



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Hey there my friend, what's up? Welcome back to the podcast. Super excited to have you here today. Super excited to be recording this for you today. Today is my birthday as I'm recording this. Fun day. My kids are actually off with their old nanny having some fun for a few hours, and I wanted to get some work done, so here I am recording this great podcast for you. I have to tell you though, yesterday I was seriously just thinking about how I wanted to share what I was doing yesterday with you guys. I seriously spent probably three hours filling out forms for my children to be able to go to this camp this summer. It's just like one week camp.

I mean, it's a great camp. It's all accredited, so they take everything really seriously. They want to really know about your child and all this other great stuff, which I'm all on board for. That's all wonderful. Only one of them is even staying overnight. The other two are just going to day camp. Seriously, I was like, "I need to hire a personal assistant just to help with all of this stuff. This is ridiculous." You will love this. My husband said to me last night, he's like, "Ah, so you're one of those people now." So, I got an email from the camp saying that within a little less than a month from now, everything has to be done, all forms in, everything paid, all sign ups done, and all of the medical forms in. Everything has to be done.

I'm like, okay, that's fine. I know the kids all had their check-ups last summer. I go, and I look. They had their check-ups in June, but the camp is in July. They have to have had a check-up within 12 months of when they are going to camp. That means that their June check-up is like 13 months, so that's not going to work. I'm like, "Oh great, watch me." Of course, I don't just call the office because my kids go to the same office where I used to practice. I'm texting one of the nurses there. I'm like, "Hey, can you check and see what's going on?" She's like, "No, no, no. You should be good. They had them last June." I was like, "No. I'm not good, and it has to be done by May 1." She said to me, she's like, "Oh, yeah. Well, that's not going to work."

I was determined to not ask for any favors or do anything crazy like that, so I'm taking my kids to the CVS today to get their little camp physical forms done. I'm so glad to be honest. I remember hearing that they were doing that and just being kind of appalled. Now I'm so grateful that something like that exists because what are you supposed to do if your doctor can't get them, where are you supposed to go? We'll be doing that, no big deal. Of course, I'll still have them get their regular check-up with their doctor, but I just need someone to sign on the dotted line apparently so that they can go to camp.

I also wanted to tell you that I was so disappointed that I had to turn off my space heater because it's too loud when I'm recording a podcast. It is so cold. I don't know what is up. It's actually snow flurrying, which it is not supposed to be doing on my birthday. It's supposed to be spring for my birthday. Anyway. I've got a rice pillow heated up on my lap to keep me warm.

Okay. Today, I want to talk to you about gossip. I think this is a really interesting concept because I think that most of you who are listening, most of us don't really identify with being a gossip. We don't think that it's something that we do a lot or really ever. I think many of us think that it's very much a schoolgirl kind of thing to do, middle school, high school, maybe college sorority kind of telling stories about people or sharing things and kind of really gossiping. I know that's one way that we identify bullying, especially amongst girls in school is gossiping and spreading rumors and things like that. But I do want to suggest to you today that you might be gossiping, participating in gossip, more frequently than you think. I want to talk to you about what that would look like, and I want to talk to you about why that might be a problem for you. It might be something that you want to change.

It's really interesting. I was thinking about being considered a gossip. It has such a negative connotation. We just think of it as, "Oh, I don't want to be that." I was thinking back to my life and being in middle school and there was this time, I want to say it was about seventh grade or so, where there was this thing, as there are these things when you're in middle school, where people had these notebooks. It was like one person had this notebook, just like a blank notebook, and I don't even remember all the details, where the questions and stuff came from. But what you basically did was you wrote down everyone's name that was kind of in your larger friend group and you passed around this book and people were to write down just what they thought about you, but kind of anonymously. It was like most likely to this and most likely to that kind of a thing.

I remember that all of my friends, kind of extended friend group, were sending this book around. Everyone's filling it in. It's like most likely to x, y, or z, or whatever. Someone wrote by my name most likely to gossip. I was devastated and I was totally embarrassed. I remember just kind of being like, "Oh my gosh. That's horrible. That's not at all how I want to be known or seen and do I really gossip?" I remember thinking, "I'm not gossiping. I just really care about everybody." I probably was gossiping, who even remembers. It's just an interesting remembrance of the time where people were talking about that and what that might mean. What do you think that person who wrote that ... because it was all anonymous. I have no idea who wrote it, what that person was thinking that I was doing that was gossiping?

