



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: What's up? What's up, my friend? How are you? Welcome to the podcast. I'm, once again, so excited to talk to you, as always. I just got back from a couple day visit to Dallas, where I participated in basically like the coaching equivalent of a CME course. So, we have a continuing education program really twice a year, but this one is the main one that's about truly coaching, so it's not about business building or things like that. It's really about coaching skills, up leveling your coaching. This one's topic was thought leadership, which was just an amazing thing to be taught about. I also presented with a whole bunch of other amazing coach instructors, and it went super well.

I have to say, I would not recommend other people put together presentations the way I do, which is to avoid it for a long time, procrastinate, finally approach a deadline and go, "Okay, I've got to figure out what I'm going to say." In this case, I actually had slides made, so they were nice and beautiful, and that was great, but then pretty much putting off practicing it until the morning of. The problem with this, you guys, is that I always do it this way, and then it works out okay. So, this is a problem I.

I haven't had an experience where it was absolutely awful, where then it reinforces to me, hey, you shouldn't do it that way. Oh my gosh. Then I tell myself, "Maybe it's not a problem. Maybe this is just the way that I do it and it's totally fine." But the reason why it's an issue for me is because the whole time leading up to it I keep thinking, "I should practice this. I'm not prepared," things like that, and then in this last little flurry I get myself prepared, and then I pull it off and it's all fine and good. The problem is I just don't present enough to really, really practice this, and then once it's over I'm like, it was fine.

But it was really, really great to just get to know some new coaches. The coaching community has grown incredibly in the last couple of years, which is so fun. There's so many great people doing really great work out in the world, and just the more people we can help, the better. Right? It's just we're really changing the face of mental health in this world and honestly mental health in the face of the medical community. There's I think probably about 20 physician coaches now within the Life Coach School community, which is what I'm part of, and we are just out there changing lives. It's so amazing. So, I loved it. I had a great, great, great time.

Okay. Let's start talking about today's topic. What I want to talk to you about is this new ailment that I have noticed with most of my clients, pretty much everybody. I mean, no one really gets away from this at least a little bit, and I think you probably have it too.

I have given it a name, and its name is special snowflake syndrome. I think you have it. It's kind of an affliction that we all have, at least to a certain extent. So, what does it mean to have special snowflake syndrome, SSS for short?

When we say that we think we're a special snowflake, what we mean by that is that we think that something is extra special, different, or wrong with us that makes something impossible. So, if you feel like you're a special snowflake when it comes to weight loss, then you have all kinds of thoughts and beliefs about why losing weight for you is particularly hard, why now isn't a good time, why it's extra difficult for you. I mean, the list goes on and on for reasons why, but I'm going to give you some. It can be because you're pregnant right now, because you have a small child, a baby, because you're breastfeeding. Some people think breastfeeding helps them to lose weight. Others think, "Oh no, no, no. I'm the special snowflake. I'm breastfeeding right now. I can't do it."

Some of us think it's because we have toddlers who are difficult or they aren't sleeping through the night yet. Some of us think because our kids are so busy as they get older, it's just not a good time, because we're running them around all the time. Sometimes once our kids get older, it's because they have all these different activities, but also maybe they're struggling in other ways, and we feel like we need to focus on them. We're just like, "Right now we've got a kid who's struggling, and we just are not able to focus on ourselves." This actually continues on, because then once our children are adults, then they have other things going on, or maybe they have their own children and now we're focusing on the grandchildren and how they might need our help.

Sometimes it's because we think that it's because our electronic medical records system at our hospital is particularly difficult, or complicated, or doesn't work, or is extra buggy, or something like that. Sometimes it's because our medical assistant is extra bad and seriously, you don't understand. She makes my life a living hell. Maybe it's because our partners in our practice just are not as helpful as they could be. They don't take their share of call. They don't do certain things that we think that they should be doing. Sometimes it's because of what our other relationships are. You might have elderly parents that you're caring for or that are a particular challenge for you right now. It might be that your marriage is struggling, and you're feeling like that precludes you from being able to make the progress that you want in your life.

You can see. Right? I could go on and on. It's because you're doing a home repair or your home renovation, or you're moving right now, or you're switching jobs. I mean, like literally it could be anything. That line of thinking is the special snowflake syndrome. It's creating an excuse for why something is impossible for you and then believing it, as though it's fact. This is what I noticed with my clients, is that they talk about it as though it just is. They don't recognize that this is completely optional to think about it this way and that it is actually a thought. So, we talk about that and we're like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. I get that it's the thought."

