



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Hey, my friend. Welcome back to the podcast. How are you today? So excited you're here. I'm so excited to share with you what I am doing tomorrow. So excited. You guys know that I'm Hamilton obsessed, right? My family is, too, and back in April I got to see the show in Chicago with my husband, and seriously I think I was 10 minutes into the show when I just felt so strongly that for sure I needed to bring my 11 year old son to see this show while it was in the theater. Because at first I had been thinking, "You know, it's going to tour. It'll come to Milwaukee. It'll be fine. I'll just have him see it then." But once I saw it there, oh, man. I was like, "I'm failing as a mother if I don't bring him. I have to do this." And I just knew that he would absolutely love it.

He's my buddy, goes with me to all the different shows and stuff. My husband likes going too, but he and I are really into it together. I actually took him on Sunday to see Idina Menzel perform, and that was amazing too. I just thought, "Okay, I'm going to get these tickets and I'm not going to tell him. I'm going to surprise him." I got some really good tickets. This was many months ago, and then on our way home from Peru is when I told him, because he's kind of like, "Oh, now this big trip is over." You know, like, "The rest of summer won't be as good." I was like, "Guess what we're doing in August?" And he was like, "No way."

That is tomorrow, so we're going to take the train down in the morning, and spend a little time wandering around Chicago, and then on Wednesdays they have matinee, so they have like a 1:30 show, so we're going to go then, which I thought was great, because even though he can stay up later, I just thought, "If he's really tired, he's not going to be able to have the same experience of it." Then I'm going to treat him to a really nice dinner at a nice restaurant, and then we'll take the train home. I'm so excited to have this special day with him and share this experience with him, and PS: I get to see it again! Just that little added extra element for me, too, which is so great. I will report back what his reaction was. I think he'll be just smiling from ear to ear. I think it's going to be so fun. So fun.

Hey, listen. I have been wanting to see if I could get you guys to leave me some more reviews about this podcast, as you know. I mentioned it last week too. So many people really struggle with figuring out how to leave a review on iTunes, and so do you know what I just figured out? The easiest way to do it from your podcast app on your phone, if you have an iPhone ... Everyone always has so much struggle with this. We can't figure it out. It's so super simple. Let me explain.

You open up your podcast app, and you go to the little search function, like that little magnifying glass, and you type in "Weight Loss for Busy Physicians." Now, most of you have probably already subscribed, so you just go straight to your list of podcasts and find my podcast, and just listen to the queue.

But you're going to still, even if you're subscribed, go into the search area, click on the search little button there, type in "Weight Loss for Busy Physicians," and then it will come up where it says "Podcasts." Not individual episodes, but just the actual podcast. Click on that, and then you're going to see the reviews. There's the number of stars, and then you can click on this little button in the middle that says "reviews," and then it will let you leave a review, which is so great. It's super easy. You can give me whatever rating you want, whatever you think I deserve, and then type in your review, and just hit "send" or "done" or whatever, and it goes. It's done.

I wanted to ask if you have been enjoying this podcast, if you've gotten anything out of this at all, then will you please be so kind as to go into iTunes or in your podcast app if that works easier for you, and leave me a rating and review. I would really, really appreciate it. It helps this podcast. It helps more people to find the podcast, and ultimately lets me help more people. If it's helped you, please help me to help other people by leaving me a review.

Today, we are going to talk about this one small passage in this amazing book called *Loving What Is* by Byron Katie. I've mentioned Byron Katie before, and there's this one concept that she teaches that I think is so important, and I wanted to devote an entire podcast to it. What I'm going to do is just read this little passage from the book *Loving What Is* to you, and then I'm going to kind of tease it apart and give you my take on how it applies to our lives as physicians, and also to our lives just as humans. The title of this section is "Staying in Your Own Business."

