



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina: Well, hey there my friend, how are you today. I'm so glad that you're listening in today. Today's episode is something special, and really the only way that I can think of to really describe it to you is that it's a love letter from me to you. It really was not what I had planned to record for you this week at all. I actually had something totally different planned. This came into my kind of psyche in the last day and I thought, you know what, no, this is for sure what I'm going to be doing.

So let me explain. So I went with my kids yesterday to the Scholastic Book Fair that they have at school and I'm sure many of you have been to similar events at your own kids' schools. And so they had gone through with their teachers before and they had their little wish lists of books that they wanted and in addition the teachers could ask for some books that we could donate to them. I had kind of looked online at the different books but didn't really pick anything out, didn't know some of the titles but I thought okay, when we're there I'll take a look and I'll get a book for each of the teachers, each and one of my kids' teachers that they're asking for as a donation because on top of it let me just be fully frank here, yesterday was Teacher Appreciation Day there and we were supposed to bring some food in for the teachers to have some sort of big celebratory lunch. Guess who completely didn't do it?

I can't even say I forgot, I did forget until the morning of. I had other stuff I had to do. I had to literally go see my surgeon for my post op appendectomy visit. I had other stuff I had to do and there was no way I was going to be doing that. So just keeping it real here with you. I just was like, I'll buy hem some books, how about that, that makes it even.

So I was in the book fair area looking at the different box and I saw that my son who's in kindergarten, his teacher had asked for this one book and the title of it is Dear Girl. It just looked cute. I thought, oh, maybe that would be a good one for my daughter. So I picked it up and I started flipping through it and I immediately had tears in my eyes and I immediately thought of you, my podcast listeners, like immediately. I thought okay, for sure I'm buying this for his teacher and I'm also buying it for me/ my daughter, so I told her it was for her but it was really for me to be able to share with you because this message even though the book says that it's geared toward ages four through eight, like, if I could just come to you and read this book to you face to face I would do it because it's so meaningful. I'm probably going to get choked up just reading this to you because it's literally everything that I want you to know about yourself.

So what I'm going to do is read the book and kind of describe to you a little bit what the pictures are if that's relevant and then I'm going to go through page by page and give you a little insight into the importance of everything. So when you first open the book, so I should tell you, let me just first tell you who it's by. It's called Dear Girl and it's written by Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Paris Rosenthal and it's illustrated by Holly Hatam. And so, when you first open it up on the book jacket on the inside and left side, it says, "Dear girl, this book is for you, wonderful, smart, beautiful you. If you ever need a reminder just turn to any page in this book and know that you are special and you are loved."

So not just children, girls ages four through eight need to hear this message. And so you're going to hear me flipping, you're going to hear all this noise in the background, that's me moving the pages so my apologies for that. I could not figure out a way to read a book silently. So here we go.

"Dear girl, keep that arm raised you have smart things to say." And so it's a picture of a girl raising her hand in school. "Dear girl, sometimes you may feel like being pink and sparkly, sometimes you may feel pretty much the opposite." And so when she's pink and sparkly she's doing ballet and in this pretty ballerina skirt and when she feels the opposite she is gleefully jumping in a mud puddle.

"Dear girl, look at yourself in the mirror. Say thank you to something that makes you you." So then they have pictures of girls looking in the mirror and one says, "Thank you freckles," one says, "Thank you birthmark," another says, "Thank you red hair."

"Dear girl, sometimes you just need a good cry, sometimes you'll need a friend, sometimes you'll need to be alone, sometimes you'll need a tissue sometimes you'll need a bucket." And so when it says sometimes you'll need a friend, she's hugging a friend. When she's alone she's sitting in a chair alone, with the tissues she's blowing her nose and then with the bucket she's sitting with a bucket on the floor and filling the bucket with her tears.

"Dear girl, do you know that there is no such thing as asking too many questions," and it shows the girl saying, "Who, what, when, where, why, how."

"Dear girl, write down your thoughts once in a while even if it's just enjoy the way your pen feels against the paper. Dear girl, make your room awesome, make your room you and while you're at it make your bed. Dear girl, don't ever lose your sense of wonder." And she's outside looking at a rainbow.

