



**All the Best Podcast**  
**Episode 15: “The Gold Standard”**  
*Featuring Dr. Martin Murphy*

Dr. Murphy: December 2nd, 2016. "Dear Marty, this note and token of my appreciation is very late in coming. Jean does say that it is her fault, but I hope you know it comes from the heart and with a great deal of gratitude. Although C-Change's closing its doors, a decision Barbara and I enthusiastically support, we are very proud of what we have accomplished in the last 15 years. Your leadership on the board from the very beginning certainly made a big difference in the lives of so many who were touched by C-Change and our mission. And, of course, it brings us great comfort to know that the CEO Roundtable will continue its great work and take on some of C-Change's unfinished business as well. On top of all that, you are making China put out their cigarettes. Marty, what can I say? You truly are what my grandchildren call a game-changer. Working with you has been a joy and an inspiration. Merry Christmas to you and your family. All the best. George Bush."

George Bush: First place, I believe that character is a part of being president.

Barbara Bush: And life really must have joy.

Sam: This is "All The Best," the official podcast of the George & Barbara Bush Foundation. I'm your host, Sam LeBlond, one of their many grandchildren. Here, we celebrate the legacy of these two incredible Americans through friends, family, and the foundation. This is "All The Best."

George Bush: I remember something my dad taught me. He said, "Write your mother, serve your country," and he said, "Tell the truth," and I've tried to do that in public life, all through it.

Barbara Bush: You are a human being first, and those human connections with children, with friends are the most important investment you will ever make.

George Bush: We stand tonight before a new world of hope and possibilities for our children, a world we could not have contemplated a few years ago.

Sam: On behalf of our family and the George & Barbara Bush Foundation, this is "All The Best."

Dr. Martin J. Murphy was founding CEO and is a board director of the 20-year-old nonprofit CEO Roundtable on Cancer at the request of my grandfather, President George H.W. Bush. As an NIH principal investigator, Dr. Murphy has authored more than 160 peer-accepted papers and 7 books. He co-founded the Society for Translational Oncology, is a member of five scientific cancer advisory boards, and was the past vice-chairman of C-Change, founded by my grandparents. We're so excited to have Dr. Murphy here with us today on "All The Best."

Dr. Murphy: Well, thank you so much for having me, Sam. I've been looking forward to this.

Sam: Dr. Murphy, I'd like to start out with this. What led you to be a doctor? Can you talk about your journey as it relates to that professional career?

Dr. Murphy: The moment of reverie takes me back to high school as a sophomore, and I was going to a Benedictine boys' boarding school. My father said they'd at least get some discipline in me. In any case, at the sophomore year, summer, he dropped me off in front of Saint Francis Hospital. I was all of about 14 years of age. And he said, "Why don't you go in there and get a job?" He knew I loved biology. And sure enough, I found my way to a pathologist by the name of Raul W. Yurik and he misunderstood that the school I was attending, he thought was a college, and so he hired me. And that afternoon, I assisted at my first post-mortem exam. And that's what I did for that summer. And I came to understand that these tumors were really deadly. And it just converted me for the rest of my life to not just answering the question of what is cancer and how does it thwart life but how can we inhibit it. And so, it was really an almost straight trajectory from age 14 to where I am right now.

Sam: We're all in a better place that you made that decision. Dr. Murphy, there simply isn't time on this podcast to cite all of the critical leadership positions you have held as a researcher and crusader in the war against cancer. But one, I thought, specifically, that brought you together with my grandparents was your groundbreaking work with the organization called C-Change. What was C-Change and what made it so unique?

