

# @Risk: Pressing Forward with Hayley Wickenheiser

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**Jodi:** Hey, I'm Jodi Butts. Welcome to @Risk, brought to you by Interac.

We live in unusual times. They are sometimes difficult to make sense of, but we don't have to do that alone. Today we can take in the wise words of Hayley Wickenheiser.

Hayley is a four-time Olympic gold medalist, community leader, mentor, history maker, accomplished businesswoman, and soon she will add doctor to her name and list of accomplishments.

Throughout her life, Hayley has managed the weight of expectations. She's thought about risk in the medical context as well as on the ice. She has earned a heralded place in the sport that many told her she didn't belong in, and she's even called out the International Olympic Committee when it really deserved it. She's Hayley Wickenheiser, a great Canadian who brings valuable perspective to these not so great times.

I'm so grateful to have had a chance to speak with her, and hope that her thoughtful, no-BS counsel helps you press forward during these challenging times.

[Music swells, then fades out]

Well thank you for joining me Hayley, and welcome to @Risk.

**Hayley:** Yeah, thanks for having me Jodi. Happy to chat with you today.

**Jodi:** So tell me, I was reading your diary leading up to the Vancouver games, I've been following your Twitter feed and all of the great interventions you've performed throughout the pandemic. How has sport prepared you for becoming a physician and for this particular moment in the pandemic?

**Hayley:** Yeah, I guess first of all, none of us ever probably thought we'd be in a pandemic in our lifetime. I know I certainly didn't think I'd be finishing medical school in a pandemic but here we all are. So I think one of the things being an athlete, I think athletes in general are some of the most resilient human beings that I've ever come across. And the reason is that at a very young age when you start competitive sport, you grow up learning to live in the unknown, and learning to live in a world that is very competitive where there are no guarantees and where your performance really dictates your next step in your career. And that's not always the case in many other walks of life.

And there's a lot that happens in sport because it's, as for example in hockey, it's a game. And you just can't control everything. One player on the ice certainly can't make everything happen. So it's not necessarily what's happening, it's your ability to react and to pivot and to adapt to all of that. So I think that that's probably the biggest thing that I learned through sport.

And then obviously with the pandemic hit, my mindset around the pandemic is less about running around panicking or putting out fires and more around, okay well this is what's happening now. What are we going to do now? What's the next step? You're always constantly forward thinking as an athlete, as well you're always constantly taking information in. You're always adapting to feedback and to criticism to try to elevate yourself to the next level. And so to kind of get mired in negativity doesn't help you in any way, shape, or form as an athlete.

The ability to sort of like have a short-term memory is what's really important, and I think that's really important in this pandemic. It's about today and what we can do today to help ourselves get out of this moving forward.

**Jodi:** Such a great outlook. And I think a lot of people, particularly in Ontario right now, are struggling a little bit. I think they had some good supports and had some guard rails mentally going, but I think at this point when some people thought maybe there wouldn't even be a third wave. It's tough to be in the middle of it.

**Hayley:** Yeah, and it was very clear to myself and every other colleague I've talked to in medicine at the start of this pandemic sort of after the first wave that we were going to have a third wave, a second wave, a third wave. It's kind of... If you're kind of been living in the medical world where I have been, everyone that I've been talking to all along has sort of predicted what's going to happen here. And so I don't think it's a surprise to anybody in the medical community what's going on.

And it's just unfortunate. There's I think many, many factors that lead to this. But for people to live in the constant opening closing, and the constant am I going to have to take my kids out of daycare or homeschool. Like it's just very hard and mentally very draining. I think people are Zoomed out. Maybe one benefit of the pandemic because you don't really have to brush hair, get dressed in the morning to go places if you're working from home. But it's mentally been a slog.

And I even think of my son, he's 21, he's in his almost third year of university and has been Zooming from his bedroom at home. And just the toll on our young people and our kids too has been hard. So I think the whole country is a bit in a bit of a grief state, and the only way out of this is to collectively band together and get as many people vaccinated as possible.

**Jodi:** Absolutely, and early in the pandemic I felt like I was witnessing you trying to harness that collective energy through the Conquer COVID-19 initiative related to gathering necessary equipment and personal protective equipment. Tell me a little bit, what was it like? You could see what was happening, I think at this point all of us were starting to certainly... We're reading stories out of Wuhan, maybe reading stories out of Italy, and our alarm bells were we're going off. But what was it like for you to appreciate, having been in a healthcare setting, to realize that wow, we might even have shortages of personal protective equipment for our folks on the front lines?

