



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Happy New Year my friend. Welcome to the podcast. It's 2019. So exciting. Can you believe it? We're almost 20 years into this new millennia. Millennium? Millennium I think. Do you remember when Y2K was a thing? It was so funny. Everyone was waiting on New Year's Eve what's going to happen and literally nothing happened. So fun.

I hope you had an excellent time whatever that means for you, whether that means you went to bed early and woke up feeling great this morning, ready to go, so you can watch the parade and have a great day with friends and family, or whether that means that you went out last night and had a great time with your friends or family, or partied, or whatever it is that you like to do, I hope that you were able to do that and have a great time.

Now some of you might be waking up going, "Seriously something has got to change," and for those of you, I have got you. This is the episode for you

What I want to talk to you about today is why you aren't taking action. When I thought about this podcast title, I was thinking to myself, "Shall I call it why you aren't taking action or shall I more make it more like positive and future focus like how to take action?" But then I was thinking we aren't sitting around going like, "How else can I take action? What else can I do to take action?" Usually what we're asking ourselves is the opposite, why we aren't doing what we know we should be doing or we want to be doing.

We might ask ourselves questions like this, "Why can't I pick an eating plan and just follow it?" Have you ever had this thought? I certainly have. Like why can't I just decide I'm going to do that and then I just do it until I get the result that I want? Why can't I consistently do the work that's required to learn to allow my urges and not resist them, allow my urges to overeat or overdrink and process them instead of giving in and meeting them with eating and drinking that my body doesn't need?

Why can I not commit to an exercise routine and actually follow through? I'm not talking about turning for a sport and race or something. I'm talking about maybe a weekly yoga class. We're like, "Okay, I'm going to do this. Once a week I'm going to go to yoga," and then we still don't do it. Why are not taking action?

Why can't I get my EMR inbox to zero every day? You have that one day where you get it cleared out you're like, "I feel amazing, I'm going to do this every single day," and then by the end of the week you totally are all backed up again.

Why can't I figure out how to be more efficient at work? I hear this a lot with my clients where they just spend a lot of time wondering how they can be more efficient, more on time, get their work done, have less charting to do at night, yet they're not actually taking action to be more efficient. Why do I keep avoiding asking for a raise or a contract renegotiation? I know so many of you can relate to this where you are really due to renew your contract or to reevaluate it at the very least, you know that you should be getting more money and you're just avoiding asking, avoiding asking, avoiding asking, or even just opening up the discussion.

Why can't I be nicer and yell less at my kids? This is a big one. We have that one day where we're feeling good, like, "Oh my gosh, maybe I could have a day where I don't yell at my kids that much or at all," and then later in the week we're just beating ourselves up again because we're right back to acting the way that we usually act, which is how we don't want to be acting.

Or why can't I just have that difficult conversation already? Have you ever done that where you're just putting off that conversation? You know you need to have it, you know that it's really the solution to the problem and you just put it off, you're just not taking action. I was thinking about all those questions we ask ourselves. Really the question is why we aren't taking action, not how to take action.

Being able to take consistent action really seems like it would be the golden key. If you had that golden key, you could just unlock the secrets to the universe. Wouldn't that be amazing? If you could get yourself to do the things that you want to be doing or think you should be doing, imagine what your life would look like.

Just take a moment here. Let's just visualize, just for a moment. What could you accomplish? What things have been sitting in the wings that you really want to get done and you just haven't done? What successes would you have? What achievements would you have? What would you no longer be worrying or thinking about? Would you still be overeating? Would you still be drinking more than you want to? What would your relationships be like? What would your working life look like? Imagine yourself with this incredible freedom where you know that once you've decided to do something, it's as good as done. When you make a decision to lose 20 pounds, it's just as good as done.

Imagine how much last time you'd spend fretting over the past and the future. We spend a lot of time worrying about the past. I don't want to recreate my past. I don't want to try to lose weight because I might fail again and then I'll feel bad the way I did in the past. Then we're fretting about the future. But what if in the future I'm going to feel bad? What if I try to lose the weight and then I'm going to feel bad, then I'm going to feel bad in the future. I want to avoid that.

Think how much more time you'd spend on just getting to work without all the brain chatter and the mind drama. You know what I'm talking about. Your brain is just being very overly dramatic, kind of like a teenager, or a toddler, either one, or both. Why aren't you taking action? Why don't you do the things that you know you want to do? This is the big question.

