



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

[00:00:08] Welcome to the Weight Loss for Busy Physicians podcast. I'm your host, master Certified life and weight loss coach, Katrina Ubell, M.D. This is the podcast where busy doctors like you come to learn how to lose weight for the last time by harnessing the power of your mind. If you're looking to overcome your stress, eating and exhaustion and move into freedom around food, you're in the right place. Well, hello there, my friend. I am so excited to talk to you today about this specific topic. So excited, in fact, that I literally just came in from a walk and walked straight upstairs to my office. I am sitting here dripping with sweat. Still, I'm a mess.

If you could see me, I am an absolute mess. [00:01:00] But that is how channeled I feel this episode is going to be. I was just on my walk. I walked near a river through these like beautiful woods and everything, and often I have the best ideas when I'm in there. Like all of a sudden it just hits me in my brain. Like, you need to talk about this and here's why. And I come up with the whole episode while I'm walking and thought, You know what? There's no shower before this today. This is going to come straight from my brain, out through my mouth, and here I am. Don't even want to put my arms on the armrests on my chair because I'm sunscreen and sweaty and literally using my shirt to mop off, sweat off my face.

[00:01:43] So that's a fun little image for you. Normally, I don't, you know, kind of cut things so close. All three of my kids are at camp this week, which is always a weird thing when all of your kids are gone. But you're home, but, like, great, too. And, you know, it's good for everybody. A little break [00:02:00] from one another. So that's also good. But that's why I'm kind of like not in my usual routine. I usually be walking much, much earlier than this right now. But anyway, this is how it worked out today.

So I'm going to talk to you about something that I have seen happen with clients that I've worked with. You know, I've been doing this a long time now. I've been a coach now for over seven years and coaching weight loss the entire time. And I have seen patterns. You know, I've worked with over 1600 women physicians. Now. Do you see the patterns evolving and similar? I feel like it's so similar to when I was in practice as a pediatrician, like around this point in my practice this many years in, you start feeling like you're like, okay, yep, I see the patterns emerging. I've worked with enough people, seen enough things happen. Certainly doesn't mean you know everything, of course, but you know, you start really getting that that experience. I feel like I'm really moving into that now in this seventh to eighth year of coaching practice.

[00:03:00] And [00:03:00] so what I want to talk to you about is the shame that a lot of people feel about gaining weight back so they have lost weight. Maybe you've experienced this. I mean, I know I have because I gained and lost a gazillion times before I finally figured this out. You know, you lose the weight and then however you gain it back, whether you gain back a lot of it, some of it, it comes back quickly. It creeps back on slowly. However it comes back on. You know, you're not feeling great about it, right? And I have seen that some people are like, shoot this whole thing. You know, they got great results in my program.

Super amazing feeling, amazing. Everything's great. And they are like, You know what? I think I've got this. And they're like, out on their own doing their thing. And for any number of a million reasons, right? The weight ends up coming back on. And it's so interesting to see the way that a lot of people interpret this or what they make that mean. And what they do is they turn it right back [00:04:00] on to themselves in the form of shame. And so to review what shame is, is when we believe that something is wrong with us. So guilt means I did something wrong. Shame is I am wrong, right? There's something fundamentally wrong with me. This is not possible for me. You know, like I am broken. There is, you know, a rotten part of my soul that keeps creating this result.

[00:04:29] I mean, whatever the story is that we have for ourselves and I find this so fascinating because, you know, as much as us high achievers, we don't like to fail. We don't like to, you know, not succeed in things that we try. We're not so fragile that we can't handle some setbacks. Right? Like we're we're over here. Like, I just don't want to fail. I'm so afraid of failing about weight loss or I have failed. And I feel terrible about

[00:05:00] it. As far as how we have defined failure as I lost weight and then gained it back, which is arguably not the best way to interpret that. But anyway, right?

