



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Hey there, my friend. Welcome back to the podcast. So excited to talk to you today. I know I say it every time, but, really, I am. I really am today. I am really hoping that today's podcast does not have a little interruption by a puppy. We got two puppies. I have one laying next to me in her crate sleeping.

This is a whole story in and of itself. We ended up with two. One is not in our house right now because he is spending two weeks with a ... I call her a dog psychologist. She's really not a dog psychologist, but she's like a specialist dog behaviorist kind of person. She'll take the puppy for two weeks, and board them, and train them all up nicely for you. Then, give them back.

I think, that's some of the best money you can spend, in my opinion, especially because she's super duper struggling with him on house training. He's really smart. He's picking everything else up, but he is being a little pissed all about that.

The little girl that we have with us right now, because she only takes one at a time, she's not so great either to be honest. She's okay. She's doing better, but man, oh, man. Last days, I'd tell you, they are stubborn. I think that's only what I got this down to. They're just like, "Don't tell me where to pee and poop. I'll figure it out myself."

Anyway, she's sleeping next to me, the little girl we named Sunny because of her coat's Cesar white. They're like the Cesar dog food commercial dogs. She has a little bit of the yellowish tinge to her fair. We named her Sunny like the sun. Then, the little boy, his name is August. We call him Auggie. They're super cute. Seriously, the girl, she has a different kind of coat, less typical coat. She's extremely fluffy. She looks like a cartoon character. She's so fluffy. It's like good thing they're cute because, otherwise, you'd be like, "Why are we doing this?"

Things are getting better. Then, once Auggie comes back after two weeks, then Sunny will go for two weeks. We've only got one puppy total for a month while they do their little training. Then, they'll be a little older. Hopefully, their bladder capacity will be a little bigger too.

Seriously, talk about self-coaching. I've seriously had to coach myself every day on my thoughts about having them. It's like having half of a baby and half of a toddler at the same time.

Then, having two of them. That's pretty fun. I mean, I'm not going to dramatize it and make it like, "Oh my god, it's so hard," but it's having a puppy. It's more work, let's just say that. They bring us so much joy.

My middle guy, for sure, he's just loving them so much. The other kids too, but this one, really, he just loves these dogs. It's so fun to have that and have that joy back in our lives. I just keep thinking like, "It won't be long. They'll be able to just take a nap in our bed, and they won't have to pee in the crate anymore. I can trust them to not pee in the house," and all of that. Luckily, we have hardwood floors. It makes it a lot easier.

Okay. Today, I want to do a Q&A call for you. Q&A podcast. The reason why is because I hadn't done one in ages. I went back and looked at my list. I've got so many questions. I think I'm going to do a couple of these a little bit more back-to-back to just get to some of your questions because I love doing these podcasts. I think they're so helpful for you guys. I love answering your questions. For sure, if you have questions, either go to the show notes page for this podcast episode, which you'll find at KatrinaUBellMD.com/92, like the number 92, or you can just email hello@KatrinaUBellMD.com. Tell us what your question is. I will, then, get back to you on a future podcast answering your question.

This one is such a great question. I think so many of you will relate to this. It goes, "I'm writing because the thought model has gotten me through a lot of obstacles, but, recently, I've had a larger one. I was passed over for a leadership position for someone junior to me who has only been here for six months. I've been here for nine years when I was doing at least half of this leadership job for the past four years. This happened about two days ago. I've been sad and depressed, which has led to overeating again. I've been eating on plan but have had a hard time stopping. I have done a thought download and wrote up my model to think thoughts of this is a new opportunity. I just can't convince myself. Any advice on how to get your thoughts to change when it's so personal and career-changing? My plan is to keep modeling until my thoughts do change?"

This is such a great, great question. This is what I want you to point out. Those of you who have worked with me in the past as my clients, I hope you can even pay attention and go like, "What's going on there? What is she going to say?" You just start thinking like, "Okay. What's the issue here?"

The real issue here is that the writer does not see the neutrality of the circumstance. The circumstance, the neutral facts here are that X, Y, Z person was hired for a leadership job. The writer didn't get the leadership job. This other person did. The other person has been there for six months. The writer has been there for nine years. Very neutral. When this person is looking at the fact, which is that person was hired for this job, it doesn't feel neutral to them, it actually hurts.

