can talk about, you know, a wellness as it pertains to, us humans being social creatures and how we're doing in terms of our connection to other people, which are often the places where we find kind of meaning.

That help us to get to that place of kind of hope and expectation. And so I think those are, those are all kind of encompass what wellness is and, and what that can be in the life of an individual. Now, mental, mental health, just, you know, kind of narrows down to. Those things that we know that are healthy for the mind, which actually a lot of those things include those areas that I described.

So they'll include nutrition. They'll include exercise that include the time we spend on our screens, it'll include like the sleep habits, you know, that we have as well. But when, when an individual. Is struggling to the point of meeting certain criteria sets. So say for instance, for, you know, depression, depression, isn't just, you know, the momentary transient sadness that, that gets better with, a couple more, you know, social interactions or, or a diet change, but there

might be something biochemically that just isn't, isn't working as well as it, as it should, and would benefit from some additional support.

And usually one of the, you know, distinguishing characteristics is that it really is limiting someone's day, meaning that their world has, has shrunk considerably and that they're having trouble, you know, really executing the tasks of daily life, eating, dressing, themselves, getting ready, picking up the phone, making the calls, performing well at work, you know, being the spouse or being the friend that they, that they want to be.

So usually when it starts to, to pass that line of really. Kind of dimming down the other areas of a person's life and, and inhibiting them. Functionally. That's usually the turn towards mental illness where we're thinking about, you know, getting an evaluation by a professional therapist, talking to their primary care, talking to a psychiatrist like me to work on.

All right. What, what more can we bring to this to help them find joy.

Don: Excellent. So, true or false many employers are seeing mental health support for employees as an imperative. Is that true or

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: I, I think that's true, actually, both from the headlines. I see. For, you know, business folks in my, in the community and circle of friends and, who reach out and say, you know, this is what, this is what we're seeing. You know, we're seeing more days missed because of mental health days. or we're, we're seeing, you know, employees who are, who before had been doing. Okay. But maybe are struggling with more episodes of, of, of panic. So I think that's, that's true. That's certainly true.

Don: Okay. A follow up on that. how can employees, I'm sorry, employers create a supportive environment that encourages people to prioritize their mental health.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Yes. I think one is, you know, when often when we're talking about, you know, or the language around kind of sick days, you know, we all have a mental picture of a broken leg and a, and a cough. and so sometimes it can be helpful to lead the conversation with examples that also include, you know, mental health.

Things. I think, you know, sometimes it's the subtle things that allow people to know actually it's okay. To struggle in this, in this way. Right.

So if someone says, well, you know, or sometimes, you know, when you're, even when you're talking to your own kids, you know what, you know, what's, what's happening, what's going wrong.

Sometimes they don't give you, you know, the full, the full breadth and height of what it is that they might be struggling with. And then sometimes you can give kind of categories of areas where they could be struggling and sometimes that's that leads them in to be able to disclose a

little bit more. So I think that's probably one of the easy kind of early steps to, to say, Hey, you know, this is a place where, you know, you don't have to approach me to be your therapist or to, you know, help solve the problems that you're struggling with. But one, we're a community where it's okay to, you know, it's okay to say, Hey, I'm, I'm really having a hard time and we're going to honor that and treat it in the same way we would, you know, other, other kind of physical ailments that someone might be able to see.

And I think, you know, if, if there are kind of signs that let people know, you know, here's someone that you can talk to, without any mark on your record, without any, you know, this affecting your, you know, promotion or chance for, ascending, as well that, that, accessing the resources. You know, we might have or share with you.

it, isn't going to be used in a, in a punitive way, because I think that's part of the stigma is that if people know, people know that, you know, I have ADHD and I get distracted sometimes, or people know [00:15:00] that, I've had past episodes of depression, you know, bouts, then they'll see me as unreliable or they'll see me as, as less than, and, and that may affect my chances to, to ascend or to be as useful as I can to my organization.

Don: One more follow-up before I turn it back over to E. It's what was the pinnacle where it was okay to start saying I'm OCD or I'm ADHD or what, when was the pinnacle when that was okay. Cause I remember there was a day. You better not say that about yourself. So when, when did that happen?

