



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. Welcome back to the third episode of Coaching Help For Your Current Struggles. This is a little mini series that I'm doing for you to help you with the current issues that you're struggling with. This is really such an unprecedented time for us as physicians. And I want to be able to offer as much help as I possibly can.

So, if this is your first time listening into this little series, these issues that I'm discussing and concerns and struggles, are those that my clients offered to me as things that they were struggling with. And they're all in my weight loss for doctors only program. And I know that so many of you are struggling with the same things, which is why I wanted to create a series of podcasts to address these things to help everybody who might be struggling with this right now.

So again, I would love it if you would be willing to share that this series exists on any of the physician Facebook groups that you might be a member of. And also, that I've been on Instagram offering some coaching help as well. My handle on Instagram is Coach Katrina Ubell MD. So let's dig in.

So the first one here, it says, "Staying home because I'm immunocompromised." And I think this is a whole other side of this issue. So if you're somebody who can't be on the front lines or can't be in the thick of everything helping, because of a current situation that you have with yourself, then feeling like you're missing out, right? Like you should be there helping and you're not. I know a lot of people who have to stay home are feeling like they're letting their partners down, like they're letting their patients down. And they just overall are feeling bad about not being able to be in there.

And so I actually recently coached one of my clients on this and she said, "I just feel like I should be there." And I said, "But should you be there?" And she's like, "No, I would totally get ill if I were there." And so I want to offer to you that it's something that seems like it's useful, thinking, "I should be there. Things shouldn't be the way they are." But no, if you are someone who does not have an immune system that could handle being exposed, then you absolutely shouldn't be in the mix. You shouldn't be seeing patients who could potentially get you sick. And thinking that it should be any other way, doesn't serve you. It doesn't end up helping you to create more value.

Now, what I think is one of the best ways to approach this that I've offered to a few people now who've been in a situation where they're forced to stay home, is to not think

of it as, "Well, the only way that I can provide value is if I'm in the hospital or in clinic, actually seeing people. That is something that is very shortsighted, is only one way that you're able to create value. And so what I want to suggest is that if this is your situation, you're staying home because you're immunocompromised, then you should spend 20 minutes at least once a day thinking just brainstorming, having thinking time, thinking about how you can provide value given your current situation.

So what are ways that you can be maybe supporting patients, your patients, other people's patients, how you can be supporting your staff, your fellow partners, like what can you be doing to provide value? Where is there a need for value that you can fill with your brain? Because that's what you still have. You may not be able to physically be present, but you still have your magnificent brain, and your brain is what creates that value.

So if you are willing to brainstorm and think of things that you can do to help, you can still be super effective. You could be the person who's researching things while everyone else is taking care of patients. You can do all kinds of different ... I mean, I could literally, I have so many ideas, but I'm going to spare you them right now. But there's so many things that you could be doing that could be of assistance of aid that could really help people. And all you have to do is get yourself into a space where you let your brain come up with those things.

So if you're struggling with staying at home because you're immunocompromised, that's only because you're thinking things should be different, right? There's a different way that things should be. And if they were that way, then it would be better. And in this case, we can confidently say no, it's better that you're not exposed to

this. But that doesn't mean that you are just sitting there twiddling your thumbs watching daytime television. There's plenty of other things that you can be doing. And one of the best ways to do that is to allow your brain to come up with solutions.

So if you set the timer for 20 minutes, what's going to happen is the first couple of minutes, your brain is going to be all over the place. "I can't think of anything. There are no ideas. Everything's already thought of. They don't really need my help. Maybe this is dumb. I shouldn't do this anyway," all kinds of things like that. And what you can do instead is just let your brain have its little tantrum and then just keep asking yourself, "But what else could I do? How else could I provide value? In what other way could I be of assistance?" And you just keep thinking and thinking and asking yourself that question and answering that question. And don't think, "Well that's stupid or that'll never work." Just write down what comes to mind. Write down what comes to mind. Just let it all flow out of you. You never know, it could be that a couple of the things end up melding together and that's actually the solution, right?

So you take all the ideas that you have and you figure out what you can do moving forward. It might even be that the first thing you try isn't actually very useful, and you have to go back to the drawing board and try something different, and that's completely fine as well. So that is what I want to offer to you if you're not able to be on the front lines and helping.

