

Audio Transcription

Season /Episode #:	Season 5 Episode 1
Guest:	Dr. Chad Kessler
Title:	Weathering The Unknown: Building Resilience in Times of Uncertainty with Dr. Chad Kessler

Dr. Shari Dade	You are now listening to the Audacity to Fail podcast, a podcast about mis stepping into success. Get ready to dive into conversation and real stories from leaders as they share how failure activates. The growth mindset is an important part of learning and motivation for improvement. I'm your host, Doctor Shari Dade psychologist with the National Center for Organizational Development.
Announcer	Thank you for tuning in. Let's get started.
Announcer	Support for this leadership podcast comes from the National Center for Organization Development. NCOD aims to increase the long term growth and performance of the Department of Veterans Affairs by collaboratively working with the leaders throughout the VA to improve organizational outcomes by supporting the development of an engaged workforce for additional information on our services. Click the link in the show notes.
Dr. Shari Dade	Welcome back, listeners, to the highly anticipated season five of our podcast. I am so excited to kick off this new season, this new chapter, with a topic that could not be more timely or essential. Navigating change and uncertainty while building resilience. As leaders, we know all too well that change can feel daunting, but it also offers opportunities to reevaluate priorities, to innovate and discover strengths that we didn't know we had.
Dr. Shari Dade	The ability to navigate these moments with resilience can mean the difference between stagnation and progress. For this season opener, I'll explore what it means to keep steady when the path forward is unclear. How to embrace the mistakes that are stepping stones to grow, and ways to cultivate resilience not just within ourselves, but also within our teams and the communities we lead and belong to.
Dr. Shari Dade	To help us launch this season with inspiration and insight, we have an incredible guest and friend to this show joining us today, Doctor Chad Kessler. Doctor Kessler is the national director of emergency medicine for the Veterans Health Administration. He's currently consulting and acting as a liaison for the Veterans Experience Office. And Chad has also made an incredible contribution to our organization with his weekly blog, C20, and much anticipated blogs about life and leadership.

Dr. Shari Dade	So whether you are dealing with change or simply wondering how to prepare for the unexpected. This episode is packed with inspiration and actionable advice. Join us as we explore how the most impactful leaders turn uncertainty into opportunity. This is the Audacity to Fail season five, episode one. Weathering through the unknown. Building resilience in Change. In Times of Uncertainty with Doctor Chad Kessler.
Dr. Shari Dade	Welcome. Welcome, welcome to season five premiere season five.
Dr. Chad Kessler	You guys are awesome. Where it all began. Shari, Jan. I mean this audacity. I remember when you all were choosing a name for this and Maureen Marks is just recently retired. NCOD like the best part of VA and I love you all guys! I'm so excited to be here. Your voice and that voiceover intro is so great. And I'll tell you, I got little chills because I was thinking of this weekend.
Dr. Chad Kessler	So first of all, happy 2025. In New Year.
Dr. Shari Dade	2025
Dr. Chad Kessler	All the listeners and we were celebrating Wintergreen skiing. Which is something I do about once a year. And the kids are so much better than than my wife and I now. But it got me thinking to that, to change to unknown to going down that black diamond in the fog this weekend where we couldn't see anything and you're like, I guess I'm going to chest it and we're going to go and make the best.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And I see my little 11 year old snowboarding and these little nuggets flying around me and jumping all over, and they're so easy to to understand and adapt to change and be resilient. And I think as we get older it becomes harder. And, and that's a great topic for today. So I'm so excited to be here.
Dr. Shari Dade	Yeah. And it's so interesting that you mentioned that because I, when I was thinking about just uncertainty and thinking about what it looks like and how we navigate it, there's this term in child development psychology that talks a little bit about like that zone of proximal development where you're right at the edge of something new. You're right at the edge of learning that skill of accomplishing that thing, of doing something different.
Dr. Shari Dade	And you have a choice in that moment to either snowboard down that hill or to crawl back up to the top and say, I don't think I can do this. And so this episode is definitely going to be packed with conversations about what does it feel like when you make the choice to go down that hill? Yeah. What does that look like?

