



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Well, hey there, my friend, how are you doing? I'm so glad you're joining me today on the podcast. And if you're new, then I'm really glad you're here today because I've got some great information for you.

I've got some good, good stuff to share with you today. It's going to be so helpful in helping you to understand why you haven't had success in losing weight permanently and it's going to explain a lot of other things to you about yourself and your life. And it's just good, good stuff to think about and understand in an effort to create what you want, the body you want, the life that you want, all of it. I am currently sitting on my bed recording this episode. I know those of you who have been following for a while, you know my office situation. So I've been working for, gosh, it's been six months now on creating a new massively upgraded and improved office opportunity for me within my home. And I thought it would be done by now, and it's not. I actually just got a taste of working up there for the last three days or so, because I was able to make things work and I actually just did a whole bunch of videography up there and it was amazing. Super, super awesome.

But then I had to take everything down because I have workers coming again tomorrow. So very sad. I can't wait to do it. I actually thought about just sitting up there in the empty room and recording this, but it's echoey because it's all hard surfaces right now. I don't have anything that's soft up there yet, and I wanted to give you a good sound experience, or much better sound, I should say. As I was getting ready to start recording this, I could hear my kids talking downstairs and I'm hoping you can't hear them. But it's probably better than the leaf blower you would have heard had I recorded this early. The leaf blower. I was very happy to see the landscaping people, but I'm like, "Really, right when I had planned on recording this. Come on."

So today I want to talk to you about failure tolerance. Failure tolerance is just like what it sounds like. It's how much failure you are willing to tolerate. I find that, when it comes to weight loss, many of us have a very poor or low failure tolerance. We don't want to fail. We want to have success all the time. We want to have linear success from point A to point B. We want it to go really fast. We want there to never be a hiccup for there to be consistently dropping numbers on the scale, even though rationally and logically we know that makes no sense and that it's not how it goes. That's really what we'd like to order up. I mean, if we could have it how we want it, that is what we'd order up, for sure. We do not want to have any failure. We don't even want to learn how to tolerate the failure. We just want to figure out a way where failure isn't involved.

We are just like, "Maybe I'll try this next new diet plan because I think maybe I won't fail on this one," and then when it doesn't work out, for whatever reason, we just drop it and quit and then wait for the next new, exciting, shiny diet plan to come into our awareness, and then we repeat the cycle. So we don't ever spend a moment to think maybe what I need to do is actually keep moving through the failure. I've been thinking about this concept because typically the way I do these podcast episodes is I come up with the topic at least days in advance, sometimes weeks. I've had this one for a couple of weeks now, and I just let it mull around in my brain for a while and I think about it and I think about it and think about it, and then I'm ready to record and I just sit down and do it. And so it's been fun thinking about failure tolerance.

And I was thinking about times in our lives when we do tolerate failure, and there are so many when we're young and for most people so few once we're older. I mean, literally, I can come up with time after time, but just to offer you a few examples, the classic example is learning how to walk. When a child, a young child is learning how to walk they fail constantly. They try and try and keep falling and keep falling and keep failing and keep failing, and we don't make anything of it. We think that that's good. We're like, "Get up and try again. There you go. Keep trying. That's how you're going to get it." The way you're going to learn to walk is by trying and failing and trying and failing, and then multiply that times however many hundreds of times, or maybe even thousands of times. And we know the walking is happening. We're not like, "This one, not going to walk, I don't think."

We are just committed to our child learning how to walk, and honestly, the child's committed to it too. You can't really slow them down if they are physically capable of doing it. So that's a time where we tolerate tons and tons of failure. Another time is learning to ride a bike, and that's something that most people do, I think. I was thinking about it. Does everybody learn to ride a bike? I think most people do. Maybe you weren't super great at it or really strong or confident with it, but most people learn how to ride a bike. And even with something like training wheels or something like that, we still expect to fail. We expect to fall off the bike. And even if, let's say you have a child who's very physically gifted, we get these kids who are just from a motor standpoint just really gifted and they can just do it right away, and they pick up on it really, really quickly, those kids still have their wobbles.

