



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Well hey there my friend, how's the going? What's up? Are you enjoying your summer so far? I definitely I'm. I'm telling you, these are the months we live for out here. I am the kind of mom who really, really actually loves it when my kids are home. As much I am an introvert and love time alone, I also just love having them around and love that time of year when we aren't running to this thing and that thing. "Come on we have to eat dinner because we've got that lesson at that time." I just love a little bit of that slower pace even though I still have my kids going to camps and stuff like that. We just keep it pretty simple, and they have an awesome time, and we have a good time together. It's just so much more relaxed, and so I really try to savor it, because my kids get 10 weeks of summer break and that is it. That really is not that long. By the time they go here and there and fly all over the place to do all their different things, well not all of them are doing that, just my oldest, my 13 year old is going to an Outward Bound Camp. He has to fly into Grand Junction, Colorado, which believe it or not is not easy to get to, especially when you're unaccompanied minor.

I will spare you the details, but let's just say that getting him there and getting him back is a very complicated process, but we made it work. We are doing it. It was getting so complicated my husband said to me he's like, "Can he just not go to this camp? I mean it seems really hard." I was like, "Listen, I have paid for the whole thing in full already. We have to get him there." He's so excited to go, so I'm excited for him, I think he's going to have a great time.

It's a hard camp, I don't know if you're familiar with Outward Bound, but there are no creature comforts at this camp. This is like the real deal, but my son, this particular son really, really loves the outdoors. I think he just loves things that challenge him, and he takes after me in that way. I think that is super awesome, I love to be able to provide him with that opportunity. I think in this day and age where I hear more and more about how teens just have no resilience, they don't know what to do when they are approached with a challenge. They don't know how to handle adversity in their lives, I think a program like Outward Bound is one of the best things you can do for your kids. I mean I had looked at it I think when he was 10, I think you have to be 12 to go. For a couple of years I was falling in line waiting for him to be able to go and do his. He went last year to camp in Washington State, so he was near the Canada border, and he just had a great, great time.

He's like, "Listen, it was not always comfortable. The food was not great." He's like, "Oh my gosh sometimes it was really hard, but it was so great." I think as I've talked to you before, that sense of accomplishment, that natural pleasure we get, I think we really prevent our children from experiencing that as children, because we want everything to be easy for them. We are like, "Hey, let me just do this for you," and then they'll be so much more simple. If they don't really have to work hard for something, they don't understand how great it feels to accomplish something.

Of course as parents we want to make it easier for them, we're doing that out of love, but longer term, we're actually depriving them of that natural pleasure. I think also depriving them of the sense of what you can accomplish when things are hard, and you set your mind to it, and you just have to do it, it's just how life is. I think that, that really sets kids up to and the better experience of their adulthood. Anyway, that's a little aside, that's what we have going on.

Okay, today I want to talk to you about something that I am calling the weight loss overconfidence spin-out. That is my term for it, the weight loss overconfidence spin-out. It is something that has happened to me, and it has happened to many of my clients. If you're working on losing weight, this might happen to you too, or it might already have happened, and you weren't sure what to do about it. I want to make sure that you are on the look out for it, so that you can identify it and reel it in before it really becomes a problem for you. It's like when you know it's something that can happen, you can be that much more aware of when it's starting and get yourself right back on track.

This is what it looks like. You are tracking along, you are doing all of the things. You are losing weight. You're staying focused, you're staying committed. You're doing your thought work. You're working through the issues that you're struggling with. You're making sure that you are feeling your feelings. You are really working on processing your urges. You are really focusing on getting as much sleep as you possibly can. You are focusing on moving your body in a loving way, if that's something that you're able to do. Things are moving along, tracking along, and maybe for a long time, maybe even months or years.

Then you start to have a thought that it's just so easy and automatic to do this weight loss stuff, like this is just no big deal. You don't think that you really need to think that hard about it. You're just finding that you don't really need to plan ahead very often, because you're able to make something work. You've done this enough times that it's no big deal. You can just show up at the restaurant and put something together. You've done it so many times. Your relationship with yourself is so strong, it's really not something you need to worry about.

