



# WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Welcome back, everybody. Welcome to episode five. I'm so excited to be here with you today. I just wanted to share with you how we have been suffering in our house. The stomach flu has hit us. Not everyone in the house, but most everybody now has been affected, unfortunately. We're just working through that. It's always fun when you have a kid who has to stay home from school. That was me this whole last week, is just trying to figure it out. Working moms, we are making it happen. I swear, it is so sad when you have just like a little toddler who has the stomach flu, is just at the mercy of their body. It's just the worst. My friend, seriously the other day was like, "Why does the stomach flu always hit at night? Why are they always puking in their bed?" I was like, "You know, that's such a good question. Why is that?" I was like, "I don't know, maybe because we eat all day and then we throw it up? I don't know the answer." If you are an infectious disease specialist and you know the answer to that, please put something up on the show notes page and let us all know, like fill us all in on why it is like that. It's always just the worst to be woken up to that situation.

Let's get to some great content today. Today we're going to talk about confusion because it's so common. We're all so confused because there's so much information out there. I mean, the internet is just overwhelming, just facts and facts and then sometimes there's alternative facts and then it's like what do we do? It's so overwhelming. This is the thing: we hate it when our patients find things on the internet and then let that information derail them in whether they take our advice or not or what they decide to do for their parenting or the way they decide to take care of themselves. Then we turn around to do the exact same thing ourselves. It's so interesting. Like our friend offers us to try this new fad diet, so we decide okay, we're going to try that, or we decide to do a Whole30 challenge and we get some results, but then at the end of the 30 days we go right off of it and then just gain that weight that we lost right back again.

What's so interesting about challenges like that are that we're really only committed for a short amount of time, like 21 days or 30 days. We might see some results, but then we immediately go back to eating the old way when the challenge is over. And then it's so fascinating because by doing that we're basically thinking that if we lose some weight on the challenge, then we can go back to our old way of eating which is overeating and expect different results. We expect to not gain that weight back. Then sometimes, I hear this from my weight loss clients so often, then we say, "Oh, the challenge didn't work. I lost weight and then I gained it back again." We blame the program instead of recognizing that the program totally works if you do it and you keep on doing it, but once you stop doing it of course it doesn't work anymore. It was really the choice to stop doing it that gave us the results that we don't want.

Another thing that we get so confused about is which foods we should eat and in which combination: five or six small meals a day, high fat/low carb, low fat/calorie restricted, vegan, vegetarian, paleo, 5/2 or some other kind of intermittent fasting, and then adding all the recommendations all over the place about the super foods that are most important that are going to keep us the healthiest and prevent cancer, trying to figure out a way to fit those in. Another major confusion area is how to exercise. Should we even exercise while we're trying to lose weight? If so, which exercise and for how long? Then what time a day is best? Should I eat before or after exercising? How does this smoothie play into that? There's so many different decisions to make.

But what I find so interesting about the whole process is how we don't tap into our inner wisdom at all here. We pretend like we know nothing about our bodies or our lives. It's like learned helplessness. "There's no way I could possibly be able to figure out how to lose weight, so I need somebody to tell me exactly what to do." This resonates with me so much because this is pretty much where I was when I found the work that helped me to lose weight, which is what I teach now. I was approaching 40 years old, I had about a year and a half prior decided that I wanted to be totally fit and healthy entering into my 40s, but of course I had actually gotten heavier during that time. I had all kinds of evidence for why I couldn't lose weight or exercise regularly. Some of them were like I have too many kids. My work is too demanding. I don't have enough flexibility at my job. I already don't sleep enough. Now I'm supposed to get up early to exercise? How is that ever going to happen? Just totally indulging in confusion. Then I started to wonder if this was just part of the aging process and that I should just maybe not fight it. Instead of fighting it, I just maybe needed to work on accepting it as just inevitable as you age.

The thing is, when we have so many options, it's so easy to get really confused and to not know who to believe and to try something for a couple of days and then when that seems uncomfortable or we don't see instant results, then we quit, go back to the old ways of eating or decide maybe to try something else, but usually we quit. Think about going on Pinterest. The options for recipes are endless, like literally endless. You have no idea which ones are good, which ones you should try. They all look amazing. I have definitely had Pinterest duds. I don't know if you guys have where you are like "that looks amazing" and you make it and you're like "oh my god, disgusting." What I would basically do is collect all these recipes on my Pinterest board, at the time telling myself that I'd try them one day. And I am going to get my act together once I have enough recipes, then I can do this. Then I'd never actually do it.

This is the ironic thing, if I had used the time that I spent searching for recipes in a different way, I totally could have gotten in a good workout or gone to bed earlier to catch up on sleep because my big story line to myself was that I was too tired. I could have caught up on some housework that I always felt behind on. It's just so important to look at that confusion and see how it permeates our lives and paralyzes us.

