



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Hey, my friend. How are you? I am so excited that I am back and recording another podcast for you. This is the first podcast that I'm recording since getting back from Peru. I got myself all ahead before I left, which was great, and now I'm back and ready to keep just offering some really great information and help for you guys. It is a Saturday. Beautiful day here in Wisconsin. Beautiful, sunny, summer day. I just put my little kids down for a nap, and I thought, okay, here is my moment where it's quiet, and I can record this for you guys.

We had hired someone to do some work on the outside of our house last year, and he's so good and so popular that we had to wait a year for him to be able to come and work on our house. We have ... It's really common where we live in Wisconsin to have a house that's all stone, like real stone on the outside, so there is just some upkeep with mortar and just old house kind of stuff. Like I said, he's amazing, but we had to wait, I think, 11 months for him to come.

Anyway, the point is, while he was here, he was figuring out that some of our window sills, the wood was rotting, and our house was built in 1930, so these things happen. Yesterday, which is Friday, is usually when I record podcasts for you guys, they were literally sawing, sanding, hammering, doing all those crazy stuff right outside the window to my office, so it was pretty clear to me by midday yesterday that this was just not going to be happening on a Friday, so wanted to do that for you guys now.

I realized just now, I have not told you that I kicked my kids out of my playroom office, and I actually have a big girl office now. They are no longer in it. We got the walls painted and it looks a lot more official, and I feel more official. I love having that feeling of this is my space. It feels more professional if that makes sense. I'm not just winging it, and it's in with the toys and trying to figure something out. It's really nice to have this whole room to myself, so now I really have my own big girl, big girl doctor, big girl doctor coach office, so super excited about that.

I wanted to just fill you guys in on Peru a little bit because I know a bunch of you were interested in hearing how the trip was. It was just amazing and fantastic in so many ways. I had never been to South America before, so that was super cool, super fun. Our guide was amazing. His name was Miguel. Seriously, you guys, the most hospitable person. He actually went to college for hotel management and hospitality, and you can totally tell. He's all about making sure that the experience is great.

My son and I actually stayed, for part of the time, at his family home where he lives and his parents live, so that was really fun to just get really good home cooked food and to just to feel so at home and comfortable there and not just in some hotel or a guest house.

Then for another large chunk of the time, we stayed at his family's country property, and that's where we did a lot of our service that we did. It was beautiful. I mean, literally, the gardens were just so lush and beautiful. They have calla lilies. Think about calla lilies and how expensive they are. They have those just growing all over the place. The weirdest thing is that you're totally at elevation.

Cusco is 11,000 feet, and it's the middle of winter. We were there during the winter solstice. We're in the mountains, and I'm like, "Why are there geranium trees?" Literally, the plants are so big, these geraniums, that they're like as tall as I am. Very, just, kind of ... For me, geraniums are so summery, it was like my brain couldn't compute. Like, what? How does this, how does this work? That was really, really fun. We got great food. We got to have homemade ceviche. Ceviche is from Peru. That was super cool.

Then we learned all about the Incas and went and saw a bunch of different ruins and really just learned about the Incas and their civilization and the pre-Inca times and then how Spain came and Francisco Pizarro came and basically slaughtered them all, but it was seriously fascinating. My 11-year-old son, who I went with, is just such a sponge at this age, like super into history. He is the kind of kid right now where he is old enough that he can be uncomfortable and deal with it.

For instance, the way they eat there is pretty European in the sense that they have a light breakfast, and then they eat a heavy lunch. Sometimes lunch is at 1:00 or 1:30, but there were times we were not eating lunch until like 3:00 or 3:30. Even though we had snacks, if it was really that bad, it was so cool to see, like he just totally just wait.

All the kids there, I'm telling you, they were all fat-adapted. We were around all these kids, and if lunch is two hours late, nobody said a word. No complaining. I mean, it's just like no big deal. They can just deal with it. It was so cool to see that.

Then normally, they'll have a light dinner, but I think because we were guests, most of the time, they ended up cooking like a whole other meal. Sometimes we were eating that until 8:30, 9:00, 9:30 at night, which was really late and oftentimes, we were just so tired, we just wanted to go to bed. We were like, "Can we just skip dinner? We're okay. We're not hungry. We just want to go to bed." They're like, "No, no, no, no, no. Dinner is almost ready." We're like, "Okay," looking at my son, just like, oh my God, he is so tired. Let the child sleep.