Remember the facts never hurt. If I'm like I'm looking at a chair. There is a chair. That does not hurt. The sky is blue. No, there's just no emotional connection to that. You can tell the pain in this person's tone of writing when they're writing this about how deeply unfair this seems to them. When you put, "So-and-so was hired for the job on the C line," and you don't see it as neutral, then you're trying to have positive thoughts about a negative circumstance.

That's why a new thought of this is a new opportunity doesn't really have a lot of traction. They wrote, "I just can't convince myself" because deep down, you don't think it's a new opportunity. I think you've been sided.

What we need to do is spend more time finding the neutrality of the circumstance and working on realizing what the true facts are and what the thoughts are that this person getting the job is not a problem. It's your thoughts about it that make it a problem. This person is writing saying ... I mean, you can tell, right. Like "For the last four years, I've been doing, at least, half of this leadership job. I've been here much longer. They've been here much less time than I have." The undercurrent there is, "I deserve to be given this leadership job. This person shouldn't have gotten it. There was a mistake here. I've been sided." I mean, any number of different things.

What the writer needs to do is spend time figuring out what those thoughts are. What are they making this neutral fact mean about them, about their job, about the hierarchy, the people who hire? All of that stuff, what are they making all of that mean because that's what's going to help them to see what the thoughts are. What their thoughts are that create so much of that pain, create so much of that sadness and depression that they're writing about.

Then, it's so interesting, right, because they write, "I've been sad and depressed, which has led to overeating again." Even while you're working on finding the neutrality, even while it's still really hurting, it's interesting how this person writes. "I have been sad and depressed." Those are the feelings on the F line of the model. That has driven the actions, right. That has led to overeating again, the action of overeating, having a hard time stopping eating.

That's interesting because that's their old pattern, I'm sure, right. When you feel these negative emotions, when I'm feeling sad and depressed, I overeat to feel better. Honestly, it makes so much sense for a lot of us who use food. Food is our way of choice of buffering our negative emotions. When you're really feeling those intensely, negative, uncomfortable emotions, then we want them to be dulled. We want them to go away.

In this case, this person is not eating off-plan. They just want more food. What more food does is it can fill up the emptiness that we feel inside. An emotional emptiness, but then, the weight of the food helps to dull that, or it just dampens. The food dampens the intensity of the emotions. Also, when you're overeating, you're thinking about something else, which helps you to feel less than depressed. If you're eating a bunch of sugar and flour, maybe you're getting a dopamine hit from that as well. Now, in this case, this person isn't doing that, which I think is great, but it's really interesting how they're really just wanting comfort from excess food.

If you can recognize, "Okay, I'm feeling sad and depressed. I know I have work to do on my thinking. My brain is suggesting that I eat food as a solution, that's what I'm wanting to do is eat, that doesn't mean I have to do that. This is such a great opportunity for me to learn to process my emotions and not eat them to avoid them. Not eat food to make them go away or dampen them. The way to do that is to practice feeling sad and depressed."

What you like to do is go out of my head and into my body. When something like this is going on, we have lots and lots of thoughts, lots and lots of chatter in our brain, and we need to just leave that place above our shoulders, and go down into our bodies, and go, "Okay, what does this actually feel like?" because I would venture to guess that this person doesn't even really know what sad and depress feel like that much because, right away, they're going to overeating to make it better and different.

Really learning like, what does sad feel like? Where is it in my body? What does it feel like in my body? There's all kinds of work you can do on this. What color is it? Does it feel high or low? Does it feel strong or soft? Does it feel ... There's so many different ways of describing it. Then, if it's in multiple places, spend some time in one place getting to know it. Then, go to the next place getting to know it. Allow yourself to feel it.

Same with the depression feeling. What that feels like in your body? Just practice being with the sadness and depression. Not wanting to chase it away very quickly. Not being scared of it. Not thinking, "I can't handle this. It needs to go away right away." Instead, just thinking, "Okay. I'm going to get really good, really skilled at feeling sad and depressed."

I know that sounds weird, but I've done this. I've done it with rejection. I've done it with a lot of really intensely, not good-feeling feelings, grief. I'm telling you, it's a game changer. It changes everything for you because you're no longer afraid to feel these emotions. You're no longer thinking that it's intolerable to feel them and that you need the escape route, i.e. food or alcohol for some of you. You're just going, "Okay, I'm all in. I know can feel this."

