



# WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Hey, my friends. What's up? How are you doing? So glad to be with you again today on this episode of the podcast. Woohoo. I have to say it's been so gorgeous here. I was just sitting outside with my laptop, putting my notes together, and I was finishing it up, had to come inside to record in here. Now, a little summer storm is about to come through. It's perfect timing, totally perfect timing. I am just loving the summer.

This has been probably the best summer I've had, gosh, in how long? A really long time. We've just had some really fun experiences, and my kids have had a great time. I've had a great time. The weather's been great. It's just been really, really a delight. You know what's so great? Even if the weather was cold and my kids hated all their camps and the trips we took sucked, I could still think that it was the best summer I've ever had in my life because I get to choose. Isn't that fun? So fun.

All right. Today, we're going to talk about decisions. I've talked about decisions before on the podcast, but there's a new way that I've decided to think about decisions recently. This has really come from me doing a considerable amount of self-coaching on myself. I can't remember if I've told you guys this on the podcast or not, but I'm currently in a year-long master coach training program, which sort of means I'm like sort of means that it's like getting a master's degree in coaching, except that that is not really what it is.

What it is is taking your coaching skills and your business skills to the next level, like really upleveling that and becoming more masterful in your coaching. If you think about going to regular coach training as sort of your "bachelor's degree" and then you go on to get your master's degree, you could think of master coach training in that way. The thing with life coaching is it's completely unregulated as an industry so saying that you're a master coach can mean a lot of different things. I think in the program that I'm going through it means a lot because for sure, holy moly, have my coaching skills improved since I've been in it. It is some serious, serious work to do on yourself like, wow, what a commitment.

I have to admit that I did not really know what all was involved when I signed up for it, but I'm so glad I didn't honestly because then I just went into it. I remember the first meeting, I'm like, "So what are we going to do?" I'm like, "Oh, I didn't realize I was going to feel like crap all the time. Fun." Anyway, all this to say that part of my project that I have to do for master coach training is I have to do some significant self-coaching with myself every single day for six months.

Can't skip a day like, boom, boom, boom, every single day. You can imagine there are some days where I don't feel like doing it. You know what? I do it anyway. The amount of progress that I have made with my own coaching, my own abilities to coach other people, the issues that I still have underlying that I'm working through, I mean, it's really been remarkable. It's just wow. Yes. It's been amazing.

In the process of doing that, I actually uncovered that I still had some lingering thoughts that created some pain for me regarding my daughter who died. Now, if you are new to the podcast, you may not know that I, let's see, eight years ago, I had a stillborn baby girl when I was nine days overdue. I've talked about it in a couple other podcasts early on. I kind of told the story a little bit more, but basically I was overdue. They offered me an induction date for April first but then said, "You know why nobody wants that? Because nobody wants their child to have an April Fool's birthday." I thought, "Well, I don't either." I let it go by. Then I had an induction date for the day after Easter, but I went into labor the night before Easter and I delivered her stillborn on Easter, mostly because her head was compressing the cord while I was laboring at home all night long.

Where I was realized that I was still stuck and had a issue was that I still felt a little pain around this idea that it maybe was my fault or that I did something wrong. It was so interesting how I'd find myself immediately just glossing over that and being like, "Well, I know it wasn't my fault. Of course it wasn't my fault," but yet I still had this little bit of me thinking that it was my fault, but that felt so painful that I would just immediately kind of flip my thinking, think about something else. I didn't even want to go there. Early on, after she died, a belief that I adopted that I continued to really cling to was this thought. You've probably had it too or maybe offered it to somebody else. That thought was I made the best decisions I could with the information I had in regards to not inducing her and also not kind of speaking up in the middle of the night when my contractions weren't long enough or frequent enough to call the hospital, but I kind of wondered when the last time was that I had felt her move. I just really thought she was fine.

I would always just say, "I really did make the best decisions I could with the information I had." That sounds like a really nice thing to say. For a lot of people, it might be very helpful, but this is what I worked through when I really dug in deep. This thought, that I made the best decisions I could with the information I had, makes the assumption that because the outcome was not what I was expecting or wanting, that it was nonetheless a bad decision because I didn't have the information that would have helped me make a good decision. Had I known that she wouldn't tolerate labor, if I had that information, then I could have made a good decision. It's sort of like making my bad decision be okay, sort of excusing that bad decision. We don't really think about it that way, but that really is what it was meaning, at least for me.

