



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: What's up, what's up? Hey friend, welcome back. Got another really great coaching call for you. Today, the person I'm coaching, her name is Nikki. She is a pediatric critical care physician. I spent some time coaching her on being busy and being tired all the time. I mean, who can relate, raise your hand. For sure, I think every single one of us. This was really just a fantastic call. We really dug into fatigue and dug into the whole indulgence of telling ourselves we're busy all the time, and how that actually makes us less efficient, which was so impactful. I hope that this is just as helpful for you as it was for Nikki.

Have a great week, and please enjoy listening to me coaching Nikki. All right, Nikki. Thanks so much for coming on the podcast.

Nikki: Thanks for having me. I'm excited.

Katrina Ubell: I'm so excited too. I'm so excited for you. What a great opportunity. Okay, so we had talked about picking a specific topic, and you were asking about fatigue and tiredness and being busy all the time. We're going to start with you just telling me more about that, more about the fatigue, the tiredness, all the busy, all of it, and how it's impacting your life.

Nikki: Okay. I'm a pediatric critical care physician. I am five years out of fellowship now, so kind of getting into my attending life. I have two little girls, a two-year-old and a five-year-old. I had my five-year-old in my third year of fellowship, and then my two-year-old kind of in the midst of my attending life. I think between going through all of residency and training and fellowship and obviously nights, night call, being up at night is part of my job. That has never gone away even being out of residency and fellowship. That's just sort of part of my life.

Katrina Ubell: Tell me a little more about that, what that looks like? What is your typical call schedule?

Nikki: It changes all the time, so there's no consistency. I typically, when I do do nights, I do several nights in a row, so usually three to four nights in a row. Some nights I'm up all night. Some nights I get maybe three or four hours of sleep, but I typically, because I have two small children and my husband is also a stay-at-home dad, which is great in some aspects and hard in others because he doesn't get a break unless I'm giving him a break, so I tend to not really sleep in between my call shifts.

Maybe an hour or two, but to try to spend time with my family and to sometimes give my husband a break, I tend to stay up. There could be days where I sleep very little, and then obviously with two small kids, they tend to wake me up here and there at night.

Katrina Ubell: Okay. All right. This happens and you're really low on sleep and then what happens?

Nikki: I just keep going about my business. I really do try to get to bed at a reasonable time. I'm usually in bed by 10:00 at the latest when I'm at home. I usually can fall asleep fairly well easily, but if I wake up in the middle of the night, I have a hard time going back to sleep. There are definitely nights where start out great but I wake up in the middle of the night, and then I'm up for hours.

Katrina Ubell: Why do you think that is?

Nikki: Usually it's get stuck on thoughts in my head, and I just can't stop thinking and get back to sleep.

Katrina Ubell: Okay. Okay. What do you think the result is for you in terms of this fatigue, right, in your life?

Nikki: I think it's when I just generally have this fatigue. I think I use it as an excuse sometimes to not do things. "I'm so tired, so I can't do this. I'm so tired, so I can't take care of myself. I can't exercise." I feel like I'm not efficient in the time that I do have.

Katrina Ubell: Okay. Are you showing up as the mom you want to be, as the wife you want to be, as the doctor you want to be? Do you think the fatigue influences that at all?

Nikki: Yeah, absolutely. I feel like my mom job is probably where I do my best. I feel like I really take as much time as I can with my girls and spend quality time with them. I feel like that's probably where I show up the best. I think my marriage is probably the worst off. That definitely takes the bottom rung with things.

Katrina Ubell: How do you think that the fatigue plays out? When you're so tired, how are you acting towards your husband?

Nikki: He kind of gets the last. It's, we get the girls down, and we finally have time together and I'm like, oh my God, I'm just going to lay here on the couch, and then in a half an hour I'm going to go to bed, so good-night.

Katrina Ubell: You mean in terms of maybe lack of connection with him? Nikki: Yeah, yeah.

Katrina Ubell: Okay, okay. Do you have any issues with that relationship in terms of arguing or not agreeing on things or things like that?

Nikki: Yeah, definitely, and it's something that we're sort of in the active phases of working on together, but I definitely think my feeling tired contributes to it.

Katrina Ubell: Okay, okay. Then the busy all the time part, let's talk a little bit more about that.

