



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Well, Hey there, my friend. How's it going? Welcome to the podcast. So glad to have you back. If you are new, then welcome, welcome, welcome. So glad to have you here.

Now, I do want to talk to you today about overeating as a feminist issue. Now, I am someone who, if I'm being honest, doesn't even really totally identify with the feminism movement. I might get some hate mail about this. You can keep it to yourself. It's okay. Or you can send it either way, that's fine, but what I feel like is that I just want to support everybody. I think all of us are awesome and amazing and I want everybody to be supported. But, there's a lot of women that aren't supported in a lot of ways and I think that that is something to pay some attention to. I also think that men are unsupported in other ways, but that's not what we're going to talk about today on this podcast.

And so I want to talk to you about overeating as a feminist issue because it's not really a way that people think about it very often and I think it's actually a super powerful way to look at the concept of stopping overeating and subsequently losing some weight if that's what your body needs to do and what you want to do. And just seeing, I think so many of us don't really recognize how we're overeating and food struggles are holding us back as women, significantly holding us back as women. So I want to propose the idea that continuing to overeat is just a continued assault on yourself as a human being and as a woman. And it's a way that we, as women, have just perpetually kept ourselves down and kept ourselves from really being able to contribute to the world and society what we have to offer.

And I think that it's a very compelling thing to think about. I'm actually really interested to hear what you have to say about it after the episode is over. And so, of course, feel free to leave me any comments that you have on the show notes page for this podcast. You can find that over at katrinaubellmd.com/159, just the episode number, and let me know what you think. I just think it's a really interesting conversation to have.

So, when you think about feminism and the feminist movement, it's about issues that are usually exclusive to women or mostly issues that women struggle with. Now of course, with overweight and obesity and overeating, men struggle with that as well, but for sure men are not shamed for being overweight the way women are like even in the slightest. And for sure the way that we are raised and the messages that we get as girls and even as women, all the advertising and marketing messages, are that being overweight is bad.

But conversely you should be able to overeat, right? You'll see these pictures or videos, commercials of women who are very, very thin and are eating like massive burgers and all this food. Now, are there people who can eat like that and look like that? There are, but it is a very, very, very small percentage, right? So it's kind of this idea of like you should be super thin and fit and you should be able to eat all the things. And just, of course, it doesn't work that way for almost anybody.

And so, I was thinking about overeating and when we overeat, what do we do? We put a lot of food in our mouths, right? We put more food in our mouth than we really need. It's kind of like a metaphor, right? When you are putting more food in your mouth than you need, you're filling your mouth, right? You're like dampening what you have to contribute out of your mouth, right? You're dampening your voice. So sometimes, literally, but mostly figuratively, when you are feeling terrible about yourself, when you are thinking that you're not valuable, when you're thinking that you're a fraud and an imposter, and certainly you're going to be found out, and that you're not doing your job or your work or your mothering or whatever you do, perfect enough.

Right? Then you're feeling terrible about yourself and then you're using food to feel better about how terrible you feel. And where are those messages coming from? Well, from our thoughts of course, right, but from just maybe the way we were raised, again, outside messages, it doesn't really matter where it comes from? Not necessarily. A lot of people in the feminist movement talk about the patriarchy and I think that that's one of those things that you can decide if believing in the patriarchy or deciding that the patriarchy is an issue is up to you to decide. Like you have to decide if that creates a result that's useful to you.

For me, myself, it's not super useful, but I think for a lot of people it is. The thing you have to be careful about with believing in the patriarchy or any of that is that, first of all, you have to understand that belief that there's a patriarchy is a thought. Patriarchy does not go on the circumstance line of a model. It's not a neutral fact. I mean, we can give lots of examples of how society has been male dominated, but believing that the patriarchy is creating a problem for you usually actually does the opposite of what we think it will do. We think that believing in the patriarchy will help us to do better and to rise up as women. But it usually actually makes us just sit around not doing things and complaining about the patriarchy and talking about all the things that we're not getting and that we don't have because of the patriarchy.

So, just something for you to think about if that's something that you think about often. So what you end up finding is that there's so much more to your life. Your life is so much richer, right? It's kind of like a monochrome when you're allowing yourself to just continually just focus on the overweight. That's the problem. This is what we do. Right? And when you think about it too, when you don't lose weight, right? Because you're afraid or you just think you can't do it, you're actually in a certain sense holding other women back too. And this is what I mean by that.

If you are overweight or you overeat and you have maybe your mom or your sister or your friends or whoever that you overeat with, right? Other women that you spend time with where this is what you do together. I've seen this time and time again where women say, "Well, I'm afraid to lose any more weight because I might not be as accessible to them anymore or I don't want to lose more weight than my sister because I might make her feel bad." Right? "

Because we've always done everything together and we've always been about the same size and now I'm losing more weight than her and then she's going to be upset." Because of course that line of thinking involves a fallacy that we can control how other people feel, right?

Because their thoughts are creating their feelings, not what we do or the size of our bodies. But this is what happens for so many of us. We limit ourselves and we don't give ourselves what we actually truly deep down want, because we think it's going to hurt other people. But instead, another way of thinking about, that we don't even realize is available to us is that you can think about it like such an amazing way to lift other women up. Like, I know you struggled with this and I've decided to handle my struggle with it. It doesn't mean you have to do anything different. It's not me putting any kind of qualification on your life or your body, but just letting you know it's possible to do something different. And that's what I created for myself just because I wanted to. It's a totally different way of looking at it.

