

EEP Ep 192 Charles Gellman Take Your Meds! AI-Assisted Robotics Improves Home Health Care

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SPEAKERS

Maria Ross, Charles Gellman

Maria Ross 00:04

Welcome to the empathy edge podcast the show that proves why cash flow, creativity and compassion are not mutually exclusive. I'm your host Maria Ross. I'm a speaker, author, mom, facilitator and empathy advocate. And here you'll meet trailblazing leaders and executives, authors and experts who embrace empathy to achieve radical success. We discuss all facets of empathy from trends and research to the future of work to how to heal societal divisions and collaborate more effectively. Our goal is to redefine success and prove that empathy isn't just good for society, it's great for business. Taking our medication properly at home is a huge problem that has serious consequences on our health and lives. Many patients do not get all the benefits they should from prescribed medications when they're not taken properly. Often, we're relying on ourselves or ad hoc caregivers to ensure we're following the right care instructions at home. Did you know that the number of caregivers increased and reached about 53,000,020 20 or more than one in five Americans and according to a PubMed article in 2022, overall pharmaceutical expenditures in the US grew 9.4% compared to the year prior, for a total of get this 633 point 5 billion with a B net net or taking a lot of drugs people and often not correctly to get the maximum benefits from what we spend on them. That leads to more than just wasting money, it can lead to death. My guest today Charles Gelman is the CEO and co founder of Heito health, and he's leveraged empathy from his own health experiences into AI assisted robotics that will alter the future of medicine and health care. Charles is an outgoing data scientist with a master's in clinical informatics and accomplished speaker and one of the top voices in AI assisted robotics, digital health and the impact on care. Heito is a patient friendly device paired with a mobile app that helps automate home care by assisting patients with medication compliance. It automates the medication experience and removes much of the burden on from patients on remembering the right medication, the right frequency, the right dosage, and validates that the right person took it through a remote video record. Today he shares his personal story and shocking statistics on the big and costly problem of inaccurate home health care. We discuss how AI assisted robotics can impact emotional well being and why empathy is

not going away. Because of all this new technology. We even took a detour and talk about how to ensure that leaders who succeed passionate founders possess the same empathy for customers and commitment to purpose. Finally, we discussed the importance of empathy to understand both providers and patients and help them alter behaviors to improve health outcomes. This was a great one, take a listen. Welcome Charles Gellman to the empathy edge podcast. I personally am very excited to have this conversation with you about your very empathetic technology at high dough and how it helps save lives as someone who has gone through some major medical issues and been on multiple different types of medications in the past, had aging parents, all the things. So welcome to the show. And thanks for being here to talk about Hi, Joe. Rhea, thank

Charles Gellman 03:40

you so much for having me. I'm very excited. We got some very exciting things for audience so they can play behind the scenes, you've got some way. So be on your toes.

Maria Ross 03:50

I will I will. First tell us a little bit about your story and why you started this company.

Charles Gellman 03:56

Yeah, so my story really aimed from a personal experience that many folks have when they have interactions within healthcare. I was in my early 20s A bit naive, you know, still going to school still trying to understand how the world works. Also, I was I had a conversation with a physician where I was having pain in my lower abdomen at that time. And they thought because my father had a family history of kidney stones, that I was also having a kidney stone, but being in my 20s I didn't really question anything. It's an authority figure. Again, you know, I wasn't very educated at that time. And so I just went with it, like many people do when they have the interaction with, you know, a trusted resource, but in fact, what happened is I had a ruptured appendicitis. Oh, wow. Yeah. So by having ruptured appendicitis for about a week, that caused my body to go into septic shock, which ultimately led me into the hospital for two weeks and I had a couple different surgeries and based on upon that interaction, in what really I understood from that interaction, and I think a lot of your audience can also understand is that you have a limited window of time that you have when you see a physician. And we're very hard to articulate or communicate what is happening with your body. And they're pressed for time. And you're pressed for getting the information across. And it's a very challenging interaction between provider and patient right now. And that's the struggle that I believe many folks across the country have on a regular basis.

Maria Ross 05:38

So tell me, I mean, I so relatable to so many people, and what led you to try to tackle that problem by dealing with how we take medicine? And how we deal with our care at home? Yeah, so

Charles Gellman 05:53

this is where trivia question number one for the audience. Right? How many prescriptions are given out each year in the United States, I want you to take a wild guess, Maria, to anyone, like collectively, collectively, in the United States, oh, my gosh, total prescriptions are there in the United States per year,

Maria Ross 06:11

I'm going to say, I'm going to say something crazy, 100 million, 6

Charles Gellman 06:16

billion prescriptions are giving out each year in the United States. Oh, my goodness, 180 7% of the population has multiple chronic care diseases to manage on their own. That is very, very significant. So what's the likelihood? trivia question number two, that all 6 billion prescriptions are taken as intended by providers? Oh, I'm

