



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Welcome back, my friend. So glad to have you here. And so glad that you can hear me. I've never been more grateful to myself that I did a little test recording before I started recording this full podcast, because I did not have my mic plugged in properly and I would have recorded the whole thing and it would've all been gone. I'm like, yes, pat on the back! Thank you, me. Thank you for doing that. I appreciate it so much. All right. How are you doing?

It's the end of July already. Can you believe it? I cannot believe it. I will tell you, I feel like so many of us have been in a big funk lately, really going through hard times. I see this with so many of my clients right now, and I wanted to just let you know something that seems to be helping me recently, and that is a little bit of a renewed commitment to some exercise.

Now this is not exercise with the intent to lose weight or to change how my body looks, or to fit into any kind of size or anything like that. It truly is just to feel good in my body, to stretch out, to break a sweat, and the measurable, noticeable improvement in my mood. It's like I exercise some and then I was like, "Oh my gosh, I forgot how good this makes me feel."

It makes it so much easier to control my mind. It makes my brain not always go to the worst case scenario or to something negative, or always interpreting things in that negative lens. It's sometimes positive or things just don't really bug me as much as they normally would. Of course there's tons that we can do with our thought work, but I just find that moving my body some ... And I'm talking like maybe 20 to 30 minutes, I often will just on YouTube do a free cardio workout.

Often I'll just do a low impact one because I don't want to be bouncing around too much or whatever. Just want something kind of chill, but I'm totally getting a good workout. I'm still sweaty at the end. My heart rate has gotten up. My breathing is elevated, right? All of the benefits are all there and it just totally changes my brain.

If that is something that you think you might want to get back into or explore, I highly recommend it. Maybe it's just going outside and taking walks. Around here it's been quite intensely hot, and so I always kind of say that I'm like a little fragile flower when it comes to extreme heat. Plus, I burn so easily that honestly it's probably better for me to just go early morning or late evening. And then of course, all the mosquitoes are out.

So I have lots of excuses for why I don't always like to get out there this time of year. What's great is I can just do one of these little workouts at home. Now, if you're one of those people who's like, "Oh my gosh, I wish I were someone who felt better when I exercise, I hate exercising. It makes me feel awful."

Then maybe this isn't for you right now. Maybe we need to do something else for you. Maybe there's other ways that you can feel better, or maybe you can just kind of re explore trying different things rather than trying to lose weight and beating yourself into submission and being horribly sore the next day or things like that. Just finding something that actually feels good for you.

All right, very good. Okay. I'm excited to tell you about this topic today. I have known about this actually for years and I kind of became shocked when I realized that I've never done a podcast on it. I was like, "What? How did I never talk about this before?" So I'm really excited. This is a book that I read years ago, actually. It's called *The Compound Effect* by Darren Hardy.

I have to say the book was fine. I don't know that it was my favorite book or the most well-written book ever in the history of the world, but the message is really important. I knew about the actual concept of the compound effect before I read the book, but I was interested in kind of a deeper dive into this topic.

And so I have just some notes from it that I wanted to help you to understand, and just some really interesting ways of thinking about the way that you're approaching your eating right now, the way that you're approaching weight loss. And if you've lost weight and you're trying to keep it off, how you're approaching that.

So just to explain to you what the compound effect is, it's the concept that small, repetitive, truly seemingly insignificant actions will lead to huge rewards in the long run. This is one of those things that you do it again and again and again and it seems like it's not making any difference at all, but if you keep doing it, it ends up actually creating huge results for you. Here's what's important: it's not like you are going to use the compound effect now and you haven't been using it.

It's always running your life whether you know it or not. It's just like the model that I teach, that your thoughts create your feelings, your feelings drive your actions, your actions create your results. That's always happening. It's not like, "Oh, yeah. Now I'm going to use that." No, it's always been the case. You just didn't know about it. It's the same thing for the compound effect. So whether you're aware of it or not, it is always applying to your life.

If you are taking small, repetitive, seemingly insignificant negative actions, those will lead to the opposite of rewards. Big time dissatisfaction with what you have. So I think what a lot of people understand is the concept of compound interest, which is very, very similar. There's a quote that's attributed to lots of people, but most people think that Albert Einstein said it. And the quote is, "The most powerful force in the world is compound interest."