**Hayley:** Yeah, well it was interesting. I mean, I was doing an elective at Scarborough Centenary Hospital, which is one of the hardest hit hospitals in Canada right now with COVID. I was in the emergency department, and you could kind of... The staff as the weeks progressed we're sort of like, "Oh yeah, maybe it'll just blast through everyone, herd immunity, and on we go."

And then the week before as medical students we got sort of yanked out due to PPE shortage, I could feel like the palpable anxiety and tension as people started to come in, and who I started to see that were sick and they were not getting better. They were heading to ICU, really of all ages.

And so I could feel it, and so I texted actually a friend of mine who's an ICU chief at a hospital in Toronto, Dr. Carol Redstone actually. And she ran the hospital through SARS. And I said, what do you think? I said, is this going to be like a SARS thing? And she said, "Oh no, this is going to be far worse. Brace yourself." And at that point I knew that this was going to be bad, I just didn't quite know how bad.

And then I was getting texts from a lot of my friends across the country saying we're going to run out of PPE, like we don't have any. I think the only province that was actually really prepared was Alberta because one of their purchasers thought ahead and actually procured enough PPE. So Alberta ended up shipping stuff to Ontario eventually. But it was like how can this be? We're a first world country here, we're like how can this be, and I'm in the hospital and I literally one day went to find an N95 mask to see patient and I couldn't. And I sort of was living it as well.

And so I just sent out a tweet to say like we need PPE. And now we know a year into the pandemic that PPE is saving lives. Like there's I believe only been about 20 transmitted healthcare worker COVID transmissions in hospital settings, and it's incredible what the PPE has done otherwise we'd all have COVID because we're all around COVID patients. And so I just said this tweet, Ryan Reynolds texted me a few minutes later and said, "Hey would you like me to amplify this," and the rest is kind of history.

So we worked with this amazing group, Conquer COVID, and we procured, I guess we gave out three million items of PPE and raised about three million dollars in eight weeks to 500 locations across Canada. And so I know looking back now that campaign and those 200 volunteers or so that banded together, doctors and med students and business people, good Samaritans, I think they saved a lot of lives doing what they did early on, especially in Ontario.

And now we're just mobilizing for April 28th with a couple of other folks I work with at Conquer COVID to do one more push which is called This Is Our Shot. And it very aptly means this is our one shot to either to get the vaccine and to get out of the pandemic. So it's a campaign focused on vaccine hesitancy and sort of encouraging people to understand that the best shot is the first shot that you can get into your arm, and sort of

dispel a lot of myths. And also put pressure on all of our political leaders to move as fast as possible to get people vaccinated.

So it's been a whirlwind of a year for sure when I look back, but I guess I just sort of fell into it of genuine care and concern for what I was seeing on the front line, sort of.

**Jodi:** Well, thank you for doing that. I'm sure you, in fact, and the efforts of all of your community members save lives. There's just no doubt about it. The line between covet and healthcare workers was really manned by PPE, so thank you for that.

**Hayley:** Yeah, no, collective effort. It's just amazing what a grassroots or group of people can do, and I think the same thing is going to be the case with This Is Our Shot. I mean, it's not- people are tired, I think, of listening to politicians. And they don't know what to what to what to believe, what not to believe with a lot of the media around the vaccines. And so this is just another way to say to people, "Hey, here's the actual facts." And athletes, musicians, artists we're all taking the vaccine that's first given to us, and so should you kind of thing. So it'll be interesting to see how it goes.

**Jodi:** Yeah well it's awesome because you're meeting people where they are. And I think one of the things with politicians today is that some have been doing daily press conferences for long periods of time, and they've been out in front. And it's important that people hear from community leaders who they already have a trust relationship with. So it's just so important, and just grateful for people willing to volunteer their time and efforts towards us.

**Hayley:** Yeah, no you're right. and I mean the fact is a lot of our like... I say to people all the time like where else would you rather be during the pandemic? I'm still very grateful to be Canadian. I'm still very grateful to live in this country. And we shouldn't just throw the weight on our governments or our politicians, it's up to all of us. So if you think you can do something, do it, and let's collectively band together and let's just figure it out. Nobody's ever had to do this before, so let's just do it together.

