



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. I'm back with another episode of coaching help for your current struggles. I have really just wanted to reach out and help as many of you as possible in this current time. I know that so many of you are struggling and I want to be able to just offer any help in any way that I possibly can. I figured that this podcast is one of my best platforms in doing so. So, in the first episode I talked a lot about resistance and I talked a lot about just struggling with what people are thinking, learning to be willing to feel your emotions and today we're going to be talking a little bit more about anxiety and worries and things like that. So this is going to be another good one.

So, in case you missed the first episode, I'm going to basically be addressing issues that my current clients in my Weight Loss for Doctors Only program told me that they are struggling with, so things that I asked them, like, "What are you struggling with? What's an issue for you right now?" And they just kind of... Stream of

consciousness told me what they're struggling with and I decided to take a lot of what they offered to me and offer you some help based on those issues on this podcast because I know you're struggling with them as well. And I do want to just remind you that on Instagram I've done a lot of coaching help as well. You can find me over there at Coach Katrina Ubell, MD, and I would love it if you would be willing to share in any of the physician Facebook groups about this podcast series to help as many women physicians as possible out there, because we need to just get this coaching help out there.

As I always say, the vast majority of the world does not know that their thoughts create their feelings, and most doctors don't know that either. So we need to make sure that we get this message out there as much as we can to just help people. My biggest concern is that we're going to come out on the other end of this and so many doctors are going to want to leave medicine. They're going to have had the worst experience of this and they're going to say, "Screw it, I'm done. No more. I can't do this anymore. I have to find something else to do." And the last thing we need is a mass Exodus out of medicine, right? We don't need a situation where we don't have enough people to take good care of us because of the backlash from having had a terrible experience here.

If anything, I think that going through this experience can make you feel more connected to your purpose as a physician, the whole reason why you became a doctor in the first place and can make you feel extra connected to the amazing work that you do if you allow your brain to offer you that. Otherwise, you're going to spend a lot of time just resisting and hating and frustrating and worrying and it's going to be a terrible experience.

So, let's dig in. So, the first struggle that I want to address says, "Guilt about exposing family, anger about perceived lack of preparedness." So, I want to talk about guilt about exposing family. I talked about that on a previous podcast

a little bit, but I want to talk about exposing family and that being a concern. And I think that guilt around that is something that's completely optional.

Guilt is one of those indulgent emotions. It's an emotion that doesn't actually create anything good. Right? It's like worry, like you just sit around and feel guilty and usually keep doing the same thing. Right? Or like, "Hey, it's going to be okay. It's better if I go to work and then come home and potentially expose my family as long as I feel guilty about it." Obviously we're not thinking about it that way, but that's essentially what it comes down to. It's like if I'm exposing them, as long as I'm feeling guilty about it and worrying about everybody, then it's okay if they get sick.

So, what I want to offer to you is, yeah, they might get sick from an exposure from you. But also they might get sick from any number of other exposure. They might get it from lots of different places, and that's what's going to happen. If that's what's going to happen, then that's what's going to happen. And resisting that or thinking that you have control over that will only make you feel worse. And so, sure, of course there's things you can do. You can change your clothes, you can take a shower. There's lots of things you can do. Obviously wearing your protective equipment and things like that.

There are lots of things you can do in order to prevent your family from being exposed or getting COVID. But at the same time, if they're going to get it, they're going to get it. And the information that I've seen is that a lot of us are going to end up getting it. So the way you have yourself positioned here is that, if your family ends up getting it, then you have to feel bad about it. Right? And then you have to blame yourself and you have to go through a lot of negative emotion. Sort of like a penance, right? That's your punishment for being a doctor and being out there taking care of people.

And what I want you to know is that all of that is completely optional. You really can think about it in a totally different way. Like I'm doing my absolute best to protect my family. They might still get exposed, they still might get it, and then we're going to deal with it and we're going to figure it out. As I told you in the last episode, whatever comes, I'm going to figure it out. That is, I think, one of the most empowering thoughts you can have right now, because there is so much that's unknown. Right? Our brains want to go to, "Well, tell me what's going to happen and then I'll come up with a solution and then I have a plan." Except there's so many things that could happen and so many unknowns it's hard to come up with enough contingency plans for all of those things.

So instead, you can just bring it back to whatever it is I know I'm going to figure it out. And the same thing will happen if your family is exposed and if your family gets ill. So the guilt part is the part that you really can drop. It's the optional part. It's a feeling that's created by the way that you're thinking. And usually it's going to be related to, "I shouldn't be doing this." Something related to, "I shouldn't be doing this, but I'm doing it anyway and my family might be harmed because of it." And then you have to feel guilty about it.