When things seem a little bit difficult, you have your ways that you deal with it and it's totally fine. Things are totally going okay, no major problems, everything is going okay. Then you miss a day or two of thought work, but you're still doing great. You really didn't actually make that much of a difference it turns out, so that's kind of cool. It turns out you really have done a lot of work, you maybe don't even need so much thought work anymore.

Then you go out of town, and you don't do any thought work while you're gone. Then all over a sudden you can't really remember the last time you did some thought work. Look, you are still doing great, it seems like.

Now you're like, "You know what, I can do this in my head, I don't need to write it down. Katrina's crazy when she says we need to write this down. I really I'm that person who can do it in my head, because I work through it like that all the time." Overall you're feeling great, and sure maybe your rate of weight loss has slowed down a little bit, but it's still totally fine. You're still happy, it's totally good. You know that things slow down as you start getting closer to your goal.

You find yourself making excuses to defend yourself when you go off a plan just a little bit. You're like, "Seriously, it's not that big of a deal, I always get myself on track again. Really it's not a problem, I'm at a point where I don't have to be so strict with myself." Then over the course of time, you know where this is headed right, you gradually stop following your plan. The brain chatter about food returns, so that looks like, "Maybe I should have that. Should I have that?" I mean seriously, I know you're just going to get a coffee and cream, but like you know that chai I mean it's really not that much sugar. I mean you can just have it one time, what's the big deal? I mean seriously if you just have a flat white or a latte, it's really not breaking your fast that much. I mean come on it's not that big of a deal." Like just that constant, constant chatter, constant negotiation. "Maybe I should have a cookie, maybe you should order some pumpkin pie when you're going to the Starbucks line." Constant discussion.

Your brain then starts going back to doing some of its old tricks, creating some intense desire and urges in the moment that you give into, because it's just easier in the moment. It's not that big of a deal. You know how to process urges, but then all of a sudden you're not processing them. You are reinforcing them again by eating whatever it is that your brain is suggesting. Then you might get really, really busy at work, or you have a lot of personal stuff going on, and you go back to your old way of eating for a little while. You just promise yourself, "It's just going to be a few days, because it's just easier to just do it like that. Just a short time." You'll just get back on track like you always do, and you know you're going to do it. It's really not that big of a deal, right?

Then over the course of time you notice that you're actually not getting back on track. It's actually getting harder, a lot harder. It's starting to feel very reminiscent of how you struggled with your weight before you learned this process, before you really learned all the things that are required to lose weight. Now you're getting to a point where you can't trust yourself anymore. You used to have this rock solid relationship with yourself where you could just depend on yourself. You knew 100% that you would do what you said you were going to do. There was no need for you to worry, but now you just don't really know. You have all this evidence that you don't do it again. Now maybe you've gained some of the weight back or if you're lucky you just stopped losing.

This is when you're in full blown spin-out, this is when it's easy to convince yourself that this doesn't work. "I knew it wasn't going to work. I knew I was going to be able to keep this off." Here goes your brain on overdrive, creating a story to make sense of what has happened. Often we will either blame other people or blame the program, or we'll blame ourselves. Like, "I knew I wasn't strong enough to do this. Why did I even think that I had it in me to do it? I totally bought into the idea I could do it, but I knew that I really couldn't." Then a lot of people start to feel quite a bit of shame and guilt and frustration because they've lost something that was so great. They have this freedom around food that they loved having, and they lost it.

Especially if they're starting to gain weight back, they're starting to have to wear bigger clothes again, they feel so much shame, and they know people can tell. They have terrible thoughts about themselves that they then put on other people and think that other people are judging them very harshly too. Then they hide, that's what we do.

We're hiding, we don't want people to see us, we don't want to be involved. We're going back to that old life. We have this taste of what it could be like without that, but now we're going back, all because of this overconfidence spin-out. Then what happens is, you tell yourself that you don't know how to get started again. You know what you had, you recognize that you lost it, but you really don't think you know how to get started again. You might promise yourself in your head that you're going to go back to your old ways. You're totally going to do it and like, "For real, tomorrow I'm totally getting back on track again." You might do okay for a few days, but probably you're just going to do your plan in your head like you were doing before. You're not really going to go back to what you really started doing in the beginning, which was writing everything down. Keeping a food journal, planning your food, following it 100%, really dialing into your hunger scale and all of those things.

