



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Well, hey, there, my friend. Welcome back to the podcast. How is it going? How was your summer? It's already July. Fourth of July is in a couple of days, if you're listening to this right as it's being released. I love Fourth of July. I mean, how fun is Fourth of July? I hope you have plans to do just something fun, something relaxing, and if your plans include working in the hospital or having to take call, just know that we all appreciate you, and hopefully next year you can have Fourth of July all for yourself, because it's just such a fun one, you know? I always loved it. Even, actually, when I was on call, I would still be able to find a way to have a good time, because it's just fun, lots of fun. If you're not American, you're not celebrating American Fourth of July, Independence Day, well, I hope you're just enjoying your July. I hope you're enjoying some nice weather and having a good time.

Today I want to talk to you about your marriage, and so many women physicians that I coach think that their marriage is a big reason for why they overeat and why they're overweight. For this podcast, I'm just going to use "husband" and "he" pronouns, male pronouns, just for the sake of simplicity. This also applies to anybody who is in any kind of close relationship where they're blaming someone else for their overweight body. If you are married to a woman, then that's awesome too. This applies to you just as much, but for the sake of simplicity, we're going to go with "husband" on this podcast.

Here are things, just some examples, a few brief examples, of things that I hear from my clients, that people talk about with their spouses or their husbands. "He eats junk food all the time, and he brings it into the house. It's not fair." "He does all of the cooking, and that's amazing and I so appreciate it, but he just makes whatever he wants to make and he doesn't make things that are going to help me."

"He tries to make things according to my plan, but he can never seem to get it right. He's always kind of messing it up, and then he gets upset if I'm thinking that I shouldn't eat it." "He shows his love through food, so how can I not eat this food, if that's how he shows his love?" "Food and alcohol, food and/or alcohol, is a big way that we connect and spend time together. That is our thing that we do together, so what are we supposed to do?" "He doesn't help me with any of the cooking or food prep."

Okay, do you see how this goes? It's like flip-flops, one or the other. He does everything and it's not okay, he doesn't do anything and it's not okay. "He doesn't help, and so it's that much harder for me to make this work." "He eats some sort of alternative diet, which makes things really challenging," so maybe he's gluten-free or keto, or I've also coached people where their husband or spouse just eats like no vegetables or is overall a very picky eater, and so then they believe that that makes things very challenging for them.

"He doesn't believe that I can lose weight, and he thinks that this weight loss attempt is going to be the same as every other time I've tried to lose weight and wasn't successful." "He stresses me out so much, so then I end up just eating or drinking to get my mind off of it." "He told me I should lose some weight, and that was so offensive." "He doesn't pay any attention to me, so food has become my go-to companion," right?

I mean, I could go on and on and on, like literally on and on and on, but I won't. We really spend a lot of time on marriages, marriage relationships, and at my weight loss program everyone's always so surprised. I'm like, "Wow, really nothing is off limits for coaching in this," because we think that it's just about the food and I promise you it's not. There are really few other relationships that we have that are as close and intimate and filled with rules and controllingness as a marriage relationship.

When two people get married, what people often talk about is those two people becoming one, and we kind of buy into this when we get married. Like it seems so special, like we were on our own, and two people come together and we become one, and in some ways this does happen a little bit, right? You might join your finances together, you might purchase real estate together, you might buy a home together, but you're still two people. Even with joint finances, you're still have different ideas about what to spend money on. You'll have different ideas about how much to spend and how much to save.

Even if you're both very aligned on what you believe about your money, you still will not have the same thoughts about it. You'll have different thoughts that drive actions of spending money on different things. You'll have a thought that you need some new clothes, and you'll go spend some money on some clothes, whereas he'll have a thought, "I need to buy a new golf club," and he'll go buy a new golf club, right? You both might be spending money in a way that you're aligned with and that you think is okay, but you still are having different thoughts about your money.

With a house that you buy or live in together, you will have different thoughts about how to decorate it or how to renovate or how to landscape it, even how often it should be cleaned and maintained. I know so many people get so upset when their husband thinks that they don't need a cleaning service or that they don't need the cleaning service as often as they're coming or something like that, right? We don't have the same thoughts, but when we go into our marriages believing that we're now one, we think that both of us should be thinking and believing the same things.

