

PAMELA BUCHANAN, MD

WHITE COAT



BLACK FACE

A DOCTOR'S GUIDE TO
OVERCOME YOUR EMOTIONAL FLATLINE

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About the Book



Part memoir, part roadmap

Dr. Pamela Buchanan shows you how to rise from the emotional flatline and live life on your terms.

The Emotional Flatline is Real. This is the Revival.

What happens when you give everything to your career, your family, your community— and have nothing left for yourself?

Dr. Pamela Buchanan calls it the emotional flatline—a silent, soul-crushing collapse that feels like burnout, but runs much deeper. And for her, it hit hardest during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As an emergency room physician on the front lines of a global crisis, Dr. Buchanan witnessed the devastation of an overwhelmed, broken healthcare system—especially for women, people of color, and the underserved. She kept going, caring for others through fear, chaos, and trauma... until there was nothing left of her to give.

White Coat, Black Face isn't just a memoir. It's a lifeline.

It's the story of what happens when the healer needs healing. In White Coat, Black Face, Dr. Buchanan shares her unfiltered journey through emotional collapse—and the radical steps she took to recover and rise.

You'll learn how to:

- Break the burnout cycle that's stealing your life
- Reclaim your identity, energy, and sense of purpose
- Navigate bias, microaggressions, and chronic exhaustion
- Create a career—and a life—that honors your whole self



Reviews & Praise



"This book is incredible and powerful—like you, Dr. Buchanan. I felt like I was walking alongside of you, and I appreciate the opportunity to witness your journey. I look forward to purchasing this book when it comes out and recommending it widely—so many will feel seen and validated through your stories. This book will save lives from suicide... and even more souls who are walking through life 'emotionally flatlined.'"

—Jillian Rigert, DMD, MD

"This is such a timely and important story. I wasn't aware of how common physician suicide is—it really opened my eyes. You just never know what someone might be going through."

—Aneesha Smith, RNC-OB

"This book pulled me in from the very first page. Dr. Buchanan's honesty and strength shine through every chapter. It's the kind of story that stays with you and makes you think deeply about your own path."

—Monique Campbell

"Dr. Buchanan's words are powerful and real. Her journey is full of moments that made me pause and reflect. I truly believe this book will help so many people feel less alone."

—Dionne Smith, PMP

"As a doctor, a mother, and a woman of color, I want to thank Dr. Buchanan for writing this book. It shines a light on struggles so many of us carry in silence. Her story is both brave and necessary, and I felt seen in ways I didn't expect. This book is a gift."

—LaTarsha Rickens, MD

Pamela Buchanan, MD



Media & Partnerships



DR. LORNA BREEN
HEROES' FOUNDATION



Dr. Pamela Buchanan is a board-certified physician, TEDx speaker, and mental health advocate with over 20 years in emergency and private practice medicine.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, she fought to save others while silently losing herself—until she experienced a personal crash she calls the emotional flatline.

Now, through her Strong Medicine brand, coaching, and speaking, she helps others heal—physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Her message is universal:

- You can come back from the brink.
- You can reclaim your power.
- You can revive your life.



Dear Readers



Dear Reader,

Thank you for choosing White Coat, Black Face for your book club. I'm honored that you're spending time not only with my story, but with the deeper truths so many of us carry silently, daily, and often invisibly.

This book began as a way to process my own emotional flatline—a state beyond burnout that left me numb, exhausted, and questioning my very place in medicine. But as I wrote, I realized I wasn't just telling my story. I was giving voice to the unspoken burdens that countless women, healthcare workers, caregivers, and high-achievers have been carrying for years.

If you've ever poured from an empty cup, smiled when you were breaking inside, or felt unseen in spaces you've given everything to, this book is for you.

Whether you're in medicine or not, my hope is that you walk away from these pages with permission. Permission to rest. Permission to feel. Permission to ask for help. And most of all, permission to redefine what healing, success, and power look like for you.

Book clubs are about connection, and that's exactly what this story is meant to foster. I invite you to not only reflect on the themes but also to reflect on your own resilience, boundaries, and truth.

To go deeper into this conversation, I invite you to watch my TEDx Talk, The Fight for Better Mental Health Care, recorded at TEDxMyrtleBeach. It offers even more context behind the emotional flatline and why this message matters now more than ever.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctKPY7JAsIA>

Thank you for holding space for my story—and perhaps, for your own.

