



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Hey, there, my friend. Thank you so much for coming back to the podcast today and tuning in. I decided to try something new and I can't wait to bring you in on it. I have found, very interestingly, it seems very obvious now to me, honestly, but at the time I was kind surprised to find out that many of you don't really know what coaching is, you don't really understand what it is. Maybe you resonate with all the things that I teach you on this podcast, but what do we actually do when we work together?

A while back, I reached out to the people on my list. By the way, if you're not on my email list, you should be. So what I offered was free coaching in exchange for allowing me to publish the recording on the podcast for others to learn from and others to really understand what coaching is. Of course, we're keeping people's anonymity somewhat covered, but not so much. The gal that you're going to hear today, her name is Erica. That really is her name. It's all the other information about her is actually not relevant at all, so not anything that we need to know. She is, I think, a really great representation of so many of you out there. She is a rockstar mom, rockstar doctor, just kind of finishing having her family, no longer having more kids, and is finding that she's just not able to keep the weight off, really does want to lose the weight, kind of also doesn't want to because it seems like it would be really hard, just one other thing that she has to do. We really dig into that.

Now, before I have you listen to our coaching call, I do want to apologize. Towards the end, we had a lot, like some significant audio issues where it wasn't even just our audio. It was our connection, I would say something or she would say something and then she would drop out. Then we had to reconnect and then go, "Okay, what were we saying?" My podcast team, my brilliant podcast team has done their best to edit this as best as they can for that flow. I think it shouldn't really affect things too much. If you're kind of just noticing like, "Wait, things seem a little bit strange," that's part of it. I don't think it's impacting ... Like on The Voice, they say that there are parts of the show they edited out that don't change the end result, it's basically what's going on here. In case you're like, "What was that?" That's what was going on. Thank you so much to Erica for coming on, for volunteering to be on the podcast. Can't wait to bring more of these for you coming forth. I am planning on doing a number more to give you guys really a good taste of what coaching is. Can't wait to offer more of that to you. Have a great week and enjoy.

Okay, here we are. All right, Erica. Thank you so much for coming onto the podcast, for volunteering for this.

Erica: Of course.

Katrina Ubell: So excited for you. Okay. We had kind of discussed earlier that you wanted to talk a little bit more about weight loss and how you end up kind of finding yourself maybe taking a couple steps forward and then going back again. This is not how you approach the rest of your life. In the arena of weight loss, you've really struggled with this. What I want to start with is you just telling me all about this struggle.

Erica: In particular around weight loss, as what we were talking about, I get really stuck in what I haven't been able to accomplish, what I have tried and failed at, what hasn't worked. It seems easier to make excuses about what isn't working than to actually make a change that may allow me to get to the goal that I've set, which, at this point, is honestly any amount of weight loss I'd be happy with.

Katrina Ubell: Okay. About how much weight do you want to lose do you think?

Erica: 40, ideally. The frustrating part is my third child was born. She's 18 months and I got down to pre-pregnancy weight with her last summer and since then have only had an upward trajectory of about 20 pounds. That's been the biggest frustration of the last year.

Katrina Ubell: Okay. All right. You had kind told me that you had been told that you had some negative self-talk. You were saying, "I don't really think that I necessarily have a lot of self-talk. I think I'm kind of more of a realist." Tell me more about that, what your thoughts are about that. What is real? What does that mean to you?

Erica: I think in most arenas of my life, I can tend to sort of pull back and be objective about the situation. Like at work, I have a pretty good insight into how my peers view me, how my patients view me, what my interactions are with families, good and bad. I'm a pretty good judge of when things didn't go right or didn't go well. I own up to things that maybe I didn't do right the first time. At home, most of it too, fairly insightful I think in an objective way about how I interact with my husband and my kids and my family. With weight loss, I just am stuck on fat, on the word fat, feeling fat, looking fat. I feel like a failure, that I haven't been able to ... My weight has only gone up since I started having kids and never got to pre-pregnancy weight with any of them for any period of time. Just really stuck on what hasn't worked and then I eat more because it feels better.

Katrina Ubell: Right. Exactly. What do you think happened after you had kids? Why do you think that the weight has been more of a struggle with that?

Erica: I've never been a small person. The smallest I was was end of med school, beginning of residency. I'd done Weight Watchers and lost 20 pounds and kept it off for a few years. Of course, then when I met my husband, gained the few usual, going out to drinks and eating dinner.

Katrina Ubell: The love pounds.

