



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Hey my friend, how're you? Welcome back to the podcast. Super excited as usual to have you back today. We're going to talk about something that I've had a lot of requests to talk about on the podcast. And that is about teaching children the model. How to bring this work to your kids and how I bring it to my kids and really just wanting all the details on how you teach this to children.

So, before I even delve into that though, I do want to just mention, if you do not have children, please be sure to listen and pay attention to this episode because this, whatever I'm going to talk about applies to anyone in your life that you want to learn this work, okay? So, it may not be children, but maybe it's your sister or your mom or your mother-in-law or your spouse or your friend or someone else in your life that you really think could benefit from this work that I'll be teaching you. Don't just think is for kids, this applies to you too, okay?

Here's the first question that people have, "Can children be coached? Is coaching for children even a thing?" And it absolutely is a thing. In fact, for children, sometimes coaching is so powerful for them because they aren't as resistant as we are as adults. They are so much more open, like you just tell them, "Listen, your thoughts are just a sentence in your brain." Like you can just pick a different sentence and they're like, "Oh, really? Okay," whereas we as adults are like, "Hold on a second, I don't know," because we have so many decades, more than them of believing our terrible stories and resisting all of that stuff.

Can the coaching be powerful for children? It absolutely can be. But in large part, I do not suggest that you try to coach your children and I'm going to explain why. And I will also explain to you later in the podcast how you can help your children with this work. But I do want to spend some time talking about why you should really, really think twice and three times and maybe even four times before you try to teach this work to your kids.

I want you to first think, why do you want your kids to learn about thought work and managing their minds? I understand having this desire. When I at very first had this idea of becoming a life coach I thought, "Oh my gosh, my adolescent patients need to know this. I wish I had known this when I was younger and for sure I want my kids to learn this. I don't want them to wait until they're as old as I was when they learn this stuff, if they ever even learn it."

I definitely had the same idea and a lot of people, when they first learn this work, they first learn the model, they immediately want to evangelize to everybody about why it's so great and you definitely need to know it and it's so good and it'll change your life because we've all gotten such great results from it and we want other people to have that too.

It's all coming from a very pure and loving place, right. But so, going back to the question, why do you want your kids to learn thought work and how to manage their minds? Ultimately, it's the same reason we ever want anything in our lives. Why do we want to lose weight? Why do we want to make more money? Why do we think we want to get married and have kids? Because of how we think it will make us feel.

Again, it's a very pure, it's coming from this loving, loving place. We really want to help our kids, us especially moms, we want to spare them from suffering. We want to help them to not struggle the way that we did when we were growing up. That's all fine and good, we just want them to be happier so we can be happier. But this presupposes some things. This presupposes that their happiness determines our happiness. What creates our feelings? Not other people. Even though we really, really think that we do, and we were thought that when we were kids. What creates our emotions is always, 100% of the time, what thoughts we're choosing.

Whether our kids are happier or less happy, that does not influence our happiness unless we choose thoughts that influence our happiness. This also presupposes that something is going wrong when our kids are struggling or experiencing some sort of emotional pain as children do, as humans do.

And ultimately, this is the affliction of the modern, young adult now. These modern, young adults, their parents have done everything possible for them to spare them from negative consequences in their lives. We all have either heard about this going on or we know people where this has happened. You don't have to look far, there's been a lot in the news recently about this kind of thing where the parents are just getting overly involved trying to manage everything, trying to spare their children from experiencing any sort of negative emotion.

And really to this end, the parents try to help them to have just a smooth and easy childhood. They think they're doing the right thing. Again, they're coming from that pure and loving place. But here's what happens, they have a relatively nice experience of their childhood and then they become adults and then these poor, misguided adults think that something is horribly wrong when they start to experience 50% negative emotions like every other normal being who's doing it right.

As you know, I teach that when you're doing it right, you're still going to be experiencing negative emotions about 50% of the time. What we think is that we should be experiencing negative emotion like 20% or less of the time. So what that belief does is it actually creates more negative emotion and makes us feel worse because we think we should be happier. And then we try to do things like buy stuff to make us happier and eat food and drink alcohol to make us feel happier, but none of that stuff actually creates happiness for us at all.

It in fact, will make us feel worse because then we have heavier bodies, or we have some other problems, we have debt or we have too much stuff. And it actually swings the other direction where we have more negative emotion than we even need to have.

