

The Journey to Better Healthcare with Ben Kruger

Candace Dellacona: Welcome to The Sandwich Generation Survival Guide. I am your host, Candace Dellacona, and I have a very special guest here with me today, Ben Kruger. Ben is one of the thought leaders in modern care. So we're so excited to have him among his many other interesting endeavors that Ben will, I'm sure share with us today, about eight years ago, right before the COVID pandemic, Ben was one of the co-founders of a company that probably many of you know called Sollis Health which provides concierge, urgent, and emergent healthcare. And Ben's newest endeavor is truly unique in the healthcare, especially the sandwich generation space called Appian. So I'm delighted to have you here with us, Ben.

But why don't we start from the beginning on how you arrived at the care space, because as some of our audience members may know, you started out your career in a very different area in Hollywood, right?

Ben Kruger: That's right. And firstly, I'd just like to say thank you so much for having me, Candace. I do love the show, and I think that what you are touching on is so important and it's a real passion area of mine. And you are correct. I got to where I am through a quite a circuitous route.

I'm from New York City. I grew up as the son of a single parent my father, I lived with my father who was one of the leaders and early creators of the concierge primary care model. And much of my early life was spent tagging along with my dad on, house calls or to the hospital.

And just seeing him engage with patients really in this very old fashioned. Person to person, empathetic way that when I was growing up just seemed like the norm. He was the trusted resource and therapist and doctor and really, that trusted source for people where they knew they could call on him at any time and he was gonna be there.

Whether it was for the medical care or just as a shoulder to cry on or a support system. And that's, as I grew up, how I expected healthcare to be. I again, then took a long and circuitous route. For me, I never thought that I wanted to be a doctor. I think I was maybe, too lazy to actually put in the long hours.

And so I went to a, after college I ended up, finding myself drawn to entertainment like many do. And I ended up heading out from New York City to Los Angeles after school. And I pursued a career in entertainment. I was a writer. I worked on television shows. I sold a number feature films.

I produced a feature of film and found my way into digital media. Again, a long story, but eventually worked at a digital media company that was acquired by an investment group. Ended up loving the work that I was doing with that investment group and they hired me on to become their head of investment sourcing.

And so really what I was doing, they had a venture model. And so I was then sitting on the buy side listening to entrepreneurs and founders talk about their ideas, their visions, companies they'd already started and the challenges they were having or ideas that they wanted us to invest in.

And it scratched a lot of the same itches that entertainment and writing did for me.

Candace Dellacona: Just to bring everyone in the loop. When you say you had a career in entertainment, you had a very successful career in entertainment, you're being very humble, and so you found the success at a pretty young age. You were exposed to this concept of being a founder and the ideas coming to life, it sounds like, which is another departure from like you didn't go to med school, you become a creative person.

You're successful, you conquer that. You see yet another sort of opportunity or avenue that you'd like to pursue just by being a witness to it, it sounds like.

Ben Kruger: Yeah I think that's true and I think I've said this before to people, it's usually anxious parents who come to me and they say, my kid wants to get into entertainment. What should I tell them? What should I do? And I say, well, for me working in Hollywood, I as Candace very kindly said, I worked on a network TV show called Brothers and Sisters.

I wrote pilots. I sold movies. I was on one of the very early digital video, YouTube shows that I ran. And what I found was that entertainment, the process of building of telling a story. Bringing that story to life is a very similar parallel process to building a business.

You are coming up with a concept that is going to serve a specific audience. You have to pitch it, you have to sell someone on it so that they will give you money so that you can go out and create that thing. And then you're pulling in different pieces and different resources to execute this vision.

So there's a lot of similarities. What I ended up finding was when I was then on the side and listening to entrepreneurs pitch me their ideas is that Hollywood creates this incredibly byzantine bureaucracy around the creative process. It's really everyone is trying to make money out of the process of making things.

And things may be a little different today with the creator economy, and it's a lot easier and faster and cheaper to make stuff. But 15, 20 years ago, you really had all of these gatekeepers. And then I would look at a, a young. I remember this young female entrepreneur coming in and she had a a tech product in the news space and she just had a concept.

She was building it and there weren't the same kind of barriers to entry for you needed money and you needed the vision and the skill, right? But. There weren't agents and lawyers and everyone saying, well, no, it's gotta go through me. It's gotta go through, will the studio say yes?