Dr. Murphy: What made it unique was George and Barbara Bush, full-stop. They made it, not only unique, they fused life into it, they breathed purpose into it. And we who were blessed to be within their orbit, we became then changed, transformed. So, what was it? I'm convinced that the death of Robin weeks short of her fourth birthday never left your grandparents' mind in a day. Every day they held hallow her precious memory. But during those years, those lengthy, productive, world-changing years of his professional life, he never really brought her name into common parlance, and I was always convinced that it was so treasured and it was yet so tender and so painful that Robin's memory was held in the locket of the heart of George and Barbara Bush. It's not that they didn't talk about her or it was a secret that she died of leukemia, no, but it was a treasure, and it also was so painful that they just didn't talk about it frequently, especially in public. But when he became, as he then once called himself, "Citizen Bush," he and Barbara said, "What can we do to foster research or to do something that would hasten solutions to this age-old disease?" and called a number of us to College Station, to the then-new library and asked, "Why is it taking so long?" Now, it wasn't an indictment as it was truly a question asking why? What is it about this terrible disease that is taking so long. And as we described reasons for it, he and Barbara then said, "Well, what could we do?" And that began what became C-Change. It originally was called the National Dialogue on Cancer, in which leaders from all parts of the spectrum of oncology, be that clinical oncology or experimental bench research, or patient advocates and so forth, all of these people also from the National Cancer Institute and the CDC, from government, all came together in this dialogue. Your grandparents sat through every one of those meetings. Sometimes it got pretty slow going.

Anyhow, at the end of one of these meetings, he looked around, and I just was privileged to sit beside him. He looked at me and said, "Have we accomplished anything?" And I described to him, I said, "Sir, many of these advocates have never really been in the same room with each other. Cancer is such a plurality of diseases. This dialogue is really constructive." And he looked at me and paused, and then your grandmother said, "You know, George doesn't do dialogue well." And that was telling, because dialogue is conversation. Yes, it's trying to find common ground. And all of that we were doing, because everyone, let's face it, were on their best behavior. If you were invited by the former leader of the free world to come to his meeting, boy, you're gonna go and you're gonna wear your best bib and tucker and you're gonna behave. Which meant, really, at one point, he said, "Well, sounds to me as if before the dialogue, there used to be sort of a collision of monologues, everyone telling their own story, but not listening to each other's stories." And this dialogue, because of George and Barbara Bush, began to become a listening opportunity. And at one point, as this was gaining traction, he then also said, "But where are

the chief executives of some of America's great corporations?" We had all these leaders of the cancer ecosystem, but where was corporate America? And he answered his own question by saying, and I quote, because, again, I was seated close to him, "No, they wouldn't play well in this sandbox. They don't do dialogue well. They're measured on actions, and performance, and product." And that began to become the kernel of an idea that grew to become the CEO Roundtable on Cancer, a parallel organization with C-Change being the nonprofit part of it, and the CEO Roundtable, although it was nonprofit nature, it consisted of chief executive officers of some of the world's great corporations, both of which C-Change and the CEO Roundtable saluted the same flag that said, "Cancer is intolerable, and we've got to do everything we can about it." And that was his mantra.

Sam: Dr. Murphy, you mentioned CEO Roundtable, and I wanna get deeper into that in a second. But first, also another thing making C-Change unique was that you basically closed the doors when you felt the group's mission had been completed. Can you talk about that decision?

Dr. Murphy: The purpose of the National Dialogue, which then became known C, the letter C, hyphen, Change. So, a play on words, a C change. Yes, he was an old Navy man, of course, and we all know what a sea change is at sea, but in this case, it was to change cancer. And the change that was sought was to gather all these disparate individuals, all these sometimes competing advocacy groups, and all these scientists, as well as physician clinicians and administrators, gather them all together and not sing the same note from the libretto, but sing different notes but in harmony, to listen to each other and, at the same time, build coalitions to collaborate. After all, patients deserve the very best from all of us, and we can really give only the very best when we do it together in concert, in harmony. At the time when C-Change was started, that was unheard of. You sang your own tune and you very often didn't listen to anybody else's. But after years of doing this, it became the norm to have a plurality of different disciplines in every room and every meeting as it is to this very day. And so, Sam, I was there at a luncheon in Houston, and the question was, "Wait a minute. We started this out, we accomplished it. Why would it continue? Let's close the door. Let's celebrate and say, "Look what this has done. Now, continue. Go and do it. Make us proud of you. And, by the way, things that are left undone, those few other things that are ongoing, Marty, why don't you take those on at the CEO Roundtable on Cancer?" That continues to this very day. In fact, we're celebrating our 20th anniversary in this year, 2020. So, that's how it was born, how it grew, how it became productive. And then, when it really had run its course, who were the ones who said, "We're not looking for legacy, we're looking for product. We want progress, and by Jingo, we've made progress. Now, go on with it."

