



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: What's up? What's up? How are you today? Super excited to talk to you. Guess what I want to share with you? I have been listening to something that has been so fascinating I absolutely had to share it with you. I knew immediately. So, for those of you who are podcast listeners, you might also be into audiobooks. So, I use Audible through Amazon, for my audiobooks, and they had something that they were offering for free.

I don't know if they're charging for it now, but they were offering it for free, and I decided to sign up for it a little while back, never really looked into it, and just recently got into it, and it is so good. If you know NPR at all, you might know Dina Temple-Raston. She is one of their correspondents, one of their reporters, and she put together this six part series with Audible, for Audible. It's called "What Were You Thinking?" Which is such a great title. "What were you thinking?" It's about the adolescent brain, and how the adolescent brain develops and how it can be led astray, and really good, hard hitting topics like suicide, and suicide clusters, school shootings, just all these really, really interesting, fascinating topics. They're about 45 minutes long each. One was about internet addiction, or video game addiction. It was so interesting, really, really fascinating.

My son is going to be 13, my oldest, soon. I was thinking about having him listen to it with me because I think it would be really helpful for him to even understand what's going on in his brain. They define adolescence as ages 13 to 24, so that's kind of long. Like, we're in med school and we're still adolescents some of us. Really, really fascinating.

So anyway, if you're a total brain nerd, like I am, always want to know what's going on in there and why, I highly, highly, highly recommend that you check it out, because it's just really well done, really well reported, and also super fascinating. Definitely check it out. "What Were You Thinking?" on Audible.

Okay, today I want to talk to you about the difference between the truth and facts. This is something that my clients often get confused and really struggle with, and get stuck with. What is the truth? I actually went to Google, and looked up the definition, "What is truth?" The definition is a fact or belief that is accepted as true. So, a fact or belief that is accepted as true, but this is so interesting, because there's two things here. There's facts and beliefs, and those are not the same thing.

Facts are something that everyone would agree on. Everyone has heard me talking about the thought model knows that on the circumstance line, we always talk about facts. The circumstance is the facts of the situation. It's something everyone would agree on, and this is things like sky is blue. But beliefs are also thoughts, right? If it's facts and beliefs that are what the truth is, and beliefs are thoughts, then we don't always agree on what's the truth.

Beliefs are thoughts, they're just thoughts we've thought so many times that we decided to believe them. Sometimes we thought them just a couple of times. Maybe when we were children, people told us what was their definition of the truth, right? Their beliefs. And we just decided to believe them, 'cause they were a trusted adult.

And sometimes we have just had a number of experiences and based on that, we've created a set of thoughts that we believe. Not everybody, though, agrees on beliefs. Now, we all know this, right? Religious beliefs, total, tons of people not agreeing on their religious beliefs. Political beliefs, people who think one way politically think that that is the truth, and other people who think the opposite way think that that is the truth.

You see this with parenting beliefs. I mean, as a pediatrician, I was really front and center with all this stuff. People have very, very, very firmly established beliefs on the right way to parent your children, and they think that that is the truth, and that you are definitely messing your kid up if you do it any other way, except that there's multiple different ways of doing these things, and people all believe that their way is the right way, and that's the truth.

You see this with financial beliefs, too, right? People have this idea of the best way to manage your money, how you should be investing, how you should be thinking about money, and that other people think about it totally differently, and they think that way serves them, and they think that way is true. You can come up with this with so many different things, right? There's people who have a belief that science is the way medicine should be practiced, and then there's people who say they don't believe in science.

I didn't know science was a belief system, but apparently some people think it is, right? And they say they don't believe in that, and they think that is the truth. So, to all of these people with different beliefs, they think that their belief is the truth. But then someone else holds an opposite belief, and they think that their opposite belief is the truth, so how can one person think that the truth is that Donald Trump is the best thing that's ever happened to America, and someone else thinks that the truth is that he's the worst thing that's happened to America, right?

If those are the truth, how can be the in conflict like that? We also think that the truth is in the past, that the truth is the details about what happened, but the past only exists in our brains, in the form of our memories, and the thoughts that we've chosen to tell ourselves about the past, and this is that story of our past. But when something has happened, we often think we need to find out the truth.

Maybe we're getting conflicting stories about what happened. One person says one thing, and says it's the truth, but another says something else, and they insist that what they're saying is the truth.

Now what? We think, "We need to figure out what the truth is here" and I'm going to give you some examples.

Say your kids were playing together alone in a room in the house, and they break something, and then they each blame the other one and say that they're telling the truth, right? "No, he is the one who broke it. I'm telling the truth." "No, she is the one who broke it, I'm telling the truth." This totally happened to me. I will come clean on this. When I was young, I mean, nine or younger, I was in our living room with my brother and I don't even know what we were doing, but I broke the lamp, and I totally blamed it on him, and my mom believed me. How about that? Did you ever do that? She knows, I've told her, but she didn't know until we were adults, so he totally got in trouble, and it was totally my fault, and I swore up and down I was telling the truth.