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Yes. you know, that's a really good question and I don't know that I have like a, a date when I can pinpoint it, but I think that has been a shift really in the last decade. So I think it's, it's pretty recent that, people have felt more empowered to share their story. And I think there are a couple of things that contribute to that.

One is social media and other people being able to. Publicly identify with someone who, who has struggled. I do think also the, the voices and, of, you know, celebrities that have come out and said, Hey, you know, these have been my, these have been my difficulties that I've struggled with. So for instance, you know, I've talked to some college, you know, basketball players who say, oh yeah, you know, Kevin Love, from the Cleveland Cavaliers saying that, you know, actually had to miss some games to take care of my mental wellbeing has really kind of changed the conversation. and at least allowed a window for us to talk about how, how your mental health affects other aspects of your life.

Don: Excellent. I mean, because recently there has been even a commercial. I don't want to give them credit for, but commercial, but I think it's Powerade. Powerade has a commercial with Simone Biles and it's based on pausing. You know, taking a pause from your career or whatever, and they've even made that into a commercial for power Powerade.

And I'm saying, okay, this is, this is changing.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: I think that is really good. One of the cautions that I give to younger people or that I will encourage parents to give to younger people too, is that they're also more than their diagnosis. And so I don't want, you know, for all the positivity and I do appreciate that people can, can now kind of say that maybe a little bit freer than they could in the past is also to not limit themselves to just.

You know, so you didn't take the trash out. Oh, that's my ADHD maybe, but it also could be that, you know, you didn't prioritize it, is as well or I made or I'm ADHD. Well, you know, that describes one aspect of your experience in the world, you know, but it doesn't have to be all of who you are.

Don: Excellent.

Ebony: I really liked that. Thank you for saying that. When you think about the workplace, in my opinion, like it's an optimal setting to like create this culture. Of health, right? Because as an employer, we have tools and resources that we can promote and help people become more comfortable. And, and, and, and use those tools.

Can you talk to us about what are some of the things that we can do, as, as businesses to promote a culture of, of mental fitness?

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: I think one, can be, and perhaps this isn't low hanging fruit because it does cost, you know, maybe, time, in terms of investing in, you know, what's what could be really helpful for any particular organization. But, but I think taking out time to, to talk about, I, I know companies, you know, well maybe having a day, which is intended for kind of bonding and getting together and kind of increasing the culture's connectivity. And I think as part of that, you know, no one wants to necessarily be lectured to, but I think those are opportunities to, to also, you know, share a reminder for one, if there are any particular resources that, that you draw from.

Hey, here are some opportunities to really plug in to re to refresh that we value that. And we noticed that, you know, when people are feeling whole and healthy and integrated that, that they feel like they're at their best too. And then, you know, I mean, it's always great. If, if there is someone. and that, and that's not always, you know, it may not always be the case, but if there is someone who's also able to, you know, kind of share, not fully disclose their own experience, but especially if there's someone in leadership who can say, you know, actually, you know, I did, I did have a period of, you know, whatever, where I was struggling with a little bit of anxiety and it was just so helpful to get connected, you know, and it doesn't have to be any deeper, deeper than that. But I think, cultures that are, that are vulnerable, and can be, can be open that can be really helpful. And actually that's one of those like tricks from, from family life too.

That also, I think work within organizations when, you know, you get modeled. Health can, can look like. And I think the parent who can say, Yeah.

I have, you know, I love you and I can be it. And there are some imperfections that I'm working on, you know, too, that doesn't stop you from still being the person who [00:20:00] provides and sets up really great opportunities for, for your child.

And I think likewise, within an organization that can be helpful, as well. The other is, I think there are some, some good resources out there for. Kind of self check-in and, you know, I have the benefit of working for a health organization that, that, you know, they they're, they're often sending out kind of wellness kind of emails, that either there, and they don't have to have anything explicit, like, you know, take this quiz to see if you meet criteria for, you know, social anxiety disorder.

It doesn't have to be that, but it can be, you know, just a helpful frame of poem, a free resource, a lecture that's coming. You know, it can be a tool. So I like the, there's, this kind of self is called self, self authoring suite and they offer some. Fairly inexpensive products that allow people to do kind of a deep dive in and figuring out their relative strengths and weaknesses.