Erica: Yeah, the love pounds. We both liked. We liked ... Then, sort of had a series of jobs that was not great and it was easy, again, to make excuses about eating felt better than being in a job I didn't like. Then had kids. I had C-sections with all of them. The first one was labor plus C-section. That was sort of challenging. Then, pretty significant postpartum depression because breastfeeding didn't go well. I've had some real medical reasons why. On various antidepressants, medications. Then, not atypical, didn't get right back to usual activities and the context of breastfeeding not going well really struggled. Then, each pregnancy was just a repeat of the same. The breastfeeding went better the last couple times. Then, with the last one, my weight did get down and breastfeeding went great. Then, I stopped breastfeeding and then had some family stuff happen. In the context of stress, it seems like eating is what I go to. I've also had a change in my job. I'm a lot more sedentary now. I'm in clinic and I make home visits and so I'm also on the road. My lifestyle has changed. I'm sometimes either just sitting in my desk by myself where there's food in abundance or on the road grabbing whatever meal along the way because I haven't done a lot of planning and the drive through is really easy.

Katrina Ubell: Absolutely. If you were to think about starting to follow some sort of eating plan to lose some weight right now, what are the first thoughts that come up for you?

Erica: I've done Weight Watchers and calorie reduction successfully in the past, but it's been a long time and I was younger. I've gone back several times and it hasn't exactly worked for me because I feel like they don't have any new tricks to teach me. Again, I think it's easier to say that Weight Watchers doesn't work than to actually do the Weight Watchers work.

Katrina Ubell: You have a lot of insight. Like, "It's not going to work for me because I didn't follow it, but we'll forget that part."

Erica: Right.

Katrina Ubell: I love that.

Erica: Then, I get stuck a little bit too. I mean, I pick from the kids' plates and I eat kid food because we eat kid food. We live in a place where there's good restaurants and so we go out a fair amount. I could choose to make different choices and I just don't at the end of a busy day.

Katrina Ubell: Why do you want to lose weight?

Erica: From a purely aesthetic reason, I'm pretty vain and can't stand looking at myself in pictures. From a much more ... That motivation isn't going to get me anywhere because that doesn't exactly work. I also have a lot of clothes I can't fit into that are really cute that I'd like to fit back into. From a longer-term and actually more medically sound and cognitively sound, I have a very strong family history of diabetes. I want to be around for my kids. I'm an older mom already. I'm 40 and I just had my third and don't want to be diabetic at 44 like my mom was.

Katrina Ubell: Why not? Let's delve into that a little bit. Why not?

Erica: I don't want to worry about disease complications in my life.

Katrina Ubell: Like what?

Erica: I mean, very specifically, I want to have vascular disease or neuropathy or have to take medications for the rest of my life and not eat carbs and not enjoy chocolate. I want to do that because I want to live a long life because I started later and I want to be there for my kids and my grandkids. I've seen my mom's brother died of diabetes complications a couple years ago in his 50s. My mom has actually managed pretty well. She's been diabetic for 20+ years now and is not on insulin. She's managed pretty well, but it definitely changed things for her. I have such terrible genetics that if I can own any piece of it ... Then, my dad's side of family, a really horrendous premature coronary disease. My younger brother was just started on antihypertensives. I don't want to have to deal with all of that. I'm an internist so I have very concrete insights and cognition about why I want to lose weight.

Katrina Ubell: Then, why don't you want to lose the weight?

Erica: I really like eating. I like cooking and that's a skill that I acquired probably in the last 10 years or so. I like cooking and I like bringing food to people. We have a lot of potlucks at work and I like sharing food. I come from a family who likes to eat. All of our celebrations, as many families' are, is around food. I guess nobody bats an eyelash at the fat girl going back for a second plate of food. Yeah, I don't know. I guess I could make a bigger impression if I, all of a sudden, wasn't going for the second plate of food. Also, probably nobody is paying attention. You know, not in the way that I think that they are.

Katrina Ubell: Right. Well, you know what I always say. I think I've said this on the podcast too. We think other people are judging us for doing things, but they're not paying attention. That judgment that we are attributing to them is actually our thoughts about ourselves. Then we're judging ourselves for the second plate of food and going, "Oh my god. Everybody's looking at me because I'm getting this."

