



Dr. Mariette Sourial received her PharmD from Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. She completed an ambulatory care PGY-1 residency through the University of Minnesota in 2011. She then joined Palm Beach Atlantic University Gregory School of Pharmacy as an assistant professor of pharmacy practice and was later promoted to associate professor. She teaches various topics in the pharmacotherapy series focusing on women's health and infectious diseases, and coordinates and facilitates in skills-based courses. She also leads the school's Objective Structured Clinical Exams (OSCEs). She serves as the Director of Interprofessional Education within the School of Pharmacy, and as the Associate Director for the Office of Interprofessional Education and Practice at Florida Atlantic University, and is known for her trailblazing efforts in IPE. Her passion lies in improving Transitions of Care and demonstrating the value of pharmacists on the healthcare team. Her current practice site is at Wellington Regional Primary Care Clinic in

Wellington, FL, where she precepts Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) students for their Ambulatory Care rotations.

From White Coat to Calling: A Pharmacist's Journey Through Loss, Burnout, and Obedience

By Melissa Turner

On the morning of November 30, 2018, while I was preparing to open the pharmacy where I worked for the last five years, I received a phone call that changed my life forever. My sister Katie and her boyfriend Keith had been shot and killed by my uncle in my grandmother's home. I collapsed onto the pharmacy floor as reality set in. Of course, I was unable to work that day and returned home to be with my family as quickly as I could. Then we began processing this unimaginable loss. I would never hear Katie's voice again. I would never hear her laughter or her singing. I would never get the opportunity to hug her or tell her how much I loved her. I didn't get to say goodbye.

A few days later, I stood in front of my closet and asked myself a question I never imagined asking: *what should I wear to my sister's funeral?* Five days after her death—on what should have been her 26th birthday—we said goodbye. I was mad at God for allowing this to happen. I was frustrated at the people who tried to comfort me by saying, *"She's in a better place now."* I was angry at myself for not repairing our relationship, because, at the time of her death, there were unresolved tensions and unspoken words between us. I carried deep regret that I had not repaired our relationship or sought reconciliation before her life was taken. That regret became a significant source of guilt in my grief journey.

A week after her death, I was right back at work filling prescriptions and administering vaccines. Resuming the same routines as if nothing had happened. Then, my downward spiral began. I was numb and in disbelief. A became a shell of the woman I used to be. I stopped

smiling. I didn't want to live anymore, and I thought about different ways I could end my life. No matter what action I took, it had to be effective—and quick—because life felt meaningless to me without Katie. I tried to numb my pain with alcohol and stay busy so I wouldn't have to feel the pain. I refused to let anyone help me or talk to a therapist or counselor because I convinced myself I was "ok" and I could figure it out on my own. I didn't care about being a pharmacist anymore. I hated my job and regretted going to pharmacy school. I begged my husband to please let me stay home so I wouldn't have to go to work. What was the point of eight years of education? The six-figure salary? The new car, the home, the fancy vacations? None of it mattered anymore.

Losing Katie marked the beginning of a profound season of grief, trauma, and transformation that would ultimately reshape my faith, my identity, and my understanding of calling. The moment I knew something had to change came quietly. I was sitting in the darkness of my bedroom after Christmas 2020 and my husband and dogs were snoring. The tears were flowing again as I listened to a podcast on pharmacist burnout. At that moment, something shifted. I had never heard of burnout and finally, I knew I wasn't alone.

I wasn't a bad pharmacist or a bad person. I knew I needed help and I also realized that while Christ is our Savior, I still had to choose to respond to His invitation for healing. No one else could do that work for me or make that decision on my behalf. I had to actively seek help, step into obedience, and participate in the healing God was offering

rather than waiting passively for my circumstances to change. I had two choices: continue drowning in pain—complaining, numbing, and feeling sorry for myself—or I could take action. It was time to face the pain and emotions I had buried for so long. Time to admit that I needed God's help. I had lost sight of what was most important: my relationship with God and my family. I had always known that God didn't promise us tomorrow, but now I had lived that truth firsthand.

It took me years to realize something critical: God did not create me (or you) to live defeated. In John 10:10 (NASB), Jesus said, *"I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly."* Not just in heaven, but also here on earth. It's not just a future promise, but a promise we can enjoy now.

On May 14, 2021, I took a six-month leave of absence from my job as a retail pharmacist and never went back (except to turn in my keys). Not because pharmacy was a mistake, but because God was expanding my understanding of calling.

On September 20, 2021, I launched my own business, Turnaround Wellness (www.turnaroundwellness.com). I wanted to help women in a way that was life-changing and transformational. To do that, God required me to surrender. I had to let go of the self-sabotage patterns I had repeated for years and decades. I believed that if I could do everything perfectly—be the dependable pharmacist, the strong daughter, the put-together Christian—I could keep the chaos of loss from touching my life again. I silenced my own grief and exhaustion so I could keep showing up for everyone else, believing my worth was tied to being needed and reliable.

My mind never rested, replaying every conversation, every decision, and every "what if," as though constant mental vigilance could somehow protect me from future pain. I carried a quiet shame for not handling grief "better," for questioning God, and for struggling in a profession I thought I was supposed to be grateful for.

I was haunted by the guilt for words left unsaid, for not repairing my broken relationship with Katie before she passed, and for continuing to live when her life had been taken. I stayed in places that God was clearly calling me away from, because I was afraid that choosing obedience would disappoint others or make me appear ungrateful or weak. Deep down, I wondered if I deserved healing or joy at all because I believed that a full life was for other people, not for someone marked by this kind of loss.

Eventually, after surrendering my whole heart to God, my priorities shifted. Relationships became central again: God, family, friends, and my clients. I began to see that my profession was never meant to be just a job. It was a ministry. God had used every part of my training—my

scientific mind, my ability to listen, my compassion forged through suffering—to serve others in ways I never imagined. If you are a Christian pharmacist reading this and you are feeling stuck, burned out, disillusioned, or quietly grieving, please hear me: you're not weak for wanting something different. You're not faithless for questioning the path you're on. You're not broken beyond repair. God may be inviting you to listen more closely. Obedience may feel risky. Leaving your current path may feel terrifying. Healing may take longer than you want. But God is with you through it all. He brought me through the darkest years of my life. He never left me. And He didn't waste a single part of my story.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." (2 Corinthians 1:3–4, NIV). I am called to comfort others because He comforted me. And if you're reading this, perhaps He is calling you too, right where you are, or somewhere entirely new.



Dr. Melissa Turner is a Holy Spirit-Led Rapid Transformation coach, author, speaker, and former pharmacist who helps women move out of survival mode and into peace, clarity, and purpose. With over 12 years in healthcare and her own healing journey, she blends science, faith, and Holy Spirit-led coaching to help women break free from overwhelm, self-sabotage, and burnout. She is the founder of Turnaround Wellness and a frequent podcast guest and speaker for women's groups and churches.

At Turnaround Wellness, Dr. Turner offers one-on-one and group coaching programs to help women turn their life around and release patterns of fear, people-pleasing, and burnout so they can feel safe in their bodies and rooted in God's truth.

She lives in Angier, North Carolina with her husband and three dogs. When she's not coaching her clients, you can find her reading, writing, traveling, and learning to play mahjong.