I remember as a pediatrician telling parents, they would say, "Well, my child just learned to walk, but now they're falling more and I'm afraid that they have a brain tumor," or whatever it wouldn't be that they were afraid of that and they were afraid that something is wrong. And I remember telling them, "Well, listen, what happens is, when they're first learning to walk, they're thinking about walking, they're paying attention to walking. When they're walking, they're like, 'I'm walking, I'm walking, I'm walking, I'm focusing on walking, thinking about walking, making sure that I'm doing the walking.' Then they learn to walk and then they start walking like we do, which is we walk while we're thinking about other things." And so when they stop focusing on walking so much, they fall more, because they're not paying attention to it so much. And the same thing happens with bike riding.

You will start to goof off, or you're looking at your friend, or you're looking down at the wheel, I mean, classic story, my poor husband, I'm going to embarrass him, tells the story of how he got his brand new bike and was riding it first time out and looking at how exciting it was and ran into a parked car because he wasn't paying attention. Damaged the bike.

That is the kind of thing that happens. There's failure that comes even when we have a pretty good skill level. I was thinking about swimming as well. When you first put a child or an adult, anybody who doesn't know how to swim, they'll think like a rock. They don't know how to swim. And so we do swim lessons typically for many months or years until we become strong swimmers and we tolerate the failure. And I was thinking about with swimming, especially with small children, you've got an adult in the water with you for, I mean, years, usually with some lessons, making sure that you're okay.

It's like the training wheels. We expect the failure. We're not like, "Hey, you should just jump into the water and know immediately how to swim in a strong way." Of course not. I was thinking about swimming because I was just recently watching my nine year old son swim, and he can swim, but it's not the most efficient swimming. And we were talking about, there could be some refinement to his stroke that I think it would probably benefit him. So he's not like, "Oh, I'm failing because I don't do this stroke," I wanted to say perfectly, but really more just accurately and more efficiently. It's just like, "Great. This is part of the process." Now he can actually swim. That's great. The next step is becoming more refined with it so he's not expending all this excess energy while he's trying to swim. So when it comes to weight loss, we're like, "Screw it all. I overate. I'm not going to be able to do it. I knew this wasn't going to happen for me. I don't think it's possible for me." We have the worst failure tolerance.

And here's the truth about failure tolerance, the amount of success you have will be in direct proportion to how much failure you're willing to tolerate. The amount of success that you create for yourself will be in direct proportion to how much failure you're willing to tolerate. So what that means is, the more failure you're willing to tolerate, the more success you'll have. I am not surprised by this. I see this in my clients who keep coming back, who are confused and keep asking questions, who think they have it figured out, they come up against some new obstacle or something is hard for them all of a sudden again, something they thought they had figured out and now it's challenging again, and they keep coming back and they keep asking for help. They will have the most success and they do because they're willing to fail and overcome the failure, tolerate that failure, and keep going.

Here is what you really need to know, and if you really think about it, it's really true. Most failures are only temporary defeats. They're only temporary setbacks. The only way that they're permanent setbacks or permanent defeat is if we just give up. I don't know if this was, I think it was Thomas Edison, who was actually quoted as saying, and I'm paraphrasing here, that there were definitely other inventors who were more talented than him who had better ideas than him, but the difference between them and him is that he kept going when he failed and they didn't, and I'm not even going to be able to get right how many iterations of various inventions that he did. I think for the light bulb, it was hundreds and hundreds to get it right, and I know he had other help and all that. But even if you think about it, maybe he got the credit, but from a team approach, you have several people who are willing to tolerate a lot of failure, and it's that failure tolerance that then creates the success that literally changes the world.

In our case, with weight loss, we're looking to change our bodies and our experience around food. We're looking to create that freedom around food and completely changing our whole experience of being around food, our relationship with food and our relationship with ourselves and our bodies.

The way that you create that is by being willing to have it not work and then to keep coming back, keep trying again, and keep asking questions. So I think of coaching like my Weight Loss For Doctors Only Coaching Program as the training wheels or the person in the water, the adult who knows how to swim, who's guiding the person, who's learning how to swim. We can't do it for you. I cannot move your limbs and make you swim. I cannot make you balance on a bike, but I sure can help you to get there. I can sure make the process less painful than if you had to figure it out all on your own. And, of course, there's going to be less failure involved in that as well.