Like if other things don't work out for us in our lives, we often do not take them so personally. We don't feel it so deeply. So what is actually different about this? Why does it feel so bad? And here's the way I see it, because, you know, when we're on the outside, this is why group coaching is so, so powerful is because when we're on the outside, we. And we're not actually living the actual, you know, thing that's going on. We're able to see things so much more clearly. And so as a coach, of course, I'm this is my job. And what I've been trained and developed the skill to be able to do to really kind of see, you know, past what people are saying and ask some pointed questions to be able to really get to the root of what's going on.

[00:05:56] But even program member to program member, when [00:06:00] you're seeing someone else talking about things, you're able to pick up on it more. You're able to see what's unfolding with the coaching and go, okay, yeah, that all makes sense. And then it can be easier even to apply it to your own life. But you know, if you really are looking at you've lost weight, I'll give you sort of like a composite description of what I've seen with some people. They come into the program and they might even stay for several rounds, maybe even several years in our program and have the most incredible results. They feel amazing in their bodies.

Their experience of their lives is so much better because they've done so much work on their thoughts, their beliefs, their identity, their processing, their emotions. They've kind of, you know, separated food from their emotional life. So, you know, the food they eat tastes good. They feel satisfied. They feel like their food is totally under control. That brain chatter on food is really very quiet and manageable. And then their emotional life is something that they're totally connected with and they're managing that really well.

[00:07:00] And it's like, things are great, you know, why wouldn't they try to go out on their own? Right? Like, of course I'm totally supportive of that. Like at a certain point you start going, you know, I think I've got this.

[00:07:10] I think, you know, I've got the training wheels off. Like, I think I can ride this two Wheeler by myself. Absolutely. And then maybe, you know, several years later, a year later or whatever, the person is coming back, weight regained, feeling so shameful,

like feeling really, really, really bad about themselves. You know, the way I interpret it, when I see a situation like this happening, I'm not like, Oh, you know, she's one of the ones that's not possible for her, right? I'm not sitting there going, like, blaming her. Like, oh, you know, she just doesn't know how to do this. Right. You know, or anything like that. If you aren't familiar with me, my undergraduate degree is in engineering and so I cannot help myself like I have to. There's this logical part of my brain I cannot turn off. Also, I was raised by [00:08:00] two German immigrants. So there you go. Between that, between my genetics and my education.

It's just, you know, I can't have a hard time getting swept up in the emotional kind of like, you know, quote unquote, drama, so to speak. Like, what I see is this There were things that this composite person was doing that gave them a set of results, right? So when they were in our program, they were eating in a way that really served them, that made their bodies feel really good. They were taking the time and dedicating parts of their lives to be able to help themselves emotionally, whatever that ends up looking like for them, meaning processing emotions, taking care of themselves physically, emotionally, spiritually, like all the ways they were taking care of themselves and they were working on their thinking so that their experiences of their lives were manageable and they didn't feel like they needed food to be able to handle them.

[00:08:58] And doing all those things like taking [00:09:00] those actions and thinking that way created a set of results for them. And so in the case of this composite person, they lost weight, they were at a healthy weight for them or a weight that was desirable for them, a weight that they really wanted. And they felt really great about that. And then when they were no longer connected to the program for any number of reasons, and there is no judgment here because we are all humans and, you know, life has its challenges.

So I get that completely. But for whatever reason, they stopped taking those actions and they stopped thinking those thoughts and, you know, took different actions and thought different thoughts. And that created different results in this case, weight gain. Right. And then usually feeling really shameful, beating themselves up, really. It's like not fun being them in their heads, in their bodies. They're just like really not in a good place. And this is not like a blame thing. It's not like a See, you did this to yourself.

[00:09:58] Like, it's not that at all. [00:10:00] It's just the logic of if you think certain ways and feel certain ways and take certain actions, you will get one result. And if you stop doing those things, it's pretty likely you're going to get a different result, right? And I think sometimes that's a piece that we haven't fully, fully integrated into our lives, into our brains. It's like we understand it logically, but it's not like how we live. It's like, you know, I was listening to this podcast the other day and it was a couple actors talking and they were talking about the difference between like. Remembering your lines like and acting them out and actually living from it.