Nikki: I feel like I'm constantly like I'm so busy, I'm so busy, and then I find myself getting lost and being sidetracked by things and not being efficient in my time. I'll sit at my work desk. I have this whole to-do list, and I get sidetracked by emails, I get sidetracked by talking to other people. Somebody comes in my office and then an hour later I'm like, oh, okay. Then I get home and my husband, Gavin, will be like, "How was your day?" I'll be like, "It was so busy and I didn't get anything done. It was so busy."

Katrina Ubell: Right, right. Right, right. Okay, okay. All right, great. Anything else related to this that you want to share? Anything else relevant?

Nikki: I mean, I think part of it too is just self-care. It's been something that I've really tried to start working on the last month or two is being busy can't be a reason to not take care of myself, but I find that that's frequently, I'm too busy and I'm too tired to do it.

Katrina Ubell: Right, okay. Right. It's like both, it always comes back to the tired and busy, right?

Nikki: Yeah.

Katrina Ubell: It's like, nothing else left. Okay. Okay, so what I want to do now is separate out the facts from the thoughts. I'll help you with this a little bit. We know that you're a pediatric critical care doctor. You have two kids ages two and five, and you're married. Part of your job is that you take in-house call, I'm assuming, right, in-house call.

Nikki: Yes, yeah.

Katrina Ubell: The schedule changes but it can be up to four nights in a row where you're working nights at times.

Nikki: Yeah.

Katrina Ubell: Okay. That's about it, I think. What do you think? Is that about it for the facts?

Nikki: Yeah. I guess I would just add, I guess for my job, the other ... I have my clinical part of my job and then I also do research. I'm also a researcher, and then also do some administrative ... I'm the director of our pediatric transport team.

Katrina Ubell: Oh, okay. All right, so some admin work, too.

Nikki: Yeah. I've got my clinical side and then the other parts.

Katrina Ubell: Yes, okay. We wouldn't really say a fact is you have admin work because nobody knows what that means. If we really wanted to list out the facts, we would write down director of this, blah-blah-blah, whatever the titles or responsibilities are and we would know that that's what we do or that's what the facts are. What's great about recognizing that is that we then realize that the rest is all thoughts. Even the fatigue where we're just like, no, but I'm really tired all the time, I'm just letting you know, that is actually a thought that we have. It's really interesting, right, because so much of our life that we just think is happening to us and we're just experiencing it is actually a choice. Same with busy, being so busy all the time, right? Can you see that, how that's a choice?

Nikki: I can see it, but ...

Katrina Ubell: Rationally she's pointing to her head.

Nikki: I'm not choosing to be tired. I don't want to be tired, but, yeah, I do see how it is a feeling.

Katrina Ubell: This is actually really interesting because let's actually work through, let's work through a model. The reason why, for the most part, the fatigue is something that we're kind of just, we're choosing as a thought is because it's hard to package that up so we can all agree, right? One person might be like, "When I don't sleep at night for three nights, I'm still totally fine," which they're probably a robot, but anyway, I'm just saying. Then someone else is like, "Oh my God, I wouldn't even be able to function. I'd be seizing on the floor," or something. Everybody is going to have a different experience with that. That's where it kind of comes into how am I choosing to think about that fatigue.

But, this is the way I would actually offer, let's do a model on this, is putting fatigue actually on the C line. On the circumstance line, for anybody who's new to the podcast, let me just do a quick refresh of this thought model we use. There's five components. The first is the circumstance or the C, we call it, just to abbreviate it, and that's a neutral fact. That's what we just all pulled out.

Then the next part is the thought. We have thoughts about the circumstance. Then our thoughts create our feelings or emotions, and our feelings drive our actions. That's all things we do and we don't do including our self talk, what we think. We're going about our life looking like everything's fine on the outside, but we're eating ourselves alive inside, that kind of thing. That all is action, and then the result is what the result is for you.

In this case, you can put fatigue on the C line because it's kind of a constant in your life, it sounds like. Sometimes another example of where we'll put things on the C line is a medical diagnosis. Say you have anxiety, right. You can have your physician be like, "Yeah, this person has anxiety. We have documentation of that." It's just a neutral fact.

Then you have thoughts about the fact that you have anxiety. Same for depression or whatever else. In this case, it sounds like, I mean, if you're going to be working four nights in a row and then not sleeping when you get home and getting just a, if you're lucky, a smattering of sleep, hours when you're at work, it sounds like fatigue is pretty much always present in your life with this current set-up.

