



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. Oh, hello there, my friend. Welcome to the podcast today. This one is a little bit of a departure from some of our usual topics, but it really does actually play into weight and overeating and our relationship with food. And I will get into that somewhat.

But sometimes I do some episodes that maybe they're not quite, you know, related to actual weight loss for doctors, but they are episodes that I feel like are kind of like public service messages, You know how like on TV they'll tell you whatever it is, something that's a good message. And and you know, I know that there are a lot of people who are never going to listen to this podcast because either they're not doctors or they don't struggle with their food or weight. But that doesn't mean that I can't offer them some help. And so this is an episode that I want to encourage you to share with people. If you find that it would be helpful, maybe they'll never listen to anything else that I ever put out there, and that's completely fine.

I just have I've actually been ruminating on this topic. I mean, really like mulling it over, letting it marinate for years, literal years, and just never felt like it was like bubbling to the surface, like it was cooked and ready to go. And all of a sudden, two days ago, I was like, Yep, ready? I don't really know. I have an idea, which I'll tell you about in a minute, why I'm ready. But suddenly it just was like, Yeah, this is the time. It's time to

talk about this. And this is an issue that so many women doctors and non doctors struggle with.

And I just have some thoughts and some things that I think can really help. So talking about reproductive shame and how to overcome it, I think what really kind of set this off for me well, first of all, if you've been listening to the podcast for a while, then you know that the baby that I had that was stillborn, her birthday was a couple weeks ago as I'm recording this. And so it's been 13 years. It's been a long time, but still just kind of, I guess, you know, the topic's a little bit just more on my heart and on my mind, you know, around this time of year when it's springtime. But also one of the amazing coaches in my program, she was sharing about her struggles with just all kinds of problems with trying to get pregnant and have a full term baby and really just how much coaching helped her through that process and the amount of work that she has done on herself to be okay with that story or to be more than okay with it, to share it with others, to really talk about it a lot.

And that was kind of inspiring to me. I was like, Yeah, yeah, we do need to talk about this more. So thanks for talking about it. It's something that I think is just really important. Of course I coach clients on this all the time. The other coaches on my team, they coach our women physicians that we work with all the time on these issues. This is, you know, not like a new breaking news story that women who are typically more well educated and more professional tend to have children or try to attempt childbearing later in their lives, which can present some issues. Right. So I have some things I want to talk to you about. I want to talk a little bit more about the shame around the reproductive struggles that we can have and even some other experiences and emotions and things that we have going on. I just know that when I was struggling. If I listen to an episode where somebody actually talked about this stuff, I think it would have really helped me.

Just going to create that episode for whoever that is. And if that's you, who's coming here, who's been recommended to listen to this episode, I just want to welcome you here today. I really hope that my words can offer you some some guidance, some support, some sort of, you know, hopefully a place to land where you can feel like you're not alone. I think one of my biggest issues is I felt very alone going through the process.

And, you know, it was just really helpful to know that there are so many people out there besides each one of us who's struggling and, you know, to hopefully offer some sort of, you know, a direction like, you know, if you ever go hiking and they have like in a good place where they hike, they'll have, you know, kind of poles periodically and like little arrows with the path, you know, kind of directing, you like to go this direction. And I kind of think of this episode as one of those markers to just sort of maybe help direct you a little bit, especially if you're feeling like don't even know what to do anymore. I just need some help. What are my next steps? Hopefully I'll get some help with this too. And, you know, I have to say that I think I mean, this is probably so many years ago, maybe four years ago, five years ago, like really long time ago.

But after this podcast had been out for a couple of years, one of the reproductive endocrinologists that I worked with, her name is Dr. Ellen Hayes. She actually had reached out and was like, Hey, I really love what you're doing and you should actually consider maybe doing an episode on this. And at the time I just really didn't feel like I would know what to talk about. And today I do feel like I know what I would talk about. So thanks, Dr. Hayes, for kind of planting the seed way back in the day. So what I'm going to do is I'm going to just very briefly, as concisely as I possibly can, just sort of tell you what my story is with my whole childbearing.