With gratitude and purpose,

Dr. Pamela Buchanan, MD
Author, Advocate, Physician Coach
Creator of The StrongHer Purpose Circle™



Interview Questions



Personal Journey & Motivation

1. What inspired you to write *White Coat, Black Face*, and why now?
2. Can you share the moment you first realized you were experiencing what you now call the “emotional flatline”?
3. How did your TEDx talk serve as a catalyst for this book and your public advocacy?

Mental Health & Medicine

1. You describe the emotional flatline as deeper than burnout—how is it different, and why is that distinction important?
2. How does the medical system fail physicians, particularly women and people of color, when it comes to mental health support?
3. You’ve talked about isolation during COVID—what do you think the public still misunderstands about the emotional toll on frontline workers?

Racism, Bias & Identity

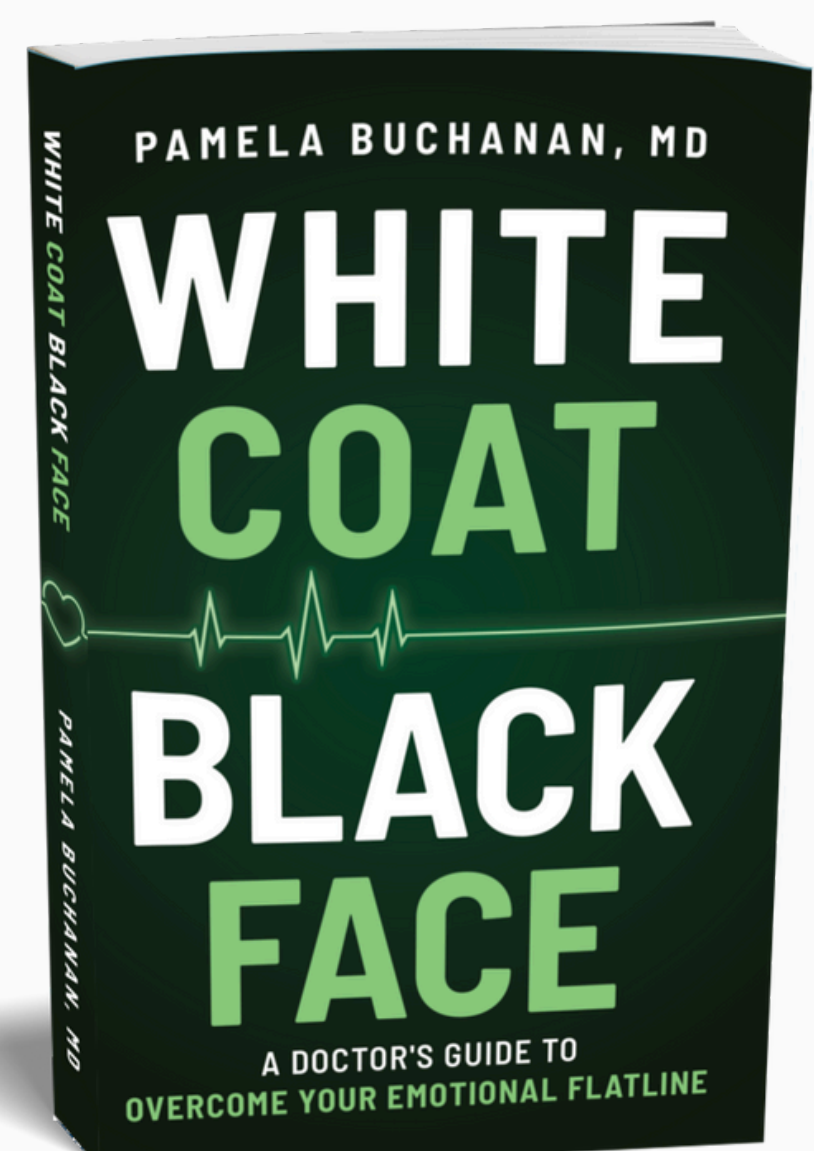
1. What does it feel like to navigate racism while trying to save lives—and how has it shaped the way you practice medicine?
2. In the book, you’re candid about being called slurs and being questioned as a Black female doctor. Why was it important to include those moments?
3. How has your neurodivergence influenced your experience in both education and medicine?

Healing & Advocacy

1. You transitioned from burnout to becoming a physician coach and advocate. What was the hardest part of that shift—and the most liberating?
2. What are some signs someone might be emotionally flatlining without even knowing it?
3. Tell us more about the StrongHer Purpose Circle and why community is such a critical part of healing.