And then the best way through it is to stick together, not tear ourselves apart. So that's where I stand, and that's probably where sport comes in. It's all about how we adapt and move forward, otherwise you just get left in the dust.

**Jodi:** Yeah, do you see much of a difference between the kind of civic leadership, if I can put it that way, that you're engaging right now versus leadership in a locker room or on the ice?

**Hayley:** Yeah, not a whole lot. I mean I probably swear a lot less. I have to kind of watch myself, and I laugh sometimes when I go to the rink and it's like I've reverted back to this language that I can't really do that in the hospital or in the real world.

But yeah, I think it's very similar. I mean, I think leadership is leadership, and it's about people. And the best leaders I've been around understand that like your most important asset is the people that you have around you, and it's how they're treated and how they believe in themselves and in you. It's not necessarily what you know or what you're

talking about. So it's about mobilizing people and inspiring people and then aligning with people that have sort of the same kind of thought process that you do.

So for example with This Is Our Shot, I mean it was myself and another gentleman named Gary Pen that kind of come up with the concept of this t-shirt campaign. But then I reached out to Claire Hughes, one of the athletes I know very well who kind of has been very engaged in the pandemic, and then Arlene Dickinson who's got a massive presence in the business community. And leaders from all sorts of different walks of life, Jan Arden and Sarah McLaughlin stepped up right away, and you didn't even take any convincing. You just ask people and they want to do it.

So I think that just galvanizing the voices of so many Canadians is really going to help Canadians that aren't sure, or that are afraid, or that are tired of watching the news in that manner think about ways that they can help. We can all get out of it. So very similar to sport, it takes a team effort always.

**Jodi:** I wanted to ask you two about values. You've talked about the need for a successful team to align around its values. And those values could be the expression of what does it mean to be a good teammate. And I was curious just to your reflections, and for sure the pandemic has been filled with lots of highs and lots of lows. But what do you think, have Canadians been good teammates to each other during this pandemic?

**Hayley:** It's a good question, very hit or miss, very hit or miss. I mean I think Canadians are- I like to think the best of us as Canadians. I mean I certainly know as an athlete when I travel the world people usually when they meet you they think you're American until I know you're Canadian. I always enjoyed those moments of someone coming up and saying, "Oh, where are you from in the US?" And I'd say, "No, actually I'm Canadian." And then automatically a huge smile on their face and just this warmth and this kind of like melting.

Because we are Canadian and we're known around the world as a country with compassion and humility, and that we help other people. And I think in the pandemic I have seen the best of people and the worst of people, and sometimes in the same person depending on the situation in the moment.

And this is unprecedented times, and so everyone has, and myself included, we've all had our good moments. And then we've all had days where we just want to run to the first plane and hit a beach and break all the rules possible and do all of those things.

But I like to think that more than not, people are really trying. And that's my experience, whether it's in the hospital with patients and healthcare workers, the people I just come across randomly. I don't personally run into very many instances where people are not being kind to each other, but I mean we know that exists and that's just part of humanity.

But I think it is important to remind ourselves that we are Canadian, and that is something that so many millions of people around the world would die to be, and a country that they would die to come to. And it doesn't take much, but just click on the news to see how much trouble some other countries in the world are right now, like for example in India. And we have to, I think, be grateful for what we have and focus on that.

So I value, for me in terms of as a teammate, I always loved to look around the dressing room and when I could look in the eyes of my teammates and never have a doubt that every player I was sitting with would do everything they could to win or to go to battle and would have my back if something went wrong. Those are the kinds of people that I like to surround myself with, and I feel like that's Canada in relation to the world. And we have to remember that and never lose sight of that.

But it's very hard in today's world of social media and inflammatory politics and poor leadership and all the things that we've witnessed over the past year at least.

**Jodi:** Yeah, absolutely. And I would have to think that your experience of playing hockey which, certainly at the time when you were getting started and being successful, was very much a male dominated sport both in terms of who played it, who gets the money, and even just the media who are covering it. So how has that shaped your views around what's important and what it means to be a good team member?