And so I was really inspired by the creativity that entrepreneurs could execute and the real world problems that they could solve and iterate and so I thought, maybe this is the best way to express my ideas and creativity. And so I started to have this nagging feeling as I was sitting there, listening to people pitch to me thinking like, I'd love to be doing that.

I wanna sit on that side of the table and and build something. And something that had a real impact as well. And again, for me, I think just naturally I gravitated to a lot of the healthcare startup ideas and healthcare deals that were happening at the time. And so we're, we're talking back, maybe 20 12, 13, 14.

And there were a lot of there was a lot of focus at that time and still today it's growing even more on the consumer side of healthcare.

Candace Dellacona: Especially in the US right?

Ben Kruger: Yes, absolutely. And and again, I think that, we forget that, healthcare in the United States accounts for something like a fifth of our GDP.

It is a massive, massive part of our economy. And obviously most of it is focused on the payer side either insurance or Medicare, et cetera. But more and more there have been efforts to provide a more consumer friendly version of healthcare. And I think a lot of what was happening really is that people were experiencing healthcare in the sort of big box version of healthcare.

And were constantly being disappointed by the experience. And I think all of us, I don't need to explain, how challenging it can be to get, not quality care in America, but a quality experience of care. And so I was looking at these concepts that were trying to address this issue and what I found was I related to it enormously because as a child, again, I go back to this, you know how I grew up, I grew up with thinking that healthcare in America was, this wonderful, warm, man.

This doctor who would answer your phone call in the middle of the night and do whatever needed to be done to help you and provide the comfort that you needed without asking you know, who your insurance provider was or saying, well, you can't really have that procedure because it's not covered.

Or, no, you need to wait three weeks for imaging because we can't get it to you in a timely manner. And so I, that's how I grew up thinking that people should be treated. And, it was my own adult realization, just like growing up and having to pay taxes that yeah, you're gonna pay a lot for insurance and you're not gonna get a lot in return.

Candace Dellacona: All of that's to say is that you're exposed to these founders who have a passion and they have a problem that they've identified that they wanna solve. All of your experience and the culmination about your exposure to young age, to healthcare and what you thought it would be. And being in the creative space, and you talked about like this Byzantine system, which is exactly what the healthcare system is. So it's almost like all of these things converged for you as a founder answering the question, making it so that healthcare is accessible and has resemblance to what you thought it was when you were a kid. Which is a really beautiful way to think about how it came to you, how you came into this space.

So can you tell us a little bit about, what you saw the first need was as it relates to Sollis, which is the first company you co-founded with your dad and another partner, Sollis Health.

Tell us a little bit about Sollis and how you got there.

Ben Kruger: I was looking, at different concepts that were emerging. And I got very interested in the growth of urgent care. And urgent care solves one specific need around immediate and urgent medical needs which is creating more convenience as opposed to using an emergency room for your urgent medical needs or trying to call your primary care physician who really isn't exactly the right person. Doesn't have necessarily the right facilities capacity, et cetera, to schedule to

Candace Dellacona: whatever, right?

Ben Kruger: see you exactly. To see you immediately.

Urgent cares were popping up and becoming quite successful and solving part of that need. And the idea was always that they would step in for the primary care doctors and for the emergency rooms and sort of fill that gap. And in New York City, especially at the time there was a company called CityMD, which was growing. And I met the the founder there, Rich Park and got very interested in what their model was.

And it was to, build as many of these boxes on as many corners as possible and try and create more convenience for the consumer so that, hey, I have a need, I can go right down there. And the Starbucks model of urgent care. So that did and helps to solve part of the need, which is convenient access.

Candace Dellacona: But not the personal part.

Ben Kruger: Exactly. On the other hand, concierge care was really growing. My dad was one of the early adopters of this model, which is, as many of you will know it's taking a membership or subscription approach to primary care and that was growing as again, people wanted a closer relationship to their doctor.

They didn't just want their insurance company telling them which doctor they should go to. They wanted to choose the doctor and they wanted to be able to call the doctor when they needed and not worry that the doctor was just charging them hourly or was unavailable to them because they couldn't be paid.

That there would be more alignment with the long-term health by creating this longer term relationship. And there were a number of businesses trying to take that concierge model out of the individual concierge doctor model and create a more scalable solution. But what I was seeing was and really what I identified was that for urgent care and the experience of going to the urgent care, it was still this kind of clunky experience, this one-off experience where, oh, I have an urgent need, but then you have to go into the urgent care. You have to give them your insurance. You have to wait online. They don't know who you are. They have to take your medical history. It can work well, but it can also be a really relatively onerous process. It's not the emergency room, but you can wait a really long time.