You know, probably about ten years of my life kind of looked like just because I think sometimes when people are talking around it, we're like, but what happened? But what happened? I know that's where my brain goes. I think it's just that Dr. Part of us is like, okay, so let me just give you the history so that we are like on the same playing field and you can actually hear me and what else I'm going to say after this. So very briefly, my husband and I decided that we wanted to try to have a baby while we were both still in residency. And I had been on the pill for a long, long time and just decided to stop it.

And I don't believe that I talked to any doctors about that. No one ever really kind of mentioned to me, or maybe I did know this and I just didn't think it would happen to me. Hard to know. It was a long time ago, like literally like close to 20 years ago. And so we were trying. It was not working. What ended up happening was after about nine months of that, I feel like I started actually ovulating. Like my periods super changed from what they had been like while I'd been on the pill, which was much easier to like. Oh right. This is what I remember from my teens and I was like, okay.

So probably it was actually nine months of just getting my body back on track. So this will hopefully go faster. And then it took another nine months. So really was like 18 months. It felt like a really long time. I remember laying on the couch in the house that we were living in and just crying and feeling like I was disappointing my husband and letting him down and saying to him, like, what if I can't have kids? Like, I'm so sorry. Like I was apologizing to him. So already at the very beginning, really of this whole stage, there was already this level of shame of like, there's something wrong with me, there's something wrong with my body.

Like it's my fault. I'm really taking all this responsibility. So then I did get pregnant on my own and had a full term pregnancy. And that's my oldest son, who's 17.5 now. And so then I remember thinking like, so funny when you're like, Oh, I'll just get pregnant, no problem. Like the issues that you think are issues like like I had him in November and that was a really tough time because where I live in particular, just being so north like we were, you know, a month later, basically we were in the longest Night or the shortest day of the year and it was just dark a lot.

And so for me personally, my husband is still a resident, so he was gone a lot. We didn't even have phones to text back then. We just had the pager. So there's just like, I had no idea when he was coming home. I had no updates on anything and I would see all the other dads in the neighborhood, like driving in 5 or 6:00 at night and sitting there with this baby by myself and just being like, I don't know, when is this going to end? When is he going to come? When am I going to get a break? And all my friends were working, you know, so like nobody to hang out with, really, or very few people. And then I knew who were, you know, home with small children and stuff.

So it was it was kind of a tough time. But I remember thinking, I do not want to have another baby in November again. So springtime or summer, you know, like, let's just plan for that. So I remember thinking like, well, do I want them like a year and a half apart or two and a half years apart? Like, how am I going to do this? Thinking that it was just going to be so easy? Now, in hindsight, I'm like laughing at myself because I'm like, Oh, little did you know, that was like the least of your concerns at all. So we start basically as soon as I got my period back, we start trying again and I'm not getting pregnant, I'm not getting pregnant.

And, you know, timeline wise, I'm kind of forgetting a little bit. I think it was probably around 18 months to two years after my first son was born that I realized that I was still lactating. And I just, like, looked inside my bra and was like, what is that dried on there? And was like, Oh, weird. Like, I just totally didn't know. And so I had always thought like I would never go down the pathway of, you know, fertility help or anything like that. I think literally just because there was some sort of stigma that I had in my head around it, like when I try to think back, like, what was my problem with it? I think it really was just stigma.

Like I remember years ago having a thought of like, well, if it just doesn't happen, then like you just have to accept that that's the way it is. And it's a very, let's just say less mature way. I think that I was thinking it's just it's like if you do have children, you'll probably understand what I say. It's like, you know, before you have kids, you're the best parent in the world. You know, like exactly how every child should be parented. And then you have kids and you're like, Oh, that was cute. I did not know what I was actually talking about.

So anyway, I decided to go to my gynecologist about that and was put on Bromocriptine and was diagnosed with a prolactinoma in my pituitary gland. So I had hyperprolactinemia. So then it was like, okay, well I'll try the bromocriptine. Like maybe that's why you're not getting pregnant. So I think we tried that for another like six months, nine months, something like that wasn't working. And so I just was like, shoot, Like, remember? Because my plan was to have these kids closer together. It's so dumb. But like, I was like, What is going on? This is not right. And a friend of mine, she had had to do IVF for all of her children.