Dr. Shari Dade	And how do you do that when you don't know what's at the bottom? You don't know what's on the way down south.
Dr. Chad Kessler	You over that? Can you see that? You're at the top of the hill and it's like the blues are to the right. The blocks are to the left to make that choice. That's scary and hard. And why do we do that at that moment? Why do we choose that black that's unknown. We don't know. It's scary. It's dangerous as opposed to that safe blue that winds around the eagle swoop.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Like, why don't we just take that comfort all the time? And most people do, to be honest. And what is it that genetic analysis, that trait, that ability to say, I'm going to jump down that black because I'm going to jump out of that helicopter at 75 yards or whatever. And I think that's such a great topic to why we do what we do.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And so I hope we can dig in that a little bit more.
Dr. Shari Dade	Absolutely. Yeah, definitely. And you mentioned it. You know, can you believe that five years ago we were here on the very first episode of The Audacity to Fail, you know, welcome back. And thank you for agreeing to come back and being a friend of the show, a fan of the show. Thank you so much.
Dr. Chad Kessler	I loved every time you I would send a new episode, we'd put it up on C20 and I just wanted more and more people. And you guys, you told me you won't brag, but I will brag, for you said here, I think, is it the most listened podcast in all of the or what was that? I mean, it was.
Dr. Shari Dade	Amazing to have been the number one podcast and since we started this inception. So thank you to the listeners. Thank you.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And thanks to the behind the scenes. So Shari is the face and, well, the voice. I guess if we're not seeing faces, but Dan Johnson and the rest of the team like you guys do it so well. And I take lessons now for C20 on what we're doing. So keep it up five years and going super decade.
Dr. Shari Dade	It sounds so serious, right? But five years is really a feat. It really is. And if we can, you know, even dare to think back to where we were five years ago, we were directly in the center of navigating the uncertainty of a life altering pandemic. And we sat down. And at that time, when you and I met to talk about, like, even the title of this podcast, you had developed C20, and it was there to really, from my perspective, eight people with navigating the worries, the anxiety of the times, of the uncertainty.

Dr. Shari Dade	And so in that moment when you decided, let me create a tool to help with with that navigation, what was your thinking in that space?
Dr. Chad Kessler	Yeah, I think and now I love that whole reference. You start out with the ski trip, which to me is the best. Like it's just real stuff that comes up. It wasn't planned. You and I hadn't talked about it at all. And that became sort of a theme to come back to because you have something to visualize. And I think that's nice.
Dr. Chad Kessler	We can talk and read Harvard Business Review books all day, but give me the book that's actually Shoe Dog The Story of Nike by, you know, Phil Knight. Like that to me is tangible. And so when you're looking down that hill, blue or black, like it's tangible and you can feel it sometimes and we said, well, how do you make that change?
Dr. Chad Kessler	You're sitting there at the top. I know I should because change is good for me and it's scary, but it's scary. And so I'm going to take the blue. But sometimes you come upon a situation where just the problem needs to be solved and you just do it. It doesn't seem so much as change is just as you doing something because it needs to be done, C20 needed to be done, or Covid in 20 back in the day, because we had this, like you said, life altering once in a lifetime type of epidemic pandemic going on and people needed answers.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And that's why so many folks came out because no one knew. And so when they started, it wasn't as much as like, oh, is this going to be okay? And who am I asking for permission? And this is going to go, well, a lot of people watch. I didn't care about any of that. The goal was that I had people calling me saying, Chad, how do we treat this?
Dr. Chad Kessler	I don't know what to do in my ear. I have 100 people lined up and I have no idea. And I talked to my friends in New Orleans and New York and said, what are you guys doing? Because no one else knows and they're waiting for this tidal wave avalanche, if you will, to keep them crashing down on them.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And so that's what we did. And Josh Guyer and I, we got on a couple guys with sort of a podcast and a platform with some music to keep the, the, the attitude, you know, light and happy in such a dark time, really. And that's what we did. And we put out information about how people are going to get triaged and hot and cold zones and how to don and gear.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And then that's what we did, and it didn't seem so much as change as much of us just doing something. And I think sometimes when you're in the heat of it, when you're like, ready to go and you're looking around and you have a million input signals coming out and you just react, sometimes that's great. It's often in our training, whether it's as in psychology, in emergency medicine, military emergency