All of us listening had experiences as children, I'm sure you can think back to when these experiences that taught us important lessons about life and of ourselves, and the lessons were taught through negative consequences. Some things happened that didn't work out in your favor or some things happened that were not fair, and we felt sad, humiliated, embarrassed, disappointed, you name it. Some negative, negative emotions.

And we can all think of the important lessons we learned from those experiences, I definitely know I can. And when we try to rescue our kids from their similar experiences so that they don't have to experience the negative emotion, then we're robbing our children of the opportunity of learning these life lessons as children or we're not sparing them. What we're doing is we're just pushing back or postponing the lessons so that they have to learn them as adults when the stakes are much higher.

So, really most of the time when someone asks me how to bring thought work, how to bring the model to their child, this is what's really going on, the underlying reason why they want their kids to know and apply this work is because they want to spare them from the pain that they're experiencing.

Now, and again, that presupposes that something is going wrong. For instance, someone my see my teenage daughter is so miserable right now, she is struggling so much and living with her is so hard, and I just think that maybe if she learned the model, she could just take better control for life because her thinking is so bad right now and then she'd be so much more pleasant to be around. Or think about, this is another one I coach a lot of people on my kids. My two sons. They just keep fighting constantly. And maybe if they just got some coaching, they will get along better, then I wouldn't have to yell at them so much. I wouldn't have to be so upset with them, I wouldn't have to ground them all the time or punish them in some way.

Again, all of this presupposes that the daughter shouldn't be miserable. That teenage girls shouldn't be miserable sometimes or that other children shouldn't fight. When you notice that you want your children to learn this work, the first question you need to ask yourself is why you think they need it. And ultimately, the majority of the time, the real thought work that is needed is by us on us. It's our duty then to do our own work on our own thinking about what's going on.

Our thoughts are that our kids are the ones that are driving us crazy or are somehow creating our emotional pain or our negative emotions. But what our kids are going through, are actually a neutral circumstance for us. They're living their life and we're a bystander. We have thoughts about them and their lives and that, those thoughts, are what creates our frustration, our pain, our sadness, whatever experiences of our kids.

So, I never ask myself how can I teach my kids this work? And I find this so interesting because I never ask myself that but other people will ask my like, "How can I bring this to my kids?"

And the reason I never ask myself how I can teach my kids this work, I never ask it anymore, obviously like I said, at the beginning I did, but now I realize that the real work always lies within me.

What I'm really doing my own work, then I'm not judging how my kids are responding to their lives. I'm not thinking that I know how to live their lives better than they do, which is ultimately what this is. When I'm doing my own work, then I'm focusing on creating rules and enforcing consequences. I'm not trying to get them to think differently so that they act differently so that I can feel better.

Believe it or not, you can create rules and enforce them all without becoming upset with the children. This is what I think a lot of parents get confused about. They think, "Well, if we set rules, then the kids will break the rules and then we're going to have to give them a consequence and they get so upset when we give them a consequence, that it just it's not even worth it."

And I very strongly beg to differ, and this isn't just from a coaching standpoint, this is 10 plus years of being a pediatrician. That you can enforce a consequence with a child and that does not have to be a negative thing for you at all. It doesn't mean that you're so glad that they're upset about something, but you have to manage your own mind to understand that them getting upset might be exactly what they need to become that person that you want them to become. That outstanding citizen who's contributing to the world.

So when you create family rules and communicate them, it's very important that you create rules and you clearly communicate them to those that are affected by the rules, you can't just keep them in your head. And you also have to communicate what their consequences are. So you create the family rules and the consequences for breaking the rules and you communicate that very clearly to your children.

Then your only role moving forward is to enforce the consequence when it's needed. But what most of the time we do is we get all bent out of shape when we have to give a consequence and the child gets upset, right? Or we don't want them to have to be upset so we end up making all kinds of empty threats and yelling and screaming and then we never follow through and nothing ever changes, sound familiar?

But when you're managing your mind, you're choosing to let your children keep and own their pain and frustration and anger. So they break a rule, there's a consequence. You come home late, you don't get to borrow the car the next day. They're upset, you're the worst parent in the world, you let them keep that. That is their thought. That is their frustration speaking, because they broke the rules.