Erica: No, there's a lot of guilt about the food. I think the other emotion that I'm not accustomed to feeling is shame. That one has been harder when I recently sort of come to realize that ... I actually said the words out loud to my husband because my husband has gained essentially as much weight as I have in the context of our relationship and having kids. He was very thin when we met. He hasn't had success at weight loss either. I said, "I feel ashamed of the weight and ashamed that I'm like the fat mom to the kids." That emotion is much harder to process because I don't have a lot of actions in my life that I feel ashamed of.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. You know what shame usually makes us want to do, is go and hide. It doesn't make us want to go take action and actually change anything. We're like, "Let me just keep this under wraps, keep up the façade. Meanwhile, I'm getting eaten alive inside with this horrible shame that I feel." Shame is an emotion. What thoughts create shame about being the overweight mom?

Erica: I mean, I guess it goes back to all of the negative thoughts because I wasn't always the fat mom. This Mother's Day, I looked at pictures when I had my son and he was a baby.

It was like, "Wow. I thought I was fat back then. Now I weigh 30 pounds more than that." The shame is about like almost sort of what was lost, what once was, I guess. Then, those times felt better than sort of lugging around this body now.

Katrina Ubell: Okay. All right. Good. Anything else about that that you think is a good idea to mention or something I should know?

Erica: I think that's it.

Katrina Ubell: All right.

Erica: Thanks a lot.

Katrina Ubell: There's one other thing that you mentioned before we started recording that I wanted to ask you about. You said that you tend to ruminate a lot. Tell me more about that.

Erica: I am an anxious person by nature, which I think in high school and college and performance-driven times in my life manifested as perfectionism and intensity and all positive things. Being anxious and fearful of not performing turned into being very hypervigilant and really performing well.

Katrina Ubell: Which I think is actually really common with physicians.

Erica: Of course. I looked around and it was normative. To feel that way was very normal. I wasn't even the highest achieving person around. Once I got to med school, I was very much in the middle. All of these things had always served me well, such that my mom I don't think ever in her life until I started having kids and were close had any understanding how anxious of a person I was. I don't even know in my younger years if I could have labeled it as anxiety, to be honest. I just think it was how we all were, Type A, tightly wound, worried about everything, but it served us all well. Then when I got to my career and I didn't need to be so worried about performing anymore and certainly with the years that I had before I had kids, I didn't need to be so anxious anymore. It wasn't really serving me well, but it also didn't go away.

Then, with kids, the anxiety really got worse. Most of my ruminating is about things that cause me to be anxious and the anxiety just sort of spirals out of control at times about the things that worry me. If my husband doesn't answer his phone and he's got the kids, I text and I call, I text and I call, it's because they're off the side of the road or the highway dead somewhere. It's not because he just can't get to his phone because he's changing a diaper or something. Again, my intellect, I have done a bit of behavioral therapy, and my cognition can kick in, right?

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Erica: I can walk it back, but about food recently, it comes with "Well, keto didn't work for me, all that fat just made my reflux worse. I'm never going to lose weight because I had really high hopes for this. How am I ever going to get a handle on it? I'd rather just have a cup of coffee and eat.

I don't care about snacking at night. I'm still going to do it." And then just the "How am I ever going to get the weight off? I'm never going to lose it. Now, I just see obesity begets more obesity, and I know what I should be doing. Why can't I do what I should be doing? I've done this before. Why can't I do it now?

Katrina Ubell: So, beating yourself up basically, right?

Erica: Yeah, yeah.

Katrina Ubell: You're basically mentally flogging yourself.

Erica: Correct.

Katrina Ubell: Okay.

Erica: Correct, yes. No positive.

Katrina Ubell: Right? It's like a lot of self-loathing. That's that shame of thinking that you're horrible for looking this way, eating this way, coping this way. You don't have to feel that way about yourself in every area, right? It doesn't sound like you feel that way about yourself in terms of your work or even how you're showing up as a mom or anything. But when it comes to this part, this relationship with yourself part, that's where you struggle, right?

Erica: Correct.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Okay. So, what I want to do now is I want to help you to separate out the facts or the circumstances, as we call them, the neutral facts, from the thoughts here. I'm going to help you with that a little bit.

Erica: Okay.

Katrina Ubell: There really are not many facts here, as is typical, because basically what I did was I took you through a thought download.

Erica: Right.

Katrina Ubell: Then we go back, and we look at everything. We go, "Okay, what are the actual facts here?" One fact would be how much you weigh right now, which is irrelevant. That number doesn't matter right now. But if you stepped on the scale right now, you'd weigh x amount, right?

Erica: Yeah, that's a fact.

Katrina Ubell: That's a fact. You have three kids. You're married. You're an internist. We can kind of describe your job a little. You have a job where sometimes you're in the office, and sometimes you have to drive to different places. But notice I wouldn't describe it as you're sedentary in your job because that's still a qualification. That's still

Erica: Yeah, there's judgment in that.