	response, it's how we train and then what we do.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And that was honestly a matter of just what we did, and it needed to be done. At that time, there wasn't too much thinking involved.
Dr. Shari Dade	Yes, absolutely. And I think that is amazing insight for those folks who may not know what to do in those moments. Right. And when we're in that space of uncertainty and I think we all know the feeling, right? We get the prickles. I call it kind of the breathless anxiety feeling, and it settles in your gut and it can sometimes really paralyze you.
Dr. Shari Dade	But I think that's really great advice of saying, like, there was something that needed to be done in the moment and people need the answers. So we figured out what was right in front of us, not what was ten yards down the road, not what it was three months down the road, but what was right in front of us.
Dr. Shari Dade	What would answer the question today? What would answer the question this week? And so I think being able to have a little bit of that nearsightedness can sometimes pull us out of that paranoia, that paralyzed phase of, oh my gosh, I don't know how this is going to end. So I don't know what to do, but being able to see what's right in front of you is important.
Dr. Chad Kessler	I think it's super important to just get started. Sometimes I look back at my career, mid-career type of thing. Some of the things that were really great that I did and some of the things that were not so great, but a lot of it was, was reaction. It was it was, you see something, you see a problem and you go start.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And it's not to say that planning is important, it is, but you can get lost in that paralysis analysis or analysis of paralysis for, for way too long. And you see it in some different, you know, things were on in Vava or whatever, but different branches of organizations, whether it's the Durham Health Care Encode or video or any things, and every group has sort of a different style.
Dr. Chad Kessler	In emergency medicine, where I learned and trained, I think people think much like I do. It's a quick and yes, there will be some times where you go a little too quick and you jump down that double black and maybe you shouldn't have, and you break your leg. But that to me, in my life really has been the rarity.
Dr. Chad Kessler	It's been that the, the 99% that you jump down the black, it's scary is how you go down. You get there and you're like, I did it. And you feel so excited and accomplished sometimes for me. So I'm not a handy man. I'm not. I wish I were, but

	I do the simplest things like change a light bulb, my room with my my kid, or I'm, like, putting a little heavy thing in my daughter's.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Well, that's like, for everybody else is like, this is like, that took you a second for me. I'm like, I feel great. But so. So I think that sense of accomplishment and whatever it is, is, is really great and keeps you going, whether it's on the black diamond or hanging up a picture in your kid's room or starting a program, starting audacity to fail, or starting C 20 or making a new policy movement.
Dr. Chad Kessler	We talked about this, so I'm a big fan of preventive health care. I work in the V.A. that's kind of what we do, right? Psychology. You'll you'll, you know, sing with me on this and, and, medicine and internal medicine and family medicine, primary care. We do the pcmc, I primary care mental health initiative or integration is unbelievable.
Dr. Chad Kessler	It's one of the best things VA does because we are the best, not only in the country, but in the world, in mental health. As I was looking this, I saw a patient. It was two Tuesdays ago and I'm looking and I was like, how did this person get lost? And it wasn't a medical, wasn't their diabetes. I ask them ten clinical reminders for viewers or listeners out there.
Dr. Chad Kessler	You know, you have so many clinical reminders and you see our patients. But when we don't have is sort of that basic yearly mental health care. And I don't either. As a non veteran, someone gets out in my family, my kids my way, we lose that. And so I thought, why don't we do that. We do an annual or physical every year, right?
Dr. Chad Kessler	Every year you have it from the time you're whenever a kid born till through maybe you lose it a little through those, you know, teenage years, college years. But you get back and every year you come a physical and I draw blood because I draw blood and I listen to your heart because I listen your heart. But when do we have that mental health thing?
Dr. Chad Kessler	We we're talking about your your mental health care and we don't. And to me, that's sort of one of those things that's like we should do. And so I reached out to, you know, the bosses of the bosses of mental health, who are great and, and our, preventive medicine and veterans experience and like, we're just going to do that and we start working down those where those ideas come from, when you're just thinking about something and then you do it, do you need to spend years planning out that?
Dr. Chad Kessler	Well, yes, maybe, in essence to get out. But sometimes you need to just get gone. So I think it's really important when talking about change or something, that you have an idea and you start running with it, it doesn't mean to just shoot up from the