**Hayley:** Oh for sure. I mean I guess I started... Well it's kind of crazy now, it's like 35 years ago I started playing hockey. But my life was spent mostly growing up listening to people say you don't belong, do something else, there's no future for you, you'll never make any money doing this. If I didn't have two parents that believed that a girl could do anything a boy could do and kind of a village in my small town of Shaunavon in Saskatchewan that I grew up in. I had a community there that just kind of propped me up all along the way, whether it was my neighborhood or people in the local rink, they saw that I had ability and they never put barriers up for me.

And I was lucky. I was lucky to have that support, I think when I look back, because I developed the ability to not listen to the critical opinion of others for whatever reason. And also combined with the love that I have for the game and for sport that just kind of propelled me forward.

But sometimes today people will say, well aren't you bitter that if you were a male equivalent you'd be making 10 million dollars a year? And I say no, it is what it is. I'm proud that where we are for example in women's hockey has advanced to the point where most of the players on the national team today can make a living, and can make a living being a hockey player in some way, shape, or form.

And we just have to keep progressing forward that way. But there's no doubt I think that women are at a disadvantage in many walks of life. But it's important for women as role models, those that have kind of survived and made it through and are in positions of leadership to, I think, to give back, to mentor.

And I really appreciate that for even in medicine, when I get to have an opportunity to work with female physicians that can mentor me and teach me. I mean, I'll be finishing med school in eight days, and I look back and I've had amazing mentors, but there's been six women that have really kind of got me through medicine. And they're rock stars, and what they do day in and day out.

And so I think those are the people that are going to keep pushing other women forward, and so we have to all kind of mentor and advocate for each other. But it's not easy. I think you certainly have to be prepared to go through a lot more than maybe your average male colleague, but it's definitely getting better.

**Jodi:** Now I want to ask you about the role of sport and our recovery in the federal budget. There was some announcement around monies going to sport organizations and still a lot of details to come, but how do you see sport playing a role in our recovery from this pandemic?

**Hayley:** Well, I'll steal a line from one of my favorite organizations Right To Play, and their line was when children play, the world wins. And I think right now when children play and kids do sports, our country wins. And money into sport in this country is incredibly important. I mean one of the things that I'm most concerned about coming out of this pandemic, there's a second pandemic in obesity and alcoholism, diabetes, and overdoses. All the things that we see with delayed patient presentations coming into the emergency department or the family medical office right now, of people just hurting.

And I think one of the greatest gifts that we could give back to our country is the ability to encourage people to get moving, and to be able to watch our best athletes perform and excel on the world stage.

It is something that is inherently so I think fundamentally important to being human, and also I think something that many Canadians value. So this is really important. It's not just about funding high performance athletes either, it's about funding the grassroots which is really going to keep our country healthy and going in the right direction.

So all of the funding and the announcements are definitely welcome and they're overdue. It's always been something that as an athlete you always hope for more funding and more money, everybody does. But I just see it as maybe more important than ever right now for our country and the health of our nation. And it will have so many trickle-down effects to other areas as well.

**Jodi:** Yeah, one of the things I've been thinking about in terms of that role of sport. So once we get to a position where physical distancing restrictions can be relaxed, one of the nice things about sport, and I guess I say this as someone who's not particularly coordinated or athletic myself, but one of the things I used to like about sports was as an awkward kid sometimes it's nice to have ground rules around engagement. Right?

And I think about my own kids who are teenagers, they've missed out on a lot of time to like just practice being around other kids. And sport is a nice way to kind of re-engage too.

**Hayley:** Yeah, well this is just it. Like so many kids, that's their social outlet. Our kids are under stressors, and often the way that children will manage their stresses are their friends, their sports, their activity, the playground. Like all of these things, and a lot of that has been taken away from our kids.

So it's so important to get them back to just sort of the baseline of how they can cope and how they socially interact. And I think as humans we are social creatures. We need that interaction and sport is that outlet that provides that. So it's vitally important.

And not only that, it instills hope and instills something to live for, or something to push for. As much as I hope the Olympics in Tokyo can go ahead, I also hope that if they are safely held that the athletes performing in the summer Olympics, when people turn on the tv, that they feel a little inspiration because that's what I think the Olympics and Canadian athletes have always done for Canadians. So it's all intertwined and it's all very important.

**Jodi:** Yeah, speaking of the Olympics and the IOC, they've been a bit challenged I think through this process. Like so many organizations, the pandemic exacerbates an organization's weaknesses, whether you're a country, a PTA, or the Olympic organizing committee.