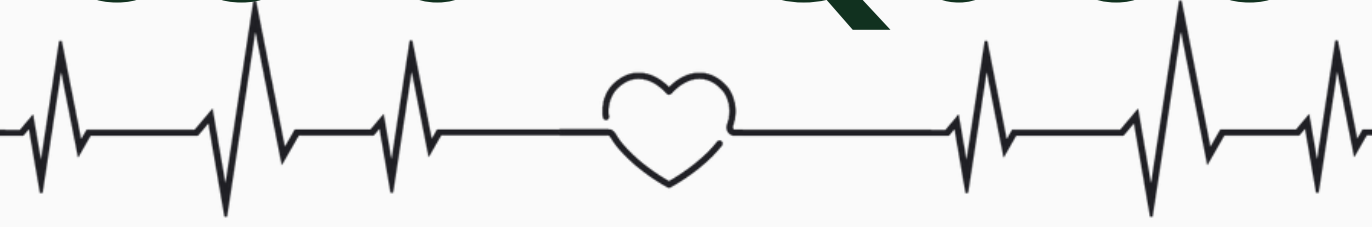
Advice & Hope

1. What advice do you have for other high-achieving professionals who feel emotionally depleted but afraid to stop “pushing through”?
2. If you could rewrite one norm in the healthcare industry today, what would it be?
3. What do you hope book clubs and readers take away from this story—especially those who aren’t in medicine?



Book Club

Discussion Questions



Part 1: The Emotional Flatline

Dr. Buchanan introduces the term “emotional flatline.”

→ How did that term resonate with you personally? Have you ever experienced something similar, even outside of medicine?

In what ways do systemic racism and gender bias show up throughout her journey?

→ How did those moments impact your reading experience or challenge your assumptions?

The book opens with warmth and childhood memory, but quickly shifts into trauma and stress.

→ Why do you think Dr. Buchanan chose to begin that way?

Part 2: Resuscitation & Realignment

When Dr. Buchanan shares the story of her mentor’s suicide, what emotions did that stir for you?

→ Have you ever felt pressure to “keep going” when you were unraveling inside?

How did learning about her experiences as a neurodivergent child shape your understanding of her resilience?

Dr. Buchanan often resisted asking for help.

→ What are some messages society gives us about vulnerability, and how do they differ by race, gender, or profession?

Part 3: Redefining Healing

She writes: “Surviving is not the same as living.”

→ What does truly “living” look like for you right now?

The F.L.A.T. framework—Feel it, Listen inward, Act with intention, Transform—was developed through personal experience.

→ Which part of the framework do you find most powerful or most difficult to apply?

The book is both deeply personal and broadly systemic.

→ What changes—personally, professionally, or politically—do you believe are needed to support the well-being of caregivers and high achievers?

What quotes or scenes stood out most to you, and why?



Book Club

Activity Ideas



1. "Permission Slip" Writing Exercise

Give each member a blank card and invite them to write a permission slip for themselves, inspired by the book.

Examples: "I give myself permission to rest," "I give myself permission to ask for help."

2. The Flatline Self-Check

As a group, review the emotional flatline definition. Ask members to reflect (privately or in pairs):

Have you felt numbness disguised as composure? When did it start?

3. "What I Want" Circle (Inspired by the Coach Scene)

Go around the room (or virtual circle) and answer the question Dr. Buchanan was asked by her coach:

"What do you want?"

(No wrong answers. Just truth.)