That's the other thing, they let their kids stay up super late, except the kids are not cranky. I was literally, the whole time, just watching, like what is going on? I was asking our guide. I'm like, "Miguel. Do they take naps every day? How are they in such a good mood and able to wait so long for food and just, like not whining, complaining." He's like, "Yeah, no. They don't take naps. They just don't really sleep that much." What are we doing wrong in America? I am like the borderline sleep Nazi, like, "You guys need to get to bed. You need good sleep. It's so important," and I still do believe that, but it was such an adjustment and so different. We just really tried to roll with the culture, and then occasionally catch up when we could. That all worked out for us.

Then going to Machu Picchu was also totally amazing. I feel like everyone that I know who's ever been there would always say, "Oh, it's so amazing." You're like, "Oh, yeah. Okay," but I'm telling you, there is something really special about that place, and that's probably why the Incas chose it, but it's so funny because they're like, "Oh, it's a lot further down in the rain forest." Yeah, a lot further down at like, 8,000 feet, which is seriously like the Town of Vail in Colorado is at 8,000. That is high. That is high up in the mountains.

Anyway, it's just beautiful there. It's one of those places where you go and you see everything, and you have this experience, and then you leave, and you keep thinking about it. In the next couple of days, you keep thinking about it. It's just in you in this way where you just really think about, what would have it been like to live there? Basically, I didn't know this, so I'll just share with you, but Machu Picchu is the only Inca, basically, town or little city, that the Spanish never found. The Incas made a deal with each other that no one would tell the Spanish that it existed because what they would do is they would go to all of their temples, all of the Inca temples, the Spanish, and they would build a church over it.

These beautiful, beautiful cathedrals and there's a basilica in Cusco and all of that, but you can see, you definitely can see some of the old remains, but it's still built over. Machu Picchu is the only civilization area there that is untouched. That's what's so special about it. You can really, really see this is how they lived. Researchers have done all this research on it, and it's not just like they built it on this mountain. There is, deep, deep, deep into the mountain, there's all these drainage systems and all these different things that they did to make it so that the city would be earthquake-proof and safe during the rainy season. It was really just so fascinating how they did everything. Huge, huge stones and how they moved them.

Anyway, I'm going to end up spending this whole podcast telling you all about that, but it was a really, really cool experience. We were there during the winter solstice, and that's also when the City of Cusco has its big celebration for the anniversary of the city, which is many hundreds of years old, probably even over a thousand years old, and so that was really neat too, really being with the locals at this big, in the big city square there. There was a big concert and then a big light show. It was just really neat. I think that's that personal touch you get when you have a guide who really lives there and wants to give you that experience.

If you're interested, I know I think I had mentioned it maybe on the podcast before or in an email, but if you're interested in looking at the company that we traveled with, it's called Discover Corps. They're affiliated loosely with the Peace Corps. They talk about offering volunteer vacations, so it's like you have a vacation, you see things, and they tour you around and stuff, but at the same time, you're also doing some service projects. We helped some school kids learn English and practice their English studies after school for about a week, and we did some other projects to a boys' orphanage. That was amazing. We did some really, really cool stuff.

Anyway, I highly recommend just that program in general. Even if you don't go to Peru, they have some other, they have programs and vacations that are all over the world. Not the cheapest proposition, but it's one of those things where you show up and they take care of everything. That's really nice and works great for me for when I'm just traveling alone with my kid. I just don't really want to have to overthink everything all the time, especially in a country where I don't speak the language. Anyway, we had a great time.

Let me tell you about what we're talking about today. We are going to be talking about questions and the

questions that we ask ourselves. For many of us, we have these loops in our heads, these questions that we ask ourselves over and over and over again. You might ask them to yourself so often that they're so under the radar, you might not even notice that you're thinking that very often, so awareness of what that kind of stream of consciousness is, and your brain is going to be really important here in applying this concept, just seeing what are you thinking all the time. What are the questions you're asking yourself.