You can decide to think about their response however you want to think, my suggestion is that you don't think that something's going on. There is a parenting method that I learned about years ago that I definitely recommend. And if you're struggling with parenting, I 100% recommend it. It's called love and logic. There are multiple books and audios and all kinds of different things.

You can even take classes from people, work with somebody even one on one. And with love and logic, what they teach is a framework that you can use from when your children are very small, all the way to when they leave your home.

So it's not like one, two, three magic where like at 15, you're not going to count to three. That's not going to be very motivating for them. Something you learn once and you just modify as you're going along but the same thing you use with the 15 month old, it's the same thing you use with the 16 year old. Just what they're upset about is different, or what they're wanting is different.

One of the things that love and logic teaches is that when you have to give a consequence, that's a really good thing because you want your kids to learn hard life lessons when the stakes are small. When they're under the protection of your home so that they thrive when they get older. Like for instance, they would talk about with money, like you want them to make money mistakes when they're young, not when they're like buying a boat that they cannot afford when they're older, right?

So, a phrase that they mentioned in one of their books, the love and logic people, is there's a lot of learning going on and we use that one all the time. In fact, my husband uses that even more often than I do. We give a consequence, the child's upset, they're crying, they're whatever and he just kind of looks at me and he's like, "There's a lot of learning going on." That just shows that there's multiple ways to think when your child is upset about the consequence.

You can be kind of secretly glad like, "This is good. They're learning a hard life lesson now when they're young not when they're 30 and there's so much riding, so much on the line." Because we so often think that if our kids are upset, then we need to be upset. You ever heard of this term that often empty nesters will use, they'll say, "Well, you know as they always say, you're only as happy as your least happy child." It's like the worst belief ever. Why would you hinge your happiness on the happiness of other human beings? It's like you're just signing up for misery they have no control over.

So many of us as moms, become really overly entwined in our children's emotional lives and then we're riding the same hormonal rollercoaster that they are. And this is not just for teenagers, this definitely can go for toddlers and younger. So really think about that. The whole course of whatever age your kids are, like how entwined are you? It doesn't mean you're not loving them, often times, the most loving thing to do is actually to give them the consequence so that they can learn the lesson they need to learn.

It's not loving to give them this easy entitled life now so that they're just postponing all of their pain for when they're adults. Adulting is already hard enough in my opinion. It's the last thing we need to do. So, I really want you to recognize that the best way to parent is to be an example of what it means to be an emotional adult to them, okay?

So often, we say, "I want to be a really good parent and I just want to know that I'm succeeding at parenting." The way you succeed is by being a good example because goodness knows, kids are not listening to what we say. They're watching our every move though.

So we tell them like, "Don't yell at your brother," and we're screaming at them like, what? Yes, obviously we scream, this is what we do. So why would they change? Doesn't make any sense.

If you're going to be an example of what it means to be an emotional adult, then that means you have to focus on yourself and doing your own work. See how the work always ends up coming back to you? We always want them to be the ones to change so that we can feel better, but we're the ones who has to do the work so that we can feel better. It's just so important.

So, this means that even when you're just talking about things, when you're an emotional adult, you're not blaming other people. You're not turning other people into the villain so that you can be the victim. You're owning 100% of your emotions and owning that those emotions are being created by your thoughts, not by what someone else is doing or thinking or saying. It's just so important. And all of us have more room to improve on this, me included.

It's also really important for you to know that you should never coach someone against their own will, okay? We get really excited about this work and then we want to tell everybody about it and the all of a sudden, we're taking someone through a model and they didn't consent to this. And even your child, you should not coach them against their own will. I've had some clients tell me that they're always playing this podcast in the car, and if they bring something up, they're like, "Is that podcast lady again? Is this ... Are you telling me what that podcast lady says?" So of course, you can play whatever you want in your car but you just have to know that they're not always going to be interested in what you have to say, right?

A good friend of mine who's a coach, her daughter got in the car to school a few weeks back and she was mad about something and she said, "She just looked at me and she said, "Don't start your speech about how other people can't make you mad."" At least she knows the information. But in the moment, she didn't want to be coached, right? She's like, "Listen, just back off. I just want you to keep quiet and let me be mad about this." Of course she has every right to be mad if she wants to be mad. We can always choose whatever thoughts and emotions we want even when we're kids. But you can ask your child, "Hey, listen, I know about something that I think might help. Would you like to hear a little bit about it?" Or, "You seem like you're having a bit of a hard time, would you like me to help you a little bit?"