It was like, yeah, I made a terrible decision, but in the moment, it was the best decision I could because I didn't have all the information. I didn't know she was going to die. I didn't know it was going to be a bad decision. This really was a way for me to sort of subtly and slyly make her death my fault, but then thinking that her death was my fault also created a lot of pain for me.

You can see that my beliefs were keeping me somewhat stuck. I was really kind of in this believing one thing and believing the other and they didn't really mesh. I didn't want it to be my fault, but it was kind of my fault, at least in a tiny way, but I didn't want it to be my fault. It's just this of course I would just push it away for years and years and be like, "I don't know. I don't want to really have to deal with that."

Here's what I figured out. This has seriously changed everything for me in terms of my process of grieving her. You know, I think you guys can all tell that I've made tons of progress with that. I've obviously done a lot of work on it, but it's really interesting when you think that you're through an issue in your life or time in your life and then you basically, possibly even years later, realize, "Oh, there's this other area. There's this other issue that I didn't even know was a problem for me," and you can start sorting that out as well. Here's what I figured out. A decision can be a good decision even if the outcome is not as expected or as desired. Let me repeat that for you. A decision can be a good decision, can be a good one, even if the outcome of that decision is not as you're expecting or as you desired.

It was a good decision for me to not induce my daughter on April first because I was not worried and nothing was going wrong. All evidence pointed to her being totally fine and it being completely safe to wait a few more days to deliver. It was a good decision to not call the hospital at 3:00 AM when I mashed on my belly and I didn't really think I felt her move because I was not worried and nothing was going wrong. Everything was fine. I have to share with you that, you know, one of the hardest things for some of us to recognize is that events are neutral. Things that happen are neutral and when your baby dies stillborn, that that's neutral. That was really, really hard for me to grasp even knowing these coaching tools for years. A lot of my thinking about my daughter dying was positive thoughts about a negative circumstance. I think you guys have heard me talk about that before where it's like you're just having a really, really good feeling, thought, about something that you think is bad instead of recognizing that the event was actually neutral.

Just about a month ago is when I had this huge breakthrough as to the fact that Vivian dying was neutral. Let me explain it to you. I'm laboring all night long and we decide at like 7:00 in the morning to go into the hospital then because it was really like, "Okay, it's getting real here." We pull into the hospital and I walk in because of course I'm going through the doctors' entrance because I'm like, "There's no way I'm going through the ER. I'll just walk in." I walk in, have to stop, labor, breathe through my contractions, then walk fast as I can to get in a little bit more, stop, have a contraction, and go all the way in. I get up in there and they're like, "Yeah, that looks like the real deal. Okay. Let's get you in a room." They put me in the room, give me a gown, say, "Go change. Leave us a urine sample and come back out." I go in and do that, come back out again.

I'm about to get in the bed and my husband says, "Hey, we don't have a recent picture of you pregnant. Let's just get a last time of you pregnant picture of you and your belly." I'm like, "Yeah, totally. Let's do that." I kind of put my hands around my belly because with the big hospital gown, you can't totally see the outline, and make it so you can see my belly. I put on this big, cheesy grin. Then, he takes the picture. Then, I hop in the bed and they start to put the monitors on. You can imagine when ended up happening from there on out.

That picture used to create so much pain for me. If I looked at that picture, I would just think, "Oh my god. I didn't even know she was dead. That's so sad. I was such a fool sitting there with this cheesy grin on my face and this whole time she was dead." I would basically sort of beat myself up about it. Then, I just never wanted to look at that picture.

About a month ago, all of a sudden, it just hit me. I was like, "Oh my god. It was neutral that she died. You know why? Because there I am in that picture, happy as can be, but she's actually dead. She's dead in my belly in that moment and I'm not sad because I don't know about it yet." The only thing that makes it sad is my thinking that this baby shouldn't die. No, this wasn't the outcome that was supposed to happen. Maybe it actually was neutral, not maybe. It was. It actually was neutral. It did not get sad until they did the ultrasound and there was no heartbeat. That is when it was like, boom, here's the grief. All that happened was my thinking. I mean, this is a little bit difficult to think about, but think about somebody who was maybe raped and conceived and decided to have the baby anyway. Then, the baby dies. She's probably not devastated like I was, right? What's the difference? Not the baby dying. The difference is our thinking about it.