	hip and email the secretary and be like, we want. It is like, that's not it, but doesn't.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Like you need to sit for a year and try to necessarily build up everything to make it perfect, because it's never going to be absolutely.
Dr. Shari Dade	And it can't be right. And if it were to be really boring, if everything was perfect. And so it makes sense to be able to say, like there's times where you have to just get going, you have to get moving and you know, but that can also be pretty difficult for quite a few people, you know? I mean, like, if I think about it, you are the best person to sit down and dive into this topic.
Dr. Shari Dade	You. But I do have to admit that most of my understanding of what truly happens in ERS and emergency rooms comes from medical TV shows like Gray's Anatomy or The Resident, or, you know, the next big.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Which is accurate by them.
Dr. Shari Dade	Well that's.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Good. Yeah. I'm just kidding.
Dr. Shari Dade	Right. So don't judge me. Right. Don't judge me. But I imagine that as an emergency medicine physician, you found yourself pretty much often in that seat of change, of uncertainty, of the rush in the movement. And I further imagine that that can sometimes light you up, that that can spark you in that environment. But like you said, not everyone feels that spark and is ignited by it.
Dr. Shari Dade	Some people feel it and they shy away from it. What would you say to a leader who is in that space and that spark terrifies them? The data, right? It doesn't spark, and ignite them. It actually shuts them down. Is there anything that you think could be helpful for them to start thinking about?
Dr. Chad Kessler	It is it is tough. And again, everyone's unique and that's why I love a genuineness and and the individual leadership because there's so many different types. But it is scary. I'm scared often times sometimes just get going because that idea is built in there. And you try to push those voices and just focus on the mission. And I think with us it's so easy because we're looking at veterans, and I remember, I think it was, deputy secretary a few secretaries ago, Gibson, Sloan, Gibson was so great because he's like.

Dr. Chad Kessler	And I remember it was paraphrased. I don't remember, but it was do what's best for the veteran how serious and all rules are guidelines and they are. But sometimes you need to do what's best. Are the veterans sitting in front of you. And I remember there was a story about one of our urgent cares was closed because sometimes there's limited hours and maybe it was ten or midnight, but someone was outside on the door banging.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And there was, you know, people who are following the rules. And they were closed. And there was someone who said, we need to treat the veteran. There's someone out there, I don't care what time it's closed, are open, there's someone here. We can help the veteran. And sometimes you just need to do the right thing. And so I think keeping that at your, at your, you know, the foresight of we're doing the right thing for veterans or whoever's in front of you.
Dr. Chad Kessler	If that's the case, chart this file and focusing on that so much and knowing that we all have your back, I think you bring up the air times. And to me that was one of the best, upbringings, backgrounds. People are trained as teachers or, you know, philosophers or engineers or builders, and maybe they can, you know, put up a picture much better than I.
Dr. Chad Kessler	But for me, that your background was like and I say it all the time, sorry. No one's dying. No one's dying. It's a policy. It's this I got in trouble because I did this, I, Angela, I didn't do that. No one's dying. There's not a five year old kid who lost his airway who's sitting in room seven right across me that I am working to develop so that person can breathe and live.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And so that sets my tone for me about what's important and what I can do. And if I get shot down or if I get in trouble for this doesn't work, or if someone doesn't like me, like, who cares? No one's dying. We can all do this. And so maybe that's my little bit of advice. I know not everyone is trained, maybe in military operations or rescue or emergency medicine.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Or is a firefighter, police police officer. But everyone had those situations they went through that were really, truly scary with their own kids, with their own partner, parents, anything. And if you can think back to that and say it's not someone dying or whatever that is for you, and then move ahead, it sort of settles you. It does for me and allows you to move forward and know that I'm doing the right thing.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Ask yourself, are you doing the right thing? Do you have trust and faith and really heart that you're doing the right thing and not so much worried about the rules or guidelines or whatever? And of course you have to. And I see that tongue in cheek. But if you know that you were doing the right thing and that is going to help veterans, people, your colleagues, sometimes you need to go for it.

Dr. Chad Kessler	That's really how changes made, changes not made over the policy. Venn diagram 20 years. That's hard. And sometimes that is made and is, but sometimes those great things that we look back to that we have done in our life and their shows, we just did, we ran with it. And so I think taking that breath, think about your goal at hand and your your, your objective in front of you and what you have done before can really drive you forward.
Dr. Shari Dade	Yeah. And I, I really love that because it also speaks to a little bit of mindfulness there, of staying present in the moment, what's right in front of you, who and what needs the help. Right. And being able to lean into that. Are you doing the thing that is going to help the person right in front of you, that is going to help your team right in front of you, that is going to push the mission forward.
Dr. Shari Dade	And I think sometimes we can get so caught up in figuring out the solutions, figuring out the outcome, and figuring out the conclusion before we actually take the first step forward. And so it definitely speaks to that space of staying present, right? Being being in the space, being in the moment, and allowing, in a sense, your, your, your brain to catch up with what's going on right in front of you.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Yeah, right. It's always best in those times of uncertainty to be going down the hill with someone else. You know, when you're up there alone, that's really hard when you know you're a 11 year old saying, let's go down the block, daddy. It drives. And so if you're in that position as a leader trying to start something new or change, grab a friend, grab a colleague by someone in so you're not doing it alone.
Dr. Chad Kessler	That's there's such an innate, you know, uniqueness of humans to be want to be, you know, with other people or pack animals. At the end of the day, we don't like to be all alone. We like, don't like to be socially isolated. That is baked in to our brain and DNA. So grab someone along that helps. That likes your idea.
Dr. Chad Kessler	So I didn't try to do that mental health thing by myself. Reach out to Doctor Campbell or somebody else, or, you know, Matt Miller. Like, you got to bring people into this as you go down to it and then study every aspect of it. Some people are different and again, some people jump in, but oftentimes when I started, something new was scared as hell as starting this new role, this new job.
Dr. Chad Kessler	I would dive in and just read all night, all weekend about what's going on. What are the numbers look like, what are these data say? And so I felt so empowered now to say, all right. Yeah, we're not doing right now. Great. Right now. But we're going to do so much better. I know how to do it. I think the biggest fear when you're don't know you're scared is when you don't know what's going on.

