



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Hey, my friend. How are you doing? So glad to have you here.

If you are new, then welcome. I'm so glad to have you listening to this podcast. I sound a little stuffy today. If you haven't noticed, I am having some serious allergy issues, it appears to be. I've been on allergy shots for a number of years, and just saw my allergist, and we agreed that we need to go up on my shots because man, oh man, my nose is not pleased.

I'm the kind of person that if I use a nasal steroid spray, I get nosebleeds, that kind of stuff, and it turns out that I'm actually not on the highest dose of allergy shots that I could be on because ... I mean, this has been a while. A couple years ago, I went and saw my allergist after I'd gotten my shots, and I had a big, local reaction on my arms, which I got every time, and he was like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. We got to dial that down," and I was doing really well, so it worked, but ragweed is my season, and man, oh man, I mean, my face when I start sneezing like this, and blowing like crazy, and it's crazy. Anyway, I just had one of those attacks a little bit ago, so I think I'm still recovering, still sounding kind of stuffy in working through all of it. I'm going to be heading out in just a couple of hours to go to Dallas for a few days.

Every year, my coach has basically, it's like a continuing ed kind of workshop for coaching, and so we have that coming up, the annual mastermind as it's called, and so I'm excited to go to that. I'm going to be speaking, get to meet up with a bunch of coaches that I love, and so I wanted to get this podcast in and make sure that I am supporting you before I go and do that. I end up going to Dallas a lot. I actually got status on American Airlines because I go there so frequently. I was like, "I never thought I'd be somebody who would get status on an airline," especially because here in Milwaukee, we don't have a hub, so I have miles and that kind of thing on all the different major airlines because sometimes, United is better, and sometimes Delta is better, and sometimes American, but American is the only one that has a nonstop to Dallas, so that's what we do all the time.

Anyway, that's where I'm at today, and I'm excited to talk to you about this topic because it's something that I'm seeing more and more surface in terms of my current weight loss clients kind of struggling with it, and trying to work through it, and try to figure it out, and I think it's just pretty much the ultimate core principle of permanent weight loss.

That's why I want to start introducing it to you here on the podcast as well, and that is the concept of self-worth. If you're anything like I was before I got into this whole coaching thing, I was kind of like, "I don't have a problem with that. That's really fine." I mean, I'm okay.

I think I'm pretty awesome. I function very highly in my life. I mean, this weight thing, I just really like food. It's really all it is. It's really not anything deeper than that, and even once I found coaching and even once I became a coach, I didn't really have great insight into this. This has taken a lot of coaching for me to work through it for myself, and I love when that happens because what that means is that I can take you on the same journey, only maybe we can speed it up for you, so it won't take quite so long because it really was something that took a while for me to find, and I find that my clients will ask about that too.

They'll say, "You know, I don't know. You know, you kind of suggest that there's this kind of like self-loathing, or this lack of self-worth, that is this underlayment of a weight problem," and I just, I'm trying to find it in myself. You're like, "I just kind of feel like things are pretty good. I have a good life. I'm reasonably happy most of the time, and sure, I've worked through a lot of different things to make that better."

"I'm working on my food, but I'm still not really finding my food plan. I'm still not getting the weight loss results that I want. I'm not really supporting myself in creating this permanent weight loss that I want. I'm trying to figure out what that's all about." I totally understand that.

I think there are obviously different kinds of people, right? There are people who really do have that self-loathing soundtrack in their head that is always there or frequently there, and they know it's there, okay? They have awareness of it. Maybe the way that they talk to themselves inside their heads is like, "You're such an idiot. You're so gross. Your body is disgusting," like you don't deserve anything in your life, really mean, mean, mean things, and so if you are thinking that way about yourself and you have some awareness around that, and that can be helpful, although sometimes I find that people who really are thinking about themselves like that, like they're so committed to these beliefs, that they're an awful, unworthy human being, that it takes more work for them to change to a belief that's different than the other kind of group of people who are like on the surface, "Things are pretty good."

"I think I'm doing a good job," "I help my patients," "I'm a decently good mom, decently good spouse, decently good sister and daughter, and friend, and sure. Is there room for improvement?" Yeah, but things are really fine overall, but I still have this weight issue, and so I want to talk about the different ways that not valuing yourself can show up in your life that are not this narrative of detesting yourself basically on a regular basis with the way that you think and feel about yourself. I see this coming up in lots of different ways. I first want to share a way that it showed up for me that I realized, and this is ...