Maria Ross 06:43

gonna say 15%. Okay, well,

Charles Gellman 06:47

this one is a little bit higher. So the clinical studies, it's about 40 to 50% of all medications are taken as prescribed. So \$300 billion a year is wasted on medications, because we don't know whether or not they're taking as prescribed so many patients at home, that may or may not understand the complicated regimens or directions by their providers, following those directions, so they're not getting the benefits and the medications. So my interest in medications really culminated from my background in data science, I was trying to figure out how do we connect the dots? How do we care for people, when they may not be capable, or they're challenged with caring for themselves at all. So if the majority of time is spent away from a sterile environment, be in the hospital, or the clinic, where you have all of those resources, you have pharmacists, you have nurses, you have physicians that are helping care for you, the second you step away, and you go into your home, look in the mirror, because that's just caring for you. And if you can't care for yourself, who is doing it? Right.

Maria Ross 08:01

Right. And you know, what this reminds me of so much is I did a lot of work with healthcare literacy, and patient communications as a patient advisor for the hospital where I got my care after my brain injury. And a lot of what we worked on was communication and education, especially around this issue around discharge, instructions to minimize readmissions, minimize chance of death, chance of injury. And you can only do so much with the communication aspect of it because like you said, when you get home, it's you in the mirror, or, like in the situation of my aging parents that are now gone. Now you have a you know, 90 something year old partner taken care of and responsible for the dispensing of medicine to their 87 year old spouse. And so there's no room for error. I mean, just just in trying to put the chart together for my parents way long ago of the different times of day, my mother needed different add medication and what she needed with food and what she didn't need with food. And this was taken four times a day, but this was taken to and this one, you had to cut the pill in half and and I thought I can't even keep track of this with a spreadsheet. How is my father keeping track of this, right? So I mean, the technology that you've invented, I get let's just get into that right now. Let's talk a little bit about what Heito does, and the problem that it solves.

Charles Gellman 09:24

So your story is not not unique. Millions of people are challenged with the exact same thing that you described. So what Haidle is, is the AI system robotic device to smooth care out in the home setting. So we take the medications that you have, we have an embedded RFID hap which knows the medications, the name, dosage, frequency and count that you put in the device is similar to like a Keurig coffee machine. You place it in it auto recognizes read that information. You walk up at unlocks with baseline D, it dispenses the medications as prescribed, and you take it and we monitor dose by dose, whether or not you're taking your medications. So we know whether or not you missed or taking your medications. You know whether or not you've taken your medications, and most importantly, your physician and nurse know what's going on in the home. And that is why we created Heito, the importance of knowing the cocktails of medications you're taking are incrementally impactful on your overall health. So your experience as a caregiver, you just got a taste of managing your parents, as you know, you know, remotely or, you know, within that that defined challenge, but there are multiple chronic care conditions, cardiovascular conditions, there's diabetes, there's cancer, there's dementia, that it goes on and on and on. And this is trivia question number three. I love that I have a percent of patients cost me how much money for health plans 1%. It's probably in the billions are going to ask for a percentage. So Oh, you're set cost? How much percentage of every dollar? I'm going to say 30%? Great answer. 40% 40 cents of every dollar is 1% of the chronic care population. And 5% of the patient population cost 80% 80 cents of every dollar is going to 5% of the people. So what if we could control that? What if we already pay for the medications for those chronic care diseases, but they're just not taken as prescribed? Would that not be a travesty? So hydro smooths out the process for patients at home with chronic ear diseases, so we can lower the cost of care and help support people in their home. unassisted so they can live independently with freedom without being dependent on their caregivers. So trivia question number four. How many caregivers are there in the United States?

Maria Ross 12:25

That sounded like a joke of like, How many people does it take to change a light bulb? I'm gonna say 300 million?

Charles Gellman 12:36

Well, there's almost the entire population is about 300 plus million. The United States. That's true. Yeah. It's about maybe 3 million 40 million caregivers in the United States. 40 million. Wow. And most of these folks are not paid for the caregiving services that they're providing. Absolutely.

Maria Ross 12:54

Because it's family or friends. It's yeah, it's not an official caregiver. Yeah.

Charles Gellman 13:00

So one out of four patients in the country have chronic care diseases. And more than 10% of the population is having some type of caregiver responsibilities. We have a health care system, we are a we are solely dependent on people at home to care for themselves. How is that working out for us? Right?

Maria Ross 13:23

All right. Well, I want to talk a little bit about the fact that, you know, this is reminding me of a past episode, and I'll put it in the show notes when I interviewed Ron Gura, who is the CEO and founder of a company called Empathy. And they are leveraging technology to create a better experience for those dealing with bereavement and death in their family and how to how to how to create a better, quote unquote, better experience for those people at a very vulnerable time in their lives. So obviously, with your company, you're applying, you know, AI assisted robotics, to this very human problem. This very, this problem that touches our emotional well being is that the promise of AI that you see is that the promise of technology where you're trying to find applications where it can improve lives versus all the scary stuff you hear about in the news every day.