So she had known that from early on. And so she was working with this one hospital system and she kind of suggested like you could just go and like get a consultation and just like find out, like, maybe there's something really easy to fix. And I was like, Yeah, I mean, that does make sense. So I went to this place and never really honestly felt like a great connection with the team there or the doctor. But just because it was a referral, I was like and honestly, it was like close to my office and I was trying not to tell anybody that I was doing this kind of stuff at work. Again, just really just stigma. Like just I told myself, I just want to be really private about this.

But really what it was, was I felt shame that I needed help with this. I wouldn't have been able to tell you that at the time, but that's what was going on. So I ended up doing Intrauterine Insemination II, and I think we did that six times. None of them worked. And I just I'm not going to get into it here, but just really didn't have a great experience with that team of people. And I just didn't really know what to do. And by this point, my son was in preschool and I went to go pick him up from preschool one day and they had like kind of like a bunch of copies of this, like a local free newspaper for parents that like circulates.

It's called Metro Parent or something. And I just happened to look at the cover of it while I was waiting for him to come out. And it was actually the picture that was the front picture was of this family. And I took care of them. Their son was my patient. And the basically the title, the headline was about how they had had to do IVF to have their son. And they had had like this lengthy, lengthy process to be able to get pregnant. And they talked about the doctor who had helped them. And so I read the whole thing and I was really like, maybe this is a sign. Like, maybe I should go have a consultation with this other doctor and this other hospital system just to see like second opinion, like what's going on here. And I went there and he was just exactly what I needed, just like balm for my soul. He just really took good care of me. He was just very, very kind and caring. Doctor So that part was a great experience. So he talks to us about IVF and I'm like, okay, I'll give it a try once. Like in my mind, I'm like, I'll give it a try once. So we did it and it actually worked and I couldn't believe it. So shocked.

Worked the first time and then promptly six weeks pregnant, had an ovarian torsion from the stimulation. So this doctor actually saved my ovary because I was still under his care. I called in like, I'm not doing well. Something bad is happening. They had me come right over. He ultrasound me right away, whisked me off. I mean, within a couple hours I was in the or worst pain I've ever experienced. Worse than childbirth. It was so bad anyway, so that was fine. And then kind of continued on with that pregnancy. Everything seemed normal. And then I that baby was stillborn at nine days overdue. So if you're looking for more information about that story, what happened there? I think it's episode 12 where I kind of tell more of the story there.

So that was obviously hugely devastating. Words cannot even describe how awful and hard that was. So went through that, right? Like full term baby in my arms who was not

alive. It was super, super hard. So then right away I was like, I want to do over. Like, I really don't want my reproductive years to end on this note. And so they, you know, several people who are very knowledgeable recommended that I wait a bit. So I did. And then. And I did two more times. Both times were successful so that those resulted in my second son and my daughter. And then with my daughter, we actually had an embryo to freeze for the first time ever.

And so I was like, Oh, okay, maybe I'm having four living kids, like, didn't realize, you know. And so then we did transfers, we did the embryo transfer and it took but then at eight weeks I miscarried. So even I think when I went in, it was really like a six week ultrasound, you know, the heart rate was just like I think it was like just a little bit above 100 and like it was measuring on the small side and like it just wasn't looking super great. And then came back a couple of weeks later and it was like it hadn't grown at all. And the heartbeat was just like a flutter or something like that.

So then I had that miscarriage. So to a certain extent I feel like I've had, you know, a whole lot of different things, certainly not all the different things that can happen. But I mean, this whole process took, like I said, about ten years of my life. Yeah, it's about ten years of my life of like trying to get pregnant, being pregnant, thinking about what I'm going to get pregnant again, Like it was a lot. So throughout that time, I now in hindsight, because of course I did not have coaching during any of this, I felt so much shame. So let's talk about that. One of the things I remember really, really, really struggling with was the fact that throughout my life, you know, I was never like the smartest kid.

I was not that kid who got like top grades and didn't have to apply myself or work very hard. That was my husband. But for me, I got good grades, but I had to apply myself. I worked hard like I went to a college then that for sure was not like the smartest at all. I had to really, really work hard. But what I had had as my experience throughout my life was if I really, really work hard and apply myself, the historically up until that point, I had been able to create what I wanted.

