



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Hey there, my friend. Welcome to the podcast today. I'm so excited to talk to you about this new idea that I have for you. First I have to tell you I went to the dermatologist today. It's always such a fun experience, right? I come out, I've got all kinds of little burns on me and little zaps that she did. I had her take out a couple of little milia on face and now I got all these little spots all over myself.

It's so funny. I was coming out of there and I'm just stinging and burning everywhere. The good news is I do not have any signs of cancer on my skin, which is good. If you've not really seen my pictures, I'm super fair. Even though my parents did the best they could at growing up with sunscreen and stuff, I still got plenty of burns.

I guess it could have happened anywhere, but I lived until I was almost 10 in Southern California, so lots of sun exposure and a family history of skin cancer, so of course we take these things seriously. When was the last time you went and had a skin check? I love seeing my dermatologist because she is a friend from residency.

When I did my month of pediatric dermatology, she was doing her month rotating through as a derm resident. We just became friends and she lives in my neighborhood and so it's always fun to see her and catch up with her a little bit. Then she takes care of all my little ditzels and makes sure that I'm good. So that was my day, my morning. Super exciting.

This is what I want to talk to you about today. I've been thinking a lot about how different people approach weight loss and how for really truly the vast majority of people, the process of weight loss is literally just this ongoing thing, right? Decades and decades and decades and so many women end up even dying, like living out the end of their lives in that same kind of a state.

You know, trying this new thing, trying the latest weight loss plan, having some success, gaining it back, trying something they tried before, it doesn't work, they're not really committed, right? Then there's people, a very small subset who go, "You know what? I'm just going to take care of this. Kind of tired of this problem. Don't want to think about this anymore. I'm committed, I'm going to get this done."

Really, what is the difference? What I want to offer to you today is that it's the difference between stepping on a hamster wheel and digging an oil well. Let me explain to you why I think about it that way. When you think about a hamster wheel, it's super easy to just hop on there, right? Just a little step on, no big deal, and the wheel turns super easily. You're able to just get going right away and start doing your thing.

It's also really easy to step off anytime you want to and you can stop anytime you want to. It's just something that's easy to hop on and off of, but you don't end up getting anywhere, right? There's no destination, there's no goal that you can reach. You just go and go and go and go until you decide you're not anymore.

When you think about an oil well, it's a lot of hard work to dig an oil well. You have to dig and dig and dig and dig some more not knowing when you're going to hit the oil, not knowing how deep you're going to have to go, not knowing when hard work will end, not having really anything in place except the belief that if you keep going, you will eventually hit the oil. Once you hit the oil, then you've got it made, right?

Then you can tap into that oil supply and every day, there's more oil, more oil, more oil. You can look at that like then you have plenty of money, you never have to worry about money anymore. Your whole family is provided for. Your needs are met financially and you've really succeeded in achieving your goal. So getting on the hamster wheel is what the majority of people do who are trying to lose weight.

They go, "Okay, I'm going to try South Beach. Let me just hop on the hamster wheel, do it for a little while, maybe get some results but easy to step off when I go on vacation, do something different, not always follow it all the time. Do it sometimes, not do it other times, then sometimes recommit and really run fast on that hamster wheel." Then before you know it, the weight has come back again, right?

Same with Weight Watchers, same with Jenny Craig, same with Whole 30 for most people because they don't stay on it, right? Whole 30, the problem is the 30 part of it. The 'Whole' part of it is just fine. It's the 30 days that we just end up stopping following it after 30 days. We hop off the hamster wheel after 30 days. That's the problem. Since most people follow this, they get the results that most people do, which is yo-yoing with their weight, not really getting to the goal of permanently handling and solving this problem for themselves. They're just putting a band-aid on it like, "Let me just lose a little weight for this event that I have, this wedding I'm going to be in, for summer coming up." Whatever it may be. Some vacation.

Then, "Let me just go right back off plan again. I'm just going to hop off that hamster wheel." The way that I teach weight loss and the process that I take my clients through really is like digging the oil well. It's so interesting even a number of months into our six month long coaching group how many of them will be thinking, "Something is going wrong. I haven't made enough progress. Why am I still struggling with this?"

It's so interesting because what they don't see is the massive progress that they have made. I'm the one who sees that. They'll start with me going, "I don't even know how to make it through one day eating this way." Then a couple months later, they're telling me, "Yeah, following this day to day in my regular routine is not a problem at all. That's very easy. Completely simple for me now."

"Now my major problem is how do I handle this when my routine isn't in place or when I'm traveling?" or something like that. I have to help them understand, hey listen, most of our lives are lived in our regular routine with our usual plan and our day-to-day lives. If that's really easy already, look at the massive progress you've made. All that you're recognizing now is where you still have more room for work to do, where you now need to focus your efforts.

