



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Hey. What's up, my friend? How are you? So happy to have you join me on the podcast today. I've got a really great topic today that I can't wait to talk to you about, but before we get into that, I have to tell you the Oscars were last night and I stayed up too late. Do you do that too? Here's the thing, I didn't even see any of the movies. Not even one. Yet, I'm sitting there in my chair, my eyes wanting to drop. I'm thinking, "I really should just go to bed," and I think, "Oh, but I want to find out who wins."

So anyway, I woke up this morning with that classic thought of, "When can I get back to sleep again?" It wasn't actually that bad. It wasn't like residency level where I would wake up and within the first two minutes of being conscious again, planning out when I was going to be able to sleep again. It wasn't that bad, but really just realizing, "Wow, okay. More evidence. You don't do as well when you don't get the sleep you need." Oh my gosh. I love that. I love just holstering that evidence and going, "Okay, Katrina. More evidence you need lots of sleep, my friend. You can always go and find out who won the Oscars online the next day." Just so you know, I'm always working on myself too.

Okay, let's talk iTunes reviews really quickly. I wanted to tell you that we are getting super close, but I need more of those reviews. If you're new to the podcast, then I'll just let you know that I have set a goal to reach 500 reviews on iTunes for this podcast. I'm super close. I'm definitely well into the 400s and I would be so appreciative if you wouldn't mind leaving me a review. Now the problem with these iTunes reviews is that if you have an iPhone and you're using the Apple Podcast app, a lot of people struggle with leaving a review. It used to be super hard to do it on the app, then they changed it so it's easier, but then a lot of people say it doesn't go through.

You can try. Just go ahead on your app and see if you can get it to go through and if doesn't, really the best way to do it is to just open up iTunes on your computer. Even if you have a PC, you can open up iTunes. You can just download it really quickly. I mean even if you just download it for this and then delete it again, that would be so great. I seriously would be so appreciative.

What I like to do is go through and look at some of the latest reviews and read some of them because I think that they are really pretty inspirational to the rest of you who are listening. This one is titled Revolutionary and the author is Barb S., MD.

She writes, "This podcast has been an amazing wake up call. We have the tools to do this. We don't need to make it harder than it really is. Life is so full of so many wonderful moments, things, experiences, travel, et cetera, such that the burden of carrying extra weight need not reside in the forefront of our minds. As a physician, pediatric subspecialist with three kids and the sole provider of income for my family, the stress is real. The battle with weight loss does not have to continue or define us. I love the way Katrina breaks down concepts that have led to years of regret, weight gain, and frustration. Dieting since third grade is humbling. Even a degree in nutritional biochemistry couldn't help me with the ongoing mental challenges and adaptations needed for sustainable weight loss. I needed a frameshift change in my thinking, which Dr. Ubell provides. You're doing amazing things and striking a chord where it matters. Thank you."

I mean seriously, you guys, this is just evidence that you actually take the time to apply this work to your life and you get amazing results. So happy for you, Barb. Thanks for your review. I really appreciate it.

Okay. Today, I want to talk to you about a different way of approaching your successes and failures, particularly as it pertains to weight loss, but then in other goals that you may have for yourself in your life as well. I notice this a lot with the clients that I work with. What they'll do is they'll set a goal to lose a certain amount of weight in a certain amount of time. The way I teach goal setting is that you always have a very measurable goal and it needs to have a finite endpoint. So how are you going to know when you've reached that goal? Well, because you have reached whatever it is by the time that you set, the day and time that you set.

My clients will set a goal to lose a certain amount of weight, like maybe a certain number of pounds in a month, and then they'll work really hard toward it and sometimes they'll reach it, but sometimes they don't. Then they're disappointed and they don't really know what to do. Some people, especially those who really have a competitive drive, really do well when they set an extremely ambitious goal for themselves, like basically borderline impossible. This really fuels up their strength in competition and then they work really hard, but sometimes you work really, really hard and you still don't achieve that goal. Like in this case, you might set a goal to lose 15 pounds in a month, which for somebody who has a lot of weight to lose, might be possible, but as you lose more and more weight, that becomes less and less likely. They work really, really hard at it. They don't get it. Maybe they lost 11 pounds. Now what?