Nikki: Yes.

Katrina Ubell: Do you agree? Okay. All right. I mean, correct me if I'm wrong, but that's what it sounds like to me. If that's the case, right, it's like, sure, you could take a month off and get totally caught up on rest, but that's not how your life is. Right now, having this constant state of fatigue is the circumstance, and then you have thoughts about it that make it so that you don't follow your eating plan, you don't exercise, right, as you said, that you use it as an excuse, and that's your thinking about the fatigue. We have our fatigue on the C line, and then your thought. We have our fatigue on the C line and then, your thought, what you told me is I use it as an excuse not to do things. Do you have a thought in the moment when you're making the excuse? Is it just like, I'm too tired?

Nikki: Yeah. It's just I'm too tired. I will set my alarm to get up to go for a walk, and I will go off and I'll be like, "I'm just too tired."

Katrina Ubell: Hell no, that's not happening, right? Yeah, exactly. Okay. I'm too tired.

Nikki: Yeah.

Katrina Ubell: Let's just say I'm too tired to eat right and exercise, right, it's kind of clear what we're talking about here. Then when you have that thought, how do you feel? What emotion do you have?

Nikki: At first, I'm like, okay, I'm too tired. I'm going to be nice to myself. This will be nice. I'll get some more sleep and then I'll feel better and we'll try again tomorrow.

Katrina Ubell: Those are a whole, I'm so glad you did this, I asked you for an emotion, you gave me a whole bunch more thoughts. That's how most of us go, right, especially because of the way that we talk, just people in America right. We're like, "How do you feel?" We're like, "Well, I feel like blah, blah, blah, blah, blah," but that's actually all thoughts.

A feeling, this is a great opportunity to discuss this, a feeling is an emotion. It's generally a one word descriptor of what's actually going on in your body, because our thoughts are created in our brains by neural connections, and then the chemical cascades that they create are what generate these feelings in our bodies. Anywhere outside of your brain, whatever you're feeling, then that's going to be an emotion. Many of us are actually not very tuned in to describing our emotions very well.

Nikki: Yeah, right.

Katrina Ubell: We have lots and lots of thoughts, but then it's like, but what are you feeling, and we're like, I really am not sure. I'm not sure what that is.

Nikki: Yeah.

Katrina Ubell: We can kind of tap into that a little bit more. If you're feeling too tired, right in that moment, I think actually when you feel sort of relieved that you're not going to go walk, that what's actually happening is you're kind of having a new thought of, oh, good, I'm not going to do it. I've made the decision not to, and then that's creating the relief, but we're kind of jumping ahead there. Right away when you think, you're feeling tired, I'm too tired to eat right and exercise, right in that split second before you have the next thought, can you think of a one word descriptor?

Nikki: Gosh.

Katrina Ubell: I can help you if you're struggling, but it's always best that the client comes up with it themselves.

Nikki: I think might even, like, a little annoyed. Like, I'm annoyed that I'm too tired to do this and I'm ... Annoyed. Stop. One word.

Katrina Ubell: Great. Annoyed. Love it. That's actually really great. It's like full stop, period, right. Then sometimes we start getting tapped into our feelings and we're like, here's 25 feelings I feel for my ... Like, no, no, no, no. I want to keep it very simple, one, maybe two is all we really want to put on. If we feel like there's a number more feelings, that means we're adding too many thoughts, we're having all kinds of thoughts about that, we're not really staying cleanly with that one thought. Okay.

Just to backtrack, our circumstances fatigue, baseline fatigue, and this really applies to so many physicians, right, I think with anybody who's got crazy schedules, all the people delivering babies that night, people who have calls who are just woken up all night, people have to go in the middle of the night. I mean, people who don't have any of that, but have children waking them up all day long, you know, people who just don't sleep well, so many people deal with this, so this is really applicable to so many.

Then the thought is I'm too tired to eat right and exercise, which, you know, I'm sure, I could testify, I've had that one a lot of times in the past. Then the feeling is annoyed. When you're annoyed about being too tired to eat right and exercise, what do you do or not do?

