



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Well, hey there my friend. How are you?

So I want to talk to you really quickly about iTunes reviews. The one I picked today I picked because it is pretty relevant to the topic that I am going to talk to you about otherwise, and the title of it is Wonderful Podcast and it's by Colorado Doc Mom. She writes, "Thank you Katrina for giving me an entirely new way to think about weight loss. I've been continually disgusted and frustrated with myself for failing to follow my diet plan and lose weight. It had never occurred to me that my thoughts were driving these results, but they absolutely are. I'm very excited to work through this process to change my thoughts which are causing the result of my overweight body. I'm in the process of listening to your early podcasts again, and I'm so excited about a weight loss method for the first time ever."

That's so exciting. That's exactly what I want to talk about, is just kind of failing and not following the plan and not losing weight. The word that I use or I guess maybe it's a compound word, maybe it's two words, but the way that I describe this is a little micro quit. That's what I want to talk to you about today, little, little quits, and how those end up actually impacting us in a much greater way than we even recognize.

If you would be willing to leave me an iTunes review, I would so appreciate it. I am still trying to get to my goal of 500 actual reviews. I have over 500 ratings, which I am so appreciative of. Thank you so much. I know many of you tried to leave a review on your phone and it didn't work. So if you would be so kind to just go to your computer and type one in on iTunes on your computer, then it'll work and I'll be that much closer. I really appreciate it. Thanks so much.

Okay, let's talk about quitting. There's kind of a couple ways of thinking about quitting. I usually think quitting means like stopping completely, like full stop, the end, we've stopped. It's like a line in the sand, we're saying we're not doing it anymore. But there is this kind of quitting that's a little bit more like a little softer quit, like a quit with a little q. The first quit is a capital q Quit, and this is going to be a little baby q quit. That's where you stop trying a little bit, you struggle a little bit, where you're sort of accepting defeat in the moment. I'm going to explain that to you a little bit in depth here.

Think about the last time you started a diet plan. You were all motivated, you're all excited about it, you know what you need to do, and you're going along, you're following your plan, the first week you're totally dialed in, you lose some weight, and you're like super jazzed because this is actually working, and it's actually not even that hard, and there's still some novelty to it, and you're really pretty motivated.

But then week two, week three roll around, the novelty's sort of wearing off, and you're kind of getting bored to the food. But you're doing it anyway because you're seeing results and it's totally worth it. You're not losing quite as fast as you were in the beginning, but you're still losing some, so you're like, "Okay, yep, I'm still doing this," and let's see, you've committed to not snacking. But then one day you're making dinner and you're cutting up some cheese and there's a little extra cheese. And you have the thought, "Well, cheese is on my plan and I'm about to eat dinner," so you end up eating it. In that moment, that was a little micro quit. Then you're right back on your plan again, where you're eating on plan dinner, and everything is fine, you don't even think twice about the cheese. It was no big deal.

Here's the thing. It really doesn't feel like you're quitting because you're still just following your plan. I mean it's just this little tiny part of your plan that you're not following. But really in that moment for the minute and a half it took you to chew up the cheese and swallow, you had quit. That was a little micro quit.

Another example of this is when you decide to go to dinner and have let's say two glasses of wine. You're with people, there's bottles of wine being opened. So you have your one glass, and then you have your second glass, you're totally on target with your food and you're eating what you had planned to had that you're going to eat, everything is great. Then they go around with the bottle one more time, you're talking to your friend, all the sudden the waiter's poured a little bit more wine and you just think, "Oh, what the heck. It's not a big deal. I'll just have a little bit more wine. I mean I said two glasses, but what's a little bit more?" In that moment that's a little micro quit.

You can argue it. Our minds are just masters of this justification where we start thinking, "Well, I mean this really isn't that big of a deal. Like the first two pours were kind of small anyway. I mean, how big is a pour anyway? I mean really, it's just a little bit more. I mean, it's basically fermented grape juice. It's just really not that big of a deal." So we're totally fine with it and we drink up.

Why is this a problem? Why is this a big deal? Why is this something I'm focusing on? Do we really, really have to be this dialed in on every little thing? Is it that important? I want to explain to you why yes in fact it is that important.