Katrina Ubell: Right, exactly, exactly.

Erica: Okay.

Katrina Ubell: Your mother has diabetes. Your uncle died of diabetes. Recently, your brother has high blood pressure. That is about it. Do you agree?

Erica: Yeah.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, okay. All right, so what's so great about that is being able to see all that really is neutral, right? It's really just like, "Yep, these are the facts." Everything else is the story that you're choosing to tell yourself about yourself, about your life, about other people in your life, about your genetics, about everything. Oftentimes, it really doesn't feel like a choice, and that's why this is so powerful to go through this because we're like, "No, for real, I'm fat." It's like no. Sometimes we want to argue, "No, everyone would agree." But that is not the case.

So, sometimes when we figure out or realize that we're the ones choosing this whole experience, sometimes it's kind of liberating. We feel like, "Oh my gosh, that's such a relief. Maybe it isn't actually the way I think it is." Sometimes though, we feel a little bit worse because we're like, "Great, now it's all my fault that I feel so bad. Another thing I can beat myself up over." So, tell me what your experience is of me explaining this to you.

Erica: So, the facts are the facts. That, I get. A little bit, I had the initial response of "Great, now I have to own it." Right? Yeah, you just told me that those are the facts. I then make a lot of judgments and inferences and turn those into feelings about those facts. Now, I have to own that maybe it's time to do something different.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Well, what I also want you to really see though is that that is ... the meaning that you are applying to all of this in your life is making you feel ashamed, frustrated, stuck, other emotions. And then you remember that thought model, which everyone who's been listening for a while knows, but I'm just going to review it again. We have our neutral circumstances, and we choose thoughts about those. Our thoughts create our feelings, and our feelings drive our actions, and our actions give us our results. In your current situation, life setup, the way that you cope with negative emotions is by doing what?

Erica: Eating.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, exactly.

Erica: And when I'm not eating, I'm thinking about eating.

Katrina Ubell: Exactly, yes.

Erica: Or why the emotion doesn't feel better in the context of eating.

Katrina Ubell: Right, so then you eat, and then the result is you gain weight and whatever it is that you were upset about or not feeling great about still hasn't changed because eating the food doesn't resolve whatever the problem is.

Erica: It actually got worse.

Katrina Ubell: It's like, "If I could just eat some cookies and then everyone would act the way that I wanted them to, that would be brilliant." But unfortunately, not how this works.

One thing I wanted just to point out to you briefly before we move on is how you really do have these opposing desires. You want to be healthy. You don't want to be sick. You don't want to have the complications of diabetes and cardiovascular disease and things like that. But at the same time, you want to still totally entertain yourself with food and celebrate with food and show love with food and get lots of pleasure out of eating food. Those things really do push up against one another. See that?

Erica: Yeah.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. What was really interesting is when you told me about diabetes, and I was asking you what are the complications you don't want to have or why you don't want to have diabetes, and you said, "I don't want to not be able to eat carbs. I don't want to not be able to eat chocolate." That's so interesting because you're like, "I don't want to have diabetes, and I still want to be able to eat all the foods that I really love and make me feel good and make me feel better, even though those probably don't go hand-in-hand, at least some of the time." Isn't that interesting?

Erica: Yeah. I mean, I had that overt thought the other day. If I ever get it together and can lose this weight, that means I have to go a really long time without chocolate, and that makes me really sad.

Katrina Ubell: Well, you know, I have to tell you, I just have to tell you that, for me, the idea of not eating bread on a regular basis was like blasphemy. I think I've talked about this before, but I was like, "Okay, I can get behind sugar, but seriously humans have been consuming bread from the beginning, people. Come on!" I really struggled with that one. It took me a while. What's great news, what I can just offer to you is I literally don't ever think about bread anymore. So, what I'm offering to you with that is just the idea that, what if you just didn't care about it? If you didn't care about carbs and chocolate, would it be hard to not eat carbs and chocolate?

Erica: No.

Katrina Ubell: No. Right. So, the reason you care is for a couple reasons because you have a lot of over-desire, so your desire for food is too high. Like you were saying, if I'm not eating food, then I'm thinking about food. You're probably strategizing about what you're going to be cooking next and what you'll bring to the next potluck and what you're going to do for the party and which restaurant you're going to go to next, right?

Erica: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. That creates way too much desire. Your brain is really, really over-emphasizing the importance of food for you.

