



# WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Hey, everybody. How are you today? Thanks for joining me. Episode 13, lucky number 13. Welcome back. I wanted to just give you guys a little recipe kind of thing. Last time, I talked to you guys about a soup recipe and some things like that. I thought, "You know what I always end up telling all of my clients is about what I think is the best way to eat broccoli." My family loves it. My kids literally devour it, and it's so easy. I'm just going to start off today with giving you a heads up on that. It's so simple. You take broccoli, you chop it up. Super easy. Or you can buy it already chopped, I think, too.

Then you steam it up, so I usually just do five minutes in the steamer and then you drizzle it, relatively heavily, with toasted sesame oil. If you're like a fan of Asian flavors, it's amazing. Toasted sesame oil and some salt, and you just stir it all up. It's delicious. It's such a great way to add fat to a vegetable that we don't typically sauté or roast in the oven too much. Give it a try. Go to the Comments for this show notes page, which you'll find at [katrinaubellmd.com/13](http://katrinaubellmd.com/13) and let me know what you think because, oh my gosh, it's so good. We just adore it. We think it's fantastic.

All right. So today we are going to be talking more about changing our thinking. I got a great comment on Episode 2 where I talked about becoming more aware of what you're thinking. Hiral writes, "Great podcast! Thank you for doing these. I listened to this episode again today and am wondering HOW you create or change the thoughts that you identify from the model." So it's a great question, Hiral. Thank you for asking it and it really helped me to know that we need to dig deeper into this topic. For any of you that are just jumping into the podcast for the first time, let me just review this thought model for you. This really is that foundational principle that all of my coaching is based on.

There is five components to this model. It starts with the circumstance. The circumstance is the neutral fact of the situation. Then circumstances can trigger our thoughts. We have thoughts about the neutral fact. Our thoughts create our feelings. Our feelings drive our actions and our actions create our results. Our results then are always proof or evidence of the original thought. If you're looking for more information or a more in-depth description of that, definitely head up to the first couple podcasts like Episodes One, Two and Three and you're going to get a lot more information about that.

When you're more aware of your thinking, because this is how we start to plug our thoughts into this model, we need to be aware of what we're thinking. You're taking on that watcher or observer role of your brain. You are monitoring your thoughts from a place of compassion and interest and curiosity.

You're not judging what you're noticing, you're not qualifying it by saying it's good or bad, you're just exploring for more information. You're separating yourself from the thoughts that are flying all around in there. This is called metacognition, the ability to think about what you're thinking about. Then you do a thought download to get it all out.

These thoughts are all just sentences in your mind, but I like to envision them as pin balls bouncing around like crazy, like ding, ding, ding, ding, ding. We need to get them out. For thought downloads, you write or type for 5 to 10 minutes straight and lay it all out there. Just pen to paper or fingers going the whole time. You can do a thought download on a certain topic like your job or your child or your weight, or you can just do stream of consciousness, just whatever is floating around in there, whatever thoughts you have bouncing around all day.

It's a really great idea to get in the habit of doing a thought download every day, so I want to encourage you to start doing that. Some people call it journaling, but I've never been a big fan of writing just for the sake of writing, so that word has never resonated with me. Like I've never been someone who has a diary. I think it's great to do that. People who have journals and diaries from all their years is just not really my thing. If that's you then I think that's fantastic. If it's not, then this is your opportunity to tap into that resource.

Somehow that thought download is a little different for me. I mean, really, my thinking is just different about it compared to keeping a journal. When I think of a thought download, I think of something quick and easy and therapeutic. It always ends up bringing me like a mental lightness, like a relief from all the thoughts flying around, and it's definitely the best way to get to the bottom of what's going on for you, like why are you having the problems you're having.

I have a client right now that I was coaching and she was asking me why she has so much negative thinking and why she's been feeling pretty miserable since we started working together and I reminded her that the way we figure out why we overeat is to stop overeating because then all those thoughts, all that garbage, comes up for us. All the reasons why we are overeating in the first place come to the surface. That can feel pretty crummy for a while as you're sorting through all of it. Nothing has gone wrong if that's what's happening. But then how this tends to manifest is with us wanting to rush the process of weight loss. Everyone's in a hurry.

We think that if we can just get down to our ideal weight, then we'll feel better. We won't have all these uncomfortable emotions anymore. It's really important to spend a little time on this. The only reason we ever want anything is because of how we think it will make us feel. Let me repeat that. The only reason we ever want anything is because of how we think it will make us feel. Why do we want to lose weight? To be healthier, so our clothes fit, we have more energy, but all those reasons will make us feel the way we want to feel. If we perceive our bodies as healthy, then we feel good about ourselves. If our clothes fit, we feel confident when we get dressed which feels great. If we have more energy, we make that mean that life is good and we can get a lot done and we feel happy or excited. There's always a feeling underlying every want that we have.

