



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell, MD: Hey, you guys! Welcome back to "Weight Loss for Busy Physicians." I'm Katrina Ubell, M.D. I'm so excited you're here today. This is the third episode of this podcast, and this launch has just been so exciting. It's been so great to be able to speak to you guys. Writing in a blog is great too. It's one way of communicating, but I feel like this way you guys are able to really get the gist of this. I feel like I can give you so much more content, and I think it's a great way for us to communicate.

So I want to just jump into some really great content today because last time we talked about becoming more aware of your thoughts, taking on that watcher or observer role, and really paying attention to what all those thoughts are that are flying through your head all the time, becoming aware of what you're thinking is like and not just taking it at face value like "this is just my experience of the world." It's more looking at it like "I am choosing to create this experience for myself in the way that I think about everything that I'm coming into contact with." That is a huge shift for people thinking about it differently like that. What can happen though when you start becoming more aware of your thoughts is that it's kind of like this: It's like you have this room in your house kind of socked away in a corner that is just a complete mess.

Maybe you moved in, put a bunch of junk in there, closed the door, and then just never got around to unpacking and making it a real functional room. You might decide, "You know what? I really do want that room. I really want to be able to use that room, so I'm going to head in there. I'm going to do it." You open the door; you flip on the lights; and you see what a mess and complete disaster area it is in there. The easiest thing, right, is to turn the lights back off, shut the door, and just pretend that it never even existed.

Like actually I don't even really need that room. Let's just leave it like it is. This seems like a lot of work.

It can be just so overwhelming we just want to run the other way. Then what happens is we let our brains come up with all sorts of reasons and excuses why now's not a good time or it's going to be such a big project I need to take a whole week off of work to get it done or things like that, that are probably just never going to happen. It's a good idea to recognize your brain going, "Oh, my gosh. My thinking's so bad." The easiest thing to do would be to just stop paying attention, just stop being that watcher or observer and shutting the lights back off and living in what we like to call an unconscious state.

Not literally unconscious like you have a low GCS score or something. Like unconscious in the sense that you don't have conscious awareness. You're not paying attention. You're just letting life happen, letting your thoughts happen to you rather than choosing thoughts that serve you and create the results that you want. What we end up doing is we just procrastinate. We forget about it or try to forget about it, and we're still not able to use that room. Seeing the junk, seeing the mess doesn't provide relief for us, but cleaning it all out definitely provides relief for us.

The way to extrapolate that to a weight issues is getting on the scale. Getting on the scale is like flipping the lights on. Like let me just actually see how bad the damage is. Get on the scale and you look at it, and the easiest thing to do is just go, "You know what? I'm not going to think about that any more. I'm just going to let my brain completely forget about that, go about my business. I just don't even know what to do, and I don't want to even decide. I'll take care of it later. I'll procrastinate and do something later." Which of course means that we never do anything. We never take action.

When we just stay unconscious like that, we keep getting the same results that we don't want over and over and over again. It's like you're not choosing to take action, but by not taking action, you're choosing the life you have now. Right now, you are choosing the body that you have, and you might say, "Wait, what? No. I am not choosing this. I would never choose this body." You are choosing that body because you are choosing thoughts and feelings that create the action of overeating or eating for emotional reasons, which is giving you that result of being overweight.

This can extrapolate to other things too. It can be anything that you're not taking action on. That is a choice as well. This is something I really want to make clear to you guys. The difference between wanting something and committing to something. Because this is the difference: when you want something, it all sounds great, but you don't have to take any action. It's kind of like putting it on your wishlist. Like I'm just going to want to lose weight. At some point, maybe I'll take action, I'll do what I need to do, but right now, I just want it.

Wanting something can actually be a safe place. It sounds really good. It seems really noble, and we don't have to do anything hard. We can just sit and want something. When you really commit to something, you decide that you're going to do whatever it takes to make that happen, even when it's totally uncomfortable, even when it's completely annoying. Even when it feels horribly restrictive, even when the results aren't as fast as you want them to be. You just keep going. That's called taking massive action. Just hammering away, chipping away, and you just keep going and going and going and going until you get the results that you want.

If something isn't working or stops working, you don't make it mean that you're totally a failure and that you should just quit and totally go off the rails and negate all of the progress that you did make. Instead, what you do is you manage your mind and you think calmly and logically about how you can pivot and try something else. Then you do that again and again and again to infinity basically until you reach your goal. I think we often just think like, "I'm just going to pick this way of eating, and that should make me lose weight, and that's all I'm going to have to do until I get to my ideal weight."