Nikki: I think I sort of, I hit that snooze button, and then later on I beat myself up about not having done it, and then I make another promise to myself that I will try again tomorrow, or I'll try again next week.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Yeah. In the moment, I totally agree with you, but in the moment, I think what your action is, is you don't eat right and you don't exercise.

Nikki: Yes.

Katrina Ubell: Right? That's really what is coming of that. Then the result is that you don't lose weight and you don't get more fit, physically fit, right?

Nikki: Yes.

Katrina Ubell: Let me just review that one more time. On the circumstance line is just fatigue, like your general state of fatigue. Your thought is I'm too tired to eat right and exercise, that makes you feel annoyed, and your action is, you don't eat right, you don't follow an eating plan, you don't exercise, and the result is you don't lose weight and you don't become more physically fit. Oh, and you're not less tired either. Also, still tired.

What we then do with a model like this is we check it. The way you check it is you make sure that the result is always proof or evidence of that original thought. The thought was, I'm too tired to eat right and exercise, and the result is that you don't lose weight, you don't get physically fit and feel tired, right?

Nikki: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Katrina Ubell: I find really simple models like this to be some of the absolutely most powerful ones, where you're like, "No, but I really feel like, I'm just letting you know, it really isn't a thought, I'm just too tired to eat right and exercise." It's like, but, that is then the result that you're creating. We don't realize that we're perpetuating exactly what it is that we don't want by thinking that way. By thinking that, it's out of our hands, it's out of our control, it's just ...

Nikki: Right.

Katrina Ubell: I'm telling you about my life. This is how I feel, right? Models like this can really help you to see, I'm thinking this, and then I'm continuing to create it, which is why I'm having such a hard time creating anything else, right?

Nikki: Right, right. Yeah.

Katrina Ubell: Which is really great news, right?

Nikki: Yes.

Katrina Ubell: It's like, oh, I thought I had to be less tired to eat right and exercise. Actually turns out, maybe not.

Nikki: Which is what I've been waiting for, to be less tired, and it hasn't happened.

Katrina Ubell: Hasn't happened, right. Doesn't look like it's on the horizon either, what you described. It's really, really good to see that. Now we understand that. What we do with this first model is we see, oh, okay, it's actually all my thoughts that are creating this result that I don't want in my life, now what?

Sometimes we just have to spend some time before we're ready for a new model just really seeing how the current model's playing out. I've talked before about taking on that observer or watcher role where you really are just paying attention, noticing your thoughts.

Something that could be very helpful for you would be just making, and you could do this even reminding yourself with post-it notes on your computer in different places or on the screen of your phone just to kind of check in what am I thinking right now, to notice how often you're using the I'm too tired to XYZ kind of thought, like, how often that's coming up for you, it may be happening a lot. It's really good for you to see that.

You're like, wow, I am creating ... I'm already fatigued, and then I'm making it worse by thinking this way about it in all these areas of my life. That's really interesting, right? You're not qualifying it, you're not judging it, you're not beating yourself up over it or anything like that. You're just noticing, this is really fascinating. Huh, okay, wow, this story that I tell myself about myself and my life has a large chunk of it related to me sort of feeling sorry for myself, I'm so tired all the time. Then you can go, okay, if fatigue truly is going to be a constant in my life, that's just going to be it, then what if I could create a different experience of that fatigue for myself. It doesn't have to be, often times I think we think that we need to flip to the other of like, I have excessive energy, I am like, you know what I mean, I love being exhausted. Of course that's not believable or realistic to think that. I mean, it's available to you if you want to try to work on believing that. We can work on something else about the fatigue that at least gives you the result that you want, right? That's ultimately what it is, and that's when we can kind of work the model backwards.

I want to do that as an example with you. What I want to do is rework this model so we still have fatigue on the see lines so it's the same thing with that, but what I want to do is first focus on the results that you want.

Nikki: Okay.

Katrina Ubell: Tell me what result ... Let's go with the eating and exercise theme. What would be the dream result for you?

Nikki: I would like to lose more weight and I would like to not get winded walking up the stairs.

Katrina Ubell: Okay.

Nikki: To feel more fit physically.

