



# WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Welcome to the Weight Loss for Busy Physicians podcast. I'm your host, master Certified life and weight loss Coach Katrina Ubell, M.D. This is the podcast where busy doctors like you come to learn how to lose weight for the last time by harnessing the power of your mind. If you're looking to overcome your stress, eating and exhaustion and move into freedom around food, you're in the right place. Well, hello there, my friend. Welcome to today's episode. I'm so glad you're here. If you're new, then welcome. I'm so glad that you're here for this conversation today.

If you've been listening for a while, then super glad that you're here as well. I was just thinking of some people that I met a couple of days ago. I think I mentioned on the podcast that I had a presentation that I was giving at an OBGYN conference that was two days ago and it's just always so fun to meet people, some clients, some people who have just been long time listeners. And so for those of you who said hi, we took selfies and hugs and hugs. Hello to you. I'm still thinking about you and just so glad to connect with people. I feel like I love me some virtual, don't get me wrong, but every now and then peppering in some in person, there's nothing like it. It's just it's cool to be around real people. I've actually been asked to do a podcast on public speaking and I was getting ready to record this today and someone on my team said, Oh, are you going to do it on public speaking? Now, granted, my presentation was two days ago and I was like, No, not yet.

Don't feel that I'm ready. I don't. It's in the works in my mind. So guess we'll call that an Easter egg, right? Sometime in the future I will do an episode on that because I know it's something that so many of us struggle with. It's definitely something that I have struggled with a lot, and even within my coaching programs, we coach on public

speaking a ton. You know, it's a common thing when you're a doctor to be asked to go and give presentations. And it's just it's a difficult thing for so many of us. So I don't feel that I'm quite at a point where I have some great lessons learned yet for you because I'm in the middle of learning them. So to be determined what they will all be. But I will have them for you sometime soon, I'm sure.

Okay. So today I want to talk to you about intuitive eating versus coaching. This is something that comes up from time to time, particularly in our coaching program. You know, clients will say, Hey, now that I'm learning a lot of these concepts, I'm starting to wonder like, is what you're teaching? Intuitive eating? Is this intuitive eating what we're doing here? And in my mind it's different. And I'm going to talk to you about why it's different, but there actually are tons of similarities.

So I think of it if you think of a Venn diagram, it's one of those Venn diagrams where the majority of both circles are overlapping. So there's some differences, but there's also a lot of similarities or a lot of kind of philosophical things where, you know, they're on the along the same lines. Now, when I say coaching, I guess what I'm really meaning when I say intuitive eating versus coaching is I'm talking about how I do weight loss coaching. So I'm just going to offer you my personal perspective on how I approach weight loss coaching. I've been at this, I think what is this year now? I think this is going to be my seventh year here pretty soon. Yeah, I think later this year it'll be seven years.

So I've been at this a while. I've been doing this for a while. I've worked with literally, you know, hundreds and hundreds, over a thousand clients, physician clients. And so I've just learned a lot over the years. And I have my own personal perspective, which of course factors into how I approach things. So I just want to be clear on that because for every different type of coach there is, there's going to be a different philosophy. And if, you know, you just got to find what resonates with you. I would never dream of, you know, representing or thinking that I'm, you know, able to represent every person who calls themselves a coach out there.

So just to be clear on that. So talking about how I think about coaching versus intuitive eating and what I also want to say about intuitive eating is, you know, I am not a trained, intuitive eating expert. So there may be some people out there who are like, No, actually this and that. But, you know, I do know some about it and I've educated myself on it.

And so this is my perspective based on that. Like I said, I think there's just a lot of things that overlap and it's just something I get asked a lot about. And I also just want to say that, you know, I am all for whatever works for people. So if you're like, what? I totally disagree about what you're saying about intuitive eating. It's changed my life. It's totally the thing that solved all my problems for me. Amazing. I'm so, so, so happy for you.

I am for whatever works for each individual person. I would never, ever begin to think of saying that whatever I say has to be the right thing for everybody. It just definitely isn't. And we all you know, one of the biggest things that I talk about all the time and that I teach my clients is that we all have to become the expert in ourselves. So I just want you to filter this all through what makes sense for you as a human being, as an individual, and just see what resonates from there.

So just definitely don't want it to look like I'm like somehow bashing intuitive eating because I'm definitely not. It's just some areas that there's like four areas where I think that, you know, there's some differences that in my mind are actually drawbacks. So before we start with that. I do just want to mention that intuitive eating started with I think one person is a therapist, one person is a registered dietitian. They wrote a book that came out in 1996 called Intuitive Eating, and they called it a recovery book for the Chronic Dieter.