Do you feel like the Olympics are kind of resettling themselves and are on a pathway of improvement and progress, or are they a little bit paralyzed by this moment?

**Hayley:** Well, I think it's actually been sort of a great way to uncover a little bit of the weaknesses of the IOC, if I can say it like that. In the sense that there was early on in the pandemic, almost... I am on the IOC. I go to the meetings, I listen to the meetings, I guess on Zoom now, but I felt there was a bit of an arrogance almost that existed. That, well, we are the IOC, we will- of course we will hold the Olympics, last summer.

And it was like, are you crazy? You're going to hold the Olympics in a freaking pandemic? And I'm talking to all my friends who are physicians in sport, and I'm like, this can't happen. They're like, there's no chance. And so they were delayed in their ability to postpone it. And so sometimes the ego and the arrogance of the entity that is the IOC, which I look at is almost a bit of a dictatorship quite frankly, I think has been tripped up in this pandemic in a good way.

They've had to look at themselves and say, okay, maybe we aren't who we portray ourselves to be. We can't fix everything, even a pandemic. And even going into the Olympics in Japan, I'm still not certain that they can be held safely. I mean, I suppose we still have two months to figure that out, but in the end I don't know that it's the IOC that will make that decision. I think it will be the Japanese government that will have to ultimately make that decision.



But the IOC sometimes loses sight that the games are for and about the athletes. And if we can't keep athletes safe and the entourage that comes with them, then the game shouldn't be held. And so this is something I wrestle with because I most of what I have in my life is through the Olympic games, yet I find at the very highest level of the IOC much of it is frustrating to delve through the politics of sport. And many days I wish I just didn't know what went on.

**Jodi:** Well, really you played a part in in rightfully getting the Olympics postponed last summer?

**Hayley:** Yeah, I think well I was the first athlete in the world as an IOC member as well to... I tweeted it. And I really kind of hummed and hawed because I'm not really the type of person that I don't mind rocking the boat if I believe strongly. But I do believe you try to give people the opportunity inside to fix things first. And I knew that wasn't going to happen, I would just be dismissed and just a small cog in a big wheel.

So I hummed and hawed and I thought nope, what I was voted into the IOC Athletes Commission for a reason, which is to advocate for the athletes of the world. And this is my job, and I'm not doing my job if I'm not knowing what I know about medicine and knowing what I know about the IOC.

This is the right move. And so I think history... I got my hand slapped pretty good from the IOC for that one, but I don't care. And I think history looking back, we know what was the right decision and what had to happen, and they were just moving far too slow or trying to... I don't know what they were trying to do. But in the end I hope that the decisions around Tokyo happening, my concern is that it just doesn't turn into another super spreader effect, which is I think a concern of many people.

**Jodi:** Yes, absolutely. And I say that acknowledging that sport has really been a big part of how we as a family have been passing our time and frankly coping through the many lockdowns. We're all big tennis fans, we love watching tennis there's some great Canadian tennis players right now who are also really exciting to watch. And the fact that the tournaments have been able to be played has been a real bright spot for us. But it's a much smaller undertaking.

**Hayley:** Yeah, yeah. I mean and I think even the Australian Open had some challenges there too. And you look at, my barometer is kind of in the NHL because I I'm intimately intertwined with the Toronto Maple Leafs and being going to the facility. And every day I go to the facility I'm tested twice, I'm given a PCR and a rapid test. And they have the money and the means to kind of bubble and make it incredibly controlled, and hence why I think you haven't seen a massive outbreak there.

But then you look at other teams that haven't been as regulated and the entire team gets COVID, unfortunately. So I just wonder and worry in an Olympic village of 17 000 people how that all works. And I leave that up to people far smarter than me, but I think it is a legitimate concern. And Japan has a, last I checked, one percent of their

population was vaccinated. So I don't know, there's a lot of questions left unanswered, I think.

**Jodi:** Yeah, for sure. And this whole discussion, and it's the subject of this podcast, is risk. So I wanted to ask you about your thoughts on risk. You had discussed it a little bit in your diary leading up to the to the Vancouver games following the tragic death of the Georgian luger and that you reflected a bit on the risks of your own sport. Can you share your thoughts with us?

**Hayley:** Yeah, I guess I suppose in life in general I'm sort of moderately risky, being slightly risky... In medicine I'm very risk adverse. I wouldn't say that I would practice medicine as a cowboy at all, I think it's always about patient care. But then I look at myself as an athlete and I think, oh, I go for it. Like I'm totally risky, I throw caution into the wind.