Erica: Oh, yeah.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, right? So, when you see that, you're like, "No, if this is literally the joy I get in my life, I'm not really that interested in giving that up. Maybe I'm going to have to have some toes amputated. I don't know because what am I going to do here? I don't get how this is going to work." I just want to point that out because over-desire is something that can be handled. That's the question of, if you didn't really care about carbs and chocolate, would it be hard to not eat them? If you didn't care about them, your desire would be low, so if your desire was low for this food, and you could just enjoy everybody because you were with them and just enjoying the connection and the community and being around people and that kind of thing, and not being so focused on the food, which just sits there and is just food, it would be a different experience, right?

Erica: Correct.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, so it's interesting to just think about that. Let your brain kind of marinate in that, this idea of what if it really could be ... What if I just could not eat that food and have it not be a big problem? Because I think, in the past ... you tell me, but what's it been like in the past when you've been on Weight Watchers, and you've not been able to eat a lot of those foods?

Erica: It was so long ago when I was successful at it, that it was in the height ... I was fourth-year med school going into residency, so I was very goal-oriented at that time. For me then, and Weight Watchers was even more restrictive back then than it is now, I was looking forward to accomplishing the goal. I even would be able to break it down into the tasks of eating properly for the day. Because the other thing that I've gotten stuck in, this is more related to the specifics about food, but the self sabotage. I tripped one step, so I might as well throw myself down the whole staircase.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Erica: Oh, so breakfast didn't go as planned, so today's off the table, right? Gotta start again tomorrow.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, start over again tomorrow.

Erica: Yeah. It's really easy to do because I don't really want to start yet.

Katrina Ubell: Right.

Erica: I'm just not there. I'm not there yet.

Katrina Ubell: Exactly, exactly. So, I want to ask you this though: Why is it a problem to not be there? Do you think that, when you're thin, you're going to have a different opinion of yourself?

Erica: I do. I think something else will cause me anxiety, so I don't pretend that ... you know what I mean? I don't pretend that the anxiety will go away.

Katrina Ubell: Good.

Erica: I'm in some discomfort on account of my size right now too.

Katrina Ubell: Okay.

Erica: Like ... that I didn't have before, some knee pain, back pain. I did treat myself to a Pilates club membership for my fortieth birthday and have been going with some regularity since then, despite not losing any weight, which was not my goal obviously going there. My body feels better. I am, at least, getting a handle on feeling better in this space that I occupy right now, the physical space that I am.

Katrina Ubell: Sure.

Erica: But I think I'm tired of looking in the mirror and wanting to pull my neck back. I just see it in my face. I look a lot like my mom, who fortunately has aged quite well, but I literally look in the mirror and see my mother because she's always been overweight. This is the first time in our lives when she isn't. She actually weighs less than I do right now.

Do you think that I will ... I would think that my thoughts about myself could potentially be less stuck in a negative. I also think that if I physically feel better, there'd be less to be negative about.

Katrina Ubell: Okay, okay. That's so interesting because this is how most people think. We're like, "No, when I get thinner, then I'll think differently about myself. I'll think I did something nice for myself. I'm taking care of myself." And all of those thoughts are available to you now. You could think about that in relation to you going to your Pilates classes, which it sounds like you do somewhat. But still the idea of "I shouldn't weigh this much, I look like my mother," that's a whole other call, right? What does it mean that you look like your mother? We won't go there today. That's totally something else.

Erica: No, I am sort of consciously aware that those thoughts are available to me now. It's not like I've thrown my hands up in the air, right?

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Erica: I have bought decent clothing that fits. I put makeup on. I get my hair colored. So, I feel like, as far as being very superficial about what the weight means, I'm doing what I have access to that, like the best that I can, I guess. I just really would love to see myself in different size clothing.

Katrina Ubell: And the reason why is because of why? Why would you love to see yourself in different size clothing?

Erica: So, it goes back to sort of the vain answer and the less vain answer. The vain answer, which is I just kind of like the way I look with less weight on my bones. And then the not-vain answer of I want to be able to keep up with my kids. I want to set a really good example for my kids. I don't want my kids to struggle with their weight. I don't want my kids to have crazy thoughts about food, but I can already see it happening.

Your podcast about the scarcity model really hit home for me. I grew up in a house where our after-school snacks were kept in locked bags, so we could only have access to one. My mom didn't want us to struggle with our weight, so we had no soda, no candy, no chips. I was a kid who ran to the candy aisle on every field trip because I didn't have access to it. Dessert was like canned fruit at Grandma's house. When you were talking about this, I feel it with me now, even when I'm out on the road in between visits. "Ooh, Starbucks drive-thru is right there. I'm going to go get myself a whatever." You know?