All right. "Both husband and I closed our offices. I'm doing most of the homeschooling with kids, husband is not. Feel as if no time for my work." And so this is a big one. We were talking about homeschooling. A lot of people are

struggling with school. So the first thing I want to just talk about again is, doing school with your kids is totally optional. There have been many times where children over the course of many centuries have not been able to get the schooling that they otherwise might have because of situations that have been happening in the world and what their parents have needed to do.

And so I want to just first talk about if you get to know schooling, you get to know schooling. It is not the worst thing in the world for a kid to need to be tutored or to have to repeat a grade or something like that. Depending on what ends up happening, how long this lasts, there are worse things that could happen. It might happen to a lot of kids, where there is just a total repeat of the grade that they were currently in, or having to take some more time to be able to get their schooling up to par, and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that.

Especially if your child or any of your children have any sort of special needs in the sense that maybe they have ADHD or they have some sort of challenge with their learning or a different way that they learn. You are not skilled in teaching them that. That's why they went to school. So you do what you can do and then that's it, and it might not be very much so. That's the first thing that I want to put out there.

The second thing is, when one of us takes on the role of homeschooling and the other parent does not, it can be easy to get resentful, because we're thinking again that things should be different than they are. He should be helping more. Maybe he should, maybe he shouldn't. We don't really know what's going on for him. I would offer that there's nothing wrong with asking him to be more involved, which is something to think about as well.

For instance, I just recently did that because my children's school has sent some things for my younger kids that they can do pretty independently, but then they've recently also sent a lot of things that require a lot of side by side sitting, helping, assisting. And there's a lot of times I don't have time to do that, because I'm here helping you guys. I am working on serving my clients as best as I can and providing value to all the physicians and healthcare workers who are going through this situation right now. And so I asked my husband since he is no longer able to operate on Wednesday mornings, "Wednesday morning, can you sit down with them and work through these packets where they need more help?" He was like, "Absolutely," and he was totally willing to do it.

So your husband might not be, but there's nothing wrong with asking. I think also, getting into some sort of schedule or routine is going to be very important as well. I have definitely tried some things that I have not worked very well so far. It's all experimentation. It's actually just like weight loss. It's like, "Hey, this seems like it would be a good way to do it." And then you try it and you're like, "No, that's actually horrible. It's not working at all. Okay, good to know." Right, with weight loss too. We always want to hit it perfectly; the nail on the head the first time, like "I've got my way of eating and I'm going to be losing weight and I'm going to lose it all rapidly." That's not how it works often. We try some things we think is going to be good and then we find out, absolutely not. It's actually not good for us at all to do it that way.

So similar with the whole schedule at home and things like that, I have an older child, but he's fully doing online school where there's attendance being taken and he has to be doing his own thing. So, it's a very different scenario

and situation right now to what I'm used to. And so for all of us, we have to make adjustments. In fact, I have decided that just getting up early is what I have to do to be able to get a few hours in uninterrupted where nobody can talk to me. And that's what I have to do, and then changing things as we go along. So that's the latest of what I'm experimenting with, and we'll see what I think about it.

So in terms of figuring out time for you to do your work, that's where you have to get creative, right? Maybe some of your work can be done between 4:00 and 6:30, when your kids wake up and you can really bang out a bunch of work. Or if you're doing televisits, then you have to figure something else out, right? If you both are home, then you have to figure out a way that works for both of you. But I do just want to add that if your kids end up watching a whole bunch of movies and TV and play a bunch of video games, and are eating junk and whatever they're doing for you to get through this, there are way worse things out there to be happening, okay? It is not something to be beating yourself up over by any stretch of the imagination. It's just not worth it at all. It will not create anything positive for you.

All right, the next one, this so interesting. "I'm sending kids to daycare because of husband not able to watch kids and I'm still working. Guilt over not doing enough with homeschool." So this is again, you have to be able to do what you need to do. If your husband's not able to watch the kids, I'm not sure why he's not able to, maybe it's because he's working, maybe because he's just not really able to do with the kids by himself. If you're still working, what we're looking for right now with our kids is basic human needs being fulfilled. Are they safe? Are they getting food? Do they have shelter? And then everything else is just a bonus.

