

## 57: (Part 2) Women Breadwinners



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Bonnie Koo, MD**

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Welcome to *The Wealthy Mom MD Podcast*, a podcast for women physicians who want to learn how to live a wealthy life. In this podcast you will learn how to make money work for you, how you can have more of it and learn the tools to empower you to live a life on purpose. Get ready to up-level and your life. I'm your host, Dr. Bonnie Koo.

Welcome to episode 57. How is everyone doing? So, I just got back from a 10-day trip. I went to Hawaii and then I went to Las Vegas. So, Hawaii was a solo trip, meaning I went without Matt or Jack, literally by myself for five nights in Oahu, and then I went to Las Vegas for another four nights or so to meet with my business mastermind, which I'll talk about probably in the next episode a bit.

And so, people have been asking me, why did you go alone? How did you do that? And why? And it kind of struck me, because I know a lot of moms, so many of my friends actually who have really never taken time for themselves, whether it's without their kids or even by themselves to get away.

And this is something I've always sort of done. Like, not so much taking an actual vacation by myself, but I've always been pretty good about going out to see friends and doing things without my partner and without Jack. And I've been doing that since he was a newborn.

And part of that is I have an amazing support system. I have Matt. I have my mom, who lives nearby. And so, I have a lot of support. And I also know how important it is for me to spend time with myself, or time with Matt without Jack to reconnect.

And so, what I was doing in Hawaii was I was literally by myself most of the time. I did meet up with friends twice, but that was it over the five nights. I was by myself. I went to breakfast and dinner by myself. I usually didn't eat lunch. It's hard for me to eat three meals a day and the breakfast was included, so of course, I had to have that.

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But yeah, I went to all the meals myself and that wasn't a problem. I really enjoyed being by myself. I think the first meal or two, I felt a little awkward because I'm pretty sure I was the only solo traveler there. Everyone there was with their significant other or with their family. And I think I pretty much was the only person there.

But after a meal or two, I got used to it and I really enjoyed my own company. And so, I'm wondering, how many of you ladies enjoy the company of just yourself? Do you enjoy yourself? That's something I've really been working on and ironically that's the coaching I got on my business mastermind, is that I need to work on enjoying my life more.

And it's something I've been thinking about because I coach female physicians and we're so conditioned to just work, work, work, and we are basically told that it's an honor to work so much, for medical school, for residency. And I am a dermatologist, so we didn't work nearly as many hours as the surgeons. But it's like a badge of honor to work 40, 60, 80, 100 hours a week.

And is it? Do we still want to think that way, that it's an honor to work all the time? What if it's an honor to work less and to enjoy our life? Anyway, I had so many new ideas from my time in Hawaii that I'll share with you over the next few podcast episodes. But I just came back and I just wanted to share with you my initial thoughts.

The next thing I want to say, before we get into the main podcast episode today, which is on female breadwinners, part two, is that depending on when you're listening to this, as of April 26<sup>th</sup>, enrolment is open for my free live workshop *How to Create Wealth Without Seeing More Patients*.

And this free workshop is May 6<sup>th</sup>, which is Thursday, at 8PM Eastern. And so, you definitely want to sign up for this. I'm going to be teaching all the money secrets that every woman physician needs to know right now to create more freedom and more enjoyment in your life right now, without actually having to change the money in your actual accounts.

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To sign up for that, go to [wealthymommd.com/workshop](http://wealthymommd.com/workshop). The link will also be in the show notes, and you can also go to my main website, [wealthymommd.com](http://wealthymommd.com) and you'll see a link up top to sign up. I can't wait to see you there.

Okay, so today, this is part two of talking about female breadwinners. So, the last episode, I had a special guest. I had Alison Armstrong. I hope you enjoyed that episode. That was, I have to say, it was super cool for me to have her on the show. And in case you didn't listen to it yet, I met Alison in my early 20s. I'm 43 right now. So, 20 years ago I met her because I took one of her courses. And so, it was kind of like an amazing full circle to have her on the show and to really get her insight on the psychology of women in relationships.

