



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Welcome to Weight Loss for Busy Physicians, the podcast where busy doctors like you get the practical solutions and support you need to permanently lose the weight, so you can feel better and have the life you want. If you're looking to overcome your stress eating and exhaustion and move into freedom around food, you're in the right place.

Hey there, my friend. How are you? I decided that I wanted to offer you more help in these very unusual times that we're experiencing right now. I recently was doing an extended coaching call within my program, Weight Loss For Doctors Only. While I was coaching all my clients, I asked them to put in the Q and box within Zoom, what they were currently struggling with and I got a whole array of different issues and we coached on a whole bunch of them. But I also copied and pasted all of them because I thought, you know what? I would love to be able to offer you help with the same things that I know you're struggling with. These things that my clients listed are what is a common issue for pretty much anybody who's on the front lines or just in medicine at all. And I know that you're struggling with a lot of these too, so I thought I would just create a little bonus podcast series to address some of these issues and just help you with them because I know so many of you are struggling as well.

So the format of this is going to be a little bit different. I just have a whole list of the different concerns and struggles that my clients have listed for me and I'm going to just address them. Talk to you as though you're the one who wrote in and had that issue and just give you my thoughts on it from a coaching perspective.

There literally has not been a better time than the present to learn how to manage your mind and you might think, well how does this work with a weight loss podcast? Well, definitely, feel free to share this with anybody who does not struggle with their weight, but who is in healthcare and is struggling with their thoughts around the COVID epidemic right now. But how it does impact weight and weight loss is that if you are somebody who uses food or maybe drinks alcohol as a way to cope when you are having any kind of struggle or negative emotion in your life, what you'll find in this pandemic situation is that that's only amplified. It's only magnified. You'll find that you were doing maybe pretty well or keeping it in check and then now it's coming back again or you'll find that you were doing it somewhat and now it's just more, right because there's more negative emotion and if that's your coping strategy is to eat or drink to deal with it, then you're just going to be doing that more often. So there's never been a time like the present to learn how to feel your feelings and not eat them.

So we'll be talking about that a little bit as we along too. I think I'm going to be dividing this up into probably about three different podcasts, so I'm going to be having them coming out day after day, and I hope that they're going to be super helpful for you. Again, please feel free to share them. I did also want to let you know that on Instagram I've done a lot of coaching as well where people have submitted in topics that they've wanted help with. So if you're on Instagram or even if you're not actually I highly recommend you go watch those. They're all Instagram

stories that I did, which means that they are little live videos and I saved all of them to the highlights bubbles, which means that once you get in and see my little profile, you can see these little bubbles below and you can click on them and they're all saved. My handle on Instagram is Coach Katrina Ubell, MD. Coach Katrina Ubell, MD. If you search for that, you'll find me and then you can watch all those highlights bubbles. So again, those are going to be helpful for you and you can share those as well.

I have one other final request. I know that many of you are in some large Facebook groups for women physicians and I wanted to ask if you would be willing to just mention that this podcast series exists and possibly the Instagram highlight bubbles as well on there. Because I just want to help as many women physicians who are out there struggling as possible. I know that there are so many who are looking for some help with their brain, some relief with what's going on and that's exactly what I'm going to be offering you here and what I've been offering you on Instagram as well. So if you wouldn't mind posting, recommending these, if you find that they're helpful, then that would be amazing.

Okay, let's dig in. I asked, like I said, I asked my clients to just putting in the little Q and A box, what are you struggling with? These are not necessarily always full complete sentences, which I think I've become really skilled in proper complete sentences, capitalization and punctuation in doing homeschooling with my first grader. So I know some of you can relate.

Okay we're talking about admin and our personal protective equipment. So admin limiting PPE for ED docs, trying to manage my mind protocols changing multiple times per day. So this is a really common situation. So

many are coming up with, I've heard other ED docs say, "Listen, what we're supposed to be doing when I start my shift is already changed in different by the time that I'm leaving my shift." It's just constant changing. Then the message from above saying you're not allowed to have more personal gear to protect yourself. This has been an ongoing issue for many people all over the country. This person wrote, "Trying to manage my mind. Protocols are changing multiple times a day." What I want to just point out here in this is that there's a lot of resistance to reality here. I've talked about this before on the podcast, but I want to really dig into it here because what I'm finding for myself is every time there's something new that comes up or a new change that we're making or a new decision that needs to be made, what I'm finding is that I initially have resistance to it. I've often had this thought, I can't believe I'm having this conversation or I can't believe I'm having to think about this or never in my life did I think I would have to be thinking about this or something to that extent.