So I think what's really important is to just have a little history lesson here. You know, what was happening in 1996? I mean, I was in my second year of college in 1996. And, you know, it was really the height of what we think of as the super duper toxic diet culture, meaning calorie counting, like thinness. And like no matter what the consequence is, like, as long as you're thin, then it's okay that you're absolutely miserable or binge from time to time or like whatever it may be. I think, you know, all that calorie counting stuff really started in the 80s. And then, you know, by the time 1996 rolled around, there were so many people, women in particular, who were just in a really bad way, who were really, really, really struggling with the chronic dieting, right? With, you know, these crash diets and things that were completely unsustainable long term.

And so this book came out and it really was revolutionary. It just completely bucked the trends, like what was considered the norm, what was considered, you know, healthy the right way, in quotes, quote unquote, right way to think about weight and weight loss.

And I think for a lot of people, it really was just like their permission to just opt out of that. You know, it was really like, oh, my gosh, this is so fresh. This is such a different way of approaching things. And it allowed them to just stop with all the craziness and all the diets and all the just nonsense, you know, eating Frankenfoods, you know, all the things that are like completely, horribly processed and stuff. I mean, it wasn't long after this that I went to Weight Watchers for the first time.

If I think about that, I mean, it was a little bit later, like maybe 2001, 2001, I think is the first time I went. They were really just sort of like, hey, there's another way. And my understanding is that this book was not like a runaway bestseller, you know, had some sales and has been kind of trucking along. And here we are, I mean, guess almost 30 years later, I guess like 27 years later, it's been a long time. But the lessons remain and the term remains. I think they coined that term intuitive eating. And so what are the similarities to the way that I approach things? I mean, like I said, I've never taken an intuitive eating class or anything.

I'm certainly not trained by them. But there's a lot of information out there on intuitive eating that I have. You know, actually in preparation for this podcast I spent some time with as well. So there's tons and tons of similarities or let's just say like philosophical agreements. So things like respecting your body, right? Like we don't treat ourselves like crap, we don't need to harm ourselves or take part in behaviors that actually hurt ourselves as we want to accept ourselves, accept our bodies, accept our natural body shapes.

If you listen to the episode that came out last fall that I did with Nadina Cojocar, who's a veterinarian who does weight loss coaching for veterinarians, she was saying how she says, like a pug, like the dog. A pug is never looking at a whippet, another kind of dog if you're not a dog person and going, Oh, I wish I could just be like long and lean, just like the whippet, like the pugs, just like, yep, I'm a pug and I'm owning it every minute of it, you know? So that's just what it reminded me of, you know, it's like like really accepting your body shape, working with what you have instead of doing, like, what I did for so many years, which maybe you have too, which is to look at people like models, bodies, whatever was like the, you know, trend du jour, which when I was growing up was like the waif look.

Kate Moss, heroin chic, like emaciated and, you know, very low level of muscle mass, just extremely, extremely rail thin and thinking that that's the only thing that's acceptable or beautiful and then thinking, well, how can I get my body to look like that? You know, like some people like their bodies are more naturally like that. But it's not a lot of people, right? So what they're talking about is just accepting what is like your genetic makeup, you know, like what you're genetically predisposed to look like.

I sometimes think, you know, for those of you who've been listening, you know, that that I come from a German background, German heritage, like literally 100% on 23 and me, I'm like almost 100% German. And so I just often think of like, you know, the woman who worked like on the dairy farm in the Black Forest or something. Like she probably looked like me, you know, like she was strong and muscular and could like, carry those buckets of milk, you know, like far from the field into the barn or whatever, you know, like, that's the kind of work that my body is built for or that those are the kind of people that I descend from. So to look at someone like Kate Moss and think like, how can I get my body to look like that? Like, I literally think that even if I were in a very bad way with like, cancer, I wouldn't look like that, you know what I mean? So, I mean, knock on wood, we don't find out.

But it's really so important for us to accept ourselves. No more diet culture, you know, just rejecting the dieting, like this idea that this is like a normal way to live, to be constantly gaining and losing weight. Totally agree with that. You know, rejecting that sort of means to an end behavior, right? Like, I'm going to do this thing that's miserable and I hate it and it's awful, but I'm only going to do it for a short time. So it's okay knowing that when it's all over, we go back to other behaviors and we're gaining it right back again.