Now, let's increase the stakes here a little bit. So, say your child is caught with drugs. He says that they aren't his and that his friend put them in his backpack. He doesn't know where they came from, he swears that this is the truth, but the friend tells his parents that he's never seen drugs before in his life, and the drugs are definitely your child's. He says he's telling the truth, so who is telling the truth?

We often think we need to find out, "What is the real truth here? Is my son telling the truth? Is the friend telling the truth?" The facts here that everyone would agree on is that there were drugs found in the backpack. How they got there and what he's been doing with his time otherwise are totally up for interpretation. Or, here is even possibly higher stakes.

We have some evidence that a spouse has been cheating on us, but he has a story that he thinks explains the evidence away, but you're not buying it, right? You don't think he's really telling the truth, but he says he is. So then it's really easy to get stuck in a bit of a spin cycle, right? Like, you just cannot get out of the cycle of thought. Sometimes call that a spin cycle.

It's easy to get stuck in that cycle of needing to figure out the truth, telling ourselves that we need to find out the truth before we can do anything else. We think that if we can find out the truth, then we'll be able to control how we think and feel, and we'll be better able to make good decisions about what to do next.

Has this ever happened to you? This is really easy for our brains to go to this place. There might be some facts involved, but likely you're going to get different versions of the truth. Then, you get to decide to make the truth whatever you want it to be, okay? You think about this, right? If the past is only a collection of your thoughts, then your recollection of what happened, which you think is the truth, is going to be different than somebody else, because their story of how they tell what happened in the past to themselves is going to be different. They're going to think that that's the truth, too.

I remember that after we used to go to the dentist, he was like a horrible, horrible man, my dentist growing up, pediatric dentist. He was a horrible man that my mom would take us out for donuts afterward, and that was ridiculously crazy, because my mom was not the kind of mom who did that.

We did not get a lot of sweets. I think she just felt so bad for us that we were just in so much emotional turmoil having had to go through this dental appointment, and there was a donut shop right nearby, that she would take us to get a donut.

I remember little goody two-shoes, me, being like, "Mommy, it hasn't been 30 minutes since I had my fluoride treatment." She'd be like, "It's fine, just eat it." So, this was a big deal. We did this over and over again. I remember it like it was yesterday. I remember sitting there with my mom, she would always get an apple fritter, and me and my brother would each pick out whatever donut we wanted. My brother has zero recollection of this. He does not remember this at all. He's like, "What are you talking about? This didn't happen."

I'm like, "It totally happened multiple times." I'm telling the truth, he's telling his version of the truth, he's like, "That never happened." It's absolutely happened, right? Because I am telling myself the story and he must have just forgotten the story. His brain was just like, "No room in my brain for that one," so who is telling the truth? You can see, that's obviously different than a cheating spouse, but just to show you a lighthearted way that the truth is totally subjective. What I want to offer to you today is that you don't need to know the truth in order to move forward when something happens. All you need are the facts, the parts that everybody will agree upon, and the ability to manage your thinking. Let's work through some of these scenarios. The kids break something, let's say it's a lamp, like the lamp that I broke.

So, the facts are that the lamp was broken and children were involved in the breaking of it. But now what, right? What do I want to make that mean? Do I want to spend a bunch of time interrogating them individually to try to break them down and figure out who to believe and who's telling me the truth? I can still be wrong, right? Even if I do that.

If your son is caught with drugs in his backpack, okay, the facts are there were drugs in his backpack. Again, now what? What will I make this mean? Should I spend a bunch of time trying to figure out where it came from and who's to blame, or should I focus on how I want to show up as a mom when something like this happens?

The final example, your spouse might be cheating. It's really easy to think that you know the truth, that it'll be easier to know whether to stay in the marriage or to leave if you know the truth, right? So then you think you need to figure out the truth, but you don't need to know any of that actually, and it's not possible for you to.

First, you make sure you truly know what the facts are and then you determine whether there's any possibility that the explanation could be true. So, I want to just mention, you don't have to believe the explanation. I'm not saying that there's a 1% chance that the explanation was true, that you're like, "Oh okay, I should just blindly accept that." That's not at all what I'm saying.

What I want you to know, though, is that it's important for your brain to recognize that there's a possibility that something else could also be true, not just the story that you've created in your brain. Because what we have to be careful of is that story that we tell ourselves about what happened. We think it's the truth, but a lot of it is just fabricated in our brains with assumptions and hearsay, mixed in with a few facts, right?

