



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Well, hey there my friend. Welcome back to the podcast. Are you gearing up for Thanksgiving next week? What are your plans? I am actually going to be flying out to Costa Rica for the week. It is my in-laws' 50th wedding anniversary this year and they are taking the whole family to Costa Rica. So I will not be having a traditional Thanksgiving meal, I don't think. Probably have some fish or something like that, which will be just amazing as well. I've never been to Costa Rica before. I have to say I'm kind of scared of the wildlife, particularly spiders. We shall see. I'll report back on what this is going to really be like. Very interesting.

All right, this is episode three in our weight loss success story series. So excited to share this interview with you. Summer Merritt is one of my oldest clients. She's been with me from quite early on, and she just like no one else, I mean, yes a lot, a lot of my clients have dug in so much, but she has really stayed so committed to herself and dug in and really worked on some major issues that she didn't really think were the cause of her weight struggle. But she kind of quickly realized were. And when things got hard, she really stuck with it and is now able to reap the benefits of that.

So our conversation delves into that somewhat, but also really just digs into how she just kept going and how that's completely changed her life. She's a concierge family medicine specialist in the Texas area. And so if you're also just interested in concierge practice and what that's all about, then you're definitely going to want to listen in because I always find it super fascinating. But she just shares a lot of her deep, intimate struggles. And I think that she's just such a great inspiration for what's possible, what can be done, and how what's happened to you in your past does not have to influence or determine what you can create in the future. So can't wait for you to listen to this episode. Please enjoy.

Hey Summer, thanks so much for coming on the podcast.

Summer Merritt: Thank you so much for having me. Appreciate it.

Katrina Ubell: I am super excited for us to talk today because we've been working together for a while. There's been a lot of work that we've done together, and I just think that your story is really, really interesting for everybody. So I'm super excited. So what I want to start off with, I just always ask everybody to just tell us a little bit about yourself. Tell us the work that you do, a little bit about your family.

Summer Merritt: Sure. I live in Texas and I'm a family physician. I have a very tiny concierge practice and I'm married and I have two kids. They're 5 and 10 and living in a small town. My family lives here. My husband's family lives here. I went to medical school at UT Houston and then started off in surgery training on the East Coast, but then came back to Texas and did family medicine at Baylor in Dallas.

Katrina Ubell: You decided that surgery was not for you?

Summer Merritt: It made me really mean. If I would've had ... I mean, honestly if I would've had coaching then, I might still do that. But I decided that it was changing my personality and so I just stepped out.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Wow. Very cool. And you've really set up this very interesting practice like you and I've talked about that quite a bit where it's so great because you get to work when you want to, but also has its own challenges because you can work whenever you want to, right?

Summer Merritt: Right. Right. So ...

Katrina Ubell: Also easy to overwork, right?

Summer Merritt: Very much so. So I have really good, usually really good day to day flexibility, so I can, I take my kids to school, I live five minutes from their school, five minutes from my office. And so that part of it is really easy, and I can kind of set up. So if I want to go work at the book fair, I can go work at the book fair. I'm on several nonprofit boards in town and so I can kind of arrange my schedule to be able to do that with the art museum and the performing arts center. But then it also means that I'm on call all the time for all my patients and they all have my cell phone number. And so we've had to do quite a bit of coaching on that because it's exactly what I set up and exactly how I wanted it to work. But it worked too well.

Katrina Ubell: Right. You trained them a certain way.

Summer Merritt: Yes. I had to stop letting my patients train me and I've had to train them.

Katrina Ubell: Right. Right. I think that's so good because what's a little bit different with this kind of a business model is you are so involved in the business. I mean you're always involved in the business at least a certain extent even when you're employed. But when you own a typical, standard type of practice, there's just a lot of things that are kind of a given I feel like that you don't really have to think about that much. And for you, you legit get to do whatever you want, which is so amazing. But also, then you have to decide and you don't always know really what the ramifications are going to be ongoing. So being willing to change things and being willing to retrain people, it's hard, right?

Summer Merritt: Yeah, it has been hard. And it's funny, because I always was so worried in med school and residency about the actually taking care of patients part, and, "Will I know enough, am I well enough trained, will I catch this while I diagnose that?" But I had no idea that the hard part about starting a business were who's going to be my internet provider and what happens when the internet goes out, and I don't have an EMR, and I don't have anybody else to call because I'm the IT person because I'm super cheap and I'm not going to pay somebody to do that.