Let me just explain that concept if you're not familiar. If you invest a dollar that compounds interest at 1% every day, after year one you have \$38. After one whole year you have \$38. That doesn't seem like a lot, right? \$1 that you've invested compounds at 1% a day. After year one, you'd have \$38. After year two, you'd have \$1,428. So \$1,428, also not that much. After year three, \$53,929. After year four, a little over \$2 million. And then after year five, over \$77 million.

You go from year one \$38, year two about \$1,400, year three about \$54,000, year four \$2 million a year, five \$77 million. That is the concept of compound interest. Just something that's really, really little, but keeps happening every single day over the course of time gives you really, really, really big rewards and results. This concept applies to weight loss as well.

Every small action you take or don't take makes a difference. This is really important for you to understand, because I see this all the time where we trick ourselves into believing that what we do doesn't make a difference. Every action you take, every time you follow your hunger scale at a meal, every time you eat when you're hungry and stop when you've had enough, that is moving you in that direction of either weight loss or maintaining your weight loss.

Taking two to three minutes to plan your food for the next day, or for the week, if you prefer to do it that way. It's a small action but it sets you up for success so that it's that much easier for you to follow your plan throughout the week. Eating what you plan for instead of what you feel like having in the moment actually takes less effort than changing your plan in the moment and doing something else.

All those actions, every time you eat what you plan for, it makes a difference. It moves that needle toward that direction you want to go. Every time you allow an urge to eat off plan, to eat more food than you need, to yell at your kids if you have kids, to yell at somebody else in your life if you don't have kids. Every time you allow an urge, it moves you closer to being someone who knows how to allow urges or just are no big deal.

And of course your brain then even down-regulates those urges and doesn't even offer as many to you, which is a nice little side benefit. Every time you do thought work to check in with yourself, every time you're checking in, "What's going on for me in my brain, how am I creating my experience of my life?" Even if you do it for just a couple of minutes, that makes a difference.

It moves you toward where you want to be. Doing what you need to do to care for yourself well, which usually involves some active de-stressing like meditation or tapping or breath work or exercise or yoga. Or whatever it is, getting enough sleep. Every time you do that, even if it's just a little bit, even if it's just 10 minutes extra of sleep, it makes a difference. And I think even most importantly, what makes a difference is questioning your thoughts that it doesn't make a difference.

Thoughts like, "This won't matter. It won't make a difference. When I do this thing I've planned, it doesn't affect what the scale reads so who cares? It doesn't matter if I do it." We say this all the time with our clients and with ourselves. All of the time that we think it's not going to really matter, so I ate a little more than I needed to.

The scale didn't show it the next day. It all adds up. Even if the scale doesn't show and it doesn't affect it there, you are going back to retraining your brain to overeat food, which makes it harder for you to not overeat food the next time. When you have a thought like, "I'm just going to take this one day off from my plan, it won't make a big difference at all. It's okay. I'll just gain a little bit and then I'll just get it off again."

It makes a difference. And maybe it's a difference that you're willing to take on. That's fine. But think about that dollar at 1% interest. At year one, it's \$38. If you're like, "Hey, you know what? I'm going to take 30 of those dollars out," you're setting yourself back massively. You're not getting those \$77 million by year five. Even if you just take \$1 out, it makes a massive difference.

Maybe you really need that dollar. Maybe you really, really want that. But my suggestion is that you just really think about what the results are when you're doing that. Another one I see so often is, "Just what's one more drink. Who cares? One more drink, one more glass of wine. It's not a big deal. It's grapes. It's basically fruit." Have you ever had that thought, "What's one more drink? It won't make a difference."

It does make a difference. It absolutely does make a difference. What Hardy says in the book is that this doesn't have to be complicated. What he writes in the book is success is doing a half dozen things really well repeated 5,000 times. You have to do it again and again and again. We think, "Well, I've done some thought work. I really dug into my brain. Do I really need to do it every day?"

