



# WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Hi there, my friend. Welcome back to the podcast. And if you're new, I'm so glad you're here. This is a really good one to start with. So if you are brand new this podcast, welcome, I'm so, so, so happy you're here. You're going to get some great, great help today.

Okay, so I have not talked to you about the masters program in a long time. So masters is the program that I offer as a continuation to the Weight Loss For Doctors Only coaching group. So many people do Weight Loss For Doctors Only, they get everything they need. It's amazing, and they're like, "God bless. I got what I needed. I'm doing my thing now." But there's also a large subsection of people who are still working on stuff, still trying to work on losing weight, still want to do more coaching, want to work on themselves some more, want a community element, and so they continue on in masters, and masters is so fun. We just have the best time. And part of being in the masters program involves getting a quarterly live event.

Now of course, we used to do those in person back in the day, as you know, COVID has changed all that. But we were able to transition to virtual events, and they have been also super, super awesome. I was actually just telling some of my clients today that when we survey them and we ask them, "Which do you prefer? Do you like the in person? Do you like the virtual?" Half of them were like, "I love the virtual. Don't ever go back to in person." And the other half were like, "We love the in person. We want to see our friends." So we're trying to figure out a way once it's safe for us to all get together, figure out a way to be able to accommodate everybody, which I know there are great solutions and we're for sure going to figure it out.

But the reason I'm bringing this up is because these days are super meaningful. In recent days, or recent times that I've had this live event, what I have done is chosen a topic for the day, and we really dig in and go deep with ourselves, each other. There's just a great community feel, do a lot of personal work on certain topics. And the one that we had several weeks ago, the topic was unconditional love. And this is one that is tough for a lot of people. I remember when I first started learning about it, I was kind of like, "Ew. But I don't want to unconditionally love people," thinking that by doing so, I was somehow saying that it was okay that they acted the way that they do, that I was somehow agreeing with it or condoning it. And so over the years, I've learned so much more about unconditional love, particularly unconditional love for myself. It's been something that I've been working on for many years, and of course, work with my clients on just in depth as well.

So we were having this great day, going through the whole thing. And then one of my clients, who actually, she'd taken a bit of a break and had come back, everyone was so excited to see her. She's going to know exactly who I'm talking about because her name somehow, I really pride myself in being able to say people's names correctly. And if I'm not sure, I ask. And I really just, having a name that people mispronounce all the time, it's just important to me that I know how to say her name. Well, her name, oh my gosh, you guys, seriously, I'm not going to say what it is because I probably would say it wrong anyway, to be quite honest. My brain just wants to say it how you would say it in German, and every time I think I've got it right, I still say it wrong.

This last time, she's like, "Listen, you should just stop trying." I'm like, "Oh, my gosh. I'm so sorry." But anyway, we were coaching, and she was telling me just the struggles that she has with unconditional love, particularly for herself. And we were talking about holding yourself really to a very, very high standard. And we were talking about what it means to be human, and how humans just by default and by design, we are not perfect. We make mistakes. We are imperfect in our perfection. Right? That's just what we know is true about ourselves. And this is for all humans. And so as we were talking about this, she was explaining that she could absolutely see that being the case for other people, but for herself, she really felt like that was not okay, like she wasn't allowed to be human.

And so I asked her, "Why are you the only human who isn't allowed to be human? Why do you not get to be human, even though you're human?" And it was kind of this big moment of really understanding how holding yourself to this extremely high standard is just not useful. And we really cling to it so deeply. Another client was saying how she was the Mary Poppins of children. She was practically perfect in every way, just really held it together, and followed all the rules. And if you talk to her about this as an adult, trying to be like that doesn't serve her anymore. So many of us, especially those of us who are very high achievers, who hold ourselves to these really high standards, where this all comes from is from our childhood.