The way you will know if it's special snowflake syndrome is when you resist the idea that it's a thought and you start arguing for your own excuses. You start arguing for your own victim mentality and your own misery. You start saying, "Well, no, no, no. I mean, I know I could do it. I mean, I know it's possible, but just right now is not a good time. Just right now I just need to get through this one section. I just need to get this grant proposal submitted, and then I'll be able to focus on it." Right?

There's always something in our lives. Ultimately, what this comes down to is us arguing for the impossibility of something that we want to create in our lives. So, it's something that we want.

In this case, we want permanent weight loss, but then our brain wants to protect us from doing something that's going to be difficult, possibly scary, and so it will come up with these stories that we then believe, and those stories hold us back. So, it very much is victim mentality, because in a victim mentalities situation, the only way for things to change or get better is for the villain to change. Then you by default, as the victim, are disempowered. You can't do what it is that you want to do until that villain changes. So, in your special snowflake syndrome, who is the villain? What is the villain? Right? You might be like, "Oh, no, no. It's not the villain. No. I'm just so happy to do all these things." Right?

I want you to be particularly careful when your response to this is going like, "No, but seriously, really, honestly, it's really, I love being with my kids. It's just not a good time right now." It sounds amazing. It sounds very sweet, and it sounds like your intentions are so good, but you are still believing in the impossibility of what you want to create for yourself in your life, and that belief, believing that story, saves you from having to do this thing that your brain is like, "Yeah, but really deep down I just don't know if you can do it."

The other element of this is that many of us really love, and by love I mean love/hate, like we hate it and we love it, we love to believe that something is particularly special and especially hard and difficult about our lives. I see this with so many doctors. I've talked about it a little bit before on a prior podcast. It's kind of this entitlement that a lot of physicians have of like, "Woe is me. I have to take call. I have a very important job. I save people's lives." It's this way for us to kind of build ourselves up. It's kind of a little bit of arrogance, entitlement, egotism. Right? It's this kind of thing of like, "Well, poor me. I can't do all of these things that most people can do, like it would be so amazing to have the time to be able to do that, but I'm a doctor. Oh, so now I'm supposed to work as a full time physician, working a gazillion hours and up all hours in the night, and have a family, and lose weight permanently?"

We really believe our stories, partly because other people corroborate them. Any other physicians in your practice that you've talked to about it will probably just egg you on. Right? They have the same terrible thinking. Other people that you talked to, "oh, he be so busy. I just don't know how you do it." I'm sure you've gotten that one. I got it so many times. When you are hearing that constantly, you're like, "Yeah. I don't know how I do it. How could anybody even suggest that I could do anything more than what I already do? Of course it's impossible." So, we argue for the impossibility of the goals that we have.

But here's the thing. That's fine. You want to believe it's impossible? Okay. But when you believe that it's impossible, but it's still a result that you want, now you're in conflict. It's a result that you want. You want to lose weight permanently, yet you believe that it's impossible. Then you're stuck in this quagmire. Right? You're just sitting there going, "Now my life, you know, if I just weren't such a special snowflake, then I could solve it. I could totally lose that weight permanently if I didn't have these things going on in my life." And we all do this. We all do this. So, this is really what it comes down to. It's going to feel bad no matter what you do, it's going to feel bad if you keep believing your special snowflake syndrome story. Oh. That's four S's.

It's going to feel bad, because you're not going to create the things that you want. You're going to live your life going, "You know what? I totally could've done that and I didn't." Have you ever had that, where you're like, "Gosh. I really believe my story that I couldn't do more," and then you look back and you're like, "I totally could've done that. I was just selling myself short"? Right? So, there's this element of holding yourself back that will feel bad, and moving forward and changing things will also be difficult. You will have to change your life. You will have to prioritize doing the work that's required to change your life and your body, except with the second one you get the results that you want.

So, at this continuing education program that I was just at, as I told you, the theme was thought leadership and the kind of subtitle was impossible is temporary. I really want you to think about that in the context of losing weight. Your brain is going to tell you, "You cannot do this. It's too hard. It's not a good time. Later you can do it. Pretty soon it's going to be a good time, just not right now. Right now it's impossible, but maybe later.? Right? But impossible is just temporary. Maybe you do need to get things kind of squared away. Maybe you do really need to look at how you're wasting time, so that you can basically salvage this time. Right?