She writes, "I can find only three kinds of business in the universe: Mine, yours, and God's. For me, the word God means 'reality.' Reality is God because it rules. Anything that's out of my control, your control, and everyone else's control, I call that God's business. Much of our stress comes from mentally living out of our own business. When I think, 'You need to get a job. I want you to be happy. You should be on time. You need to take better care of yourself.' I am in your business. When I'm worried about earthquakes, floods, war, or when I will die, I am in God's business. If I am mentally in your business or in God's business, the effect is separation. I noticed this early in 1986. When I mentally went into my mother's business, for example, with a thought like, 'My mother should understand me,' I immediately experienced a feeling of loneliness, and I realized that every time in my life that I had felt hurt or lonely, I had been in someone else's business."

"If you are living your life, and I am mentally living your life, who is here living mine? We're both over there. Being mentally in your business keeps me from being present in my own. I am separate from myself, wondering why my life doesn't work. To think that I know what's best for anyone else is to be out of my business. Even in the name of love, it is pure arrogance, and the result is tension, anxiety, and fear. Do I know what's right for me? That is my only business. Let me work with that before I try to solve your problems for you. If you understand the three kinds of business enough to stay in your own business, it could free your life in a way that you can't even imagine. The next time you're feeling stress or discomfort, ask yourself whose business you're in mentally, and you may burst out laughing. That question can bring you back to yourself, and you may come to see that you've never really been present, that you've been mentally living in other people's business all your life. Just to notice that you're in someone else's business can bring you back to your own wonderful self, and if you practice it for a while, you may come to see that you don't have any business either, and that your life runs perfectly well on its own."

Oh, so good. So, so good. Let's start teasing it apart a little bit. She talks about the three kinds of business. Once I mentioned God's business, I don't want you to turn your brain off, especially if you're not a religious person, because as she says, she looks at God's business as God as just reality. I think of it as non-human business, or the universe, or however that looks for you. Whatever kind of mental construct you have to process that. It's important to note, though, that God's business is outside of my control and outside of your control. This includes natural disasters, but also what's happening in Syria, and the White House, and in Charlottesville with white supremacists marching. We can spend a lot of time being very upset about these things when we live in God's business. Someone I know on Facebook follows these kinds of events really closely, and she gets very sad and upset. One time she wrote, "I just hate hate." I found that so interesting, because if you hate hate, you are actually only increasing the amount of hate in the world, which is what she doesn't want.

Now, this isn't to say that you shouldn't take action and work to change the world for the better. But do so from within your own business. What that means is that you look at what you, as a person, are able to do to help. It might be as simple as sending a few emails or making phone calls, or it might look like you starting a whole non-profit to help other people in need, or to research the best ways to help people with opposite beliefs co-exist in harmony, or something like that. Those are things you can do when you live in your own business, and in doing so, you're making progress on the goal to reduce hate. But posting on Facebook about hating hate does nothing except create more hate, which is what we don't want.

In the book, Katie ... Her name is Byron Katie. That's her first and middle names, but she goes by Katie. Katie writes, "So much of our stress comes from mentally living out of our own business." We think we know what's best for most other people, right? Especially as doctors. We have all kinds of research, and data, and practice guidelines for how to manage disease and other people's bodies, and this is great information that we can offer and use to help somebody who's suffering. But we can't make the other person receive that information in any certain way. We've all had patients like this, right? Where we think we know what's best for them, but they don't want to do that. We think they should take their medication, get the surgery, do the chemotherapy, lose weight, or let their kids get the vaccines. That thinking creates a lot of suffering for us, in the form of frustration, disappointment, and resistance. Ultimately, we don't ever know what's best for someone else. Like Katie says, even in the name of love, even with the absolute purest of intentions, it is pure arrogance for us to think that we know better than someone else what they should or shouldn't do.

This can be hard to grasp, because we might think, "Well, if you have advanced cancer, and for whatever reason refuse the chemotherapy that has a good chance of curing you, you're making a mistake." But we don't really know that it's a mistake. What if it's the perfect decision, because you might not respond at all to the chemo, and only have side effects? You might have an anaphylactic reaction to it and die. You might end up having a worse quality of life. The chances of this might be slim, but it's always a possibility.