Ultimately, really, the details don't even end up mattering, but what matters is that I can make a good decision and have the outcome still be the exact opposite of what I wanted or expected. The same goes for you. You can make a good decision and have the outcome still be the exact opposite of what you wanted or expected. A bad outcome does not make a previous decision bad. I didn't make a bad decision by not inducing on April first because she ended up dying. It was a good decision at the time. It just turns out that the outcome was not what I expected. An outcome is only bad if we think it is. This is actually very freeing. I'll circle back to this in a minute. Now we're having our summer storm. You might be able to hear some thunder. I love a day like that. Afternoon storms, so great.

Here's some other examples. You can decide to marry someone and then have a very difficult marriage and end up divorced even if you had concerns when you said, "I do." You can decide that in the moment, saying, "I do," was the decision you made and it was a good decision. Even if you were just thinking, "I don't know if I should do this," well, the good outweighed the bad and you said, "Yes. I do." That was a good decision to get married even if the outcome was not what you expected. Think of time when maybe you took care of someone in the hospital and then that person died or had some sort of complication. You thought, "Oh, shoot. I made a bad decision." What you did wasn't necessarily the wrong thing. It doesn't have to mean that you made a bad decision, but you made a decision in that moment that seemed good and then the outcome happened. You're typically not going like, "I think I'm going to make a bad decision right now." The decision you make, based on the information you have, you think it's a good decision in that moment and then it is a good decision. You can continue to believe it was a good decision even though the outcome was ultimately not what you wanted or what the patient wanted.

When we think that the only way to get a good outcome is to make a good decision, then we often can't make a decision. This totally leads to indecision, indecisiveness, which is one of those indulgent emotions, never leads to anything. There's no forward movement. We are stuck. We think we need more information. We're in constant information consumption mode instead of taking action. We see this sometimes with new trainees especially, medical students and residents.

They're like, "Eh, I'm just really afraid to move forward and make a decision and actually create a treatment plan because what if it's not the right thing. I just need to learn more. I need to read another article. I need to ask another person. I need to get another consult." You just end up taking some action. What we're wanting is the guarantee of it working out before we make the decision.

I see this with my weight loss clients. They want to know for sure that they'll lose the weight before they make the decision to sign up to work with me. What they don't realize is that it's not my program that determines whether they'll lose the weight or not. It's their commitment to the process that creates the outcome. They are totally in control of whether they lose the weight or not. My program's amazing, if I may say so myself, but they think, "I don't know. Is her program good enough? Is it going to be what's going to allow me to lose weight?" My program doesn't make you lose weight. It's your commitment and your application of the process and being all in on the work that creates that outcome. You're in complete, full control of whether you get a good outcome or not. So interesting, right?

Then, think on the flip side. Have you ever made a decision that probably wasn't great but then it still ended up with a good outcome? I was thinking about this. Think about driving. You're on the freeway and, all of a sudden, someone slams on the brakes in front of you and then you just quickly swerve into the left lane to pass them or get out of their way without checking your blind spot first. That could have had a disastrous outcome. You could have totally had someone flying down the freeway 90 miles an hour who came pummeling right into your car. That is not a great decision, but there was no car there so your bad decision had a good outcome. Interesting, right? It wasn't a good decision, but, oh, it happened to work out okay. That's the flip side of it. You can give 10 times the dose of something by accident, 10 times the proper dose, of course thinking that it's a good decision in the moment because you would never do that on purpose, and the outcome for the patient is that they actually end up being fine. It doesn't actually harm them. Bad decision doesn't necessarily mean that you'll get a bad outcome. In this case, it was a near miss and you had a really good outcome.

This is interesting to think about. Ultimately, what determines whether a decision is good or bad? What determines whether an outcome is good or bad? Only your thinking about it. You can decide to believe whatever you want. You may remember that back in the fall when I, well, my husband was involved, obviously, in this decision too, but we decided to move our kids to a totally different school. I just decided, you know what, this is going to be a good decision. There will be no looking back and going, "Eh, maybe we should have stayed. Maybe it wasn't right." No, we're just going to move forward. It was a good decision. That's it. The end. I'm deciding it. It's decided. You can think that way too. Even if the outcome was disastrous, even if someone had a terrible outcome and the family sued you, you still made a good decision even though the outcome was bad.