But it's not just from a skills based approach, but also incorporates, you know, here's my personality style. So here are the things that are natural for me versus a little less natural. Here are the places where I'm more likely to find frustration and to run into that with some helpful hints at, you know, things that you might do to, to know that about yourself and to be able to, to, master it and hopefully transform that into a better kind of work-life balance. and, yeah, and environment in general.

Ebony: Yeah, no, that's awesome. And what, and you said that as a self,

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: think it, I think the website is kind of self, self authoring.com that has. As several things on there that, that, Yeah.

That allow you to, there's one, that's more of a, where am I now? There's one that kind of looks at, you know, how do I, how do I look at my past self? Because we kind of bring our, our history with us and that can inform our sense of confidence and self-mastery, and then there's one, that's kind of future focused.

That's looking at, you know, how do I draw on kind of these, these things about my present and my past. To kind of map out my goals for the future and to, and to be hopeful about my future.

Ebony: One of the things that I that has always impressed me is, you know, you're talking about music and, emotional health or mental wellbeing and, you know, the Wichita symphony orchestra, which I absolutely love they were doing this wellness Wednesday. Thing with Holly and she would do different pieces of music and it would be offered during lunch so that everyone can access it.

W could you talk to us a little bit about those type of mindfulness techniques that maybe helped.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Yes. One is, and you made mention of it earlier is, is the pause. One of the things that, music has the ability to do is, you know, kind of take us out of our moment and either realign us with a past, you know, experience that, you know, possibly a positive one, but also, just provide space for our brain to kind of encounter information in a, in a slightly different, in a different way.

And so I know in medicine it can feel this way. We're constantly hopping from thing to thing, right. Or objective to objective or, or patient to patient, you know, in my. And my experience and, and the moments for pause and quiet in our life are actually few and far between, and, and I think really beautiful music commands your attention.

And if you're really in it and really enjoying it, you're not also searching through Instagram or looking through slack or answering an email at the same time. Right. you can be kind of arrested. By it. And there's just, and so there's a lot of beauty and, and helpful things that come from our brains.

Being able to just take, take a moment, to do that. And I think, you know, people who are listening have probably had this experience before, whether it's been kinda, you know, Hiking in the wilderness and maybe you just happened to have bad, you know, cell phone coverage. I know we don't have any mountains here in Kansas.

That's the only thing I would change. there's a little more elevation. but, but those opportunities to, To one, be clued into ourselves, but also to allow our minds to be a little less, cluttered and, and present to the moment and to, and to really be grounded. So mindfulness really what it introduces is a chance for stillness, a chance for silence, a chance for kind of reconnection to our own, to our own bodies in a way which feels weird to say that that, you may not go through life, not really being fully in-tune, you know, with myself and, and with who I am. And the answer is, yes, there's probably a lot of, a lot of that, that we kind of pushed to the side and prioritize other things. So I'll give you a silly anecdote, I guess it was a couple of years ago. It must've been like just before COVID really is upon us. And I'm at a, I'm speaking to the bride before, you know, she's about to be wed, and so I asked, you know, how are you feeling? [00:25:00] And she's like, oh, I'm feeling fine. so I was like, wow. I mean, yeah. Not, not to stress. No, no, no. I'm not really that stressed. No. Okay. so yeah. What's been going on? Well, you know, I did wake up this morning with a little bit of headache. My stomach has been really tight.

I don't know what that is. Like I maybe have a GI bug or, you know, I mean, after, after we talked through, you know, four or five symptoms, Do you know that anxiety, I mean, again, that didn't need medication. It didn't need therapy necessarily, you know, but that's, that's how often we move through the world that we're having these experiences that we can kind of put in categories and we're kind of pressing through.

But if we, if we took a moment, you know, once I repeated it back to her, so you have this, this, this, this, you know, then she's like, oh right. I guess, I guess, I guess I am feeling a little

Ebony: I'm a little stressed.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Yes. and so I think those, those moments, so mindfulness helps again, kind of re refocus to the here and now.