And so it's just interesting how when you float through different aspects of your life you have sort of different tolerances to risk. And right now even looking at the vaccine and just people sort of thinking around risk tolerance with getting AstraZeneca, it's fascinating to hear people sort of ration why they would or wouldn't get it and what their risk tolerance might be.

So I think we all have our sort of own inner barometer. And for me, I think I'm calculated. So I tend to kind of go through all the steps, and if I feel like the odds are good and I can execute the way I want, I'm generally a person that'll go for it and not sit back. But certainly not without sort of making a calculated thought.

However as a hockey player, I feel like I was good at what I did and had success because I often took caution to the wind and just went for it. I tended not to be a rule follower in the sense of abiding just to systems on the ice and things like this. I used intuition, and I used kind of my senses versus logic. And so it depends on what area of life, but far more the thrill of going for it is certainly what I like to do. I just need to be in a position where I feel like I'm prepared to do it. So that's kind of how I look at risk, and I guess everybody has their own sort of barometer for that.

**Jodi:** Yeah, for sure. And I think one of the lesser explored aspects of risk is around the communications. And I think throughout the pandemic and just generally true there's been some really great communication tools, like the swiss cheese model showing how layers of protection can help you not get COVID. Not because any one layer is perfect, but because of the cumulative effect of the layers.

But the other one most recently that I saw that was so great was just lining up different risks that were greater than any risks associated with AstraZeneca. And I'm like, yeah, visual. Some of us are visual.

**Hayley:** Yeah, that's very true. I think I saw that, what I call it meme or that graphic of the birth control pill versus AstraZeneca versus a blood clot on an airplane. It's funny how I think of how many times I've jumped on a plane, and I think there's 400 times

more likely to get a blood clot on a plane than to get a central venous thrombosis from a AstraZeneca vaccine.

So I it is interesting how the hysteria and just the different ways of communicating to people can really perpetuate quite frankly which is a myth or untruths, that it is a dangerous thing when we every day are taking far greater risks by getting in the car to go places or taking other medications that have higher risks.

So I think it speaks to also fatigue. Also the fact that people are just so... Like if I think after COVID is over, like if somebody ever mentions COVID again, that would be not a good idea. And just that the pandemic, and just like enough already. And so people are overloaded.

And so just I think being creative, and it's amazing to see some of the folks on social media or in the media that are coming up with creative ways to spread the truth of science of what we know about the vaccines. That's what we really need to do and sort of just dispel the myths that aren't true.

**Jodi:** Yeah, absolutely. On this podcast we had Cass Sunstein on, and he's a Harvard law professor, but he's also written a lot about nudges and how our human psychology impacts the messages that are directed at us. And he summed it up as, "Jodi, psychology changes everything, and we ignore it at our peril."

**Hayley:** That's very true, that is very true.

**Jodi:** So speaking of psychology, I want to talk to you about expectations. Because surely you as a Canadian, you are probably one of the few small number of Canadians who have carried such big expectations on their shoulders. I wanted to ask you, what's your advice around expectations?

**Hayley:** Well, I think I always say pressure is a privilege, that people wouldn't ask you to do something or be something if they didn't believe that you could actually do it. And so one of the things, one of the kind of moments that illustrates that was the Vancouver Olympics in 2010, where the media, again back to this media and psychology, they kept talking to a lot of Olympic athletes in the country. And, oh, the weight of the nation, are you sure you can perform in your own country?

And it's like, do you want your athletes to perform or not? But this self-perpetuating like negativity that we can be as Canadians, oh, do you think you can really do it? And so as a team, we just decided like we're going to flip the narrative. And not the weight of the nation on top of us, but rather the weight of the nation behind us pushing us forward, as the seventh man in the stands so to speak sort of propelling us. 35 million people behind us, not pushing us down. And not one Canadian would hopefully want us to lose, they all want us to win, of course. But so I think it's the way in which you think about pressure and expectations. And we can sometimes see that as a burden, or we can see it as, wow, people really believe in us to get the job done. So let's get it done.