So again, drop the guilt over not doing homeschool, okay, or not doing enough with it. You get to it however you get to it. I'm telling you, this packet that I printed off yesterday, I was like, wow, this is a lot of work. And then it was like, "And if you get through that, you can do all this other stuff." And I was like okay, clearly, some teachers are not understanding what it's like at home right now. And I recognize having a little extra is probably better, but yeah, we're going to get to what we get to, and that's still going to be amazing.

So even if you do none of it, do not stress, okay? If you get to one worksheet, you are killing it, okay? You were doing so well. You're super amazing. There's no reason to be beating yourself up. Let's just say, let's just for argument's sake say that your kids come back later and they're like, "Why did I have to repeat that grade?" You can be like, "Hey, listen, I was saving the world during a pandemic, so you're welcome." And I'm not joking actually, I'm totally serious, right? This is the truth. That's what you're doing. You're out there doing what needs to be done in a very unusual situation. You know they're there because they're going to be fine. They are going to be fine.

One thing I know for sure is that children are resilient, right? They will get through it. Luckily we have all of summer to work through things if we need to. Hopefully we won't be inside all through summer, but if we are, we're going to work through that as well and we're going to make it work. It's just changing all of our routines so much and we have to be willing to try and fail and try and fail and again, fail forward, mess it up, and then go, "Okay, what's the next thing I'm going to try?" Instead of going, "Well, I guess I'm just not going to teach my kids

anything." Which by the way is also fine to decide. There's nothing wrong with that.

All right, "Being stuck at home with kids and buffering with alcohol and extra food. Working on this all day, every day." Yes. Okay. So this is such a great opportunity for you to work on your relationship with your children and recognizing what your thoughts are about your kids and how you don't like the feelings that those thoughts create. And then you don't want to feel those feelings. So you're eating food and drinking alcohol to try to make that all go away, right?

So there's never been a better time to be working on your thoughts about your family. I always say I'm an outgoing introvert. I need a lot of time alone and by myself, and so I love being able to have my children at school, so even when I'm working and I'm doing things at home, I still am by myself. I'm finding that I'm having a lot harder time finding time to be by myself. But I'm telling you what, getting up early in the morning before the kids get up, that gives me that extra time than I need.

What I would suggest is that for sure you have to be doing thought work during this time. And what that involves is doing a thought download where you empty out all your thoughts about your kids and being at home with them, right? Even thinking, "I'm stuck at home with them," probably creates negative emotion and probably makes you feel pretty helpless, right? You're just empowered in thinking that you're stuck. You're not stuck. You could totally leave. You could totally go do things with them. You're just choosing not to, and you like your reasons I think, right? So recognizing how your thinking is creating that whole experience is going to be so important.

So you start with a thought download, you empty out everything that's going on in your brain, and then you can actually look at it. First of all, it always feels way better just dumping it all out anyway, right? Get that whole brain dump. It's just like totally cathartic. Like you're taking a shower, you're just like, ha. It's all out. It doesn't have to rattle around in there anymore. And then you can start looking like, "Okay, I've got this thought and this thought." Be really careful about not judging yourself in this time. What I find so many of us do is then we look at what we actually wrote and then we're so judgmental and mean to ourselves like, "I can't believe I think that about myself. I'm such a horrible mom."

No, do not let yourself do that, okay? Do not let yourself go to that place. What you need to be doing is looking at it from a place of compassion and curiosity. "I'm struggling at home right now. I wonder what my thoughts are and what my feelings are that are making it so much of a struggle for me, so that I can look at it and figure it out. Okay? It's a totally different way of looking at it, than going, "Let me just look at all the ways that I'm screwing it up and then beat myself up for doing that." That will not create anything positive for you at all.

So you're at home and then you're noticing you're reaching for the food. What I want to offer to you is, the way you're going to figure this out as well, is notice yourself going for the food, wanting the food, reaching for the food, and just pause. Hit pause for a second. You're not even saying that you can't eat it. You're just saying, "Hold on a second. Let me just figure out what is going on for me right now. What is my emotion?" Figure out what your top three emotions are at home every day with these kids, and ask yourself why you're not willing to feel them. You recognize that your thoughts are the ones that are

creating them and you can work through your thoughts, and you can work to try to think differently of course.