And as these urgent cares were also being purchased by private equity companies the pressure for them to squeeze their margins was such that there's incentive for those companies to hire lower level providers.

Who might be less seasoned and you might actually provide less quality care. And so the experience you get there is not great. Meanwhile, concierge doctors, they still have the problem of what to do when someone needs something immediately, because, you have these amazing internists, but you cut your hand, they dunno how to sew you up, right? Or they shouldn't sew you up, right? And they don't have capacity in their office and they're just not built for that. You have tummy pain, you need imaging. They can't do that. So they also had this need for this urgent and emergency support. So the concept came to us and it was through conversations with my father about what his business could use and what his service could use and what was in the market that what if we applied the membership? Approach to experience and that long-term alignment with patients and medical providers and applied that to the urgent emergency care space. And so that was the basic concept of Sollis in a nutshell.

It was create a subscription version of the urgent care slash emergency room. We built that, we started that in 2016 and really it was to serve concierge doctors and a lot of the, private doctors and their patients. And we really started very small. And it was really, we bootstrapped the company, not knowing what we didn't know. Built it from scratch and the concept started to take on attraction. And really most importantly, the doctors out there loved the concept and were engaging with us as partners.

Candace Dellacona: So I love the fact, a, as a sandwich generation member, that it's a concept that you came up with your dad. And, you brought your certainly different skillset together to solve a problem that your dad had. So you helped him, the elder fix a problem that he felt through creativity and with that being said, and the concept of concierge taking off, other than the obvious, and before we get to your newest endeavor.

Why do you think the concept of concierge care is resonating with so many people? Is it because you read the times and you read that our healthcare system is broken. Is it because people are craving that old fashioned, real meaningful relationship with your physicians? Is it a combination? What are your thoughts about why it's resonating with so many people?

Ben Kruger: I believe it's all of the above.

Candace Dellacona: Yeah.

Ben Kruger: That's a sort of a cop out answer. But I really do think the healthcare system in America is, it's a cliché to say it's broken, but it truly is broken. We have the greatest doctors, the greatest minds. You unquestionably will get the greatest medical care if you can in America, the greatest care that exists in the world, exists in America.

But the process of accessing that care, who gets the care, how you get the care is just broken. And nobody, even the most seasoned physicians, really knows the best way to navigate that system. It is extremely complex. Every single situation is different.

Every hospital has a different way of working. Every insurance company, every state has different regulations. You layer into that Medicare, Medicaid. The sheer number of people in America, the needs in urban environments, underserved communities it just becomes a truly, and again, the fact that it accounts for a fifth of our economy.

It is just an unwieldy monster. And I think just like anything else people want a better experience and people want to have access and they want expertise. And so I think for a certain market, it is worth spending money to get that better experience for something as important as your healthcare .

Candace Dellacona: I would also say, I think it's important that it's not just experience that people are craving. They're craving good care. So we're not really talking about a luxury here, unfortunately, we're talking about having the attention span of a physician that doesn't have his hand or her hand on the door the entire time of the appointment because insurance companies are requiring that they see a client every, or patient every six minutes. So experience versus the actual care, I think is really an important distinction. I also think if I could, is that, the creation, the finding of Sollis Care, which is amazing because it answered this deficit and this area where everyone realized there, there wasn't anyone to fill that space. You then took almost a wide lens view. I'm gonna use your, one of your Hollywood terms, but a wide lens view. And you started thinking about care in a much broader way when you conceived of Appian?

Is that accurate?

Ben Kruger: Absolutely. With the creation of Sollis, one of the things that I really enjoyed was the helping, right? The helping our clients and members deal with the problems that they were facing. And yes, solace started really as this approach to urgent emergency care, right? That, hey, I have an immediate need.

But what we ended up building around that was a really powerful care navigation engine as well. So when someone would come into us, firstly, we would already know their medical histories and know who they were, which made the experience of coming in, even with a new urgent situation, a much better experience for them.

By creating higher quality of care because we didn't have to rule out 50 things. We knew, okay, there's a history of this already. We can laser focus in on what that problem probably is, might be, and then execute on that much more quickly. And with a lot more focus. Similarly, we already have relationships with the rest of their care team, and so a lot of what Sollis continued to build was those touchpoint with the family. Those touch points with the family's support system, the primary care doctor, maybe they have a specialist, a cardiologist an orthopedist. So Sollis would then be able to sit in the middle and be able to communicate better and execute for the family, and so really create this network effect. What I realized was Sollis did that amazingly well when someone had that immediate need come in. When we were looking at a cohort of our patients who were older,

Candace Dellacona: Aging.