And what is, what, what am I hearing, what am I feeling? What is my body telling me about what's going on in this, in this present moment? And I think the more we're able to do that, we're actually able to, find some really great things. Clue into to the things around us and how things are, are affecting us.

can I give you one like psychiatry pro-tip? This is like one of the under the hood that, that, no one really tells you about training. So when in psychiatric training, you're often doing supervision where you are, you have a patient that you're walking through therapy with, and then you meet with your supervisor.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: You know, once a week or once every other week to talk about the case and they advise you on how you should proceed. And so often one of the first things my supervisors would ask is, so when they said this, how did you feel? And I was always like, why does it matter how I feel. But what they were trying to train me to do is that if I'm aware of how certain things make me feel, then actually that becomes an extra diagnostic clue as to what's going on.

Right. And so one way to think about mindfulness for people who, you know, maybe get stuck in the, do I have to do 10 breaths? Do I have. Be quiet, you know? I mean, if you start with the, how am I feeling right now? Like, what is my stomach telling me? What are my hands telling me? What are my shoulders? Oh, they are kind of tight. Yeah.

You know, why am I sitting this way in my chair? Have I been sitting this way? The last 20 minutes, last 20 seconds, last 20 minutes, you know, those moments can really be informative, and may lead us to some discoveries about how we can improve our own wellness or, you know, the way we feel about certain things and maybe why we choose certain. Yeah,

Ebony: Yeah, I think that's so important for us as leaders. And so thank you for sharing those tips. We're going to hear a word from our sponsors and maybe this is, we can take a, a moment for mindfulness and hear from our wonderful sponsor. Welcome back friends. We're here with Dr. Larry Mitnaul with Via Christi Ascension. So we've been having a really deep conversation. You've been giving us little nuggets throughout, so we appreciate that. As we're coming back, can you talk to us a little bit more on how, you know, for me, we have a lot going on all of us.

How can we be more intentional of how we show up for our households?

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Great question. And I think the first place is kind of an inventory, but not in a way that's, you know, woe is me and I'm doing everything wrong. Right. So our brain can tend to catastrophize meaning going to jumping to the worst possible, you know, experience or, you know, interpretation of the facts. I don't want anyone to know.

but a good, maybe a good way to begin is by drawing kind of, you know, what are the most important areas in your life? What are the things that mean the most to you? Right. So, and so we all might rank those four or five categories in different, in different ways, but at least spelling them out can be helpful in making them concrete.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: And so you might say, you know, I [00:30:00] think my, my just overall health, my physical health is something that, you know, I have, I have goals around. my family is something that really means something to me that it's, you know, I, I, I want to think more concretely about what's my role and, and are we moving in the direction that we need to, you know, maybe fellowship, family, friends, you know, how am I kind of connecting to, to, you know, so say those are your three things, and then I want you to list for your.

What are the beautiful things that are going on in those nurturing relationships. So you can start with the positive and then where are the areas of growth? And again, not to beat yourself up over the head. I haven't called my cousin every two weeks. Like I said, I was going to that's, you know, that's going to happen.

Life is going to happen. But from that, you know, okay. If these are my three core goals, what does my life actually. Right now, you know what D in the way that I structured my time, what are my priorities? So, you know, maybe I'm doing karaoke every Tuesday and Friday.

Ebony: Yes, karaoke.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: the wonder that

Don: you had another button, you hit another button,

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: And that's not a bad, and that's not a bad thing, but if you say, okay, what I get from this helps me on the, on the mental wellness side, but maybe one of those, you know, maybe one of those pockets I exchange for family time. And so I'm going to. You know, over this next month, I'm just going to swap that out to be intentional that now I have made space.

Now I've made room for something that's really, really important to me. And what happens, you know, through the course of life is that our priorities change, you know, the importance of certain things, change, our kids get older. And so our presence, you know, and the type of supervision we need to do around that, change too.

And so those things get reorganized, but the goal is to come out with something. All right?

What does my life actually look like in the areas that I care most about? What are the beautiful things that are coming from that? Where are the areas I could, you know, be intentional about beefing that up and then let me pick one thing.