Katrina Ubell: Okay. All right. Great. Okay. Yeah. This is really good. I want to point out what you did, because I don't think you even realized it, but I just want to point this out. Before, our result was no weight loss, not physically more fit, and still tired. For the result, right, it's the opposite that you want, you want to lose weight, you want to be more physically fit so you can walk up the stairs and anything else you want to do. You didn't say, "And I don't want to be so tired," because that's not a result. If the circumstances fatigue, that's a constant here, that's not something that we're going to be changing. Sometimes people are like, "But I just don't want to be so tired." I'm like, "Yeah, and see, that's another thought that's making being fatigued so much more uncomfortable." We're accepting fatigue is the baseline, but you want to have the result of losing weight and being more physically fit. If that is what you wanted as a result, what would you need to do? What actions would you need to take?

Nikki: I would need to exercise on a regular basis, and I would need to follow my food plan and eat healthy and not snack.

Katrina Ubell: Okay, all right. That's on our action line. We're working our way up if you guys are following me with this model. It's circumstance, thought, feeling, action, result. We started on the bottom, the result line. Now we're moving up to the action line. In order to get the result of losing weight, being more physically fit so you can walk up the stairs, you want to exercise regularly and follow your food plan including no snacks. Okay. In order to take those actions of exercising regularly, following that food plan, what emotions do you need to feel? What emotions drive those actions?

Nikki: I don't know.

Katrina Ubell: Here's another rule about coaching. We're not allowed to say we don't know. What you can do is sometimes just wait a minute and let our brain answer it, or sometimes we just go like, you know, if you did know, what might it be? If you just had to take a guess.

Nikki: The first word that comes to mind is excited.

Katrina Ubell: Okay. Great. What about when it's really not exciting to get up really? Is there another emotion maybe that ...

Nikki: Motivated.

Katrina Ubell: Motivated, okay. For everybody who is following along, other feelings that are common that people come to our, feeling driven, feeling determined, feeling committed. Those feel pretty good, but they're not like, amazing. A lot of the time when you're following your food plan and you're exercising regularly, it's not so great, right? You're excited for the first week and then you're like, yeah, like, that ship has sailed, now what, you know? Motivated is good, is having something that's like, okay, I want to do this, even if I don't

Nikki: Yeah

Katrina Ubell: Or something like that. Okay. Excited and motivated would drive those actions of exercising regularly and following the food plan. Now we work on finding a thought about being fatigued all the time in relation to exercise and losing weight that feels true and believable to you, that makes you feel excited and motivated so that you exercise regularly the way you want to and get the results that you want. Can you think of something? We can just play with things. You don't have to hit it right on the head.

Nikki: Yeah. I guess I would start out with, I know I'm tired, but ...

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Nikki: Start out with I know I'm tired, but ...

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Nikki: I will feel better if I get up and exercise now, or if I stick to my meal plan or my food plan.

Katrina Ubell: Okay. That is a great way of handling this. You really came to right where I wanted you to. It's like, I'm too tired to eat right and exercise is like, I'm tired, but I know I'm tired or I can eat right and exercise even if I'm tired. It's really acceptance of that circumstance of I'm tired, not using it as oh, but it should be different. If it's a fact, it's not gonna be different. This is this constant in your life, then I can do these things even if I'm tired. You might want to play with different versions of that, or have a couple different versions of it.

Then what you do is what I call ... I say you go and take it into the wild. That means you go and live your life and actually try this thought and really see does it actually make me feel excited? Does it make me feel motivated like I think it might? Does it then drive me to follow my plan and exercise so I get those results that I want? You might find you're like, "You know, it's pretty good, but it needs a little tweaking." Or you might find this one seems to really resonate better than that one or whatever and that's completely fine.

Then what's so important is we all like to think that we can just coach ourselves in our minds and not write anything down, including me, raising my hand like I definitely am guilty of this as well at times. It's really important that you write this down for yourself because ... and before you know it you're on to the next thing and you're just all over the place and you're not focused on that. So then you can create that model for yourself at any time.

Then you can experiment with when you want to intentionally read this model and create that for yourself or think that thought. If it's like I want to get up early in the morning, maybe what you do is even before you go to bed, you're literally climbing in bed turning the light off, and you're looking at that model. Even though I'm tired, I want the end results of having exercised, or whatever it is. Reminding yourself of that.