At first you needed to focus your efforts on just getting through your regular routine, your regular day-to-day and making that work for you. Now you barely even have to think about that. What that means with the oil well analogy is you've dug. You've dug a good sized hole but you're not at the oil yet. The oil is permanent weight loss where it's effortless, that true freedom from food where you aren't thinking about it. You're just handling your life, managing your emotions, and doing what you need to do.

It's so easy for us to want to just turn around. We're like, "Yeah, I thought I would have hit oil by now. This seems dumb. Maybe I should just fill in this hole and start digging another oil well. That sounds like a good idea." But really when you think about it, no, that's a terrible idea. You've done your research. You really believe that there is oil to be tapped into if you dig in this one area, right?

You can't just dig anywhere and assume that you're going to get oil. You've done your research. You're following a plan that makes sense to you that you think if you follow it, it really can work. You have to put that effort into it. I always find it so interesting when my clients ask me for reassurance.

They say, "I really just want to know that this is going to work for me. I just really want you to tell me that I can do this, that this is going to be the way that I can get the results that I want." I always find that so interesting because what they want is for a different circumstance. They want me to say something so that they can have a thought that makes them feel good about their potential and ability to lose weight.

They are asking me, "Hey, can you just let me know your belief about me so that I can start believing in me?" What's so interesting about that is I can say whatever I want to say, but I'm not in control of the results that they get at all. They are 100% in control of the results they get. What I'm in control of is how I show up as their coach, how I teach them, how I support them, how I coach them. How committed I am to helping them and how committed I am to making sure they get all of the help that they need while they're going through the process.

What's so interesting then is I've had many, many multiple clients who have taken me up on everything I've offered, have just completely absorbed and applied everything. Have totally shown up for themselves in the coaching group and have gotten incredible results and not just on the scale.

These are the people who tell me, "Yeah, the weight loss was great, but listen, my life is finally the life that I always wanted. I'm finally the doctor I always wanted to be. I'm finally living this life that I always dreamed I could have." It's so interesting how the weight doesn't even seem that important to them anymore. They've finally just changed everything and they no longer need that food to make them feel better.

There are also clients who have been offered the exact same support from me, the exact same information, the same teaching, the same support, the same coaching, the same help, same suggestions. For whatever reason, they don't decide to apply to their lives and then they don't get results. So maybe they lose a few pounds but they don't really learn how to manage their minds.

They're not really showing up for themselves and their end of the bargain. Their end of the bargain is the part that actually creates the results, not what I offer. Isn't that the best news, though? It's the same thing with any other weight loss plan. If you really show up and do it, you're going to get the results.

If you followed Whole 30 100% for the absolute rest of your life, would that work? Yeah, it probably would work. There's no reason not to do that except for all the issues that come up when you have the idea, "Oh, I should do that." It's such a simple solution to the problem. "I'll just follow this eating plan forever. I'll just count points for the rest of my life. I'll just eat these pre-packaged Jenny Craig meals for the rest of my life."

It's totally neutral. You can completely do that if you want to. It's what comes up for you when you decide "I'm not going to do that" that is where your work lies, right? When you're thinking about digging this oil well, you have to just decide, "Okay, I've done my research. This seems to make sense. I am on board with this plan and I'm in charge of whether or not I hit the oil or not."

"I am not going to be someone who's just on and off the hamster wheel all the time. I'm actually going to keep working and working and failing and maybe hitting rocks and having to really get help to be able to push through and keep digging and digging until I hit that oil well. Once I hit that oil well, I know, okay, this is going to be it. This is when the weight is no longer an issue for me. This is when I'm confident that I will never gain it back again."

It's so interesting to me because I have that confidence in myself now. I will never ever gain this weight back again because I have all the tools that I need to make sure that I don't regain it. It's not just, oh, I know how to eat or I know how to lose a few pounds. It's that I know how to manage my brain. That I know that what my weight is, what the scale shows is 100% a reflection of what's going on in my mind.

Our thoughts are always creating our feelings which drive our actions which create our results. If my result is that I've gained five pounds, what's going on in my brain that's creating that? We think, "Oh, it was the food. It was that I didn't plan ahead." It was all these action-based things that are the problem. Actions are never the problem. Think about that model. What comes before the action line? Your feelings and your thoughts.

There is always going to be a thought that's creating a feeling that's driving that action that we may not want that creates that result that we don't want. When you really start looking at it like that, the thought management component is so critical. It's so crucial. There just are not many regular traditional weight loss programs out there that are teaching that.

When you recognize this is a multifactorial process this weight loss thing, especially if it's been something that you've been struggling with for awhile that's going to be more than just getting a diet plan and following it, it's going to be more than just giving up eating this thing or that thing or not drinking so much on the weekends, it's so much more than that. This is the thing, too. There are lots of thin people who are miserable, like tons of them.

This is what's so interesting. When we are overweight, we're like, "No, I just can't believe that thin people, they really ... they look happier. I'm pretty sure that their waistband's not digging in and making their top part of their stomach fold over the bottom part." Right? We're like, "That's very uncomfortable and I'm sure they feel very comfortable in their bodies."

