



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Hey, my friend. What's going on? So glad to have you back on the podcast. Today we have a very special treat. I have gotten multiple questions and comments from you, my listeners, asking for more information about meditation, particularly how to get started with a meditation practice. While I do teach my clients in my coaching groups about meditation and I do know somewhat, I have a working knowledge of meditation, I'm certainly by no means an expert. I wanted to bring somebody on who is more of an expert who could help us all to really learn something about meditation, why it's helpful and why we should all be doing it.

I brought on a woman named Brodie Welch and she's a licensed acupuncturist, a board certified herbalist, Chinese medicine expert, group coach and self-care strategist. She's the founder of Life in Balance Acupuncture in Corvallis, Oregon where she's been treating patients since 2003. She and I met probably maybe a year ago, maybe a little bit less, when I was a guest on her podcast. I remembered having a great discussion with her, a nice conversation. I reached out to her and said, "Hey, Brodie. Do you think you would be someone who'd feel comfortable talking about meditation?" She said, "Yes. This is right up my alley. I'd love to do that."

In addition to her clinical practice, she helps caring high achieving women put themselves on their own to do list so they can trade stress and burnout for energy, joy and vibrant health. She has helped thousands of clients improve their digestion, sleep and mood, dial in a regular body mind practice and step into the next version of themselves. She's also the creator and host of A Healthy Curiosity, the podcast that explores what it takes to be well in a busy world. As you're going to hear on this interview, she has a ton of experience with meditation and really changed her whole entire life and her whole life experience partly through meditation. I think to a large part through meditation.

I think you're really going to enjoy this. If you have anymore questions about meditation, please bring them to the comment section on the show notes for this episode, which you can find at katrinaubellmd.com/47, the number 47, and we can do our best to answer those for you. I can't stress enough to you how big of a difference it makes when you're taking steps to actively de-stress, to actively reduce your cortisol levels and your other stress hormones not just in terms of your weight and being able to achieve a healthy weight and stay there permanently, but also in terms of living the life that you want to live.

Not feeling so at the effect of what's going on around you and instead being more deliberate in how you're approaching your life and creating the life that you really want. Please enjoy this interview with Brodie Welch. Hey, Brodie. Welcome to the podcast.

Brodie Welch: I'm so glad to be her, Katrina. It was so fun talking with you on my show, A Healthy Curiosity, a while back and I love that we get to do it again.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Me too. You were definitely the first person I thought of when I got a number of questions and comments from my listeners about meditation, asking about how to start, what is the best way to meditate, just kind of wanting to know everything. For this conversation, I am going to pretend like I know nothing about meditation. I'm certainly not an expert, but I'm going to pretend like I am a complete newbie. I've heard of the word, but I know nothing else and I'm going to ask you questions about it related to that. Okay?

Brodie Welch: All right. I know that you actually know more than you will let on in this conversation. You're all good there.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Maybe I'll put in my two cents if I will its necessary, but I think that you know a lot more about it. Why don't we start with you telling me about your background with meditation, your experience with it and all that?

Brodie Welch: Sure. Well, I got into meditation at a really early age. As a teenager, I was the classic overachiever, trying to do it all.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: We don't have any of those on this podcast.

Brodie Welch: Yeah. It's so unrelatable, right? I actually didn't feel like I had a right to exist on the planet unless I was actively doing everything I could everyday to make the world a better place. In addition to the usual high school stuff, I did all this like volunteering and community and homeless shelters and soup kitchens, all this. I really was totally identified with my doing rather than my being. I just felt like that it's like you're complicit and evil unless you're helping to make the world a better place and I can't live like that. I was like quite ... As you can imagine, I was acheerful teenager, but I was depressed and at times even suicidal because I was defining myself by my actions and in Chinese medicine the yang instead of the yin and the yang.