You're not shoving it down their throats, right? You're just kind of like, "Hey, I got some information, I'd love to talk to you about it." And if they're like, "No, not right now." "Okay, fine." And if the answer's no, what you do is then step away and manage your own mind. Because your mind's going to be like, "Oh, my gosh, it's so terrible, now she's going to suffer." Like, of course she's going to suffer, she's a human being. It doesn't necessarily have to mean something is going on.

Now, if your child answers with, "Yes, I would like to hear it." Then of course you can teach them the basics of the model. And if you want to know how to explain that, I recommend going back to the first few episodes of this podcast where I teach it. Because I really break it down into small segments and what you just need to show them is the difference between the neutral facts or circumstance in their thoughts and show them how their thoughts create their results for them.

But if you're very new to this work, I want to discourage you from trying to teach this to other people. I've seen some people try to do that and they're not solid on their own understanding of this work and so then they get tripped up.

And so you kind of have so many opportunities with your kids to explain this information. You want to make sure you really, really understand it. Have done enough of your own work that you feel confident in taking them through their own model.

So, ultimately, do I want my kids to know this work? Of course, I do. But I don't just go around coaching them. What I do is kind of sprinkle it in like in the cracks. People call that coaching in the cracks. I'll give you a couple examples for how I've done that in recent weeks and months. My little five year old daughter, she came home and said that her little BFF told her that she hurt her feelings. So my little daughter, the friend told me daughter that my daughter hurt the friend's feelings. And she just kind of said that to me. She said, "She told me that I hurt her feelings." And I said, "Well, what do you think that you did that made her think that?"

You see how I said that? I didn't say, "What did you do to hurt her feelings?" I said, "What do you think you did that made her think that?" It gives her a vocabulary to understand that her friend had the thought about what my daughter did. Whatever my daughter did or said is the friend's neutral circumstance.

And so she kind of mentioned whatever I think she said, "I don't know, I don't think I even did anything, I went over and played with so and so," or something like that. And I said, "Okay, are you happy that you did that? Do you think that that was a good thing for you to do?" And she's like, "yeah," so like, "Okay, well, just remember that a lot of people think that you can hurt their feelings or other people determine how they feel but they really don't, right?" And she's like, "Yeah," so like remember what makes you feel something, she's like, "How I think?" I was like, "Yeah, right. You have a thought, you think about something and that makes you feel a certain way. But a lot of people don't know that. A lot of people might even say to you that, that's not true. But we really know it's true." And she's like, "Yeah," and then she goes, "I think tomorrow I'm going to tell her that." I was like, "You know, you don't have to really tell her that. It's okay, you can just keep it to yourself."

And then I explained to her, why are we nice to people? What's the point? Because a lot of us think like, "Well, I don't want to hurt someone's feelings that's why I'm kind." But no, the reason you're kind is because it feels good to be kind. You benefit from being kind. My daughter benefits from being that kind of a friend. From showing up as the kind of friend that she would like to have. That's the benefit to her. So, that's one example. Another example just happened. Because I'm recording this the day after Easter and my little son who's almost eight, we took all the kids to a little Easter egg hunt and my older guy who's 13, he didn't participate which is obviously, probably a good thing, his age.

But the two little ones participated and so they had a kind of setup so that the really, really little kids would go out one area and then the little bit older kids would go out a different area because for the little, little kids they had their eggs just really very visible.

Well, the way they kind of had it setup for the little kids, they just took a whole bunch of eggs and they just dumped them in the grass in a huge pile, so there was no hunting, really to be happened, it was more like, grab an egg, put it in your basket, very easy.

They also didn't give the kids any kind of upper limit. Sometimes that Easter egg hunts they'll say, "Okay, once you've gotten 12, you're done." Or something like that. So it was kind of free for all, get whatever you want. So my two kids, almost six, almost eight, go running out and my daughter, the younger one just goes over to where the little kids are and starts filling her basket completely full because there's just eggs everywhere and they're just laying there. But then my older guy, he goes running off where the kids are a little bit older and so he goes running all over the place looking for things and finding different ones and they were hidden a lot harder, it was just not many out there.

So he came back with about six. And he was beside himself. He wanted to just burst out into tears. He was trying to hold it back. He was so upset. "I only got six and they weren't letting me have any." Which I was watching the whole time, that's not really how it was going on, but that's what it felt to him. Like, they were all kind of running and he didn't get there quick enough so they got them and he didn't.