You know, slowing down and actually tasting your food. You know what I mean? Like actually getting some pleasure out of food, not just like plowing through it. Totally agree with that. Thinking about exercise more as like loving movement for your body. Right? Rather than looking at it as like, I need to beat my body up so I can burn calories and lose weight instead. Just like what feels good, like human bodies were made to move. So how can I move? That feels good. So I can actually enjoy having this body of mine. I think those are all things that are like such great messages. I absolutely love them. And you know, I picked up on all of these ideas through a different channel.

But I just want to say that like, I'm sure that if somehow it is possible to trace back the person who I learned it from or the, you know, the books that I learned it from and stuff like where did they learn it from? And the person that they learned from and what books did they read? It probably traces back to this intuitive eating book. So I do just want to say like that I'm really not trashing this, but I do see some areas where, in my opinion, I think that coaching wins out. So these are all things that I teach, like everything I just said, like I, you know, I teach my clients exactly how to do all of those things. But in my mind there's like four differences.

So let's go through what those differences are. So for me, it really ultimately intuitive eating is like incomplete, you know, like it just doesn't cover all of the nuances. Like it's a bit too surface level for me. It reminds me of many of the books that I read where I was like, Yeah, that's so good. But like, what do I do now? Like, what do I actually do? It reminds me of when I read a lot of books by Jeanine Roth, who is an amazing author and has helped so many people. But I remember reading the books and being like, Yes, yes, yes, like waiting for the solution to come.

Like, when is she going to tell me what to do instead? When is she going to tell me how to stop doing this? And like that never came, You know, it's just a bit too surface level for a lot of people, like for the person who's really like, okay, but like in the actual moment, like, what do I actually do? You know? And I think that, you know, like I said, when this book first came out, it was when calorie counting was like all the rage. I think the modern version of calorie counting now is just macro accounting. And a lot of people, instead of looking at it like it's, you know, to diet to get thinner, now it's like for like longevity or to get all your lab parameters in a better place like this.

Very much the strong kind of group of people out there who are all about like almost like the word that comes to mind for me or the term is like extreme health. You know, it's like constantly optimizing everything. And so they're like, you know, if you just don't eat this and don't eat that, then like, this number gets better and then that's better for you and that's going to help you live longer. I think it's really just like same thing, different flavor. I think it's it's actually really similar. So one of the things that I think there is really incomplete on is that there's no real actionable tools on stopping emotional eating,

right? They say, Yeah, don't eat for emotional reasons, you know, like treat your emotions with kindness.

Like totally makes so much sense. What does that actually look like, though? Like, you know, like I know before I knew all this coaching stuff, you know, before I'd been coached and was trained to be a coach, like I would have been like, makes perfect sense, except I don't know how to actually apply what you're saying to what I'm doing. And and I know it's not just me. Like I said, I've been doing some research on this and I was actually talking to a friend, a close friend, and she was sharing she's been involved in coaching like way longer than I even have. But she was saying that, you know, she had struggled with her weight and the diet culture. I mean, it was terrible. Just terrible for so many years, really in a bad place. She discovered intuitive eating. It was like, oh my gosh, this is it. This is totally what it is.

And a lot of times they say with intuitive eating, like you're going to have to gain weight, you're going to have to be okay with just gaining weight because you're going to let you're not going to restrict yourself anymore. You're just going to eat whatever you want. And so she was like, okay, I'm going to do that. I'm going to do that. And she said, So she actually became more miserable than ever because she was sitting there eating, constantly eating non stop thinking like, Well, this is what they said to do and just.

Pletely was not getting the experience that they promised about feeling like mean. They don't use the terms peace and freedom around food. That's kind of what I call it. But like she just wasn't getting that at all. And then it wasn't until she found coaching that she was like, Oh, right. Like she just completely did not have the awareness around the emotional eating that she was doing until a coach could help her work through it and pointed out to her and give her some actionable tools, like real steps on how to stop doing that.

And, you know, I know there's like intuitive eating counselors out there and, you know, different people. And so there could be other coaches where like, yeah, I fill in that gap and I, you know, whatever And so amazing if they do that. But that is just something that surface level I think is is an omission. It's pretty incomplete there. The next thing is it really doesn't take human physiology into account. I think this is a really important thing to talk about because also food is, you know, in all the research I've done, way more

processed so much weird stuff in our food, much more so than even in 1996. And so like a big thing they talk about is honoring your hunger and honoring your satiety. Which 100%? I'm all in for that.

Except that when you're eating a bunch of processed food and you're eating in certain ways, it can be really hard to interpret your hunger. You know, your hunger can feel really extreme because your hormones are not right, you know, because of the way that you're eating. So what I have found is like one of the best ways to reeducate ourselves on our hunger and satiety is to take a break from eating those foods that jack it all up, right? Like, so that it becomes easy to figure that all out rather than like, while everything's messed up. It's like trying to listen for a whisper through this super loud cacophony of noise. It's just really, really, really hard. And and same with fullness.