Sometimes, we call these questions thought loops because they keep repeating again and again in our brains in a loop because we don't ever really create a good answer. If you have a question, and then you got an answer, it sort of shoots that one out of your brain. You're looping when you don't come up with a good answer for your question, and then you keep questioning yourself with the same question.

Our brains are set up to always want to answer a question. It's how we're wired as humans. We all ask ourselves questions every day. It's basically how we make the thousands, tens of thousands, maybe even more, decisions that we do every day, like what time should I wake up? What's the weather going to be? Do I need an umbrella? What should I wear today? How should I do my hair? What should I make the kids for breakfast? What time is my first case or patient? What time do I need to leave for work? That's just probably 10 minutes or maybe even less, and that list goes on and on.

With these questions, you answer them for yourself, like what time should I wake up? 6:00. What's the weather going to be? Cloudy with a 50% chance of rain. Do I need an umbrella? Yes. What should I wear today? You choose an outfit. You put it on. How should I do my hair? You choose the style and fix your hair that way. What should I make the kids for breakfast? You think about what food do you have in the house and how much time you have, and you feed the kids. What time is my first case or patient? 8:00. What time do I need to leave for work? 7:15, or however it all works out. You get the idea, but you ask yourself these questions, and you answer the questions. You make decisions and you move ahead. But when it comes to other areas of our lives, we ask ourselves questions in thought loops, essentially on repeat, and we don't come up with good answers. We call those questions dead-end questions. The reason they're dead-end questions is because the answers don't move us forward down the path of our lives. Instead, they run us into a dead end, and we find ourselves stuck and stagnant, and not making progress in our lives.

You guys know I'm such a visual person, I always have these kind of visions in my head. I think of bumper cars. If you keep just bumping into the wall, then you go this way, but if you keep bumping into the wall, you're not making any progress.

Here is some examples of some common dead-end questions: What should I do? If you ask yourself, "What should I do?" and you decide to do something, this is not a dead end question, of course. But when you need to make a decision about something and you ask yourself again and again, "What should I do," without making a decision, then you're indulging in confusion, indecision, and probably some overwhelm too.

If you haven't listened to some of the older podcasts, you might want to check out episode number five, which is all about confusion. You can find that one at katrinaubellmd.com/5 or just scroll down to older episodes on your podcast app, and then you'll find it.

What should I do can become a trap that you're stuck in. What should I do? Should I follow this eating plan or that one? Should I quit my job or not? Should I leave my husband or not? Should I send my child to this

school or that school? Should I buy this house or a different one? Should I pick this tile for the bathroom renovation or that one? None of these has a right or wrong answer, so continuing to ask yourself, "What should I do?" in this kind of situation just keeps you looping, never moving forward with any decision. As soon as you make a decision, then you worry that you made the wrong decision, and then you're right back where you started again.

The next question: Why can't I start losing weight? Why can't I start exercising regularly? Why can't I start being nice to my mother-in-law? Why can't I start de-cluttering the house? Why can't I start following my diet plan? Why can't I start getting up before the kids wake up in the morning? Why can't I start going to bed at a decent hour?

With this question, we spend a lot of trying to dig for some elusive information that, in theory, might help us start doing whatever it is that we want to do, but without that information, we feel like we're stuck. When we're stuck like this, we often actually, deep down, don't want to become unstuck because then we have to actually move forward with something hard like losing weight or committing to an exercise program or being a single mom or being nice to someone we have a strange relationship with. We just keep looping, "Why can't I start?" in our heads.

The next question: What is wrong with me? This is a really common one, like, "There must be something wrong with me, and if I could just figure out how to change it or fix it, then everything in my life would be better." With a dead-end question like what's wrong with me, our brains are still searching for an answer for us, don't forget. The brain will continually scan for evidence to prove whatever you believe about yourself. If you believe that something is wrong with you, then your brain will be on a mission to offer you all kinds of possible evidence that support that something is wrong with you.

That means that every little mistake you make and trip up you have will be brought to your attention, front and center. All you'll see are all the possibilities of what could possibly be wrong with you. Then you're thinking about yourself of being negative because you think being this way is wrong, and that'll create negative emotions that drive actions that ultimately create negative results for you. Again, a dead-end questions.