That means that we should feel the same way and act the same way as well, and this is precisely where the trouble starts, because if you're married, you know that there's really not a chance of this happening. It's just not how it is. It just isn't.

In every relationship that you have with anybody, any person, but also especially your marriage relationship, your relationship with the other person is 100% created in your mind with your thoughts about the other person, okay? What creates the relationship is a collection of thoughts and beliefs that you have. Beliefs are just thoughts you've had so many times that you believe them, and the same is true for the other person. Their relationship with you is 100% created in their mind with their thoughts and beliefs about you, okay?

There is no marriage relationship that kind of lives between the two of you, and I think that this is really excellent news, because you get to choose to think and believe whatever you want to about that person. The problem is that we think that the other person is the problem when something isn't going right. We think that we're just observing reality and explaining facts, but it's actually our thoughts about the person and what they're doing or not doing that is the problem.

Let's use one of those examples that I gave you, so he eats junk food and brings it into the house. That may seem factual, but really he eats food and brings food into the house would be factual, because not everybody agrees on what junk food is. He might not think that eating fast food is junk food, so he brings food into the home. Why is that a problem? Well, the problem is because of what we make that mean. It's usually something like this. "I think this is a problem because then I have to look at this food, and it's so hard not to eat it. After a while I just can't keep it up, and I cave and I eat all of it. If he were just a better husband, he would know that those foods are really hard for me to have around."

Right, so this is total emotional childhood. We're in emotional childhood when we think that someone else is able to control how we feel, and we think that in order for us to feel differently, the person has to change. In this example, in order for me to not overeat the food in the house and to feel good about myself, I think that the food needs to not be in my house, and so the solution should be that my husband should stop bringing it in. Then I feel entitled to tell him all about how he's doing it wrong, all right? This is how arguments start in marriages. This is how resentment begins, and ultimately this is really the lazy way of losing weight, okay? This does not solve your problem at all.

What's actually true is that having that food in the house is probably exactly what you need, so that you can do the work required on your brain to stop overdesiring that food so much. It's so much easier to just blame your husband and wish he were different. Like, "Why does he have to always buy the sugar cereal? He knows that I can't control myself," right? Then you probably tell him all about how if he were different, that would be really great for you, and you're asking him to think and feel and act exactly like you, but that's never going to happen. You will always be two people with two different brains and different thoughts driving your feelings and your actions.

Let's take another example. Let's talk about when he says that you should lose some weight and you get offended. Our brains, when we hear that, immediately draw the battle lines, right? "He shouldn't have said that. He is so rude. He's so unsupportive. He doesn't love me. I shouldn't have married him," and on and on and, right? When we think that way, we feel terrible. We feel angry or hurt or frustrated, offended, annoyed, furious, sometimes even helpless. When we feel that way, what do we do most of the time, usually? We eat, and sometimes we have some alcohol, right? We eat to feel better.

Here's what's so interesting about this situation. You think you should lose weight too, so you actually both agree about this, right? You want to lose weight and think you should lose weight, and he thinks you should lose weight, so we're in agreement here. What's the problem? When you let your brain go right to being offended and furious, you let your brain tell you that he's the reason you aren't able to conquer your overeating problem, that it's your marriage that's keeping you overweight, and this is what you have to recognize.

There's no way that another person, or your marriage, can prevent you from doing anything you want to do, okay? Instead, what we're wanting is for someone else to do the heavy lifting for us. We don't want to have to do the work on our thoughts that are creating desire, and learn how to feel the urges for the off-plan foods and not act on them and how to process that. We don't want to have to feel all of our uncomfortable emotions. We just want to have the outside world conform to what we think will make it easier, and this is everybody, including me, okay?

I just want you to know, nothing is wrong with you if this is how your brain approaches things, okay? This is very habitual for most of us, and we weren't even aware of it, and it's never been modeled to us. We just think that this is how it is. For a lot of you listening, I have a feeling that you're going to be like, "What is happening?" Your brain is just going to be exploding about this concept, okay, so just stick with me here. It's so much easier to blame someone else than to own that all of the work is ours, right? It's easier to daydream about having a professional chef who makes every food perfectly and always in the right amount and serves it exactly when you're ready for it, right? I've definitely had that daydream many times.