Ben Kruger: Exactly they're dealing with more healthcare complexities, more comorbidities. They have more complex social dynamics as well,

Candace Dellacona: Absolutely. Yeah.

Ben Kruger: Some people have, they've lost their partner. Their families may have moved away. And what I was seeing was that the needs that they were presenting were much, much, much more complex. And that Sollis did a great job trying to serve those needs, but wasn't built for that type of complexity and that type of longevity care.

And so as I saw that and I also experienced my own experience as a member of the sandwich generation. I've got children and I have aging parents as well. I started to think about can we take some of the things that we learned about creating a really quality care experience and apply that to a aging market and an aging demographic who has a bit more complexity. As I looked at that, I realized too, Sollis is focused, I would say 95% or more on medical care, the needs of our aging population. Sure, the medical care needs are more and more complex, but there's all of these other needs that go along with that.

And with that aging process that I was starting to look at and really start to understand more and educate myself on. And as I looked at that, I realized that there was an opportunity to try to create that same kind of support network, that advocacy, that navigation that we tried to provide to the healthcare system for Sollis, for the broader journey of aging.

And that's what Appian is.

Candace Dellacona: When you think about aging, and it's certainly a topic that comes up a lot on this podcast, and as members, you and I of the sandwich generation, when you become a caregiver in whatever form that is, whatever, however you define it. think you're right. Only a small percentage of what we do as advocates for our aging loved ones have to do with the medical care. And part of the reason why I actually started this podcast was to provide these resources that go beyond that because the things that we need beyond the medical care are also time consuming, also require sometimes expert guidance. And they are things that you and I as laypeople may not do as well. So what I think you explained, and correct me if I'm wrong, but, Appian seeks to serve as almost the quarterback for the network surrounding your aging loved one. And what I love about that, and one of the things that we've talked about on this podcast too, is the concept of solo aging. Because you don't always have a network of people that can step in and advocate for you.

So, when you come up with the concept of Appian, I'm curious to know, as your dad who was, say, focused on the care, what did everybody say to you? Did they say you're onto something Ben? Did they say you're crazy. It's too expansive, it's too big of an idea, it's too ambitious. What was the, the feedback?

Ben Kruger: It's interesting you asked that. The feedback, firstly, I think stepping back really what is the concept?. I think that you identified it well, it is creating a service that can be the partner to the aging adults or the family and the caregivers and or and or both. And act really as their advocate, guide, supporter, project manager through the holistic process of aging, right? And what we see is aging is incredibly complex.

Candace Dellacona: Yes.

Ben Kruger: Everyone is going to have a different experience, right? Some will have extreme medical needs, some won't. Some will be aging alone. Some will have, beautiful communities and families. But for everyone, that journey is one of the most important and impactful moments of one's life.

It sounds obvious, but for most people, especially in today's modern America, aging is something that happens to them. And what we seek to do is honor the process by giving people the tools to place the attention and intention on aging that it deserves, so that aging goes from a passive experience that happens into an active project that you get to engage with, and that you get to make good decisions for yourself and for your family that are going to optimize your life today and set yourself up for the best possible future you can have.

Candace Dellacona: So with all of that, if you think of aging as a project, I think that's a great analogy. Creating the infrastructure so that when things do happen, when the result of the quote unquote, aging could end up in a compromised mental capacity if you have a memory impairment issue or you're physically more limited than you once were having that infrastructure in place, and you and I have talked about this a bunch of times, Ben, it provides choices so that there is no crisis.

And I think that's one of the main points that I try to make with my clients, with our listeners, is that when you set up yourself for success, and you think about what the future holds and lay the plan so that it's plug and play, it is much more seamless. There are less mistakes, it is less costly than making a really misguided under the gun decision in crisis mode. And so I think what is also quite universal in setting up this plan is children of, the older generations, many of us struggle with, how do we even start this conversation to say, Hey, mom, dad, aunt, uncle, whomever it is. What's the plan? How do we start that dialogue? What's your best advice?

Ben Kruger: The best advice that I have through this process and my experience is not to wait to engage. Engage now in a conversation. And secondarily, it's to really listen, as the members of the sandwich generation to really try to understand what are the goals and desires of the aging loved one?