I was really overworked and exhausted. Actually I got introduced to a spiritual teacher from India who gave me my first meditation practice. While that's no longer in any way what I practice as meditation, it opened a doorway to me. Like it was the first time that ... This was through my older sisters who have been with this teacher for a long time. Just getting that sense of dropping into stepping outside of the stream of thought and just being able to sink down, it was really the first time in my life that I felt worthy without doing anything. I was like, "Wow. Okay. There's some power here, but the whole devotional to a guru thing is totally not my path, totally not me."

Then when I got into shortly thereafter started studying Chinese medicine and in Chinese medicine meditation comes from Buddhist tradition, from the Daoist tradition, various traditions inform Chinese medicine.

I got really curious about sort of these different paths of meditation that involve even the body as a portal instead of like shut off your minds and go transcends the body. It was about using the body as a tool to go inward and that's every similar to tantric yoga, right? The idea that the body and the mind in unity, really uniting the mind and the body is a form of meditation and a way that we can get mindful and present.

I've done countless forms of meditation like just ranging from the Buddhist loving-kindness kind of thing to the stare at a candle and concentrate kind of thing to the mantra style to chanting. I actually even used to sing and play the cello in a Kirton band with Kirton being like call in response devotional chanting and have a yoga teacher certification and studied with many Daoist masters. I have sat at the feet of a lot of people who have been able to traverse these inner planes pretty skillfully. I'm actually right now in yet another teacher training program for something called the realization process, which is a nondual form of meditation where we realize ourselves as fundamental consciousness.

We realize that the self is an illusion really and the same space that pervades us pervades all it is, which is very much in line with Chinese medicine because that's the notion of chi, right? That we're all just energy. There's energy and there's matter, but we're an ecosystem and we're an ecosystem within an ecosystem. That the people around us, the environments around us affects our health and our life as well. Anyway, I've sampled from the buffet of different meditation traditions. Something that I teach in my group coaching programs that are about habit change because that's one of the most massive benefits of meditation is that I think it's like the master habit on lock for anything that you don't want to be doing anymore. It's like you can't change what you're not aware of. If you build the muscles of awareness, you're able to live your life with a lot more mastery.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Yeah, totally. Let's transition that right into this question of why should we care.

Brodie Welch: Why should we care? Well, I think this goes to like how you want to show up in the world, right? I'm a busy woman. I've got a family. I've got a busy practice. I've got online programs. I have a lot of irons in the fire. The days that I believe what my mind is telling me, which is like, "You've got a lot to do, shouldn't you be doing it instead of sitting here with your eyes closed," it's like those are days where my perspective contracts and I contract. I feel less connected to my purpose. My life feels like it lacks a certain depth. I feel like I'm just going through motions, which feels kind of like a mild version of depression. I also feel aimless in terms of ...Like I find that I focus on the wrong things, that sense of overwhelm that I'm sure people are familiar with. It's like it's really easy to slice through overwhelm if you know who you are and what you're about and what the most important thing for you is that day. If it's being present with your family, it's a lot more easy. A lot more easy. A lot easier to be loving and kind and patient when you've taken a breath, like when you stepped into timelessness. Meditation, it's a master habit on lock, but it's also something that just ... It takes us out of the flow of our usual thoughts. It gets us to not believe everything we think.

That voice in our head that's like you got to keep running, you got to keep up with your to do list, you got to be as busy as possible and get as much stuff done as possible, you lose sight of the fact that your being carries the power, right?

If we're with our patients and we are distracted in the future, in the past, we're not connected, right? We're not able to tap into presence in our full capacity as healers, which involves compassion, which involves our full access to our prefrontal cortex, right? That's another thing meditation does is that actually we all know about neuroplasticity being kind of this new and exciting tool that we get to use.