Our brains really like to take some information and then run with creating the story. In this kind of a situation, your brain will probably feel very threatened, and you might go into full on fight or flight mode, right? Where you either feel like you need to defend yourself and you go on the attack, or you feel like you need to completely retreat and you just completely separate yourself and want to be alone.

In this kind of a situation, it's really important that you manage your thinking, that you just watch your brain completely freak out. This is where you take on that awareness, that watcher or observer position, and you just watch your brain got nutso, and create a whole story. I'm sure your brains do this. Mine definitely does. That, "For sure, this is how this is going down, this is exactly how it happened," and before I know it, I've created all kinds of things that are pure fabrication, completely just made it up myself.

So, once you recognize that, you see your brain freaking out, you recognize, "Okay, these are the facts, and I get to decide what I want to believe," then from that place that is your version of the truth. When you think, "I need to know the truth," like this is your version of the truth, because nobody's going to come up and say, "This is the actual truth" unless there's true facts, right? You know the facts, and the rest, you get to decide what you want to think about it.

Is the truth that you still love your spouse? Is the truth that you want to try to go to counseling and work things out? Is the truth that you need some time and some distance to figure out what you believe and want? I think it can be really good to just decide to not decide for a while, to just go, "I don't know if I'm going to stay, I don't know if I'm going to go, and I'm just going to decide to not make a decision right now and work on my thinking, and do my own work on myself," and from that place, make a decision.

But going back to other examples, is the truth that you don't know who broke the lamp? Is the truth that you've known for a while that your son has been struggling and this is just further evidence that you need to be more present in his life, or show up in a different way in his life? You're never going to know what the facts are. Who broke the lamp? You're never going to know for sure. How did the drugs get in the backpack? You're never going to know for sure.

Was there an affair or was there no affair? You're not going to know for sure, but you can still decide to believe whatever you want to believe. Make sure it has an upside for you. This is when people are like, "What, I'm supposed to be totally deluded? Like, clearly he's been doing these things." Well, if you have facts, okay, right? But what is a delusion? It's deciding to believe something that other people don't agree with.

Well, then we're all deluded, right? Because we're all believing things that other people don't believe. That's exactly what beliefs are, so if you're going to be deluded anyway, then just make sure that your delusion has an upside for you.

Here are some beliefs that can help you. "I'm resilient and I can work my way through any difficult time in my life. The only person I can control is me, and I get to decide how I'm going to show up in the world. I don't have to rush to make a decision and can take all the time I need. I'm the only one who can determine how I think, feel, and act. Nobody else can control that."

These are beliefs and truths that have an upside for you. This is how you move forward and get out of that spin cycle. You drop the need for this "truth," that you think is out there, and you work on believing what you do know is the truth, right? You don't have to rush to make a decision. You are resilient, and can work through this. From that place, you're so much better able to make decisions about what to do next, right?

That is how you end up working through all of your thinking, and clearing everything up, so that you can make a decision about what to do next. Because what we typically do is we fly off the handle and completely freak out, and that's unnecessary. Now, I do want to just take a moment as a little side note, because some people will often talk about their "truth."

People will use this way of speaking, like their truth, as a way of saying something hurtful, or insulting, or judgmental, and they often apologize beforehand, but it's one of those, "Sorry, not sorry" kind of apologies, right? Here's a couple examples. "I'm sorry, she's just a terrible teacher. That is just my truth." "The hospital administrator is a jackass. That is my truth." "You are a lazy husband. That's just my truth. I'm speaking my truth."

People really think that if they just say what they think, then call it their truth, then that can be okay, and I want to point this out because you might speak this way, or you might notice other people speaking this way, and I want you to recognize what's going on there. It's really important that you recognize that these are thoughts, and tacking on, "It's my truth" to the end is just a way of justifying thoughts that don't serve you, right?

It's a way of arguing for your own misery, in the sense that you're saying, "She's just a terrible teacher," like you're just saying the facts, right? Except that's a complete choice, and that choice may give you a little dopamine hit saying that, but the long term result is not going to be good for you. It's the same for any of these kinds of thoughts that are hurtful or insulting, or judgmental.

So, those thoughts, "She's a terrible teacher," "The hospital admin is a jackass," "You're a lazy husband," they do not generally create results that serve us. We know that when we run them through a model, right? When you take that and run it through a model, you'll see that there's no meaningful action taken when you have the thought, "The hospital admin is a jackass," right? Like, are you improving anything? No. Are you finding a different job? No. You're not doing anything except just wallowing in your own misery.

So, just be watchful, if your brain offers this kind of line of thinking up to you, or you hear people talking this way, it's just that way of justifying, not managing your mind, and arguing, basically being entitled, to your own misery. It's blaming other people and not taking responsibility for your own thoughts and feelings.

If you talk that way, I want to encourage you to drop that, okay? All right. Well, I hope you have a wonderful week, and I will talk to you next week. Take care. Bye bye.