It's a lot easier to have someone teach you how to swim than it is to try to figure out how to swim on your own knowing nothing or very little about how to swim. So it makes sense to have some help, to have guidance, to have people who can help you to do it, but you still have to be willing to fail. With swimming, you still have to be willing to get the water up your nose and to cough and sputter, and that didn't feel good and sort yourself out, and then start again. With a bike, you have to be willing to fall scrape your knees, scrape your palms, maybe shed a few tears, get frustrated, and get right back on that bike. And that is how we do it. That is what we have to decide to tolerate in order to create the success that we want. What's so interesting is that we expect that discomfort for our kids. Of course, we can feel some compassion for them and empathy when they hurt themselves or they're having a hard time and not creating what they want to create.

But we never are sitting there going like, "Well, I don't know. This one, maybe you just can't get it." I mean, maybe that does happen with some kids, if they just really don't want to learn to ride a bike and it is very, very traumatic. I mean, I used to advise people that, by around age six, you should really, really tried to make it happen because then you get bigger. It's harder to ride a bike and it just become scarier. You fall more. And I found that with my kids. None of my kids were really excited about doing it. They liked the idea of riding a bike, they wanted to know how to ride a bike, but they were scared about going through the process. And I completely get that. They're like, "But I don't want to hurt. I don't want to fall. It seems scary." So it makes sense for you too to be like, "But I don't want to have to fail. It feels terrible. I don't want to have to go through that whole process." But what's on the other side is the freedom.

For a kid, riding their bike, it's like freedom to go ride around the block or whatever they want to do with their bike. Same thing with swimming. It's so nice to be able to swim on your own when you're a kid and maybe even when you're an adult to just get out there in the water, enjoy yourself, and not have to be afraid that something's going to happen. Same thing happens with weight loss. Yeah, it's not that exciting when you're first getting going, but think about the freedom on the other end. It's so great. I wish I could just give you a taste of it to just be able to look at food and be like, "Yeah, I could eat it. I could not. It doesn't really matter." It's not constantly on your mind. You're not constantly thinking about what you want to eat, what you did eat. Should you have eaten it? What are the consequences of you having eaten it? What does that mean about you as a person?

I mean, I was literally just communicating with a friend and she was saying how she was thinking about getting back together sometime later this year with people at various events now that things are starting to open up more, and immediately she just went to, "Oh my gosh, I've got to lose weight before people see me." Think about solving for that problem so that no matter what your body looks like you are in love with yourself and happy to show yourself and be around other people.

And then if you decide you want to be in a smaller body, that you think that that's the right thing for you, that feels like what's aligned with the authentic true you, then great, then we can lose some weight as well. So this is exactly what I help my clients with. What I always say is, "I literally don't care what you weigh, but I want to help you to no longer emotionally eat."

I want to help you to no longer rely on food and maybe alcohol to make your life tolerable or make your life better or for that to be the main source of pleasure in your life. There's other ways to have pleasure in your life that you might need to rediscover. Usually, that's going to involve some weight loss, and often it's more weight than you ever dreamed was possible because you don't even realize how much food is just dominating your coping mechanisms. When you no longer are doing that, you're able to lose that weight and keep it off. So the weight loss is the result of you doing the personal work. When we go into it, "The weight loss is what's going to make me feel better," we get confused. What we need to do is feel better first so we can lose the weight. And the way we feel better first is by working on our brains. This is exactly what we do in Weight Loss For Doctors Only.

And the cool part about this is, as a physician, when you learn this work and you really start to understand this, apply this to your life, get the results that you want for yourself, you're then able to share it with the patients that you take care of who also struggled with their weight. I've had so many clients tell me over the years how their patients come to them and ask, "I understand that it would be better for me to lose weight, to be lighter, how can I do that? What's the best or most effective way?" And they themselves don't know the answer. They're like, "Listen, I struggle too. I don't even really know. When I find out, I'll let you know." And now they're able to offer that to their patients. So, really, it's not even just for you. We get to be an example of what's possible to our patients and to all the people around us, which is so awesome.

All right. I think it might be time to be done. My dog who's been snuggling is walking around trying to figure out a way to lay on me or maybe the computer. So maybe it's time to be done.

All right, my friend, have a lovely, lovely rest of your day, and I'll talk to you next time.

Take care. Bye-bye.