Katrina Ubell: That's how I used to get through calls on the weekends. How bad of a call was it based on how many times I went through the Starbucks drive-thru?

Erica: Right, right. When you were speaking about that scarcity model, I feel like, even though nothing in my life really is scarce right now, I subscribe to the thinking of "Oh, maybe this piece of chocolate is going to be my last piece of chocolate."

Katrina Ubell: Yes, right. It's like still deep down, there's still kind of this belief, "This is my one chance. This is my chance to get it." Just like when you're on the field trip, running to the candy aisle. "Ooh, it's here. I might not have something in 20 minutes." I'm telling you, the scarcity stuff is some of the best work you can do. I still work on it with myself.

It's gotten so much better, but especially when it's something that's been ingrained in you from childhood, it's something you have to always be aware of and paying attention to. When your brain goes, "Ooh, look, there's a Starbucks drive-thru, you're like, yeah, cool, that's cool, but actually I'm good right now. Let me actually just see does my body actually need food?" Probably not most of the time, right?

But I want to circle back really quickly to you were talking about the vain answer and the non-vain answer and really what it comes down to is, because you'll feel better, right? If you lose the weight, you'll feel better. You'll physically feel better probably, maybe, maybe not. We don't know for sure. Maybe some of those ailments will go away, but also emotionally you're going to feel better. You're going to feel, from the vanity perspective, you'll be like, "I look really nice. I'm so glad I'm doing this." And then from the non-vain answer, as you put it, just knowing, "Okay, I'm doing everything I can to keep myself healthy for the long term." It's just important to remember that the only reason we ever want anything is because of how we think it'll make us feel. We think we'll feel better because of how we think it will make us feel. So we think we'll feel better. Like why do we want our kids to be okay? Because if they're okay, then we're okay. Right?

Erica: Sure.

Katrina Ubell: Like why do you have a lot of thoughts that make you feel anxious when your husband doesn't answer the text? Because, right? Then you're like no, but if something happened to them, then I would feel bad and I don't want to feel bad.

Erica: Oh yeah.

Katrina Ubell: It's literally anything. It's like why do we want to save the whales? Because when the whales die, we feel bad and we want to feel good. It always comes back to that with like anything, so it's always interesting to kind of think why is it that I even want that? Like oh, because I want to feel better. Well, the good news is that's available to me now just by changing my thinking. Like nothing on the outside has to change. Like you don't actually have to get the text back from the husband.

Like you said, you know, you're able to cognitively rationally go like, "Okay, everything is fine. There's lots of other reasons he might not be responding," or things like that. And you know, I think with anxiety sometimes it's helpful to just recognize that that's a very primitive part of your brain that just wants your children and your family, like your tribe, your people to survive because that propagates the species. Without that drive we probably wouldn't be here today as humans, right? So when your brain offers that up, it's the idea of of course my brain is making me feel anxious about this because the safety and health of my family is important to me. That doesn't mean though that something bad has actually happened, right? So that's like a way of going okay. Like what we usually say with something like this, someone who has anxiety is you put actually anxiety on this circumstance line.

Like we can call that a circumstance. Like you have anxiety and then it's what you think about the fact that you have anxiety. Right? You can be like, "Yeah, I have a lot of anxious thoughts and I feel anxious a lot. That's cool because I can feel anxious," versus like, "No, something really bad's going to happen," like where you're believing the whole thing. You see the difference?

Erica: Yeah.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Yeah. So I want to look at the thought it's easy for me to make excuses and then not follow through. Let's do that one. So when you have that thought, so the circumstance here is weight loss attempts, right? It's all very neutral, just times you've tried to lose weight, and then your thought is it's easy for me to make excuses and not follow the plan. When you think that, how do you feel?

Erica: So it did take me a second and There's a couple. I think one is like, one is I think, and the reason why I think I come back to these feelings is because I feel an element of relief. Like I don't have to do it then. If I can't do it, well, I don't have to do it and I don't want to do it right now. It's too hard and if I just like blame it on whatever in the world that is going wrong that's not allowing me to sort of make these changes, then I'm relieved of that responsibility. But then not accomplishing it or not being able to do it ...

Katrina Ubell: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, yeah. Well, let's touch onto the relief first because I think that one's actually really interesting because I think what ends up happening then, we have our circumstance of weight loss attempts and then your thought is it's easy for me to make excuses and not follow the plan, then you have the feeling of sort of being relieved, right? Sort of like you're let off the hook in terms of having to follow the plan. Then what that feeling creates actually is making excuses and not following the plan, right? That's the action on that model, and then the result is gain weight. It continues to be easy to make excuses to not following the plan. Which is kind of what you don't want, right? Not kind of, it isn't what you want.