"Dear girl, sometimes you just gotta stop and dance." So it's in the middle of dinner and she's got her chair pulled out and she's totally dancing on top of her chair." "Dear girl, find people like you, find people unlike you." So the people like you are the girls on her soccer team and then she's walking over to some other kids and there's a kid who's a painter and a boy and girl who's like a skater.

"Dear girl, create traditions, funny crazy handshakes and silly inside jokes. Dear girl, if your instinct is telling you to say no, say no, you know. Dear girl, coloring outside the lines is cool too. Dear girl, there are no rules about what to wear or how to cut your hair.

Dear girl, you know what's really boring, when people say how bored they are. Dear girl, listen to your brave side." So in this one she's standing on this high diving board and she's got one thought bubble that says, "Gosh, I don't know," and the other thought bubble says, "I've got this," and then you see the splash when she jumps in.

"Dear girl, you won't be invited to every single party on the planet which is really okay. Can you imagine how exhausting that would be? Dear girl, a tree trunk is the perfect place for quiet thoughts to be thunk. Dear girl, whenever you need an encouraging boost, remember you can turn to any page in this book. Most of all dear girl who I love know that you can always, always, always turn to me."

Whoo, I'm like seriously choked up. It's such a good book. You know me, I'm not a crier. Like holy moly, that's like so meaningful even for us, even when we're in our 30's or 40's or 50's or 60's or 100's, right? Like this is so meaningful, we all need this message. So I'm going to go through this page by page with you and help you to understand how this applies to your life right now because I'm assuming you're not a girl ages four to eight.

So we start with, "Dear girl, keep that arm raised you have smart things to say." I cannot tell you how often my clients ask for coaching about how they find themselves stifling their ideas in meetings or not wanting to raise their hand and express some interest that they have in a new position or a raise. How sometimes they will say that they feel like they just need to stay in their place and they shouldn't be raising their hand and putting themselves forth in any way. What I see is just what an absolute shame that is, right? Keep that arm raised, you have smart things to say. And we would tell our daughters this, right? But we have smart things to say too.

We have a voice and it's so important that we now only learn to do that when we're girls but if we didn't or we forgot how to do that, that we continue on with letting people know the smart things that we have to say, what we think. Even when we think other people aren't interested or they're just going to turn us down, keep that arm raised, you have smart things to say.

"Dear girl, sometimes you may feel like being pink and sparkly and sometimes you may feel pretty much the opposite." The way I interpreted that for midlife, where we are, wherever you are in the midlife spectrum is some days you put on a bright face. You make yourself look put together and you feel great and some days you're in your jammies and your hair is greasy and you put on a hat and you go to the grocery store anyway. Both of those are okay, right? Sometimes you feel like being pink and sparkly. And for you it might not be pink and sparkly, it might be navy and shiny, I don't know. Some days you put yourself together and some days you're in the mud puddle. Both of those are completely fine.

So many of us have this idea that we need to look a certain way all the time or we need to be approaching our life from an outward appearance in a certain way all the time and none of that is important. It's so much more important to just honor who you are in that moment. If you're in jammies and greasy hair then that's the kind of day you're having and that's totally okay. You got to love yourself regardless.

"Dear girl, look at yourself in the mirror. Say thank you to something that makes you you." I cannot stress enough to you. I can't tell you how many clients tell me how disgusted they are when they look in the mirror or I ask them to take pictures of themselves when we first start working together so that they can compare to their after pictures when our group is over, and how many of them will post those pictures to me and will add some sort of comment about how disgusted they are, disgust is the word that's most commonly used, how disappointed they are, how horrified they are. Really the self loathing behind their opinion of what their bodies looks like just breaks my heart. It just is so optional and if we sat in front of the mirror like they say in this book and we said thank you to ourselves for something about us that makes us us, imagine how that would change everything.

I remember being in high school and not liking what my eyes looked like and not liking the birthmark on my neck and wishing my hair was different and all of these different things and we just continued doing that into our adult life thinking that somehow we can think or do better about ourselves. It's not going to happen until we start really, really starting to love ourselves. You start that by thanking yourself for something that makes you you. It's so great. Oh my gosh, please do that when you go to bed tonight. Thank yourself in the mirror.