You just look at it like, "No, of course I should be doing this. This is my job. This is what I've been called to do as a human being, and part of the deal is that there's increased exposure for myself and my family."

Anger about perceived lack of preparedness. Again, we talked about anger last time, but anger again is an emotion that's created by your thought. Right? A perceived lack of preparedness. That means that your interpretation is that there's a lack of preparedness, and this goes also for seeing people out.

Apparently, just yesterday I heard that on one of the peers in California there were just thousands of people,

and this certain age group that is not seemingly taking social distancing very seriously. And so there is this lack of preparedness and then you are angry about it. Again, the anger part is the optional part. That's the part where you can say, "Okay, apparently this is what people are supposed to be doing. This is always going to be this way, it's supposed to be this way. These are the challenges within which I'm supposed to find a solution, and just moving myself forward." Whenever you're angry, you're thinking it should be different than it is, and apparently it shouldn't be different than it is.

I think it's interesting whenever we have this idea of everybody should be totally following social distancing, everybody should be following the lockdown rules, everybody should be taking this seriously or things like that. Except why would we ever expect them to? When are we all in agreement on anything? When you really think about it, right, there's always going to be the people who are the dissenters, the people who are like, "No, listen, this is all made up. This isn't even true. None of this is even anything to worry about." And maybe for them, they're right. Maybe if they get it, they're going to be fine. Maybe if they get it, they'll be one of the people who basically doesn't even have symptoms. We don't know.

Now, the reason we get so upset is because we think, yeah, but then you're going to give it to someone who really does have some compromised immune system or is elderly and then they're going to have a real problem with it. Maybe, maybe not. We don't know that for a fact.

What's interesting is we experienced so much uncertainty and we don't like that feeling of uncertainty, but we're very certain about all the horrible things that are going to happen if people don't follow the rules or don't do exactly what we think they should do. It's also possible that all these people in their 20s get together and nothing bad happens. Right? So we can decide. It doesn't mean we have to agree with it, but we can decide, hey, this is just

what they're going to do. We can educate them as best as we can. If it becomes a law or it's something where law enforcement needs to get involved, then they will get involved. But otherwise, what I need to focus on is what I can control, and that is how I take care of myself, how I take care of my family, and how I take care of the patients. Meaning the patient who's right in front of me. And it doesn't really matter who exposed them or who got them sick or where it came from or any of that. Just how do I help the person who's in front of me right in this moment needing my care?

Okay, next one. "Overall anxiety and overwhelmed with being on isolation for two weeks, trying to find coverage for work, daycare closed, and no childcare for when I'm back to work." So, overall anxiety and overwhelm, again, are emotions that this client is attributing to lots of circumstances. So being on isolation for two weeks, needing coverage for work, daycare is closed, daycare is not open when I go back to work. Those are not things that create anxiety or overwhelm. What creates anxiety or overwhelm is you're thinking about it, your thoughts like, "I'm not going to be able to figure this out. There's not a solution. What if I can't find somebody to help me?" All the ways that our brains run away without us.

And so, the way that you can look at this is, "Okay, I'm experiencing anxiety, I'm experiencing overwhelm right now because of the way that I'm thinking." Again, owning it, and going, "Okay, at any time I can switch my brain over to solutions focus and move toward finding a way to figure this out whenever I'm ready to drop the anxiety and the overwhelm."

Often the anxiety and the overwhelm really feels necessary and it feels useful, and what I want to make sure that you're not doing is indulging in it. Meaning you're just staying in it and spinning in it and looping and not able to get yourself out. That is when we have more of a problem, because then you don't come up with any

solutions. So daycare is closed, there's no childcare for when you're back at work. That's when you need to start thinking, what are the other options? Brainstorming every possible thing, even things that are ridiculous. Who else might possibly be able to help? And figuring out what to do with that.

It could be that what you figure out to do is to... This time that you're in isolation, you figure out doing tele-visits and you're actually able to stay home with the kids and still see patients through that. I don't know, it's just one idea I came up with, but there's so many different solutions. When you know that there's a solution out there, even when your brain keeps telling you, "Nope, Nope, Nope, there's not one," when you keep believing there's a solution, I'm going to figure it out, I'm going to figure it out, your brain gets to work solving that puzzle for you, solving that problem. So you just have to give it the opportunity to do so. The way you do that is by getting yourself out of anxiety and out of overwhelm.