I'm not going to pick everything. Cause then I'll be, you know, beating myself up for not having done 10 things. I'm going to do the one thing I'm going to call my cousin more or I'm going to be more present to my spouse. And we're going to do a date night, every, you know, every week, whatever that is, you know, and then here's what I have to exchange.

So you're going to make that very. Real and concrete so that you actually have a chance at getting it done. And it's not just a general goal of, yeah. I want to do this, you know, once a week, that's fine, but it's less likely to happen unless you add some teeth and some, some particularity to it, to, to kind of boost and move on to that next move.

Ebony: I love that. And if we could, for our producers to make sure we get that soundbite of I'm going to have a date night with my wife every week, so I can send it to my husband.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Yeah.

Ebony: Let's just get that out there right now. Get that taken care of. Thank you for that, but more seriously. So, mental health awareness month is around the corner, right?

It's in a couple of weeks. so talk to us a little bit about what that means and what are some of the things that we could be doing to really, enhance that or pump it up. What are your.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Good. I think one of those things is, is actually that I think that's a really easy springboard to talk about it. It doesn't have to feel forced. It's actually something your people are going to be seeing, reading, hearing about they're going to be events and activities circled around awareness. And so even if the conversation is, you know, here are some things that are going on in our community that you should check out.

Here's a really great talk. Here's what, you know, a dinner night here are, you know, there are a couple of schools are doing this program or that program around it. I think, that's really, I think the beauty of the month two is, is that it just, it, because it, it will be a more pervasive. Item on the agenda for the city, for homes, for churches, that there will be more opportunities for people to at least talk about it or highlight it.

And so I think just highlighting it is, is probably the beginning of that. The other, the other thing too, that I, that I hope kind of rings out is, you know, not every American is as dealing with mental illness in the, you know, in the categorical sense that that we're talking about. And I think that's something to be.

To be both thankful for, and to be able to say, you know, and for those who are struggling, one, it's okay to not be okay. And two, there are really good resources out there and there are great tools and strategies to help to help people. So if, if, if nothing else, if we get out of this month that, Hey, you know, it turns out that therapy works.

It turns out that, you know, all of our, all of our research and tools have, have really given us

some better ways at approaching this and helping people to find. Joy helping people to find peace and calm. if, if they've not been able to have it, and if they've been mightily struggling with distraction, there are ways to, to tune that in, you know, a little bit better too.

Don: I'm just going to throw this out there. I mean, Sunday [00:35:00] night, March 27th, 15.4 million folks witnessed something that they may have never seen before live on TV. It was at the Oscars. I'm just going to leave that there, your thoughts and what can we take away from that?

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Yeah.

So one is that I'm glad that we had started the conversation too, with wellness versus mental illness. Right. And so sometimes, you know, we can jump to conclusions that, you know, labels that as a, you know, that must be. Fill in the blank, right? That must be bipolar. That must be, you know, depression or that must be, and the truth is, you know, human, human reactions to, to stresses and things that, that occur in our lives are, are hard to hard to categorize by one event.

Right? I mean, thankfully all of our lives aren't defined by one event, for good or ill actually, you know? And so one is. Now there's, we have a chance to really think about how we calibrate our responses to seeing things that are unexpected from people that we think we know from people that we have certain expected behaviors that, that this doesn't quite fit, you know, whatever it is that we're kind of holding in our, in our minds.

And it makes clear, I think, or a chance for us to talk about, you know, our, our mental wellness though in general, which applies to everyone. So while, you know, Yeah, I can't diagnose anyone from, you know, from afar or I'm not even saying that I suspect that you know of, of anyone, it makes clear that, you know, our mental wellness is no respecter of persons that there isn't a, there isn't an income there isn't a, socioeconomic status.

There isn't a level of attainment that stops any of them. at any time, really from, you know, from, from not presenting ourselves in the best way or, or not reacting in the, in the way. Yeah. We'd like to, or that we'd like to kind of demonstrate. And so I think, especially when I'm, when I'm talking to my own kids about, you know, how do we react to negative things in the news?

You know, I just tell them, we try to start with compassion. Right. because we, we can never be in the mind, you know, perfectly of the other person and what they're experiencing. but that also should give us maybe some humility about ourselves and a chance for reflection about where are our kind of vulnerable.