But in the moment when you're feeling that negative emotion that you don't want to feel and you're asking food to solve the problem, and alcohol to solve the problem, just pause for a moment. "What is that emotion? Let me get to know it. Let me move out of my head and out of resistance, move into it. Really identify where it is in my body, what it feels like, what color is it? What shape is it? Is it changing? Is it not? Is it rough? Is it smooth? Is it cold? Is it hot?" Get to know the whole feeling super, super well and then you can have the food if you still need it.

And you might only be able to do that for like 30 seconds and that's okay. Work on just feeling it for 30 seconds. Then have the food or have the drink and then challenge yourself to feeling it for a minute. You can set the timer on your phone if you need to, to just allow yourself to be with it, not resisting it, okay? Very important. Moving toward being with it, allowing it to be there, keep breathing, relax your muscles, let it be there and then if you still are needing the food, then you can have it.

What you'll find is that you'll build up your strength in terms of being able to feel an emotion. That's what all of this is about, learning to feel your emotions. If you can feel your feelings, you will not need the food and the alcohol. Then you're really just feeling your body because it needs food.

So this is one of the best opportunities that you have to practice this. Even before this pandemic, there were lots of opportunities. We were talking about this all the time.

But there's literally not been a better time than now to work on this. Recognize what is that emotion that I'm feeling? What is the name of it? Move out of your head and into your body. Move toward it instead of pushing it away. This is a super important skill. Once you've mastered this, I'm telling you, this solves so many problems for you; it is so worth it.

All right. Being more short tempered at home. Yeah, I think a lot of that comes down to just being in a situation where we're not used to being around our family members so much. Also, kind of resisting the way they're acting. But I think a lot of it comes down to the short temperedness comes down to just feeling fear and anxiety, and not being sure of what's going to be happening and kind of lashing out, reacting to that.

And so I think it's important for you to determine what those are. "Is it that I'm not liking how these people in my house are acting right now and that's why I'm short tempered with them? Or is this a carry over from some of the anger and frustration that I brought home from work? Is this something that is based in the fear that I'm experiencing right now? And instead of processing my emotions, I'm reacting and yelling at people or being snarky with them or sarcastic? What is this actually all about?" Again, taking time to do a thought download, a few minutes will be very helpful in determining this.

"I responded in this way. This thing happened. These were the neutral facts, and this was my response. I wonder why I responded in that way. What did I make it mean that that happened? Why was that a problem for me?" And from there you can start to figure out, "Okay, I made it mean this. This was really the problem. This is why I was struggling." Super good.

And then the final one I have is, "My scarcity is in full force right now with the thought, I can't go to the store and get what I need." I think this is so important. So many of us who struggle with food scarcity issues are having this issue right now as well. Where it's this idea of, "I can't get what I need. I can't get my needs met." And what I want to offer to you about that is that that's never true because you can always get your needs met as long as you have your magnificent, brilliant human brain that can solve problems for you.

So let's just say that your house is empty of food and you go to different stores and there's no food there. You would figure out what to do. There's no way that you're going to starve to death, right? You're going to figure out a solution. Some ideas I've thought of, because my brain's gone here too. There's food banks. There's negotiating or bartering or trading with neighbors, right? There's so many ways you can get what you need. Pretty soon, we're going to be able to plant seeds and grow our own food if we need to. There's lots and lots of ways to be able to get what you need.

I think that when we allow ourselves to spend time in scarcity and food scarcity and thinking that we're not going to get what we need, and the same goes for money scarcity right now too, because there's so many people thinking in that way as well. When we think that way, it just keeps us stuck and it keeps us not creating solutions, right? It holds us back from what we need. So in this case, when you notice that your brain is saying, "Oh my gosh, I can't get to the store, I can't get what I need." Just notice, "Okay, that's the scarcity right now, but it's actually not true."

The reason why your brain offers you those scarcity thoughts is because it thinks that that is somehow going to help you. It seems like it's very useful. It seems like it's going to protect you or it's going to make it so that you don't have a problem later. Like, "Hey, if you just think about how you don't have enough then you could get enough." Here's what's so interesting though, there is no enough. There's not enough food that you can have in your house that would make you feel like food was plentiful, right? Because you think that there needs to be food in the stores in order for you to feel like food is plentiful. Like the whole supply chain with food needs to be totally solid.