However our family of origin was set up, and for us to be able to get our needs met within that family of origin, or whoever raised us, whoever we spent time with, or were important to us in our formative years, we figured out that the way for us to get our needs met, to maybe not attract negative attention, or maybe to attract positive attention and love was to follow the rules, to be really good, in quotes, to just be whatever that version of good looked like. Whatever was expected of us, we did it with flying colors. Maybe we even blew everybody's expectations away because we just did so much and achieved so much. And we probably got a lot of praise for that, maybe several awards in school. And so we built up this whole system of survival that served us well when we were children. And then many of us took that along with us into our careers as doctors, just working hard, doing the best that we can, obviously being intelligent and applying ourselves, and really holding ourselves to this high standard that we really want to do a good job.

And I'm not saying that wanting to do a good job is wrong or bad, that's amazing, that's great. But it's only great when it doesn't have a negative effect on you, when you don't hold it against yourself, when you don't say, well, because you don't do literally every single thing perfectly, then you get to be yourself up, you get to think negative thoughts about yourself. And still then believe that treating yourself that way is going to somehow help you, or allow you, or propel you toward doing better.

This is a really important concept that comes up again and again and again with my clients, this idea that if you speak negatively to yourself, if you are internally cracking the whip and just flogging yourself, that you are somehow going to do better.

And part of the reason why we continue to do this is because we have usually some evidence that it's worked. We made some mistake, we spoke really meanly to ourselves, we were really unkind, thinking, "I'm not going to tolerate that nonsense with myself," and then we went and did better. And so we made this association that the way to excel, the way to do better, the way to achieve, the way to grow is to treat ourselves really meanly, and that the only way that we can be acceptable is to never make a mistake, to be perfect, even when we intellectually understand that perfection doesn't exist, and you can't do that, and it's not possible. We can totally understand that all day long in our brains, but deep down in our subconscious, in who we are as people, we're like, "Yeah. But that doesn't apply to me. They're not talking about me." Right? I'm not the human that gets to be human. That's for all the other humans. We get to offer them grace and compassion and love when they mess up, when they don't do their absolute best, but that doesn't apply to me.

And when we believe that's the case, that furthers our belief that we're somehow other, we're somehow different. We're somehow more broken or worse off somehow than other people. Right? If people really know who we were, then they'd understand why this doesn't apply to us and why we don't deserve compassion and love. And what I want to say to this is, this is literally just a habit way of approaching yourself and thinking about yourself, and it was created early on as a survival mechanism, as a way to protect yourself, keep yourself safe, have your needs met, and be okay. And so that was great, and it's so great that you did that. The issue now though is that it's maladaptive in adulthood, and this is when we need to go and heal these wounds, where we need to question what we think about ourselves and decide to take on a different identity.

And what I want to encourage you to do is to consider coming over to the side of the rest of us humans, who know we're not perfect, and we're totally okay with it. I've taught, it was actually a podcast a long, long time ago, so if you're newer, this one will be back in the archives. But I taught about doing B minus work. Here's actually what's fascinating about the concept of B minus work, is that the whole time I called it B minus work, and I can't tell you how many people have said to me, "You know what really helped me? Your concept of B plus work." It's like they couldn't even hear B minus. They're like, "B minus is almost a C, and I am not a C student," like no, I cannot be getting in the low 80 percentile.

So their brain heard B plus. They're like, "I'm doing B plus work," which is totally fine if that's still helping them. But I've even had clients be like, "Well, I just do A minus work," and I'm like, "Yeah, that's not what I said. What I said was B minus work." And that's how much our brains struggle with this. No, I have to be that person who exceeds expectations, who goes above and beyond, who does so much. I know for myself, that showed up in this excessive level of responsibility that I felt, like I had, the responsibility I believed I had toward my patients was so over the top, no wonder I overworked. Right? I told myself the story that they needed me to be this certain way, and that they somehow couldn't survive, or would reject me, or switch to a different doctor, not like me, which of course, felt like the worst thing in the world then, if I didn't show up for them in this excessive, over the top kind of a way.