The more you're all in and willing to feel it, then you recognize, "When I actually let it be there and just process it, it actually goes away pretty quickly. When I just eat to avoid it, it's still there waiting for me. Then, I'm so sad and depressed. Then, I'm eating more. Then, why am I having a hard time stopping it? I'm doing this every single day," because you're not processing that emotion.

When you learn to sit with it, and just let it be there, and not resist it, not think it should be different, just accept it, "Today is the day where I feel sad and depress about this. I know I'm creating it with my thoughts. Right now, I'm not able to change those. I'm just going to sit with sadness and depression. I'm going to go about my day with sadness and depression," you start learning like, "Okay, this isn't really that big of a deal. I can feel this. I'm totally fine. Nothing is going wrong. I can go about my day and still feel this," and your body just lets it be there and then lets it pass as well. When you resist it, it stays. It won't actually be processed and go away.

There's that twofold opportunity here. The one opportunity is to really understand and explore the neutrality of the circumstance and really recognizing all of the thoughts that something has gone wrong. When nothing has gone wrong, this person was never going to get that job. Everything is going perfectly right.

"This is a new opportunity" might be a great thought for them once they can get to that neutrality of realizing like, "Oh, see, I was never supposed to get that job. Nothing has gone wrong here. That person was always going to get the job. I wasn't. It's totally fine. This is a new opportunity for me" because that was one of their new thoughts they're trying on.

That's the first opportunity. The second opportunity is learning to feel your emotions and not eat them, to try to avoid feeling them. Once you interrupt that model and go, "Okay, I'm just going to feel this sadness. I'm going to feel this depression," it changes everything for you. I guarantee you, you will feel those emotions for less amount of time, shorter amount of time. From that place, you're going to be able to better do the self-coaching that you need to do to see the neutrality.

I'm so glad, sender, emailer, that you emailed us because this is a game changer. This goes for any emotion. Even including things like over-desire and urges, okay. A lot of us are like, "No, no, no. It doesn't really feel like an emotion. It's just an urge." The urge comes from thoughts of over-desire just like, "It looks good. I want to eat that," and things like that. Like going, "Okay. How about I just feel it? I'm just going to feel it, and let it pass through me, and let it process."

Then, you build up your confidence. "Okay, sadness and depression, game on. It's a day with you again. Cool. That's fine because I can feel you." You're much less scared and avoidant of those feelings when you really spend time with them and gotten to know them. I always tell my clients with urges, like, "I want you to become best friends with that urge. I just want you to know it inside and out so well."

Then, once you know it, there's nothing to be afraid of. Yeah, it's just this feeling I get sometimes. Then, it goes away when I just allow it to be there, and I don't resist it. That is really your work there. I think that's really such a great question because it's going to help so many other people who listen to the podcast. Thank you so much.

Okay, one more question here today. Then, I'm going to do another one this because these are just so great. "When I follow my plan 100%, I consistently lose." Don't you love that. Suddenly, my glands are like, "I'm just not losing." I'm like, "Are you following your plan?" "No." "How about you follow that?" "Okay." Then, they do. Then, they lose. It's like, "Don't you just hate that when your plan works?" I really wanted something to be wrong in the plan, not my ability to follow it. Okay. When I follow my plan 100%, I consistently lose. When I have an exception meal, I gain up to five pounds, and it takes me about 10 days to lose them. How can I prepare for exceptions to avoid these huge stalls?

This is such an amazing question. The first thing I would offer to you is when you're having an exception meal, is this a free-for-all eating, everything under the sun, totally getting overly full, really overindulging kind of an exception meal, or is it like, "I think I might like to have a taco shell with my tacos today. Just this smaller amount." If you're gaining up to five pounds, it makes me think that you're eating a lot of off-planned food and just a lot of food in general. That's my guess because five pounds is a lot.

Now, some of it can be related to salt intake or things like that. Sometimes, if you're eating very, very low carb, and then you eat a bunch of sugar, you're going to have a lot of water gain with that. Sometimes, the five pounds isn't really like five pounds. If it takes you 10 days to lose it, it makes me think that, certainly, a good chunk of it is not water.

What I would suggest is if you're still consistently working on losing weight is that you don't have a full exception meal because an exception meal means in my world, in my viewpoint that you're having basically whatever you want for the entire meal. You're having all the flour and sugar you want, all the alcohol you want, whatever, anything you want, bread, whatever, all of it. When you're trying to lose, sometimes, your body just won't work with you on that in the sense that you will gain five pounds, and it's going to take you a week and a half to lose it.