I will. I I've told my, my oldest, this before where, you know, how good our brains are at, at really kind of focusing in, on the, on the negative and not really looking at. What else could be going on is, is, is driving. Now. Of course I love Wichita Wichitans are great drivers, but every once in a while, right.

The, you know, you get cut off or something or something happens. I mean, I I've heard, at least

I've heard of that happening. Other people have told me that such things happen here or there. And so what happens? So I, you know, I, there's a temptation for my mind to dwell on that. And what were they thinking?

And, you know, fill in the blank, right. For all the negatives and. My entire, you know, commute from work to home was probably mostly filled with people, allowing me in people, taking turns, people being really, you know, kind, people looking at the stop sign and, you know, gesturing and allowing me to pass, even though it wasn't my turn.

Right. but our brains can really be selective. And when the. Happens or the unforeseen happens. That's the thing. It kind of focuses in on. So, so hopefully we arrive out of this with, Hey, you know, we, it's, it's important for us to look out for each other. Even our friends who we think, you know, are perfect and have, you know, all the good news and good advice that they can have.

And then the self-inventory of, you know, what can I do to. To shore myself up and maybe using some of the things that we talked about earlier and finding peace or are trying to push ourselves forward.

Ebony: I think we are about time for us to wrap up and begin doing a little fun word association.

Don: Yeah, you've got to deal, you got to deal with Ebony all this time now it's fun time.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: All right.

Don: Yeah, but it's just word association. I give you one word. You give me one word back. It's not wrong because it's your word. Are you ready

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Got it.

Don: Leader.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Compassion.

Don: Oh, that's a good one. College.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Community.

Don: Vacation,

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Cruise.

Don: Ooh, entrepreneur. You got me on that one, I love cruises. I'm sorry, but that's not about me entrepreneur.

Ebony: Not about you.

Don: Bring him on back entrepreneur.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Bold.

Don: Ooh. Yeah, hero.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Hero. Self-sacrifice.

Don: Ooh, family,

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Love

Don: [00:40:00] Chamber. Wichita chamber in particular.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Fun, especially with you guys.

Don: Yeah, that was good. you've talked about it before, Wichita.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Hmm. Home.

Don: Vacation.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Vacation.

do I get apart two, nature?

Don: Last, but not least. And you got to tell the truth about this one. Not saying you'd not been telling the truth, but you gotta tell the truth about this one beverage.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Beverage, Hmm. Bourbon.

Don: Excellent. Excellent.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: It might've been the most unexpected of the.

Don: That's. Wow. That's that's that's all right,

Ebony: of my favorites as well. Angels

Don: E roll it out. Let's see.

Ebony: we certainly appreciate you being here, Dr. Mitnaul. It has, we've had a lovely

conversation and pretty lively if I must say so, you know, it's, it's, it's a pleasure and thank you for being so open and thank you for giving to our community in ways that perhaps we didn't even know that we need it.

your help in this.

Dr. Larry Mitnaul: Well, thank you. Thank you. It really, it really is an honor. you know, I, I, I do count it an honor to be a Wichitan. I think the, the chamber just does such a great job of kind of connecting this really amazing world together. and so as I'm feel like I'm moving deeper and deeper and I'm just more and more impressed, at the, at the gyms that are, that are all in one space, so grateful to be here.

Don: Oh, and, congratulations on being a cancer African-American museum trailblazer rising star. Did I get that right, E?

Ebony: Yes, the Doris Kerr Larkins Rising Star 2021 recipient. Dr. Larry Mitnaul.

Don: She had, she had to roll with the embellishment, but she got it. So congrat congratulations on that. That was cool. And I was there to witness that. That was cool.

Ebony: All right friends. That's the end of today's segment. Please make certain that you like us make certain that you share it with your circle of influence. And if you find someone or know someone who might find this episode beneficial, please send it to them. Personally, let us know who you want to hear from next till next time.

Don: And I know you, when you was talking about that driver. I know you was looking at Ebony. I, I, I get that because I've seen her drive and it's yeah, yeah. It's supposed to be four wheels, but it's sometimes it's two, but that's okay.