Sam: Well, can you share more on the second part of the mission my grandfather started with the CEO Roundtable and how you all are continuing to push that movement forward today?

Dr. Murphy: Wow. Well, it's really push and pull, thankfully. Now, globally, really, Sam, it's not just in the United States as now there is a first-in-class nonprofit called the CEO Roundtable on Cancer China. At the invitation of China, and I'll be happy to tell you again how your grandfather opened that door to the Middle Kingdom. He opened it wide, and it was through there that we passed. But what is it all about? The CEO Roundtable has two motifs. Really, first of all, he called us to be bold and venturesome. His comment was, "I don't wanna see you guys who are chief executives of some of the world's greatest corporations doing something dull, or trivial, or repetitive. I want you to be bold, be venturesome. In fact, put yourself, and, yes, to an extent, maybe your company, at some risk. But for what purpose? Because cancer is intolerable. And if you guys really pushed the envelope, there's no telling what you guys can do." Does that sound like him? Yeah. And that's exactly what happened. And so, it was that a band of 13 chief executives got together at the invitation of the President and they asked the question, "Well, what could we do as chief executives?" Yes, they're always being invited to make contributions financially to cancer research organizations, and truly America is the most generous of all countries in its philanthropy in that regard. But did they, each of these CEOs, occupying a corner office, did they also occupy a piece of that responsibility? So, they went back to their companies and said, "Well, what are we doing about cancer education, cancer awareness, cancer detection early on, and cancer treatment, and cancer patient care? What are we doing in our company in all those areas?" And then, we regathered all of these CEOs, and that time, Sam, we were in the board room of MD Anderson Cancer Center, that great hospital devoted to cancer that your grandfather and grandmother were both on that board. They went around the room, your grandfather was there at the head of the table, and each of these CEOs of these enormous companies, they were gonna be showing off. I'm kidding in saying that, but they went back, and they found out all the things that their company was doing, and they wanted to boast about it, rightfully. But as they began to talk, you could see the ballpoint pens coming out and notes were being taken.

And after the end of two hours of this roundtable discussion, when everyone reported what they were doing about cancer in their workplace at their company, the boss...and that's what I affectionately called your grandfather...the boss said, "It looks to me as if everyone is doing something really good, but no one's doing it all because you're taking notes." And they nodded their heads and said, "Yeah, you're right, Mr. President. I learned something from so and so that

I don't think we're doing, but we're going to." And it was just a short step from there to say, "What we should do is to establish a new standard so high that even these great companies would have to reach to achieve it. Let's call it a gold standard." And that became the CEO Cancer Gold Standard. Over 7 million Americans are working in corporations where their management are enlightened to actually bring about a corporate culture, a workplace wellness culture that inculcates and helps the individual employees know the choices that they make, the lifestyles that they adopt very often predicate how well and long they live. Sixty percent, 60% Sam, of all cancer-related deaths are due to choices that I've made. We can change the trajectory of cancer death today without another ounce of research if we just implemented lifestyle decisions that predicated health, and that's what this is all about. So, the Gold Standard is a workplace wellness initiative, instigated by your grandfather, with what it is called the gold standard that now is used by companies large and small, not only around the country but now also in China, where the President actually wrote his dear friend who is then the, Foreign Minister, Foreign Minister Yang. He called him Tiger because he was born in the year of the tiger, and they met when he was an envoy in 1976 that drew our countries diplomatically together. He met him at that time and befriended him the rest of his life. And he wrote a letter to, "Dear, Tiger. Let me tell you about the CEO Roundtable on Cancer and what they're doing. I think you might be interested." I should now tell you, Sam, that I just finished my 125th trip to the Middle Kingdom.