Katrina Ubell: Right.

Summer Merritt: Then I have to retrain myself on how to do phlebotomy because I have a super wonderful nurse. I have one employee, but she's it. When she came to work with me, she was like, "I really don't want to work Fridays." And I was like, "Okay. Sure. Sounds great. Come on." So I work on Fridays by myself and all the other doctors in town laugh at me. They're like, "How does that work? Most of us have off on Fridays and our staff are working. You're doing it completely backwards." But it's just the way that I wanted it to work.

So what that means is that I have to be able to do phlebotomy and urine dips and talk to old ladies about their blood pressure and their bowel movements. There's no, literally no filter in between myself and the patients, so.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. It's kind of like, to a certain extent, a little bit like that old time kind of community doctor where it was just, literally it was just you and you're doing all of the things. I bet that's kind of fun though, a little bit, right? Like you just feel so capable because you can do anything yourself.

Summer Merritt: I mean sometimes it's terrifying, but yes, I do feel like a small town doctor, and I tell people, "I'm not doing anything new. I'm just what the community doctor has been," because I go to the ER, I admit people to the hospital, I do all those things, but it's just a different package. And so it's really nothing new and there's not insurance in between me and the patient. Is just us with that relationship.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Summer Merritt: And that's it. So yeah, it's just has its own ... It does. It definitely has its own challenges.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Yeah. I mean you are spared from all the insurance stuff, which is huge, right? Like you totally have to have other people helping you with all that stuff if you're doing that. So it's like the give and take. It's 50-50 it turns out Summer I think.

Summer Merritt: It's just a different frame.

Katrina Ubell: Just different. Exactly. Exactly. Okay. So let's have you just tell us about your struggle with your weight, like when that started and kind of how it all manifested in your life.

Summer Merritt: Sure. So it's been forever, honestly. I was overweight as a kid, probably started about first or second grade. I remember a pediatrician, I think it was a pediatrician telling me or telling my mom with me in the room that she needed to put me on a diet when I was 10. And so it's been since then on and off with being overweight, and would go up and down depending on which kind of diet I was on. If I was on weight Watchers, Jenny Craig, Nutrisystem, whatever it was. But it was just always something new, something different, some kind of supplement pill, herbal thing that I would try.

And then I lost a lot after my son was born 10 years ago and then gained it all back plus some after my daughter was born. And so that's kind of when I decided that I needed to do something different. And then also it was, I was hitting 40, and so I definitely knew that I wanted to kind of right the ship so to speak.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, yeah, exactly. Let's sort of like, okay, I sort of felt like at the same time it's like this is like do or die time here people, like either if we're going to figure this out or I don't know what's going to happen.

Summer Merritt: Yeah because I kind of felt like in a lot of ways, I mean, and it's ... I mean no offense, but also to your credit, I kind of felt like this was my last, like the last thing I could do or try because I felt like I tried everything else.

Katrina Ubell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Summer Merritt: So I put a lot of eggs in one basket and really just said, "This is going to be it. This is going to be what is finally going to fix this. Because either I do this or I'm just going to be overweight forever and I'm not going to do anything else." Because I was just tired of the, all the drama and just ...

Katrina Ubell: Right.

Summer Merritt: Always thinking about it constantly.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. One element of your struggle was also with some binge eating.

Summer Merritt: Correct.

Katrina Ubell: Which some people struggle with. Some don't. Some people, I always think that that term is hard because there's the diagnostic criteria for bingeing. And then people talk about bingeing, just everything all the time. And if you overate a little, it's like, "Oh my God, I binge." It's like, "Well, that's not a binge."

Summer Merritt: Right.

Katrina Ubell: But that was definitely an added element to that.

Summer Merritt: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Katrina Ubell: Can you speak to that a little bit and how that kind of influenced things?

Summer Merritt: Sure. And I didn't even honestly have a name for the pattern of eating that I had until I started working with you. But looking back, I mean it started when I was a kid and I would kind of sneak eat and like hide in the closet and, or like the pantry and eat stuff that my mom didn't know about, or like, you know those you're supposed to like sell beef jerky for softball or something?