What I'm finding is that if I stay with that and just let myself, it's almost like I think of myself as being within a cage and fighting and freaking out and having a toddler tantrum. If I just stay with it and let that tantrum work its way out, then I can move into acceptance so much better. Resistance is... I was thinking of using actual strength and muscular pushing to keep it away. No, I don't want this. I'm resisting it. I don't want to have to manage my mind. I don't want to have to think about new protocols multiple times a day. I don't want to have my PPA being limited by admin.

When you can just stay with that for a second and recognize, okay, I'm just resisting reality right now then you can move into acceptance. Okay, what we've got right now is that I've got limited protective gear. What I've got right now is that every couple of hours it seems the protocols for how to manage things are being changed.

Okay. All right. That's what we've got here. That's what we've got here. I think what we sometimes do is we want to expect ourselves to be able to just move into acceptance immediately and I think that that's something to move toward. I think there's nothing wrong with trying to accomplish that or achieve that, but I want you to know that if you are finding yourself a little resistant, maybe eye rolling, feeling like you're having a little chew out session in your head with somebody or whoever the people are in charge, it's okay to let yourself be there for a moment. Just recognize that as the resistance but then work toward moving into acceptance, which is going, this is what we've got today and that's okay.

It's going to feel so much better for you to move into acceptance versus thinking it should be different than it is. When we think it should be different than it is we are resisting reality and that always feels bad. It's a total Byron Katie thing, right? When you resist reality, you are just going to be creating unnecessary pain and struggle for yourself. One of the reasons this is so important is because when you're in resistance all of the time, this is very exhausting, mentally exhausting, but you will feel it as physical exhaustion as well. So you will be thinking, oh my gosh, work is so tiring right now. Then you'll come home and you'll still be resistant. You'll be thinking, work isn't going well and then you're going to find yourself struggling with your home life, struggling to connect with the people who are important to you at home, struggling to actually be able to relax, finding yourself wanting to reach for the food or the alcohol to try to use something else to help you unwind and relax and be able to distress. All of that is so much easier and you don't have to do that so much if you're able to move into acceptance.

Every couple of hours they're changing the protocols. Okay. So when it happens again, it's not a surprise except our brains are just like, what? How is that possible?

They're changing it again. Complete resistance, instead moving toward, of course I knew they were going to change it again. This is a rapidly changing situation. What I like to think of is that the people who are in charge right now are really, truly doing the best that they can. One of the other things that I have listed here is the quote unquote, Who's In Charge Of X, Communication Issues Between Leadership at a Big Center.

I just believe in the general goodness of human beings, especially physicians, and in a situation like we're going through, there's going to be some communication issues. There's going to be a lack of leadership in the sense that nobody really knows what's the right thing to do. There's arguably a lack of leadership on a more federal level. So there are certain messages that come across, but not everybody agrees with them. Or there's a lack of message in terms of certain situations or the leadership in your center are looking at what's actually happening in your specific city or town and not necessarily looking at the greater country and what people are doing there.

So again, moving into, of course humans are going to be doing the best that they can and in doing so they're going to reserve the right to change their minds and in changing their minds, they're going to decide different things. They're going to change protocols. They're going to decide that a different person's in charge of something. They're going to maybe buck responsibility for it. Maybe that's happening too, where people are saying, hey, I don't feel like there's any leadership or I'm not being told what the right thing to do is here so I'm not in charge. Then you have a whole bunch of people saying that and then it's like, well, but who is in charge? So another thing that came up for some people is, it's all going to fall on me. I'm going to have to be the one to stand up and do it.