I used to sometimes think about how confidently I would present my treatment plan to my patients' families. Like, I'd diagnose strep throat, get them on prescription, tell them this was the medicine that would make them feel better. But really, it was just a highly, highly educated guess, right? Because sometimes we'd see treatment failures, or the child would have an allergic reaction to the medication, and we had to switch to something else. But in medicine, we kind of delude ourselves into thinking that we know that if we do this thing, that thing, and the other thing, then the patient will have a good outcome, and we adopt this line of thinking and mindset because it makes us feel more confident and in control.

Rationally, we know this, right? But our overall mindset makes us feel more confident and in control. But ultimately, there's always a chance, no matter how small, of the patient not responding well or possibly even dying. We never really know that things will be better for them if they follow our recommendations.

Think about how medicine changes, too. For decades, all we heard was that the best way to lose weight was with a low fat, calorie restricted diet, so we confidently told our patients that that's what they should do, that that kind of diet would give them the results they want, and they should listen to us. When they didn't lose weight permanently, we made it mean something about them, not that our advice was somehow faulty. Now we have new information, and we're totally changing these recommendations, thinking that, again, we know how people should eat. This has happened so many times and in so many ways in medicine in the past, where treatment guidelines change, sometimes really dramatically. We expect our patients to jump right on board with us, and most do, but not all of them.

This is not to say that you should change how you're treating your patients, but my point is that when the patient doesn't want to take our recommendations, we'll often be a little, or sometimes a lot offended, or think that they're uneducated, or have some sort of warped sense of reality or something, because we think we know what's best for them better than they know what's best for them. Now, sometimes they just need a little more education. Maybe they just don't understand what they need to know to see what you recommend as the best option. That happens all the time with vaccines. Because the parent doesn't really even know what vaccines do, and how they function in the body, they've created a story for themselves of how they think vaccines work, and that story frightens them, so they want to refuse them for their child. For some people, you can spend some time educating them on the science behind vaccines and how they work, and help them to understand so that they might be less fearful about vaccinating their child, but even then, we don't know for sure that their child won't have a vaccine related injury. The chances are very slim, but it is still possible.

If this is the case, and we're not supposed to live in someone else's business, why do we even show up as doctors then, right? Like, what's the point? If we shouldn't live in their business, then what are we even doing? The way I interpret this is that as a doctor, being in your own business means that you show up with integrity and love for yourself and your patients every day. You do your best to stay up to date on the latest information and data, and use your highly educated and experienced brain to offer a treatment plan that's in alignment with how you would want to be treated if you had the same problem. At that point, it's no longer your business anymore. If you're attached to the outcome, meaning you'll be happy if they follow your plan, and not happy if they don't, then you're in their business, and this creates stress for you. If they have questions for you, that's now your business again, to answer them as best as you can. Then it's back to them making the best decision for themselves that they can, and you can't possibly know what will be the best thing for them. Only they can know that.

Once you really see this and accept it as the truth, your experience of your job will be so much better. You won't be hung up on all sorts of things that you can't ever hope to even control. When we try to control other people, it creates so much suffering for us, and like she says in the book, if you're living your life, and I'm mentally living your life, who's over here living mine? Nobody. It's always so fascinating how we desperately try to control others, while in the meantime we're doing a terrible job of controlling ourselves. This is so backwards because the only person we can actually control is us. When we commit to living only in our business, we work on controlling ourselves so that we show up in the world in the way that we want to, and then also create the results that we want for ourselves. We don't need to expend so much energy controlling everyone else so that we can feel good. We can just feel good.

This is a big lesson for me in my coaching practice. I have a few coaching groups right now, and the results these women are getting, not only on the scale but also in every area of their lives, is just astonishing. It is so exciting and fun, but I never make their success about me. What I focus on is providing the best coaching I know how to provide, and being available to them, and doing my best to help them achieve what they want, but whether they then go and apply what I taught them and get amazing results, or do nothing I taught them and get no results, neither is a reflection of how good of a coach I am. If I made their successes or failures determine whether I think I'm a good coach or not, I would be living in their business. I'd get creepy, and needy, and controlling. I'd be trying to lose weight for them, which is impossible.