Katrina Ubell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Summer Merritt: My mom would be like, "Where'd all those go?" I'm like, "I have no idea." Yet hid in the pantry eating them. And so it was cycles of that where ... And I realize now if I was just feeling completely out of control with my feelings, and that's the way that I had taught myself how to cope with it, was two or three times a week having binge eating and always in secret, nobody ever knew about it. It wasn't like I would go out to eat with friends or with my family and just eat a ton. It would just always be super high fat, high sugar carby foods that I would just eat by myself. And so that was really difficult too. Well, first of all, I was like, "Oh, this is what's happening and I have these super strong urges to do this on a very regular basis." But I hadn't even let myself be aware that I was doing it. Does that make sense?

Katrina Ubell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Summer Merritt: And so then once, getting off of flour and sugar, that helped. But then in some ways it was kind of, I was looking for that release or that outlet that I'd used for honestly 30 years. So that was hard to identify it, address it, and then work through it. And that took probably honestly a year.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Yeah.

Summer Merritt: To work through.

Katrina Ubell: I mean we'll talk about your weight loss journey this last time a little bit more. But ultimately it was like we started together, you learned a bunch of stuff, you tried a bunch of stuff, you figured out a lot of things that didn't work for you. And then we spend a bunch of time not trying to lose weight, but just working on the binging. I really firmly believe like, I mean you can lose weight while you're still doing some binging from time to time, but it's not solving the problem. Like you do not have any food freedom when you still have these are just a binge and then you're, the constant up and down with the binging and everything. So you did all of that and then you were able to actually ...

Summer Merritt: Right.

Katrina Ubell: Make some progress there. Yeah.

Summer Merritt: Numbers wise, so I've lost about 15 pounds before I started working with you. And then through the first round that we did, I can't remember the exact numbers, but it was maybe 30 pounds I lost the first six months and then I ... We just kind of pumped the brakes on it for a while because I was still binging and I was using that to really beat myself up and feel, even though I was like, "Oh I've lost weight, I feel better about myself," I was still really beating myself up about that. And so even though I was working the plan the best I knew how, until I could really get a handle on those binges, I just, I had to put everything on pause.

Katrina Ubell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Summer Merritt: And that was difficult. I remember getting a lot of coaching on that and it was really hard because it's like every other time I've lost weight, I want to do it super fast and get it all off and be done with it and be over. I mean, I don't know how many times you had to say, "Why are you in such a hurry? Why are you ... Like if this is the last time, why are you in such a hurry?" So probably the 55th time I finally was like, "Oh. Oh, I see what you're saying because I'm not going to lose anymore and I'm going to continue the cycle of bingeing and going up and down these same stupid five pounds if I don't really work on this." So the second six months that we worked together, it was mainly just thought work. And I did end up losing more. And so total then I've lost 75 and I have

Katrina Ubell: Yeah amazing.

Summer Merritt: I have more to go, but I'm okay with that in a weird way.

Katrina Ubell: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. Well, because you're not in a rush anymore, because you realized that you can do that anytime you want to, but it's not ... Life's not going to be better there. You can do it just because you want to, right? It's a totally different motivation for it then. Like, "I'll be whole, I'll be valuable, I'll be okay once I get down to that number on the scale."

Summer Merritt: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Summer Merritt: And I mean I'm lighter than I've ever been as an adult. This is probably what I weighed in junior high. So I'm kind of like, "I feel pretty good," you know?

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Well, and that's the thing, right? Sometimes we get to a place where we just are like, "I really love this. I love. Like all of this is great." You don't have to necessarily lose tons and tons and tons and tons. But as you know, I still encourage you to do it, just so that you know you can, because sometimes deep down we kind of convince ourselves that we like this because we don't believe we can do more. So you can ... going through the process of losing it, deciding if you don't like it, you can always gain some back, I think is useful, because then you really do know really where do I want to be. And there needs to never be any more discussion in my brain over what is a good weight for me because I know for a fact this is where I want to be, and I know that I can choose to weigh whatever I want to weigh.