What I want to offer to you is if that's the case, then literally there's nobody better than you to do it. If you're feeling called to do that, then do it and step up and do it. Even if you're like, yeah, well I'm not feeling called, but no one else is doing it, we could argue that you're still being called to do it even if you don't really want to. If you're reluctant to be the one who's in charge, you can still stand up and do it.

It's also interesting to look at why you might be reluctant. Often we're reluctant because we think that there's going to be criticism, that people are going to be mad at us. We want people to like us, and that's why we don't really want to stand up. I think that in this situation, there's no better time than right now to work on being okay with people being wrong about you. Having thoughts that you're taking things too seriously or not seriously enough, or another issue that came up as being called an alarmist. Another opportunity to allow people to be wrong about you. They have a thought, she's being an alarmist. You get to decide what you make that mean. Someone else has that thought or they tell you that that's what they think. That goes on the circumstance line for you in a thought model, which means that that is a neutral fact. That's what someone said and you get to decide what you want to make that mean.

If you have the thought they might be right or they're being jerks for not agreeing with me or they're wrong, or things like that, then you're going to feel bad. Or you could be like, yeah I could see how somebody might think that, but I actually think that what I'm saying and what I'm doing actually makes a lot of sense. I think that I'm not being an alarmist. I'm going to keep moving forward no matter what other people say because that's what feels right to me. So much of being upset with other people for

thinking you're an alarmist is again, resistance. Thinking that other people are saying, no, you shouldn't be thinking that way and you going, no, but I should. I should. Instead of going, I can see that some people think that. I happen to disagree and I like my reasons for it, so I'm going to stick with that.

Okay. Another issue that came up was, "Angry about the lack of protective equipment in the ER, wanting this to be different instead of looking for solutions. Frustrated with the worried well, in dealing with their anger, which I also share. Just looping with anger." I find that anger is one of the most exhausting emotions. Grief is actually very exhausting too I find. I find that anger and rage are very, very exhausting and they sometimes can fuel your actions. Sometimes we get kind of confused me think, while I'm taking all this good action, I'm just filled with rage. What I would say is that you can take actions that might actually really help people coming from that place of anger, but your whole experience of having done it will be awful and so exhausting. We get into that righteous indignation too, the martyr type of situation where it's like, well I was the one who had to do this and nobody stepped up to help and all just woe is me. Poor me. It's so sad that I have to be the one to save the world kind of situation.

I want to offer to you that that is all optional. You really can come down to, you know what, literally who better than me? Everybody else seems be screwing it up as far as I can tell so I might as well be the one to step in and actually do what needs to be done here. But I can do it with gladness in my heart. I can do it with a sense of purpose and a sense of fulfilling the oath that I took as a physician to help people. It's a very different experience of it than being fueled by rage.

So let's just break this down here. She says she's angry about the lack of protective equipment in the ER and wanting this to be different instead of looking for solutions. That's such a good example of that resistance. Resistance, resistance, resistance, just thinking it shouldn't be this way. It shouldn't be this way. As she states so clearly here, when she's wanting this to be different and resisting it, she's not looking for solutions. That's what is so interesting about this. We feel so righteous in our resistance that it really shouldn't be this way and that we're right in that, except that when we're doing that, we're not coming up with solutions. We're not coming up with anything that can make it better. We're committing ourselves to feeling miserable rather than going, you know what, okay, this is what we got today. What are we going to do? Maybe there is a really good way to reuse your protective equipment. I'm going to figure out what it is to put myself at the least possible risk or something like that.

Frustrated with a worried well and dealing with their anger, which I also share. Yeah, so the worried well. I think sometimes they can be the hardest to deal with because they think they have a really big problem, but we as physicians know that they really are okay. So when we have thoughts about, they shouldn't be worried, they shouldn't be here right now, they're wasting my time. They're taking away resources from patients who actually need me. Things like that. That creates that feeling of frustration. So I want to remind you that is not the worried well that makes you feel frustrated.