"Dear girl, sometimes you just need a good cry. Sometimes you'll need a friend, sometimes you'll need to be alone, sometimes you'll need a tissue, sometimes you'll need a bucket." Whoo, that, gosh emotional today. I just think back, sorry for the, I'm sure you can hear my voice, the emotion is like, when my daughter died and just feeling like, just so overcome with emotion, and you just need that good cry. It's so important to know that that's normal and needed. There's nothing wrong with you when that's where you're at in life and you just need to process those emotions. Okay, wow. All right, let's keep going.

"Dear girl, do you know that there is no such thing as asking too many questions?" Like, oh my God, like how many of us felt like we were the goody two shoes or the teacher's pet if we raised our hand too much or see this all the time in my groups where they come to these live coaching calls and nobody has asked for coaching. I've told them this. Here you have this opportunity to work with me. You've paid me all this money and you won't raise your hand to ask a question or to get what it is that you're needing. We do that all the time, right? Like, I don't want to be the squeaky wheel, I don't want to be the one who's causing problems. Why not? You have every right to ask every question, to ask for help, all the time every single time.

So much of the reason why we don't do that is because we think that other people are going to have a negative opinion of us. As I've taught you, you can't control that anyway. Even if you don't ask questions there's going to be people who have a negative opinion of you. Like no matter what, there are people who will have a negative opinion of you. So if that's the case then raise your hand and ask your questions. Ask for the help that you need. Advocate for yourself. It's so, so, so important.

"Dear girl, write down your thoughts once in a while even if it's just to enjoy the way your pen feels against the paper." When I read this I was like, oh my god, it said thought download, yes. Write down your thoughts once in a while.

Please do this. Please get in touch with what's going on for you in your life. The only way you will do this is by writing it down. I know you think you can do a thought download in your head and the reason I know this is because I used to think I could too.

I promise you it's so much more meaningful and impactful if you do this on paper or you can type it onto the computer if that's more your thing. But really writing it all down, being able to go back and evaluate all this is so important. And even if you're thinking, like you see in this book, just enjoy the way your pen feels against the paper. You don't have to have something horrible going on for you all the time. It literally can just be you going, you know what, I'm just going to get in touch with what's going on for me today, good or bad. I'm just going to see. I'm just going to enjoy the way my pen feels against the paper and see what comes from there. Amazing.

"Dear girl, make your room awesome, make your room you and while you're at it make your bed." So, so many people who have weight issues also live in a very cluttered home. Their mind is cluttered with their thinking, their home is cluttered with a bunch of things that they don't even want or like or need. They find that electronically they're completely cluttered. Their email is a mess, their electronic medical records are a mess and what I want to convey to you is the power of cleaning that all up. Decluttering not only your life and your possessions but also decluttering your mind and decluttering everything. Like really choosing what you want to bring into your life because that influences your experience of your life so much.

So make your room awesome, make your room you. Is the room that reflects you the room that has a bunch of junk all over it and laundry all over the place? No, right? Make your room you. Spend a little money on some real decorating. Make it look nice. This doesn't have to be expensive. Clear it all out, make it a reflection of the room and the house and the life of the person you are wanting to be. Create that experience around you and then work on living up to being that person who keeps their house decluttered and keeps it nicely decorated and a reflection of who they are.

And then as it says in the book, while you're at it, make your bed. Yeah you need to make your bed, that's a big part of it, to be able to keep that up. I cannot stress to you enough how important this is.

And the next one, "Dear girl, don't ever lose your sense of wonder." She's looking at this rainbow. This is so important too. Think about how we are just going through the motions so often through our days and we don't take the time, it sounds trite, it sounds like just something you're going to see on a meme or like some of these mommy bloggers just put out there and you're like, yeah, yeah, yeah, I should do that. But when was the last time you really looked at your children's faces with wonder? I wonder what is going on in that brain. It's so amazing that I get to watch this child grow up. All the hard parts too, right? The good parts and the hard parts, all of it. What an amazing opportunity I have in my life.

You're not like, my life's amazing and everything's wonderful. Like I don't mean that. But I mean really looking at your life and going look at this person that I married, this person that I chose to spend the rest of my life with. He or she is pretty badass.

That's wonderful. Warts and all, all the things that we don't love too but just allowing ourselves to be in touch with that sense of wonder, whether it's nature, whether it's the people that you interact with, whether is having a really good pick up on some sort of diagnosis or a case that was trying to go bad and you brought it back.