Well, maybe you do. What if you tried doing it every day to see what result you'd create for yourself? What if you're just stopping yourself at year one at \$38 going, Well, that was nice. I made \$38 off of \$1." Not recognizing that if you just leave it alone and keep doing what you're doing, that \$38 can turn into \$77 million.

He says small choices plus consistency plus time equals significant results. Let's break those all down. Small choices, the things that you think aren't going to make a difference. "I'm just not going to plan my food this time. I'm just going to wing it and it's going to be fine. I'm just going to have this one little extra bite. I'm just going to lick my fingers a little extra. I'm just going to lick the spoon after baking with the family. I'm just going to do that, it won't make a difference."

Okay. But when you make those choices to not do that, and you consistently do that, you do it again and again and again. Over the course of time, it makes a massive, significant difference. He writes consistency is the ultimate key to success. You have to figure out what works for you and then you have to keep doing it, and I want you to know that that is how you keep your weight off as well. That's why we don't do dieting here. We don't come up with a plan to get the weight off and then figure out how to keep the weight off.

We figure out a plan that gets the weight off and then cruises you right into a way that you can eat for the rest of your life that you are more than happy to follow, that's very satisfying for you, that tastes great to you, that you can consistently follow. That is the ultimate key to success. So, so, so important. Another major concept that he covers in this book is that you can't improve something until you measure it. I think that there's so much truth in this. So the first step toward change, any of my clients will tell you is awareness.

First you have to know what's actually happening. You have to know what you're thinking and feeling that drives you to take the actions that you take, which is creating the result you have right now. And that is a result you do not want. You have to understand how you're creating the result you do not want before you can create a different result. You need to have that awareness.

Then once you have that awareness and you understand it, and you want to make a change and create a different result for yourself, you should measure what you're doing. That creates awareness while you're going through the process. And that means writing it down, tracking it in some way. The best way to become aware is to measure so you can actually see it. This is why we keep a food journal, because a food journal is a way that you write down what you eat so that you have awareness of it.

It is not a moral judgment on who you are as a human being. It is literally just information that you're not going to be able to keep in your brain. We need to be able to see it so we can see what works and we can see what doesn't work. You have to write it down. It doesn't have to be complicated. It can be a very simple chart. If you're an Excel spreadsheet person, go for it if you love that. I personally am allergic to spreadsheets. I do not like them, but I force myself to use them.

You have to write it all down and keep track. If you don't like the results you have right now, find a way to measure it so that you can start to see the improvements. You can start seeing that compound effect happening, which helps you to of course keep going.

What I find when we talk about measuring things is that a lot of us will get stuck because we start thinking, "Well, how can I measure my interactions with somebody? I want to be kinder to my partner. I want to be a more loving mother. I want to be a better friend. I want to be able to show up for my patients in a better way." But here's the thing, there's lots of ways that you can measure yourself and measure the things that you're doing. Some of those things are very easy, and then I'll get into some ideas for how you can measure the things that are a little harder to measure.

One way of measuring is weighing yourself regularly. I suggest you do it every day, because usually there are a lot of thoughts that we have about the scale that we need to work through. We need to neutralize the scale and get it to a place where we know that this is literally just a measure of our physical mass on the planet right now. It doesn't mean anything about us, whether we're good or bad, whether we're enough or not enough, it doesn't mean anything like that. It is literally just information. When you take that information and you track it, then you're able to see, "What kind of progress am I making? You can measure how often you plan your food and your alcohol.

You could say, "I want to be planning this every single week." And you can have a little chart for, "Did I plan my food for this week?" and check that off. You can measure how often you follow your plan, because planning is the first step. But then how often do you actually do what you say you're going to do? And every day, "Did I follow my plan or not?" You can keep track of that. You can measure how often do you do your thought work. So you could have a goal for yourself. "I want to do this five times a week," and have a little chart for yourself. "Did I do it five times this week?" And then when you're thinking, "You know what? Oh, I really don't feel like it tonight." But you realize you only did it four times since the last day of the week.

"Okay, I'm going to do it because I want to keep my streak alive. I want to create that compound effect for myself." If you're working with me and my team and my program, how often you're getting coached is something that you can measure. How often you are actually raising your hand and going, "Yeah, I want to work on this." And you can even take it farther.