With meditation, we can rewire our brains so that we spend less time in amygdala and more in our prefrontal cortex so we make better decisions. We're able to concentrate. We're less impulsive. We're better able to stick with our goals. Our memory and our capacity to learn goes up. We're more likely to be in a flow state that we associate with high performance and amazing artists. We have fewer accidents. We're more efficient. We're less anxious and depressed. We're able to concentrate better. We lengthen our telomeres, right? We're literally increasing our life span and preventing age related decline in the brain. As I said, you can't change what you're not aware of. As you build the muscles of awareness, which is really what I think meditation is, you're enabling yourself to ditch old patterns like crazy because you become aware of your patterning, your own conditioning. Oh yeah. Whenever I'm stressed out, I crave chocolate. Now that I've meditated and I'm aware of this pattern, I can do something different, right? When I'm reaching for the chocolate I can go ha, pause. Create space between trigger response, trigger response, trigger response. You're able to ...

Dr. Katrina Ubell: The urge and the action exactly.

Brodie Welch: Exactly. Right?

Dr. Katrina Ubell: The brain is asking me to eat some chocolate. Is that what I really should do or want to do?

Brodie Welch: Exactly. Where is this coming from? Isn't that interesting? Oh yeah. Right. I must be actually needing rest. I must actually be needing comfort. I must actually be needing just something to go well today. We become more aware of what it is we're doing when we've bothered to not believe everything we think and not react to every physical sensation because that's really what meditation does is that allows us to recognize that we're not our thoughts. Our thoughts are going to come and go. We can choose to pay attention to them and buy into them, or we can choose to just let them sail on by.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Like the clouds in the sky, just watching them go.

Brodie Welch: Exactly. Exactly. Really it's like stopping identifying with who we think we are, like our ego minds where we go ... Our sense of being somebody in the world and all these things that he or she has that are qualities of our personalities that are really just habituated patterns because who we are isn't any of that, right? We can change all of these things and what's essential, what doesn't change is our consciousness, our awareness. When we make space to be consciousness itself, we become a lot more aware of what's just habit and what's just an outdated way of being. We actually give ourselves the freedom to evolve, which I think is the most interesting thing ever.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Definitely. Yeah, right? Because you're not just reacting. You're being intentional and deliberate in how you're choosing to live your life.

Brodie Welch: Exactly.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: That way you're able to create the results that you want, right? Reactions that you've been falling through on have created what you have right now in your life and so if that's not what you want, right, if there's things in your life right now that you want to change, then the way you respond to your thoughts needs to change.

Brodie Welch: Exactly. Exactly. We can't do the same thing and expect a different result. We all know that. There's that wonderful quote from Viktor Frankl that you may have heard and I might butcher it exactly, but basically that between the event and the response, there is a space and in that space to choose is our freedom, right? I think about meditation, it allows us to slow down time. What I'm talking about is not something that's going to happen overnight, but it is something that could potentially happen with regular practice and it doesn't take all that long. Some studies have shown that we actually increase the density in our prefrontal cortex within eight weeks 20 minutes a day, which I think is really inspiring.

There's also some bio hacking tricks to be able to kind of like drop into different states, which again I think is super interesting, but the idea is that you don't just pour some water on the ground and expect the plant to grow. It's like you have to keep watering that same patch of ground if you want to actually get that plant to grow and eventually bear fruit. It's the kind of thing where if somebody is new at this, just do it. Just commit to it without fail. If your day is busy, it doesn't matter. It's like just make it nonnegotiable, but modular. If you want to do a one minute or one breath practice, that counts. Get your butt on your cushion and do it. If you make it nonnegotiable, then you can just set a timer and no matter how it goes ...

Especially if you're not used to it, the mind is going to want to do something else. It's like, "Oh my god. I'm not in control. What's going to happen? Things are going to get very out of hand if I'm not in control," because it's unfamiliar. Being able to stay in that what can feel like torture for as long as you've set your timer and maybe you'll close your eyes at ... There's this big myth I think that what meditation means is that you access the state of bliss. It's like I can tell you as an experienced meditator of several decades, that's very rare. It's true that you can get there and it is very relaxing, very blissful, but more importantly I think the bliss happens in life.

The bliss happens with the being the person that you want to be instead to this irritable reactive version of yourself whose perspective gets narrower and narrower as opposed to being in touch with like, "Oh yeah. I'm not going to sweat the small stuff. I'm going to pay attention to what's most important both for my productivity and for like who I want to be with the people I love."