I'd been able to, you know, get into the college I wanted to go to and the program that I wanted to go to. I'd been able to get into medical school and, you know, residency and like all these things, right? So it was just like, if you just work hard enough, you can get

what you want. I think that was like a belief that I had, except that when it comes to this kind of stuff, that's not necessarily the case at all. And I think that's an area where a lot of women physicians and just women in general who have been high achievers really, really struggle because this is just really different. Right? Really, really different. And and in a lot of ways, there's just not much you can do about it.

I remember reading so many books and then like all these supplements and different things that, you know, you could try. I mean, I had my husband on the most disgusting cocktail of vitamins and supplements and all this stuff. I mean, who knows if any of it made a difference, But it was just like sometimes you just need to have something to do because you need to feel like you have control over something, you know? And it was so difficult. Oh, I didn't say that. You know, they worked us both up and could never it was unexplained infertility, you know. So after once the prolactinoma was, you know, handled and taken care of, they still didn't know why we couldn't get pregnant.

So that was also difficult because it was like if I could just know what the problem is, then I can figure out how to fix it. Well, then the answer is like, we have no idea why you can't get pregnant. Awesome. So it just, you know, for that scientifically minded person, you're, you know, evidence based kind of a person, you're just like, okay, well, tell me what the problem is so that I can fix it. Well, basically, you're told like, we don't know what the problem is. You know, And I do actually have to say, I mean, I definitely do not want to like suggest that before there were reproductive treatments that were effective, that women who struggled with conceiving, carrying a baby to term or, you know, weren't able to have a baby at all like that.

They didn't struggle because I know that that was difficult, to say the least, for lots and lots and lots of women. But I think to a certain extent, the fact that there are so many options now is it can sometimes for some people make it feel worse because there are so many more things to try and to fail at. You know, like it's not like, okay, well, we you know, this is just this is the reality. This is just what happened. It's like, okay, now we found this problem. We can fix that and we can try this thing and we can fix that. And let's try this and let's try that. And you know, so many people go through extensive like taxing on them mentally and physically and even spiritually.

Reproductive treatments that aren't working. And oh, let's not forget the financial expenditure and everything that goes into that, like to still be in the same place. Which is, you know, for in those cases, you know, possibly like having no children or not like children born of your body, you know. And so I do think that sometimes, like being on that infertility path can just be very, very, very exhausting and difficult. And people go into debt over this and people's relationships really can struggle because of it.

I mean, it is it's a lot. What I also know, too, is just like, well, being a pediatrician, people share more of this stuff with you. But then also, once you've had a pregnancy loss or, you know, spoken about your reproductive challenges, a lot of people will talk to you more about it and you just hear other people's stories. It's just it's something that so many women struggle with, Right. But when you are feeling shame, when you think something's wrong with you, Right. And you don't want people to know.

So what we tend to do when we're feeling shame is we hide. And that's exactly what I did. I didn't want people to know. I didn't want anybody in my office to know, particularly my partners. They were all men at the time. I felt so much shame that I was in this situation and now, of course, I would approach myself totally differently with the skills and tools and stuff that I have. But at the time and this honest truth, I felt so much shame. I didn't want anyone to know. So I had to come up with these, like, elaborate stories about why I suddenly had to leave the office and cancel patients in the middle of the day so I could go do my I. It was just, oh my gosh, it was a lot. It was really it was very, very, very, very stressful.

I did see a therapist a couple of times on the recommendation of a friend, but I was just thinking about like, why did I not continue with her? And I think it was still like there was just a lot of stigma around that. And I think that things have really changed over the last 10 to 15 years in terms of stigma around mental health services. Of course, it still exists totally in a lot of areas as well, but I think at the time it was kind of like, okay, I'll talk to her for a couple days. You know, a couple times like that should fix me and I should be better and I shouldn't need this help anymore.

Where in hindsight, I think, you know, seeing her regularly probably would have really helped me to be able to process what was going on. I did have that one friend that I could talk to about this, but other than that, I kept it from everybody else that I knew. I

mean, it's so interesting. I just did not want anybody else to know. Once I got into the IVF process, I had to tell some people the doctor that I worked with wanted me to do bedrest for a few days after the embryo transfer. I had to tell my partners, Look, there's going to be a time that I'm not exactly sure when that's going to be and I'm going to have to take off a couple of days.