Summer Merritt: Right.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Summer Merritt: And so that's what ... And I do 100% want to do that. And I think probably only in the last month or so have I really believed that that's possible. And it's been me working through, I mean, honestly just doing a ton of thought downloads and really thinking like, "What are my reasons? Are they good? Are they believable?" And then if not, figuring out like, what do I ... how do I want to think about myself? And honestly I'm good, I'm so much better with my self-talk and with my self-worth now that it's kind of almost like if when I lose ... Not if, when I lose the rest of the way it's going to be gravy.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Oh, totally.

Summer Merritt: Never would have thought that. Never would have thought that.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Summer Merritt: So that's why I'm okay with it being really slow, because when I find myself kind of spinning out and like, if it goes up and my weight goes up and then it goes down, I kind of pull back and it's, I still ... It's not like I get off the plan or off the program. It's I pull back and do more thought work, and just really hit that part hard and just kind of say, "Okay, well I know how to maintain, so I'm going to maintain right here and I'm not going to be active about doing anything," as you say on the ARR lines. I'm just, I'm going to work on the T. So I have to really work on my thoughts a lot and then I can unpause and step back for it again.

Katrina Ubell: Right, exactly. Exactly. And you know what's so interesting is how often, like when you hit pause and you really work on your brain that you do actually start to lose weight because you're actually really in touch with what's going on for you and connected to yourself, your body, what your body needs, and when you feed it, what it needs and no more it goes to where it wants, to a healthy weight for you. So it's so interesting. So when you first signed up, which was like two years ago I believe.

Summer Merritt: Over two, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, over two years ago, that was like way back in the day when I still did one-on-one calls. So we had a little chat and we were talking, everything was great. And at the very end you told me something that I remember being like, I mean I remember it totally like it was yesterday, and I thought you might want to share with our listeners because this is something, this has been an added element that you've worked on a bunch as well. And I think it's been really, like first of all, I just am super proud of you. I think it's been amazing what you've done. But I think it's really also been able to help you create everything that you've created that's so amazing.

Summer Merritt: Right. And I don't even know why I blabbed that out to you at the last second for our 15 minute call. But I knew the reason why that nothing had ever worked for me before is because I had never addressed childhood abuse that had happened. And that's happened over a period of time before I started gaining weight. And that's kind of, I feel like the reason why that for a long time I lived in shame, and the reason why I used food as a coping mechanism and the reason why that I was bingeing. And I had never ever told anybody that ever before. I mean, no one. So why not tell a complete stranger on the phone when I'm sitting in the parking lot of a dialysis center? That made complete sense. But I mean, like I said, I just, I was kind of honestly at the end of my rope with weight loss and I had listened to your podcast and I just had this light that kind of went on in my brain that was like, "This is it. This is what you have to do. And if you're going to do it, you have to be honest." Because I knew that that was the piece that I had to work through, even though I didn't want to. I mean because why would I? If I for 35 years never addressed it, and I mean, not ever weaved a word of it, why would I start now? But I knew that that was what was holding up me losing weight permanently.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Yeah. I think that just kind of observing your whole journey, I think it was influencing more of your life than even just the weight, right? Like it was, it was contributing to just, it was influencing all of your relationships. I mean, just everything. It was just, it kind of like ... It's like we've talked about it before. It's like it's this thing that happened in the past, but it's this story that was still very alive in your life. It's still had influence over all these different areas. And so together we worked on that. And then now it's something. I mean here you are on a podcast sharing that.

But I think that this has happened to so many more people than we know like I was sharing with you before we started recording. I just think that there is going to be so many people who are listening who are going, "Oh my gosh. We can address that too." Because I think that there's this element where people, I think it's kind of a dual thing where it's like, "Oh it happened so long ago, it can't possibly be still influencing things." And/or, "It's so bad that I just, I can't talk to anybody about it. Like what would people think? Like I just need to keep it hidden."

So it's kind of interesting the parallel between the bingeing always secret, always in hiding. Right? And that's exactly what shame does. It wants you to hide. So yeah, shame about bingeing, shame about the abuse. It's just a whole shame fest and all kind of steeped in self-loathing. So yeah, I mean, what ... I'm sure it's been hard, but if you had to kind of describe the two years of working through that, how would you describe that?