4. Soundtrack of Stress or Healing

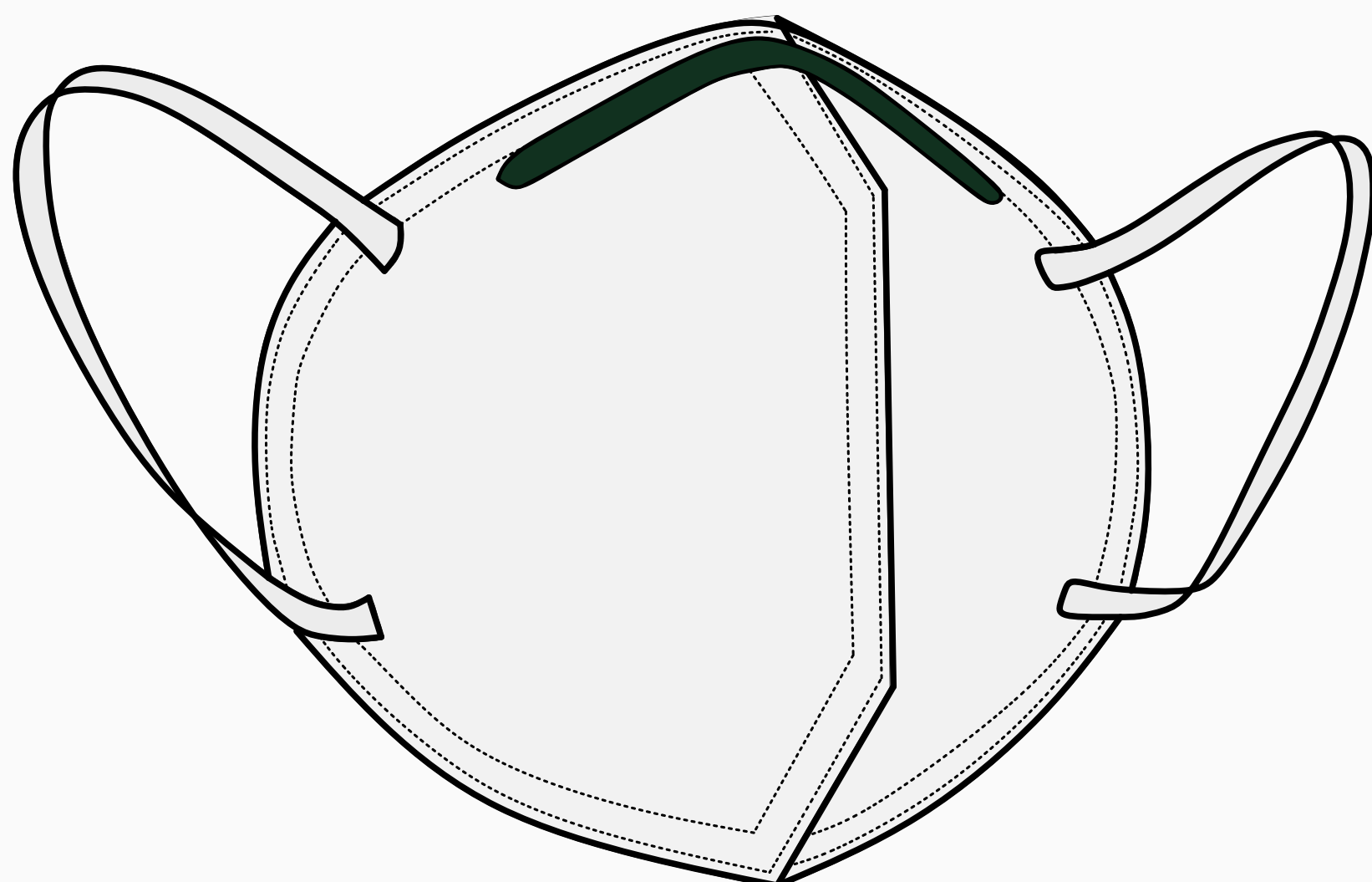
Invite members to share one song that represents a stressful season—and one that represents healing. Make a club playlist!

