Episode 1

My name is Dr Fares Kady, and I currently serve as the head of the WHO sub-office in Aleppo, Syria. My journey began in the last century – when I volunteered with the Red Cross/Red Crescent in 1998 – then on to the international NGO field. I joined WHO in 2013.

Two decades of experience in humanitarian work taught me that good intentions alone are not enough; they must be followed by action and commitment. Once we assess the needs and recognize the gaps, it becomes our duty to bridge the divide between intent and impact and translate intention into tangible efforts. A harmonious combination between idealism and practicality is the key.

I am a strong believer in people's capabilities and potential. With the right opportunity and support, the experience of others can be built, holding paramount importance in our humanitarian work. I call it "team's captain" style, fostering mutual confidence instead of adopting a traditional boss role. This approach necessitates being actively present in the field, working collaboratively, stepping in for each other when necessary, and celebrating collective victories.

Humanitarian work is like walking a tightrope, requiring lots of talent and courage, with the constant challenge of balancing responsibilities. During my frontline duties and response to emergencies, I faced deeply emotional moments: my father passed away while I was engaged in an evacuation mission in 2016; I was responding in an IDP camp hundreds of kilometers away when my wife faced a life-threatening miscarriage in 2018; and the earthquake this year was no easier as we had to get our kids to safety before rushing to the response.

I love to play hide and seek with my kids. It develops their patience and critical thinking about the best hiding spots and creative ways to find someone. But it’s more than just a game for me. I see it as a way for us to build a strong bond while spending quality time. It creates trust as my kids rely on me to always find them. I usually win -- they make it easy so I can find them and wrap them in a hug. My kids, on the other hand, may tirelessly try to find me for days while I am hiding during the response to one crisis or another!

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