So I kind of shared with like one person that needed to know, but I really tried to keep it as quiet as I could. And I still even thinking about that time, I can feel a shame in my body right now. Like I just felt so ashamed that I was going through this. I mean, and so I just want to speak to what the truth was for me. You know, I'm not suggesting everyone should feel that way by any stretch of the imagination or that anyone listening to this feels that way. But I just really did. And so I think what was going on for me and for a lot of people as well is we have the shame, right? Something's wrong with me. Something's wrong with my body.

And then we're really not used to failing again and again and again, right? Experiencing that failure, feeling like a failure, even though it takes two to tango. It's very easy as the woman to take excess responsibility for the success or the failure of treatments and even just, you know, trying the natural way and stuff like that. So there's that. Then there's just the whole not processing the roller coaster of emotions that come with this. And that's where I want to talk about eating because I definitely emotionally ate during this time because it was such a hard time and I didn't know anything else to do.

So rather than having actual support and tools and skills and things that I could do to help me process all the ups and downs, the inevitable ups and downs, I was just like stuffing it down. I didn't want anyone to know. I just wanted to keep it all inside. And what helps to keep it inside is eating right for those of us who struggle with emotional eating. So right. Like sometimes we're like, Why am I gaining so much weight? Right? Because we're using food instead of actually processing our emotions, which totally makes sense when you have no other tools or skills.

No one's taught you how to process your emotions in another way. But once we identify what's going on, we can realize it more. We can actually get that help, you know, that we need so we can learn what we need to learn. I think for some of us, I think for me for sure, maybe somewhat for me, I think more so maybe for some people and probably

not at all for plenty of people. But there was sort of like an image that I wanted to portray, you know, that I had it all together. I didn't want to be someone who, like people saw as like broken or that people pitied or like there was this facade that I wanted to, like, present myself behind, you know, And I wanted to uphold that.

And I didn't want to be a person who had a hard time conceiving. I mean, I started this I was 29, I think, when I had my first son. So like, you know, I didn't even have the age issue. Like I really in my mind was like, I should have no problem, you know, conceiving and having a baby. And so that was a whole thing to reckon with. Like, what is it about this image or this facade that I, you know, want people to think of me as? And does that even serve me? You know, just not saying you shouldn't do that, but instead just going like, well, what are the consequences?

What are the results that happen for me when I'm showing myself to the world in this way? And sometimes we can realize like, Oh, this actually doesn't help me. And then then we have the opportunity to decide to do it differently if we want to. And then I just want to speak to this because I'm telling you, I felt it, too. This is like just being fully honest with you. Yeah, sometimes we feel some competition with others, right? Even if we know it's not helpful or we don't want to. I mean, I felt a little competition, just sort of like kind of like I need to get my family complete or like I don't want to be left behind.

I think would be something that I would say that I sort of felt. I have known people who, you know, wanted to keep up with a sibling who, you know, one of their siblings who was having a family and having like the same number of kids that they had or, you know, just like since they were six years old, they knew they wanted to have many kids. And so just feeling like, you know, but so and so has that. And so I need that, too. And, you know, I think this is often something that consciously we're not really aware of or we would really deny that it's a thing for us.

But I do think that on a subconscious level, for a lot of us, there's some of that competition as well. Like, you know, just liking being successful and not wanting to have to change that identity for ourselves, right? Like, you know, if your identity is that you're someone who accomplishes what she sets out to achieve, and then as you do this, you're not getting that result. Like that really shakes your identity, shakes you to the core. It really can. So I just want to speak a little bit to just all the different kind of

situations that people can be going through where they can experience some reproductive shame. And what I've really tried to be inclusive here. I just, just want to mention that if I don't touch on your particular issue or struggle, you know, please know, you know, what we talk about today still applies to you.

But I think it's easy to think that like, oh, the people who are struggling with this are people who are having infertility treatments. And it's not that there's so many different other kind of variations of this, for sure, trying to conceive naturally and it just not working. You know, that's kind of where it started with me. Some people will feel like, well, I shouldn't even complain because I know all these other people are really struggling. I don't even like deserve to complain yet or like some, you know, these stories that we tell ourselves like, no, it can be hard when you're going through that and it's not working.