Dr. Chad Kessler	As soon as you understand the situation, the game plan, the people, the players, the data. I at least for me, I feel so much better. And so if I have all the data, the information and walk in hand by hand with, you know, Doctor Shari, Dave, I feel a lot better going into that unknown into that situation.
Dr. Shari Dade	No, that is, that's that's amazing. Because when I think about moving into and moving through spaces of uncertainty, often times literally the physiological things that happen in our body, and I'm sure you can, you know, say all of these things that happen so well, but it puts us in this state of wakefulness, our brain starts to move. The blood flows in different ways.
Dr. Shari Dade	We get more oxygen into our lungs, and we go into this state of wakefulness. And oftentimes we can see that as like, oh my gosh, this is the most horrible feeling in the world. Or we can choose again with that choice on the mountain, right? The choice on the slope. We can choose to use that wakefulness to actually seek and learn and discover and be able to do exactly what you're saying.
Dr. Shari Dade	Study the aspect of what's happening around us. And I think that goes against what we are often. Todd, especially what leaders might be taught is you can't not know. You gotta know. You gotta have a conclusion, you gotta have the answer. But in that space of uncertainty, truly, you don't have the answers to moving forward. And so instead of saying, oh my gosh, I've got to know and I'm going to press until I get the answer being able to allow that space of wakefulness to give you some some room to discover, to give you some room to learn.
Dr. Chad Kessler	I love that people talk about mindfulness all the time. Right? Sorry, but wakefulness people don't. And to have sort of a little cast on that, which is sort of what this is turning into a bit, is really good. Those choices that someone there to drag you and or push you the information briefly, of looking at a trail map and saying, oh, this is what it is.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Yeah, it's not gonna be perfect. Or you can identify every mogul every turn. No, not until you go down and feel it. You can have an aerial map of something and the same thing with a policy or decision going on. But sometimes you need to feel you need a skier to understand, and then you go back and you get better and better.
Dr. Chad Kessler	It's not to say you can't do it again.
Dr. Shari Dade	Absolutely. We've talked about resilience a bit and what that means to both of us, just kind of outside of just this episode, what role do you think resilience plays during uncertain times?

Dr. Chad Kessler	It's it's huge. I think as we've talked a little bit before, it's my most favorite character trait. You know, like picking anything or picking this or that. Everything's important. You hear no one ever puts their mouth out and says, this is my absolute favorite. But it is, resilience to me is everything. It's how we grow and it's how we change.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And I see it personally and up front. I mean, I, you know, seeing patients and, and growing live in emergency medicine training. But I see it most of my kids, I have four kids. And, there's one kid that just you're you're born with it. And some people are every different traits. And we have athleticism, brains, smart, quick thinking people are have different things.
Dr. Chad Kessler	It doesn't mean you can't learn things. It doesn't mean you can't grow or get better at things. But some people have innate qualities, and one of our kids has the most innate resilience I've ever seen. And it doesn't mean that he or she has everything, because these are things they don't have. But it's it's it's incredible because you're able to shrug things off like a quarterback, say, after you get intercepted, sacked and you just get back on and they always say that that's a great quality.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And some people at home or at APT to do that. But here's the thing not everyone has the resilience. I actually don't, on the grand spectrum, in my own estimation. I don't think I'm very resilient. When I get some bad news or something. It like pounded into the ground and I shut down and many of my close family, friends, wife get very frustrated at me because I really do like shut down.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And I remember a story when I got asked to do something back in the day and step in this new role. I had no idea I was standing on a mountain, never seen the mountain before, like straight down. And that's what I felt. And it took a few days for someone to be like, hey, this is what's down there, pick your head up.
Dr. Chad Kessler	We're going to go down together and then I felt so much better. But there are times you don't know. But I do think you can learn for all of us there, I'm raising my hand that don't have that super resilience. Like there's things you can do. And I think it's the same thing. And there's this wakefulness moment. Sorry, that we talked about is to study the terrain a little bit.
Dr. Chad Kessler	It's to to have a friend to pull people in to understand what's going on, to talk to people. Sometimes that takes a little bit and that's okay. You don't need to be have everything right there, someone to ask you questions. You don't need to have the answer perfectly. Big doubt in your head. It's okay to say, I'm going to get back to you.
Dr. Chad Kessler	I need to review the data. But what it's not okay is to sort of shut down. And I do know this because I do, and I'm trying to get better, and it's to still have that smile