Summer Merritt: It's like I kind of feel like that those events really did permeate my life for such a long time, even though I would actively try to not think about it. And if it would come up, I would just push, just push all of those feelings down. And so then when I would request coaching, I would ... It's like I would barely want to put it out there and then if I would, I'd want to pull it right back.

And then I remember you coaching, saying, "Do you want to talk about this anymore? And even then I said, "I have ... I don't know." And then it's, "I do, but not right now." And then it's, "I will, but I'm only going to tell you a little bit." And then it was, "Okay, I'm just going to put it all out there and I'll just tell you the whole thing." And so you had me write it down, everything, just very black and white, and it felt horrible to be honest. But then it also was exactly what I needed.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. There's just this processing that hadn't been done. It's sort of like you had hit this pause button on your childhood brain that didn't know what was going on, but knew that it felt terrible, and then it's all just still sitting there waiting for you. It's like you can't skip over that part of processing it.

I mean, from the coach perspective, I just ... I really viewed my role as just holding space for you because so many other people in your life would not be able to do that, right? They would be ... Especially anybody that you'd be willing to share such intimate kind of story with. So I think that there's something about knowing that you can just completely like fall apart and there's, it's like true judgment free zone that allows you to actually move forward on that.

Summer Merritt: Yeah. Because I knew that it was somewhere that was safe and it wasn't telling just to tell. It was, I had to tell to get through it.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. To move forward in your life. Yeah.

Summer Merritt: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, to move forward. And it's been honestly really freeing because since then I was able to talk to my husband about it. I mean, he had no idea. And that's been, I mean, it's been tricky. I don't know how else to say it. I mean, I think it's surprising, especially if you think, if someone's really super good at hiding something and then they tell you something that was probably a pretty big deal that maybe they could have told you before. But you know, but I mean it's brought our relationship a lot closer and it makes me realize that there's nothing that's so bad that we can't, that we can't work through and that a lot of the times, when we had or have miscommunications, it's because the way that I would, the emotions that ... Something, a very innocuous conversation between husband and wife, it would trigger these emotions that were the same emotions that I would feel as a kid.

And so if those emotions got triggered, then my brain would just go completely haywire and blow a conversation completely out of proportion. And my very sweet, kind, super patient husband be like, "What just happened? What did I do? What did I say?"

Katrina Ubell: Right.

Summer Merritt: And so if I felt ignored and I've had to address those rejected, ignored, abandoned, not safe. So whenever I feel those things, I know that my brain at first wants to go completely nuts.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Summer Merritt: And just go into this shutdown overreaction. But then now when I'm like, "Oh, he didn't get me a birthday present," and I'm feeling ignored, but that's because I'm feeling ignored because of that other thing. It has nothing to do with what he did or didn't do or said or didn't say. And that's 100% me.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Summer Merritt: You know? And that's not any fault of his. Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Absolutely.

Summer Merritt: So that, I mean, that's still obviously a work in progress and trying to tease apart those things. But it's so interesting to see how, even though I thought that I had really well compartmentalized things, that how those feelings still permeated into lots of parts of my life that I didn't realize they did, especially with my self-worth and people pleasing and trying to be perfect.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. And that really played out in your business as well, in your practice, right?

Summer Merritt: 100%.

Katrina Ubell: Like so much of it, right? It was so hard for you to let go of the overworking and the over availability when ... You don't want to do that when your self worth is coming from them being so grateful for your over availability, right? Yeah.

Summer Merritt: About because if I felt like, well, I didn't return their text in 10 minutes or 15 minutes, well they're going to think I'm a totally horrible doctor and they're going to tell everybody, and it's a small town, everyone's going to know, and this is going to get out as soon as possible. And I just had to reel all that back in because it was, the over delivering was under delivering to me.

Katrina Ubell: Yes. Right, exactly. It was at your own expense.

Summer Merritt: 100%.

Katrina Ubell: Right.

Summer Merritt: And even when I scaled back and I set up "more boundaries" it didn't change. That's not even really what the patients were looking for. They were more looking for the connection and the availability and it was these really super weird, just things that I'd set up in my own mind of ways, things that I had to do to show how amazing I was so that that way they would say I was amazing and then I would feel good.