So, today, I really want to continue the conversation because a lot of my clients, including myself, we are the breadwinner, and we might be the sole earner in our families. And I just see a lot of suffering around it. It's not usually seen as a badge of honor. So, whether you're the breadwinner of you and your spouse, or if you're the only earner as a single mom, this episode is for you.

Now, I'm really narrowing in specifically about being a breadwinner. But as we all know, women physicians, especially if you're also a mom, we have a lot of other stuff going on. And of course, this all contributes to some general unhappiness.

So, let's talk about the definition of a breadwinner. You know I love looking up these things and the history and telling you guys all about it. So, the definition I found is someone who works and earns money for their family, typically the sole or primary earner. The term breadwinner comes from the UK in the early 1820s.

Now, I found a few origins of where it came from. And one source said that people used to be paid in bread rather than actual currency. And then another source said it kind of started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century because bread was

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a staple food item for many families, and so the breadwinner was simply the family member who brought home the bread.

And what I have found after coaching thousands of female physicians is that most of my breadwinning clients are stressed and they feel a lot of pressure. Sound familiar?

Now, in the previous episode you heard Alison and I talk about the breadwinner dynamic. Now, we were talking in a hetero-normal couple, and how common thought errors can lead down a dangerous path if you start conflating being the main earner as the gatekeeper of the money, or conflating money with power, or as the ultimate decision-maker. I want you to think about that for a second.

How many of you who are listening right now will sort of wield that decision power because you are the sole earner? I'm not pointing it out to make you feel bad. I just want you to notice if you find yourself thinking that way, that you have the ability to veto spending because you are the sole or main earner.

Now, not all breadwinners are going to have negative feelings about being the breadwinner, of course. But I find that the majority of my clients do. So, a lot of them feel a lot of pressure. And they come from thoughts like, "I have to make money."

Any thought or sentence in your head that begins with, "I have to make money," or something like that, check in with yourself. How does that feel? I'm pretty sure it doesn't feel good. Feeling pressured never feels good to me. It feels urgent.

This leads to a lot of stress as well. And what I often see over time is then my clients often feel resentful. Which is basically the emotion that eventually becomes anger. I think resentful is basically anger. It's just a muted form of it. And then, when you start feeling resentful, especially if

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you're in a couple situation, that just creates all sorts of problems in the relationship.

And so, once concept that I think I spoke about – I had an episode on relationships. So, the concept that I talked about there is called the manual. And so, in case you're not familiar with this concept, the manual is a concept that we have a manual of how other people should behave.

Now, I'm talking about if you're a breadwinner and you have a partner. So, you have this manual of how they should behave. And if they follow your manual, you will feel better.

So, here's a problem with the manual. There are two problems. Number one is that the manual is often very thick and long with lots of footnotes and appendices. And you never gave it to the person. So, they don't even know the manual that you're judging them by.

The second thing that doesn't work about the manual is that we can't control other people and other people's behavior does not create our feelings. I'm going to repeat that again because I know a lot of us, including myself, so I'm calling myself out too, we think that if only our partner behaved this way instead of that way, it would make us feel better. We would feel better. We would be happier.

And because we think that way, we become resentful. And feeling resentful becomes feeling angry and even having contempt for your spouse. And I forget the name of the relationship person, but the really famous guy who wrote, not the Four Love Languages. I think he wrote the *Men Are from Mars, Men Are From Venus*, he actually said that contempt is the biggest marker of why a marriage will fail, or something like if there is contempt within a marriage, that is basically a sign that it's doomed.

And so, you can easily see that feeling pressure and stress about being the breadwinner, which then leads into feeling resentful towards our partner,

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eventually leads to anger and contempt. And then, you start having thought errors like, “I’m better off without him.”