I was thinking though, what really qualifies as gossip? I looked up a couple definitions. One definition is "casual or unconstrained conversation or reports about other people, typically involving details that are not confirmed as being true". Another definition is "ideal talk or rumor, especially about the personal or private affairs of others". I thought those were good definitions. A lot of rumor, a lot of talking about things that are not confirmed as being true. I love the idea of unconstrained conversation or reports. There's no filter there. It's just verbal vomit. Just let it all out, there's no filter, whatever your brain is thinking, all the judgements all just come out.

I think it's interesting though because oftentimes people talk about gossip like it's an okay thing. Think about how you listen, if you go on that ETV channel, they're like, "All the celebrity gossip that you want to know." Or People magazine or things like that. They kind of talk about it like it's an okay thing. But really, what they're doing is exactly what these definitions say. They're spreading rumors, they're talking about details that are not confirmed typically as being true, a lot of unconstrained conversation. That's exactly what it is. It actually is gossip, but they're kind of spinning it like it's not a problem. It really means that anytime we're chatting about other people's lives or just talking about our opinions of what's going on for them, we're gossiping.

Why is gossiping bad? I want to talk about that. Gossip really is a buffer because it's a reaction that makes us feel better in the short term. It's a way for us to get that little dopamine hit and feel better. There's that German word *schadenfreude*, which means getting pleasure out of the discomfort or bad situations of others. That's basically what gossiping is. We're typically not gossiping about amazing things that are happening to other people unless we think that they don't deserve it or there's some sort of negative issue related to that. The thing with all buffers is that there's that short term pleasure that we get, that short term little dopamine hit, but then we exchange that for the long term pain, the net negative. When you're sharing information that's not yours to share about other people, you are gossiping.

What I think about is every time that I have ended up feeling like I have been engaging in gossip, it kind of feels salacious and really exciting in the moment and then I always feel bad about myself later. Not to the point of beating myself up, but just that feeling you get when you know you're not really being the best version of yourself, when you know you're not really showing up as the person you want to be. You think, "You know, I'm really kind of a better person than that. I want to be a better person than someone who totally is cutting down people behind their back."

The reason why this is important is because we use food to buffer to make ourselves feel better and that has a net negative. Some of us use alcohol and that has a net negative. Some of us spend too much and then that can have a net negative, whether it's debt or it's too much stuff in your house. Gossiping is also a buffer. It's also a way that we try to make ourselves feel better because we're having negative thoughts about someone else. We found out some information about someone else's life, like maybe they told us it or we heard it from somebody else secondhand or third hand, and then we let our brains just create an opinion, have a judgment about it, and then we go and spread that around to other people and that opinion might be making us feel bad, which is why we then gossip about it to feel better so we can make ourselves feel better.

The whole purpose of gossiping is to make ourselves feel better than we were before because we are somehow making ourselves better off or higher than or somehow better than the person that we're gossiping about. It really is something that doesn't bring anything positive into the world. Really what it is, is it's putting negativity out into the world. Now if you've spent any time or even just talking to a lot of people, there is a lot that's already negative out in the world. There's already a lot of information to have bad thoughts about. I always think about, do I want to add to that? Is what I'm contributing adding to that negativity in the world or am I contributing something positive?

What's interesting is when you put negativity out into the world, that is what you will get back. That will come back to you. What that negativity does is it trains your brain to focus on other people's shortcomings, which then in turn creates the filter through which you view and experience your life. We all have this filter, our brains can't possibly take in all the information that we hear and see and feel at all times. So our brains filter that by what we ask our brains to show us. When you are putting out this negativity, that is that filter through which you view your life. Your brain will show you more, more negativity. This is really that net negative for you when you gossip besides feeling maybe bad about yourself or maybe just feeling that ick feeling like, "Ugh, I don't know if I felt good about that."

This is not woo woo, this stuff. This is totally out there, like putting stuff out in karma and whatever and any of that. Literally when you are gossiping, your brain is creating stories about other people and then you're perpetuating those stories by putting them out into the world. They really are not usually very nice or complimentary or supportive of that person. You're asking your brain to show you what's negative or wrong or bad or salacious about someone else and then your brain will continue to show you that. It'll show you what's wrong or bad or negative about your own life as well and that creates your experience of your life.