Bring that sense of wonder into that. Look what I was able to do. That was fricking amazing what I was able to create there, like that's awesome. That's that sense of wonder. Wow, look what humans are capable of doing, right? Not totally tooting your own horn which is completely fine too if you want to do that, that feels good but really just going like this is an amazing human life that I get to experience, I promise you will not regret that.

"Dear girl, sometimes you just got to stop and dance." I took this to mean we do not give ourselves the opportunity to just have fun, at least not that often. Just to having fun. Living that exciting life, having hobbies and not making it all be about food or alcohol or overworking or whatever it is. Like just letting loose, dancing, having fun. I was recently coaching a client who thinks that her dancing is horrible and she is super self conscious about it. Then if you need to dance alone in your closet then let's do that. Alone in the shower then let's do that. But seriously like talk about bringing joy to your life. Having a dance party is one of the best things I ever. Highly encourage it.

"Dear girl, find people like you, find people unlike you." I think there's so much deeper meaning here. Find people like you, find some other physicians to be friends with. Start really connecting and reaching out to people like you and making those relationships to support you. Then on the flip side, find people unlike you. We don't all have to be doing the same thing. I remember in medical school feeling like oh my gosh, I've got to get out of here. Like all I do is live and eat and study and go to class with the same people doing the same things. In college I didn't have that experience because I had friends who were doing different things in different classes and in different days.

When I was in med school I was like I've just got to go home. Luckily I could drive home to my parents' house just to get away for a little while. Find some people who are unlike you. One way that I did that in medical school is I ended up signing up for Team In Training to run a marathon and I met and trained with a whole bunch of wonderful women who had nothing in common with me except that we were trying to run this one marathon together. Those relationships were so meaningful to me. I kept in touch with them for a very, very, very long time even while after that marathon was over. So find some people who are different than you and engage with them too. It really brings so much depth and breadth to your life. So worth doing that.

The next one, "Dear girl, create traditions, fun crazy handshakes and silly inside jokes." I really take this to mean like how you're showing up for your family and if you're someone who has children or a spouse or both or extended family or just your friends or your chosen family you can do all of these things. Create traditions, traditions are so important. They are these touch points throughout the year that we get to look forward to. They bring us so much meaning, so much joy and they don't have to be food related at all.

One thing I really love about this book is there's not girls like eating popsicles and cupcakes all the time which I feel like so many kids' books glorify right now. The tradition that they show our two girls having a little tea party in a Fort that they've created. It's just little traditions that you do with your kids.

One thing I'll just share with you that I don't think I've shared on the podcast before. One thing that we like to do around Valentine's Day is we cut out a bunch of paper hearts out of like red and pink construction paper and then we all sit down, everyone gets an equal amount of hearts and we write down things that we love about all of the other people in our family. So depending on how many we have we'll say okay, you have to write three things you love about each person, one on each heart. Of course we help the little kids if they can't write yet and it's really good for the kids who don't always have like favorable opinions of their siblings, right? So sometimes they have to think hard about what they love about that person.

Then we take all those hearts and we read them aloud to each other and then we tape them all over the kitchen. So they're all over all the cabinets. One time we had a big empty wall that we hadn't put art on yet and we put all the hearts on the wall in the shape of a big heart. It seriously is the most amazing tradition, the kids love doing it. We love just taking the time to really focus on what we love about each other. It is such a relationship building exercise and it's so easy. It takes like no time. And if your kids can cut and write it literally you just make them do all the work. And then you just sit down and write something. That's so meaningful. That's just one example of a tradition.

It could just be every year in the fall you go apple picking and then you guys enjoy eating those apples together. It really does not have to be anything that is super involved or difficult. I know when I was in practice I would often think like oh, those traditions look amazing but I don't have time for that kind of stuff, it's so involved. It does not have to be that at all. It really can be that we just go for a walk together once a month, me and each of my kids alone and we talk about what's going on for them and really get in touch with one another and connect. It's just an example but just creating traditions, think about how you're intentionally living your life right now. Then inserting some fun, right? Fun crazy handshakes and silly inside jokes.