Dr. Katrina Ubell: I love that because, right, we get focused on the meditation and what our experience is while we're meditating and that's not even really the important part, right? The meditation is what helps us to get to the place we want to get to so that we show up in the rest of our lives in the way that we want to show up so that the life that we live is what we want.

It's kind of looking at it going through the meditation route to create that for yourself. I think the other thing that I mean pretty much everybody I think this applies to, but we live such busy go, go, go, go, go lives. I know. I see it with myself too where I'm like literally like racing around sometimes trying to get stuff done because I got to go get the kids or whatever. It's just that moment of being still. When are ever still on purpose? Very rarely.

Brodie Welch: Yeah. Circling back to my original story, right, that there is an incredible power in recognizing that we can just let everything be as it is. We don't have to be the doer all the time. Like, "Yes. The dishes are undone." You can stay here and breath.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Acceptance. Acceptance of the now. There are chart notes that need finish. Yes. Not right now.

Brodie Welch: Yeah, right. Giving yourself that freedom to just exist. It's a little big yin that counterbalances the yang of activity in our daily life and a little bit of just beingness that balances the doingness.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Yeah. That's so good. Okay. I love that. Okay. I told you I was going to ask this question. You're like, "Uh." What is meditation?

Brodie Welch: Well, I think I've danced around it a little bit. A, I'm not going to define meditation because it's multiplicity of traditions that can sometimes ... It could be put to multiple purposes. I think ultimately that meditation ... I think what these things have in common is that you are identifying with something other than your thoughts and something other than your emotions and something other than your bodily sensations. Meditation I think is a means by which ... First of all, a prerequisite for meditation is relaxation. The simplest instructions are basically like sit down, close your eyes, relax. The pre instructions for like just countless meditation traditions begin with just this process of ...

Here's maybe my definition. Meditation is a process of turning your focus from the external world to your internal world.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Love that. It's succinct and so good. I can hear people, I feel like I could envision some listeners going, "But isn't this like a religious thing? Do you have to be religious? Is it kind of this like woo out there spiritual stuff? What is this?"

Brodie Welch: Well, the answer is yes, yes and no. They absolutely are religious traditions or spiritual paths where you meditate in this particular way as it's going to advance your spiritual progress in this particular way. People who follow a spiritual teacher, a particular tradition, for them it is very much one and the same with uniting with God. For some people that's the point, right, is to unite with the divine within and to connect with higher purpose. It absolutely can be spiritual and religious. It also can be totally secular. It can be totally practical and non woo-woo. In that sense, it's simply allowing your focus to come inward and uniting the mind, giving the mind something to do other than think and other than be on autopilot default mode.

Really it's changing your perspective on yourself and on the world by instead of identifying with the thoughts themselves, identifying with the observer and just witnessing the flow of thoughts. That's sort of the mindfulness tradition. I mean it definitely came. It has its roots in Eastern traditions, Eastern thought, but Jon Kabat-Zinn, who popularized meditation and mindfulness in the United States, has made it ... It's like something that you'll experience on a corporate wellness retreat or that kind of thing. It's incredibly mainstream. You remove the trappings of ritual or like it has to be this way. There can be very strict rules and Zen practice is sort of notorious for like your spine must be like this or somebody will hit you with a stick.

Sure. There's a huge multiplicity of traditions and they're all different. Finding something that helps you and that works for you is something that like is I think really important. It's personal.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Would you say that if someone who has tried it and didn't like it or who has tried it a number of different times and different ways and hasn't like it, does that mean that meditation's not for them?

Brodie Welch: Yeah, there's no hope that. No, I'm kidding.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: What would be your suggestion for that person who comes in immediately resistant? Kind of like, "No, I've tried it. I didn't like it."