I've been learning about this with capital gains and finances, how you can basically sort of salvage and harvest some of your losses that you have in the stock market to offset taxes in the future. What I want you to do is harvest the time that you're wasting. I want you to go around your day being aware of how you're wasting time, how you maybe spend some time on social media, or you're just kind of dinking around, reading emails that aren't important or not useful, or you're spending time gossiping with people. I want you to harvest that time. That is lost time that you then tell yourself you don't have. You don't have extra time to do something like lose weight permanently.

It's just not true at all, because if I told you, "Hey, listen, you need to lose your weight or I'm going to kidnap your child. You'll never see them again," I mean, depending on the day, you might be like, "No. I'm going to lose the weight." Depending on the child. Which one are we talking about? No, I'm just kidding. Right? But if I told you I'd give you \$5 million if you lost the weight, would you lose the weight? If something that is really, really important to you, you will find the time to do it. Also, you might not want to do it, and that's fine, but then stop telling yourself that there's this whole reason why you can't do it. Just actually own the fact that you don't want to and stop telling yourself that it's because of this situation in your life or that situation, which puts you totally into that victim mentality, disempowered state that feels terrible. Okay?

Now, the final element of this that I want you to think about is really how the special snowflake syndrome is a way that we isolate ourselves. when we think that we're specially broken, there is shame involved in that. What shame is is believing that something's wrong with you. What I find with so many of my clients is we start digging in and I tell them, "Listen, deep down you don't think that you are really worthy of losing this weight, and the reason I know that is because you are overeating. It didn't just magically happen that you were eating too much food on a regular basis, that you were using food to feel better. You didn't understand any other way to take care of yourself, but you also don't respect yourself enough to not eat in a way that doesn't serve your body."

That can be a tough pill to swallow for some of them. Some of them are like, "Yes. You're totally right," and they're in tune with that and others, it takes them some time. They're like, "I don't know. I think I feel good about myself. I think I'm pretty awesome. I think I respect myself, except then when they really started digging in, they recognize, that no, actually there's some elements of their life where they don't. So, when you're buying into this special snowflake syndrome, you are intentionally isolating yourself, because when you're in shame, what shame wants you to do is to hide. then you use all the excuses as the surface layer of why you're not doing these things, but deep down you just want to hide, because you think that you're extra special, broken, and that nobody else is really going to understand.

This is what I love about my coaching groups, is we get a whole bunch of these women together who believe this way and think this way, and then they all recognize that they're all the same. Right? There's this community of recognizing like, "I thought I was the only one, and you thought you were the only one, and you thought you were the only one and it turns out we have so much more in common than we thought. Hey, if you're working on it, and you're working, working on it and you're working on it, maybe there's some hope for me. Maybe I can work on it too." Then we actually start getting to work. Right? We dissolve those stories that we have, that we've got this syndrome, we're a special snowflake, somethings extra special, hard about our lives or wrong with us, or we've got some sort of medical problem that makes it even harder, or we're in menopause and post-menopausal and it makes it even harder.

All of those stories, like none of that is relevant in terms of getting going and losing this weight. None of that is a reason to believe that it's impossible and just stop. So, I want you to think about where the special snowflake syndrome is showing up in your life. I promise you it's showing up somewhere. When I was thinking about it for myself, I could totally find still places where it comes up. So, I promise you, you are not a special snowflake, not in this way. Okay? Of course you're a special, delightful, valuable human being, but not in the way you're thinking about it, like this, where you think that you're special because there's something extra wrong with you. So, I want you to think about that, and recognize it as a story, and start questioning it. What if this weren't even true? What if all of this story that I've been telling myself is complete nonsense, like what then? What would I do? Would I get to work? What would I do?

So, I can't wait to have you spend a little time thinking about this. Those of you who are doing your thought downloads and want to know what you should be writing about, this is a perfect topic for that, to just ask yourself, where is this showing up? Again, you're not doing this from a place of harsh judgment, or berating yourself, or getting upset with yourself. You're doing it from a place of openness, and curiosity, and love for yourself. Okay? It's really good practice for you.

Have a wonderful week I'll talk to you very soon. Take care. Bye bye.