Erica: Right. Right.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. So that's what's so fascinating about the model, right? You can see how it really is like no, but I'm just conveying the news. I'm just letting you know it's really easy for me to make these excuses to not follow the plan, but what that thought and that belief about yourself creates is more of what you already have, which is what you don't want.

Erica: Correct.

Katrina Ubell: Interesting, right? It's really interesting to see that. So in just the last couple ...

Erica: How do, I guess, and maybe you're going to get to this, but like that feeling of relief, like being relieved of the duty or responsibility to have to make change feels easier.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Right, right, right. So it feels easier to not do that because it is, right? It's easier to just make those excuses.

Erica: Right.

Katrina Ubell: But regardless of it being easier or not, it's still giving you the result ...

Katrina Ubell: ... of not following the plan. Right. So this is kind of what we sometimes talk about. It's like do you want easy/hard or hard/easy, right? If you hit the easy button in the short term, you get the hard button in the longterm, right? So that's your diabetes, that's your like, your conflict with your vanity beliefs. You know, not keeping up with the kids, that's the hard later.

If you pick hard now, which is like it's totally easy to make excuses except today I'm not going to make an excuse, I'm going to follow my plan, that's hard now, but the longterm is easier in the sense that physically you feel better. You're building up that relationship with yourself which is so important, meaning that you do what you say you're going to do no matter what. You know you've always got your back.

Like you don't have that right now, right? If you say you're going to do something for yourself, it's very likely it won't happen. I mean it sounds like you're, you know, not like that at all in other areas of your life. This is exactly how I was. I'm like, "Oh no, I'm incredibly responsible to everybody, but to me it's like maybe I'll do it." You know? It's possible, but probably not. You know?

Erica: Yes.

Katrina Ubell: And so like that's totally fine, but you just have to own it. Like yeah, I'm not accountable to myself. That's totally my thing that I need to work on. I'll be honest with you, I mean, just to share this with you, if I had to sum up, if someone said what's the number one thing you had to learn or work on to make it so you could lose weight and keep it off, by far it was my relationship with myself.

And the great news is about that is you can start building that up in other ways that aren't even related to weight loss if that's something that you want to do. Right? If you're kind of like I'm not in a place where I really want to focus on the food, you can instead go, "Okay, but I'm going to commit to going to Pilates twice a week and no matter what I'm going to do that. If for some reason I can't, this is, you know, then I'm going to walk for 30 minutes."

You know? Or whatever. You're like I will do this and there's nothing that will happen that will be an excuse because I've got me and I do what I say I'm going to do. Then you build up that evidence for yourself where oh yeah, I said I was going to do that and look, it's been months and I'm actually doing that. I'm actually doing what I said I was going to do. Like, maybe I should try that with like drinking enough water. Maybe not drinking as you know, many Starbucks in the day and instead doing some water or something, right?

Just making that up, but then it's like okay, yeah look, I committed to that and even when it was hard and I really didn't want to do it I didn't expect myself to feel like doing it. I just did what I said I was going to do because that's a person that I'm creating, right? For me what really helped me was thinking about it in terms of being in integrity with myself. Right? Like identifying as somebody who's not in integrity with themselves is not something that I was like open to. You know what I mean? I wasn't like yeah, I'm totally okay that I'm ...

Erica: Right.

Katrina Ubell: ... not a person of integrity, you know? I was like yeah, that's not okay. Once I really saw that I wasn't living in integrity with myself when I wasn't following through, I was like oh, well okay, yeah, that's ... Not because I would beat myself up, but because that's just not who I'm trying to be in this world. Right? Like I'm somebody who's just trying ...

Erica: Right.

Katrina Ubell: ... to live in integrity, right? So then it's like oh okay, well maybe you know, I said I was just going to have one cupcake, I'm going to just have the one and deal with the urges to have more afterward even though nobody would really notice that the overweight girl's going and getting a second one. I'm going to deal with that discomfort now to have the, you know, the good feelings later of I did what I said I was going to do. I'm building up that relationship with myself. Does that make sense?

Erica: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yes.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. It's really, really powerful when you start kind of delving into it because you do have a good relationship with yourself. You say you're going to take care of your kids and you do it. You say you're going to go to work every day and you do it. Right? There's lots of things that you do where you do have your back. You're like, "Yeah, I want to show up and be a good employee so I'm going to go to work and do my job," right?