	because you can't walk around with your head down and moping and people ask you and you sound like you're like, everything in the world is going to end.
Dr. Chad Kessler	So pick your face up, pick your head up and just tell people I got it. I'm going to look into it and then go home and read. Go home and study the problem. Look at it, read all policies, talk to friends, make some calls. It's a lot of work. I think maybe that's what it is. And that resilience in that change, it's a lot of work.
Dr. Chad Kessler	People don't understand all the work that goes inside for you to have no idea and enter the unknown to you. Be ready to ski down the mountain, be like, I know I'm going to start out on the left side because that right is like a big not well, that policy or those numbers are those data for that pattern.
Dr. Chad Kessler	I need to know that I need to understand the data definitions. And so I'm going to read I'm going to make 17 calls today to people to understand what's going on, so that I feel better every piece of data you feel better. Every person you talk to, you feel better. Does that need to take two weeks? No, you can do that in a day.
Dr. Chad Kessler	If you're really driven. There's teams and there's text and there's emails and there's calls and there's walking in offices, but you need to do it. I think we stall. We stall out because we're scared. And so we sit there and we look down and you're like, no way of doing that, right? We did get over. So it's okay.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Take a breath, grab a chai, grab a coffee, grab your colleague and just let them sit with you and start looking and reading and talking to people. And with every paragraph you read, with every call you make, with every message you see on teams, you will feel better. I promise you. You will feel better, better and better to the point where you look over and you're like, don't look so bad, sorry, let's do it.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And that's great to you're so good. And you get chills and you do it and you learn. But I think that's a point of getting to that paralyzed to the point we're going to go. And it takes time and that's okay. Could be an hour depending on the decision or sending email could be a day. It could be a week.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Don't let it be and don't let it be a year. Like get.
Dr. Shari Dade	Going. Yeah. And you make a really good point. There's a huge difference between fear and discomfort. Right. And being able to pull those two things apart allows for resilience to grow. And I often say uncertainty is often and I try to reframe it because I'm not that good at uncertainty either. I have a very low tolerance for uncertainty.

Dr. Shari Dade	I like to know when, I like to know where, and I like to know who. But I often say that space of uncertainty is a space of possibility. It really is where the growth is. I envision it as kind of like the green bud on the tree, right? You see the tree. And once we, you know, get through this winter and we get into spring and it's like, is the tree coming back?
Dr. Shari Dade	Is it growing again? And you see those buds and it allows for there to be possibility, possibility for growth. And I think being able to lean into that resilience and being able to understand that there's learning in the falling, there's learning and the uncertainty and being able to get back up again and knowing, okay, I'm not going to do it that time.
Dr. Shari Dade	I'm not going to do it that way again. And so I definitely believe that in those periods there's a possibility for continual growth.
Dr. Chad Kessler	That's where change happens in the uncomfortable and the discomfort. I love that you said, you know, the fear and discomfort and and pulling those apart because they are there. I love that line. I get it. That might be the title, a little blurb, pulling those apart because it is a different state of when you can't do something and you can, but you're just a little bit unsure.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And a lot of that comes down to self-awareness and emotional intelligence. Also something that we can train. People think you're born with it or not, that's not true. Anything you can get better at, it doesn't mean that you're going to be great. Some people again, have that natural and they maybe go on to do different things in their world.
Dr. Chad Kessler	That's that's led to that. You know, a lot of leadership qualities are doing that. A quarterback type of things. Sometimes there's more planners and everyone's unique. And you don't have to be great at that. But you do need to be in a space where it doesn't paralyze you, and you can still act and function and be a leader, even if you're not born with that trait of self-awareness, of emotional intelligence, of resilience, you can learn that, and you could learn enough and get better and better.
Dr. Chad Kessler	To the point.
Dr. Shari Dade	Absolutely. There's a you know, and I'm going to say this before we start to do our wrap up, but there is a spoken word artist and a poet, Rudy Francisco. And one of the things that he said in one of his, works of art that has stuck with me is I have learned more in the falling and getting up than in soaring.