It was really fascinating for me when I uncovered this. When I was first going through my weight loss journey this last time where I lost all the weight and kept it off, what I noticed was that I got to a weight that like never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagined was possible for me as an adult, like it was less than I weighed in ninth grade.

I was like, "This is crazy," like I can't believe it, but I got to that weight, and this is just further proof that all that changes when you lose weight is your body. Like your brain doesn't change unless you work on it. What I found was that I would get to a weight that I thought that if I got to that weight, it would just be like heaven on earth, right?

Like unicorns would come live with me, like everything would be amazing, right? It would be so great, and it was great. It was nice. It was nice being able to walk into a store and just buy a certain size and it would fit, and that was all great, but what I noticed over the course of time was that my brain kept suggesting to me that it wasn't enough, and if I had gotten there, like I wasn't thinking like this isn't enough, I was thinking, "Well, this is great, but I bet you could lose another one or two pounds." It was basically saying, "Yeah, but you still got this fat in this area, and you still got this kind of poochy area here. I wonder what might happen if I lost another one or two pounds, or maybe three or four or five pounds?"

Like, "Huh, maybe that's actually my ideal weight." You can see how this masquerades itself as something being useful. Like, "This is great. I achieved this accomplishment, this goal that I had. Maybe I can even do more," and I didn't even realize, and so of course my achiever instinct completely kicked in, and, "I want you to try to lose weight." It didn't matter if I lost a couple more pounds.

It still felt like I should lose a few more, and what I started to recognize over the course of time was that there literally was not one number where I would feel like I was done, where I could finally be satisfied with the way that I looked, that I could just love my body for what it was, that it didn't need to get thinner. Like it was this idea that like leaner is better, and you can't be too lean, except you can be too lean when you start looking emaciated or like you're some super long distance athlete who has very, very low body fat percentage. It was really, really painful for me when I recognized this. I realized that I'd put myself into this position where I really could never be good enough. I kept striving to get to that place where I would be good enough.

This is why we can't achieve ourselves to feeling worthy, to feeling valuable, to feeling like we are enough, because it's never enough. We get to that place, we blow our own minds, we create this amazing result, and it's still not enough. Once I realized that, it was painful, yet also really liberating, because I kept thinking, "There probably is something else going on. I just cannot figure out what it is," and that's when I figured it out. Like, "Oh, this is my brain wanting to continue to believe that I'm just not good enough," and so of course, it won't let me be satisfied at any weight that I achieve. It keeps thinking that there is going to be better than here, that two more pounds, that's really when it's going to be amazing, right? That's when your cellulite is going to go away. Did you know that? No. That's not what happens.

That's when the belly skin that's stretched out from having pregnancies magically goes away and your body looks like you're 18. No. It's not what happens, and so I really had to spend some time practicing, first of all, just being with myself in that place of compassion for myself for being so misguided in my brain. It was really not easy, but it was something that really, really changed my life because now, if anything comes up where it might hint at this idea that I might not be good enough, I'm immediately onto it.

I'm like, "Oh, it's just some residual of that I'm not good enough thing," and so it really has been a work in progress for me to decide like, "What weight is good enough?" Right?

As achievers, we want to just have these goals, and then many of us are like, "Okay. I got to that weight. Now, I want to build muscle," or some people have said to me, "Oh, once I lose weight, then I want to compete in a bikini competition," or something like that, but I promise you, the majority of people who think they want to do that want to do that because they think that once they're really fit and lean like that, then they can finally feel proud of themselves, and finally feel good about themselves, and finally feel like they've accomplished something. I'm not against doing that if you want to do it, although I do find that the majority of people who do that end up with some really disordered eating, and it really, really messes with their head. They can start developing some binge-eating or urge-driven eating that they didn't have before or it worsens it, so I would just say that if you decide you want to do that, you should definitely be working with a mindset coach through it, not just a coach who can help you to cut and get that lean because I've seen it time and time again that people may look a certain way that you might see as desirable, but in their head, they're usually really, really struggling.

That's just as an aside. I see this showing up for my clients in other ways as well. I recently coached one of my clients, and it was her birthday, and she had submitted some information to me beforehand about what she wanted to be coached on. What she was talking about was that her birthday every year seems to be this time where she reevaluates things, but in reevaluating, what she allows her brain to do is to just show her all the ways that she's not good enough, all the ways she's screwing it up, and on top of it, she doesn't have that much more time left because she's one year older. I've seen this before in other people too.