My kids right now, oh my gosh, talk about silly inside jokes, my kids since the summer, so now we're talking nine months or so, they have been creating their own language. It is like the craziest thing, my husband and I cannot even keep up with what these words mean. They all have new names for each other, they all have different names. They say things all super weird and they all three of them think it's hilarious and the funniest thing. We thought that this was just going to die out. No, going strong still. My husband and I have said to each other how many years do you think they're going to do this. I can already envision them as adults being like remember. The name of the language is Sebasjohn It's so ridiculous. They're going to be in their 20's or 30's going remember when we spoke Sebasjohn to each other all the time. Like just having those silly inside jokes and doing fun crazy handshakes, you're never going to regret it.

Okay, next one. "Dear girl, if your instinct is telling you to say no, say no." This is another one, right? How many of us are saying yes even though we don't want to do it. Everything in us is saying turn around, go the other direction, don't do this.

I have shared with you guys how I felt this whole thing and I can't trust my gut because my gut told me my baby was fine and then she died and all of this stuff. But really ultimately whatever you want to call it your instinct, when your brain is telling you don't do this, say no, listen to yourself as it says in the book. If you don't want to do it then just don't do it and honor that. It's not the right time.

I want to share one thing with you that I learned from this one mom blog a number of years ago. They were talking about how to say no when it's something that you really wish you could say yes to. Like maybe you really do wish you could be the mom who could help bring three dozen home-baked cookies but you're just like I just don't see how that's possible. Some of us are like, I don't care at all. Can I pay for cookies? But some of us really are like I want to be that mom. That was my mom. I want to be that person and I just can't. What I found and many of you probably have too especially if you have school-aged kids is that if you're the kind of mom who says yes a few times the teacher is God love them come to you first because they're like well, she often has said yes so maybe she'll say yes.

So now you start thinking, gosh, I have to do everything they ask me to do and now it's really stressing you out because you don't have the time to do it. It's really something that you shouldn't have taken on. So, what they were saying in this blog post was how to say no in a nice way. I've actually used this a number of times and it's worked great and it makes me feel really good while I'm saying no. Basically what you say is in my heart I would absolutely love to do XYZ, whatever it is they're asking but if I'm really honest with myself it really just is not something I can take on right now. It's not the right time, whatever it is. Like I just can't schedule the time for that right now or that's just not something I'm able to commit to right now so I'm going to have to say no.

It's so discrete and finite but you're also sharing like in my heart I want to say yes. You're honoring the idea that you're like I'm really not being selfish. I really do want to do it but I just can't. So if that's something that helps you feel free to adopt it, it's yours.

The next one is, "Dear girl, coloring outside the lines is cool too." I was thinking because my daughter right now is working on coloring inside the lines and in her case I think it's more just not being messy, like she needs to focus on being a little bit more careful and detail-oriented so in her case I think coloring inside lines is good. But as we know coloring outside the lines has a second meaning and so many of us are so afraid to be different, to not follow that molded path for a woman physician. We're supposed to have this kind of a life and here we are in that life and we're not happy. We're not satisfied, it's not the life that we wanted. Then, you know what, it's cool too to color outside the lines.

There's a gal that I went to medical school with and she has this nomadic practice basically. She's figured out a way to be able to move all over the country and the world and spend a few months here and a few months there and still support herself and still have her practice because she feels, she calls herself a Gypsy. She's like I'm just somebody who needs to be on the move and I just want to be able to do that. Talk about coloring outside the lines. Her practice is nowhere near anything that you would consider traditional at all and she's making it work because that is why it's authentic and true for her and for what she wants in her life.

So think about where you might want to color outside the lines, where deep down coloring inside the lines has been killing you inside and you really want to just get out there and do something different. Some of the most amazing advice you can ever get, right?

"Dear girl, there are no rules about what to wear or how to cut your hair." I think that's so good too. I think it's really easy for us to just kind of get into the uniform and think, oh, I don't really care how I look, I don't really care what I'm wearing, I just want it to be able to dry well in the dryer so it doesn't wrinkle and I can just put it right back on again or if it sits on the laundry pile dry and clean and not hung up or folded again for the next five days I can still put it on without having to iron it or rewash it. There's no rules about what to wear or how to cut your hair. There's no rules about how you should show up in your life. What's so important is that you are liking your reasons for what you wear and how you cut your hair and how you show up in your life.