And the actor said something. One of them said something like, Unlace your shoes, like take the laces out of your shoes and then relace your shoes while you are saying your lines. Because if you can do that, then you've got it in you. Like you're not having to think anymore. Oh, these are the lines. [00:11:00] Like they're in you so that you can actually act. And those are the most convincing, you know, acting portrayals that we experience, that we see actors do. And, you know, I'm sure you've noticed that, too. I mean, I have. There's so many examples where, you know, there's an actor doing taking on a character and you're like, I'm there with you. Like, I can't even remember that this person is so-and-so in real life because I'm so bought in to this character, right? Like it's just completely integrated into who they are as they're playing that character.

[00:11:33] And so, so when we are doing this work that I teach about really working on changing identity and how we think and how we act and what we do with our feelings, like we have to fully integrate it. It has to become just like who we are. It's how we roll, it's what we do. You know, people like us do things like this [00:12:00] because when that is the case, then it doesn't matter what comes up in your life when you're out there without a coach anymore, right? Like new challenges show up of all varieties and all flavors, and you're still doing what supports you.

You know, like you're at a point where you're not going like, Oh, I guess it's acceptable for me to overeat again in this scenario because that scenario is particularly difficult or particularly challenging in my life right now. It's more like when you notice yourself going back to relying on food in that way, it immediately triggers something in your brain going weird. Why am I doing that? I must be struggling with something. Something's going on for me. I want to go figure that out and support myself because this is not what I do

anymore. This is not who I am. It's a full identity. So if somebody has gained that weight back, it doesn't mean that something's wrong with them.

[00:12:59] There's no reason [00:13:00] to feel shame. It means, Oh, you know what? There was some more to be done there. And what I will tell you is that I think that sometimes the up and down is a part that we have to really go through for us to really deeply understand what's required. I have had many clients over the years tell me, like, I know you always say you got to do this other work. And, you know, I kind of did some of it a little bit halfheartedly or I was kind of bought in like, Yeah, okay, I can do that. But like, I probably don't need all of it. Like it probably doesn't all apply to me. And, you know, maybe they're right.

]I don't know. I'm not going to tell you how to do it. Exactly the way I say or what I teach or recommend. But in in hindsight, they go, you know what? I was just there for the weight loss. I just wanted to, you know, eat the certain way so I could lose the weight and just hope that that was going to be enough. And now I realize, like you were right, there's a missing piece that I have to take advantage of applying and integrating into my life so [00:14:00] that this just becomes how I roll and what I do. And a big piece of that is also learning how to offer ourselves some self-love, some self-compassion, right to be on our own sides, meaning not going against ourselves and not beating ourselves up.

[00:14:21] If we gain some weight back, if we gain all the way back, if we are very clear that we're not doing the things that support us. Right, beating ourselves up internally, yelling at ourselves, telling ourselves all kinds of mean and nasty things, particularly those sneaky ones, where we just think that we're telling ourselves the truth and we're being realistic. Those are the ones you got to really watch out for, right? As though that is going to help us. We have to stop. Thinking about ourselves in that way.

And what I have found is that for people who have lost the weight and then gained it back again, often my recommendation is you work on that [00:15:00] self-love and self-compassion and self worth before you even try to lose weight again, because it's almost like a shortcut to lose weight because we're so ingrained to only allow ourselves to feel good about ourselves if we're losing weight or at a certain weight, you know, like thin enough, whatever that is in our brains, you know, it's like we're like, Oh, I totally have compassion for myself as long as I weigh X amount or this size of clothes fits me.

And when you've gained the weight back and you're there having to work on having compassion and love for yourself and still believing that you're worthy and still believing that you have so much value in the world and that you don't have to change anything in order to be perfectly imperfect as a human you are.

[00:15:45] That can be very challenging for people, right? That's the real work there. And then from that place, once you've done that work, I mean, you already know how to lose weight. You did it before and you felt great while you did it. I'm speaking about the people who worked with me. If you haven't [00:16:00] felt great while you did it, well, that's a different story. We can teach you how to do that. That's not the problem. It's not the weight that's the problem. It's the way that we're approaching ourselves. So why do we even feel shame in the first place?