I've had another client that I worked with who every year on her birthday, leading up to it was in an emotional state that was akin to panic basically, about she might die soon and she hasn't done enough, that she hasn't created a valuable-enough life in case she dies. She hasn't actually contributed enough to the world, and she might die, even though she's young and she's healthy and there's no reason to think that she might die. This was this perpetual cycle that would happen every year on her birthday. Even when you can see it, intellectually, as not rational, when you believe this deep down, you guys understand that concept of confirmation bias, your brain will do things to confirm that. If you believe that you are not enough and not good enough, deep down, that you're not contributing enough or not valuable enough, then your brain will interpret it doesn't matter what everything as you not doing enough.

Now meanwhile, this person who was in the panic before her birthday was working incredible hours. She wasn't a physician, but incredible hours at her job. I mean, just toiling away, thinking that if she did enough, then she could feel good about herself, and then she wouldn't be so upset around her birthday. Except of course, that never happened, because her brain just told her that that wasn't enough. Always, always, always, that's that perfectionism that shows up.

You are not doing it well enough, and you never will. It's this ideal that's unachievable. That's the problem. It's like this race to nowhere. You're like achieving, achieving, achieving as much as you can, thinking that the ticket to that self-worth and finally feeling good about yourself is on the other side of it, and I promise you, it's not.

I also promise you that if you spend a little bit of time just thinking about your life right now, you're going to have so much evidence of that. I know for myself, "Oh, I'm just going to finish medical school." Then, I'm finally going to feel good about myself. "No, it's residency." Then, I'll finally feel good about myself. Then, I get the job. Okay, then, I'll finally feel good about myself. Then, "Oh, no. I need to have a baby." Then, I'll feel good about myself. "I need a bigger house." Then, I'll feel good about myself. No.

None of it actually creates that, because all of those things are circumstances, and circumstances don't make you feel anything. It's your thoughts that make you feel things. Really important, right? We understand this from an intellectual standpoint, but the reason I keep driving this home for you is because you have to get this down to your bones where you live from it, not just something that you understand and know, but that's just in you. The woman who on her birthday was being coached was really sad and upset on her birthday, and she said every year, she's very, very emotional, feeling like time is of the essence.

It's running out, right? I did that podcast on time scarcity. This shows up, "I've coached other people too on this," or it's like, "Yeah, but time is running out. I might die young." I see people die young all the time, at work, and that might be me, and I'm just, "I haven't done enough. I haven't spent enough time with my kids."

"I haven't done enough quality work. I haven't been the loving sister, wife, daughter," any of those things. Your brain is just on hyper-drive going, "What are all the possible things that you might be screwing up?" Let me show them all to you right now, right? That is a really interesting way that it shows up.

We think we're just telling the truth when we're like, "No," but literally, I'm really not that nice to my kids sometimes. Yeah, welcome to being a human being who is raising children, right? This is how it goes. That doesn't mean you're doing something wrong, but when you believe that you're not enough, your self-worth is low, you will always have your brain looking for proof and evidence to prove that true, because you have that confirmation bias in your brain. Your brain is not going to easily want to look for evidence to the contrary.

Then, I also coached someone recently who said, "I know you say that if we really loved ourselves, we wouldn't overeat in this way that hurts our body," and by hurting our body, what she meant was creating a body that is higher percentage body fat than it should be. She said that, "I just, I can't find it. I don't really know." What I suggest, if this is you as well where you're kind of like, "I mean, I believe you, but I just can't find it or it's not easily accessible," what I want to suggest is that you just are open and patient with yourself in finding this out. What I suggested for her was to just spend some time looking at the times when she overeats, if she plans her food, and then she doesn't follow it.

Someone who really believes in their own value and worth is not going to go against something that they know is good for them. When you are really feeling connected with yourself, and loving yourself, and you feel like a valuable person in this world, you are able to connect to that future version of you who has solved the weight problem. I teach this to my clients about figuring out who that future self is, who doesn't struggle with the food anymore.

This can be a great way for you to access this, where you really think ahead, maybe here, maybe five years, maybe 10 years, that you that you want to create, actually being intentional about, "Who do I want to be?" This is like this idea of like if I get in the car and go, "I'm going to drive to Los Angeles," but I don't have a map and I don't punch it into the GPS, and I just start driving, how am I going to know if I'm on the right track?