When we gossip, we think we know better than the person who we're gossiping about how to live their life. We're using their circumstances or our interpretation of their circumstances for entertainment value. Then we're going about and sharing intimate and possibly really private information about these people that likely is really not yours to share. Back in the day, there was a nurse who used to work in my office and she was great with the patients and everybody loved her, but she really, really, really gossiped a lot. It was like she couldn't even control herself. You could just see that once she knew some gossip, it was just going to burst out of her. She couldn't even control it at all. I remember one specific time where I thought to myself, "Oh my gosh. I can't believe she just said that and just shared that."

She had been babysitting for another partner one weekend and they were very newly pregnant and their older child had shared with her because they had apparently shared with their child that she was pregnant. Their child told this nurse when she was babysitting. Then she came to work and spread it all around to everybody. It was definitely not her information to share. Being able to share that you're pregnant is a great thing. It's one of the most fun things and she completely stole that from everybody. That is definitely gossip. She told me that and I was happy for them and I immediately felt this pit in my stomach. I felt awful. I felt like, "Oh my gosh. She just totally stole that from these people. That was not her information to share." Just because she was not able to control herself and control her filter. She just had to have that verbal vomit and share it.

I want to offer to you that engaging in gossip is like poisoning your mind. It does not bring out the best in who you are as a human. It does not build your relationships with others. In fact, when you gossip to somebody else, oftentimes they're then thinking, "I wonder what she says about me when I'm not around." I've certainly had that thought before when people were talking to me.

One interesting idea is, what if some of my friendships are based mostly on gossiping? You might listen to this and go, "Oh my gosh. With so and so, that's basically all we do. All we do is talk about people behind their backs. Now what?"

If I'm not going to do that with that person, what does this friendship look like?" It can be good to take some time to evaluate that relationship and really ask yourself, is this friendship serving me? Does it help me be the person that I want to be? Am I evolving toward the person I want to be when I'm with that friend or when I'm inviting him or her into my life?

I'm just going to take a leap of faith that you are someone who wants to improve yourself and you want to evolve yourself as a human or you wouldn't be listening to this podcast. If you're the person who wants to continually be improving yourself, it's worth it to evaluate all of your relationships in this way. It might be possible to kind of adjust or modify the friendship away from the gossiping so that it becomes more meaningful and more supportive communication or you might find that it really can't be salvaged. If the other person doesn't want to stop gossiping and for him or her, gossip really is the foundation of your friendship, then you really can't control that. All you can control is how you're showing up. If you disengage from that gossiping behavior, it might seem like you're changing the framework of the friendship. Honestly, it seems like that because you are changing the framework of the friendship.

Friendships can have lifespans and that can be okay or maybe you can still be in each other's lives but not that in same close way where you're really gossiping and trash talking other people like you were in the past. I always like to think that people come into and out of my life at just the perfect times. You really get to decide what to make it mean if it's time to back out of a close relationship because you just don't want to invite this kind of poison, this gossip, into your life and into your brain anymore.

The last part of this that I want to address or discuss is how do you know when it's really gossip? What if you really just want to kind of talk about a mutual friend with another friend? Say you have a friend whose getting divorced and you're feeling like you want to be able to support her more. You have to think about, what is that emotion that's driving the action of gossiping? If you are talking about this person, if it's gossip or not gossip, if you're really coming from a place of love and true concern and really wanting to play some ideas off of another friend, what might I be able to do to help her? Maybe you have a lot of empathy or compassion for her. That's not going to drive gossip. That drives having a discussion with your friend about how you can really help this other friend or this other person that you know.

If you have a different emotion that's driving that conversation like jealousy or contempt or frustration with somebody else or self pity or really even just kind of having ego, arrogance driving the conversation about that other person, you're much more likely to be gossiping because those are the emotions that drive conversation about somebody that isn't meaningful, isn't supportive to them. It's all about building yourself up but in doing so, you're tearing someone else down. Have a thought with that and see how much that is applying to your life. I think that this is something that you're probably not doing a ton of, maybe you are, but I think it's really worth discussing because it's something that is really important in terms of showing up as the best person you can be in all areas of your life, which is what we're trying to do.

All right. Have a wonderful, wonderful week and I will talk to you next time. Take care. Bye.