When we want the weight to come off quickly, it's because we're trying to escape the uncomfortable feelings that we have right now. Also, we often have thoughts about how once we're at goal weight, we can loosen up a touch and not have to be so strict with ourselves, which is basically code for "I want to go back to overeating. I'll do this diet plan until I get the results I want and then I'll stop following it." This is exactly how we yo-yo diet.

One pretty disappointing realization I have had is that when you're thin, you just don't need as much food. Like straight up, you can't eat as much as you were eating before you lost weight because even if it's all fuel foods for your body, it's still too much fuel for your body. Of course, we get to decide what that means for us. We can decide to think about it with self-pity like, "Oh, poor me. I'll never get to overeat again without gaining weight back. Life isn't fair." But if you run those thoughts through a model, the feeling you get from that thought is entitled, the action is to get slippery with your protocol, basically overeating, and the result is gaining weight back.

Can you see how those thoughts that seem very true and real, like you're just reporting the news, end up contributing to weight gain? So there is no upside to thinking that way about the food you get to eat. When your brain starts going into self-pity mode, the awareness that you have of your thinking will help you correct those thoughts. One way to do that is envisioning a delete button in your brain and just envision hitting delete on that thought, just erasing it out of your mind. You can remind yourself that that's just a thought error. When you think of an error, it's totally neutral. It's just a little mistake. That's not a big deal.

What I don't want you to do is notice your old thinking patterns and then get all mad and frustrated with yourself because that does not serve any purpose. Beating yourself up is not going to be an effective way of changing your thinking permanently. If anything, it beats you down. What you're wanting is growth and evolution in your thinking but by indulging and beating yourself up, you're actually setting yourself back. Deciding to think of the old programming as thought errors neutralizes them. It's just a quick mistake that your brain made. This happens with technology all the time, like my phone will all of a sudden start acting wacky.

I don't make it mean that I should smash it in the floor and that it's a horrible phone and I'll never find a phone that works right. I just restart it and then it's back to normal, humming along with the correct programming again. When you notice the thought error, you just remind yourself that you don't think about it like that anymore and you intentionally think the new thoughts, the new way of deciding to think about it. Instead, a new thought about how much food I can eat and still maintain my weight is, "I love eating exactly as much food as my body needs. No more and no less."

For me, where I'm at right now, that thought makes me feel empowered. When I feel empowered, the actions I take are to eat according to my protocol, to not justify overeating on protocol foods, and to continue to manage my mind. The results I get from that are staying at my ideal weight permanently by eating exactly how much food my body needs, no more and no less. Do you see how that result is evidence or proof of the original thought? That thought gives me the result that I want so when my brain wants to go to pity party land, I can remind myself that I don't think about it that way anymore and think this new thought instead to create the emotion of empowerment for myself. Empowered feels a whole heck of a lot better than entitled, right?

To get back to Hiral's original question, how do you create or change the thoughts for the new model? Sometimes it's pretty simple and we just have to redirect our brains to the new thought that feels true and believable to us. Sometimes it's a much bigger reach. We know we'd like to think a certain way but it feels so distant and unbelievable that we just can't get there.

Let's use a work example because so many of my clients have a lot of frustration and other negative emotions around their work. If you have a thought, "I hate my job," it's too far of a reach to just start believing I love my job. Love feels so much better for us than hate does, but we just can't make that leap. It's too wide. How do we get from hate to love? What we do is break that gap between the thoughts down into what's called bridging thoughts. I like to think about it like the monkey bars on the playground. When you start on one side, you can't just reach to the far end. Your arms just aren't long enough.

If you want to get to the other side, you need to reach out for the first rung and then move to the second and then the third, and so on, and if you continue, you ultimately get to the other side. To change our thinking from hating our job to loving our job, we have to decide what the rungs are, meaning what are the thoughts that if we go from one to the next to the next, we ultimately end up not only just thinking that we love our job, but believing it. We know our current thought is "I hate my job" and it's creating the current thought pattern and results. Nobody wants to feel hate on purpose, but most of the time we think that there's no other way to think about it because of all the evidence we see around us that supports us hating the job. You guys, you can apply this to anything.

If you love your job, you can apply this to hating your body and then loving your body; or hating your neighbor or loving your neighbor; or hating where you live and loving where you live. It applies to everything. So then we decide what we want to think and feel instead. To do this, we have to create a new thought. Our new thought here is "I love my job," which creates the feeling of love for us which we want. So then we start to gradually tweak and modify the original thought until we filled in all the rungs in the monkey bars and we're at "I love my job."