5. Medical Bias Story Share

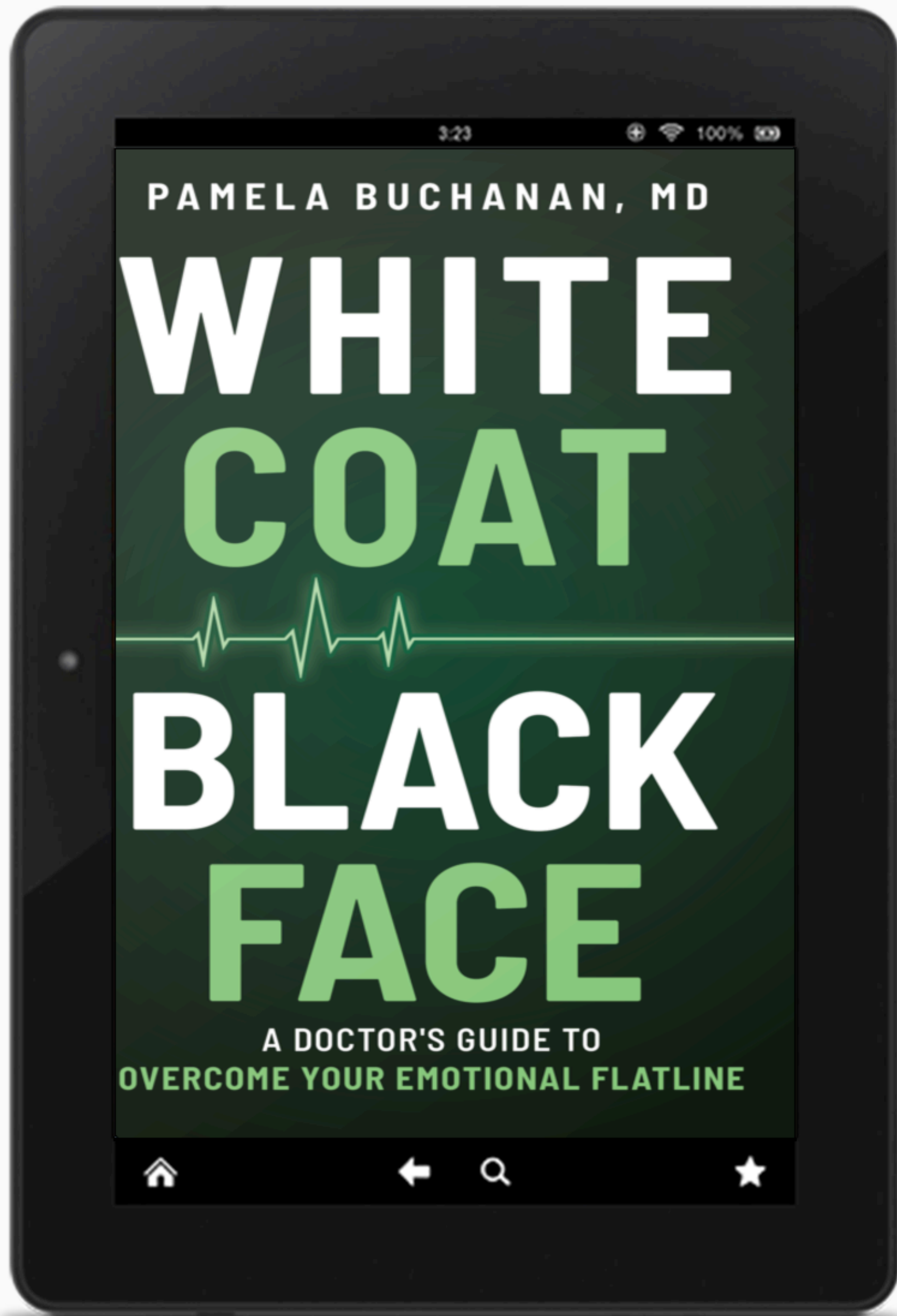
If comfortable, invite members to share any personal experiences with bias in healthcare. Offer a safe and respectful listening circle.

6. "StrongHer" Goals

Inspired by Dr. Buchanan's StrongHer Purpose Circle, ask each member to name one habit, boundary, or support system they want to build this year.



Read Sample Chapters



[CLICK TO READ SAMPLE CHAPTERS](#)

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Get Your Free Guide

The StrongHER Method™

10 Ways to Banish Stress for Good



How It Works:

01 Scan the QR Code

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02 Provide Your Email

Subscribe to the StrongHer email list to receive your free guide. Be sure to confirm your subscription.

03 Look Out for Invite

Check your email for an invite to the StrongHer Purpose Circle.

Having trouble with the QR Code?
Try this: <https://bit.ly/4cRQRn3>



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It's the story of what happens when the healer needs healing.

Advanced Reviews

"This book is incredible and powerful—like you, Dr. Buchanan. I felt like I was walking alongside of you, and I appreciate the opportunity to witness your journey. I look forward to purchasing this book when it comes out and recommending it widely—so many will feel seen and validated through your stories. This book will save lives from suicide... and even more souls who are walking through life 'emotionally flatlined.'"

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Author Biography

Pamela Buchanan, MD is a fierce mental health advocate and has been a board-certified physician in private practice and emergency medicine for over 20 years.

Dr. Buchanan earned her undergraduate degree from Washington University in St. Louis and her medical degree from the Ross University School of Medicine.

Today, she serves as an advocate for the Lorna Breene Foundation and provides coaching to women physicians and other professionals in high-pressure roles.