You create the rules. Don't have this assumption that other people have this expectation or something like that. Like I've seen pictures or videos sometimes of doctors who are wearing things that are very nontraditional. Not what you consider to be traditional professional attire and they're bringing so much incredible value to their patients that nobody cares. So I'm not saying like go to work in your sweats or the greasy hair, like that's not what I'm saying but I'm just saying just really think about why you're choosing to show up in your life the way you are and is that truly authentic to the real you deep down inside.

I think some of us are stifling the real person we are inside and that feels so awful and so uncomfortable that we then use food and or alcohol to feel better. So spend a little time thinking about that if that is an application to your life.

"Dear girl, you know what's really boring? When people say how bored they are." Yeah, you know what I took to mean with that is, gosh, we can be so bored in our lives and we don't even recognize that it's our choice to entertain ourselves. Like we're looking for somebody else to entertain us or some other relationship to entertain us or our job to entertain us but really it's our job to create a life that we don't believe is boring because what's boring only something that you have decided to believe is boring. It's truly just a thought.

So, you know what's a really boring thought, thinking that you're boring or that you're bored. How about a better thought is asking yourself this question, what can I do to entertain myself. What would be really fun? How can I bring more fun into my life? How can I make this more fun for me and everyone else in my life. Let your brain close that loop, let your brain answer that question and see how your whole life changes. So amazing.

"Dear girl, listen to your brave side." So this is the one where she has the thought, "Gosh, I don't know," and then the other thought bubbles says, "I've got this," and then she just dives right in. Right, listen to your brave side. It's there. So many of us are just shackled with our insecurities though. I don't know, I don't know. I need to know for sure that it's going to work out before I'll take the leap. I need to know for sure that losing this weight is possible before I can decide to join Katrina's group and make that investment in myself.

That is not at all how this works, right? You decide to be brave and to summon your courage having no idea how it's going to go, but just knowing that you believe in the possibility of changing your life. That's all you need to really change everything for yourself. Listen to that brave side, that side of you that decided heck yeah, I'm going to apply for med school, heck yeah, I'm going to go to this hard residency. It's so much easier to just get a job at Walgreens and just a checker there. Why did you decide to have courage and do the brave thing? Can you extrapolate that same skill to what you're trying to create for yourself now in your life. Some of the best work you can do.

"Dear girl, you won't be invited to every single party on the planet which is really okay. Can you imagine how exhausting that would be?" And so they kind of show like it's party time and birthday all around the planet and a picture of the planet. And of course me, the introvert me I'm like, thank God I'm not invited to every single party on the planet but still it's so easy for us to feel left out. It's so easy for us to make ourselves feel left out with our thinking when we aren't invited to something or someone else gets something that we wanted. It's really truly an option.

When you can change your thinking from scarcity to abundance and go instead of why wasn't I invited to that, why wasn't I included in that to going I know that this is all happening for me. For some reason, me going to that party or that event or whatever it was, that meeting was not something that was relevant to me. All of this is happening for me. I may not be able to see it right now but I believe that it's all happening for me. Totally different. Who cares about the dumb meeting that you weren't invited to but your colleague was. Like irrelevant. You just keep showing up for yourself every day, providing incredible value, producing more than you consume and it all works out, it all comes back to you in the end.

"Dear girl, a tree trunk is the perfect place for quiet thoughts to be thunk." What this made me think of is doing thought work. We were talking before about doing thought downloads but having a perfect place for quiet thoughts to be thunk. Some time to actually process your thoughts, process your emotions, spend some time actually intentionally living your life, not just going through the motions like you're in a fog like how the vast majority of humans do. Instead, really getting in touch with what it is you want and how you're going to go about creating that. If you want to do that under a tree trunk, excellent, more power to you. If you live in Wisconsin and it's the middle of winter, maybe just have a cozy chair and a cup of tea. That can do the same thing for you.

And then finally, "Dear girl, whenever you need an encouraging boost, remember you can turn to any page in this book." And most of all dear girl, dear listener, dear podcast listener who I love, know that you can always, always, always turn to me. I am always here for you to help you and support you and help you create that life you want, to help you to bring all of your dreams to fruition and I just cannot thank you enough for tuning in with me every week. It means so much to me and I just love all of you so much. All right, I will see you next week. Have a wonderful one, talk to you soon, bye bye.