Here are the rungs, so to speak, that I came up with. You start with the thought, "I hate my job." Then you move to "I hate my job and that's okay." Then "There are times when I don't hate my job." "There are even hours at a time where I don't hate my job." "I want to not hate my job." "It's possible that someday I could love my job." "I'm open to the idea that I could love my job." "Someday I will love my job." "I don't hate my job anymore." "I will love my job." "I love my job."

You can see how each of those thoughts is like a little baby step. It's inching toward how we want to think and that little inch can be believable when you start thinking it on purpose. Going through this process of believing each new thought or each rung can take a short amount of time or can take many months. You want to be patient with yourself if it's taking you some time to believe that new thought and think it automatically. When you're going through this process, I want to encourage you to write this all down, write down all of the rungs, the whole process that you're going to take. Make sure you're not making such big leaps between the rungs that you won't be able to reach the next one.

When we think about the monkey bars, there's never an enormous gap that there's no way you could cross. You want to make sure that they're close enough that you can reach it. Now you have the path to follow from your old thought to your new big thought that doesn't seem believable at all yet.

Let's just touch briefly here on what beliefs actually are. Beliefs are thoughts that you've thought so many times that you believe them. It's just as simple as that. Many of our thoughts, many of our beliefs are thoughts that other people told us to believe, like when we were younger and we just decided to believe them. Or, as adults, we interpret our experience of something or someone in a certain way and then we believe it. But we can change our beliefs when we decide to.

I think a good example of this that's really not super emotionally charged is when you meet someone and decide you don't really like them that much based on your first couple interactions and then you believe that you don't like or respect that person. Like you have a belief that that is not someone you care to spend time with. But over the course of time, you might get to know them better, you might interact with them in different ways and in different areas of your life, and you start to have thoughts that maybe this person isn't so bad after all. Has this happened to you? It's totally happened to me.

Like my initial judgment was maybe a little off or maybe a lot off. Your belief that you don't like them then starts to soften. Then as you continue to interact with them, you decide that even though that person has some flaws, you really do like them, so you change your beliefs about them. Now you think of them as a friend and you don't place so much emphasis on those things they do that you don't love or agree with. You focus on what makes you friends. You've completely changed your belief about them.

We're going to do a similar process here but with intention. We're going to do it on purpose. With the friend example, it just happened based on your experiences and how you interacted with this person, but here we're going to do this on purpose. We're going to deliberately think the new thought. In our job example, you would pick "I hate my job and that's okay" as your first bridging thought or the first rung on the monkey bars. Then whenever your brain has the automatic efficient thought of "I hate my job," you notice that thought because you're aware and you tack on "and that's okay" after it. You keep practicing this.

Once you believe the new thought, "I hate my job and that's okay," now you know you're ready to move on to the next thought. In this case that's, "There are times when I don't hate my job." Then when you automatically think, "I hate my job and that's okay," you remind yourself that the new way you think about it is "There are times when I don't hate my job." As you're doing that, you're training your brain to start paying attention to the times when you don't hate your job. You start to believe that, "Yeah, there really are times when I don't hate my job. Imagine that."

Then the next thought is "There are even hours at a time where I don't hate my job." You expand your thinking and start looking for times when there are hours where you don't hate your job. You notice those and build evidence for yourself of that belief. Then you keep going, swinging from rung to rung on the monkey bars until you get to the other side. Something as emotionally charged as I hate my job really might take many months but it's totally worth it. I will point out that it doesn't necessarily have to take many months. Sometimes people just have this assumption that they're going to hate their job and as soon as they start noticing the things that they like, it's actually not that hard for them to get to "I love my job" and to stop placing so much emphasis on all the things that maybe aren't as fun or they don't like as much.

Really, what it comes down to is who wants to feel hate on a regular basis, especially when the hate is self-created by the thoughts that we choose? No one can make us feel anything because all of our feelings are created by our thoughts. Since hate is such an uncomfortable emotion to feel, then what we tend to do is distract ourselves from it or avoid it by eating. You see how these thoughts all feed back into our weight issues. It's not just about following a certain diet plan, it's so much more. You have to identify what these thoughts are that you have that drive you to overeat and work on changing them with intention.

All right, you guys, have a wonderful, wonderful week. It is April now. I hope you are getting some spring time sunshine. It's always one of my favorite times of the year, just finally when things start thawing, especially in Wisconsin here. It's like we're desperate for it. Come on, winter, be over. Have a wonderful amazing week and I'll talk you next week. All right, take care. Bye-bye.