Every action is created by a feeling or an emotion. An emotion is driving every action you take, whether it's an action that helps you to create what you want, or if it's the opposite of what you want that you're creating. But there's always an emotion there. Even when we think there's not an emotion there, there is always an emotion there.

But most of us, many of us are totally shut off from our emotions. Think about our medical training. If you're very emotional, that wasn't something that was highly regarded, that wasn't something that was encouraged. If anything, we were encouraged to just completely stuff our emotions. I've had so many of my OB-GYN clients tell me how they have to go from feel demise where they feel horrible and they just want to sob for this patient they love and they just have to completely stuff down all those emotions and put a smile on their face and go into the room next door where they're about to deliver their alive baby. We are just taught to just don't process the emotions, stuff everything down, shut yourself off, and move forward.

When we barely even know any words to describe our emotions, we're like "What are you talking about I have a feeling that's driving my actions? Like I'm pretty sure I don't because I'm pretty even-keel emotionally." Well, because you're stuffing them. And that could be you're stuffing them down by overeating or by drinking too much or by over-ing something else.

There's this book called The Dictionary of Emotions and it's by Patrick Micheal Ryan and it's a really interesting book. It's literally just a dictionary of emotions like it says. You just flip it open and there is a whole book full of names of emotions and a description for them. I find it so helpful because when you're really able to figure out the exact word to describe how you're feeling, it helps you to really understand your current thought models so much better.

So many of us have just very surface level kind of emotions like sad and happy and pissed off. I was going to say mad but I think for a lot of us we're like I was so pissed off. But having this opportunity to look and go, "No, you know what it was? I was just really aggravated. It was a little more than irritated and I wasn't quite enraged yet, but I was aggravated." It's really, really good to know like that is the word to describe exactly how I'm feeling.

Then every emotion is created by a thought that we have. Remember that model, there's always a thought that then generates a feeling. If we're totally closed off from knowing and understanding what our emotions are, we're usually operating on a very surface level as well in terms of knowing what we're thinking. If we don't even know what we're feeling, or a lot of times we don't know what we're thinking either, or what we think we're thinking, the only thing we think we're thinking, follow me here, is just the very surface level stuff, just the things that you can come up with right off the top of your head. But you don't really understand what's driving you, what your beliefs are that are driving you.

Then the reason why you aren't taking action is because of a thought that you think that creates an emotion that drives you to take all of the action besides the action you want to be taking. Think about that when you know you should be just clearing up your charts, finishing up all your charting and documentation, and emptying out your EMR inbox, and instead you're doing everything but that.

You might not be just like sitting there doing nothing, but you might be on Facebook or Instagram. You might be just suddenly needing to clean something up or suddenly you need to be answering these emails. It's still kind of productive stuff, but it's still not the thing that you want to be doing, it's still not the action you want to be taking and you're still avoiding that. The reason you're avoiding that is because of a thought that you're thinking that creates that emotion that drives you to be Facebooking, answering emails, cleaning, whatever that is.

The good news is that that thought that drives that emotion is just a sentence in your mind. It is nothing more than that. Sometimes we think our brains are broken or we just somehow are damaged. No. It literally is just a sentence in your mind. It's just two neurons that keep firing together, and they do that over and over again because it is a well worn pathway and your brain is very efficient at firing those neurons together. And what they do when they fire together is they create emotions, but not the emotions that are required for you to take the actions you want to take. So they keep firing together and they keep creating those same old emotions that are driving the actions that are not the ones you want to be taking.

Often those emotions are ones like feeling afraid or fear, or feeling unmotivated, or feeling tired, or frustrated, or embarrassed. Oftentimes we are thinking, "Oh, I'm not afraid, I don't have any fear," but when you really dig down, when you really dig deeper and dig down into what is going on for you, no, you're afraid to take action on losing weight because you might have to feel disappointed in yourself again if you don't follow through. Or you are afraid that other people are going to notice that you lost some weight and then what if you gain it back again, what are they going to think? Or you're afraid that you might not have the same connections with your friends who are overweight if you lose the weight. There's a lot of fear for a lot of us that keeps us stuck where we are so that we don't take the action we want to take.

Those emotions, whatever they are, drive the actions you keep taking, the current actions which are often actions like inaction, like not doing what you want to be doing, or reaction. With reaction sometimes that's sort of yelling at people or things like that. But think about, have you ever sat around and complained about a bunch of things to people who have no control over the issue you're complaining about? That's a reaction as well. You're not doing anything that's driving any progress.