Going through lots of pregnancy losses, you know, at any and all stages of the pregnancy, that is an area where it's like, I can get pregnant, but I can't keep the pregnancy. Sometimes it's a lot of genetic issues, a lot of miscarriages or things like that that can be just really, really, really difficult to go through. So much grief and sadness around that. And then when that's compounded with shame, it just makes it so much, so much worse. Um, some people have been able to conceive and carry the baby, but then the baby's born prematurely and maybe even kind of significantly prematurely. And then a lot of shame around that, shame around their body that their body couldn't hold the pregnancy longer, or that, you know, if they had just rested more or not pushed themselves so hard at work or things like that, then they wouldn't have, you know, deciding that they put themselves into premature labor or, you know, all the things around there.

There can be a lot of shame around that. And that can linger, too, for years. I mean, that child can be many years old and and women are still hanging on to that. There can be shame around waiting until later, you know, or just general age issues. A lot of women physicians, just from the sheer number of years that it takes to become a doctor, find themselves, you know, seeking out a partner or even if they're doing it on their own, exploring what needs to be done to start a family later than maybe others do and and are kind of early on maybe confronted with some of those age issues.

And then there I've coached many people who have shame around like, you know, I should have been working harder at dating earlier, you know, like somehow that they did something wrong or they're bad because they're at this age in this situation right now. And that can bring a lot of shame. Some people, you know, really kind of have that belief like, well, I froze my eggs.

So that's going to make it easier later or I won't have problems later. And then still struggling, right? It's like when you have that belief of like, Oh, I bought this insurance policy, I did this thing that was going to make it much easier and then it's still not working, right? That can bring so much shame. It can be so difficult finding out that you need to explore using an egg donor or a sperm donor can be a big issue for a lot of people, especially with, you know, older age and things like that. A big issue around this can be just when nothing is working and like when to call it quits and feeling so much shame around that, you know, like when is enough enough? Like how much are you going to put your body through feeling shame that you want to quit, but you actually, you know, feel like you're letting someone down.

If you do that, you know your partner or, you know, letting yourself down or it's just so much that can be tied up into that. And then I just want to speak to the people who just genuinely don't want children and then feeling shamed for that because that's a real thing too, where, you know, it's a personal choice, personal decision. Do not want to have children, which is I'm like, Great, then don't have them. But it's easy to be like, okay, then just like, go on your merry way and talk to many women over the years who are in this position who really feel just like othered in society for that decision.

And honestly, whether it was a personal decision, it was a choice on. Purpose or not. But in particular, if it was on purpose, just kind of being really surprised at how some people kind of regard them or just feeling just not feeling supported or accepted in that way. So it's there's so many situations, right, where all the shame can come up. So what do we do with this? And I, I have some things that I hesitate to even call steps because steps sort of sound like, okay, do this then when you're done with that, move on to this. And that's not really the way this is. I think these are kind of five things to do, five things to consider. You know, maybe you start with 1 or 2 or maybe you kind of jump in with all of them or like whatever. Just feels like it's going to be the right and most supportive thing for you is the way that you should approach this.

So the first thing I suggest strongly, strongly encourage you to do and suggest is to talk to someone about what's going on, talk to them about the truth and talk to someone. Or maybe lots of people. You know, like for some people like feeling like, okay, I'm actually going to be honest and talking about this with lots of people is even more freeing.

But everybody is different. And so maybe we'll just start with one person if that's what feels best or maybe talking to, you know, someone who's close to us who we haven't shared it with. We know that talking about shame helps to reduce shame because when we're hiding, when we're not sharing it, we we just compound shame. So when we share it, when we're honest, just doing that action can really, really help to start to reduce that shame just on its own, right? You know, are there ways to process shame and all that? Absolutely.

But then it's easy to be like, Oh, I have to do that by myself in secret, which only perpetuates the shame, right? So I just want to really encourage you to talk to some people. Now, this is the second part, kind of like maybe part two of the first part. But I do want to just talk about the gift of professional help. I think it's really good to include the people who are important to you in your life, for sure. In this. I think it's actually a very important part of doing this. But I do also think that for some people who are open to it, getting some independent help or impartial help can be very, very helpful. So that could be working with a coach, that could be working with a therapist, joining a support group, something like that.