Now, this is the thing. The morning will come. The alarm will go off. What do you think is gonna happen? Your old thought is gonna come back immediately because your brain is super efficient at thinking that and you've thought it so long, it's just like a habit thought. It's just like, boom, this is the thought and right away you're annoyed and tired and don't want to do it. You have to expect that. You have to remember that that will always be your initial, well, at least for the next while, that will be your ... expect that you will have that initial response. Then you go, "But wait, I've got something new. I've got this new thought. Let me just read that thought," and generate for yourself.

Sometimes we end up coming up with all kinds of things, like, "Oh, but then there's that one podcast or audio book I'm loving. Then I can listen to that, but only when I'm walking at 5:00 in the morning, so I better get up so I can find out what happens," or whatever.

Nikki: No, that's ... I've been listening to your podcast when I get up in the morning and walk my dog and that is my treat for getting up.

Katrina Ubell: Awesome. There you go.

Nikki: Thank you.

Katrina Ubell: Love it. You're welcome. That's fantastic. Right. You really are ... I've done that. I used to do that back in the day when I would pump with my first. This was like '05, '06. I didn't have a smart phone or anything and I think ... I don't even think we had a laptop then so I would get a People magazine subscription and I could only look at it when I was pumping so it was a good motivator. I'm like, "I get to read some trashy magazines if I'm doing this pumping that I hate doing." It's a way of motivating yourself. That's a great way of doing that.

So over the course of time, let's just say that you are really consistent with this and every time you say you're gonna get up and walk in the morning and you do it and you do that for months and years, your initial experience of waking up tired will be different. Your thoughts will change, but it's gonna take some time. How long? We don't know. But just believing in that idea that if I keep up with this and I'm consistent with this that old habit programming of how I feel when I first wake up will change.

Then I argue with some people who are like, "What if it doesn't change?" I'm like, "Then you're doing this forever more," and that can be okay. Because if you're just really annoyed for a few seconds until you think your new thought and you get yourself going, that's okay too. That will be okay. But for sure, over the course of time, you stay committed to it, it becomes something that does give you an end result that you want. Like so many things, so many things that are worth it in life require you to do the hard thing now so you get that end result that you want.

Yeah. What do you think of that model? Is that one that you think you can try out?

Nikki: Yeah, definitely.

Katrina Ubell: Okay.

Nikki: Definitely.

Katrina Ubell: Awesome. Good. Okay, so in the few minutes that we have still, I wanted to touch on the busy, the busyness thing and just teach you a little bit more about busyness. I don't know, I actually did a podcast on busyness. You might not have actually gotten to it yet.

Nikki: I think I have.

Katrina Ubell: I don't remember, I don't even know when, I just know I did one, I don't know... So really telling yourself that you're so busy and that feeling of busyness is really an indulgent emotion. What I mean by that is it never produces anything useful. The same thing as worry or confusion or doubt or indecision or any of those things where you just are like, like you said, you come home, "How was your day?" "Oh, so busy but I got nothing done." It kind of makes us feel like we're ... like it was an important day, things happened. Nothing meaningful, but things happened. It becomes this just loop, again this kind of filter on how we see our experience.

It doesn't actually create the result of getting more done. That's really the irony there. It's like, "Oh, but if I'm really busy, then I'm getting a lot done," except you're not. So telling yourself that you're busy actually slows you down and makes you less efficient, which we kind of touched on.

Nikki: Yeah.

Katrina Ubell: I think efficiency for someone who's chronically sleep deprived is gonna be a struggle or a challenge anyway. Something that you really have to focus on anyway, but you add that whole extra busy layer on top of it, it's like, it makes it so much more challenging for you. One thing you can even do is banish that word from your vocabulary for a little while and you'll find yourself like wanting to use that all the time. How's your job? Busy, I mean not busy.

Nikki: Yeah.

Katrina Ubell: If your day isn't busy, then what is it? Let's think of something new to describe your day. If you're being really honest when you're not getting your to-do list done, if it's not busy then what was it?

Nikki: I mean some days I would say it was productive. It was a productive day because I actually made it through my to do list. Some days I would say it's distracted.

Katrina Ubell: Right. What's so good about that is instead of going it was busy, you're like, "Oh, I had a ton of distractions today. I was really distracted." That then sets your brain ... that actually tells your brain that what the real problem is, and then you can set it to work creating solutions for you. What's the solution to being busy? Quitting your job? I don't know, nothing, right? It's just you ... if you're deciding that you're busy or not and you're always busy, you're never gonna not be busy. You know what I mean? If you're like, "Oh, it was really a distracted day," then you can go, "Huh. I didn't get a lot done and I was really distracted, I wonder how I could maybe minimize the distractions in my day."