Brodie Welch: Well, you're not going to like it. I mean it's one of those things where nobody necessarily starts off loving kale. Just do it because it's good for you and then you decide wow, actually my taste has changed. You put enough butter and salt on this and it's delicious. I really feel that way about meditation. It's not necessarily something that I love until it's over. I never regret doing it ever. It's always time well spent. Frankly, I don't know who I would be without it. I don't know how people get through life without a practice. I really don't. It's the first thing I will assign to patients. Usually within this multiplicity of traditions and something that doesn't ...

Clearly it's not my places as a medical provider to be giving people spiritual advice, but Chinese medicine is a body, mind, spirit thing. It's certainly my place to give somebody the ability to unite their body and minds. Within Chinese medicine, for people who hate sitting still, there's Qigong and I really just want to mention Qigong for a moment because it's basically meditation in motion or gentle exercise that happens to be mindful. If you just think about like simple flowing movements that are repeated over and over again and actually I have the world's simplest Qigong available for people on my website. I have this Common Centered Bundle, which gives you five minute breathing meditation.

I walk you through a standing form that combines breath with movement and inward focus and that's really the components. It's combining your breath with your posture whether you're moving or not and shining your light of awareness instead of outwards, shining it inward and getting a sense of what's there. Because the breath is always with us and because we can't breathe from the past or for the future, it's a really excellent focal point for people to use and also because when the mind is so busy, the mind likes to have something to do. Focusing on the breath can be really practical and easy and people can often find some level of "success" with it because they feel like they can follow that instruction.

Usually I just invite people to find a comfortable seated position one in which the hips are elevated above the knees to take strain out of the lower back. This could be sitting in a chair or it could be sitting cross-legged, but with your hips plenty elevated so that you're comfortable and that you're actually able to relax, and so that your spine is relatively aligned in a vertical plane because a lot of these different traditions talk about the central channel of the body that is for yoga practitioners it's sashimnunati and in Chinese medicine there's like several different meridians that all go right up from the crown of your head to the center of the base of your torso. There's this alignment.

There's this central alignment. In the Vedic system, it's like where the chakras all are. Basically it's like where powerful energy can be accessed. If your spine is straight, you have more likelihood of being able to find that inner alignment both physically and energetically. Anyway, it doesn't matter. You can be slumped over and still meditate. It still works.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: I will admit to sometimes meditating while laying down flat. I did actually this morning. You know what? I was too tired. I didn't feel like getting up and so I just turned my phone on and did my meditation while I was ...

Brodie Welch: Yeah, why not? I mean that's absolutely legit. The reason I don't recommend lying down for beginners is because it's very easy ... Like when we're lying down it's very easy to fall into sleep.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Right. Exactly.

Brodie Welch: Meditation is not sleep and nor is it hypnosis. It's a different thing entirely. Okay. Find a comfortable position, one in which your back is straight. Bring your awareness from your external world to your internal world and just notice. Just start with noticing. Usually when I'm teaching in a group setting like I'll encourage people to let go of any obvious tension that they maybe holding phallically because the body and the mind work together. If your mind is all tense, it's like how about dropping your shoulders an inch? How about letting the space between your eyebrows smooth out?

Dr. Katrina Ubell: That's exactly what I was going to say. It's amazing how much tension we carry in our face, right? Like the forehead.

Brodie Welch: Yup. The tongue and the jaw.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: If you have to do like a little micros file, it's amazing how your face just completely changes.

Brodie Welch: In Qigong we bring the tip of our tongue lightly to behind our upper teeth, at the root of the mouth. That aligns two important energy channels, but necessarily it relaxes some of the muscles that we use to hold our faces. Yeah. We invite some level of relaxation in the body. You just become aware of the breath. Again if people want to do this, they can grab my meditation freebie. I walk people through it.

Set a timer and just sit there until your timer goes off. Just start small. Start with a one minute practice. Start with a two minute practice, a five minute practice. When that gets comfortable, when that feels like, "Oh yeah. I could probably do more," then work your way up to 20 minutes. I don't necessarily know that more is better.