Here's where it gets really tricky and slippery for us. What ends up happening as we do this, we have the cheese, we have a little extra wine, or we eat a little bit past plus four, and we start thinking, like, "You know what? I'm like nothing bad happened. I didn't see anything on the scale. I ate that cheese and I still lost this week. That's pretty amazing." We start building evidence for how these little micro quits have not slowed down our results, and in doing so we start to get in the habits of micro quitting on ourselves.

Like if you had the cheese and it wasn't a big deal, then what do you do the next time there's a little extra cheese? You're making lunches and there's a little extra cheese, you just cut a little extra slice off for yourself. It becomes easier and easier and easier for you to do these little quits.

When you start stringing all of these little micro quits together it ends up equaling the big capital q Quit. It really wasn't a problem when you had one little quit or two little quits or a couple of them strung out far apart. But what you're then doing is building evidence for yourself that you don't have to follow it 100% because nothing bad happens when you don't follow your plan 100% of the time.

So then you do it again and again and now you're, what, maybe six weeks into your diet plan, it's really getting boring. Now the novelty has totally worn off. You're looking at everybody else eating all this stuff and you're going, "Oh, come on, flour and sugar, is it really that bad?" You are also noticing that you haven't lost weight now in a couple of weeks. In fact, you might have gained a little bit of weight during this time.

Then you start having thoughts of, "This plan doesn't even work. It worked in the beginning but now it doesn't even work. And I'm not even going to follow this anymore because it's not working. Like this plan is a dud." Then that's the big capital q Quit. That's when you decide, "I'm not going to follow this anymore," and then you basically eat all the things you haven't been eating, you make up for all those weeks of dieting and you eat whatever you want, truly whatever you want, like all the things that you've been not having, and then you gain all that weight back really quickly and usually a little bit more. Then you start feeling terrible about yourself. "Why can't I get myself together? Why can't I follow my diet plan and lose weight?" That's what Colorado Doc Mom was talking about. She was so disgusted with herself and so frustrated with herself because she was not doing what she needed to do to actually lose the weight.

But this is the thing, when you have that big q Quit day where you say, "This isn't working, this is dumb, I'm not following it anymore," you actually quit the day you have that piece of extra cheese, like that was the beginning of the quit, the day that you didn't hold accountable to your plan of how much wine you were going to have, that was when the quit started.

All these little micro quits end up building up together. Now I have talked about justifications before, but I wanted to talk to you about them a little bit more because our brains are so sneaky and sly in getting us to get on board with them, like really so good at negotiating. I know a lot of lawyers call this lawyer brain, but I think all of us just have lawyer brain, I think we all just have this brain that is very smart, very intelligent, and can come up with a reasoning for doing whatever it is we really want.

I'm going to give you some examples of little micro quits. So think to yourself if any of these resonate with you, if you've had any of these thoughts either recently or while you've been trying to lose weight. "I had no choice. I had to eat that food. There were no other choices. I just can't do it right now. I am just too busy. It's not a good time for this right now. I will do this tomorrow." Or, "I'll do it later." Or, "With my next meal I'll get on. This is really hard." We oftentimes have that thought, "This is really hard."

Another good one is, "I could do this if x were different. I could do this if my husband were more on plan. I could do this if my kids were older. I could do this if my kids were out of the house. I could do this if I didn't have so many patients to see. I could do this if I weren't a surgeon. I could do this if I had full time in house help." But what you're saying is that's the reason you can't do it because you have all of those things that you think need to be different.

Oftentimes we tell ourselves, "This really isn't a big deal this time. I mean really, a couple more sips of wine, it's not a big deal. I'll do better tomorrow." I've so many clients with that thought. "It's not a big deal this time. I'll just do it this time. Tomorrow I'll do better. I just need a break. I've been working so hard." This one really feels like we're taking good care of ourselves, like we're being so nice to ourselves.

"I just need a break. You've been so good at following this. I mean come on, everybody deserves a break. I'm just not in the mood. I just don't feel like it right now." Such a common one, "I'm just not in the mood. I'm just so overwhelmed right now, it's just not a good time." Or, "I'm just confused right now about what I need to do, I need to take a break."