And so then my second thought around expectations is the only thing that I can control is my ability to prepare to perform. And then I have to be able to let it go. The rest is out of my control. And so I always believed as an athlete when I stepped on any into any gold medal final at the Olympic games, I had this inevitably a couple days before the Olympic gold medal final I was like a nervous wreck. And I'd be like, oh my god, if we lose, and I'd go through this sort of catastrophizing mentality. And then I would let myself like catastrophize for an hour. And then I would say, okay, for the rest of the day you're just going to not think about it.

And then as we creep closer to the gold medal day, it was a weird thing where I would ultimately become kind of stressed to like super calm. Because I truly believed deep down that I had done everything I humanly could to be prepared for that moment, and all I had to do was perform and the rest was kind of out of my control. And so it was a way for me to kind of control what I could and to sort of manage those expectations.

And I feel the same way in medicine where there's a lot there's a lot I know now, but there's still so much that I don't know. And so the only thing I can do is prepare to do my best, and I have to just continually evolve and be okay with failing along the way and failing forward, so to speak. And so that's kind of how I see it.

And I believe that my preparation has really kind of helped me manage those through the years, but also the mentality of glass half full sort of thinking versus a burden is something that's much healthier to be able to manage.

**Jodi:** Yeah, it's very inspiring because I think at no matter who you are, I think at some level you're managing expectations. Maybe it's parents, maybe it's peers, maybe it's your boss. But I think it's something we all have to struggle with and find our way through it, and as you say, turn it into an advantage.

**Hayley:** Yeah, for sure, and rely on the people around you, too. Like nobody gets through life alone, I think. And so I just think back to all the great teams and teammates, and even going through medical school. I mean, I could not have gotten through medical school without my coveted friends that kind of all helped each other. So you don't have to take the burden on alone at times, too. I think that's really helpful as well to know.

**Jodi:** Yeah, I think for sure. And particularly during a period where we are at the very least physical distancing and for the most part social distancing as well, it's a good message that you just need to hear. You can't hear it enough that we're not alone.

**Hayley:** Yeah, for sure. No, and it's hard, because right now people are I think so many people feel alone, isolated, wondering what is everyone else doing outside of your house at times. And so finding ways to connect is a challenge for all of us.

**Jodi:** So you're just about to, I guess, officially be licensed as a physician? Is that where you're at in your training?

**Hayley:** Yeah, I think I could officially say I'm a doctor on April 30th after my last exam. So yeah, I'm very close. It's strange, it's been a long journey. Something I've thought about since I was 10 years old, actually, just wanting to go and finish medicine. So yeah, very exciting and a long three years, but it goes by very fast as well.

**Jodi:** Well, first off, huge congratulations. And I just thought maybe a nice way of wrapping up our conversation was to give you an opportunity to say a few words to your soon-to-be fellow physicians during what is a really difficult time in a lot of parts of the country right now?

**Hayley:** Well yeah, I mean I guess first of all I just... I don't know, it's been... It's been a year. I've seen I guess varying degrees of emotion inside the hospital, or with people in medicine that I've encountered. Whether it's just everyone, it's the nursing staff, it's porters in the hospital, it's ICU docs, and our docs, family docs.

So I think... I do think that we are- there is a light here. We have an influx of vaccines coming, we are close. And I know everybody keeps saying that, but I do think we are. And so my message is to hold on, to find ways to kind of put the oxygen mask on yourself first so that you can continue to take care of other people.

Because it's a drain, it's tiring. But this is why we all went into this profession, I think, is to help people. And that's what we're here to do. And so keep on keeping on. And I think really important to take care of yourselves and your families first, that's the most important thing. And then everybody else can be helped after that.

But I'm very proud to be a part of the medical community here in Canada. I've seen some absolutely incredible things throughout this pandemic of empathy and compassion and medicine at its best. And there's no other country in the world that I would want to be in during a pandemic. Our health care system is on the verge of, I guess, being overwhelmed, and the burden is so heavy. But at the same time the people inside of it make it work. And that's who will always make it work. So thank you to everyone out there doing your thing. Keep going, and proud to be Canadian.

[Music swells]

**Jodi:** Thank you so much Hayley. Thank you for all of your leadership and the inspiration that you've been providing to the country for so many years, and continue to do so in what is a really difficult moment. And we'll all be sure to go get our shot.

**Hayley:** Yeah, and get your shot for sure. That's our best way out of this. So thank you very much for having me, Jodi, it was a lot of fun.

**Jodi:** Thank you.

[Music fades out]