Other examples of dead-end questions: Why am I still blank? Why am I still something? Why am I still eating after the kids go to bed? Why am I still avoiding intimacy with my husband? Why am I still impatient and short with my kids? Why am I still in this job that I hate? Why am I still in debt? The answer is not moving you forward.

Another one: How am I going to get through this? We're looking for some sort of divine intervention, like the lightning bolt. That isn't going to be, for most people, of question that moves you forward.

Why is this so hard? I find this one is usually followed by a whole made up story about why it's so much harder for me than everyone else, that nobody struggles like I do. Basically, it's a raging pity party for myself.

Another one: Why can't I be normal, or why can't my body be normal, or why can't my life be normal, or why can't my marriage be normal, or substitute anything about you in there and ask why it can't be

normal. Why do I always feel like this? I'll give you a hint on this one. Ready? The answer is always your thinking.

Another question: Why did they do that to me? This is a question that is steeped in the past. We're looking to our past, deciding that what somebody did to us was bad or wrong or that we've been slighted in some way, and then we're looping on why the person did the thing, when that is now completely irrelevant and a question that we probably can't even answer. Again, a total dead end.

What did I do to deserve this? What did I do to deserve this call weekend? Why did I do to deserve these kids who misbehave or talk back or are totally ungrateful and entitled? This is a question that's totally based in classic emotional childhood and self-pity.

What will they think of me? What will think of me if I don't eat what they eat? What if I don't drink alcohol with them, if I say something that they don't agree with? We worry so much of what they'll think about us when we don't even know.

When is it going to get better? This is a classic one that we often answer with some future time in our lives. During residency, when is it going to get better? When we're attendings of course. But is it better? In some ways, yes, but there's a lot of miserable attendings out there. The best news here is that we don't need to wait for time to pass for it to get better. We can make it better right now by changing our thinking.

Another one that's really common: Why can't she something? Why can't she treat me with respect? Why can't she stop judging me? Why can't the kids clean up their toys when they're finished playing with them? Why can't he be more generous? Why can't he be more kind? Why can't he be more fair? Why can't she be more loving? Why can't they be the grandparents my kids deserve? No answer to that at all. Just creates misery in pointing out all the things that you don't see or have.

The next few are totally based in emotional childhood. Why is this taking so long? Just about every single one of my clients ends up asking me this question at some point or another. It's complete entitlement, like we feel like we somehow deserve for it to go quickly, even when we're not following our plan. It's so interesting to me we get so upset that we're not losing weight, but we're following our plan. How ... When has that ever worked? Give me an example.

We also think that if we work hard, it should somehow result in the results that we want, except that is not the way of the world. We never deserve anything, ever, but that's not how people think. I mean, they'll see this on like on TV, and they'll be like, "We deserve it. It's our time." No. You actually don't ever deserve anything, ever. So what if it's taking so long? The only reason you want it to go fast is because of how you'll think you'll feel when you're thinner. You think you'll feel better, except you can feel better now while you're losing the weight slowly. It's totally fine.

Why is this happening to me? This is a good one. Why is this happening to me? Does it really matter? That's the big question here. This is where we have to work on accepting reality. It probably doesn't matter why it's happening to me. The key is that it is happening to me, and so I need to work on accepting that and moving forward with my life.

Why haven't I learned this yet? This is, again, looking to the past, wondering why we keep making the same mistakes over and over again. It's actually totally irrelevant why I haven't learned something yet.

When I'm future-focused and moving forward with my life, I decide to learn the lesson now and move forward in my life, applying that lesson to future decisions or problems. I'm not spending a lot of time wondering why I still haven't learned the lesson. It makes no difference why. I'm just going to decide to learn the lesson now.

Here's another one: Why do I keep doing this to myself? Just like with the last one, the answer here is only going to involve you beating yourself up and thinking that somehow beating yourself up is going to change you for the better. Berating yourself never, ever gets you the results you want.

Why am I so dumb or whatever. Why am I so stupid? You can substitute whatever negative description you want in there. All you'll see are the answers to this question, all the places and reasons that you're dumb. That's definitely never going to result in what you want.

Why can't I get it together? This is the last one, and I've thought this one so many times about myself in the past, especially when I had these expectations of myself to not only be an amazing and dedicated pediatrician, but also a mom who does crafts with her kids and has the house clean and tidy every night. Oh, and also grows vegetables in her own garden and is thin and has no food or weight issues and is also incredibly organized.