And then thinking, "No, but this is how it has to be. This is what they expect from me. This is how I have to be." And then if I didn't do that, feeling terribly about myself. Even if it was just because I wanted to go spend time with my own family, my own children, I actually wanted to put them to bed. Recently, my husband was looking through old archives of videos on his phone, and I cannot even tell you how many videos were on there of my little kids, where they could barely talk, it was hard to even understand them, laying on the changing table or whatever, saying, "Come home, Mama," or, "Night, night, Mama. Love you," because I'm still at work, answering the calls, slogging away, and Matt's at home putting these kids to bed, which by the way, PS, if you don't know, he's a surgeon and he would still get home before me basically all of the time, almost all of the time.

So I want to offer to you on this episode permission ... There's a siren going by, so my apologies if you can hear that. But I want to give you permission to be human. I want to offer to you that this idea that you are extra special and different, and those rules don't apply to you, first of all is A, not true. But B, it's not helping you. This is a maladaptive way of behaving in adulthood. And as soon as you can see the pain that it creates for you in your life, possibly physical pain, but I'm talking more about emotional pain, then you can start to consider the idea of releasing this idea, this belief that you have about yourself that you're held to a different standard, or that other people get to be that way, but not you.

So in this discussion, if you're noticing tension coming up in your chest, if you're noticing this reluctance or resistance to what I'm saying, then all the more reason that you need to dig into this. I promise you, if you're wondering how this applies to weight loss or overeating, when you think that you have to be perfect, when you think you have to be better than everyone else, that the standard they're held to is lower than your own standard, it's impossible, it's asking so much of yourself that you aren't able to meet that. And then when you don't meet that, you treat yourself so poorly, of course you're going to ask food to make you feel better. Of course, you're going to ask food to numb you out, so that you don't have to experience that negative thought process, that internal self loathing. Of course, you are going to want to just zone out on social media and not pay attention to what's going on in your life. You're just going to be like, "I just want to hit the pause button," because being with yourself is so uncomfortable.

But the only way to build up that relationship with yourself, so that being with yourself is actually pleasant and enjoyable and something that you look forward to, is you have to stop thinking that you are somehow held to this higher standard, that you're somehow different than everybody else, that you maybe need to be better than everyone else in order to make up for some sort of self perceived shortcomings that you believe that you have. All of that is just made up. This is all just a framework of thought that you've been thinking for so long, that you think it's true, especially because these roots are from your childhood.

So your identity is created when you are very young. And if this is what you've decided for yourself, you have to create something new. You have to question this, understand how it plays out in your life, how it's creating problems for you, and how you can then go ahead and change that into something different. I'm telling you, the effects of this are so far reaching. They're not just that it's better for you and you get to feel better. Think about all the women girls who you experience, who you are around, who you influence, who you talk to. When you change this, you get to be an example of what is possible for them.

You get to be an example of someone who loves herself unconditionally, who offers herself grace, who of course wants to do the best that she can at all times, except she recognizes that sometimes her best is not great. And that's okay because she's a human, and this is how humans are.

We can offer ourselves that love and grace and compassion because when we feel held, when we feel loved, when we feel supported, then we can do better just because we want to, just because we know we can, just because it's a fun challenge for ourselves, and not from a place of lack, of trying to make up for our deficiencies, of trying to fill this bottomless hole of worthlessness, that somehow if I do more and do better, I'll suddenly believe that I'm worthwhile. I promise you, it doesn't work that way. So permission to be a human like the rest of us, you really do get to be a human just like everyone else. And I promise you, it will transform your life. You think you're downgrading. You're like, "Why would I want to settle for mediocrity?" I promise you, mediocrity is not what you will create.

Just try it. Just trust me. Believe me for a minute. Give it a go. Give it a try. And if you find that it doesn't work, you can always go back to hating yourself and seeing if that works. Trust me. You're not going to go back.

All right. Let this simmer in this for a little while, marinate in this concept. Let it work in your brain, see what comes up. Okay? I promise you, the best work you can do.

All right. Love you, my friend. I know there's someone out there who needs to hear this. Sending you all my love, you are amazing. It's the truth, and don't let your brain tell you otherwise.

Talk to you next week.