"I have anxiety about leading my OR team in a time of uncertainty. With PPE availability making me feel like I am not enough." Yeah, so this is really interesting, right? This is this idea of I'm in a leadership position and there's so much anxiety and uncertainty and people are looking to me to help them and it's making me feel like I'm not enough, except that's actually not what's making you feel like you're not enough.

What I would argue is that you've always felt like you were not enough, and this is just another example that your brain is showing you of like, "See, you're not enough. Here's more evidence." I think that this is a thought that this person has had longstanding and this is just another episode of it showing its head here. And so, feeling like you're enough or not enough is 100% optional.

Why allow your brain to tell you you're not enough, that you're not enough, when it's... Who decides that? Right?

It's literally a belief that you have about yourself. That's why I know that you already have this belief about yourself, because if you felt like you were enough and you were really having a positive opinion of yourself, then you would say, "Regardless of my anxiety and regardless of the uncertainty and regardless of how I have to lead the OR team, I know that, as a human being, I am enough." My leadership, what I do, what I don't do, how I lead people, how I don't lead people, none of that has any reflection on your worth as a human being or your value as a human being. This is the true opinion of yourself work that you have to do, where you have to look at, even if I screw this up royally, I am still an amazing, perfect, whole human being.

And coming from that place going, "Okay, how can I best serve my OR team?" It's a very different place than I have this emptiness within me and I have to be performing externally in a certain way in order to fill that void and make myself feel like I'm enough. You're going to have a very hard time feeling like you're enough. Your brain will just show you every little minute way. Even if you rock it out and do an amazing job, if you have this belief that you're not enough, your brain will come up with this one minor time that you just said one little thing wrong, and be like, "Yeah, but see, you screwed it up there." That's how brains work. That's what your brain will do.

The next one says, "The reality of closing down my pediatric practice is very real and it is terrifying that I won't be able to afford my employees." This is a really big issue for a lot of people who are in private practice right now. I was actually talking to my husband recently and saying, "Is this whole event going to be the end of private practices as we know it?" It's going to be really, really interesting to see what ends up happening here. And so, yeah, there is a reality that a lot of practices are going to have to close and there's the reality then that, if you're not making any money, then you're not going to be able to pay your employees.

Now, of course there's all kinds of different things that the government is working on to help support people and support small businesses and things like that. And even by the time this airs, hopefully they will have come up with a solution and a plan to help support people. But this is one of those times where the closing down of your pediatric practice is very real, and the terrifying part is the part that you can choose, right?

Now, I think that it's normal to feel upset when there's a lot of people that you employ that you could really care about and you want to be able to support them and help them. But I also think that coming to terms with the possibility of your practice failing, going bankrupt, needing to close down, and moving toward acceptance of that makes it so that you can make the best decisions that you can. I think if you can get to a place of peace and acceptance, I may have to close my practice permanently, and then working on acceptance of that, then you can move forward and say, "Okay, if that's the case, how am I going to best take care of these people? What am I going to do? How are we going to work this all out? How can I best serve the world in whatever way that may be?" And then once you've gone to that worst case scenario, right, of closing it all down, then you can see options. Well, one option is to close it all down, but also I might be able to do this. I might be able to get this loan. If I use it to pay for payroll, then it's forgiven, or whatever the situation is.

But you often need to go to that worst case scenario to work through that. Yeah, it is a real reality for a lot of people that their practice may need to close and they may need to lay people off or lay everybody off possibly, but then knowing that it's all going to work itself out in the long run. Again, we're going to figure it out. If you can believe that there is resilience to human beings, which I believe that there is or there's no way we would make it as long as we have, that resilience is going to keep us going. It's going to help us to serve as physicians, it's going to help

the employees that we have to lay off to figure out another solution for themselves as well.

We often think, "Oh, my gosh, I'm going to have to lay them off and that's going to be the worst thing in the world." For some people, that might be the best thing in the world. Think about the opportunities that come up when you have that time where you unexpectedly were laid off or something changed in your life, and then you thought, "There was always that thing that I always wanted to do," or, "I was thinking about a career change anyway, but I never had the guts to do it," or, "I always wanted to start a business," or whatever it may be. You can just decide, this might be an amazing opportunity for all of these employees to start over, to really think about what they want to do moving forward in their lives and move toward that.