You can measure how often you're focusing your coaching on a certain challenge or struggle. I see that all the time where so many of my clients are like, "Listen, I have done all the low hanging fruit. So many areas of my life are so much better, but I've been avoiding the real thing that I really, really struggle with." That's what we want to be diving into. That hard thing that you want to avoid, let's take care of it so you can reap the benefits longterm of having dealt with it.

If you overspend, you can measure by putting together a budget or at least a spending tracker. You have to have awareness besides what your credit card bill is as to how much you're spending. If you struggle with your partner, you can measure how often you take a few minutes to coach yourself and center yourself before you respond instead of just responding out of anger or responding impulsively.

You can measure how often you initiate a difficult conversation that you've been avoiding. If you're single and dating, you can measure how many dates per week or per month that you go on and you can have a goal for yourself. The more people you meet, the higher the likelihood that you'll find someone that you want to have relationship with. That is a great thing to measure.

So you can't measure like, "Do I have a relationship with somebody," but you totally have control over how many dates you go on, how often you're meeting somebody new. And if it's hard to measure the actual result, you can definitely measure the actions that you're taking to create that result. So whatever it is, if it's like being happier, if it's something like wanting to be kinder or things like that, maybe you have a hard time measuring that but you can definitely measure all the things that you're doing with the intent to get that result.

Maybe you're trying to do more meditation, some active de-stressing, and you're finding that's helping you to be kinder and to not be so reactive. How often are you meditating? What is your goal, and are you sticking to that? So tracking it in a visual way is important. You know me, I love my bullet journal, and it's so easy to literally just draw a quick chart with a ruler and a pen in there and then just check it off. Doesn't have to be pretty. It doesn't have to be fancy. I keep mine as simple and bare-bones as possible because the minute I start getting colored pens out, the perfectionism starts to rise. It's not useful.

And then my clients, of course, they get a special program planner and that has some ways to measure things as well. That's a great way to use it as well. So tracking your progress, but then also your missteps when you screw it up, super key for longterm success. If you're anything like me, what you do is when you're on a roll and things are going well, you want to track. And then when you don't do it, you ignore it for a little while.

And then you're back on our kick again, but you don't really know what you're doing and what you're not doing, and why you're not doing it when you're not doing it. You're not keeping track of like, "Oh, today I didn't do it."

What I mean by that is like, "If you have a little chart and just ..." Literally like a little table and you put in an X in there if you did the thing ... Rather than just leaving it blank if you didn't do the thing, maybe what you commit to doing is putting a zero in there or a circle.

So you know, "This was a day I didn't do it," but then you were aware of the fact that you didn't do it versus just forgetting about it entirely. You're always going in and checking on that progress. These are habits that you can create. This does not take long for you to check in.

Just like you have a whole routine of how you get ready in the morning, and if you have any routine for getting ready at night, you can add this in. Also when I'm really having a hard time remembering something, I love to use the reminder feature on my phone and just let my phone remind me for a while until it becomes a total habit. Then what's really important is that you make sure you learn from what you track. You gather all of this data and it's just nothing if it just sits there and you don't actually look at it.

You have to look at, "Okay, these are the things I did. What were the results that I created? What are the things that I'm doing that are moving the needle? What are the things that are holding me back? How can I improve so that all these areas where there's the oh's where I haven't been doing that thing, I can make sure that I'm doing it?"

You work on improving it. Now here's what I find is the biggest challenge for most of us, is we look at that chart and we think we're being graded. We interpret it like we're failing. We got the F, we're at the bottom of the class. Everyone else is doing it better than us. And we turn it into this whole judgment around how we're lacking in some way, somehow we are a bad person or something's wrong with us.

I want you to know that your brain will be tempted to do that, but when you're aware of it and you prepare yourself before you go in and actually look at it and evaluate it, you can decide in advance, "I will not do that. I will not tolerate that line of thinking. I'm looking at this because I am on my own side. I'm trying to help myself, and this is one of the best ways I can do that. What is the information here that I can learn from?"