It's not like you get bonus points and you probably are busy and have things to do. Just being able to have success with your meditation practice requires that consistency, that watering the ground. Making it so simple that it's easy, that the ego can't wrestle back control and tell you that you're wasting time when in fact this is something that it gets us in touch with the most important things in our lives, as well as having all sorts of like physical, clinical, measurable benefits to the body.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Yeah, definitely. Definitely. Where do you need to be? Do you need to be like I need like a certain cushion or whatever or can you be in a call room somewhere? Can you be around noise? What if your kids are yelling or you're at the nurse's station, what can you do? How can you do that?

Brodie Welch: I think that being in a noisy environment can almost be useful to us because it's practice. As we attune to our senses, we get present, right? That actually can, "Okay. I'm aware of the hum of the refrigerator. I'm aware of the kids bickering in the background. I'm aware of whatever it is, of the ambient noise." The trick is to not follow the content of the noise, right? If people are having a discussion or having an argument, it's like you know to not pay attention to that because it's out there. You know that it's an invitation to come back to your breath and to continue paying attention to making your breath even, right?

Even counting to four on the inhale, counting to four on the exhale, or counting to whatever number, just like whatever your breath happens to be. Then of course you can get fancy. There's all sorts of ways that changing your breathing actually can make meditation a little bit easier. I actually recommend simply Pranayama or simple breathing exercises can be a really nice gateway towards getting your minds relaxed.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: You know what I want to just put in a plug for here is that I feel like I've done ... Because I basically just do guided meditations and I feel like I've done a bunch of different ones that have you count or notice or pay attention to your breath in all kinds of different ways. Sometimes manipulating it, like making it last a certain count and a certain count out. Sometimes just letting it be there and watching it. Some of them I liked and some I didn't really. Over the course of time I've really found one that if you said right now sit there, meditate and pay attention to your breath, like there's a certain way I would do that and that's the way I like to do it.

I think that if you kind of tried a couple of times and it doesn't really resonate with you that much, it doesn't mean that you can't do it or it's not a good option for you. It just means that you're still exploring and trying to find what is going to work for you. It's what I kind of like about some of the meditation apps that are out there is that you have the opportunity to try a little taste of a lot of different kind of methods.

Actually years ago I had gotten whatever, my mantra or whatever with the transcendental meditation people. I went through that whole thing. You know I'll be honest, it was like so rule driven that I couldn't make it work. It was like you have to do it twice a day 20 minutes.

They said like you can't be interrupted, so like that it wasn't good for you if something happened like one of your kids fell and hurt themselves or something and you had to get up that that wasn't good and that you had to do it before dinner. Like literally that opportunity almost never happened for me. Then I didn't do anything for a long time and kind of thinking like, "Oh, it just doesn't work for me." Really over the course of the last year, I've been able to extremely gradually piece together what I actually consider now as my meditation practice. It still feels kind of like funny to me that I would say that I have that because it felt so difficult for me for so long, but I just want to put out there the idea of just keep trying differing things and experimenting. You might find that you don't like an app. That you really like to do it on your own or that you really like to ... I mean there's so many different people, you included, right, you got a meditation MP3 files and you can listen to those. There's so many different ways of doing it. You can just keep exploring until you find the ones that you like. I actually also listen to guided meditations after my daughter died for grief. That was super, super healing.

Then as I was pregnant again and had so much anxiety about being pregnant, I listened to some guided meditations on being pregnant and even going through the IBF process and things like that specifically for that, which I found really, really helpful. It felt so true. I really believe my story that created anxiety for me and that was a way of just separating from that. It was like a little pause button on those emotions that felt really like warranted. Like there was no reason to not feel that way, but it was a really nice break. Like you were saying, it's hard to even describe all the different ways because there are so many, but then we hear like Deepak Chopra is meditating three hours every morning from like 4:00 AM to 7:00 AM or something. That for sure is not what our goal is here. Really a minute or two is fine.