And when I think about it, I just think, "Gosh, have we been so spoiled, right, in thinking, it's never a problem. We get whatever we want." And most of the time, that's completely been the case for us. But when things are different or there's the threat of things being different, we start thinking, "Oh my gosh, I'm not going to be able to figure it out. I'm not going to be able to get what I need." Except that's not true at all. You absolutely will be able to get what you need. All you have to do is again, come up with a solution.

When my brain goes to this place, because food scarcity has been an issue for me as well, I just think to myself, "You know what? I'm going to figure it out. We have plenty of food right now. I don't need to overeat what I have," which is very important, right? If you're snacking and munching and eating all the food right now, yeah, you're going to need more food sooner, that's for sure. If you're having money scarcity issues, over eating food wastes a lot of money. You don't need that food to survive right now.

So when you spend time focusing on, "I know that no matter what, I can make sure that my needs are met, because I have a brain that can come up with solutions," then you can let all of that just go, right? And it might back again. It probably will. You remember, "You know what? I've got myself, I've got me. I can totally figure it out. I will not starve." And then dropping it again. So notice so many people, right, are struggling with scarcity right now in this way. Just notice that it's just your brain trying to protect you. It's like, "Hey, we need more and more and more. We need tons of reserves in stores."

I think that this probably from a biological standpoint, comes from back in the days when you really couldn't get food for a really long time during winter. And so we thought, "Okay, well we know there's not going to be food during winter, we're not going to be able to get things. So we have got to get as much as we can during the warmer months, and store it all away so that we can survive through the winter." And so the way our lives typically are where we can just get food anytime we want to, the reason why we still feel like, "I don't have enough," or there's scarcity around food, is just based in that longstanding tradition for humans where we needed to stockpile food to be able to survive.

And so now that the typical way of getting food is threatened in some way, the brain's like, "Listen, this is life or death. You need to get more food. This is really going to be a problem." Except it's not going to be life or death. There are so many people who stockpiled so much food. And if it comes down to it, everybody's going to be sharing and helping each other. It's just human nature that there's good people out there who are going to share and are going to help. And you might have some things that you're able to share and help with as well.

Now, I don't actually think it's going to get to that place, but I think it's good to go to the worst case scenario, so that you have a solution. You already know, "Hey, if it gets to that point where literally all the shelves are empty, what are we going to do? Okay, this is what we're going to do, and we're going to figure it out in this way."

I've had some clients say too, "I'm really worried I'm not going to be able to get food that serves me. I'm not going to be able to get food that is on my plan. Or I'm going to end up gaining a bunch of weight because I have to eat pancakes or something." Something that isn't something that they typically would eat or that they typically overeat. And what I want to offer to you, is that you never have to overeat anything. Like no matter what is left, even if all that's left is candy, I mean candy will keep you alive, but you don't have to overeat candy. You would eat just as much as you need; stay alive. If you're overweight, you have plenty of fat stores on your body. You have many, many meals that you can access on your body in the form of fat before things really start to become a problem.

We are a long, long, long way in this country from getting to a place where many people are truly suffering from starvation and dying from starvation. So when you bring yourself back to what the facts are, then you can get yourself focused and moving forward and dropping the whole narrative of how you're not going to have enough.

All right. With that, I'm going to sign off. I'm telling you this is some of the best work that you can do. I will be opening up my May Weight Loss For Doctors Only Program as I originally scheduled. I think that there's never been a better time for you to work on your brain, get the coaching help that you need to be able to get through this in one piece without having gained a bunch of weight and being

completely burned out and hating medicine on the other end of it.

And so if you are interested in learning more and interested in figuring out if you're ready to lose weight, then I'll be offering a few free trainings coming up here soon. You can find out more information about that by going to Katrinaubellmd.com/ready, R-E-A-D-Y. And if you just want to get more information about the program on your own, you can go to Katrinaubellmd.com/info, I-N-F-O.

And with that, I'm going to sign off. Have a great rest of your day. We're going to get through this together friends, we really are. I'm here for you. I'm going to support you all the way, and 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.