So I just think that, you know, it just doesn't take into account, like the way human bodies actually function, particularly when they're eating the food that's currently available, at least in North America. Next, they do tell you how to think about food and and some of the ways that they talk about it. It's quite disempowering to me. Like I just you know, I'm just like reading what they say and it's just like it can be like kind of aggressive and like you just have to get angry at diet culture and was like, Well, but that's so interesting because sure, maybe that anger is super helpful for some people. But you know, it takes away there's not an individuality like a way of individualizing it taught.

And that's one thing that I think is really amazing with the way that I go about it in my weight loss or doctors only program is it's like completely tailored individually to each person, right? Like it's not helpful to tell people how to think about anything because those thoughts might help half the people and they're actually not helpful for the other people. That's not the best way for them to think about it. So what coaching does is it helps each individual person to figure out the way that they as an individual want to think about food, right? So like you as an individual, like what are the thoughts that actually help you knowing that you are a unique individual who has all of their own unique experiences, heritage, familial background, you know, family of origin, people who raised you mean so many different factors that play into it.

So it can just feel like, you know, the regular intuitive eating stuff, it can just feel a little too, you know, simplified, I guess, because I think that, again, it's like it all sounds so great, you know, here's how you think about food and then like, but what if that doesn't resonate for you? Because I think for a lot of people, some of those things really won't. And what really works is when we figure out what works best for us and then we just do that rather than this is what works best for most. Okay.

And then the fourth issue that I have seen is that intuitive eating, like a lot of things these days, can actually be a little bit cultish. And what I mean by that is particularly in like online intuitive eating support groups and stuff, it's the classic like, well, if you're doing well, it's because of intuitive eating. And if you're not doing well, it's your fault. Like the blame is put on the person who is struggling, right? Like, well, you're just not working the steps well enough. Like you're going back. There's like ten steps that you're supposed to follow and like, you're just not doing it right.

There's actually a New York Times article, I don't know, maybe in the last couple of months where they were talking about this. And, you know, there was a woman who was saying that she thought this was going to be so great and then it was really struggling, like fully bingeing every day, like it was really not working for her. She was totally miserable. So she went to, you know, some of these intuitive eating groups for support and was completely shamed by people. Like she was like, I don't even feel safe even bringing this up to anybody anymore because of the experience that I had where it was just she said. It was just like a complete pile on of people. And that's, you know, I have some more to say about some of that, which will probably be a different episode.

But I just think that there's no. Excuse for that. Like I just can't think of how can people who want are like in this group to help others think that that is actually being helpful. Like it's just really, really not. And we shame ourselves enough. Like we do not need other people contributing. Like that's just not okay. It's just not cool. So, so again, like if you're going to do this on your own or just like work with a, like a therapist maybe or something, then maybe that could be good. But, but often a community, you know, can really be helpful when you're really trying to cement this in for what you're doing, you know, like changing your whole relationship with food. And and I just don't think it's helpful to be approached in that way at all. And I just really feel for people who've had that experience. I think that really sucks and I wish that hadn't happened to them.

So really, that's the way that I see the differences. I really see it as something that is there's a lot to be learned there, but I don't personally see it as just being like fully formed, completely like able to stand alone. But again, not to negate or take away anything from people who have found that to be very helpful for them. I just think that coaching is more comprehensive, it's more individualized and it really meets you where you're at. It's like you get all these ten rules.

It's easy to start feeling like you need to do everything all at once. You're doing a terrible job at it. When you are coach, it's like you're able to really figure out what makes the most sense for you to do as your next steps and then meets you along the way to get to wherever it is that you're wanting to go. So so that's intuitive eating versus coaching. Hopefully that was helpful if you've ever been interested or intrigued in that. And yeah, that's what I've got for you today, so I wish you just a great rest of your week.

And for me, I'm recording this on a Friday, so I want to say like, you know, have a great weekend, but know that you'll listen to this, you know. Well, if it if you listen to it the day it comes out, it's a Tuesday. So so anyway, I hope you have a great rest of your week, however many more days you have left in your week. And hopefully you will find yourself really thinking about what kind of way of approaching yourself when it comes to emotional eating. Really struggling with food is going to be the most supportive for you because we have options.

All right, my friend, have a great rest of your day and I'll talk to you next time. Bye bye. Ready to start making progress on your weight loss goals. For lots of free help, go to [katrinaubellmd.com](http://katrinaubellmd.com) and click on Free resources.