Like I might end up in Florida if I don't know which direction that I'm going or know what the goal is. I don't know how to get there. Like I know I want to get to LA, but I'm not even giving myself any of the information that I need to be able to get there. It's the same thing with weight loss. There might be a number, and that's your goal, but who is the version of you who lives at that number permanently?

Do you know her? Have you figured out who she is, because you have to really know her to figure out what that path is to figure out what the map is. When you connect to who she is and really, really get to know her, what you'll find is that she doesn't speak harshly to herself. She's patient with her herself when she makes mistakes. She loves herself even when she's crazy sometimes and does just totally messed up stuff.

When she has a terrible day and she's mean to everybody and just wishes she could go hide in bed, she's like, "Yeah, we have those days sometimes. It's okay. I love you anyway." She doesn't use food to harm herself. What I mean by harm herself is in the moment, of course, it makes her feel better, but in the long-term, it harms her because it creates so much negative emotion, and it creates a larger body, and possibly potentially some health problems as well, but it hurts her emotionally and mentally because of all the drama that ensues when you're overeating.

When you are connected to who she is, you can start seeing how you're not congruent with that now. That's who she is. That's how she shows up. How am I showing up right now, and where's the difference? Then, getting curious about the difference.

That's so interesting. I know that she has desire for chocolate at night, but she doesn't ever consider eating it. Okay, interesting, but I do consider it, and then I end up eating it. I wonder if maybe I just didn't eat it and was willing to feel the emotions that I feel when I am not eating it, if maybe that would help me move toward that direction. Maybe it will.

Maybe it won't. Here's the thing, we don't know, but you don't have to have it all figured out before you get started, right? We're like, "I want to do everything I'm doing right now but be thin permanently." You have got to transform in your brain in order to create that result. It's just not going to happen otherwise. I know that you know this deep down because look and everybody around you who's lost weight, and probably you as well, who's lost weight and hasn't been able to keep it off. There's watching something ... Someone was showing me something, a video that came up on maybe Instagram or something about someone who was talking about weight loss.

I'm sure she is wonderful and a lovely human being and really helping people, but what she's doing is focusing on the food, talking about fasting, things like that. Fasting is a great tool. It's wonderful, but fasting does not change your brain. You have to change your brain. I'm just going to keep saying it over and over again because I know, right?

Sometimes we need to hear it a million times to get it through. I know, I'm like that. I'm like, "Apparently, I needed to hear it 75 times before I really believed it." You have to change your brain because otherwise, you put all this effort into losing the weight, and for what? You're just going to end up gaining it back again. You haven't really solved the problem.

What I want to suggest is figuring out where in your life there is this dissatisfaction with yourself, this kind of rejection of yourself, of thinking that something is maybe fundamentally wrong with you, that if people really knew who you were, they would know something really isn't right with you, and that's why you're not able to create what you want to create, right? When you recognize this, then you understand why you people please, why you're a perfectionist, all of this. You can get so much awareness and insight into what your struggle is. It just lightens everything. It doesn't mean you're not still struggling with it, but at least you understand what's going on a little bit more. It makes it that much easier to move forward, rather than constantly just repeating the cycle of losing the weight, continuing to hate yourself.

Even when you don't think you hate yourself, there's something you're hating about yourself where you end up using food to make yourself feel better and gain it back because it really isn't better there. It's like, "What's the point?" It's so hard. That's what I want to leave you with today. This is really, really important stuff.

I want you to not skip over this, and I know that many of you are going to be like, "Listen, I'll do that work once I lose the weight. Let me just lose 50 pounds first, then I'll do that work." My answer to that is you can do whatever you want. I mean, if you really want to do it that way, I suppose you can, but all you're doing is postponing what you need. You're only postponing the thing that will actually truly change your life for the better, so why wouldn't you want to do that at least simultaneously if not at first, because I'm telling you what, when you have this figured out and sorted out, and you know that your worth is inherent no matter what you do, and that you're a valuable human being just for waking up this morning, the weight loss is so much easier.

It's so, so, so much easier. Okay. On that note, I want to wish you a wonderful week. I want to tell you that I love you and you're doing a really good job, and you're going to go, "No, I'm not. She doesn't know me," and I'm telling you, yes, you are.

I know you're doing a really good job because you're here listening to this podcast.

I will talk to you next time. Take care. Bye-bye.