The worried well are a circumstance. This is the patient that you're seeing right now or collectively the group of people who are taking up space in your waiting room. The frustration comes from your thought, which is again, probably steeped in resistance. They shouldn't be here. This shouldn't be happening like this. They should know

better. Something along those lines that makes you feel frustrated. Probably your action when you're frustrated is you still take care of them, but maybe not as lovingly, not with as much compassion, not with as much patience and your whole experience of taking care of them is so much worse. Your whole experience of your day and taking care of humans in general is so much worse. You end up leaving your shift, feeling completely annihilated, really, really, really exhausted from all that resistance. And again dealing with her anger, which I also share. So they're coming to you and expressing anger, which is a circumstance and then you have a thought of, yeah you're right, I'm pissed too or whatever it is, and then your feeling is anger and just looping in that anger.

It's like you're talking with other people who are angry and you're all agreeing on how the circumstance at large is anger provoking, except not recognizing that it's your thoughts about all of it that are creating the anger. Now, again, not to say that you shouldn't be able to feel anger from time to time. I think that's very, very normal. Again, I think as new things roll out, that's going to be probably the default way that your brain goes and that's okay. Just notice, okay, I'm angry and then own it. I'm angry because of a thought in my head. I'm angry because of the way that I'm thinking about this right now. You may not even really know what your thought is. It may feel very true and very much like a circumstance in that moment, but just own it. I'm angry not because of what's going on around me, but I'm angry because of a sentence in my mind, a way that I'm thinking about this and that's okay. Make some space for that. Allow yourself to be angry.

Like I said, being in a cage and just like a wild animal, freaking out in there and then, okay now we're going to settle down. It's going to be okay. We're going to work through it. Choosing new thoughts. I think one of the best thoughts that you can have in this current situation is, I'm

going to figure this out. I'm going to figure this out. Whatever comes, I'm going to figure it out. If you believe that, which I think most of us do when it really comes down to it, whatever it is, whatever the situation is, I'm going to figure it out. Then you can start moving into acceptance and moving forward and okay, what are the next steps? What are the next things that I need to be doing here?

Constant bombardment with fears from other people. So here's another one. I think that this is one that a lot of us are coming back to where we are getting our own fear under control and then we're like, okay I'm doing okay. I'm going to go in there. Then every single person we talk to is so afraid and telling us all about their fear and then it is more effort to not just jump on board with them and have a whole big shared fear fest where everybody's just ramping each other up.

I think that this requires some skill in terms of managing your mind in the sense that, first you have to recognize what people are sharing with me right now is not the truth. What they're sharing with me is their thoughts that make them feel afraid and I get to decide what I want to think about that. You might find yourself kind of getting sucked in and going, oh my gosh, I can feel it. I can feel it on my chest. I can feel it under my diaphragm. I can feel it in my throat. I'm feeling afraid again. Then recognizing, okay I'm feeling afraid because of the way that I'm thinking. I'm feeling afraid because the way that I'm thinking. Everyone else that's sharing their thoughts, it's easy to start taking those on, but you can allow other people to say all of that, all the things that are causing them fear and allow for it, and then take a moment. How do I want to think about this? Now that I have this information, now that I hear what people are saying, sometimes it's so hard when you hear about specific situations like this family and they're not going to have enough food and they're not going to be

able to pay their rent. They're going to be evicted and where are they going to go and things like that.

Just recognizing all I can control is my own experience and my thoughts in my head right now, because you certainly aren't able to help somebody else from that place of fear. It's the same thing as when we're super angry with politicians in particular. Let's just use that as an example. When we're really, really angry and we think that we're so righteous and our anger and it feels like we should be angry, except it doesn't create any change at all. It doesn't improve anything at all. If anything, all it does is it increases the amount of hatred in the world or increases the amount of negative emotion in the world. What I would say here is there's plenty of fear for everybody. It's okay to spend some time there for a moment, for a while if you need to, but then moving yourself out of it. I don't have to stay in fear. Most people don't recognize that their thoughts create their feelings, the vast majority of people. So they're going to think that the current situation is creating their fear, but you know better. You know that it's your thinking that's creating your fear and you can change that at any time.