These ridiculous expectations of myself are so over the top that there was no way I could ever measure up. In turn, I never had an answer to why I couldn't get it together. I kept trying something and failing because those expectations were completely unrealistic.

Now, let's talk about better questions so that you can see the true power that they hold. They are what we call useful questions because they result in answers that move you forward in your life instead of holding you back.

Here they are: What is perfect about this? This one, oh man, if you got something hard going on in your life, ask yourself that question, and make yourself come up with an answer. Don't just go, "There's nothing perfect."

This happened to me when I was first starting to do Facebook ads. I know that as physicians, you're not probably going to relate to that too much because probably most of you are not running Facebook ads, but let me just give you this example just so you can tell how I applied this for myself.

I had been working for about five or six weeks trying to get Facebook to just let me even create an ad. This was last year. It was unbelievable. Their customer service was so bad. I mean, I was going in circles with these people. I could not get an answer. I was giving them all the details and information I felt like I could, screenshots of what I was seeing. I could not figure out how to make it work. Everybody else is not having a problem. I'm like, seriously, what is going on? Facebook ads are so important and good. In fact, there's a good chance that some of you listening found me through a Facebook ad.

I knew I couldn't just give up and be like, "Yeah, screw Facebook. I'm not doing this." I had to make this work. That's when my coach asked me, "Tell me what is perfect about this situation." I mean, I was so frustrated. I was on the brink of tears, I mean, where you just are like, want to like, freak out on somebody

is where I was. It was hard. I think it even took me a couple of days of just keeping asking myself, "What is perfect about this? What is perfect about it?" I couldn't come up with anything.

Then I finally was able to answer the question. I mean, just focusing my brain on the tiniest little thing like what was perfect about it was this was happening during the holidays, and ads are more expensive during the holidays, so I wasn't wasting a bunch of money on ads during that time. What was perfect was that I learned that I really didn't want to spend time on Facebook ads, and that I was going to definitely hire that task out to an expert. I was no longer going to spend time on it myself.

What was perfect is I got a much better sense of how Facebook ads are, how Facebook runs their business, how confusing Facebook ads can be for everybody. It wasn't like I had to come up with like, "No, this has completely made my life wonderful." It wasn't anything like that, but I could still, in my frustration, go, "Okay. There's probably one or two or three things that are silver linings, that are happening for me. I'm learning from this, and that can be perfect too." This is really powerful question, ask yourself that and hold yourself to it, meaning make yourself come up with answers.

Next question: What is the thought causing this? That was so good for me when I came back from Peru. That whole first week coming back from Peru, pretty much. Oh my God, so overwhelmed, just, I felt like ... Like someone was telling me it's like saying you don't know where your face is, like, "Where is my face?" I just felt all over the place being gone for so long and getting caught back up with everything.

I could tell that I was creating all of that misery for myself. I knew I was creating it for myself. Asking myself, "What is the thought causing this?" is so powerful because otherwise, you think it's the circumstance. It's the fact that I went on vacation. It's the fact that I need a vacation for my vacation or after my vacation. I have all this laundry to do, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. No. It's all because of my thinking. You can get yourself out of that tailspin so much easier and quicker when you can identify what is the thought that is causing this emotion right now, that is so uncomfortable and miserable for me.

Next question: What do I need to believe? This is so good for all of you who want to lose weight or really, if you want to move ahead with anything. If I want to lose weight, what do I need to believe? What do I need to believe about myself? What do I need to believe about life in general? I need to believe that it's possible. I need to believe that I can create something I've never created before, a permanently thin body.

When you don't believe that that's a possibility for you, you will not be able to create that, as a result, for yourself. You can sub anything else that you want, any result that you want into that. What do I need to believe about myself or about this situation to make that happen?

Here's another one: How do I want to feel? We so often are living our lives just at the mercy of what our emotions are, like we have no control over them, like we had to be angry, we had to be bored, there's nothing to do when that's always an option. We could always choose how we feel because we can generate any emotion for ourselves by choosing thoughts that create that emotion for ourselves.