So again, it's not like you have to be happy about it, but it is just as equally an opportunity for them as it is a terrible thing that's happening to them. So you can decide to think they are all going to work it out. This is all going to be happening for them. If it's happening for them, then they're going to be sorting it out. They're going to figure out a solution. They're going to come up with something that's going to work for them.

"I'm struggling with overwhelm about the amount of information about COVID and deciding what is important and reliable." I think that that is a really big issue for a lot of people because things are changing frequently and it's hard to know where to get the latest information. But what I would suggest is that you decide on a few different places that are giving out information, and those are the places you check and that's it.

So for instance, just as an example, I think one way that might be useful to look at it is looking at what the CDC says, maybe looking at what your state medical governing body is saying, and then being in touch with public health

officials in your specific location, where you are, whether it's a city or a general region, and finding out what they're saying is happening specifically where you are.

I also think that, depending on the leadership of your organization, there might be some information coming from public health officers or people like that coming from your institution as well about how to handle things, and looking at that and making decisions based on that are good. But what it says here is, "I'm struggle with overwhelm about deciding what is important and reliable." So again, what is important and reliable is what you decide it is, and so what we often think is like someone else is going to have that information, I've got to find it, and then that's very overwhelming. And I want to suggest to you that it really is something that you decide. What's important is the information from these sources and I'm going to decide that what I get from them is reliable until I have further information that points out that maybe it's not reliable, but right now I'm going to believe that it's reliable, because again, those are thoughts, this information is reliable, this information is important.

You can also decide, but many people will decide this isn't reliable, this isn't important. So the overwhelm is the optional part, the overwhelm is the part that you can drop and just decide, "Okay, I'm going to check these sources, this is where I'm getting information from, this is directing my decision-making, and then I'm going to move forward from there.

Okay. "My husband doesn't want me to be a "hero" coming into the hospital when so much of the staff decisions seem shortsighted and not proactively safe." So I think what's hard about this is when we have other people in our lives who very much have an opinion about what we should be doing and things like that. And I think that, in this situation, I think that you have to decide what is it that I'm going to do to keep myself safe? What am I going to do that is right? And if you don't think it's right, if

you really, legitimately, honest to goodness think that it's risky and not right, then what are you going to do?

Because what typically happens here is the husband, let's just say in this example here, the husband is upset about it and you are upset about it, but then you still go to work and you still go do the things that you think are not safe. And what I would say is if you really legitimately don't think that it's safe or you think it's a really big problem, then you have to be willing to put your foot down and say, "No, I'm not going to come in if this is the situation." And if you're not willing to put your foot down and do that, then there's really no sense in spending time and brain energy on it should be different, or I shouldn't have to be the hero coming in here to do this. This is again, resistance, right? It shouldn't be the way it is. It shouldn't be the way it is.

Well, there's ways to change it if you think it should be different. Stepping up and taking a leadership role and changing it, and if you're not willing to do that, then that's totally fine, but then being willing to be the follower and allowing leadership to figure it out. They're failing forward, all the leadership. Right? They're like, "Hey, we're going to do this. Oh, whoops, that's not working or that's not probably the right thing to do. Okay, failed on that. Now we're failing forward. What's the next thing we're going to do? What's the next thing we're going to do?"

So, they're doing the best that they can. We often think that they're not. We really want to think that they're all idiots and they're screwing up royally, but I want to offer to you that, in a similar position, would you be sitting there going, "I want to screw this up royally. I want to screw as many people as I can." No, you're going to be looking at information just like any other human being, trying to figure out what the best, most right thing is and screwing it up from time to time.

So, I want to offer to you that, when your husband offers you those thoughts, you get to just love him for having so

much concern about you. He doesn't want you to be the hero because he doesn't want you to become ill and compromised in any way or hurt in any way because he loves you and he cares about you, and so he is coming from a protective place and we can love him and we can decide to do whatever is best for us, whether that's going in, whether that's not going in, whether that is taking on a more leadership position to help do things in a way that you think is better, but we can just love him for having that concern. We don't have to think about it as a situation that is causing breakdown or tension within the relationship.

Okay, we did another one. I've got more. I'm going to record a third. It's coming soon. All right. Hang in there. You are doing this. You literally were made for this. There's no one better than you to do this. Okay? I mean it, I know this about you, because why would you have become a physician in the first place if you didn't have it in you to do something like this? You're being called to serve your true purpose in your life, which is to care for people when they really need you. And there's literally nothing better you could be doing with your time, your energy, your intelligence, your space on this earth than to do what you're doing right now. So, hang in there, you've got this, and I'm with you the whole way.

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.