So I'm going to finish up this episode with one of the other comments that someone wrote and they said, "I think the best message for me today thus far, it is okay to feel fear." I want you to know that too. You get to that place, you feel the fear. You recognize like, okay I am afraid right now. I can stay with us for a little while or a whole day. I had a couple of days ago, I had a whole day, the whole day I just felt afraid. I'll be honest with you, that's not an emotion that I feel on a super regular basis. So it felt really unusual for me. I got to know fear very well and I allowed myself to stay with it. I noticed what it did for me. It made me more disconnected from my family. It made me feel like I needed to be alone, like I needed to figure something out except I didn't know what any solutions

were. It was really interesting. Because we want more connection with people in this time where we're separated and then we're feeling afraid and we don't even connect with the people that we have around us that we could connect with.

I had a hard time with my kids who were very much having a happy go lucky, not a care in the world, kind of an attitude, running around the house, doing different things. It was almost like I wanted to take that away from them, to have them feel some fear too, so that they could understand why I was feeling that way. Then once I recognized I had that thought, I thought, well okay, but they don't have to take on my emotions in order for me to be okay. We don't all need to be afraid. In fact, it's probably much better for them if they're living their happy go lucky existences and not really recognizing what the adults in their lives are dealing with.

So just remember, I'm going to close this one out with, it is okay to feel fear. There's nothing wrong with feeling that emotion. When you're willing to feel that emotion, then you don't need to eat to try to dampen it. So often, I've talked about this before but I want to remind you, so often we're eating to try to numb or dull that sensation that we have in our bodies. Think about a wine glass, a crystal glass, and when you have a little water in it and then you wet the rim and you move your finger all around it and it hums. You add more water and it changes the pitch of that hum. Eventually, if you fill it completely full of water, it doesn't do that anymore. There's no vibration left anymore because the water has completely dampened the vibration in the glass and that's what we're asking food and alcohol to do for us when we're eating, instead of feeling our emotions.

You can think of our bodies as a vessel, as the glass, and the vibration being the emotion that you're feeling and when you eat more and more food and drink more and more alcohol, you're just filling yourself up in an attempt to no longer feel that vibration. You're trying to dampen or numb what you're experiencing in your body. What I want to offer to you is that you can just be there with it and feel that vibration and allow it to go through you and experience it, get to know it really, really clearly and then recognize that the finger that's rubbing the top of it and making it vibrate is your thought. The way you're thinking is what's creating that emotion and you can just take your finger off the glass at any time. Also, if the finger is still there because the thought is there and you're having a hard time changing it, you can stay with the vibration. You can allow the glass to vibrate. You can allow your body to experience that emotion. You don't have to make it go away by eating food or drinking alcohol.

When you don't use food or alcohol to make yourself feel better, first of all, you build up your confidence that you can experience any emotion and that really no emotion is as bad as you think it's going to be. But you also don't feel physically bad from overeating. There are so many people who are going to end up having gained so much weight after this whole pandemic has passed through because of just eating and eating, eating and drinking, drinking, drinking, trying to make this whole situation more pleasant, but it really doesn't make it more pleasant. In fact, when you don't recognize that it's your thought that's creating that emotion, you're only pushing off more negative emotion for later because you're not processing it. You're just going, "Hey, can I just hit the pause button?" It's just like that easy button. Hey let's hit that and then I'll just postpone it. It's like snoozing your emotions for later instead of just actually dealing with them. They're just going to be waiting for you. That fear will just be waiting for you if you're not willing to process it and be with it. Same for the frustration. Same with the anger, all of that.

So I want to encourage you today to spend some time being with those emotions, owning that you're the one who's creating them with the way that you're thinking. That does not involve you beating yourself up. It doesn't involve you thinking that you're doing it wrong. It doesn't involve you then being frustrated with yourself because you're thinking a thought that's creating a negative emotion. It's you just moving into acceptance of, I have a human brain. It's going to offer me lots of thoughts. All of those thoughts will create an emotion and many of them will create negative emotions and that's what's happening right now. Nothing is going wrong. I'm just experiencing a negative emotion and the good news is I can feel any emotion that my brain creates with its thoughts.

All right, I'm going to be back very soon with the next episode and we're going to keep digging in and talking more and more about these struggles that you're having. All right, I'll talk to you very soon. Take care. Bye bye.

Did you know that you can find a lot more help from me on my website? Go to KatrinaUbellmd.com and click on free resources.