Or, "I'm just really busy. I have so much going on. I'm just too tired. I just really need the kids to sleep through. I need one long night of sleep and then I can start following my plan again. I just don't want to do it." And that's really, really what we're saying when we're saying, "I don't want to ... I don't feel like it. I just need a break." We're like, "I just don't want to do this right now."

What's so funny about that is like, okay, but recognize that what you're doing is quitting in that moment and not justifying it with that little very sneaky little way of thinking about it that it really is okay.

All of these feel really legit in the moment. They all feel like, "Yeah, these are totally reasonable reasons to not follow my plan right now." If you ask yourself right then you're like, "Oh, no, I'm not quitting, I'm not planning on quitting. Not at all. I'm just taking this little short break right now, just doing this nice thing for myself." But what you don't recognize is that the nice thing to do for yourself is to actually follow the plan so that you can get those results that you want, so you don't end up going down that path to the big q Quit.

What is the way that we counteract this? What do we do so that we aren't falling into all these micro quits all the time? There's two things. The first thing is really committing again. I cannot tell you how important commitment is. I mean you have got to know why you want to lose weight and keep it off.

It sounds so obvious, like, "Well, I want to be thin. I want to wear these clothes," things like that. But what I find happens with my clients is that it's not always so simple, like they want it but they don't even always really want it. They're like not really that fully committed. It's always so obvious. Those who are not fully committed are the ones who don't get good results. They lose maybe 10 pounds in six months or something like that, they lose a little bit of weight, but they've been ... I mean, they quit in the beginning, in the very, very beginning of the group was just little micro quit after micro quit, and before you know it they're just not doing it, they're not getting those results.

This is the thing, that's okay, but just recognize that. Don't make it mean that something's wrong with you, that you're broken, that your body is faulty, that you'll never be able to lose the weight. Just own it and say, "Okay, yeah, I didn't do the work, and these are the results that I got."

I always kind of say, if you don't want to do the work, then be honest with yourself. It's okay. You don't have to do the work. You don't have to lose weight. So many of us think we need to lose weight because then we can finally feel good about ourselves, then we can be proud of ourselves, then we can be happy about who we are.

I promise you that if you do not change your thinking about yourself, you will lose the weight and you will have the exact same opinion about yourself and you will be very disappointed because you will find that your brain is exactly the same, even though your body is different, and you're going to go, "Wait a minute, this sucks because this was supposed to be different. This was not what I signed up for. I thought that this was going to be the panacea. Then finally I'd be happy. I wouldn't be anxious anymore, wouldn't have all these worries, I wouldn't be stressed about stuff all the time, to have this amazing relationship with my spouse." All these things, none of that changes if you don't change your thinking.

So what is so great is like if you don't want to do the work to lose weight, then just own it and do the work on your thoughts. Stop hating your body, stop hating yourself, actually work to accept yourself and love yourself as you are right now. Then from that place decide, do I want to actually lose weight or not? And know why, really come up with what that compelling reason is, knowing that you are going to actually do it, that you are committed, not just wanting to do it, but actually being committed to doing it and actually do the work.

But if you're not going to do it, then just be honest and say, "I'm not going to do it right now. It isn't a good time. I'm not willing to commit to it." Okay, great, then just stop thinking you should be doing something else then. Make your decision and like your reasons and own it and move forward. You can always lose weight whenever you want to.

Then the second part is managing what happens for yourself when you want to quit, like anticipate it happening. Don't just assume like, "No, I'm super motivated, I'm just going to manage my thoughts and have motivation all the time." Of course that's not at all how it's going to go for you. There are going to be these times where a little glass of wine, a little extra wine doesn't seem like a big deal, a little extra cheese doesn't seem like a big deal, or another couple of nuts, what's the problem.

When you are anticipating that these little quits are going to come up, that your brain is going to offer you these justifications, you're not surprised. You knew these were all coming and you create your response ahead of time. You can anticipate. You can say, "Okay, yeah, a common one is that I get really overwhelmed, and when I'm overwhelmed I tend to go off my plan. And so what am I going to do when I'm overwhelmed and I want to go off my plan and I'm trying to justify it?" That's what we need to work through.

