



# WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Well, what's up my friend? How are you? Welcome to the podcast today. So excited to talk to you as usual. It feels like spring here and it's not even the end of February as I'm recording this. It was 60 here today and, I know, those of you who live in the South are like, "Yeah, whatever. We get that all the time." But we don't here in Wisconsin. It's been so beautiful, so sunny, such a nice little break from the freezing cold. And it probably will snow again. I mean, we've had a foot of snow on Easter. These things can definitely happen but we will take it. It's such a great day today and it's such a great day because I'm recording a podcast for you. Woot, woot! Okay, let's get going today.

Listen, before we get started, just really, really quickly, I want to talk to you about iTunes reviews because guess what? You guys are coming through for me. I appreciate it so much. There's 429 reviews as of today and as you know, I'm trying to get to 500. So if I'm doing my math correctly, that sounds to me like 71 more people need to leave a review, which should not be a problem because I know there are so many of you out there who haven't left one yet. So if you would be so kind as to leave me one, I would totally appreciate it.

The best way to do that is to go to iTunes on your computer. I know you can do it on your app on your phone, on the podcast app. Sometimes it works and a lot of times it doesn't. In any case, just make it easy on yourself and go ahead and go into iTunes, whether you have a Mac or PC, it's totally fine, and you can just leave me something really quickly. The rating, the star rating is super helpful too. Thank you for everyone who's left me that. What I'm really looking for is 500 reviews, meaning written reviews. You can even just leave me a short sentence. That's all you have to do. That'd be great.

As you know, I love to share your successes that I hear about from your iTunes reviews. So, I'm just going to read this one quickly. This is from Jill M OB-GYN and the title is, "Thank you." She writes, "Thank you so much for this podcast. While I am still working on these last 10 pounds of baby weight, it's my relationships with my husband and kids and my attitude at work that have changed so much. I tell everyone about my business, your business, and God's business. Totally life changing way to look at life. Also, I am staying caught up on my charting. Done is best. Please keep the podcasts coming." Absolutely Jill, I plan on it. I love talking to you guys every week. It's one of my most favorite parts of the week. It's fantastic.

Today, I'm going to talk to you about a really fun topic and that is rejection. This is seriously a really, really good one for us to talk about because it's really very primitive for us as humans to want to avoid being rejected. Yet, rejection shows up in our lives in so many different ways, so I can't wait to talk to you about this. When you think about it, there's so many ways that people will reject us. Our patients sometimes reject us when they give us a bad review or maybe they just leave us, leave our practice because they're just mad at us about something or they aren't happy or satisfied about something. Sometimes, we feel rejected because a patient doesn't want to see us and it might be because of what we look like, might be our gender, it might be our race, it might be something else that they don't like about us so they prefer to see somebody else and then we feel rejected. Or sometimes, we spend a lot of time really coming up with a great treatment plan that we think will really help them and they reject us for that. They don't like that at all. Some people really have a hard time when a patient goes and gets a second or third opinion and other doctors are like, "Great, I encourage you to do that. That's fantastic." The only thing that's different is our thinking and then the emotion that that thinking creates for us.

Another way that we often feel rejected is from our friends and family. These are people that we go to, they're our tribe. They're the people that we really connect with, that we feel like we want to be accepted by, probably more so than any other people in our lives and it's not uncommon for us to feel rejected by friends and family.

Sometimes this happens once you lose weight. If you had a friend who was once overweight with you and you were always dieting together and you lose a bunch of weight. It might put a strain on the relationship and your friend might reject you. Same thing can happen in families. This can also happen if people deem you to be too successful. "Now, you're this doctor, fancy-schmancy. You have all this money. You're just too successful," and then they end up rejecting you. Or they just find that you're not good enough in some way. It's like what we teach kids. Kids can always come up with something to tease another kid about, our friends and family can always come up with something that we're not good enough at or some quality that we're lacking in some way and then we feel really rejected.

We can sometimes feel rejected by our kids. It's so often for kids to go through one of those phases where they just don't want to talk to us so they don't want to play with us or hug us or kiss us or they want someone else always to put them to bed or if you're in a teenager realm, you want to connect with them and talk with them and they just won't talk to you. Total rejection right there.

Maybe you're applying for jobs, looking for a different job or you're applying for a promotion or a grant and you don't get it. That can make you feel very rejected. Even dating, people who are dating, often times don't even want to get out there for this fear of rejection. They just feel like they've been rejected so many times already and they don't want to be rejected more. So they just give up on finding the mate that they are looking for.

It's important to really understand what it meant, a long time ago for humans, if we were rejected. I'm going back to hunter-gatherer days. Really, when you had some sort of family unit, tribe, village, collection of humans who worked together to help each other survive. If you were rejected by this group, it basically meant certain death. This was a really, really bad thing if you were rejected. That was the way humans existed for a very long time.