Katrina Ubell: Right, exactly. It's like you put all these middlemen in between you and feeling good about yourself. Right. Which we all do by the way. I completely do that too. Like big time, big time. Like, "No, I'm just over delivering." I'm like, I'm just that kind of doctor that I'd love to have. But do I really want a doctor who's missing dinner most nights because she's staying late at the office talking to people? I don't know. I totally identify with that. It's like you create the story that literally isn't even really based in anything and then you just believe it as though it's fact, as though they have ... you have a survey of them telling you what they want. So then you're acting from that place.

Yeah. So it's we think like, "Oh, I'm just overworking," but it's so much more than that. Like why are you actually overworking? It's so hard to work less when you're believing that you working a lot is what's valuable about you. It's very painful to stop doing that. You're always going to tend to go back to that if you don't figure out how to create that value for yourself.

Summer Merritt: And I, because the way that my practice is set up, so my shortest appointment time is 30 minutes. And so I would feel like, well, if we got through the medical part in five minutes, like you've got a cold, you know?

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Summer Merritt: Just wait. You know?

Katrina Ubell: Right.

Summer Merritt: But then I feel like I would need to fill up that time with, "Well, how's so-and-so? How's so-and-so? What's going on? Where are you going on vacation? What else is happening?" You know?

Katrina Ubell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Summer Merritt: And sometimes they just wanted to get out the door.

Katrina Ubell: Right.

Summer Merritt: They just wanted to know, yeah, you don't have the flu, go live your life. And I was feeling the need to form this fake weird connection so that they would like me and they were just wanting to get their cold treated and go back to work.

Katrina Ubell: Right. It's almost like they, they're looking for a level of professional relationship too. There is this kind of line there. And I think it varies for different people, but sometimes ... So there are going to be people who wanted to chat more, but then there's going to be people who don't. Yeah, I totally got that. Yeah, absolutely. That's so fascinating.

Summer Merritt: So I pulled back some and I'm like, "Okay, well anything else?" And if they're like, "Nope, I'm out," then I'm like, "Okay, well good. Now I've got 15 minutes to do whatever I need to do."

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, catch up on some other things. Yeah. That's so amazing. That is great. So you to just kind of sum up the weight loss journey this last time, you kind of decided, okay, like I get it, last ditch effort, I have to work on my brain. You signed up. You told me about the abuse. We dug into all of that, worked on all the binging. Where do you feel like your work is right now?

Summer Merritt: I mean I feel like that it's kind of where it kind of boils down to a lot of people, where it really just boils down to self-worth and how we think about ourselves and kind of like your podcast this week about how what is the most important thing and how maybe it needs to be taking care of myself so that way I can be the best mom, the best physician, the best daughter that I think that it's really learning how to have my own back, how to put myself first in an appropriate nice way. And then just to really, to really love myself even where I am right this second still being overweight.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, exactly. And I think that's such a good point, right? It's loving yourself, putting yourself first, but in a productive way for everybody. That sounds like it can be so selfish. So many people just recoil at the idea of putting yourself first, that that's like a bad thing and it's always kind of the message growing up and that we're such givers. But you can put yourself first. And by doing that actually care for others better. Right?

The classic example is if you're a mother and you're putting your children first, to your own detriment, then you're probably a lot more frustrated and shorter with them and you're not really showing up as a mom you want to be. But when you are able to meet your own needs first, then you can be that mom that you want to be. It's so much easier. Right?

Summer Merritt: Right. That's a big part that I learned and I've worked on is that when I do have more compassion for myself, that I am so much more compassionate to my kids and to my family. Even the tricky in-law family and my patients that if it's always coming out of a place of compassion, then it just feels so much better.

Katrina Ubell: Yes. For you, right? Like we don't know what their response is, but it feels so much better for you. Yeah.

Summer Merritt: Yeah. Because for so long, the self-talk was so ... It wasn't, I mean, not like horrible, but it was just so perfectionistic in such a weird high standard and just not compassionate at all. So when I'm like, "You know what? I try my best. Kind of screwed up. Oh well."

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Summer Merritt: You know? And it's like, "That person screws up too and so does that one." So we're just all people figuring it out together. But it's a lot easier for me to be like that with other people. And it does feel a lot better than just to have a real connection when you're, you can admit to other people, "My life's not perfect in this way, that way, and this way. And these are the ways that I mess up all the time."