So they often ask me how to look at this. Should they set a more realistic goal? By realistic I'm doing air quotes because what really is realistic? It's only what we decide to think is realistic. Or maybe we look to the past for evidence of what we think realistic is, but that still is just a thought in our minds. But it's, especially for the competitive people, hard for them to not look at this like a failure. Losing 11 pounds in a month is amazing. They're like, "Yeah, but I didn't lose 15." Here's a question. Why bother setting a true below your own mind goal if you're just going to end up being disappointed if you don't reach it?

I want to introduce to you a concept called the gap versus the gain. Let me explain that to you. You have your starting point whenever you are creating a goal for yourself. Right? You're at time zero right now and you want to set a goal to improve something else. So what your goal is, is the ideal goal. Right?

Say we're going to use a huge stretch goal and say 15 pounds in a month weight loss is what we want and our starting point is our weight today. So we're going to know that we've reached this goal if we've lost 15 pounds in 30 days from today, let's say. This ideal really might be something that you aren't sure you can achieve, but you want to try it. You can call that your reach goal, like if you could have everything you wanted, that would be what you would want.

Now a reach goal is not 50 pounds in a month. I mean that's not realistic or safe or healthy for you at all. We can all agree that that's a goal that doesn't make a lot of sense, but say you are needing to lose 100 plus pounds and you're just getting going on this work. Losing 15 pounds in a month might really happen for you. It is possible. Say you set that as this big, fat, juicy goal for yourself. Then you go about doing the work required to achieve this goal. At the end of the 30 days, you look at where you end up. What is your results? That may not be the ideal. Say your goal is to lose 15 pounds and you lost 11. Then how you look at that. Was that a failure? Should you be disappointed? Should you push yourself less in terms of your goal setting? Should you set more realistic i.e. lower, easier goals so that you have a higher probability of reaching them, which will then make you feel better about yourself? Or is there another way to look at this?

That way of looking at it, looking at it like well, I failed, I missed my goal by four pounds. I'm really disappointed. That wasn't realistic. I should just do something easier. This way of thinking is called the gap. The gap is what's between the ideal that you set and what you actually created. So between the ideal goal and your actual results. When you're in the gap, that means that you're measuring success by comparing where you ended up with the ideal. So when you do this, you're setting yourself up for being dissatisfied a lot of the time. Unless you've reached that ideal. You'll never be able to measure up. You'll never be happy.

Now for some of you who find that you're dissatisfied a lot, you might really resonate with this. You might have this idea that this experience, this holiday together with my family should be this way and this is the ideal and you've set up this idea for how it's going to be, and then there's the actual real result. If you're comparing your result to the ideal, you'll always be disappointed. The children didn't sled holding hands, laughing hysterically and loving on each other all the time. Or whatever it was, these ideas that you had in your head. You're then in the gap. You're always going to be in that disappointed, dissatisfied, never happy kind of place.

This can also apply to things like, say you have a goal to be more patient with your kids over the next month. You'll measure this by not raising your voice with them more than once a week because right now you're raising your voice with them every day, let's say. At the end of the month, you find that you've raised your voice twice a week during that month. When you're in the gap, you'll see this as a failure because you're always measuring yourself against this ideal. In this case, it's probably this ideal mom who, let's face it, doesn't even exist. If she doesn't raise her voice, then she's probably drinking too much wine to deal with the thoughts she has in her head.

The same thing can apply for your charting. So your goal might be to clear out your EMR before you go home every day. What if you do that four out of every five days in the week? Do you still think then that you're not good enough and that you failed at your goal? Because if you do think that way, you're in the gap.

Now let's look at the gain. The gain is where you measure your success against where you started from. Instead of measuring your success against the ideal, you're measuring it against where you started from. This way, what you're doing is you're recognizing the true successes that you've had. For weight, if your goal was to lose 15 pounds in a month and you lost 11, then you're like, "Oh my god. I lost 11 pounds in a month. That's amazing." Super sense of accomplishment. Focusing your attention of what you did create instead of what you didn't create.

Now what if your goal was to lose 10 pounds in a month and you lost only one pound in that month? Can you then rejoice in the fact that you lost one pound? Because you have that gain, right? The comparison of in a month, I still lost a pound. What if you didn't lose anything and you just maintained? So you didn't lose, you didn't gain. Can you rejoice in the fact that you now know exactly what you need to do to maintain your weight at this point? Maintenance is such a huge issue for so many of us.