Now if you go to the person who actually can fix the thing and say, "Hey, this is an issue that I've discovered, How can we solve this," that's totally different. But just the kind of sitting around complaining and everybody talking about ain't it awful, just completely indulging in all of that negativity is the same thing as inaction, it's not going to ... It feels like you're doing something, but it's not going to give you the results you want. All of this inaction and reaction creates the current results you have in your life right now that you don't want.

If you want to lose weight in 2019 and you want to take action for that goal of losing weight, you will not find lasting success if you keep thinking the same thoughts and creating the same emotions that create the results you have right now. Thinking the same thoughts and feelings that are creating the result you have right now, which is an overweight body, if you don't change those, they will continue to create that overweight body. This is why most people don't keep the weight off. The thoughts and the feelings are the same. We keep thinking the same way we always have been. It's very efficient. We're not aware. And that keeps creating those same feelings, those same emotions that we always have. But then, rather than eating to feel better, we use willpower to make sure our actions are different. That's where your thoughts and your feelings are the same and really have a lot of desire and you really want to eat all this food, but you're like, "No, no, nope. I'm on a diet. I'm not eating the brownies someone brought in." So you're using willpower to resist that food, and then maybe you'll get some new results for a little while, you might lose some weight. But those old thoughts and feelings are still there and they will drive you right back to the same results you have right now if you don't figure out what they are and then actively change them.

This is what's so interesting because we're like, "Oh, why do I yo-yo so much? I think for sure when I get down to my goal weight I'm going to feel so much better, I'm going to think like a naturally thin person." You won't if you don't change your thoughts and your feelings. You have to actively do that. It's just as important, if not more important than what you're choosing to eat. The same is true for those who drink too much. The thoughts and feelings that drive you to take the action of pouring another glass of wine to deal with your charting is still going to be there even if you just decide to stop drinking.

The thoughts and the feelings that create the desire for the wine and the desire for the food when you're overeating, then you're just using willpower to resist them. When you're using that willpower to resist them so that you don't eat and drink, it doesn't last for ever. You cannot keep that willpower up for ever. And there really is tons of research in the psychological field that shows that this is the case. We all know this from our own experience and from the experience of the people we know who've tried to lose weight. From our own experience, but we see that in our patients and in our friends and family who've tried to lose weight. You just cannot keep up the willpower forever.

To have long-lasting permanent weight loss results we have to understand what's currently creating the results we have. Here's the thing. I know this feels really kind of boring. We're like, "Can we just jump ahead to the fun and exciting part which is the losing weight part and the getting smaller jeans part. I don't want to have to go through all this thought crap." I totally get it. But this is what I'm handing you right now. I'm handing you that golden key. This is the secret to the universe. If you want permanent weight loss, you have to do this work on your brain.

And you can do this work while you are also losing weight. But you have to include this thought work component if you want to be successful long-term with weight loss. This is exactly what I teach my clients in my coaching group Weight Loss For Doctors Only. Not only do we lose a ton of weight in that group. We get to the root of what got us overweight in the first place. And sure it's from eating too much. But why did we eat too much? Because of the thoughts and feeling that drove the action of eating too much.

So when you're so focused on food, you're missing out on the part that's really driving the issue. To stay thin permanently we need to change that thinking and that is where coaching is so powerful.

Once you understand what's gotten you here, then you can go about creating something new for yourself. You can start choosing new thoughts and new beliefs that create the feelings that are required to drive the actions you want to be taking. When you master this skill, you know how to deliberately create any emotion you want. Then you get to pick what you want to feel when it comes time to take the action you want to be taking. That's how you do take the action you want to be taking.

If you felt motivated when it came to losing weight and motivated all the time, it would be easier to stay in your plan, yes? You're like, "I'm super motivated all the time. This is so easy and so great." If you felt content and satisfied and encouraged, it wouldn't be hard to not pour yourself another glass of wine, yeah? The best news that I have for you is that you can create all this for yourself. This is the exact work that I take my clients through in my online coaching program.

Okay, I will see you in a couple of days. Super fun. Have a wonderful, wonderful New Year. I cannot wait to help you fulfill your resolution for the year which is permanent weight loss. Let's just handle it, take care of it, and be done with this so you can hit 2020 knowing that you can create whatever it is you want in your life because you finally get to stop thinking about your weight. I will talk to you then. Have a good one. Bye-bye.