Dr. Shari Dade	The ground has taught me more than the sky ever can. And I think.
Dr. Chad Kessler	That.
Dr. Shari Dade	Especially around this time, for our nation, for our organization, we are going and we're right in the middle and on the precipice of so much change. And with that comes uncertainty. And we know that it often shakes people up. It often makes people anxious and get that kind of breathless, prickly feeling that I was talking about before. But I think some of the things that you mentioned in this episode, getting a buddy, not going it alone, being making sure that you're studying, that you're ready for the next step and making sure that you don't postpone that next step out of fear, and you pull apart the discomforting.
Dr. Shari Dade	You can say, I am uncomfortable right now, but I'm not going to allow the fear to paralyze me. I think those are some real things that people can grasp on to some tangible things that people can hold as we go through this period of uncertainty and keep our veterans in mind and continue to stay connected to our mission.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Don't say no too quickly. I guess that's a thing, right? Because you're given a choice often times. Do you do you want this new job? You're being considered for this new job. There's a new treatment for this patient. There's a new policy. I need you to write. Can you do this? And oftentimes that fear just says no. It equates to no, no, no.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Like don't say no. Think about it. Can I think about it or. Yes. And I love that from the, the old improv days. Yes. And there's never a no, but it's always a yes. And and then you can go and do that research. Do the day to day. Yeah. And grab a friend. But I think sometimes folks say no way too quickly, I want to do this.
Dr. Chad Kessler	It can't be done. I hear that all the time instead of yes. And we'll find a way. You can always find a way. Sometimes those things take a little time, but when we shut it off with an immediate no, it's it's. You have no opportunity anymore. So give it some time. See if you can come to a yes.
Dr. Shari Dade	And yeah, it's hard to think curiosity. Right. Keeping that open. Like, can we figure this out without saying no?
Dr. Chad Kessler	Second favorite. Yeah, I love curiosity. Curiosity.
Dr. Shari Dade	Yes, yes. Well, I'm sure we could go on for hours chatting about uncertainty and how to manage uncertainty, but, one it make sure to remember and, you know,

	stick with some of the things that are so important to leaders as they continue to move forward. Being able to lean on their teams, allowing their teams to lean on them.
Dr. Shari Dade	Are there any last things that you would encourage folks to do as we pull into kind of this change of guards? Right. Within our organization, are there things that you think might be helpful as we wrap up?
Dr. Chad Kessler	Yeah, absolutely. I mean, again, with as we're talking about change and whether it's here in VA, VHA, anywhere, again, a lot of folks listen in their own their families change and friends and different jobs, whatnot. Teams. You just got to keep down. And I think when people worry about it too much, talk about it too much, what's going to happen?
Dr. Chad Kessler	I don't know, you just keep doing your job, like keep doing your work. We do great work. Things are going to happen all the time around us. You know, outside, at home, at work. But as long as we have those core values, the I care values for a VA or in your home or your family, you know, maybe it's your religion, maybe it's, you know, your time, whatever, whatever that is.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Like keep yourself grounded, keep doing what you're doing. I think when we start to think too much and and I don't know about this and this is going to happen, we get lost, we get off the train, like stay on the tracks for some time. There's always time for growth and change. Is this time to just keep your head down and do your work?
Dr. Chad Kessler	Now is that time to just like, keep down, keep doing your great work, taking care of patients and whatever capacity that means. Again, in front, walking around the E.R. in the office, checking people in with that smile. Keep doing what you do. That's what got us here. That's what the VA and VHA right now is the best it's ever been in my mind.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And I've been here for quite a while, a couple decades plus. This is an absolute great time because people are accepting of that change. But, you know, I just I hear that fear so much and just keep keep doing what you're doing. Keep doing. We do great. We're going to take care of patients. I think things we pulled out from a little bit of the episode is just that patient right in front of you do the best thing for that patient in whatever capacity that needs, or the veteran VBA and NCA.
Dr. Chad Kessler	As long as you do that, I think we'll really be okay. Things will settle out. We're still going to have patients, we're still going to do primary care, we're still going to do mental health. It all shake out, but it just keep focused.