I do think that for some people, depending on the people who are around them, whether it's their family of origin, friends, whatever their support system is, they may not feel that actually sharing about this gives them the support that they need. So it might it probably would help to be honest about it and be, you know, clear and share what's actually going on for you. But if you're not feeling like you're getting what you need from that, just really don't underestimate the power of therapist a coach.

And it doesn't even necessarily have to be someone who specializes in that. I think often we're like, Well, I need the person who like only does that. No, you don't. It's your brain. It's always just your brain. Right? I do want to mention something about support groups, Facebook groups in particular. So I actually have some experience with support groups. After my daughter died, I went to some infant loss support groups and several

of them were actually quite helpful for me. And then once I got pregnant again, they had a different support group for pregnancy after infant loss. And that was a kind of a nice one. It was once a month, so it was like every month I went there, I'm like, okay, I made another month still pregnant, you know? So that was kind of helpful.

But I just want to talk about, I think the the easiest way, the most accessible way for most people to get support these days is through Facebook group and or some other online group. And I just want to encourage you to use some discernment if you explore those things. And what I mean by that is really checking in with how you feel when you're in them. Sometimes those groups can be an absolute lifeline. They can be incredibly helpful. So I'm not saying that they're not helpful. I think at certain times and for certain people they can be very, very helpful.

But also just be really aware that if you're spending a lot of time reading people's posts about their struggles as a person with a heart and probably, you know, a person who cares about others, it's easy to unintentionally start taking on the emotional roller coaster that others are going on or, you know, this person that you've kind of met through that Facebook group, now they're having a loss and you're feeling devastated for them on top of your own emotional journey and stuff. And I do find that for some people it can actually make it worse, makes them feel worse. So that's what I just want to encourage you to use that discernment, you know, and maybe it was great last week and this week it's not the thing. Or, you know, for a month it was so great.

And then now you're ready to move on to something different. Just know, right? Just be like checking in with yourself. Is this really the most supportive thing for me? And the way you're going to know is how do you feel? Not that you necessarily feel better, but if you feel worse, maybe that's not the most supportive thing for you. So it's okay to dip in and out of things. One of the things that I'm always working on, helping my clients. Particularly around weight loss to understand is you know you are really the expert in.

You know one's going to know better than you what's going to be supportive for you, whether that's, you know, a support group or what way to eat or how to move your body or any of that kind of stuff. Like you are the expert in your emotional state. And so, you know, make sure that you use that information effectively. Okay. So the next step is to work on accepting the reality of the situation. I know there are a lot of times that I just

kept resisting what was real, you know, resisting what was true, thinking it shouldn't be this way.

Something is going wrong, just really pushing back hard against that. What I didn't realize is that that resistance creates so much suffering. It's already a difficult situation, and then it's made worse by the resistance. And so sometimes I think we think that if we accept the reality of the situation, that that means that we're like, okay with it or we're fine with it, or it's not bothering us or, you know, we're not allowed to have emotions or thoughts about it.

And it doesn't mean that at all. It just means being present with what's true and not thinking that it should be different than it is. And the reason we know it shouldn't be different is because it's not different. Right? This is what we're dealing with. So if we can work to lessen that, drop that reduce that in some way, it can help us to be more present to what we really need in the moment to most support ourselves, to be able to hopefully get the best result that we can. Okay. The next step or thing to consider is just learning to process your emotions as they come up.

You know, we have to learn how to let these things flow through us. I always talk about emotions as energy. They're just energy in us. And when we stuff it all down, we're trapping that energy inside. When we process it, we're moving the energy through us and out. And so sometimes that's going to look like the energy coming out your eyeballs because you need to cry or sob, you know, or scream into a pillow or just scream. It doesn't have to be into a pillow or, you know, just write and write and write all the things that are swirling around in your head or any of the tons of other ways that I teach about processing emotions.

You know, you don't have to know the way. There's not a right way. There's tons of different ways. And it's important that you have a bit of a set of tools, so to speak, things that you can rely on to help you to process and move those emotions through you as you get good news and bad news. I mean, and I'll just say, you know, I would get good news. I would feel better for maybe five seconds, like say I found out that my IVF took I'd feel like so excited for like five seconds and immediately be like, Oh my gosh, I hope everything's okay. I'm like immediately back into anxiety and negative thinking and think, that was protective, right?