For those of you who have a husband who cooks all the food and does all the meal prep, it's the same thing. You think like, "If he could just do it right, then this would be so much easier for me." It's easier to believe that if he helped more around the house, then you could focus on yourself and your weight loss more. That's not what would happen. If he just stressed you out less and spoke more nicely to you, or if he was just more of an engaged companion, or if he could just show his love in another way, then it would be easier to lose weight. It's just easier to believe that if he were more supportive, then you'd be able to follow your plan more easily.

If he just told you how beautiful you are and how perfect you look, then it'll be easier to love yourself and stop beating yourself up all the time, but I promise you this is not the case. There are plenty of people who have this, and they still struggle too. This job, this weight loss job, true permanent weight loss, is an inside job. The only person who can do it is you. Sure, some things might be easier if some people support you and help you with some things, but also that's not required at all. Stopping emotional eating and losing the weight permanently can only come from within you.

Of course, getting the tools and help that you need can change everything, but that help doesn't have to come from your husband or anybody else in your life. This is exactly what I offer my weight loss clients. Imagine how much more effective your weight loss will be when you're getting the help you need from someone whose entire job and passion is to do that, instead of thinking that's your husband's job or the whole world's job, to change in order to accommodate you.

When you believe that anybody besides you has to change in order to create the results you want to your life, you will spend your life either trying to change everyone else ... and unsuccessfully, I might add, very, very unsuccessfully ... or you just end up taking on the victim role and giving up, because everybody else is the villain. They have the power to control your results and how you think and feel.

Either one is completely exhausting, and this leads to endless negative emotion, which I actually personally think contributes to the overall negative mindset that many adults take on as they age. When you feel helpless to change what you want to change ... which is how you feel when you're in victim mode ... then you become hopeless, and then what's the point? You might as well just sit around and complain about what's wrong with the world and why everything sucks. Sound familiar? We can think of that maybe in our parents or grandparents, but we do it too, right? We're on that path as well if we're not careful.

Ultimately, your marriage, I promise you, is not making you fat, okay? What's creating extra body fat on your body is eating more food than your body needs, period. Nobody is making you do that. When you move into emotional adulthood about this, you take full responsibility for all of it. You take full responsibility for how you feel all of the time, both the positive and the negative emotions, and you also take full responsibility for everything you eat.

Instead of telling yourself that you couldn't resist some treat, just tell yourself the truth, and the truth is you just chose not to feel your emotions, and that is just fine, okay? That's okay, but just be truthful to yourself about it. Whenever you notice yourself thinking it's your husband who's the problem, pause for a moment and ask yourself, "How am I actually responsible for this? How am I the only one who can fix this? How can I set myself up for success in this situation? What do I need to be doing in this scenario? Where do I have room to improve?"

You know, I think the best scenario, like the easiest way to understand this, is something that I learned from my friend Sherry Gill, who I've had on the podcast. She's an amazing organizational expert, and I was listening to an interview that she did with her husband, and he does all the cooking in their house and so he cleans up too, but he doesn't clean up to her level of satisfaction, okay? The counters aren't wiped down the way she would like them to be. She would like it to be tidier, and so she used to try to get him to clean up after making dinner in the way that she wanted him to, so that it looked the way she wanted it.

Then she finally just realized, "You know what, he doesn't care. He just made a whole meal and cleaned up. If I want it to look a little bit better, then I'm just going to have to do that myself, because I'm the one who cares," and so here's the deal. You're the one who cares about your body the way it is, right? You're the one who cares about how it looks. You're the one who cares about what your BMI is and how your clothes fit. If you want something done and you want it changed, then you need to do that yourself, all right? You need to stop thinking that it's someone else's job.

Whenever your brain wants to focus on someone else and what they should be doing differently, I want you to turn it around and lovingly ... important, lovingly ... focus on yourself. This is not an opportunity to beat yourself up some more, okay, but lovingly focus on yourself, and I promise you this is what has to happen in order for you to get the weight loss results you want.

By the way, this is also how you create an amazing marriage, okay? You let the other person be themselves, and you focus on creating what you want for yourself, so just a little aside, right? You think loving thoughts toward your partner and you think loving thoughts towards yourself. This is the solution.

All right. I can't wait to talk to you next week. I've got some good stuff planned. I'll be talking to you very soon.

Have a good one. Bye bye.