I used to believe that bad things just happen sometimes. We would say this kind of as doctors. Bad, you know what, just happens, things that we can't make any sense of, we don't know why. People who are amazing get cancer and die when other people who take terrible care of themselves end up living for years with the same cancer. We just think that bad things just happen sometimes, but what I know now is that what's really true is that things just happen sometimes and we get to decide if they're bad or not. Isn't that amazing?

Thinking that babies shouldn't die and adults shouldn't die young has no upside at all for us because babies do die and adults do die young. Thinking that doctors should never make mistakes has no upside because we do. In fact, I believe that as soon as you can own and fully accept the fact that you will make some mistakes and probably some decisions that aren't great, you'll actually likely make better decisions and fewer mistakes because you're not hung up on trying not to make a mistake.

This will actually boost your confidence in yourself when you just know, "Yeah, I'm going to screw some stuff up and I'm going to own it, but, in the meantime, I'm just going to get to work making the best decisions I can and not getting all hung up in my head about whether I'm going to screw something up and being all scared and fearful about it. Instead, I'm going to focus on my purpose of actually helping this patient in the best way that I know how." I think that when you're in an abundant mentality like that, where you're thinking about the patient and really working on focusing on helping them and not being all up in your head and being in scarcity mode and being surrounded by fear, you will be a much better doctor. Even if you do make a terrible mistake, it ends up working better for you in the long run. People know. People can tell and sense this kind of stuff.

This doesn't mean that we don't care when someone dies or we don't grieve. I think that's where sometimes we get mixed up. We're like, "Oh, okay. If babies should die and adults should die young, then what? We're just not supposed to care?" That's not at all what I mean. What I mean is that what we can control is the additional suffering that we add to the pain we experience by believing that things should have been any different than they were. This is the difference between resisting reality and accepting reality. The reality is the person's gone and that's sad and we miss them and we wish they were with us and we want to go through the process of grieving, but when we think that they shouldn't have died, then that only compounds the discomfort, the pain, that resistance feels so bad. For so many of us then, we're looking to food and/or alcohol to take the edge off because it's so uncomfortable to go through that.

Byron Katie says everybody dies right on time. It's honestly taken me a couple of years of knowing that to really believe it in my bones. I'm finally there, where there's never a mistake when somebody dies. We don't have to understand why. We don't have to agree with it. We don't have to think it's right, but everybody dies right on time. It's never a mistake. Isn't that so freeing? It's like, "Oh, then I can just work on my grieving process and remembering that person and loving them even though they're gone and creating love instead of this very difficult, painful resistance that just goes on indefinitely." When we label certain outcomes as bad, what we're doing is we're resisting our human lives, our human experiences, all of the events that humans have always gone through and will continue to go through, death, pain, suffering of all kinds.

This is the part of life that helps us understand how good the good times are, the saves and the cures and the love and the connection. While having those opposites really help us to enjoy the good times, we don't have to make them harder for ourselves by believing that it's worse than it really is. Our decisions really are separate from what the outcome is. That's the best news. That's so amazing. You can just make a decision and then just go all out and take full-blown action and just keep going until you get the outcome that you want instead of going, "I need to know that it's going to be a good outcome before I make that decision."

We all know people like that. That might be you. This can absolutely free you from the anxiety you might feel around making a bad decision.

I hope that sharing my personal work has been helpful. My clients always say that they love it when I share this kind of self-coaching that I do because it helps them to know that I'm doing all the same stuff you guys are. I would just say this is a little more on the 2.0 level. If you're new to the podcast, you might be like, "What is she talking about?" You can just go back to the first 10 or 20 podcasts and things will start getting a lot clearer for you. I believe it's episode 12 where I first talk about my daughter dying. If you're interested, if you're going through a grief process right now and you're interested in hearing more about that and my take on that in other areas, then for sure take a listen to that episode. All right, my friends. I will talk to you next week. Have a great one. Take care. Bye bye.