Sam: I'm glad you mentioned China. You and my grandparents both had an affinity towards China and the Chinese people. As you just mentioned, you just completed your 125th trip there. What have you learned from your experiences in visiting China?

Dr. Murphy: Five millennia is the length of time. There's a written codification of history in China. This is an old culture, and that culture is steeped in an appreciation for age, a reverence for it, and, of course, the traditional Chinese medicines goes back millennia as well. There is a culture of wellness in China that goes back millennia. So, there's a commonality there, and he knew that. And I think that's probably one of the reasons why he said there's something really important ongoing in the United States to his good friend, Tiger Yang, and he wanted to share it. In so doing, we have come now to recognize that one of the most powerful ways of any two people to get to know each other is to find a common enemy. And I can't think of any more worthy enemy to have in common than the defeat of cancer and the conquering of this disease that we hold in common with confreres, many of whom have become like brothers. Even to this very day, there is a plane taking off in Atlanta that is carrying 80 pallets of vitally needed health supplies that your CEO Roundtable on Cancer, along with a number of marvelous corporations in the United States and abroad,

have come together to help combat and contain the coronavirus epidemic that is extant right now in China and healthcare workers are desperately in need of things like surgical masks of a very special sort, and gowns, and whatnot. Well, 80 pallets of that are being airlifted now into China where a number of organizations, again, coordinated by the CEO Roundtable among others, including the Red Cross Society of China, will be coordinating the distribution of that to hospitals that are so badly in need. An example of the vision that the President and Barbara had by getting good people together with a common purpose, and to do so with passion, you can't help but have good derive there from it.

Sam: Dr. Murphy, I'd like to ask you the same question I put to Dr. Von Eschenbach on a previous episode of "All The Best." What is the state of the war on cancer today?

Dr. Murphy: The state of the war on cancer is really deriving from our better understanding of the nature of the disease. First of all, cancer is native to the estate of life. There's hardly any life form that does not have malignancy attached somehow to it. When you think about the rapidity with which cells have to replenish themselves in any body, they're dividing all the time. As you and I are having this conversation, Sam, every second, that's 2.5 million new red blood cells were produced in your bone marrow. There is a tremendous turnover of cells. Think about the complexity of any cell not having a point mutation at some point in time that might not kill the cell. It wouldn't be a life-ending or a cell-ending mutation, it would be able to propagate that mutation. And you've just defined cancer. It's native to the state of life. So, as we understand more about, really, the cell biology of the cancer cell, we now recognize that there is a whole universe of other physiological functions, including our immune system, that also orchestrate this symphony of health that can become a cacophony of illness. And with that comes the opportunity with increased technology to find what we call druggable targets, molecules inside cells that could become a key way into which an anticancer drug could be inserted, and in so doing when it was the right fit, it would cause the death of that malignant cell. And that's targeted therapy, that's precision medicine, and that's where we are, so that some intractable forms of cancer, even 10 years ago, that were absolutely intractable, we now have longterm survivors as a consequence of a new modality of therapy called Immuno-oncology that's being combined with some classical drugs for the betterment of patients. So, where are we? We're on a trajectory. And if I know Andy, and to know him is to love him, he was optimistic in what he said and the speed with which progress was being made. And I share his optimism that's based on fact.

Sam: We're so lucky to have such a cancer expert as yourself with us today, Dr. Murphy. So, I have to ask, for those who have a family history of cancer, what are some of the preventative steps that we can take to mitigate our risk of getting cancer?

