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## Paging Dr. Feelgood...

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What do Elvis, Heath Ledger and Michael Jackson all have in common?

Yes, they are celebrities, super talented and died before their time. That's true.

But they also, per reports, had doctors "involved" in prescribing or over-prescribing medications that were found in their system during their fatal overdose. These were legal medications given to a patient by a physician or various physicians.

Which leads us to the introduction of...Dr. Feelgood.

Most physicians are smart, ethical and actually care about their patients. And the process of pre-med, medical school, internship, residency and fellowship is long, painful and costly with large amounts of stress and sleep deprivation. It's not fun. But, many doctors get through it because they love the cutting edge science, healing, stability and helping people.

**But, to be a good physician, you have to be street smart as well as book smart.** You have to know when you're being conned. You have to be strong enough to "just say no" to a medication seeking patient who is out "doctor shopping." You have to not care if the patient gets angry or stressed out because you know you are doing the right thing. And you can't fall prey to the celebrity bartering of riches, fame and friendship for the power of your prescription pad.

Dr. Feelgood comes in 3 varieties. Shady, Naive & People Pleasers.

The shady ones are just trading pills for cash. They are literally legal "drug dealers." The naive doctors don't know they're being manipulated and just go along with it when the patient describes symptoms (that they just looked up on their phone in the hallway) to score pills. And the people pleasers are physicians who are unable to "just say no" because they want to be liked by their patients. Doctors are people too and many of us were pretty nerdy growing up. As a result, some doctors desperately want to be liked especially by important people like celebrity politicians, actors and musicians.

Many clinicians have referred patients to me at **The Control Center** because they developed an addiction to prescription pills. And many of these patients were getting them from a few of these Dr. Feelgoods. These doctors make it much harder for addiction medicine physicians, psychiatrists and therapists to treat their patients.

Celebrity treatment can be really challenging. It's a unique subculture. As a doctor, you need a strong backbone. You have to set limits. You can't use alias names on prescriptions. You can't be intimidated by the entourage/enablers/handlers who are making money off the celebrity client and don't want that person to stop working for six months to get better because they won't get paid. You have to be street smart and most of all, you have to remember that we are in a prescription pill epidemic and doctors must inform our patients which medications are easily abused.

Ultimately it's every individual's responsibility to know what they're putting in their body. But, we are slowly becoming a pill-popping society. And Dr. Feelgood is getting more and more popular.

"One nation under sedation"?

I hope not.

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