I think that is a belief that is such a good one to challenge because I used to think that too. "I'll just follow Weight Watchers until I get to my goal, and then I can stop following Weight Watchers and go back to my old eating patterns." Then I would tell myself, "Oh and I should be able to maintain." Of course, that doesn't make sense. I was overeating. Of course, I would gain again. Also, sometimes it just stops working. You maybe lose 10, 20, 30 or more pounds, and then you plateau and you have to make some changes.

Rather than making that mean this isn't working anymore; I'm a failure; that's it, I'm just going to go devour the Girl Scout cookies, all it means is that you just need to switch

and find something else to do. Make a tweak, try something different, make some adjustments and see what kind of results you can get until you get that goal that you really committed to. I just really want to make sure you guys understand that this is what it takes to get to permanent weight loss and maintenance. For me and my weight loss journey this time, how many different programs or protocols did I follow?

At least three or four or five. I would do something and then it wasn't working anymore. Then tweak it. Try this. Then that wasn't working anymore. Then tweak it and try this. Then that wasn't working anymore. Then go try something different. They all were good and they all were helpful, and they're all right. None of them were wrong or didn't work. They helped me get a chunk of the weight off, and then they weren't working anymore. It was time to try something else.

I just want you to really work on accepting that and believing that it's a whole process and it's going to require some discomfort. It's going to require some thought. It's going to require perseverance for sure. This is the thing. I completely understand not wanting to take that on. You might have heard me discussing the difference between wanting something and committing to something, and you're like, "Yeah, okay. I get that. I am not in a place where I'm ready to commit to weight loss." I think that's awesome. I think that's fantastic to have the introspection to be able to know that.

Because what you're doing is you're sparing yourself from pretending to commit. You're doing yourself a favor and you're saying, "You know what? I'm not going to pretend to commit. I'm not going to lie to myself and say I'm committed and then basically cheat on myself all the time." You're just basically saying, "Look, that's something I want to do eventually. Right now, it's not possible for me for whatever the reasons are. I'm just not willing to make that commitment." Then just give yourself that freedom of having made that decision rather than this constant cycle of saying you're committed, kind of halfassedly doing some things, not getting results.

Honestly, when you do that you usually end up weighing more than you did if you had just not committed to anything. The other thing I want to mention is that when you do that, when you are in that cycle of not really committing and then cheating on yourself, you're not only not losing the weight, but you're also eroding your relationship with yourself. Let me give you an example. Think about how upset we get when someone

says they're going to do something and they don't. If your nurse tells you like, "Oh, yeah, I'm going to call that patient back and give them that information" and then she doesn't.

Or our kids say, "Yeah, yeah. I'm going to clean my room," and then they don't. We can make that mean that we can't trust that person, that we think they should keep their word, they should do what they said they were going to do because it's the right thing to do.

Then we go back on what we say we're going to do all the time. We say we're going to follow this diet, we're going to be all-in on this program, we're going to be all-in and declutter the house, we're going to be all-in and exercise like we're supposed to, and then we totally don't. Then when we don't, there's different ways we can respond. One response is totally chewing yourself out with your self-talk, basically completely berating yourself, pointing out all your flaws to yourself, or sometimes we play the victim. "I just didn't have a choice. That plan isn't working. That just doesn't work," but in reality, we never even really followed the plan like we could have, so we blame the plan versus what we failed to do. Or we justify our decisions to ourselves like, "I was just too tired. I couldn't do it. I was just too busy. I didn't have enough time."

The thing is, those are all thoughts. Those seem really true and seem really realistic, but they are all just thoughts and they are optional. When we respond this way, it really breaks down our relationship with ourselves, and it basically guarantees that we don't get the results that we want. How do we start getting down to the business of going from where we are to getting the results that we want? It's like now we know what that messy room looks like, and we know we want a decluttered and clean space, and we're committed to making that happen, but how do we get from point A to point B?

What is the actual process to get through that? It all comes back to that thought model that I teach. If you need a more in-depth review of that, check out episode one of this podcast. You can find that at KatrinaUbellMD.com/1, but I'll give you a quick review of the model right here. The model has five components. This is a thought model that was created by Brooke Castillo. It starts with the circumstance, which are just the neutral facts. This is something everybody would agree on in the whole world. It's not open to interpretation at all.

We have circumstances in our lives that can trigger our thoughts. We have our thoughts about those circumstances, and that creates our experience of the world. Our thoughts create our feelings, and feelings are our emotions. Our feelings drive all of our actions. That is what we do. It's also what we don't do, and it's also how we react, like if we lash out at other people or if we basically go and hide under the covers. Then what we do or don't do creates our results in our lives. Our results are always proof or evidence of the original thought.