The next one: What are they thinking that makes them do that? That's so good when somebody's doing something you don't understand or you think it's wrong, your brain's wanting to judge it. You may not even ever know for sure what they're thinking. In fact, you probably won't because you can't ever know what

somebody else is thinking, but when you put yourself in their shoes and think, "What are they thinking that makes them do that?" then you can often come up with an answer that makes you feel a lot better than just sitting and stewing in judgment.

Here's the next one: What is funny about this? Don't underestimate the power of humor. So often that happens. We have some trip or something where everything's falling apart. At the time, it was super frustrating and difficult, and then when we retell the story, we're dying of laughter. There was humor in it. We just wouldn't let ourselves see it when we're in it. You always can ask yourself, "What is funny about this?"

Another one: How can we make this more fun? Such a good question.

How can I create what I want? That's such a good open-ended question. You're giving your brain the task. How can I create the body that I want? Let's start looking for solutions instead of just running into a dead end all the time.

Here's another one: What can I give? How can I provide more value here? Such a good question. You're basically asking your brain to tap into the best of you, the best of what you have to offer, what you bring to the table in this world, and you're asking how you can do more of that. So good.

What can I learn from this? There's always going to be a lesson in everything. As we know from before, those other questions, you don't have to ask yourself, "Why do I keep, have to learn the same lesson over and over again? Why haven't I learned this before?" No. What can I learn from this, and then I'm going to move forward with that lesson.

Next question: What is the solution to this problem? Nice open-ended question. Very, very useful.

Why am I so lucky? So good, because your brain starts looking for where you're lucky. Why am I so lucky? Well, maybe it's because I have this really great mentor or I hired a great coach or I'm listening to this podcast. I'm so lucky I found this podcast or other podcast or amazing books that are changing my life. I'm so lucky that those things found their way into my life so that I can move forward and create the life that I want.

Next question: What's the good news here? Always going to be some good news somewhere. Ask your brain to find it.

What am I making that mean, especially when you feel like you're reactive to somebody else or some sort of situation or family members who are upset about this or that or telling you different things. What am I making it mean? Somebody yells at you, someone is frustrated with you, someone is talking to you in a mean way.

What are you making what they say or do mean, because what they are saying and doing is a neutral fact. That is the circumstance. That goes on the sea line of that thought model. What you make it mean is your thinking. All of that is either thinking that you decide to choose that has a benefit to you or it's all just

drama.

Next question: How is this moving me forward in my life? So good. If everything that's happening to you, everything good including also everything that's bad or more difficult, if you can believe and decide that it's moving you forward in your life, then you don't feel like you're stuck. You don't feel like you're stagnant. You're looking for which elements of this situation are going to move me forward in my life.

If you spend time thinking about that and how you've done that in the past, how you've taken something difficult and allowed it to move you forward, you're going to see, "Oh yeah, I did that. That was amazing. Things really have worked out okay since that happened, and so how can I take what's going on for me right now and allow that to move me forward in the future?"

The last one: How might this benefit me? When your brain is like, "No. There's no benefit in this at all," your brain's going to argue with you. Your primitive brain's going to be like, "Uh, I don't think so." You keep asking, "How might this benefit me? There's gotta be something in there. There's gotta be one tiny little nugget. Let me see if I can find it." This is so good, you guys.

The old dead-end questions are our old way of thinking. So many people think this way. There's nothing wrong with us that we think that way, but if I were you, I would download the transcript to this podcast, which, by the way, if you don't know, that there are transcripts on the podcast website that you can download. They are there. You can print it off, and you can use these as a resource guide.

Go back and read these questions. Pick one when you're having a difficult time. "This is the question I'm going to ask myself over and over. When my brain starts offering up the dead-end questions, I'm going to catch it with my awareness and sub out this other question. I'm going to keep looking for the answer to that question to move me forward in my life." This is so good.

You guys have a wonderful, awesome, amazing week. Oh, and by the way, I've seen some of you on some of the Facebook groups saying like, "It's like she's talking directly to me." You always laugh because you know what? Good, because I am. I am talking to you. Yes, you. I really, really am, and I love you guys so much. I think that this is so amazing that we have this relationship through this podcast.

All right. Enjoy the beautiful summer weather, and I'll talk to you next week. Take care. Bye-bye.