Now, I’m not a relationship coach so I’m not going to get into the nitty gritty of that kind of stuff, but you can see that it doesn’t even really matter what that person is doing because everything I’m talking about right now is about what you’re thinking and how you’re feeling because of what you’re thinking.

It really has nothing to do with the other person. And so, how else can you think about being the breadwinner of your family? It’s not that those other thoughts like, “I have to make money...” or whatever. It’s not that those things aren’t necessarily true. But are they useful for you? Do they feel good? They don’t.

And I’m not trying to get you to just feel better to feel better. But which beliefs, which sentences would feel empowering? What would make you feel proud and accomplished?

So, here are three that I like to practice. And like all of you, I’m human. I still have a human brain, which means I still will have sentences go through my head about feeling resentful towards Matt. And actually, that’s one thing that I really worked on when I was in Hawaii. I spent a lot of time just observing my thoughts.

And this is something that I teach my clients inside Money for Women Physicians. I really teach you how to observe your thoughts. Because what happens a lot is you think something and you just automatically believe it. Versus noticing the thoughts that pop up and understanding that they’re optional, and that if you want to create a richer, happier, a much more enjoyable experience of life, it just means you need to think on purpose.

And so, when you catch yourself thinking thoughts that really make you feel disempowered, pressured, resentful, angry, contempt, what else could you think on purpose. And so, here are the three that I like to think.

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I get to be the breadwinner. I love being the breadwinner. What a privilege it is to be the breadwinner. These thoughts make me feel empowered, even compelled and make me feel proud. And then, when I spend some time really sort of sinking into those feelings of feeling proud, compelled, accomplished, I'm then able to see things I haven't been able to see if I was spending all my time feeling resentful or pressured and stressed.

For example, me being able to retire Matt has allowed us to really create a life where we can do what we want, including me going to Hawaii for five nights because I don't have to worry about Matt taking off time from work.

Our son Jack has some speech delay. And so, right now he goes to two schools. And the first school is from eight to 11AM and then he goes to a private preschool from 11AM to whatever, 4PM or 5PM. And Matt is able to drive him to school and do all those pickups.

Like, it doesn't seem like a big deal to be able to have that, but it's huge. But if I focus on all the things he's doing wrong, which are my thoughts anyway, it just creates resentment. Of course it does.

Now, previously, I wasn't able to see. I just didn't have the tools to understand that my thoughts were creating those really negative feelings. So, this is what I want to suggest for those of you listening about how you feel about being – whether you're the breadwinner or whether you're the sole earner because you're single, a single mom, whatever, what are your thoughts about being the only earner?

Write them all out. Spend like 10 minutes. Take out your journal. Write down everything that pops into your head. Now, sometimes I have trouble with this. But what I can tap into is, what am I feeling? When I think about being the only earner for my family, or maybe I'm just by myself, how do I feel about that? What are the top three feelings that pop up for me? I'll write those down. And then sometimes I can reverse engineer, what are those thoughts?

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Sometimes, it's helpful to do it that way instead of identifying the thoughts first. Or, if you're sort of visual like I am, maybe you have images that pop up in your mind about being the only earner. What kind of images pop up? What sort of experience do those images create for you? Start there.

And then, I want you to take some time to think about what would you rather feel about being a breadwinner? What would you rather think? And it's important for me to say that I don't want you to beat yourself up if you're having very negative thoughts and feelings about being the sole earner, especially if a lot of those thoughts are directed at your partner.

Don't beat yourself up about it. It is never useful. I want you to be kind to yourself, and then really spend some time thinking, "Do I want to feel this way about my partner?" And here's an important question that I've had to ask myself, "Would I rather be right or happy about this?"

Well, that's all I have for you guys today. I will talk to you next week.

Hey, if you're ready to create wealth, I want to invite you to join my program Money for Women Physicians. You'll join a community of likeminded women physicians who are committed to creating wealth. Just head over to [wealthymommd.com/money](http://wealthymommd.com/money) to learn more.