When I look at a big overall problem, like an umbrella problem, like I'm overweight or something like that and it has lots of smaller actions and decisions underneath, it can be really easy to get all caught up with like, "I just don't know what to do with all these different things and indulging in confusion, but what I know I need to do is get my thoughts and feelings straight before I go all-in in committing to getting the big problem, the project done. The way I like to do this the best is to actually work that model backwards.

Let me give you a couple of examples. What you do is first you figure out what is the result that you want. What do you actually want? Let's just say as an example, "I want to lose 50 pounds in 2017. I have 12 months to lose 50 pounds." Then you move up the model. What actions do I need to take or what do I need to do and what do I need to not do to be able to lose 50 pounds in 2017? That would be I need to choose an eating plan. I need to stick with it no matter what.

I need to commit to not eating off my plan and not overeating. I need to commit to getting enough sleep. I need to manage my mind. I need to find a form of exercise that serves me. Then we march up to the feelings. How do I need to feel to be able to choose the eating plan, stick with it no matter what, get the sleep, manage my mind, do the exercise? In this model, I chose motivated, and if I'm motivated, what do I ... If I want to be motivated, what do I have to think to create that feeling of motivation in me so that I do all those things that I want to do, so I get that result of losing 50 pounds in 2017.

The thought I came up with was I want to lose the weight so I can sleep better and have fewer aches and pains, so I'm healthier as I age, so that I can move my body comfortably in the ways that I want to. Then at the very top is a circumstance. In this

case, the circumstance is just my body. It doesn't have to be some specific thing like I stepped on the scale or whatever. I really can just be my body. Sometimes the circumstance isn't even necessarily that relevant.

What that thought is when you look at the big picture of your weight loss journey, that should be your compelling reason. It shouldn't be like, "I want to lose the weight so that other people stop looking down on me or so that my ex-husband stops saying that I'm fat" or things like that. Because we cannot ever control what other people do or say or what they think about us or about anything. We can't control that. What we need to do is do this for ourselves.

We need the motivation to be something that we can control, so choosing something like people will sometimes say to me, clients will say, "Well, I want to lose this so that my kids have this kind of experience of their childhood" or "My kids think about me in this way." We can't ever control how they think about it. You guys, I lost 45 pounds in a year. My 11-year-old seriously did not even notice. I think at one point, many pounds down, I made some comment of like, "Oh, I lost a little bit of weight," and he's like, "You did?" Which honestly, I think is fantastic because he is just living such a comfortable life.

He's in his head doing his thing. He doesn't even need to worry about what's going on for his parents or anything like that. I think that's fantastic, but it was just funny to me because so many people would notice when I would go places and make a comment. He was just like, "Oh, really? Hmm, I didn't notice." We need to be doing it for ourselves, for what ... If we want to be affecting our kids' experience of their childhood, then maybe the compelling reason is I want to be able to feel comfortable in my body so that I can engage in activities with my kids in the way that I want to.

You can control how you show up into that relationship. You cannot control what they get out of that relationship at all. This was a huge life lesson for me, you guys, in my parenting big time. Let me just run that model now from top to bottom so you can see how I did that. The circumstance is my body. The thoughts that I chose was I want to lose the weight so I can sleep better and have fewer aches and pains, so I'm healthier as I age, so that I can move my body comfortably in the ways I want to. That makes me feel motivated.

Then my actions are choosing an eating plan, sticking with it no matter what, getting enough sleep, managing my mind, and exercising in a way that serves me. Then the result is losing 50 pounds in 2017. I do want to just point out that when I was putting together the sample model for you guys, I purposely did not choose a feeling of confident. Let me explain why. A lot of times, we think we need to be confident that we can achieve something before we should start doing it, but here is such an amazing revelation.

Once you can accept this, it just takes away so much resistance in your life. Confidence comes after you've achieved your goal. What it takes during the process of achieving your goal is courage, the courage to make the commitment and to do it. Courage often feels really uncomfortable. That's the thing. If I'm confident I can lose weight, but then something happens, I might be confident that I can try something else. I can have confidence that I do what I say I'm going to do and whether it takes me one year to lose the weight or ten years to lose the weight, I'm going to keep going with massive action until I get it.

We have to be careful with that confident feeling. It's a great feeling. It feels awesome. You lose the weight and you're confident like, "I can do this because I did," but what might be a better feeling to choose is motivated because then you just keep going. You're motivated. You keep trying. You keep hammering away, perseverance until you get that result that you want. Let me give you a non-weight example because I know not everybody listening is necessarily having an overeating issue or a weight issue, just to show you guys how this applies to your life, also in non-food areas.