Confusion is one of the indulgent emotions. What I mean by that is that we like to indulge in it. When I say that, you might be thinking, "Actually no. I don't like feeling confused at all. How is that indulgent?" But it really is because the only way you can be confused is if you don't make a decision. Once a decision is made, it can be really scary and more uncomfortable because that means we actually have to do something now. We have to do something new, something out of the ordinary, something that probably is going to cause us some discomfort. It actually can be more comfortable to just stay in confusion because then we never actually have to take action. The thing about confusion that I want you to know is that it's always a lie.

This is how I know it's a lie. Say you were confused about which eating plan you're going to follow and then I tell you that if you don't make a decision and commit to one eating plan for the next three months I'm going to cut your thumb off. You know you'd be making a decision immediately and sticking to it. You weren't really confused, you were just indulging in confusion so you didn't have to take action and move ahead with anything. There are times, like sometimes we are actually confused because we truly need more information or we need something explained to us more clearly, but if you reach out and get the information or the explanation, then you're leaving confusion because you now know what you needed to know. Then you have to take some action, but if you indulge in confusion and don't move ahead with obtaining that information,

then you don't have to do anything, but you're also not going to see results. If you need that information or explanation, you don't have to get confused. What you need is to get motivated so you can go ahead and ask for what you need so you can move ahead and move forward with your goals.

If you find yourself in confusion and you don't know how to get yourself out of it, ask yourself this question: if I did know what I was supposed to do, what would it be? The first thing that might come up is: no, but I don't know. Then you just ask yourself again, but if you did know, what would it be? It's amazing how often we can come up with an answer. It's like once you open up the door in your brain to a possibility of a solution rather than being just locked down and blocked with I don't know and confusion, then your brain comes up with really good solutions pretty much right away.

Often, the confusion we experience is a distraction from deeper emotions that we don't want to feel. We don't want to feel like a failure if we decide to start an eating plan and then quit. We don't want to feel humiliated if we pick an exercise and then can't do it or end up being the heaviest person in the class. We don't want to feel deprived when we want to overeat to neutralize our other negative emotions, but aren't allowed to on our eating plan. As much as confusion can be uncomfortable, most of us would agree that failure, humiliation, and deprivation feel worse. We don't want to take a chance on feeling those feelings, so we'll just indulge in the discomfort of confusion.

Another way that confusion shows up in our lives is through indecisiveness. I hear that all the time. So many people identify with being indecisive. I'm just an indecisive person, like it's innately in your genetic code or something. Or people say, "I'm from an indecisive family," but the only reason you're an indecisive person is because you have the habit of being indecisive. You've basically allowed yourself to be confused about decision-making for so long and so often that you've adapted it into your personality as kind of just how you roll. All of that is indulgence. It really feels protective. It's part of your identity. If you can't decide on something, then you don't have to find out that you made the wrong decision. Rather than knowing that at least some of the time you'll make the right decision and actually benefit from that, you just let yourself down ahead of time by staying in confusion. Then, nothing bad or good can happen. Do you see that? You're actually preventing yourself from having some good experiences or good results.

When you notice yourself spinning in indecision or confusion, that's a great opportunity for a thought download. What you do for that, just a reminder, you write or type out all the reasons why you're confused and why you can't make a decision so that you can move forward. Then you look at each reason. You can ask yourself, "Is it really true? What will it cost me if I continue to indulge in confusion?" I find so often that once I get out all the thoughts that are bouncing around in my head like a pinball onto the paper or onto my computer screen, I can use my brain in a different way to problem solve. This is the thing: as doctors, we are highly skilled at solving problems. We do it all day long. What we're doing here is we're then utilizing that skill to help us move forward so that we feel driven to take the actions we need to take to start losing weight.

I just want to make sure you guys know that you can absolutely do all of this work on your own. This is for sure something that you, with enough effort and persistence and perseverance, can make great strides with. This might be just all you need to just get you out of that confusion and get you going, doing that plan that you've already decided that you want to do. But if you're not quite there yet, it really is so much easier to do this work when you work with someone else who's objective and skilled at facilitating the process. It's someone who doesn't let you use your excuses, kind of calls you on your BS a little bit. That's what I do as a coach. I help you to develop this skill for yourself so that once we're done working together, you know how to always bring yourself out of confusion and indecision and move forward on your goals.

One of the best parts I personally think about this is that once you know these skills and you've applied them and really incorporated them into the way you show up in the world, then if you have kids, you can even teach these skills to your kids so they don't have to suffer for decades until they figure it out for themselves or someone teaches it to them because nobody's teaching us this stuff when we're younger and learning how to adult. It's really a total win-win.

You guys have a wonderful, wonderful healthy week. I hope nobody else is struggling to get healthy like we are. I'll talk to you guys next time. Take care, bye-bye.