So, when you keep yourself overeating and potentially overweight as well, and you think that somehow this is keeping you within your community, you're feeling more accepted. What you're actually doing is, in a minor way, a very small way, creating an assault on women. You can see what I'm saying here. This is something that then we pass down on the generations. This is something that is bigger than just having smaller clothing, right? So many of us are like, "No, I'm just going to lose this weight. And then I'll be happier." Right? And we don't even realize that. In fact, it's available to anybody to just be a great example for women and just to speak up. But what I find is that, for so many women who are overweight or struggle with their food, they just allow that to consume and take over so much of their lives that they really aren't capable of taking on anything else.

That really is the true way that they can create an amazing legacy really to the world with what they're doing. So, what I want you to know and what I want you to take away from this episode is that there's so much more within you that you have to contribute to the world, to your family, to probably even yourself, that overeating consistently and continue to overeat is preventing you from sharing. Like when you really think about living a true full human life, it's going to require that you contribute in an all out, full force kind of a way. And the more that you obsess about food, spend time thinking about food and how you're going to die and how you're going to lose weight, that just completely takes away from who you're really meant to be. And that's such a travesty.

Think about all the women who've been oppressed in the past, and we have such an amazing platform and opportunity to be able to express ourselves now so much more than any other woman in the past ever has had. And yet, we're still allowing ourselves to be completely obsessed with something that continues to hold us down and oppress us just in another way. And that's with hating our bodies, hating ourselves and obsessing about what we're eating, what we're not eating, how much we're exercising, how much we're not exercising, what the number on the scale is. All of that is the least important thing.

But I promise you that if you are still focused on overeating, it's not because something's wrong with you. And that's what I really want you to know. This is just old programming that's been passed down from the generations. This is just like this residual remnant of useless thinking and this can all be changed.

It can be changed actually very quickly. Just recognizing that the way that you think about it is what's creating the results that you have right now, and if those results are not satisfactory to you, then that can be changed at any time.

The way to create new results for yourself is to change the way you think, because what creates your results are the actions that you take, the things you do and the things you don't do right. The food you eat and the food you don't eat. And all the other actions that you take that create the results that you want. What creates our actions, what drives our actions is how we feel and how we feel is created by our thoughts. So, of course the way we think is going to create our results. If you know that there's more within you for you to contribute than you're contributing right now. Then you can decide, "What is that result that I want? I want to be able to be the department chair person. I want to be able to be a person who is a leader within my organization." That is a leader or a mentor for the medical students, residents, fellows that are coming up.

Maybe there's some sort of community organization or an organization that your children are a part of that you want to be a leader within or you want to have a voice within. Maybe it's a religious organization, maybe it's just being a full, all out, aware, present parent. There are so many things that are within you that are waiting to come out, but are being dampened when you're putting food in your mouth for reasons that are not related to pure physical hunger. So, it's really interesting to think about. If you just wipe that all away, what would you be doing if your brain wasn't consumed with overeating and over desire for food and being hungry all the time and obsessing about what you're going to eat next and all of that, what would you actually be doing?

And this is such an amazing opportunity. Now I want you to be really careful because some of you are going to think back to years past where maybe opportunities passed you by and you didn't take them because of lack of self-confidence or the way you felt about your body or just what your thoughts were about yourself in general. Or you might think, "I can't believe I spent so many years struggling with my weight," and it's very common that people think that they wasted a lot of time in their life on weight and overeating and I want to just offer you permission to leave all that behind and to recognize that you learned about this work at the exact right time, right when your brain was ready to take it and ready to incorporate it and that you have this amazing opportunity to create so much more time for yourself doing those things that are really so important to you.

I just recently was coaching somebody and she said that she learned about this work and then she was feeling so bad about herself and so guilty and judgmental and sad and just shameful about the 15 years prior and how she just was completely out of control and she kept telling herself a very terrible story about it, which is why she felt those terrible emotions. And I shared with her that that is completely optional to think about that way.

I didn't learn about this stuff until I turned 40. Now I can look back and be like, "I can't believe I wasted 40 years of my life." But here's what I've decided to think about it. You know what? I might have actually been confronted by it. It's possible that somebody tried to teach me this stuff earlier and I just wasn't open to it. My brain wasn't available to take it in. Maybe it didn't make sense to me. It just didn't land, didn't resonate in some way. It was supposed to be when I was 40 years old that I would really learn and take this in and start to actually apply it. It happened right on time because that's when it happened. It literally serves me no purpose to sit around thinking about all the things that I've missed out on or things that could have been different.

But it makes me feel so great to think about, "Well, I'm so glad I know this." Thank God somebody told me. Right? I could've lived my whole life like most people do, never knowing. So thank God I know. And then now what? What am I going to do moving forward? How am I going to take this information and move forward and actually change the world, my life, the lives of my clients, everyone who's important to me? How can I just make massive contributions to this world because of how it feels for me, right? Being able to contribute and help others feels amazing. And I know you know that because that's why we became physicians. It's a huge part of it.

So I want you to just contemplate this, I think this is really interesting. Whether you identify as being staunchly feminist and that's a big part of you or if it's something that you're maybe kind of back and forth on, maybe it's not so much of a big deal for you. I want you to think about though like how you have oppressed yourself in your life up to this point with food? And it really is this interesting metaphor, right? Like we have a voice but instead we mute ourselves by putting food in our mouths. And I think it's a really interesting thing to contemplate because it can help you so much to recognize it and then stop it, right? Understand like, "Oh, this is me just trying to silence myself and I'm not going to do that anymore."

On that note, I want to wish you a wonderful week and I will talk to you next time. Take care, bye bye.