You can come up with a number of those reasons. You can just go back to the past to like what are the reasons I quit in the last number of times I've tried to lose weight. You can anticipate just based on what your life is looking like right now, what are some of the challenges and obstacles that are going to come up for you, and come up with some solutions for them.

Then you have to ask yourself some questions. You need to know why you'll want to quit. Those are those obstacles. You're going to say that it's too hard, that you're too busy, that whatever, like the kids are too busy, you're already doing all these other things, it's just what it is you're avoiding discomfort. You just want the comfort of the food, and instead of saying, "I'm going to quit right now," you're saying, "I just need a break. I just need to not focus on this right now." You're allowing yourself to buffer them.

Why are you going to want to quit? And then think about how you're going to feel about yourself when you quit, if you quit. You have to think about that, what is the emotional you're going to have. Right now you're trying to avoid discomfort by just merely a micro quit, by giving yourself a break, but in the long term with the big q Quit how are you going to feel. Are you going to feel disgusted with yourself? Are you going to feel really frustrated? Are you going to feel really disappointed in yourself? Are you going to really feel hopeless?

Then ask yourself what you are glad that you didn't quit in the past. I know for all my doctors listening, like are you glad you didn't quit med school, are you glad that you made it through that really hard rotation where you were just like, "Oh my god, if you told me I had to be this kind of doctor, I would literally quit right now." I definitely had that. I'm not going to tell you which specialty it was, but there was for sure time in third year where I was like, "Yeah, if this is what I had to do this would all be over. I would not sign up for this."

You're glad that you didn't quit. You're glad that you pushed forward and through that. Think about times in residency when it was so hard and you're like, "You know what? This is hard. What I do is hard every day, and I just do it." And you're glad now that you didn't quit, that you didn't even entertain that option, or if you did entertain it, you didn't entertain it super seriously because you've got that accomplishment on the other end.

And then I want you to also ask yourself if you knew you'd be successful, if you knew that getting to your goal weight was just in the mail as we say, it's like you've ordered it from Amazon and it's just on its way here, you know it's coming, you just don't actually have it yet, how would you show up? Would you be eating the little extra cheese, or would you do what needs to be done to actually create that result?

The last thing to think about and consider is the concept of quitting ahead of time. Are you basically knowing or believing that you're going to quit or that you won't be able to maintain it in the future, so then you're just deciding to quit now to sort of get the show on the road so to speak. Like if you always have all this evidence that all you've done in the past has failed and quit, then are you going, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, I want to lose weight, I want to show that I'm trying, and actually I'm just going to quit now with these little quits because I know this isn't going to work any way," because you have that deep down belief that it won't work.

Now you probably aren't sitting there thinking to yourself, "Yeah, I think I'm going to quit ahead of time today," like that's not how this is going for you, but that really is what it is. What you're doing is doing a little micro quit and then thinking that it's not going to be a big deal, which is probably what you've done in the past, which is why you've quit and not had success in the past. You're just recreating that going, "Oh, okay, well, I don't really need to be so strict. I'll just modify it a little bit," and then we wonder why we don't get results.

This is really something to think about. I mean, I find myself doing these little micro quits from time to time still too. Even preparing for this podcast I was like, "Yeah, I'm sometimes doing that every now and then too." And it's maybe a little bit different for me at this point, but it's still something I need to work on, it's still something that is not the way that I want to show up, and it's still something for me to work on.

We constantly have work to do on ourselves. There is not that finish line where, "Oh my god, I'm amazing. My brain only thinks the amazing thoughts. I never have a care in the world." Of course that's not how it goes. So I want you to really think about this. I think everybody listening to this podcast has had these thoughts and can identify how you've done little micro quit and how that hasn't helped you in the long run to achieve the results that you really want.

On that note, think about all those little micro quits. We are not micro quitters. We do what we say we're going to do. It's so good. Okay. Have a great week and I will talk to you soon. Take care. Bye-bye.