Brodie Welch: What you're describing with the transcendental meditation and its rules and how that really was like you couldn't make it work so you gave up on meditation entirely for a while, that there is ... Yeah, absolutely. That a lot of those traditions originated in the East where that was your only job was to be a meditator. It was like in the sort of masculine tradition of renouncing the world and transcending it and being unaesthetic. Like going off and meditating at the top of a mountain and that's like your whole life, but we're householders. We live in the world. Making it work for us, it's like no. Also, just that idea that it has to be this way, I think it's quite a masculine paradigm.

I personally as a teacher just encourage people that like what are you doing this for. What you're describing is like the emotional solace that guided meditation gave you when you were going through such a painful time and such a stressful time that it gave your mind something to focus on other than what it would habitually land on. In that sense, guided meditation is sort of like a little journey and it takes you somewhere else, but I actually kind of think that that's more mental manipulation than it is meditation, which isn't to say that it's not useful, but I think that that's very different than cultivating awareness of what's going on now internally in your ecosystem. I think like meditations are sometimes different than meditation.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Yeah. I think that's really interesting. I do two different apps is what I do. I do one and a different one in the morning because I like them for different reasons. The one that I do in the morning is Headspace and their like little basic pack, which I think you can do for free, like it's 30 days worth. I was like, "I'm going to just do this for 30 days and see what I think at the end before I pay any money this." I loved it. I really loved his way of kind of telling you what to do. I'm at a point I could do completely on my own. I don't need to do that, but I just finished today a little pack about patience and impatience and it was so interesting. It's interesting how we get impatient with ourselves when we're meditating, right?

Just this idea of letting the thoughts come and then just identifying that it's a thought and letting it go. It's so helpful for me in the sense that I like to somewhat be told what to do. It's like the same thing when I work out. Like I just want to show up. Like someone just tell me what to do. I do it first thing in the morning. 5:30 in the morning. I'm tired. I can't think about what I'm supposed to do. Just tell me. I see what you're saying because definitely ... I would say that some of those "meditations" were more like visualization exercises.

Brodie Welch: Yeah. Yeah, exactly. You're manipulating consciousness. What you're describing with Headspace, it totally sounds like training wheels and that you don't need them anymore.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: It really was training wheels and I'm at a point now, I think they just sent me an email, that I've been doing it like 90 days straight or something.

Brodie Welch: Go you. That's awesome.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Right. It's at a point now where I really I want to do it. If I haven't done it first thing in the morning, I'm like, "Oh my gosh. Okay. I need to find 10 minutes." I do 10 minutes. Where's the 10 minutes so I can do that? That's what we really want, right? That's like a true habit.

Brodie Welch: Yes. Exactly.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: I really want to make sure I get this done today.

Brodie Welch: Oh yeah. When mornings are mine and I can do my whole morning routine, the whole day is mine basically. If I start my day in alignment with my highest values, I literally set myself up for success in a way that just doesn't happen if I wait until later. I'm with you on the meditating in the morning because again it's like especially when a habit is new, like willpower will deplete your ability to stick with that new habit. If it is something that you want to bring online, I highly recommend starting early in the day before the demands of life kick in and before your mind tells you that it doesn't want to be shut off and that you shouldn't shut it off.

Shutting off is actually kind of the wrong terminology because just like you can't stop your heart from beating or your lungs from taking in breath, you really can't stop your mind from thinking. It's just what your mind does, which is why giving the mind something to do where it can feel purposeful, but you don't have to believe your thoughts is really kind.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Right. Definitely. Definitely. Oh man. This is such a great conversation. I think this is really just a good way for people to kind of get a sense of what is this stuff all about. The other thing that I just want to mention and I told you this before the call is that what I will often do with my clients with my clients who are physicians who are on call and stuck in the hospital, particularly people like anesthesiologists or OBGYNs who really are ... They can't go anywhere. There's so much going on. They're so busy, but then they are waiting for a woman who's laboring or something or there is kind of a downtime.