Dr. Murphy: Even if there is no apparent history...and it's a rare family without a history, let's face it, about half of all men will hear, "You have cancer" during their lifetime, and about 37% of all women will get that diagnosis. So, in every family, there are those things that can be done. In certain families, if there is a significant history, then you do it more often, and you do it in greater depth, and you'd begin to do it earlier. But every person needs to be cancer-aware. And number one on everyone's hit parade is to stay away from those things that we know, scientifically, without a shadow of a doubt, cause cancer. You know where I'm going. Smoking and any aspect of it, whether it's chewing, smoking, snuffing, don't get close to it. We know excessive sun will induce those point mutations to which I alluded previously, and therefore, doesn't mean you can't go outside, but it means you gotta wear the appropriate sunscreen and apparel. And then, we need to have our exams. That means periodic, depends upon the age of the individual and the family history as to how frequently one has a colonoscopy or a mammography and so forth. All of those things, catch it early, we cure it very early, very often, and rather benignly or not as expensive and troublesome in pain and suffering. So, early detection is extraordinarily important. All of those things are embedded, in fact, Sam in the Gold Standard. That's what it's all about. So, it's don't smoke, have a really good, healthy diet, get exercise, make sure that you have your exams for the appropriate biomarkers, depending upon one's sex and age, and then if and when cancer is detected, then the opportunity must always be explored depending upon the tumor type that it is to engage in a expert cancer center where clinical trials are ongoing. You can very often have the best bet, especially today, by enrolling in certain clinical trials dependent upon the type of cancer.

Sam: Thank you for sharing those, doctor. And I'd like to end with this. January 10th, 2009 was a very special day for our family as we watched the CVN-77 George H.W. Bush aircraft carrier come to life. You also were there that day to share in the splendor. Can you tell me about that day?

Dr. Murphy: Indeed, Sam. I was honored to be at the commissioning. And your mother, the ship's sponsor for life, called the ship to life amidst blaring horns, you'll remember, and those fine men and women in their dress whites off. They ran up the gangway, they brought that great vessel, all five acres of its deck, all 5,000 able-bodied sea persons aboard, they brought it to life. It was a day that I'll, of course, always treasure, as I know you will. One of the things that I treasure most about it was that afternoon precedent, there was that special

luncheon that Ann and I, my wife and I, were invited to join, and your grandfather was so taken by emotion because, you'll remember, that your mother and he made countless trips to the shipyards. They must have shaken every shipwright's hand at least once, and there were more than 1,100 men and women that built that great ship. They met all of them. It was one of the greatest days of his life to have it brought to life. And, in fact, as he stood at the head of the assembly there, at that luncheon, he got very emotional and he began to have a hard time completing his thought at the microphone. And your grandmother stood up and said, "Well, that's George. He cries at the opening of a new Dunkin' Donuts." That broke his inability to talk at that moment, and he reclaimed the microphone, and he said to everybody there, he said, "This is the happiest day of my life." And your grandmother shot him one of those looks of hers.

Sam: Oh, no.

Dr. Murphy: And he said, "Barb, I gotta tell the truth." It was one of the happiest times of his life, and made so not because his name is only on it but because it was for those men and women who sail in her, and in memory of his shipmates, some of whom were lost at sea during his time of service. And all of this was to hold the world at peace. And that's what it was dedicated for.

Sam: Well, Dr. Murphy, I'd like to thank you for your dedication for fighting cancer, what you've done, what you're still doing, and what you're going to do. It sounds like there's a light at the end of the tunnel.

Dr. Murphy: Your grandfather, 16 days before his death, he sent a letter that I will always treasure that talked about, "Never let anyone use the word impossible when it comes to cancer. It might not happen in my lifetime, and it might not happen in yours, Marty, but I am convinced," your grandfather wrote, "that it will happen. It will happen. Cancer will be brought to its knees." And so, we work not only in his memory, but we work inspired by what he gave us, not only the vision, but the verve to be bold and be venturesome.

Sam: Dr. Murphy, thank you for joining us.

Dr. Murphy: He gave us only all the best. Thank you, Sam.

Sam: I'm Sam LeBlond, reminding you to listen, share, and subscribe to "All The Best" on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and everywhere great podcasts are found. Thank you for joining me as we celebrate "All The Best."

Barbara Bush: Both George and I believe that while the White House is important, the country's future is in your house, every house, all over America.

George Bush: Preparedness, strength, decency and honor, courage, sacrifice, the willingness to fight, even die for one's country. America, the land of the free and the brave."

Man: And God bless the United States of America.

George Bush: The greatest country on the face of the earth.