Nikki: Yes.

Katrina Ubell: You know what I mean? Then, that's one of those good questions to ask your brain, because your brain will want to try to come up with the solution and you might go, "Oh, you know what? So and so came and asked this question and then we ended up chatting for an hour and I really could have gotten a lot done." What might be a different way of handling that? There's so many different ways that you could experiment with, but then you could come up with a big brainstorm list of ways you could maybe make your day a little bit more efficient, a little less distracted. Then start trying them out, experimenting with them, going, "I really want every day to be really productive."

On those productive days you can even think too, "Okay, why were there less distractions today? How did I minimize that?" Maybe even unintentionally. Or so and so who comes in all the time happened to be on vacation. Okay, good to know. That person's interactions are a place to focus some attention. What can we do to make that more efficient? If it's someone you love chatting with, you're like, "Oh, let's just go have drinks later tonight." Or I don't know, whatever.

Something, connect in a different way is my point. Go for a walk together early in the morning, that would be better. You can start creating solutions for what it is you want and that's the difference. That feeling distracted is a different kind of emotion that has the possibility of helping you to create something different that you want, whereas when you're feeling busy, it's just you're just like looping, looping, looping and you never end up getting out of that. That's why so often we're just like, "I'm just so busy. I'm just never not busy."

Nikki: Right, exactly.

Katrina Ubell: I'm telling myself.

Nikki: Always busy.

Katrina Ubell: Have you ever seen moms whose kids ... they have a whole bunch of kids and they've got stuff all over for the kids and they're like, "No, it's cool. We'll get there. Sometimes we're a little late but it's okay." They aren't thinking that they're so busy. Meanwhile, me, I'm like, "We need to go! If we're a minute late ...". My brain's acting like if we're a minute late like everyone's gonna die.

Nikki: Right.

Katrina Ubell: The drama that's created there and it's all optional. It's all created in my head. It's really interested to just watch our brains tick and what is it, when do we pick up on that busy thing? Probably for you years ago, because med school, residency, everything, fellowship is all busyness. It's all various levels of busy. It's how so many people describe their lives and it kind of becomes a habit.

Nikki: Right, yeah.

Katrina Ubell: People even say that to me. They're like, "You must just be so much busier than you were in practice." I'm like, I always say, "No, actually I'm not. You know why? Because I get to decide. I get to decide whether I'm busy or not."

Nikki: Yeah.

Katrina Ubell: I'm not busy at all. Because I know that that thought, I'm busy, doesn't help me at all.

Nikki: Right.

Katrina Ubell: It's not an accurate reflection of what's going on for me at all. A little tidbit there for you to ponder, digest, marinate in.

Nikki: Yeah, it's so ... to view that word in a different way. It really is ... it doesn't really have much meaning behind it.

Katrina Ubell: It really doesn't serve you. That's really what it comes down to. It always comes down to does thinking this way or does this emotion have an upside for me or not? No matter how true it feels, if it doesn't have an upside then is that one a good one to think on purpose? If we get to pick, why would we pick one that doesn't have that upside? That's when you can start being like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's true too, but I'm just gonna intentionally not think about my life in that way because I see that it doesn't give me the result that I want," which is so great.

Nikki: Yeah.

Katrina Ubell: We have all the control. Nothing has to change. You don't need less work.

Nikki: Yeah.

Katrina Ubell: Change your thinking. Amazing, right?

Nikki: It really is. It really ... listening to your podcast and going through this, it really is amazing how your thoughts really are created and drive everything that you do.

Katrina Ubell: Right. I know. Trust me, I was totally like, when I learned it, I'm like, "How did I never know this before? What?"

Nikki: Right.

Katrina Ubell: I felt like I missed out on this huge piece, secret of the universe that no one was sharing with me. I was like, "What is going on?" All right, Nikki. Thank you so much.

Nikki: Thank you.

Katrina Ubell: This was so fun. It's so great having you on, and thanks for being willing to let all my listeners kind of be the fly on the wall and learn through you.

Nikki: Oh no, thank you. I appreciate it.

Katrina Ubell: You're so welcome.