When they have major breakthroughs and lose more and more weight, and they're so happy and so excited about the life they're creating, my happiness is for them. I'm not happy for me. I'm not patting myself on the back. I'm making it mean that they're showing up for themselves and creating the relationship with themselves that's required to lose weight and maintain it permanently. I share in their happiness, but I know that no matter what their results are, it's not a reflection of my worth or ability as a coach. The same goes for your worth or ability as a physician. Whether a person decides to follow your recommendations or not is not your business. Your business is to be the best physician you know how to be, and not get attached to the decisions the patient makes.

We can extrapolate this to all other areas of our lives as well. In the book, she gives the example of the thought, "My mother should understand me," which immediately makes her feel lonely. That's being in her mother's business, and wanting to control her mother. When she lives in her own business, a more true thought would be, "My mother understands me exactly as she should, because it's how she does." With this thought, we're not arguing with the reality that her mother doesn't understand her. Her mother shouldn't understand her, because she doesn't. Another great thought would be, "My mother doesn't understand me, but that's okay, because all I need is to understand myself." Then she focuses on gaining understanding of herself, instead of trying to convince her mother to understand her, which doesn't look like it's going to happen.

Even something as nice-sounding as, "I want you to be happy." The only reason we want someone else to be happy is so that we can be happy, we can feel good. That's living in their business. If we live in our business, then we know we can make ourselves happy with our thoughts no matter what is going on for the other person. This is so applicable for those of us who are parents. We live in our kids' business all the time, trying to control them and their lives so that we can feel better.

I was noticing myself doing this just this morning, in fact. We are taking family pictures tonight, and for years I've really wanted to do a beach session, but our photographer likes to take those pictures as the sun is setting, because the light is really pretty, which means that in the summer, that's very late, and so our kids were never able to stay up that late, or if they did, they were not in a position where their moods were good enough to be "on," so to speak, for family pictures. We kind of thought, "All right. This is the year. I think we can finally do it. It'll be fun." The weather's finally good. We already had to cancel it one night because it was raining. The plan is to do it tonight, and the kids got up and were immediately bickering with one another, and fighting with one another, and my brain immediately went to, "Oh my gosh. They're already fighting. Tonight's going to be a disaster, right?" Completely catastrophizing the whole thing. Like, "If they're starting off the day on each other's nerves, tonight's going to be horrible. They need to be happy. They need to get along with one another. They need to be smiling all the time."

This is not the first time or the only time that I've gotten into this line of thinking when we have family pictures. I turn into this, like, alter ego, hyper-controlling mom. I should dress up like her for Halloween. Hyper-controlling mom, who is irritated, frustrated, just a total nitpicker on every little thing. Just not nice in general. I've noticed this about myself in the past, and so I prepare for it, and notice that I don't want to show up that way, and of course no one's going to be as happy or interacting with one another in a way that is conducive to good smiles when Mom is wound up like a crazy person. It was so interesting to see me immediately go into their business this morning, thinking that they needed to be interacting with one another in a different way, versus just going, "Maybe they're getting it out of their system now. Maybe that means they'll take a good nap, and then they'll be even happier at the pictures tonight." There's so many options, but my brain immediately goes into trying to control them and thinking they should be different than they are.

I want you to start paying attention to whose business you're living in on a regular basis. Check in with yourself throughout the day and see. Like Katie says in the book, you might notice you're mentally living in other people's business all the time. Once you notice it, then you're immediately back in your own business.

Please go to the comments section for the show notes for this episode, which you can find at KatrinaUbellMD.com/34, and let me know what you think, or ask me any questions that you have about this topic, and I will answer it on a future podcast. Have a wonderful week. Take care. Bye bye.