Charles Gellman 14:12

Yeah, so I believe that the the significant promise of AI is enhancing our lives. So, you know, to get headlines, you're going to have both the positives and the negatives. And, you know, oh, we're, you know, it's going to take us to a different realm where AI is going to take over the world to a very primitive technology, which you've seen, which is, you know, generative AI, which is, you know, enable text and it does some, you know, applications for efficiency and productivity. What hydro does is it has the potential to enhance and insist your lifestyle. So, a goal is if we have these basic behaviors that need to be altered, so it's called the classic condition in behavioral modification, we are trying to elicit risk wants is to help you care for yourself. So you can spend time on the most important things like believing your life and not worrying about your medications, right? Whether you take them, you know, just the very right stuff, right?

Maria Ross 15:14

I mean, and I, again, I can relate, and I'm sure many people can too, like, even just certain medications I'm on. It's like, Did I take that this morning? I forget if I did. And now I don't know if I should take another one. Because that would be bad. And so that constant, like, do I need that stress on top of everything else going on in my life, like you said, it gets in the way of living,

Charles Gellman 15:34

while you're trying to balance you know, you a lot of folks have worked in family responsibilities for them. Or maybe they're helping a friend, family member, as a caregiver, you know, if they had an application where they could just look on their phone, and they didn't have to remember with all of the other things that are going on, it's just something to ease the burden on

Maria Ross 15:55

totally reduce that cognitive load for sure. What's been the most rewarding aspect of I mean, you're a technologist, you, you know, you're you're a founder, but what's been sort of the emotional reward for you, of working with your customers and working with folks that are using the product? Can you share a story about how it's really transformed someone's life? Yeah,

Charles Gellman 16:17

there's multiple stories. And you know, people, if they want to look on YouTube, just look up Heito, health, ha do health, and you'll be able to see most multiple patient testimonials, but the biggest impact to me, you know, it's the end of life. You know, we had a patient, Nancy, that at that time, you know, I

didn't know she had terminal cancer, she was struggling with heart failure. So we were treating her for heart failure, I got to know her and her family. And her family worked very well. Her husband is a hypertensive diabetic patient, David, who still uses our device to this day. And we were able to get to know him through Nancy and Nancy brand of a friend. So we first started this journey. This was, will this work for these patients, because they were wanting some of the things that could help alleviate the burden. And as a founder, and as a technologist, I said, You know what, I don't know. But let's try, let's give it a shot. Because these people already suffering, what if we can alleviate some of the burden, and help enable them to live those final moments and memories, and focus on their family and their loved ones versus trying to manage a very complex regimen and process. So we just went in, we just said, You know what, I don't know what's going to happen. But let's just lean in and see what we can do. And, you know, I was able to get to know her story very well. And, you know, ultimately, she passed and was very challenging for us, we learned a lot. And those experiences, those memories, and the type of impact that we can make on touching people's lives to help enable them to live the lifestyle they want, or to extend into the moments they have with their family. That's what drives me 24/7 and drives us as an organization.

Maria Ross 18:06

I love that story. Thank you for sharing that with us. And I want to pull back for a second because you sparked something in that answer that I've seen in my career working in tech as well, is, obviously the passion of so many founders is the people component is how is this technology going to enhance someone's business or life? They're very close to their customers, whether they're doing beta testing, or MVP testing, anything like that? How do you see that transferring? Let's say at some point the company sold, it grows so big, you're no longer there that touch point, that singular touch point. I'm curious how you transfer that empathy and that caring and that passion in a succession plan? How do you get someone to take over a company or to lead a company that they didn't start? And still feel that same passion, that same empathy for their customers? I'm curious if you have any thoughts on that?

Charles Gellman 19:05

Yeah. So that is a great insight, you know how to essentially ensure the legacy of compassion. Empathy will continue after you stepped aside because there will be a succession plan as we grow and scale out. And this is a product that could reach worldwide exposure out into Asia and Europe and the Middle East, and Latin America. And that's very realistic. And my guess counterpoint would be is that, you know, when you start thinking about patients as a whole, and then being solely independent, rely on themselves. The way I see it is just by having our technology integrated within their home is a substantial lift to everybody training, manage this complex regimen, no matter what country or what language or what leaders in charge, and vice simplifying that process with AI technology, you will lift up many, many millions of people right now that are struggling, that it's a unknown paradigm. And so the leader that will, you know, succeed in this position and roll through, they'll understand the type of impact that they're making to humanity as a whole, in carry on the mission legacy that we started here. Well,