So it makes sense that our brains would be so rejection averse. That they would think that any kind of rejection is a really horrible thing and that we need to try to prevent that as much as possible. What that often ends up looking like is people-pleasing. You're rejecting me so let me do something and twist myself around and try to recreate myself in a way that will make you like me so that I can feel accepted, except that's not who I am or who I want to be. That's the problem of people-pleasing.

The important thing to understand though is that as humans have evolved and we are totally capable of providing for ourselves completely, we still have the same brain that still thinks that rejection is a really, really bad thing. We think that we can't survive without them and our brain thinks that it's going to be some sort of certain death. Of course, rationally, we don't believe this but that primitive brain, that part of our brains that really has helped us to survive up until this point that is so primal, has not evolved to recognize that the chances of us really being truly rejected where it turns into us having a very negative outcome is rare. Especially if you're a physician, you have an education, you're able to provide value in the world. That provides you with income and you can support yourself. There really is nothing that you need somebody for to help. These threats are much, much, much less now but our brains are very confused and still think that the threats are as present as they always were.

What we like to do is defend ourselves from rejection because in our minds, rejection is so bad, we want to do everything possible to make sure that we don't get rejected. Then what we often do is we will reject somebody or something ahead of time. I don't want to be rejected by you so I'll just reject you instead. This shows up in so many different ways. You are wanting to find a mate, you see the date walk into the bar and you see the look on his face or what he's dressed like and you immediately make a snap judgment, rejecting him because you're worried that he's rejecting you. Or you just, by omission, reject yourself, meaning, you don't apply for a new job. You just settle for what you have because you just don't want to be rejected and go through the whole process of rejection. Or you don't put yourself in for the possibility of being promoted or to be voted in as chief of staff or something like that because you don't want to lose and go through that feeling of rejection.

This just goes on and on. The patient doesn't want to see us so we reject them ahead of time and say that they're stupid, they're racist, they're, whatever we call them and they might be racist. I mean it's definitely a possibility but we come up with all the reasons why they are at fault because they are finding us at fault. So they reject us, we reject right back.

It's so interesting because what that really is, is going into emotional childhood and I know you guys have heard me talk about that before. I want to touch more on emotional childhood on this episode though because what I'm finding pretty often with my clients is that I'll point out to them that they are in emotional childhood and they'll completely agree. They're right away like, "Oh, totally, yeah. I absolutely am doing that." Rationally, they understand but then they are like, "Well, but I'm right." They're still clinging to that story. They understand that that is very childlike and that they are taking on that victim mentality or that they're blaming somebody else for how they think and feel but they still are wanting to love in that story. It feels right to them because they want to push back.

I'm going to tell you another story, an interesting interaction I had with somebody recently and I'll do my best to keep identities and details as minimal as possible. There's somebody that I know and she is really, probably, one of the sweetest, nicest people you'll ever meet in your whole entire life. Just one of those really, really good, sweet, nice people. Gives people the benefit of the doubt, is always there to help somebody, just an amazing, amazing person. We ran into each other at an event that we were at and we were just chatting, catching up a little bit and she mentioned that something had happened where she had gotten some negative feedback from somebody who was running an after-school program that one of her children had been participating in and one of my children had been participating in as well. So I was just asking, "Oh, what happened?" She told me what happened and basically, what ended up happening was there was a certain way that she and her family were approaching that activity and the people in charge made it clear that that was not acceptable to them.

What I found so interesting is this wonderful and beautiful, loving, open-hearted person went right into emotional childhood as she told me about it. This is the interesting thing. Since my child's in the same program, I actually know that what the people who run it were saying is what they say at the beginning. Pretty much like, "This is how it is. If you can't commit to this, then this probably isn't the right thing for you." It's possible that she just missed that or didn't see it or whatever but she was totally going into blame and blaming them and going into victim mentality and told me how she had forwarded on some emails that she wasn't happy about to people who are higher up and I found it so fascinating how she totally went into blaming other people and not taking responsibility for her part in this.

Now, how those other people approached her, maybe that was not at all the right way to do it. Maybe that was excessive. Who knows? But she went right into defending herself and why it was okay that she did what she did, that it wasn't really that bad and she's doing the best she can as we all are but it was so fascinating to me just watching her go into just abdicating responsibility for her part in the problem.

I've been thinking about that for a few days. Like, literally, everybody does this. I think some of us who maybe have a more baseline negative way of thinking tend to think that all those people who are so sweet and nice and wonderful don't have these problems, but they do. Everybody goes into emotional childhood like this.

The first thing is obviously recognizing that you're in emotional childhood, which of course, I was not coaching this friend that I have and so I didn't bring it up at all and I just listened and let it go. But when I'm coaching my clients, I mention to them that they are in emotional childhood and they say, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, of course I am. How do I get out of it?" The answer is always to take responsibility for how you think and feel.

The first step is how am I contributing to this right now? I didn't show up the way I should've. I am having a little tantrum right now because my brain is just not happy with how things are going. Own your mistakes, own your missteps, admit when you're wrong. It's so interesting, I feel so lucky because I have no problem at all admitting when I'm wrong. I'm like, "Please, prove me wrong. I'm wrong all the time."