Like, you know, if there's other setbacks in our lives, we often don't feel shame about it or if we do like not to the same extent, not to the same intensity. And I just want to point out that sadly, unfortunately for women and girls in particular, we have been raised with such a close conflation of the size of our bodies, the shape of our bodies, the way that we look. And our self-worth. And, you know, I am sorry that that is the society we live in. Like, honestly, like, I wish I, you know, like my apology could help anything. Like I'm sorry for all of us because this has been a message to us through all of the various systems [00:17:00] from the very smallest. Right. So from our family who raised us, you know, the adults we spent the most time with, maybe even other children when we were young, all the way up to, you know.

[00:17:13] Patriarchy, big society, you know, all the advertising and everything in between. And so we were raised from an early age to completely conflate self-worth and our bodies. And so it makes complete sense then that if you have success in losing weight, regain it, that you would again conflate those things. My body is bigger, therefore I'm worthless. Therefore, you know, there's so much to feel ashamed about. And this is each of us, each of us women. This is our personal work that we are being called to do. Every woman who does the work of separating [00:18:00] these two things, our self-worth. And our bodies in terms of shape, size. And it goes into everything hair, you know, skin, all of it. Like the more we do this work, the more able we are to end this cycle.

When we don't do this work, we end up knowingly or unknowingly passing this on to future generations. If you bristle at the idea of your great great granddaughter still struggling with this kind of stuff, then this is your invitation to work on this stuff now, right? Like you're not too far gone or anything like that. Like this is how we make changes. It's like on this little micro level, with each person doing their own work, we end up actually affecting big change. So that is why I believe why we have so much shame when that weight comes back.

[00:18:59] And [00:19:00] I know that if we can do the work to be on our own side, to really support ourselves, to not abandon ourselves the minute the scale creeps up, whatever. We've gotten busy. We're not doing the things that we know support us, but instead to actually be genuinely interested and concerned about what's going on with us, that is huge. I mean, I even and I've said this before, I'll say it again, I even believe like if you gain the weight back and then you're like, You know what? I just decided I don't really care about losing weight. Amazing. You don't have to. I totally support you in that. But please do the work to be able to stop thinking negative thoughts about yourself because your body.

I just did a training several weeks ago and someone in the chat asked a question about being, I think in her 50s, you know, struggling with her weight all these years. Like, do I still think, you know, it's possible for her to be able to lose this weight and, you know, even physiologically [00:20:00] be able to, you know, kind of change things so that she could get the results that she wanted. And was just thinking to myself, like, even if you didn't lose weight, but you did this work to just free yourself of the struggle, wouldn't that be worth it? I mean, of course, I do believe that she can lose weight, but that's that's kind of beside the point, right? Like doing the mental work to just go, you know what, I love myself exactly as I am.

[00:20:27] I know that I'm enough exactly as I am. And if I decide I want to change something about my body, then I can. And then the pressure is so much less. It's not like I'm going to lose weight. And the subtitle there is. And. My ability to do that. Determines my worth. Whether I'm a worthless piece of garbage or whether I deserve to be able to breathe the oxygen that surrounds me. You know what I mean? Like, I know it sounds dramatic. You might be like, Oh, [00:21:00] don't really think that way. You know what? I'll tell you, seven years of doing this. Hundreds and hundreds and

hundreds and hundreds of clients, even those of us who are like actually like myself, I think I'm pretty bad ass.

Like, listen, there's probably a part of you that still struggles with this. I mean, I would love it for you if you don't, but what I have seen is that very consistently there is a part still where we're like, Oh, but I'm just not sure I'm enough. I'm just not sure if I stay the way I am that that could be acceptable. And, you know, I just want to circle back to the concept of, you know, the things that helped you create one result and then you do different things and you get a different result.