And he was so upset that his sister got so many, well, because she took the easy way out. He actually had to hunt. And I told them before they left, I said, "Listen, the whole point of this is to have fun. So if you're not having fun, you're doing it wrong so make sure you're having fun." Like, "Okay, okay." And so he comes back and so I just kind of let him sort of process his emotions a little bit and then, what I did is I just asked him to tell me what the name was of the emotion he was feeling. And I didn't get an answer so I said, "Are you mad? Are you frustrated? Are you disappointed? Are you sad?" And he was like, "None of those."

Nothing that I offered was what he felt was right and then we just kind of left it at that. And so you can see, I didn't have to tie it up in a pretty bow but all I did was give him the opportunity to check in with himself to determine a word that would describe what his emotions are. And he couldn't even think of what that word was, even with my suggestions, and that's completely fine. He's not even eight yet. That vocabulary will come for him, but I did help him to tune in with himself, stop blaming the other kids thinking that they're the problem.

"The reason I feel bad is because of how I'm feeling right now." And I just left it at that. That was all I needed. And then one other story just with my older guy who's 13, a year or two ago he had to give a big presentation in school and he and I while in a walk and he was describing it to me or he was kind of practicing with me and at the end, we had a little bit more to walk before we got home and I said, "Oh, have other kids gone to given their presentation?" He said yes. And I said, "Have some of them been nervous?" And he said, "Oh, definitely." And I said, "how can you tell?" And he was describing symptoms, you know, like, Just their voice are shaking and they're stammering and things like that and I said, "How do you feel about your presentation?" And he's like, "No, I'm feeling good." And I said, "What do you think the difference is? Why are they nervous and you're not nervous?" And he took a moment to think and he's like, "Well, I mean probably I guess the way we're thinking about it."

And I was like, "Right. Because your thoughts are always creating your feelings, so that's really good news. You can actually create nervousness for yourself and the opposite is true. You can actually make nervousness go away by thinking something else if you want to. Note nervousness is not always bad, sometimes nervousness helps you to know that you really care. That's important to you. Maybe it's something that you're really excited about, it's totally fine to feel that way. But sometimes, an emotion like nervous can make it so that you actually don't perform the way that you want to because you're so caught up in yourself."

And usually thoughts that make us feel nervous are thoughts about ourselves. When we start thinking about our audience and the message that we want to convey to them, and stop making it about us and make it about them, we automatically stop feeling so nervous." And he was like, "Okay, cool." And I just left it that. It's just like a little nugget right there. It's not like, "Listen, we need to sit down and do a model together, you know."

And what I believe is that when aren't stuffing it down their throats, they're so much likely to take it in and apply it to their lives. To just take it as kind of a suggestion and way you like to think about it and just leave it at that. Otherwise, it feels like your parent is just telling you that you're living your life wrong and nobody likes to feel that way. Sometimes we just want to feel bad, and we're allowed to feel bad. Same for your kids. Same for anybody in this world. We don't have to change them.

And the other thing to remember too is, many, many kids, like what did we like to do when we were kids? We liked to do the opposite of what our parents want us to do. We liked to rebel against that. So when you're coming full steam ahead like, "Listen, I'm going to coach you on all this stuff that you're struggling with." They're like, "Absolutely no, you're not. I am not into that at all." Just be really thoughtful, when you're thinking, "Oh my kids could really benefit from this."

First, the person who needs to benefit is you. So spend way more time on yourself and then sprinkle it in just here and there as needed when they're asking for it or really open to it rather than making it seem like, "Listen, we're going to sit down and do our thought work now." I hope that that's helpful for you. I know it's going to impact a lot of you who've been really wanting to bring this to your kids, I'm not against it, just be really careful and thoughtful in how you're doing it and they'll make a big, big difference. Not only for their life, but also for yours because, here's the thing, you're going to have to continue working on yourselves about your kids even when they're out of your house. So pretty much for the rest of your life.

You're going to have to be managing your thinking about them. So, really spend this time getting good at that, developing that skill for yourself and you will not regret it. They will only improve your whole experience of being a parent as they age and get into adulthood, which is exactly what we want, right?

Have a wonderful week and I will talk to you next time. Bye-bye.