Maybe they do physically, but they experience just as much emotional discomfort as the rest of us. It's that emotional discomfort that we have to be willing to get good at feeling in order for us to really get these results that we want. So for that naturally thin person, it may not be food that makes them feel better. They're the person who's like, "I'm totally sad or frustrated. Why would I eat, though? That doesn't make sense."

Maybe they're the person who spends way too much. They go and online shop in order to get their dopamine hit whereas for me, food is where my brain wants to go. There's so many different ways that I've talked to you about on prior podcasts for us to get our dopamine hits. For some people, food really just doesn't do it for them.

Just like I've told you. Gambling doesn't do it for me, but for some people, they just cannot get enough. It's like the best thing in the world to them. Recognizing that emotional piece and also recognizing there's an oil field out there, I just need to keep digging, I need to keep digging, I need to keep digging, and knowing that there's going to be new obstacles as I go down. Maybe some of the walls of the well will cave in and I'm going to have to go back and dig more dirt out. I'm just going to be committed to the idea, to the process of reaching that oil field knowing that it's there. I just need to keep going and going and going and going and eventually I will hit that jackpot. That's when that goal is reached and that's when I can create something new.

Most people in the oil industry, which I am not one of these people at all, but most people in the oil industry, if they tap an oil field, they tend to not go, "Okay, I'm set. That's it." They go, "Hmm. Maybe I should do that again because if I have twice as much oil, interesting. What can I create then?" Once you've hit the oil field with weight loss, that's when you're ready to take on the next big project, the next big goal in your life.

What is it that you're going to take on? You're really going to have to become a new person. So many people will end up struggling with this.

They're like, "Who am I if I'm not someone who struggles with my weight? Who am I if I'm someone who actually wears a size four or a size six comfortably and easily every single day? I don't even know her. I don't know anything about her. I have no idea who she is."

We have to get to know her. That's where self-sabotage can come in where we have such a hard time. We have such a cognitive bias that we are someone who is overweight and struggles with our weight that when we actually start to weigh a number lower than that, our brains start flipping us out. For many people, this happens as they're dropping below 200 pounds.

It's so interesting. I've seen it so many times. They really start struggling like, "Wait a minute, I might actually be starting to be a thin person now. What does this mean about me? How does this change the way that I interact with other people in the world? Who is this thin version of me?" Especially my clients have been overweight since they were children.

Then they have this whole story about, "Well, but I've never weighed less than this in my whole entire adult life." My response is, who cares? It's not relevant at all. It's just the shape of your body. What we have to look at are the thoughts. What are you making it mean? What does it mean to you to be someone who's thin? How does the thin version of you show up in her life?

What's different? What's the same? What's better? What's worse? Sometimes we have to actually let some friendships go. We realize that there's people in our lives who actually only loved us if we were overweight. That can be very painful. It can be a hard struggle to go through. That's one of those obstacles that we have to go through. That's like hitting a rock and having to get it out when we're going toward that oil field.

It doesn't mean that we go, "Oh, I'm afraid of losing that friendship. I should just eat a whole bunch of food off my plan and regain the weight" and then deal with the net negative. Beating ourselves up, feeling really upset that we can't achieve what we want. You have to pick your hard. Would you rather work through different changes in your life in terms of your relationships, including your relationship with yourself or would you prefer to just stay overweight?

What that entails is continuing to not honor your plans for yourself, to keep beating yourself up, to not live in integrity with yourself, which also feels bad. Pick which one you want, right? When you are committed to the idea of no longer having this weight issue, just taking care of it, no longer having this problem and knowing that through coaching you can work through any of the other issues that come up, any obstacles that come up, you can work through them, that is living an evolved life.

Really working on being the best version of yourself. That's one of those commitments that when you get there and when you look later in your life, you never look back and go, "I really wish I hadn't done that. That was really a waste of my time. That was really kind of stupid." We never think back. We go, "That was super hard. That was some of the hardest work of my life and it was so worth it."

You're never going to look back 20 years from the day that you hit that oil field and go, "That was dumb. That was a lot of hard work. I wish for the last 20 years I could have kept struggling with digging this oil well instead of just having, enjoying the fruits of my labor with this oil." Instead of struggling with my weight for 20 more years, I actually took care of the problem.

So I want you to think about that. Are you digging an oil well or are you on and off the hamster wheel, easy peasy, on and off, on and off? When you're really, really ready to do the work, to dig that oil well, I'm here for you. This is what I offer. This is the work. All of these 76 episodes that I've recorded for you contain the tools to dig that oil well.

For those who want extra help, that's what I offer in my coaching groups. But for those of you who aren't eligible or can't or don't want to join them for whatever reason, just know that you can still also learn how to do this. You have to be dedicated and put forth the effort and just keep digging that oil well knowing that you will get to the oil if you keep digging long enough and hard enough and stay committed to that process.

All right. Have a wonderful week and I will talk to you soon. Take care. Bye bye.