A common issue that I hear from my clients is that their EMR, electronic medical record, inboxes are overflowing. That they feel like they're constantly treading water, are never able to really get control on that. This is the story that they tell themselves: That it's too hard to do that, it's too much, stupid EMR, why can't we go back to paper charts? That was so much better anyway." All of that. I came up with a result that I would want.

The result is I want to leave work every day with my EMR inbox at zero. I want to be zeroed out every day. Then what do I have to do to get that? I need to utilize efficiency strategies. That might be charting in the room. That might be creating templates so it's quicker to input things, etc., things like that. It might be actually doing B- work when

appropriate. This one's a big revelation because we are A+ students. We didn't get where we are without doing really, really good work, but that perfectionism can paralyze us and make us not do anything. We just avoid the dictation rather than just doing B-work and getting it done.

P.S.: almost all the time, a B- level dictation is perfectly adequate, so soon as we can accept that, we get just such relief because we can move forward. Other things we can do: stay focused until the task is complete. That would be something like don't let a bunch of distractions in, making sure that we're not letting people come up and talk to us, getting distracted on social media, chit-chatting about this, that and the other thing. Make a decision. I'm doing this now, and I'm going to do it until I'm done. Then let's back it up again. To do those things, what do I need to feel, how do I need to feel? What I chose was driven.

We usually just pick one feeling just to keep things really, really simple, but the other one I thought of was unstoppable. I really like unstoppable. That feeling to me is just like it doesn't even matter. I'm a battering ram. I'm just plowing through and getting it done, which is also being driven. What do I have to think so I can feel driven and unstoppable, so I can do what I need to do to get my EMR inbox at zero by the time I leave work every day? The thought I chose is I take excellent care of my patients while also valuing and prioritizing my free time.

The circumstance there is just my job. It's not so critical what that is. You have a job. That's very, very neutral. This is the thing about that thought. You might think that thought does not make me feel driven or unstoppable. That's totally fine, and that's why this work is so personal. It's really, really important that the thought you choose feels true and believable to you. Otherwise, this is just positive thinking and it's not going to really create lasting change for you.

It's worth it to take some time to really think, "does this thought actually truly create that feeling in my body of driven and unstoppable or whatever the feeling is that you chose? Once you have that model, that new model, then you decide to think that thought or a grouping of thoughts on purpose over and over again. This is what's going to happen. I'm just going to tell you this because most of the time we think, "Okay, I've chosen a

new way of thinking about this." Then when our brains default back to the old way of thinking, we think something's gone terribly wrong.

Our brains are faulty. We're defective. Forget this. This is dumb. What's going to happen is your brain will go back to that old way of thinking very automatically for quite a while. Something happens; immediately your brain goes to that old thought. The reason for that is because you have this really well-worn, almost rutted, neural pathway in your brain. This is how you think about this, and so what we need to do is to change that.

The way you change that is you continue to be that watcher or observer of your thoughts, and when you find yourself thinking the old thought because you're paying attention, you're always monitoring. Once you find yourself thinking those old thoughts, you notice it and then you calmly, gently, kindly remind yourself that you have a newer, better way of thinking about that circumstance. Then you think those new thoughts on purpose. You don't get frustrated with yourself.

One way someone explained it to me once is when the new year turns over and then for probably at least a month when you're writing down the date, you put the wrong year down for a while because you just haven't practiced it enough. We don't make that mean that we're idiots or that we're failures. We just laugh at ourselves and change it. It's not a big deal. That's how I want you to think about it with this. "Oh, it's just not the way I think about it yet." The 2016 rut is still in my brain, and I need to just modify that neural pathway so I can get to the 2017 rutted neural pathway for the next 12 months.

The way you do that is you just think those new thoughts on purpose. Oh, yeah. That's right. It's 2017. Oh, right, that's how I think about it. Then before you know it, it's 2017 and that's your new reality. It's like you have outdated programming in your brain and by doing this work, you're doing a system update. You're just going okay, this is the new way of thinking about this, so I just need to remind myself. You're creating those new neural pathways and continuing to work on that so that your brain defaults to thinking the new way about that circumstance.

I hope that was super helpful. I will see you guys next week. Thank you so much. Take care. Have an awesome week. Bye-bye.

Thanks for joining us for "Weight Loss For Busy Physicians." Now take the next step and go to KatrinaUbellMD.com to download just what you need. Join us again next week for more support to keep you in control and on the path to freedom around food.