Like, I didn't want to let myself feel too good because I was worried about feeling worse if it didn't work out, which is a whole other thing to talk about how we will intentionally reduce the intensity of our positive emotions because we're afraid of those negative emotions that we will inevitably feel, whether we feel a lot of positive emotions or not. It's just a protective thing that we end up, you know, unintentionally doing, but allowing even with processing emotions, you can even create space to be happy, to be excited, to be hopeful, rather than just constantly trying to protect yourself emotionally because you're stuffing it all down.

And then the final thing I want to suggest is to really work on strengthening your relationship with yourself. What I mean by that is how you treat yourself, and that means like how you physically treat yourself. I mean, even just like how you nourish your body and how you move it and you know how much sleep you get and things like that. But also your self-talk, right? The way that you are thinking about yourself to yourself, often especially in a reproductive issue, fertility issue kind of a situation, we often are allowing some very mean self-talk and that just makes us feel worse about all of it.

And really what it comes down to is the person we're with all the time is us 100% of the time, 24 over seven, always with us. And when it's not really fun to be with us, we try to escape, right? We like do all the ways that we escape. Eating can be one thing. So many other ways, right? Drinking alcohol. If you just found out you're not pregnant, Right? You might be totally drinking way more than you ordinarily like to. Maybe you're totally zoning out in front of social media or other electronics or things like that, like just trying to numb yourself to try to get away from that negative self-talk and how difficult it is to be with you.

And so what I want to suggest is that when you work on strengthening your relationship with yourself, that means that you do what you say you're going to do, but you are supportive and loving and encouraging and kind to yourself. And this is something that can make the whole struggle so much more tolerable, right? Like, I definitely had thoughts that were not very kind about myself when I was going through this whole process. And I just know that working. On that, really practicing that would have really helped me. And the other thing that's really good to know is like so many of these tools, these things that you'll practice, these things you'll apply in this situation. There are things that help you and every other part of your life too, right?

Being able to accept the reality of a situation works in any difficult situation in your life, right? Processing the emotions that come up is something that you will be you know, it's an opportunity you'll be faced with or it's an opportunity that will be brought to you every day for the rest of your entire living life. Right. Strengthening your relationship with yourself is only going to help you once you have that infant or once you are parenting an older child or accepting yourself in a situation where you're going to have a life with no biological children of your own.

You know, just like that way that you put yourself what it's like to be with you, in you as you. It's always going to help you to work on that and to strengthen that relationship. So, you know, if there's one person you can count on, you know, it's you, it's the best. So, so good. So this has been a little bit of a longer episode than typical. Had a lot to say here. And I wanted to just take my time and be sensitive around this because it really is an issue that so many women struggle with. And I just want you to know that if you're going through it, you're not alone. And if you're going through it, there are ways for it to feel less bad.

I'm not going to say there's ways to make it so that like it's a walk in the park and super easy and you're never going to feel the normal range of human emotions. But there's a lot of additional pain that we add on unintentionally that makes it even worse and more difficult. And that's the part that we can we can really work on while we're figuring out all the other things. So with that, I just want to send you a ton of love and hope and care and wish I could just reach through and give you a hug right now. Big, nice, tight squeeze. When you talk to other people who have gone through this or are going through this, you just start to realize like nothing's wrong with you.

Like you are a human woman on earth having a very human experience. And for some people they get pregnant very easily and then they have other huge challenges. That was something that that I would try to remind myself of. Like, you know, it's not like, Oh, if you can just get pregnant easily, then your life is, you know, golden and you're never going to have any other problems in your life. Right. It's like this is just the big challenge that I've been, you know, or essentially I'm signing up to pursue right now. And that doesn't mean don't get to feel all the emotions about it. But, you know, I'm going to stop expecting it to be any different than it really is.

All right. Sending you lots and lots of love. Again, if there's anybody just now or in the future who you think would benefit from this episode, I would love it if you would share it with them. This is just where, you know, we have to come through and support each other and think, this is one way we can do it. All right, my friend, have a great rest of your week 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 and click on Free resources.