We tell ourselves such a big story like, "I have no idea how to maintain my weight. What am I going to do when I get to maintenance? I'm freaking out." Well, if you don't lose anything, if you want to maintain the weight you're at right now, you just keep doing what you did. That's good information. Now say you go, "Well, okay. I don't really want to be at this weight. I want to be 30 pounds lower." Okay, well, now you know how to maintain 30 pounds higher. Let's get to work losing some weight and then we'll figure out how to maintain that. That's totally doable as well.

If you were trying to be patient with your kids and you were only able to be patient like one time that month, can you rejoice in knowing that it is possible for you to improve in this area? That sometimes, it's possible for you to not raise your voice. Looking at the gain means seeing that one less of raising your voice is still moving you in the right direction. This is still the gain. This isn't having ridiculous magical thinking and thinking that you're just giving yourself a pass. It's not that at all. It's focusing on what you have actually achieved instead of what you have not achieved because focusing constantly on what you have not achieved is not going to make you achieve any more. It's not going to make you any better. That's the key thing.

Say you're trying to clear out your EMR notifications before you leave work every day. Can you rejoice in knowing that instead of having a huge backlog every day, that sometimes you keep up with your charts now? Even if it's three times in a month. That is a huge improvement. That is focusing on the gain. When you focus on the gain, that's when you go, "Well, hey. If I cleared out my EMR three times this month and my goal is to have it eventually be cleared out every day. Gosh, okay, three times this month I was able to do it. Let me really focus on what I did that created that. Now let me see if I could double down on that. Let me see if I can six times this month, clear it out before I leave."

I want to stress again, this does not mean you're letting yourself off the hook. It doesn't mean that you're lowering your high expectations of yourself. It means focusing your brain on what you are creating instead of what you didn't or couldn't create. This allows you to then pick that next big goal and move toward it with massive action because there's no downside. When we talk about choosing a realistic goal, we want to protect ourselves from that disappointment of not reaching it. Now what if you just focus on approaching your goal with massive action, doing your best to achieve that, and then really loving the fact that you created the success that you did?

When you create that next big goal, if you reach it, amazing. That's fantastic. Aren't you so glad that you had a real push goal for yourself so that you could create more than you ever thought possible? But if you don't reach that goal, then where did you improve? What did you learn? Where did you have successes along the way? Were you applying massive action? Only a couple of times? Okay, so how can you work on applying massive action all of the time? What can you learn and what can you apply from what you learned to reach that new goal?

This point of view, focusing on the gain instead of being in the gap, keeps you focused on keeping yourself in that right direction. You don't make not meeting your stretch goal mean anything bad is happening or that anything is bad or wrong or broken about you. You rejoice in the gains that you've made. You learn from your failures. You set a new goal and you get to work achieving it.

It's basically how we talk to our children. If my kids come home and say, "Oh, but I didn't do this," or, "Look, I created this new thing and I kind of colored outside the lines here." I say, "Yeah, okay. A little bit there, but look at all the areas where you colored inside the line. That's great. Next time you just focus a little bit more on keeping everything inside the lines and you've got it." It's that more positive reframing that we do for other people all the time. We have to learn to do it for ourselves all the time as well.

This is really, in my opinion, the best way to make your experience of your weight loss journey a really, truly great experience. When you are allowing yourself to rejoice in your successes, no matter how small they are, then you get that awesome sense of accomplishment. You get to see that progress that you're making. Since you're not in a rush, right? Because the only reason we ever want anything in a hurry is because of how we think it'll make us feel. When we're not in a rush because we know this is the last time we're losing weight, then we can just keep rejoicing in our successes and focusing on what worked and learning from what didn't work and try again with that next new goal. You push yourself to see what that results in instead of what that doesn't result in. I promise you this is going to change your whole perspective on weight loss or any other big goal that you're working super hard to achieve.

All right, my friends. Thank you so much for joining me today. Great, great topic. Can't wait to see how this affects you guys and helps you. Just one final plug for iTunes reviews. If you could please leave me a review if you haven't already, I would super duper appreciate it. All right. Have a wonderful weekend. I'll talk to you soon. Bye.