You might do okay for a few days, you might be able to really muscle your way through, and you're doing okay. Maybe even a couple pounds come off, and then you start doing okay during the day, but then by evening you're kind of pouring that extra glass of wine again. Or instead of just a square of chocolate, you're having the whole bar, and it's just not getting you where you want to go.

When you have the belief that you don't know how to get started again, it results in you not getting started. You guys remember that thought model that I teach, your circumstances, which are the neutral facts are just neutral. It's what your body weighs, it's what everyone can agree on. Then we have thoughts about that, then our thoughts create our feelings. Our feelings drive our actions. Our actions create our results. When you believe you have a thought, "I don't know how to get started again," what will it make you feel? It'll probably make you feel stuck or powerless or hopeless. That will drive the action of usually doing nothing, big, fat goose egg. If anything we complain, we beat ourselves up in our head, we tell our friends what we're going to do. We feel really awful or really destructed thinking a lot about food and what's going on for us. We're not driving the action of getting started, so that's how you can see that thought does not in create the action of you getting started again.

What we usually do and what I know I've done in this scenario is, I start looking for the next shiny object. I start thinking, "Well, this didn't really work, so there's probably another weight loss program that I can follow." Whatever that thing is that my friend is doing that I haven't heard of. What's the latest, greatest New York Times bestselling diet book? Maybe I should read that for certainly more information that I don't have and I need that, and then that's going to be the solution.

It's so interesting right, of course our brains do that. Our brains are designed to look for novelties, so of course we're going to be tempted by that. What's so interesting is we have all this evidence that what we were doing before works. We had that food freedom, we had that effortlessness, relative effortlessness to it.

Then we think something else is going to provide us with that. What we need to do is go back to what we know what works and just do that again, because looking for the next shiny object is absolutely not the permanent weight loss solution for you. It's figuring out what actually works for your body and managing your mind, and then eating only what your body needs. That's it. Letting your body dine in on the fat that you already have on it.

The main thing that's really missing here is the thought work, the mind management. When you look at that example that I gave you of things slowly unraveling, it's like okay so when did this spin-out begin? In my opinion the spin-out really got into full force when the thought work stopped. I've seen this with myself, and I've seen this with so many clients. As soon as you're not doing the thought work like written out, not in your head, things start to go haywire. It can take quite some time before you even notice that anything is happening.

You have to recognize that when you think that you don't know how to get started again, that is a thought, that is not a fact. That is an optional way of thinking about what's going on for you. That thought will result in you not taking the actions required to get you back to where you were before. Here's the thing, if you're not doing your thought work, you're not going to be able to recognize it as a thought. You're going to go about your life like most people do thinking that your thoughts are your circumstances, that, that's just the fact, that's the problem. "I don't know how to get started again. If I just knew how to get started, then I could do it." Well you do know, your brain's just telling you that you don't know, so you're not able to come up with a solution.

You have to spend sometime with yourself, dumping out all of the objections your brain has to getting back on plan out onto the paper, so that you can actually evaluate it. You can figure out where in your brain you're getting stuck. All that's happened is, you had thoughts that created overconfidence for you, hence the name the weight loss overconfidence spin-out. You had thoughts and beliefs that you totally had yourself all organized and set, and your relationship is strong, and that you didn't need to keep yourself in line as much. That is what's resulting in that overconfidence. When you feel overconfident, you make decisions that aren't always in line with what best serves you and helps you to get the results that you want.

