Dr. Jess Bunin Challenges Women in Medicine to Recognize the Leader They Already Are

Author, Physician and Leadership Coach Says Women Physicians Do Not Need to Become Leaders, They Need to Recognize Their Leadership


Dr. Jess Bunin

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, September 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Women in medicine are often encouraged to develop leadership skills, pursue leadership positions, and learn how to lead others. But Dr. Jess Bunin, physician, author, speaker, and leadership coach, believes the conversation needs to start somewhere deeper: recognizing that many women physicians are already leaders.

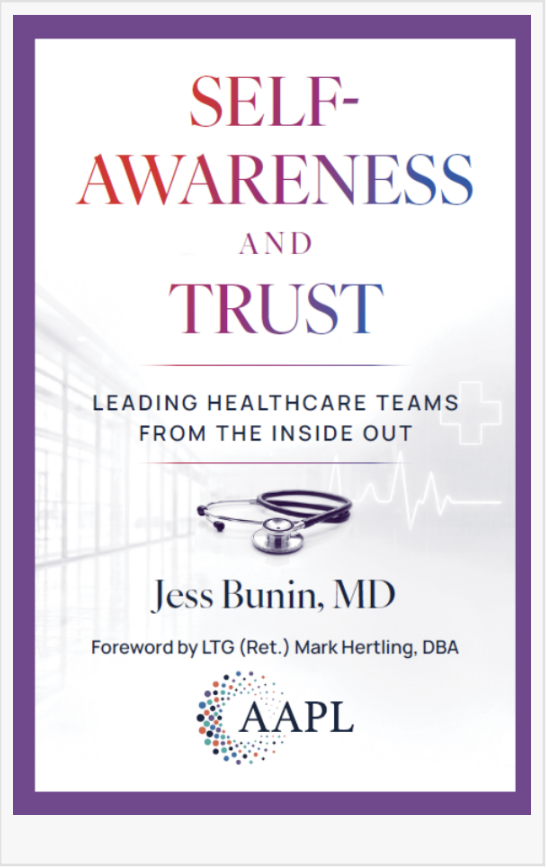
“You don’t have to become the leader,” says Bunin. “You have to recognize that you are the leader.”

Bunin explores this idea in her new book, Self-Awareness and Trust: Leading Healthcare Teams from the Inside Out, which examines the internal and relational skills healthcare professionals need to lead themselves and others with greater self-awareness, trust, and confidence.

“Women in medicine see themselves as doctors and medical providers, but not always as influencers. However, women physicians are influencers. They must understand who they are as leaders and the impact their work has on others,” Bunin explains.

Bunin says leadership is not an inherent personality trait, and influence is not reserved for certain people. Women have represented at least 40% of U.S. medical students for more than 25 years, yet they hold only 18% of hospital CEO positions and 16% of medical school dean and department chair roles, according to Harvard Business Review. For Bunin, the issue isn't teaching women in medicine how to become leaders. It's helping them recognize the leadership they already bring to the table.

“Leadership isn't always about the title on your door or the position on the organizational chart,” says Bunin. “It is about recognizing the influence you already have and becoming intentional about how you use it.”



With more than two decades of experience spanning medicine, military service, critical care, psychiatry, medical education, and leadership development, Bunin understands the transition from clinician to leader firsthand. Her career has placed her in environments where decisions carry significant consequences and where effective leadership depends not only on expertise, but also on self-awareness, communication, trust, and the ability to navigate difficult conversations.

“Clinical excellence can establish credibility. But leading people requires something more. It requires knowing when to speak, when to listen, how to address conflict, how to build trust, and how to create an environment where other people can contribute and succeed,” says Bunin.

For women physicians, leadership may begin with a simple shift in perspective. Leadership isn't necessarily something they need to earn or wait for. They may already be leading through their expertise, influence, advocacy, and everyday decisions. The question is whether they recognize it.

“You must embrace the coat of leadership that was always yours to wear,” Bunin concludes. “It was never about waiting for someone to hand you the title, give you permission, or tell you that you were ready. Leadership was already woven into the work you were doing, the people you influenced, the decisions you made, and the voices you chose to elevate. The shift is recognizing it, owning it, and having the confidence to lead as the woman you already are.”

About Jess Bunin, MD

Jess Bunin, MD, is a physician, author, speaker, and coach whose career spans medicine, military service, critical care, psychiatry, medical education, and leadership development. A West Point graduate and former Army physician, Bunin served for more than two decades in the military, including assignments in Iraq and Afghanistan. She has held leadership roles in healthcare and medical education and now works with physicians and healthcare professionals to strengthen self-awareness, communication, trust, and leadership.

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