Okay, so just be aware of your tendency to want to beat yourself up over it. Now let's talk a little bit about momentum. He talks a little bit about momentum like it being the merry-go-round on the playground. Do you remember that thing? I feel like for a while, that none of those were on the playgrounds anymore, and now you can find them in some places.

I remember hanging on for dear life, like literally thinking I'm going to get flung off of here. This is spinning so fast. But if you think about it, if ever a bunch of kids were on the merry-go-round and you were one of the kids who was helping to spin it and to run, like to get going at first you had to put all of your weight and your effort into it.

And you were pushing, pushing, pushing. It was so hard. But once you get it going and once you get it moving, at a certain point you develop this momentum. And then you get to a point where you can't even run fast enough with it anymore. And then you have to stop and just grab the metal handles and just push and push and push when you are able to reach one. Once you get it going, you can keep it going very easily.

You don't have to put much effort into that. It's the same thing with the compound effect. When you have been four months planning your food, eating what you plan to eat, stopping when you're at a plus four on the hunger scale, it's very easy to do that. But when you keep stopping and starting every single time you start again, it's like developing that momentum again.

It does feel hard. I see this with my clients who sometimes kind of very slowly backslide, which I've talked about on a previous podcast. All of a sudden they realize like, "Oh my gosh, I'm really not doing these things anymore, and here's the negative result." And then getting back on it again is much harder. They're like, "Man, it used to be so easy. It used to be so simple. It used to be something I didn't have to think about and now I do."

Right, because you allowed yourself to lose that momentum. You put on the brakes on the merry-go round, and so now we just need to get it going again. You can totally get it going again. Absolutely. It's just going to take some time and some effort to do that. Totally worth it, but you want to keep your momentum going if at all possible, because you continue succeeding with less work.

It's the easiest way to keep things running, to keep things going, to keep working toward that compound effect that you're looking for is to keep up that momentum. You have to 100% take responsibility for what happens to you when you are not liking the results that you're creating. You have to look at what your influence is on them, because there always is something. There's always a decision that you made that brought it on.

And again, this doesn't mean beating yourself up or blaming yourself. It's none of that. It's just taking responsibility. "I created this. And the good news is if I created it, I can also change it." The final note that I want to mention that he talks about is the difference between learning and studying.

I think this is really important because I have many of you listeners who tell me, "You know what? I applied what you taught me and it's changed my whole life. I've lost all this weight and it's amazing." And then I have other people who are like, "How would I do that? How can I use the podcast?" They're very confused. And what you have to do is move from learning to studying. You have to move from this is just something that is interesting to know about, to actually studying it and applying it to your life.

Now, some of you are going to want to work with me individually. I'm that kind of person. I can love a podcast and maybe I'll make a few changes, but a podcast has never changed my life like that for the most part. Certainly not when it came to overeating. I needed to work with someone. I needed studying on a different level with a guide and support and all of that.

So if that's what you're wanting, that's totally great. That's exactly what I do in my programs. I'm happy to help you with that. But regardless, you have to be willing to spend some time actually studying it. Because with learning, you get knowledge. When you study something you're invested in it, you're trying it out, you're applying it to your life. You don't need more knowledge. There's so much of it out there.

What you need is to study and to practice and to truly take action on the knowledge that you have, what's already available to you. So the compound effect, it's everything. It's always happening. Think about what are you compounding right now in your life. Are you compounding pounds and the scale is going up?

Sometimes if you're just gaining a pound or two a month, that's still the compound effect. By the end of the year, you've gained 10 or 20 pounds. It doesn't take long for those tiny little overeats to turn into real pounds and real size changes and not feeling comfortable in your body. Because as you know, I don't care what you weigh. I'm way more important about what you think about yourself and how you treat yourself, that you actually treat yourself with love and respect.

When you treat yourself with love and respect, you don't overeat food that your body doesn't need, which leads to weight loss.

All right. Well, I hope you have a very nice week. I hope you can find something to do that lifts the mood, maybe allows the funk to air out a little bit, lightens things a little bit for yourself, and I will talk to you next time.

Have a great day and take care. Bye.