What is it that they want? What are they scared of? What don't they want? The first step is to really get to know them and go more deeply into their hopes and dreams and fears as well. Fears play a huge part of that. I think the challenge is for a lot of people and a lot of us, the relationships that we have can be complicated.

It's very hard for a lot of people to have the kind of open conversations that they hope to have. Not everybody has those tools. People have the tools of, let me fix a problem and, I can get on the internet and I'll figure something out. But those other tools, especially when it's with your parents are more complex. It is more challenging. So in some ways we can serve as an intermediary or that third party who can step in there and have that conversation and start that dialogue in a way and it allows people to speak to us potentially in a way that they might not be able to speak to their children and they might not be able to speak to their parents.

But I think generally the more you can do to really ask open-ended questions, honor and accept what you're hearing. And I'll give an example. For instance, my mother and my stepfather they live outside of New York City. They live about an hour out of town in a three story home that is not really aging appropriate, let's say.

And the conversation about where to age and how has been an ongoing conversation. And the first time I asked the question about this I approached it like, Hey, your house isn't safe in case something happens, what's gonna happen in the winter? If someone slips and falls and gets hurt, you don't have a bathroom on your first floor.

This is a disaster waiting to happen. What are you gonna do? How can I help. That was not met with the kind of, warmth and appreciative appreciation that I expected. And instead it was, Hey, we've got it covered. Don't worry about it. And we're figuring something out.

And what I didn't realize was I was projecting all of my fears and all of my needs onto them. The need for me was, or my fear is, okay, you're gonna get hurt. And my need is I want you to be safe, and I wanna know what's happening so I'm not called in the middle of the night and have to deal with this.

I mean, sort of selfishly,

Candace Dellacona: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Ben Kruger: But that's just not ultimately how these conversations work best. And so instead asking, Hey, if you had your dream scenario of how you're going to live the next 10 years of your life and where you're going to live, like what does that look like?

What would be, your kind of nightmare scenario. What don't you want? So and a lot of the time what happens is people say you'll speak to an aging adult, and I don't know what the percentage is, but a very high percentage of people will say, Hey, I wanna, I want to age in place. I wanna live at home.

A lot of that has to do with comfort, the community that they have. But all of those things are changing too. So helping to have a really complex and sort of intentional dialogue around this will unlock options and decisions. I think, the same goes for this big question of taking away the keys, right? For the driver. How do you talk to someone who you don't feel safe with them driving? It's not that people necessarily are so desperate to drive their own car, driving isn't that great, but what is great? Independence. And so how can you come up with understanding what the fear is?

I'm gonna lose my independence. Okay. How can we solve for that issue while also solving for the safety issue. And I think it takes that kind of intentionality and that kind of thoughtfulness and time. And not everybody has that, and not everybody has that relationship.

Candace Dellacona: I think you're right. I think one of the things that many people struggle with is the role that you play within the family unit. It's a role that you've played for a really long time. And I think sometimes there is a role reversal. I had that with my own dad where he was seeking advice for me in ways that he had never done before. It was strange. It was unnerving. I was lucky that he actually thought that my input was valuable. I think a lot of adult children don't have that experience. One of the things that you said, and I think it's the key to all of it, is listening. And sometimes your family relationship doesn't really allow for that.

So having a neutral third party, whether it's Appian or geriatric care manager in general, I think people should think of the professionals in the context of being able to push in on certain subjects so that the information that we need as adult children and advocates, who cares how we get it. If it comes from the geriatric care manager 'cause mom or dad or aunt or uncle couldn't say it out loud to you. It doesn't matter. But the more data and information we have, the better we're able to plan for and help our loved one plan for what it looks like. And just, based on what you said, Ben you come, to your mom and your stepdad and you love them and you're like afraid for them. I'm sure what they heard is, I know best. You are not doing this. So changing that dialogue I think is really important. And it is so great to have a neutral third party that can help you do that so that you can continue with your, relationship as complex as it is, you don't also have to solve for, how do you find out what their hopes and dreams are when you've never had a conversation like that in 45 years?

Ben Kruger: Absolutely. And, look, I'm a traditional like fixer and problem solver type. That's who I am. That's who I am in my business. But whether it's with your children or your spouse or your aging parents, how you engage and how you listen and how you show up really, really matters.

And so I think what I'm trying to build, too, is a service that can do both. We will absolutely do, and we are the project manager, problem solver, network. And that's the sort of engine that I'm building and is really taking this idea of care management, of care coordination, of navigation, and adding a technological underpinning to that to make it more efficient.