Maria Ross 20:26

it's also something you know, we, I've talked about this many times in terms of culture, it's something that you look for, right? So when you're, when you're selecting that successor, it's do the values of the organization and for you the values of the founder, are you aligned with that? Can you get on board

with that? Do you genuinely connect with that mission, and that that vision, that purpose of our company, and so you know, that's part of the selection process, not just the business acumen of the next person that that steps in charge, but I know, we went off on a little bit of a tangent there, but I was just so curious from your perspective, because that's often a struggle, I hear from founders who are very passionate about the impact of their technology. And then sometimes they sell their companies sometimes, you know, I've talked to other founders, and they feel like the values of the company have been eroded, because the people that took over didn't hold those same values, dear.

Charles Gellman 21:20

Yeah, I think it just depends. I mean, that's just a question of just interviewing folks that are aligned with your vision and mission and capable of hearing it to those next levels. And there are plenty of good folks out there that want to do the right thing that and drive business and make an impact. And they are mission driven. So it's just a question to just connect, I

Maria Ross 21:41

think them? Yeah, absolutely. So let's talk a little bit, again, about the AI and automation industry writ large. This is a common debate that's happening is empathy going away, because of AI, and because of automation. What's your perspective.

Charles Gellman 21:58

So I think that AI technologies can help enhance, you know, specific items in life, if you're solely dependent on a chatbot. And then you can eliminate, you know, all type of human factors or connections, that's where I think, you know, things kind of get away from understanding the situations, I don't see that taking place, unless it's very mundane tasks, like you're calling in for a prompt and you're trying to get a bank balance, or, or something very simplistic in nature, where it's just, you just need a simple task done. But once you need full understanding, they can enhance the data to bring it front and center for people to understand and synthesize and then have a educated discussion, versus you hear them typing up on the other side, and trying to pull that information. So again, I believe it's going to enhance professions over time, and the people that lean into it and utilize it, they will be miles ahead versus people that are still on pen and paper.

Maria Ross 23:04

Love that. Love that. And let's talk about kind of a final wrap up the role of empathy, in altering behaviors to improve health outcomes, like you're in this space, you're tackling this problem in a very specific way with technology. But how do you see the role as empathy of empathy evolving, or, or ramping up to achieve better health outcomes? I mean, you you're talking to physicians all the time, you're talking to patients all the time. What do you see as the landscape of where empathy is really improving those health outcomes? Whether it's with technology or not,

Charles Gellman 23:44

you wonder that you have to understand the challenges that everybody has. And that's why I proceeded the conversation, the beginning is that your providers struggle, giving care to people, and patients struggle communicating what is happening with themselves, because they're not educated from a medical standpoint, and you have to communicate it accordingly. So you get this moment of lost

in translation. So you have to understand where both parties are coming messenger and receiver to broadcast that message, synthesize it and understand it. So based upon the unique circumstances, and the constraints that exists within healthcare, and the burdens that people experience on both sides, then you can start attacking the underlying issues and address them accordingly. But you have to understand what challenges that they have in order to address them accordingly. And that's why we stay very, very close with both providers and patients and the different types of, you know, struggles that people have. So then we can build accordingly. And I've said this time and time again. Heito is the culmination of the ship discussions and interactions. It's not because of us. It's been Designed by the customer for the customer, as needed, when needed. Love

Maria Ross 25:05

that. Love that. So, Charles, thank you so much for your time today. And more importantly for this work you're putting into the world to improve people's lives. And you're you're coming at it from such a perspective of empathy and a desire to improve people's lives and well being. So I really applaud that effort. And we're going to have all your links in the show notes. I'm going to put a link to the intro video for Heito as well which really explains the product and the promise very, very well in a very succinct way. But for folks on the go, who might be exercising right now as they're listening to us, where's the best place they can get in touch with you or find out more about your work. So please

Charles Gellman 25:44

visit us at hydro health. It's H ideal health or you can go on YouTube search a hydro health, we have plenty of videos on there for you to peruse and look forward to connecting you if you have any. Anything you want to drop comments or likes or feedback, please feel free to write accordingly.

Maria Ross 25:59

Wonderful. Thank you so much, Charles. Thank you, Maria for having me. Appreciate it. And thank you everyone for listening to another episode of the empathy edge podcast. If you liked what you heard, you know what to do, rate review and share it with a colleague or a friend. And until next time, please remember that kashflow creativity and compassion are not mutually exclusive. Take care and be kind. For more on how to achieve radical success through empathy, visit the empathy edge.com. There you can listen to past episodes, access shownotes and free resources. Book me for a Keynote or workshop and sign up for our email list to get new episodes insights, news and events. Please follow me on Instagram at Red slice Maria. Never forget empathy is your superpower. Use it to make your work and the world a better place.