Dr. Shari Dade	Let's keep doing the work because we do good work. That is so true. So true. Oh Chad again thank you, thank you, thank you so much. And before we get out of here, I always like to play my game of word association. So let's give that a.
Dr. Chad Kessler	I forgot about that. Yes.
Dr. Shari Dade	Let's give that a spin. So the first word that, I'm going to pull out for you is one of your favorites. And that's resilience.
Dr. Chad Kessler	All right Sean. And so that's my, my 15 year old kid who, unbelievably like, killed. Is he something terrible because he's 15. And then afterwards, I remember mad. He'll come up and give me the most big, beautiful hug and just everything goes away. And I think relating to that is you're going to make errors and if you can put it behind you and work it out with those people you love, your coworkers, your family, everything gets better.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Remember that. You know, just so you don't walk away mad. Instead, give a hug. Try that next time. I love.
Dr. Shari Dade	You. I love you too, I love that, yes, shout out to Sean. The next word is uncertainty.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Uncertainty. And now you got me in my head. Is that slope? Is that top of the skis not looking down? It was the black Tequila Sunrise or morning sunrise, I don't know, or in the name, but I was so scared. It was a foggy day. You couldn't see anything. And again, my 11 year old Ryan was on the snow.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Be like daddy, let's go down. And I was like, I know that Blue's looking really nice. They did it last time, but we did it and it was scary. It how you couldn't see anything. And afterwards I was like, so great, a little black and, you know, telling everybody. And I didn't break any bones, didn't even fall. So like looking down, that's that I think of that black swan.
Dr. Shari Dade	Yeah. And last but certainly not least, the audacity to fail.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Oh, I think it's Shari and Jan. I love the title. I remember going through it. Don't be afraid. Just like that's how we learned you mentioned so much in that beautiful quote you have learning more on the ground. And I tell my kids all the time, and it's not because when you're young, you know, you don't, you don't have that.
Dr. Chad Kessler	Yeah, you fail naturally. That's how we learn. That's why people crawl. That's why they fall. Looks so cute. Because they don't know. And they get up again and again.

	As we grow older, we lose that because we're self-conscious. We're conscious of ourselves and others and like, oh, look, I don't want to fall. I don't want to miss this shot.
Dr. Chad Kessler	So I'm not going to shoot. Bring it back to hockey because everything's hockey with me. So I'm going to make that pass, I'm going to skate and we're going to dump it in. That's safe. And you know what? No one recognizes that when you're safe and you're not going to move on to your ultimate goal to play in the NHL because you're safe and you don't want to fail.
Dr. Chad Kessler	But those kids out there, they're taking the slap shots and missing wildly, and the puck goes the other way and you feel terrible. Those are the ones that are going to get better. People don't see it because they're like, oh, they tried. But next time that slapshot gets better and better, and the next time at work, when you take a chance to send the email to talk to your boss to make that great move, whatever it is to start a new podcast, that's what we're beautiful.
Dr. Chad Kessler	And five years later, you guys have proven that right. You've proven you with so many viewers in that, and that's the audacity to fail. It's to try and to learn and to get better, because that's how we get better.
Dr. Shari Dade	And I love, love, love it. Chad, I knew you were going to be the right person for our season opener and you did not disappoint. Thank you so much.
Dr. Chad Kessler	So honored to be here I love this. We could do this on it. It doesn't feel.
Dr. Shari Dade	Like work, I know. Well, as we head out, I want to remind the listeners to subscribe to share. We are only as great as you say we are. And to leave us a comment. We love to chat with you guys. We love to hear from you all. Thank you so much. Welcome to 2025. Welcome to season five and have a good one.
Dr. Shari Dade	Thanks again Chad.
Dr. Chad Kessler	No there isn't Chad. I've been here.
Dr. Shari Dade	So we've come to the end of another great episode of the Audacity to Fail podcast. Thank you for tuning in to learn how missteps can lead to growth and success. Be sure to check out the key lessons in the show notes for a refresher. To request services from the National Center for Organization Development, check out our website. Also linked in the show notes.

Dr. Shari Dade	Remember, if you missed the target 100 times, you have not failed. Instead, you've simply found 100 strategies that did not work. Be well and continue to fail. Forward. Until next time. Thank you.
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