By the way for my clients listening, this same thing can happen when you're in maintenance too, this is so important for you to understand. Sometimes we are A plus students when it comes to the weight loss, and it's the maintenance where we're going to maintenance overconfidence spin-out. Things are tracking along, you're just very happy with where you are, your clothes are fitting, your plan is easy. You start thinking, "I don't think I need a food journal anymore, I don't need to plan so much anymore." Then all of a sudden you've gained back 10 or 20 pounds and you don't know what happened. This is exactly what I help my clients with, but particularly those who are in my continuation program, the weight loss for doctors only masters program. They are the ones who are at that point where they're ready to really take this to maintenance and dial it in for the rest of their lives. They're like, "Yes, let's do this."

Here's the thing, I think it's completely okay to need some support to get out of that overconfidence spin-out. Or to have someone basically call you out on it and point it out, like that's what's happening for you right now, and that's the power of coaching.

Self-coaching is amazing, and the more you self-coach the better you become at it. There is nothing like having an outside person, another coach be able to help you to see things that you just can't see for yourself.

I know for myself I will never go without having a coach who helps me on my personal stuff, because I can just see the benefits of it. Every time I take a break from coaching with somebody, I end up within a couple months just feeling like a level of stagnation, like I'm just not growing. I'm not as in tune with what's going on for me as I am when I'm working with a coach, which is exactly why I created that masters program as a continuation program for my clients who got amazing results and are loving all this work. Want to continue, want to keep working on it and want to maintain these amazing results long-term for them.

Ultimately, you have to commit to doing what supports you, particularly that daily thought work no matter what. Wait, here's the thing you can make it easy on yourself. Keep a journal and pen with you as often as you can. Like you can even get these teeny, teeny-tiny little journals and teeny-tiny little pen if you don't want to have a whole lot on you. Just let you have something that you can scribble down on. I mean you can do it on a receipt. You can do it on a napkin. You can do it anywhere, just you have to really work on believing how helpful that thought work is for yourself. If you're not believing that yet, I would argue that's because you haven't really done it in an effective manner in a long-term way that gives you those results, that it does provide when you're doing that long term.

Notice how trying to do thought work in your head is like writing the spin-out merry-go-round. I've often done this early on, I be like, "I can totally do it in my head, look at this." Then what I noticed was, when I thought I was doing it in my head, what was actually happening was, I was just spinning and spinning with the same thoughts. I wasn't actually making meaningful progress. I wasn't really actually able to question what I was thinking and what my thoughts were. I wasn't really, really able to get the super powerful progress moving forward that writing it down gives you. It's just the way to move you forward in a meaningful way.

Then once you start seeing that, you can start sealing that spin-out down and getting yourself back on track. What I found with most of my clients is that, it doesn't take much. Once they recognize they're in a spin-out, and they realize, "Oh my gosh, look what's happening to me," and they get back on track with all those things from before that they know are working, they are right back on track again doing all those things.

Now you have to be careful that you don't allow yourself to go into victim mode or blaming yourself, or starting to think terrible thoughts about yourself. You shouldn't have done this, and, "I wish this hadn't happened." None of that is going to serve you. None of that is going to drive you toward meaningful change that's going to be long-term. Apparently this is exactly what was supposed to happen, because it did. Now, what can we learn from it so we can move forward and actually create these long-term results?

Recognize the overconfidence spin-out and the way it lasts. When you stop doing your thought work, that is when you need to start being suspicious.

"Why I'm I not doing it? Why I'm I avoiding it? I'm I getting over confident?" Probably the answer is yes. This is how you can be on the lookout for it and keep yourself on track. I think it's okay especially as you're maintaining to have your way that you normally do it, and then you have some limits for yourself. As soon as you have a day where you get off plan and you're just doing some random stuff you don't normally do, okay, what's the plan then?

It's not a punishment, it's just tightening things up to support yourself, to protect yourself. To make sure that you're honoring all of this progress that you've made, so that you can treasure it and cherish it and keep it safe. That might mean, "Okay, I need to go back to writing out what I'm going to eat the next day for the next seven days. If everything comes down and the chatters gone, then I can try just going with my usual thing again," or whatever it is. You don't just let yourself gain a whole bunch of weight back before you start making any changes. If you do, that's okay too, we can always get you back on track.

All right have a wonderful week and I will talk to you very soon. Have a good one, bye, bye.