And so whenever you have a need, we are there to solve it. That is the core underpinning. But, what we realize and what my concept really is that it has to engage in the human, emotional, intentional way that will speak to people where they actually are. Because one of the challenges with all of this is getting people to make those decisions, getting people to start, take that first step on the journey. And that's why we think of it as a journey. But if you can help people along to take those steps and then you're providing them with all of the resources that they need to execute and helping to keep them on the path.

We are gonna take this detour and that will mean this, but then we end up over here and if you help them along, then it becomes a really empowering process.

Candace Dellacona: One of the things that we talk about often is the fact that it is empowering, that we wanna engage our loved ones so that we're not the one making the decision when it's long past the time that they can. And we're supposing what they want. We're just assuming I think that they would want this.

So it's really nice to involve, your loved one in the dialogue so that they can pick the course. And so there isn't a lot of getting off the path. And whether it's Appian or any other methodology you choose as you age, I think one of the key factors, Ben, that you and I have talked about often is the plan. And having the plan in place will allow you to age well. And whether that looks like a really strong family unit where powers can be delegated and tasks can be handed out because you have a family of physicians and social workers and finance people. Awesome, that's great. But the conversation has to start about what the expectations are and how to set up that framework in advance of a crisis. So I will say that, looking at Appian and, I really hope that this is the way of the future that, our goal as a human race is to age well, even though in America, obviously we're so focused on youth, but that's one of the inevitable sort of factors of life.

If you are lucky enough to have a long life, you're gonna age. So it's awesome that you've come up with this concept to really try to address this giant issue that we're all going to face whether ourselves or we're going to advocate for somebody else in the process. I think the other part, and I've mentioned this a couple of times before, we have people watching us, and those people are our children.

We're modeling for them. So the way in which we are providing care to our aging loved ones is being witnessed by the generation of people we're trying to bring up to do better than we did.

Ben Kruger: That's absolutely right. I love seeing my children with my parents and having them experience that kind of beautiful, multi-generational experience. And again, I think, when we look back 50 years or into other cultures, families were all living together. There really was this amazing network effect that you could have.

But in today's society, again, things are quite fragmented. People's lives are quite individualistic. Everyone is busy and doing their thing. And there isn't also that kind of multi-generational, natural experience that one would have and roadmap that one would've already had of well, I've seen someone age, I've witnessed it.

I've seen, I saw my aunt do that for my grandmother. I've been there along the way. And so there's a blueprint. There's already a blueprint. For us today, there is no blueprint. And I think that what is really shocking to me, but very obvious is almost no one is prepared. Almost no one has given this experience and this journey the thought, the honor that it deserves and once, as you say, once you get to the point

where you are in crisis, it is too late. It is too late to make the kind of choices that you would want, and suddenly you are then just reacting. And so Appian unquestionably does crisis management, but our goal is to engage people before there's a crisis.

And once you have a plan in place, you can execute that plan. And the resources that you need are much more manageable. And so even outside of people who may not want to engage an outside support system like Appian, I really encourage people to engage early in the conversation.

Engage early in the planning and obviously that's why, when we spoke the legal piece of it is huge.

The logistical side of it is huge. And so that's what I would just say to the listener, start planning today. If you need support, reach out, ask for it. You have so many resources, and it's one of the beautiful things about this show is that you are bringing these resources together for people. And there are resources out there for, really almost anyone with, very differing levels of resource.

Candace Dellacona: I think you're right. I think I'm gonna echo what you said is that the time to have the conversations now we have to honor the process of aging with intention and thought, and there's no better way to show someone that you love them than starting this dialogue. I also wanna thank you because you have seen this problem and you've sought your own creativity and really tapped into trying to do a good thing, a mitzvah, if you will, by answering a problem that we all have. So in the creation of Appian, hopefully inspiring other founders to identify and hope they solve for those problems to make it easier for us in the sandwich generation to provide the care for our loved ones so that they can age well and they can, live out their beautiful life and end their beautiful life with dignity.

Because I think that's all we hope to do for our loved ones. So thank you so much for being here and, sharing your story with us and again, sharing your passion and your creativity that really is truly answering the call.

Ben Kruger: I appreciate being on the show so much, and you're absolutely right. The needs are vast, but there are lots of really passionate, smart people out there trying to solve these problems and I thank you for bringing a lot of this together,

Candace Dellacona: Yeah, my pleasure.

Ben Kruger: Thanks for having me.

Candace Dellacona: You're welcome. Thanks, Ben.