Katrina Ubell: Right.

Summer Merritt: But we can figure it out, to get in that sense of community, of ... Because I feel like that the people pleasing and the perfectionism is really isolating.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, totally.

Summer Merritt: I feel like, I don't know ... I don't know if ever before, if I've really felt as connected to people.

Katrina Ubell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Summer Merritt: Because it was always this weird false wall of I can't let them know X, Y, or Z because they might think differently of me.

Katrina Ubell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Summer Merritt: And so you can never really have a true connection.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. It's like you recognize the commonality of our human experience. There might be a lot of differences, but deep down it's all basically the same thing. And I think that even helps with mothering too, with parenting, like of just this idea of they're human beings who are struggling. They're not here to make me proud or make me look a certain way or anything like that. It's just such a different, a different experience. Yeah. I love, I love how you said that. That's so, so helpful.

So if you could give a piece of advice to someone who's listening, maybe they've been listening for a while, maybe they've been kind of contemplating would this kind of work for me or not, or maybe ... A lot of people listen, will lose some weight, and then they're kind of like, "Oh, I think maybe that's it." What would you give them as a piece of advice or just a thought to ponder?

Summer Merritt: One, it's definitely not just about the weight.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Summer Merritt: And then two, that life coaching is way more than I ever anticipated. I mean it's really turned my life upside down in a super good way. And I didn't anticipate that at all. I honestly thought this was my last ditch effort to lose weight. I had no idea of how far reaching and how it would really kind of transform my life in every, every way.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. I feel like I can only say it so many times. I feel like it's great when other people are like, "Yes, this is really what it is. This is really what it is."

Summer Merritt: Because since we've worked together for so long, it was funny even because I thought that, "Well, that that was six months. There we go. That was it." But then in my brain I'm thinking, "But I've got so much other stuff I need to work through." And so I emailed you. I was like, "Am I a failure if I sign up again? Does this mean that it didn't work? Did it not take? What happened?" But it's really an ongoing process and I don't know why I would think that in six months I could unravel 35 years of ...

Katrina Ubell: Everything. Life.

Summer Merritt: Yeah, right. So once I was like, "You know what? It really is, it's been for me the best investment because it's my brain and I need it. We all need it."

Katrina Ubell: Right. And it's not replaceable.

Summer Merritt: Yeah, exactly. But it's, I kind of just kind of think it like maintenance now.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Like hygiene. It's just like this thing that is just like getting your eyebrows waxed. It's like just this thing that you do because it's really a good thing for yourself when you do it. Yeah. Right.

Summer Merritt: And it's, for me it's far more valuable than any other type of self-care that I could pay for, that I could do. And it's just been transformative.

Katrina Ubell: That makes my heart sing. It just makes me so happy for you. Well, Summer, thank you so much for coming on and sharing your story. I know that this took a lot of guts. You had to really challenge yourself to do this.

Summer Merritt: I had to watch Brene Brown's TED Talk this morning, full disclosure, the one about vulnerability.

Katrina Ubell: Vulnerability. But and just so everybody knows, you volunteered. I didn't ask you to do it. You volunteered. But I have to say I was so, so, so pleased when you volunteered because your story is really, really telling. I think it's going to help so many people. Kind of like what we talked about, it's like once you are willing to share things with the world, it just moves you so much further along in your own work, which is so great.

Summer Merritt: Thank you. I just wanted to rip the bandaid off and be done with it. And I think this is part of it, even though it's massively uncomfortable. And that's something that I've learned is that the discomfort is not intolerable.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Summer Merritt: There's no emotion that's intolerable.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. And it's like the discomfort mean that you shouldn't do it.

Summer Merritt: Right.

Katrina Ubell: Right? Like we often are like, "Ew, it's uncomfortable. Run the other way." But that creates discomfort too often.

Summer Merritt: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Katrina Ubell: So we just have to move through it.

Summer Merritt: It was exactly what I wanted to do, even though I didn't want to do it at all.

Katrina Ubell: Right. I 100% understand that sentiment for sure. All right. Thanks, Summer. I appreciate you coming on.

Summer Merritt: You're welcome.