I'm very good at being wrong but I've had many, many clients and we all know people like this, who just cling to the need to be right. Really at the expense of their relationships, at the expense of their bodies because they feel so upset about the fact that they think that they're right, that they end up eating and gaining weight.

It's so interesting, if you're one of those people who really has a hard time being wrong, that's something to spend some time on. What does it mean about you if you're wrong? Why is it a problem to be wrong? Be aware of your shortcomings and don't think that the world should change to accommodate them. If you are able to do something or you didn't do it to the best of your ability or somebody who only has one child would've been able to do that but you can't because you have more than that, just recognize, "Yeah, I messed that up. I had a bunch of kids that I had to figure out how to get them where they needed to go and that meant that we missed this thing a couple of times. I agree. I had some sort of contribution to this problem, to this situation and recognizing what that is." That's when you're having an argument or some sort of scuffle with your husband or your spouse or your partner, recognizing and owning what is actually true about the parts that you could do better.

This is hard stuff because a lot of times, we really want to kick our heels in. We're like, "No. They're the bad person." They probably do have a huge part that they can contribute to this whole issue but you have to own the part that is yours. Going back to rejection, and this is a situation where this friend was being told by this program directors that how they were showing up was not okay. She was feeling rejected. She felt she was doing the best that she could and they were rejecting her and her family for not doing the things that they thought that they should do. That rejection feels so bad that we right away start blaming other people. Things should be different, the world should be different. If I had somebody else helping me, if I had a different job, if I had a spouse who was more helpful, then I could do it. Putting the blame on everybody else to try to get away from that feeling of rejection.

Now, one of the most important things to do which I talked about last time when we talked about urges, is learning to actually feel your feelings and identify what it actually feels like. I have actually gone through some feelings of rejection recently and spent a good bit of time really looking into what it is when I feel rejected and getting good at feeling it and having that feeling be familiar. Most of us hate the feeling of rejection so much that we try to buffer it away or start blaming other people or get angry or go to some other emotion so quickly that we don't even know what it feels like to be rejected.

I spent some time getting out of my head and into my body, what does rejection actually feel like. For me, it was really interesting. What I noticed is that when I feel rejected, my muscles and arms and legs and my whole body, just feels very heavy and my muscles feel weak. I feel like I have been drained of energy. My body just feels very dense and heavy and my brain is just sad and dull and all I want to do is go to bed and get away from everybody. Which is so interesting because if you're being rejected, then you're being told to go out on your own and then what I'm saying is all I want is to go and be by myself, which is so interesting. What I'm wanting to do by wanting to go to bed and leave everyone behind is I want to get away from that rejection. I want to just go to something that just feels like a safe haven so that I'm not feeling that feeling of rejection so much.

That's what rejection feels like for me and I know we've all been rejected many times but for a lot of us, we haven't spent a lot of time there recently or maybe ever, especially for somebody, who's always been a super high achiever, always pretty much gotten what they wanted, gotten to all the schools, passed all the tests, got the residency program, got the job you wanted, found a spouse, all these different things and then others things come up, you might be like, "I don't know how to do rejection. This is really foreign to me." Instead of getting defensive, instead of blaming other people and going into emotional childhood, I want you to spend some time in your body determining what it feels like and recognizing, "Oh, that's rejection." Then, the next time you have that feeling and you're rejected, you're like, "Oh yeah, this is rejection. That's okay. I can do rejection."

Every time you put yourself into a position where you might be rejected and you are rejected, you get better at the feeling of rejection, so that you're like, "Yeah, I'm a master at feeling rejection. If I'm willing to feel rejected, then I'm just going to get out there and go on three dates a week because the person that I want to marry is out there. I just need to find him and actually have to show up for myself and go out on some dates." It might mean that instead of avoiding that promotion that you actually really want, that you put your hat in the ring. That you start telling people what it is that you really want knowing that you might be rejected and if you are rejected, it's fine. You can feel rejection. It's just an emotion that's created by chemicals in your brain that create a cascade into your body and in my case, it makes my body feel like it's just filled with lead weights.

That's what I want you to practice. I want you to practice feeling rejection, taking responsibility for your part in it and just recognizing that nothing is going wrong. You're not going to die and rationally, you know you're not going to die but emotionally, you're not going to die, you can feel this and that helps you to get out of your own way.

What that means then is that you're able to get out there and start creating the things that you want in your life because you're not so worried about being rejected. And you just recognize, as part of creating that, you will be rejected and that's okay. It's completely fine. You have to practice feeling this emotion and allow yourself to feel it and know that nothing's going wrong. You don't have to get away from it. You don't need to drink wine or eat or yell at anybody or any of that. You can just let that feeling be there and let it pass just as quickly.

Okay, super fun. Love rejection. Have a wonderful, wonderful week and I'll talk to you next time. Take care. Bye-bye.