They're waiting for a patient to come down from the room to do this one procedure or come in from the ER or something like that and they feel so stressed and oftentimes they would eat during that time because they feel like oh, maybe they want some energy. It's something to do. It makes them feel better. Of course, their baseline thinking is that they're not happy that they're in the hospital in the middle of the night. They probably have quite a bit of self-pity for themselves that they have to do it. What I have encouraged a number of them to do is to do a meditation. To just sit there and calm yourself down and do that active de-stressing in that moment.

I just wondered if you could speak to the utility of doing that just kind of when you're feeling more stressed out or something. You're waiting. You wish you weren't somewhere.

Brodie Welch: Its phenomenal advice. I can't imagine a better thing to do with that kind of time where you have to be ready, but you're not ... You can't necessarily do anything else, right? You are where you are. Yeah. First of all, it's incredibly restful to drop into meditation. Even if you can't get sleep, you can often feel quite refreshed after meditating. Just improving your focus and concentration, decreasing your likelihood of making a mistake, all of those things can happen as you basically hone your focus, right? I think I've used the analogy that awareness is like a muscle. If our focus is very diffused and we're focused on all the 10,000 things that there are in the world that could be occupying our minds, it's very hard to get clear.

We practice honing our focus like a laser beam so we consolidate our awareness down to just the one thing at a time that we're doing, you're going to be so much more effective at whatever it is you're putting your mind to. That could be in the form of a visualization, of what you're about to do, but really just coming from a space of ... Really it's awareness training and that's going to make you better at whether it's being an Olympic athlete or being a surgeon or being anything in between, being a writer, being an artist. It's all going to be better.

Plus if your job in any way involves people, which I'm assuming most physicians talk to patients, right, is that you're going to be much more present and in your heart you're going to be much more present for whatever it is that they've got going on and much more empathetic.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Yeah, which is huge because so many physicians now identify as being burned out. Really part of that is having a lack of empathy. Just feeling so tapped out. Like the energy or the empathy reserves are like on zero. Every patient is just another thing to add to the to do list. It's just another box to check.

Brodie Welch: Who gets into medicine who doesn't want to help people, right? I mean it's like probably pretty far away from what you really are about, right?

Dr. Katrina Ubell: That's why people are so dissatisfied and the idea of this wasn't what I thought it was going to be like. I thought I wanted to be a doctor and this is nowhere near what I thought that experience would be like.

Brodie Welch: In medicine, it's like so often we can't necessarily cure whatever is going on with the person. We can't snap our fingers and make bipolar disorder go away or make cancer go away, whatever it is that the person has and very likely has to deal with for a long time. What we can do is amplify their strength by seeing them as a whole and seeing them as who they are. If you've identified yourself as part of the wholeness, right, the wholeness, the big flux of life and being a drop in the ocean of consciousness like your awareness in your body and your perspective, it's just you over there and I'm over here, but it's the same thing.

It's the same force of consciousness. The same force of observation. If we can tap into that, we are so much more able to be medicine for patients instead of just administering medicine to patients.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: I love that. That is so great. All right. Well, on that note, Brodie, where can my listeners find you?

Brodie Welch: They can go brodiewelch.com and that's Brodie with an I E and Welch with a C-H at brodiewelch.com. They can grab my Common Centered Bundle, which is the seated meditation and little Qigong meditation. Kind of the take your choice about whether you want to try something seated and guided or something standing. You can also download The Right To Take Care Of Yourself manifesto, which is on there because it's the kind of thing that when you do take care of yourself and you do put yourself at the top of your to do list, you are so much more able to show up for the people in your life and to do the best job you possibly can. You can also check me out at ...

If you're a podcast listener as I assume you are if you're listening to this one, you can go over to A Healthy Curiosity and check out whatever episodes seems interesting to you.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Awesome. Thank you so much, Brodie. I really appreciate you coming on and explaining all this to everybody.

Brodie Welch: Oh, it's a blast. I love sharing this stuff with people because it's such an important tool and what a different world it would be if we all actually started the day from a place of centered kindness to ourselves and alignment with all that is.

Dr. Katrina Ubell: Love it. Love it. All right. Take care, Brodie. Bye, bye.

Brodie Welch: Bye.