Can you do that? Of course, you can do that. You can do whatever you want or signing up for gaining weight, and you're taking 10 weeks for it to come back off, and you're losing those 10 ... Or not 10 weeks, 10 days. Then, you're taking those 10 days to lose it to get back to where you are right now. Now, depending on the situation, that might be worth it to you sometimes. For a lot of us, we're like, "I don't know if that was really worth it. That was a lot to not be making any progress."

What I want you to think about is the idea of just having a joy eat. Meaning, just a small one thing that is off your plan and not having the whole extravaganza. Experiment with trying having just one cookie or having one piece of bread out of the bread basket when you're having your meal out, and the rest of it being on plan. Play around and see what happens.

Now, of course, there's all this work that can be done on your thinking about the five pounds on the scale, and why that's a problem, and all of that, right. It doesn't have to be like, "I got to figure out a way, so that I don't gain any weight. Then, I can feel good because the scale didn't move." No, no, no. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking more about just figuring out a way to be able to have a little exception, a little something that's not on your usual plan, and not have it result in five pounds that takes 10 days to lose.

This can be something like one scoop of ice cream or just really one small thing, and really making sure you're getting the full enjoyment out of that. There's no decisions in the moment. You're deciding this, at least, 24 hours in advance. You're eating just that, you're getting your pleasure out of it, and you're moving on. Sometimes, I think, with an exception meal, we're like, "Well, it was an exception anyway. Yes, cocktails and half a bottle of wine, and an appetizer because why not. It's an exception." Then, before we know it, it's just turned into way, way, way, way too much food.

That is really the thing to look at, being much more deliberate about what the exception is, and why you're choosing to have it, why it's worth it to you, and which parts of it are really the parts that you want to have. I know for myself, I used to overeat so much at these really fancy restaurant meals. It was like I couldn't even fully get all the pleasure out of it. I thought I was. Now, in hindsight, it was like I was eating when I did not want more food. For sure, I mean, the tastes are good, but it wasn't like as amazing as it would taste if I was actually hungry when I was eating it.

If you're doing any overeating, if you're eating past the plus four on hunger scale, then it's time to stop no matter what, even though you've planned it for your exception meal.

Sometimes, we get into that diet mentality type of thing where we're like "This is my chance. It's my exception meal. I need to eat all of it. I'm going to have the huge Oreo blizzard, and tons of pizza, and ..." Just like all of this stuff, we need to have it because this is my exception.

It's total scarcity mindset rather than going, "I can eat whenever I want, whatever I want. I'm choosing to stay on my plan most of the time. Then, today, I am choosing to eat this one thing that's off my plan. I like my reasons. This is why I'm doing it." You can tell the difference in mindset. It's not so scarcity-laden. It's not so tied up in lack, basically. I'm just not going to get what I need. This is my one chance. No. You can literally eat at any time you want to. There's really nothing holding you back.

That is the way to approach that. Think about just dialing it back, something smaller. Once you're at maintenance, then you can see, maybe you can expand that a little bit. Maybe you can broaden it a little bit. You can have a little bit more at a meal and still be able to maintain or maybe if the scale goes up a pound or two, and within a couple of days, it's back down again, but, ultimately, you are working and maintaining, which is just a different mindset, different situation.

That's all that is, preparing for exceptions, avoid the huge stall is just to plan in advance and make sure you know why you're having it. Like these days, I don't eat any bread. You guys, I was a serious bread addict. I loved bread. I don't eat any bread unless it's really amazing. It's not worth it to me to eat any bread if it's not warm and fresh. Every now and then, there's this scenario where it comes out, and it's just like, "Yeah, their bread is amazing. I'm definitely going to want that." Most of the time, it's like just not even that good. You can just look forward to eating other stuff.

That's where I think having it really dialed in, even if it is going to be an exception, it needs to be like, "This thing I'm going to have is absolutely amazing, and this thing I'm going to have is absolutely amazing, and this thing I'm going to have is absolutely amazing." Not just like, "Wow, while I'm at it, I'll just eat all the things." There's a big difference there for you.

All right. I'm going to do the next podcast as a Q&A as well because these are so fun. I love answering your questions. More questions and answers next week. Don't miss it. I'll talk to you soon. Have a great week. Bye-bye.