So it's not like your entire relationship with yourself is awful. It's just that you have to see where you're doing a good job of it and then extrapolate that to other areas where you're struggling a little bit more. And so just to like circle back around to this model, you know, we can change the model. Like you know, weight loss attempts and you know, instead of thinking it's easy to make excuses to not follow my plan, we don't have to be like, "I hate making excuses to follow my plan," or something that isn't you know, believable at all, but instead your new thought might be something like I'm learning how to not make excuses to not follow my plan.

Right? So it's much more like growth mindset in the sense of you're going, "You know, I think there's a possibility that I might be able to learn how to not always make excuses and not follow my eating plan. If you have that thought, what emotion do you get from that?

Erica: I guess I want to say almost like anticipation.

Katrina Ubell: Okay.

Erica: Sort of to see if I can do it. I don't know, does that make sense?

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, yeah.

Erica: Like wanting to see if I can ... Like excitement almost.

Katrina Ubell: Like open, right? Yeah. Kind of excited and ...

Erica: Actually fulfilling a positive change.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Yeah, right? And so when you have that emotion, what action would you take? Would you go and eat off plan all the time?

Erica: No.

Katrina Ubell: No. What would you do?

Erica: For like a very concrete, like I would bring my food to work from home.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Right.

Katrina Ubell: You know, another thing might be, would be working on figuring out how to not make excuses, right? Go maybe I should spend some time actually thinking about what are my excuses, what are the obstacles and what are the solutions? Right?

Like something that does drive you forward so then the result for that, whether you lose weight or not, right, you're still learning. It doesn't have to be like then I dropped you know, 25 pounds. Like, that would be nice but the result here, what we're wanting is for you to learn how to not have the excuses determine what you do, right?

Erica: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Katrina Ubell: For you to instead be more deliberate in what you're going to do and doing what you say you're going to do. That's what you know, a thought like that can do. Now that thought you know, for the sake of time I kind of gave you that thought, but that's available to you you know, to kind of come up with something else. Like maybe there's a different thought that you like better, but then when you see yeah, that is the result that I want, then you intentionally and on purpose think that thought to yourself.

So you start your day with that thought and then you know, whenever there's kind of a situation coming up or you notice you know, you're seeing or whatever you're thinking and you notice your brain making excuses, okay no, but I'm working on learning how to not have excuses drive my actions. You know, okay, so let me pay attention. Where is that excuse coming from? Is it because I'm actually like what else is going on for me? What other emotions am I having? Why is that excuse ... Is the excuse just me wanting to hit the easy button? You know what I mean? Just really being curious and open to learning more about yourself, not thinking that you know everything about yourself can really be powerful and you can have some really big breakthroughs as to what's going on with this whole issue here, you know? So you can start making progress in whatever way that ends up being.

I always tell my clients you don't have to lose weight if you don't want to, but for God's sake, if you're going to stay overweight, then stop hating yourself. Stop beating yourself up. Learn to actually love yourself at that weight and just own it. Yeah, I want to be heavy. I want to eat this way. Cool and I love myself anyway and I have an amazing life, right? But that's not how it is for most of us, you know what I mean?

Erica: No.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. So it's like ... But then it's like no, but then I'll lose weight. Then I'll feel good about myself. But if you're an excellent self-beater-upper, you're going to do the same thing when you're thin too. That's not going to change unless we spend active time changing that. People talk about having to love yourself thin. It's kind of the same thing. Like you have to learn to love yourself now.

You have to learn to not beat yourself up now so that you can actually lose the weight and then you also are not beating yourself up when you are down at your goal weight. So this is you know, we just touched on lots of really great topics in really a short amount of time, but that is basically that skill where you do your thought download, you pull out what the facts are. You pull out a thought. Here I just pulled out that one thought.

You told me it's easy to make excuses to not follow my plan, and then you can see what that result is. You can do that with any thought you have. Any and every thought in there to see what the results are. You start really getting to understand what's going on for you and I mean, that's what I work with my clients on obviously in my groups and everything with some help, but something that you're able to do on your own too to really figure out what it is that's holding you back, like why you're stuck.

Erica: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Katrina Ubell: Okay. All right Erica, well thank you so much for coming on. This was super fun.

Erica: Thank you.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah ...

Katrina Ubell: ... and hopefully this will help you to move forward and get you unstuck as you move forward.

Erica: Thank you.

Katrina Ubell: You are so welcome. Alright, take care Erica.

Erica: Bye.

Katrina Ubell: Bye.