[00:21:43] You know, I think sometimes people get so like disappointed about that. And I just want to point out to you that there's so many areas in our lives where we don't believe that we should be able to do something for a while, get a specific result, and then never have to maintain that in any way, like if you brush your [00:22:00] teeth. Up until now, every day, twice a day, and then you're like, My teeth are amazing, my teeth are super healthy, like never been happier with my teeth. And then you decide to gradually just go to once a day and then maybe just like once a week brushing your teeth and you don't go to the dentist anymore, like you're going to get a different result because you've taken different actions, right? Like you're going to get a different result.

That result of like healthy dentition is going to go away because you stopped doing the things that support you. Like maybe you get the very best haircut of your life. Like eventually you're going to have to get a cut again. That's just how this goes, right? Or even in practice, right. There's a reason there's maintenance of certification. You learn a whole bunch of things. And let's just say, you know, you had to take a sabbatical. Take a year or 2 or 5 off from practicing, you know, and you weren't maintaining that stuff. You would start to forget things.

[00:22:51] Things would not be as sharp for you. So if you wanted to get back into practice, you would need to put some concerted effort into studying, reviewing, refreshing [00:23:00] things, you know, getting yourself back into that place where, you know, your fund of knowledge is in a good place and then you're maintaining, you're refreshing, you're keeping yourself there once you've lost weight. It's like literally no difference. The maintenance doesn't mean like now I never have to think about food or weight ever again. Like that doesn't actually really make sense.

You know, like if we can incorporate it into our lives. So it's just what we do and it's not a pain in the butt. And it's like, is it easier to just go to bed and not brush your teeth? Yes, but it's actually not that big of a deal to just brush your teeth. You know what I mean? Like, you can also just go and, you know, get a haircut from time to time. You can also make sure you're doing a couple of things every day to support yourself, to keep yourself in a state where you have peace and freedom around food and your weight is stable and it's just not a big deal for you. Right? So if you've gained weight back, I want to just let you know the [00:24:00] shame part really is optional and it won't feel optional if you're feeling it, but it really doesn't have to be that way.

[00:24:07] And for me, it just feels like particularly if you've done coaching or you've worked with me in the past, like it just means that we're in the middle of the process. Right. So it's like if you're running a marathon and you stop at mile 18 and you're just like, Well, guess I can't do it. Or maybe we could walk for a little bit, get our energy back, drink some Gatorade, and maybe start jogging a little bit, right? Like maybe we could continue going even when we feel like, you know, that's it, I can't do it anymore. Okay. I think I have shared with you all that I want to say about this.

This episode is going to be coming out two days before we close up enrollment for our September 2023 cohort of weight loss for doctors only. I just want to invite you if you've been curious thinking about it, I want to invite [00:25:00] you to check out the information page to find out if this is the right fit for you. Just go to katrinaubellmd.com/info and you can get more information about that. I just know that if you come into the weight loss journey, really understanding what it's all about, you're going to find yourself in a much better position. Things won't seem so unfamiliar, strange, you won't be thrown off so much. You'll have a better sense of like, this doesn't mean everything's falling apart. It's like you're more sturdy, right? You're not sitting there like one.

[00:25:36] Like the wind blows a little whiff and you're like, Oh, my God, I'm falling over. You're like, Yep, I'm going to keep going because I know this is part of the process. And for a lot of people, they think, You know what? I don't even want to start trying to lose weight because I don't want to feel like a failure. I don't want to feel that shame if and when I don't have success. And hopefully this episode has helped you to understand what that shame is really about. The shame has nothing to do [00:26:00] with the

weight. It has everything to do with the way that you're thinking about yourself, the way you approach yourself and what you're making weight loss or weight gain mean about you. That is what I'm a specialist in helping you to change. And it makes all the difference no matter what you weigh. And you can just weigh whatever you want.

All right, my friend. Thank you. I've cooled off a lot. I'm no longer dripping. In case you were wondering, you're probably not. Anyway, I'm going to go hop in the shower. Thank you for joining me today. Hopefully I'll see you in one of my programs sometime very soon. And I wish you all the best. Have a great week. Ready to start making progress on your weight loss goals. For lots of free help, go to katrinaubellmd.com and click on Free Resources.